Report on IOM Development Fund 2017 Ex-Post Evaluations

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IOM Development Fund

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Contents

Executive summary

The IOM Development Fund completed a review of all ex-post evaluations carried out on IOM Development Fund projects during the 2017 calendar year. The goal of the review was to collate the key findings from all the evaluations, analyse them, formulate lessons learned, and then provide recommendations. The recommendations would be shared with project developers, managers and technical specialists and incorporated into the Fund's Strategic Plan for funding disbursement decision-making.

This report constitutes a rapid assessment of nine projects.

Key findings

The key findings from the review are as follows:

Relevance
- ➢ Project interventions were found to be highly relevant and suited to context.
- ➢ Theory of change (ToC) was not explicitly discussed in the documents and in many cases lacked cause-effect relationship analysis; however, it was anchored in the regional context and took into account regional strategies, as well as IOM's institutional and the Fund's priorities.
- ➢ Stakeholder involvement during project design was found to be insufficient.
- ➢ Results statements and realistic indicators could have been better formulated.

Effectiveness
- ➢ Projects reached or exceeded stated outputs and outcomes with financial and technical capacity contributing to the achievements.
- ➢ Government involvement in planning was found to lead to added value capacity-building in the replication of activities.
- ➢ Regional projects encountered challenges in coordination, collaboration, implementation and addressing challenges.

Efficiency
- ➢ Projects were cost-effective and implemented within budget. Benefits were maximized by leveraging external resources from partners and selecting appropriate participants in capacity-building activities.
- ➢ Projects were implemented with appropriate and transparent administrative procedures and with ongoing feedback from stakeholders to adjust activities to reflect changes in context.
- ➢ Monitoring procedures were relatively weak for all projects.
- ➢ Unrealistic time frames were evident for the majority of the projects, and no immediate presence or remote management were identified as issues delaying activities.

Sustainability
- ➢ Benefits emanating from the projects continued to be of value to the Member States and other stakeholders, with projects that had a high level of engagement from government partners from the beginning proving to be the ones with the most sustained activities.
- ➢ Limitations to sustainability included a lack of human and financial resources and structural issues within government.

Impact
➢ In general, the projects influenced future development or finalization of relevant policies in migration and informed inclusion of migration issues in any planning and policy formulation.

Cross-cutting issues
➢ Adherence to a rights-based approach was evident in most projects even if not explicably mentioned in the project documents.
➢ The more recent projects aimed to mainstream gender throughout the project documents.

Key recommendations

Key recommendations from this review for any future project development are as follows:

Relevance
➢ Deepen TOC-based analysis and documentation.
➢ Formulate interventions using a participatory process, in collaboration with the relevant IOM Country Offices and key stakeholders in the benefiting country(ies).
➢ The use of workshops for the formulation of interventions would improve the level of buy-in and the understanding that partners would have about the project, and would encourage their active participation in the implementation of related activities.
➢ Involve the monitoring and evaluation expert in the design of the project results framework.
➢ Improving project planning and design is critical to ensuring the proper articulation of results, indicators and an overall ToC.
➢ As IOM works towards a results-based management approach, these are increasingly important considerations for new proposals, as a results focus starts at the planning stage.

Effectiveness
➢ During project design and implementation, fully involve stakeholders, especially in supporting National Development Plans, and better link activities to decision-making processes in the government.
➢ Establish a communication plan before commencing a new intervention in a new country in order to avoid creating misunderstandings or erroneous ideas by beneficiaries concerning IOM support. This is especially important when working with vulnerable groups.
➢ Sound assumptions/risk analysis are required at project development stage.

Efficiency
➢ Reconsider the remote project implementation model, as it requires greater resources, including increasing efforts for project monitoring, and consider hiring local staff to ensure IOM presence.
➢ Continue to look at innovative ways to find alternative modalities of funding for workshops and training courses to improve project efficiency.
➢ Require counterparts to cover at least part of the costs of attendance.
➢ Use less ambitious project time frames and targets in order to avoid no-cost extensions.
➢ Strengthened capacity in monitoring and evaluation should allow projects to establish enhanced monitoring tools and processes. This would allow staff to collect more systematic data on the medium- and long-term effects of the projects – for example, by incorporating tracer studies for

trained individuals, which would require a more systematic approach to obtaining and maintaining contact details of project beneficiaries.

