Meta-evaluation of IOM Development Fund projects (funded 2016-2021)

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Executive Summary

This report is a meta-evaluation summarizing the findings of 22 project evaluations of the International Organization of Migration (IOM). These projects were funded by the IOM Development Fund ("the Fund") from 2016 to 2021 and evaluated by a team of consultants from Owl RE, research and evaluation consultancy, Geneva between January 2022 and December 2023; the Owl RE team also prepared this meta-evaluation.

Findings

Overall, the projects were found to respond well to the needs of IOM Member States in migration management and to IOM's own strategic priorities. The projects were relevant, coherent and achieved the majority of their planned results. However, the efficiency, long-term impact and sustainability measures were found to be weaker, requiring strengthening. Similar findings were found in the previous 2021 and 2023 meta-evaluations.

Project performance on main criteria

Relevance: As in the previous meta-evaluations, relevance was rated highest out of all the criteria. In general, the Fund projects were well-aligned with government priorities, regional bodies (where relevant) and international norms and commitments, and with the priorities of IOM itself. Projects that were rated high on relevance showed very good alignment with government and national priorities. They were also based on consultation with key stakeholders and thus reflected their needs. Projects that were rated lower in relevance often had limited stakeholder involvement in project and/or poor project design, including being unrealistic and lacking context, missing some required activities and showing inconsistencies in the results matrix.

Coherence: This criterion was the second highest rated criteria as for the 2023 meta-evaluation, with internal coherence (with other IOM projects) stronger than external coherence (with projects of other organizations and/or governments in the same or related fields). Projects that were rated high on coherence showed good alignment both internally and externally, whereas projects that were rated lower were found to have lacked alignment internally and/or externally.

Effectiveness: Compared to the 2023 meta-evaluation, the rating of effectiveness increased from 60% to 70% for this meta-evaluation. Projects rated higher were those that were assessed as having reached or mainly reached their objectives, often reporting good collaboration with partners and other actors. Projects rater lower were those that did not achieve their objectives, for various reasons including delays seen in reaching the

intended results, setting unrealistic objectives and outcomes, lack of sustainability measures and changing contexts.

Project design: This was a new criterion for 11 of these evaluations (previously it was included under Relevance). Projects rated highly had a strong logical connection between the objectives, outcomes, outputs and indicators. Projects rated lower had issues with the project logic, such as lacking assumptions, outputs set as outcomes (or vice-versa) and inadequate indicators.

Efficiency: There were mixed findings on projects being managed efficiently, with a slightly higher rating than for the 2023 meta-evaluation. Projects that were rated high on efficiency showed a number of key characteristics, including acting as seed funding and consequently extending the projects' results, combining resources with other migration actors for cost-savings and/or extending the projects' activities and reach, completion within the project's timelines and efficient project coordination. Projects rated lower on efficiency tended to need one or several no-cost extensions and/or had significant underspending of allocated budgets. Project extensions were required by 60% of projects evaluated given delays in implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact: Projects that were rated higher on impact, showed evidence of continued benefits beyond project completion, such as increased knowledge and capacity of stakeholders, new or revised national policies, practices, mechanisms and tools in place and additional funding secured by IOM and/or other stakeholders to sustain and extend project benefits. Similar to the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, impact was rated lower where it was difficult to see any indications of a longer-term impact from the projects.

Sustainability: As seen in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, sustainability was rated lowest out of all the criteria. The few projects that received a higher score for sustainability demonstrated good practices such as providing the foundation for the generation of additional funds, supporting integration within the government infrastructure and creating networks for peer learning and sharing best practices. Projects that were rated lower on sustainability had characteristics contrary to the above, including limited sustainability measures built into project design, no hand-over or post project action plans, lack of integration of the projects' results within IOM programming and/or stakeholders' activities, lack of proper analysis or mitigation in terms of potential changes in government that could influence the impact and sustainability of the projects and lack of resources and/or funding being available to sustain the projects' results.

Recommendations of the individual evaluations

Every evaluation report proposed six actionable points on average, a total of 130 recommendations. These recommendations were analysed and classified as follows:

Project design: These recommendations (45/130) focused on several areas, similar to those seen in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, including: project's objectives and outcomes to be well-formulated; the project design phase should include a comprehensive needs assessment and/or broad stakeholder consultation; IOM and stakeholder experience and guidance are referenced in the project proposal; follow-up and sustainability measures should be included in the project design; and corresponding activities should be followed to their logical conclusions.

Sustainability: These recommendations (29/130) focused on the longer-term sustainability of the projects' results, such as ongoing engagement with stakeholders, encouraging the long-term integration of the projects' results within the activities of stakeholders and IOM and providing inputs/support into the anticipated next steps of the policy processes and/or other related initiatives.

Follow-up: These recommendations (18/130) focused on suggestions for immediate follow-up actions to ensure that project benefits were concretised, such as: explore possibilities to provide continuity to the activities delivered by the projects, such as validation of policies, tools or action plans, continuation of activities, further promotion, publication of project deliverables; support the authorities in resource mobilisation and/or a new initiative to continue the projects' benefits and/or integration with existing stakeholder and/or IOM initiatives. Some positive examples identified by this meta-evaluation included links established with other complementary IOM projects to continue and extend the project benefits.

Project management: Recommendations for project management (17/130) suggested actions in the following areas: suggestions for project staff management, including staff having enough time available to manage all aspects of the Fund project(s); ensuring a proper handover between outgoing and incoming project staff, and that roles and responsibilities were clear for all stakeholders involved in the project implementation; greater focus on monitoring of project implementation against the set indicators and the disbursement rates of the activity budgets; further use of measurements tools; and adapting project activities to optimise project benefits, such as using unutilised budgets for advocacy and outreach actions.

Guidance: Recommendations on guidance (12/130) mainly focused on encouraging other IOM projects to learn from the experiences of these projects. This included using existing IOM expertise and guidance; more detailed memorandums of understanding with the

authorities to secure institutionalisation of processes; and integrating more learning activities from the project research carried out.

Project administration: Recommendations (8/130) were mainly suggestions for improving project administration, notably providing interim and final reports on time, updating results matrices and budgets, and uploading all project documentation in PRIMA, in particular the minutes and attendance lists of all the meetings conducted. Similar recommendations were found in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations.

Gender: There was only one recommendation for gender in this meta-evaluation (compared to seven in 2023). The recommendation suggested inclusion of the government gender agency in future migration projects.

Conclusions and good practices

The meta-evaluation provided an overview of common trends and themes identified across the 22 Fund projects evaluated. This meta-evaluation found similar findings to those identified in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations.

Given the concentration of issues in the project design and conception, a good practices checklist for use by the Fund and project designers has been created drawing from the three meta-evaluations with guidance on the project proposal: rationale, project description, cross-cutting considerations, partnerships and coordination, sustainability, monitoring, evaluation, results matrix, work plan and budget.

Glossary of Terms

DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
The Fund	IOM Development Fund
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations

1. Introduction

This report is a meta-evaluation, which summarizes the findings of 22 project evaluations carried out for the International Organization of Migration (IOM). These projects were funded by the IOM Development Fund ("the Fund") from 2016 to 2021. The projects were evaluated by a team of consultants from the Owl RE, research and evaluation consultancy, Geneva between January 2022 and December 2023. The evaluation team included Patricia Goldschmid, Anita Leutgeb, Sharon McClenaghan and Glenn O'Neil. The list of 22 projects included in this meta-evaluation can be found in Annex 1.

The purpose of this meta-evaluation was to compare findings and recommendations across all 22 ex-post external evaluations and identify common trends and themes.[1] These findings build on previous meta-evaluations of 19 Fund evaluations in 2023 and 18 Fund evaluations in 2021.[2]

The meta-evaluation concludes with a good practice checklist for the Fund projects drawn from the meta-evaluations that can be used in project proposal development and approval.

2. *Evaluation methodology*

The meta-evaluation was carried out through a systematic review of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of all 22 evaluations. All the evaluation reports used common criteria, questions and an aligned structure, which facilitated the analysis.

The evaluations provided a rating[3] and assessment based on six main OECD-DAC[4] evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (in addition, project design was added as a new criterion for 11 of these evaluations (previously it was included under relevance). The meta-evaluation calculated the average rating provided for the criteria and analysed the summary texts of each criterion to draw out common trends and themes.

Each evaluation report was accompanied by a series of recommendations; six actionable points on average, a total of 130 recommendations for all reports. This was similar to the

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[1] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) defines a meta-evaluation as follows: "*Evaluations designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations. It can also be used to denote the evaluation of an evaluation to judge its quality and/or assess the performance of the evaluators*" (p. 27).This meta-evaluation only focuses on aggregating findings and does not judge the quality of the evaluations/evaluators: https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf

[2] Owl RE (April 2021), *Meta-evaluation of IOM Development Fund projects (funded between 2015-2017) and (February 2023), Meta-evaluation of IOM Development Fund projects (funded between 2015-2018).*

[3] The five-point rating scale and explanation used can be found in Annex 2.

[4] OCEC-DAC: "DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance": http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

2023 meta-evaluation (six actionable points for each evaluation). These recommendations and the actionable points were analysed and categorised by theme with major trends and themes identified. The findings present the results of this analysis.

3. Findings

Overall, the projects were found to respond well to the needs of IOM Member States in migration management and to IOM's own strategic priorities. The projects were relevant, coherent and achieved the majority of their planned results. However, the efficiency, long-term impact and sustainability measures were found to be weaker, requiring strengthening. Similar findings were found in the previous 2021 and 2023 meta-evaluations. This was also found in an additional meta-evaluation conducted in 2020 and 2023.[5]

The 22 project evaluations covered all regions, with the majority from Africa and Middle East – 41% (9) and Americas and the Caribbean – 27% (6).

**Figure 1: Geographic distribution of 22 project evaluations**

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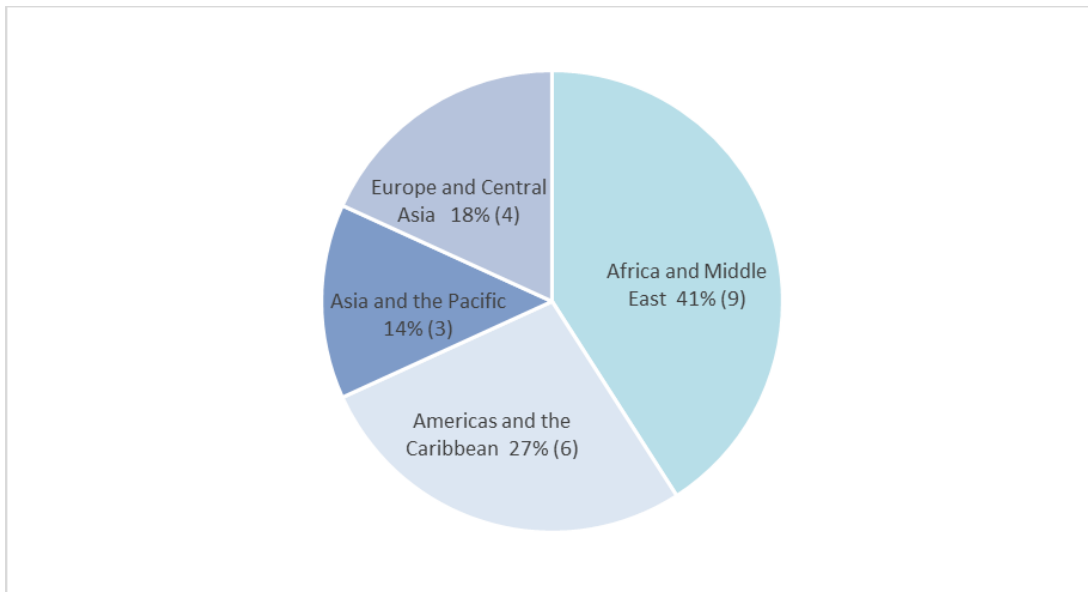
[5] *IOM (2020) Report on IOM Development Fund 2019 Ex-post Evaluations* (28 projects); L. Austin (2023), *Synthesis Evaluation, Extracting Learning from 2022 IOM Ex-Post Evaluations* (12 projects).