Sustainability
- ➢ When possible, continue engaging with governments after the project ends, in order to (a) sustain and expand the results achieved through the project, and (b) to build upon capacities and knowledge of migration management among governments, civil society and private sector actors, among others.
- ➢ Projects that follow IOM Development Fund initiatives should complement and reinforce past projects and complement each other using an integrated programme approach.
- ➢ When the actors are the same, current projects should benefit from past projects in terms of improving the sustainability of results.
- ➢ In thematic areas such as trafficking in persons (TiP) and protection of victims, a long-term intervention is necessary, as is government buy-in to take on activities.
- ➢ Clarity is required in any legal agreement made by service providers as their action can affect sustainability of project benefits.
- ➢ A lack of post-project engagement or mobilization to promote a Migration Profile will negatively impact the attention to and interest in sustaining the momentum of the project results.
- ➢ Consider starting a Migration Profile with a Line 1 allocation only so it may be possible to continue activities with a Line 2 allocation.

Impact
- ➢ Enhance publicity on the project outputs. Increased strategic promotion of documents, such as migration profiles, is still necessary to make them known among a wider strategic audience, both in the country and beyond, and to promote their use in policy development, project design, research and studies, among others.

Cross-cutting issues
- ➢ Include a gender focus throughout implementation of projects. This means that gender-related structural inequities must be taken into consideration in all activities, particularly in any documents produced by the projects and in any training delivered.

Objective

The objective of this review was to examine all of the ex-post evaluations carried out on IOM Development Fund projects during the 2017 calendar year, summarize and analyse the key findings, formulate lessons learned and then provide recommendations for the Fund's Strategic Plan and funding disbursement decision-making. More specifically, the review of the reports was aimed at collating results in regard to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the projects implemented. The report will be shared widely with IOM staff developing and implementing projects, as well as those at the regional offices.

Methodology

The methodology for this review consisted of reviewing all of the evaluation reports submitted during 2017 and then extrapolating and analysing the key findings with regard to the five standard Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) core evaluation criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact – into a qualitative database. Cross-cutting issues, such as the use of a gender approach in project development and implementation, were also considered. Lessons learned were summarized in order to then develop recommendations.

In keeping with social science ethics standards and IOM's Data Protection Manual, consent was explicitly sought in all interactions during the ex-post evaluations, and all efforts were made to ensure confidentiality of data provided by respondents.

Limitations

It is important to note that this report details a rapid assessment carried out over a 10-day period. The core activity involved reviewing the evaluation reports and final reports of the projects specified.

A total of nine ex-post evaluations were reviewed. Although this is a qualitative review, the evaluation criteria assessed during each ex-post evaluation can be considered to provide an accurate evaluation of each project. Some limitations need to be highlighted:

➢ Some evaluations did not consider one of the five OECD-DAC core evaluation criteria, such as impact or sustainability, thereby reducing the ability to make comparisons between the different evaluations.
➢ The evaluations varied in scope and quality which resulted in some challenges when trying to extrapolate comparable findings.
➢ In some cases, there was limited participation by civil society organizations in the evaluations.
➢ Transferring of government officials made it sometimes difficult to assess the knowledge transfer achieved.
➢ In the case of regional projects, evaluators were limited in most cases to visiting one country, thereby creating an imbalance in the amount and quality of information available since survey and remote interviews do not usually yield the same wealth and nuance of information that a series of in-person interviews provides.

Findings

This section presents the findings organized according to the evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact, based on the OECD-DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance. The evaluation criteria and the findings are provided.

Relevance

All project interventions were found to be highly relevant for and suited to the context and challenges of the countries, responding to direct requests and priorities of the benefiting countries. Bottom-up approaches to project conceptualizations seemed to be the most successful.

The projects' ToC was not explicitly discussed in the project documents but within the results matrix they were internally logical, suited to the context and challenges of the benefiting countries.

In many cases, the ToC description lacked a cause-effect relationship analysis ("problem tree"). It also lacked the inclusion of preconditions that must exist to enable the projects, the negative factors that could hinder the projects' ToC and the positive factors already in place that the project could utilize.

The ToC was anchored in the regional context and the project design took into account regional strategies. The projects were also aligned to IOM's institutional priorities and to the Fund's priorities.

The formulation/design of the projects did not include a participative workshop with all partners – all were based on individual meetings conducted with specific stakeholders and partners. Stakeholder involvement in project design was found to be too limited.

Though the framing of results statements and selection of realistic indicators generally

Relevance relates to the extent to which the project's objective and intended results remain valid and pertinent either as originally planned or as subsequently modified for the beneficiaries that it is intended to serve. An assessment of the project's relevance to the main stakeholders is aimed at determining whether the objective and outcomes identified and formulated during project design are consistent with the priorities of the beneficiaries, the national or local government, and the donor. These perspectives were explored by the evaluators through project document review, participatory observation, stakeholder interviews, direct beneficiary surveys, focus group discussions and questionnaires.

In addition, the evaluations explored the alignment of the activities undertaken through the project with the strategies and work plans of the relevant institutions, as well as IOM's broader institutional objectives and the objectives of the Development Fund. These lines of enquiry allow the evaluation to reconstruct and make explicit the ToC underlying the project, and assess the various links between outputs and outcomes.

Theory of change
ToC is a way of understanding the larger change (impact) that an organization seeks to bring about and the steps that it envisages to do so, taking into account the context within which this will occur. Just as importantly, ToC articulates the underlying assumptions within these various steps, and can thus help to ensure that the assumptions are theoretically sound. (Center for Theory of Change)

reflected the intended action, more specific or scoped statements could have been more effective. Some results statements were found to be framed inappropriately as activities. Outcome statements used activity language instead of change language. Use of change language helps monitoring and evaluation to identify quickly the change that needs to be monitored or evaluated. Outputs are not just merely activities completed (such as training conducted) but also the immediate result that comes about after an activity

is completed (such as gained knowledge), which can easily be measured using a pre- and post-training assessment.

In some cases, it was found that the contribution to increase technical capacity was limited due to the limited nature of the project.

Effectiveness

Overall, the projects that reached or exceeded their stated outputs and outcomes involved close collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

The financial and technical capacities provided by the projects were said to have contributed to the achievements with satisfaction, which assured both support to the government and good communication with all stakeholders.

The close involvement of governments in activity planning was found to add value to capacity-building and allowed them to replicate the activities.

For migration policies, the presence of a central data repository was found not to be an ideal indicator for evidence-based policymaking, being too limited.

For some counter-trafficking initiatives, creating a parallel system of assistance was found to limit the impact of intervention in the long term, reducing effectiveness and efficiency of the intervention.

Efficiency

Overall, the projects were cost effective, implemented within budget, established processes to ensure the minimization of costs but the maximization of benefits by leveraging external resources from partners, many times in kind, and selected appropriate participants in capacity-building activities.

The projects were efficiently managed, with appropriate human and financial resources available for implementation, appropriate and transparent administrative procedures and clear evidence of seeking ongoing feedback from stakeholders to adjust activities to reflect changes in context. Some projects would have benefited from a higher budget to

> *Effectiveness is an assessment of the extent to which a project achieves its intended results. It investigates if the activities have led to the outputs and if the delivery of the outputs has led to the expected outcomes, and the degree to which the achievement of outcomes has contributed to the realization of the project's objective. An assessment of effectiveness will consider if beneficiaries have used the services and products availed by the project, if they were of the required quality and if so, whether this has led to the intended benefits specified in the project outcomes.*
>
> *The evaluations sought to use interviews and documents to explore effectiveness.*

> *Efficiency relates to the relationship linking inputs to outputs to outcomes. The evaluations assessed the extent to which the projects had clear and realistic criteria for allocating financial and other resources to meet its targets, as well as the alignment between planned and actual expenditures, and the timely delivery of outputs. These questions are applied both to the projects as a whole and to each of its components, using perception data, in the form of various interviews with key stakeholders. These perceptual data were complemented by a review of available financial documentation.*

reach a greater number of beneficiaries – for example, transport allocated to more regions to deliver training, benefits and so forth.

Monitoring capacity and procedures were relatively weak for all projects. Apart from the submission of interim reports, the projects did not include detailed monitoring systems, including results monitoring frameworks to capture progress.

In all but two of the projects, the project duration was extended, proving the unrealistic time frame set during project development, as well as a lack of comprehensive risk analysis.

No previous presence in a country and remote management were identified as issues delaying activities, as there were no IOM staff on the ground to regularly drive implementation.

Regional projects also encountered challenges in making sure the management site in one country was able to fully grasp issues of the other benefiting country(ies), coordinate/collaborate fully with the benefiting country(ies), implement activities and address challenges.

Governments were also found to take a long time to approve outputs – whether a report, a Migration Profile or a mass media campaign. This again touches upon the need for realistic time frames to allow for review and approval.

Translation, editing and publication of products took time and were rarely forecasted correctly, leading to delays in distribution and sometimes unavailability of published products in time for final workshops.

Sustainability

Overall, the benefits emanating from the projects seem to have continued to be of value to the benefiting Member States and other stakeholders.

The projects that had a high level of government partner engagement from the beginning of the project proved to be the ones for which project activities continued after the project came to an end.