3.1. Project performance on main criteria

The following graph provides the average scores for the six evaluation criteria across all 22 projects. The graph illustrates that the highest ranked criterion was relevance and the lowest was sustainability. This was similar to the ranking found in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, implying that the evaluations were reaching similar and comparable findings. For this meta-evaluation, effectiveness increased (from 60% in 2023 to 70% in 2024); all other criteria remained in a similar range with differences between 1-6%.

Figure 2: Average scores of evaluation criteria of 22 project evaluations
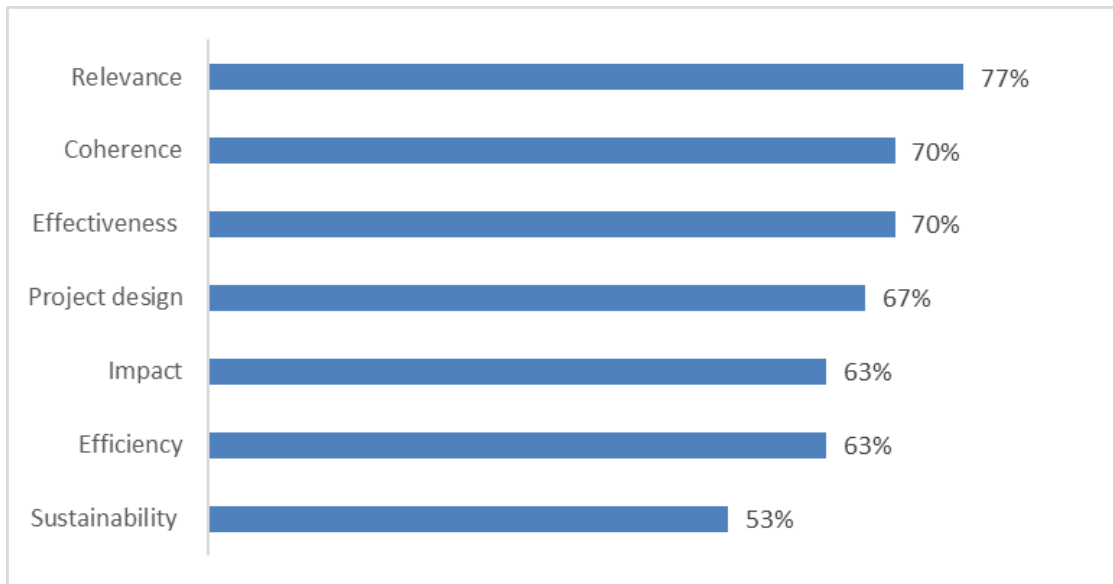
The following section is a further detailed analysis of each evaluation criterion:

Relevance

As in the previous meta-evaluations, relevance was rated highest out of all the criteria. In general, the Fund projects were well-aligned with government priorities, regional bodies (where relevant) and international norms and commitments, and with the priorities of IOM itself.

Projects that were rated high on relevance showed very good alignment with the priorities of government and other migration actors. They were also based on consultation with key stakeholders and thus reflected their needs (IB.0030, Bosnia and Herzegovina; CD.0003, Lesotho; LM.0333, Jamaica; PO.0125, Brazil; PO.0141, Brazil).

Projects that were rated lower in relevance often had issues with project design, including being unrealistic and lacking context (Georgia, PR.0234), lacking a range of required activities (NC.0017, Vietnam; CD.0012, Malawi) and showing inconsistencies in the results matrix (Georgia, PR.0234). Similar findings were found for the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations.

Coherence

Coherence was the second equal highest rated criterion (70%). In general, the evaluators found that internal coherence (with other IOM projects) was stronger than external coherence (with projects of other organizations and/or governments in the same or related fields).

Projects that were rated high on coherence showed good alignment both internally and externally, for example collaborating with relevant initiatives of other United Nations (UN) agencies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) or governments (CE.0392, Afghanistan; NC.0017, Vietnam; CD.0009, Dominica). Projects that were rated lower on coherence were found to have lacked alignment internally and/or externally. For example, this included projects that potentially overlapped with other IOM projects and/or did not establish links with them (PR.0222, Senegal; MP.0346, Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo).

Effectiveness

Compared to the 2023 meta-evaluation, the rating of effectiveness increased from 60% to 70% for this meta-evaluation. Projects rated higher were those that were assessed as having reached or mainly reached their objectives, often reporting good collaboration with partners and other actors (CD.0003, Lesotho; CT.1172, Tajikistan; PO.0125, Brazil).

Projects were rated lower for effectiveness largely considering that their objectives were not fully achieved. This was due to a number of reasons, also identified in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, including:
● Delays seen in reaching the intended results due to slowness in response of government partners (LM.0333, Jamaica);
● Setting unrealistic objectives and outcomes and insufficient supporting activities (CD.0012, Malawi);
● Lack of sustainability measures by IOM and/or stakeholders to support outcomes (NC.0017, Vietnam; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire; PR.0222, Senegal);
● Difficult or changing contexts that hindered the achievement of outcomes (CE.0392, Afghanistan; CD.0009, Dominica; PO.0141, Brazil; PR.0163, Panama).

Project design

Project design was added as a new criterion for 11 of these evaluations (previously it was included under relevance). Projects rated highly had a strong logical connection between the objectives, outcomes, outputs and indicators (LM.0321, Nepal; LM.0333, Jamaica; PO.0125, Brazil). Projects rated lower had issues with the project logic, such as lacking assumptions, outputs set as outcomes (or vice-versa) and inadequate indicators (PR.0206, Tunisia; PX.0022, Peru; MP.0346, Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo; PR.0163, Panama).

Efficiency

In general, there were mixed findings on projects being managed efficiently (63%), a slightly higher rating than for the 2023 meta-evaluation (58%), as seen in figure 2. Projects that were rated high on efficiency showed a number of key characteristics, including:

● Acting as seed funding and consequently extending the projects' results (CD.0003, Lesotho; PO.0125, Brazil; IB.0049, Benin).
● Combining resources with other migration actors for cost-savings and/or extending the projects' activities and reach (IB.0030, Bosnia and Herzegovina; IB.0049, Benin; NC.0017, Vietnam; CE.0409, Armenia).
● Completion within the projects' timeframes (LM.0321, Nepal; TC.1039, Uganda).
● Efficient project coordination within IOM and with project stakeholders (IB.0030, Bosnia and Herzegovina; NC.0017, Vietnam).

Projects rated lower on efficiency tended to need one or several no-cost extensions (PR.0234; Georgia; CD.0012, Malawi; TC.1056, Eastern and Southern Africa) and/or had significant underspending of allocated budgets (CE.0392; Afghanistan; Tunisia, PR.0206).

Of note, distinct from the two previous meta-evaluations, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the majority of the projects evaluated, notably resulting in a need for project extensions: 60% (13 of 22) of projects reported delays in implementation due to the pandemic.

Projects generally used PRIMA (Project Information and Management Application) efficiently. Although, as seen with the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, instances were seen where changes to the projects were not updated, documentation was missing from PRIMA (e.g. minutes of meetings and lists of attendees), and progress and final reports were uploaded with delays.

Impact

Impact showed a slightly higher rating (63%) compared to the 2023 meta-evaluation (62%). Projects that were rated higher on impact, showed evidence of continued benefits beyond project completion, for example:

- Increased knowledge and capacity of stakeholders (PO.0125, Brazil; TC.1039, Uganda).
- New or revised national policies and practices in place (PO.0125, Brazil; IB.0030, Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- New or revised mechanisms and tools being used by authorities and stakeholders (CD.0003, Lesotho; TC.1056, Southern and Eastern Africa; IB.0049, Benin; CT.1172, Tajikistan; LM.0321, Nepal; CE.0409, Armenia).
- Additional funding secured by IOM and/or other stakeholders to sustain and extend project benefits (CD.0003, Lesotho; PO.0125, Brazil; IB.0049, Benin).

Similar to the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, impact was rated lower where it was difficult to see any indications of a longer-term impact from the projects. For example:

- Anticipated policy processes had not yet progressed (LM.0333, Jamaica).
- Follow-up and/or complementary activities needed for impact were not carried out (PR.0222, Senegal).
- Main deliverables were not fully implemented and/or used and therefore little impact was evident (PR.0163; Panama).
- Loss of any impacts seen due to significant changes to the context (CE.0392, Afghanistan; PX.0022, Peru).

Sustainability

As seen in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, sustainability was rated lowest out of all the criteria. The few projects (four projects rated as 4-Very Good) that received a higher score for sustainability demonstrated the following good practices:

- Lesotho (PR.0163) supported the development of a diaspora policy and action plan with an allocated government budget and network established for the diaspora.
- East and Southern Africa (TC.1056) provided the foundation for the generation of additional funds for integrated border management.
- Nepal (LM.0321) supported the integration of the project-funded job portal database within the government infrastructure.
- Brazil (PO.0125) increased the collaboration with partners and the creation of a network for peer learning and sharing best practices.

Projects that were rated lower on sustainability had the following characteristics:

- Limited sustainability measures built into project design (CD.0012, Malawi; NC.0017, Vietnam; PR.0222, Senegal);

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- No hand-over or post project action plans (PR.0234, Georgia; NC.0017, Vietnam; LM.0333, Jamaica; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire; PR.0222, Senegal);
- Lack of integration of the projects' results (e.g. research findings, new ways of working, mechanisms or tools) within IOM programming and/or stakeholders' activities (PR.0234, Georgia; NC.0017, Vietnam; PX.0022, Peru; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire);
- Lack of proper analysis or mitigation in terms of potential changes in government that could influence the impact and sustainability of the projects (PX.0022, Peru; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire; PR.0163, Panama).
- Lack of resources and/or funding being available to sustain the projects' results (NC.0017, Vietnam; PX.0022, Peru; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire; PR.0234, Georgia).

3.2. Recommendations of the individual evaluations

A total of 130 recommendations were identified in the 22 reports evaluated. These included specific actionable points for the IOM stakeholders involved. Similar to the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, the top category was project design (35%) as seen in figure 3.

Figure 3: Categories of recommendations of 22 projects evaluations
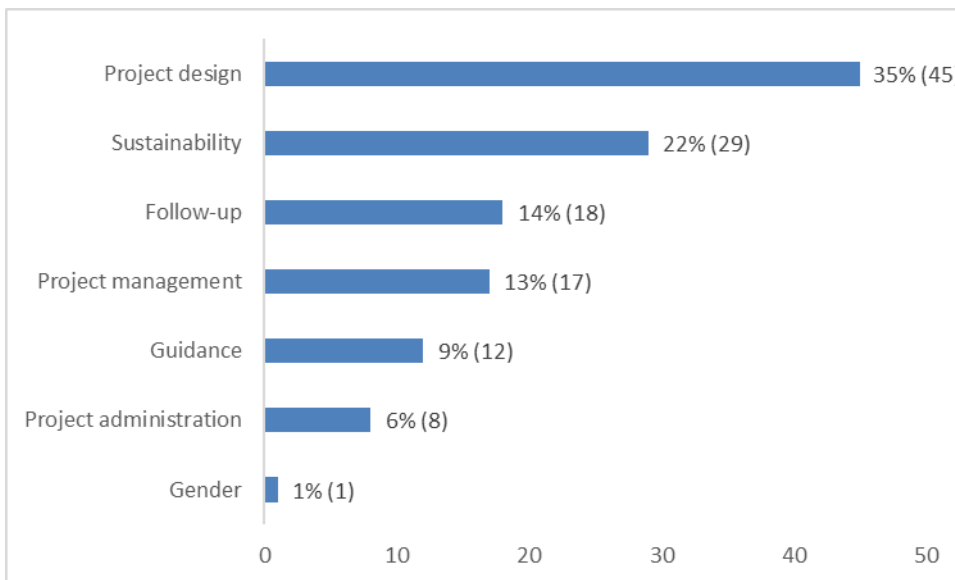
Each recommendation category is analysed further below.