Examples of follow-up activities:
- National strategy on migration developed and validated by ministries
- Task committees set up continued despite government changes due to strong leadership
- Mass media campaigns funded by governments as follow-up/replicated activities
- National strategic frameworks and action plans to combat TiP
- Processing of human trafficking cases by governments

> *The **sustainability** of a project or programme can be assessed through the question of whether its results and benefits are likely to continue after the project is no longer active and donor funding has been withdrawn. In the case of capacity-building interventions focused on training, sustainability examines the extent to which the knowledge acquired through the training activities is institutionalized in the relevant organizations by becoming standard practice. The evaluations assessed this dimension through interviews and, as far as the available documentation allowed, through a review of documents detailing policies and practices of the relevant organizations.*

- Establishment of shelters for victims of trafficking
- Development of standard operating procedures by relevant departments
- Referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking published
- Migration integrated in national development plans
- Migration policies have spurred and provided data for labour migration policies, and led to revised Immigration Acts and new projects in other thematic areas.

Limitations highlighted included a lack of human and financial resources, structural issues related to mandates and legislative frameworks, and technical capacity gaps that challenged the ability of stakeholders to act on the recommendations resulting from the projects. There were constraints regarding the financial capacity of some of the partners to maintain project activities.

An exit strategy was not always developed during project implementation but in many cases, outputs or reports were used to feed into existing and future projects to support governments in implementing recommendations.

The key issues that need to be clarified for the sustainability of Migration Profile projects are: how frequently to collect data and update the profile; and who will ensure that the future data collection exercises are planned, funded and executed.

Impact

Even 12 months after the projects ended, it was still early in most cases to cite any impact. However, it is clear that in general the projects influenced future development or finalization of relevant policies on migration and informed inclusion of migration issues in any planning and policy formulation. Furthermore, coordination between migration actors continued and new outputs resulted. Governments had a high level of confidence in the relevance and effectiveness of the support provided by the projects.

For regional projects, various stakeholders lamented that planned regional elements were lost, for instance in terms of original plans and the lack of efforts due to complications in coordinating activities between country partners.

> ***Impact*** *speaks to long-term results and changes to which an intervention contributes. Impact analysis was used to assess achievement at the outcome and overall objective level. Evaluators wished to assess if the intervention contributed towards reaching the higher-level objective, and to determine the impact or effect of the intervention in proportion to the overall situation of the target group or those effected.*

Cross-cutting issues

Adherence to a rights-based approach was evident in most projects even if not explicably mentioned in the project documents.

The projects aimed to mainstream gender throughout the project documents of the more recent projects; however, according to the information collected from interviews, the inclusion of gender at project implementation should be strengthened.

Cross-cutting issues: The proper inclusion of and adherence to a rights-based approach to programming and gender mainstreaming starts at the design stage of a project. The IOM policy on protection states that IOM protects migrants "by emphasizing the promotion of their dignity, their well-being and respect for their rights and by adopting a rights-based approach in all its policies, strategies, projects and activities, going beyond simply the physical and material needs of migrants"[1], thus making a rights-based approach a key priority for the organization. Similarly, IOM's Gender Equality Policy 2015–2019 sets out a commitment to gender mainstreaming in project review and endorsement processes. As such, gender mainstreaming also constitutes a priority for IOM, and its inclusion in project design and execution is a measure of its alignment with this organizational priority.
These two components were assessed through document review as well as through interviews with relevant stakeholders.

Recommendations

Relevance

1. Strengthen ToC-based analysis and documentation at project development stage.
2. Formulate interventions using a participatory process, in collaboration with the relevant IOM Country Offices and key stakeholders. The use of workshops to formulate interventions would improve the level of buy-in and partners' understanding of the project, and would encourage their active participation in the implementation of related activities.
3. Involve the monitoring and evaluation expert in the design of the project results framework. Improving project planning and design is critical to ensuring the proper articulation of results, indicators and an overall ToC. As IOM works towards a result-based management approach, these are increasingly important considerations for new proposals, as a focus on results starts at the planning stage.

Effectiveness
1. During project design and implementation, enhance the link to decision-making processes in the government, particularly related to how they can support National Action Plans.

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[1] IOM Policy on Protection – Council 106th Session – September 2015

2. Establish a communication plan before beginning a new intervention in a country, especially if the budget is significant, in order to avoid creating misunderstandings or erroneous ideas concerning IOM's support. This is particularly important when working with vulnerable groups.