Project design

These recommendations (45/130) focused on several areas, like those seen in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, including:

- Projects' objectives and outcomes should be well-formulated and set at the right level (not too ambitious) with SMART indicators[6] (PR.0206, Tunisia; TC.1039, Uganda; PO.0125, Brazil; PO.0141, Brazil; MP.0346, Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo; PR.0163, Panama).
- The project design phase should include a comprehensive needs assessment and/or broad stakeholder consultation (PR.0206, Tunisia; LM.0333, Jamaica; TC.1056, Eastern and Southern Africa; MP.0346, Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo; PR.0234, Georgia; LM.0321, Nepal; CD.0009, Dominica; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire; PR.0163, Panama).
- Ensure that IOM experience and guidance, as well as stakeholders, are consulted and referenced in the project proposal, e.g. a diaspora mapping project has consulted the IOM diaspora mapping toolkit; a proposal refers to the existing government set-up (CD.0012, Malawi; PO.0125, Brazil; PO.0141, Brazil).
- Follow-up and sustainability measures, such as exit strategies should be included in the project design as specific project activities (LM.0333, Jamaica; TC.1056, Eastern and Southern Africa; PR.0222, Senegal; CD.0009, Dominica; PX.0022, Peru; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire; PR.0163, Panama).
- Outcomes, outputs and corresponding activities should be followed to their logical conclusions. For example, for a project focused on producing a research report, include activities for the effective dissemination, communication and advocacy of the research results; a community consultation includes a budgeted feedback session with the community; where extra analysis is needed on the stakeholder landscape, include a stakeholder mapping as a first budgeted activity (CD.0003; Lesotho; CD.0012, Malawi; CD.0009, Dominica; PX.0022, Peru; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire; CE.0409, Armenia).

Similar to the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, issues were also often found in relation to the results matrices. These included problems relating to the consistency and comprehensiveness of outcomes, objectives, indicators, baselines, targets and assumptions not sufficiently detailed or missing or too ambitious to achieve with the given resources and timeline; indicators that were inappropriate and/or insufficient for the given outcomes or outputs; confusion between outcomes and outputs (often one substituting the other); means of verification not detailed, and baselines and targets that were not detailed and/or unrealistic or inappropriate.

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[6] "SMART" refers to: specific, measurable, achievable, (or agreed), realistic (or relevant) and time-bound (or timely).

Sustainability

These recommendations (29/130) focused on the longer-term sustainability of the projects' results, such as:
- Ongoing engagement with stakeholders to extend the project's benefits (CD.0003; Lesotho; TC.1062, Eastern and Southern Africa; PO.0141, Brazil; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire).
- Encourage the adoption of sustainability measures by stakeholders, such as seeking training certification, updating project products, holding refresher courses for training participants and integrating IOM representation into ongoing technical migration working groups (TC.1062, Eastern and Southern Africa; IB.0049, Benin; PO.0141, Brazil; MP.0346, Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire).
- Encourage the long-term integration of the projects' results (i.e. tools, policies, research results, etc.) within stakeholders' and IOM's activities (IB.0049, Benin; CT.1172, Tajikistan; PR.0206, Tunisia; LM.0333, Jamaica; MP.0346, Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo; PR.0222, Senegal).
- Provide inputs/support into the anticipated next steps of the policy processes and/or other related initiatives (IB.0049; Benin; CT.1172, Tajikistan; PO.0125; Brazil).

Recommendations for sustainability were linked to those for immediate follow-up and project design, particularly the inclusion of follow-up and sustainability measures in the project design as specific activities, as described above.

Follow-up

Closely related to sustainability issues, these recommendations (18/130) focused on suggestions for immediate follow-up actions to ensure that project benefits were concretised. For example, recommendations could suggest actions to be carried out by IOM country offices such as:
- Explore possibilities to provide continuity to the activities delivered by the projects, such as validation of policies, tools or action plans, continuation of activities, further promotion, publication of project deliverables (IB.0030, Bosnia Herzegovina; CD.0003, Lesotho; CD.0012, Malawi; CE.0393, Afghanistan; TC.1039, Uganda; IB.0049, Benin; NC.0017, Vietnam; CD.0009, Dominica; CE.0353, Côte d'Ivoire; CE.0409, Armenia).
- Support the authorities in resource mobilisation and/or a new initiative to continue the projects' benefits and/or integration with existing stakeholder/IOM initiatives (NC.0017, Vietnam; LM.0321, Nepal; PX.0022, Peru; PR.0222, Senegal).

As found in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations, the evaluation team also saw that the actions needed were often small-scale in terms of IOM resources and staff input required but crucial to increase the chances of sustainability of the projects' benefits. However, IOM

staff and resources were often not available for such follow-up actions given that the project budgets were closed and the staff were already working on other projects (or no longer in post). Further, there were limited links between the (current or former) project management staff with the project developers to explore the sustainability measures proposed by the evaluations.

Some positive examples identified by this meta-evaluation included links established with other complementary IOM projects to continue and extend the project benefits. For example, the completion and extension of some project activities by IOM's Western Hemisphere Programme (PR.0163, Panama) and the expansion of project activities within a larger IOM Integration Border Management project with USD $1.5 million funding secured (IB.0049, Benin).

Project management

Recommendations for project management (17/130) suggested actions in the following areas:

- Suggestions for project management staff, including staff having enough time available to manage all aspects of the Fund project(s), such as coordination with all stakeholders, ensuring a proper handover between outgoing and incoming project staff, and that roles and responsibilities were clear for all stakeholders involved in the project implementation in the initial stages (CD.0003, Lesotho; TC.1063, Eastern and Southern Africa; PX.0022, Peru; PR.0163, Panama).
- Greater focus on monitoring of project implementation against the set indicators, gender mainstreaming and data disaggregation, respecting timelines; monitoring of potential disruptions to project activities (e.g. elections) and the disbursement rates of the activity budgets (TC.1039, Uganda; PR.0206, Tunisia; LM.0333, Jamaica; PO.0141, Brazil; CT.1172, Tajikistan).
- Adapt project activities to optimise project benefits, such as using unutilised budgets for advocacy and outreach actions (PX.0022, Peru).
- Further use and know-how of measurements tools (such as pre- and post-activity questionnaires) for capacity building and/or awareness raising activities (PR.0206, Tunisia).

These areas for suggested actions were similar to the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations.

Guidance

Recommendations on guidance (12/130) mainly focused on encouraging other IOM projects/missions to learn from the project experiences. This included integrating

complementary approaches and activities to strengthen the project results, such as:

- Updating guidance based on the COVID-19 experience (TC.1059, Eastern and Southern Africa).
- Using existing IOM expertise and guidance (CE.0394, Afghanistan).
- More detailed memorandums of understanding / agreements with the authorities and stakeholders to secure institutionalisation of processes (TC.1059, Eastern and Southern Africa; IB.0049, Benin; NC.0017, Vietnam; PR.0163, Panama).
- Integrating more learning activities from the project research carried out (NC.0017, Vietnam; PR.0163, Panama).

Project administration

Recommendations (8/130) concerned suggestions for improving project administration, notably providing interim and final reports on time, updating results matrices and budgets, and uploading all project documentation in PRIMA, in particular the minutes and attendance lists of all the meetings conducted. Similar recommendations were found in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations.

Gender

There was only one recommendation for gender in this meta-evaluation (compared to seven in 2023). The recommendation (IB.0030, Bosnia and Herzegovina) suggested inclusion of the government gender agency in future migration projects.

4. Conclusions and good practices

The meta-evaluation provided an overview of common trends and themes identified across the 22 Fund projects evaluated. This meta-evaluation found similar findings to those identified in the 2023 and 2021 meta-evaluations.

Given the concentration of issues in the project design and conception, the following good practices checklist for use by the Fund and project designers has been created drawing from the three meta-evaluations:

Good practices Checklist for IOM Development Fund project proposals

The project proposal covers the following points of good practices:

Rationale:

- ✔ Relevant previous IOM projects and/or initiatives of other migration actors are researched and referenced.
- ✔ The relevant IOM Country Office and/or Regional Office strategies are referenced.
- ✔ The proposed project is part of a broader approach by the country/region to a given migration focus (i.e. migration management, integrated border management, health migration, migration and development, etc.) and not a "one-off" initiative.
- ✔ Relevant IOM frameworks, guidelines and tools are mentioned.
- ✔ Relevant existing set-ups and infrastructures (of governments and other actors) are described in relation to the project's objective.

Project description:

- ✓ The project objective, outcomes and outputs align with the definitions of the IOM Project Handbook.
- ✓ Activities are included to ensure their logical conclusion, i.e. a research product is accompanied by a dissemination/publication activity.
- ✓ Activities are included to support the project commencing on a solid basis, such as needs assessment, baseline and/or stakeholder mapping and stakeholder consultation with consideration made to potential changing contexts (change of government, etc).
- ✓ Activities are included to support the sustainability of the project, such as integration with existing government structures, creation of an exit strategy, hand-over and/or follow-up plan, in addition to resource mobilisation.
- ✓ Any potential risks to the project are described together with mitigation strategies, such as forthcoming elections, hesitancy of stakeholders to be involved in the project (e.g. diaspora, NGOs, etc.), change or sudden unavailability of key stakeholders, level of priority given to migration issues by the government, etc.

Cross-cutting considerations:

- ✔ Gender and diversity mainstreaming measures for the project are described with reference to IOM guidance (going beyond simple disaggregation of project data) and ensuring an assessment of the gendered implications for all planned activities.
- ✔ IOM's Strategic Results Framework[7] cross-cutting issues are incorporated and measures are included where relevant.

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[7] Six cross-cutting issues: 1) Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus, 2) Gender mainstreaming 3) Disability inclusion, 4) Prevention of (and Response) to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Harassment, 5) Youth and 6) Accountability to Affected Populations. Source: https://www.srf.iom.int/ccp

✓ Environment and climate change as emerging issues are incorporated and measures included where relevant.

Partnerships and Coordination:

✓ Descriptions of partners include the level of collaboration with IOM already established (in project preparation and/or with previous or current IOM projects).
✓ Anticipated roles and responsibilities of partners are clearly described and shared as part of MOU.
✓ Anticipated roles and responsibilities of IOM staff outside of the project location are clearly described and shared (i.e. Regional Offices, HQ and other Country Offices or locations).
✓ Any project set-ups (such as steering committees) are described including their membership; preference is given to integrating the project within existing set-ups / structures.

Sustainability:

✓ Sustainability measures are described, aligned and included as project activities described in the Project Description.
✓ Sustainability measures include those actions to integrate the project activities within the existing stakeholder structures and align with existing resources, such as building on existing policies and mechanisms, integrating within existing IT structures and staff for technology deliverables, etc.
✓ Sustainability measures also include those actions to ensure the benefits of the project continue, including budgeted exit strategy, hand-over and/or follow-up plan, a realistic analysis of future resources required.
✓ Potential links with existing or planned IOM projects (and those external to the given area of work) are described.
✓ A description is provided of how this project will effectively serve as seed funding (i.e. how it will be built upon, replicated and/or expanded).
✓ External projects and initiatives that are potential sources to expand and build on the project's benefits are described.