Efficiency
1. Re-examine the remote project implementation model as it requires greater resources, including increasing efforts for project monitoring; consider hiring local staff to ensure IOM's presence.
2. Continue to look at innovative ways to find alternative modalities of funding for workshops and training courses to improve project efficiency; require counterparts to cover at least part of the costs of attendance.
3. Use less ambitious project time frames and targets to avoid the need for no-cost extensions.
4. Monitoring and evaluation capacity should allow projects to establish stronger monitoring tools and processes. This would allow staff to collect more systematic data on the medium- and long-term effects of the projects by incorporating, for example, tracer studies for trained individuals. This would require a more systematic approach to obtaining and maintaining contact details of project beneficiaries.
5. Sound assumptions/risk analysis are required at the project development stage.

Sustainability

1. Continue engagement with governments when possible after the project ends, in order to sustain and expand the results achieved through the project, and to build upon capacities and knowledge of migration management among governments, civil society and private sector actors, among others.
2. To build on training already delivered, projects that follow IOM Development Fund initiatives should complement and reinforce past projects and complement each other using an integrated programme approach. Since the actors are the same, current projects should benefit from past projects in terms of improving the sustainability of results.

Impact
1. Enhance publicity on the project outputs. Increased strategic promotion of documents, such as Migration Profiles, remains necessary in order to make them known to a wider strategic audience, both in the country and beyond, and to promote their use in policy development, project design, research and studies, among others.

Cross-cutting issues
1. Include a gender focus throughout implementation of projects. This means that gender-related structural inequities must be taken into consideration in all activities, particularly in any documents produced by the projects and in any training delivered.

Recommendations related to counter-trafficking
1. Clarity is required in any legal agreement made by service providers as their action can affect sustainability of project benefits.
2. In thematic areas such as TiP and protection of victims, both a long-term intervention and buy-in from the government to take on activities are essential.

3. Considering their role in the investigation and apprehension of offenders, police training in TIP is necessary.
4. Focus on partnership concerning protection and reinforcement of capacities of local actors already working in areas of protection of vulnerable women and children.

Recommendations related to Migration Profiles
1. For Migration Profiles stakeholder consultation was the cornerstone of success in the delivery of activities and outputs. A lack of post-project engagement or mobilization to promote the Migration Profile after a project ends negatively impacts on the attention to and interest in sustaining the momentum.
2. Consider starting a Migration Profile with a Line 1 allocation so it is possible to continue activities with a Line 2 allocation.

Annex 1: Challenges encountered and discussed during the ex-post evaluations

Political instability

Changing government partners

Changing governmental priorities

Changing government counterparts

Lack of buy-in by the government counterparts

Pirating server hosting diaspora websites

Difficulty accessing existing data

Lack of reliable information

Disagreements (related to legal documents) between media companies and governments regarding hosting rights for websites developed

Lack of collaboration among partners

Lack of coordination among agencies

Quality of the outputs delivered by consultants

Annex 2: Positive impacts encountered and discussed during the ex-post evaluations

Migration Profiles developed with full coordination by all parties concerned

National strategies on migration developed and validated by ministries

Ownership of project activities by relevant ministries

Inclusion of migration-related outputs in national budget programmes and relevant national department programmes; for example, a Department of Statistics now includes specific migration-related statistics

Passing of specific migration-related laws; for example, a counter-trafficking law

Improvement in TiP world ranking

Governments closely involved in awareness campaigns have consequently used the same or similar material in subsequent campaigns they have sponsored

Annex 3: List of projects

Funding year	Project code	Project title	Total USD allocation (budget line)/Final expenditure	Duration (months)/ Original duration (months)
2012	CE.0205	Research and Capacity-Building for the Strategic Management of Migration in Burkina Faso and of the Burkinabe Diaspora	200,000/196,997	41/12
2013	CT.0708	Strengthening the Capacity of the Government of Seychelles to Combat Trafficking in Persons	100,000/70,000	16/9
2013	TC.0735	Enhancing Joint Border Management between Mali and Mauritania	200,000/165,000	33/12
2013	PR.0126	Migration Profile in Malawi: Building Capacities to Promote Evidence-Based Policymaking	200,000/197,239	17/22
2014	CE.0269	Diaspora Engagement for Migration and Development in Burundi	200,000/200,000	28/18
2013	CT.0711	Strengthening Capacity for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of Migrants in a Vulnerable Situation in South America (PRODEHSA)	260,000/246,441	33/15
2014	CT.0783	Helping the Government of Madagascar Address Issues of Trafficking in Persons	100,000/86,836	14/12
2014	PR.0140	Migration Profile in Namibia: Building Capacities to Promote Evidence-Based Policymaking	180,000/180,000	24/24
2015	CT.0887	Identifying Gaps and Assessing Need: A Comparative Assessment of Counter-Trafficking Efforts in Countries in the South Caucasus	130,000/130,000	12/12