Monitoring:

✓ Responsibility for both 1) operational/activity monitoring and 2) financial monitoring is described.
✓ The planned monitoring tools and timeline is set out.

Evaluation:

- ✓ The timeline for the evaluation is set out.
- ✓ The suggested focus of the evaluation is described, i.e. which OECD-DAC criteria or other criteria will be used.
- ✓ Roles and responsibilities for the evaluation are set out in terms of who is responsible for commissioning and managing the evaluation, in addition to responding to the evaluation findings.

Results Matrix:

- ✓ The totality of the project objective, outcome and outputs describe a realistic and achievable project, also considering the budget available and context.
- ✓ The outcomes are set at a realistic level, i.e. within two years it will be possible to achieve what is described.
- ✓ The outputs are logically linked to the outcomes and can be reasonably expected to contribute to the outcomes' achievement.
- ✓ The indicators are aligned to the definition of the IOM Project Handbook and are the most appropriate measurable point of the given objective, outcomes and outputs.
- ✓ The targets are set at a realistic level and potentially achievable within the project timespan.
- ✓ Data collection methods are budgeted for if necessary.
- ✓ The result matrix includes assumptions at all levels with the exception of the impact level.
- ✓ All results and indicators contain a unique reference number.

Work Plan:

- ✓ The project timeline is realistic and builds in time needed for stakeholder involvement, approval / validation of project deliverables by both IOM and stakeholders.
- ✓ Fully utilise the "Phase Zero" of the project for no-cost preparatory activities such as coordination with government stakeholders, establishing project steering bodies, identifying consultants, drafting ToRs and obtaining further government approval for implementation, etc.
- ✓ In the first six months of the project, plan and carry out necessary budgeted preparatory activities a such as needs assessments, baselines and/or stakeholder mapping/research.
- ✓ Partner identification and contracting is scheduled in the first three/six months of the project.
- ✓ Meetings/consultations (either through a steering committee/working group or individually) are scheduled regularly (i.e. every three months) during the project's duration.

- ✓ Activity timelines show the full logical conclusion, i.e. research followed by product production followed by dissemination/publication.
- ✓ In the last six months of the project, sustainability measures are planned and budgeted for, e.g., exit strategy, hand-over and/or follow-up plan.

Budget:

- ✓ Activities are budgeted for in a reasonable way, ideally based on previous similar activities in the context(s).
- ✓ Activities are budgeted to include all known expenses, including research needed, translations, infrastructure (IT) costs, etc.

Annex One: List of projects covered by the meta-evaluation

#	Project name and description, start and end date
1)	IB.0030, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Strengthening Government Capacities in Integrated Border Management. Implementation dates: 01/10/2018 – 31/03/2021.
2)	CD.0003, Enhancing Coordination and Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Effectively Engage with Basotho Diaspora. (Lesotho) Implementation dates: 01/09/2018 – 28/02/2021.
3)	PR.0234, Capacity Building of Georgian Authorities in Migration Data Analysis. Implementation dates: 01/11/2018 – 28/02/2021.
4)	CD.0012, Mapping and profiling Malawian diaspora in South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States.
5)	TC.1056, Promoting a Regional Corridor Approach to Coordinated/Integrated Border Management in Eastern and Southern Africa (Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe). Implementation dates: 01/11/2017 – 30/04/2020.
6)	CE.0392, Undertaking a Mapping Exercise and Qualitative Needs Assessment to Support the National Diaspora Policy of Afghanistan. Implementation dates: 31/12/2017 – 29/09/2019.
7)	TC.1039, Support to Uganda's Immigration Training Academy. Implementation dates: 30/08/2017 – 29/08/2018.
8)	IB.0049, Support to Migration Management in Benin. Implementation dates: 01/01/2019 – 31/03/2021.
9)	CT.1172, Strengthening State-Civic Capacities and Dialogue on Internal Trafficking in Tajikistan. Implementation dates: 01/08/2018 – 31/03/2021.
10)	NC.0017, Building Resilience of Communities Affected by Climate Change and Environmental Degradation in Viet Nam. Implementation dates: 01/12/2018 – 30/11/2020.
11)	LM.0321, Increasing the Capacity of Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) in Nepal to Foster Safe, Humane and Orderly Migration. Implementation dates: 01/08/2017 – 31/07/2019.

#	Project name and description, start and end date
12)	PR.0206, Support to the National Observatory for Migration in Tunisia. Implementation dates: 01/12/2016 – 31/05/2020.
13)	LM.0333, Promoting Integrity in International Recruitment and Migrant Skill Development in Jamaica. Implementation dates: 01/12/2017 – 13/12/2020.
14)	CD 0009, Strengthening the Capacity of the Dominica Youth Business Trust to Foster Youth Entrepreneurs' Engagement in the Development of Dominica.
15)	PO.0125, Enhancing Migration Governance in Brazil. Implementation dates: 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2020.
16)	PO.0141, Strengthening the Capacity of Local Stakeholders to Address Migration in Coordination with Federal Authorities in Brazil.
17)	PX.0022, Strengthening Migration Management in the Border of Tumbes, Peru. Implementation dates: 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2020.
18)	MP.0346, Health and Humanitarian Border Management: Capacity Building for Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response in Burundi and the DRC. Implementation dates: 01/01/2018 – 31/03/2020.
19)	CE.0353, Developing an Online Tool to Map the Ivoirian Diaspora. Implementation dates: 01/11/2016 – 31/03/2021.
20)	CE.0409, Enhancing Development through Diaspora Engagement in Armenia. Implementation dates: 01/10/2018 – 31/12/2019.
21)	PR.0163, Migration Profile for Panama with a View to the Development of an Integrated Migration Policy. Implementation dates: 15/10/2015 - 15/12/2017.
22)	PR.0222, Strengthening the Capacities of the Migration Research Institutions in Senegal. Implementation dates: 01/07/2018 – 31/12/2019.

Annex Two: Evaluation criteria and scale

CRITERIA / OECD DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS MEASURED	1-Poor	2-Adequate	3 - Good	4 – Very good	5 - Excellent
RELEVANCE *IS THE INTERVENTION DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?* The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/ institutional needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.	● Level of alignment with national priorities, strategies, policies, global commitments and IOM / Fund priorities / criteria.	Project is not aligned with national priorities, strategies, policies, global commitments and IOM / Fund priorities / criteria.	Project is only partially aligned with national priorities, strategies, policies, global commitments and IOM / Fund priorities / criteria.	Project is mostly aligned with national priorities, strategies, policies, global commitments and IOM / Fund priorities / criteria.	Project is aligned with national priorities, strategies, policies, global commitments and IOM / Fund priorities / criteria.	Project is well aligned with national priorities, strategies, policies, global commitments and IOM / Fund priorities / criteria.
	● Level of evidence that beneficiaries and stakeholders were involved in project design.	No evidence that beneficiaries and stakeholders were involved in project design.	Adequate evidence that beneficiaries and stakeholders were involved in project design but with many limitations.	Good evidence that beneficiaries and stakeholders were involved in project design but with some limitations.	Very good evidence that beneficiaries and stakeholders were involved in project design.	Excellent evidence that beneficiaries and stakeholders were significantly involved in project design.
	● Existence of needs assessment.	No needs assessment carried out.	Very limited or no needs assessment carried out.	Limited needs assessment carried out.	Needs assessment carried out.	Needs assessment carried out.
	● Level of integration of human rights and gender equality within the project design and implementation.	No integration of human rights and gender equality within the project design and implementation.	Little or no integration of human rights and gender equality within the project design and implementation.	Some integration of human rights and gender equality within the project design and implementation.	Strong integration of human rights and gender equality within the project design and implementation.	Very strong integration of human rights and gender equality within the project design and implementation.

CRITERIA / OECD DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS MEASURED	1-Poor	2-Adequate	3 - Good	4 – Very good	5 - Excellent
VALIDITY OF PROJECT DESIGN	● The validity and logic of the project design as seen in the results matrix (RM).	Poor vertical logic of the RM (assessing quality of results-formulation as well as linkages between objectives, outcomes and outputs) Poor horizontal logic of the RM (inter alia indicator quality)	Adequate vertical logic of the RM (assessing quality of results-formulation as well as linkages between objectives, outcomes and outputs) Adequate horizontal logic of the RM (inter alia indicator quality)	Good vertical logic of the RM (assessing quality of results-formulation as well as linkages between objectives, outcomes and outputs) Good horizontal logic of the RM (inter alia indicator quality)	Very good vertical logic of the RM (assessing quality of results-formulation as well as linkages between objectives, outcomes and outputs) Very good horizontal logic of the RM (inter alia indicator quality)	Excellent vertical logic of the RM (assessing quality of results-formulation as well as linkages between objectives, outcomes and outputs) Excellent horizontal logic of the RM (inter alia indicator quality)
		Indicators do not match the respective result and therefore do not measure progress adequately against the respective result	Only some (or few) Indicators match the respective result and measure progress adequately against the respective result.	Indicators match well the respective result and measure well progress adequately against the respective result with some limitations.	Indicators match well the respective result and measure well progress adequately against the respective result with very few limitations.	Indicators match well the respective result and measure well progress adequately against the respective result
		Baselines and targets are inappropriate and unrealistic.	Most baselines and targets are inappropriate and unrealistic.	Baselines and targets are appropriate and realistic, with some limitations.	Baselines and targets are appropriate and realistic, with very few limitations.	Baselines and targets are appropriate and realistic.
		No assumptions are described.	No assumptions are described or very few.	Assumptions are described, but more could have been foreseen.	Assumptions are described.	Assumptions are described.
COHERENCE *HOW WELL DOES THE INTERVENTION FIT?*	● Extent of compatibility and coordination with other	Poor coherence with other IOM projects; relevant staff not aware of other IOM projects within the	Adequate coherence with other IOM projects; relevant staff aware of other	Good coherence with other IOM projects; relevant staff aware of each other's	Very good coherence with other IOM projects as demonstrated	Excellent coherence with other IOM projects as demonstrated through working

CRITERIA / OECD DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS MEASURED	1-Poor	2-Adequate	3 - Good	4 – Very good	5 - Excellent
The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.	interventions of the sector.	country and at other IOM missions. Poor coherence with relevant external interventions as demonstrated through IOM staff not aware of them.	projects but little or no contact. Adequate coherence with relevant external interventions as demonstrated through IOM staff being knowledgeable of some interventions but not all relevant.	projects and are in contact. Good coherence with relevant external interventions as demonstrated through IOM staff being knowledgeable of them.	through coordination between projects. Very good coherence with relevant external interventions as demonstrated through contact between IOM and interventions' staff.	together, possible joint activities and sharing resources. Excellent coherence with external relevant interventions as demonstrated through coordination meetings and possible joint activities.
EFFECTIVENESS *IS THE INTERVENTION ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVES?* The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.	● Extent to which the project objective and outcomes were achieved.	Poor or no evidence that the project activities were translated into short- & long-term results. Evidence of unintended negative results. Project objective and outcomes not achieved.	Some satisfactory evidence that the project produced positive effects. Evidence of unintended negative results. Project objective and outcomes partially or not achieved.	Good evidence that the project produced good positive effects. Few negative unintended effects. Project objective and outcomes partially achieved.	Strong evidence that the project produced very good positive effects. Few negative or no unintended effects identified. Project objective and outcomes partially or mainly achieved.	Excellent evidence the project achieved more than set targets including unintended positive changes. Project objective and outcomes mainly or fully achieved.
	● Effectiveness of collaboration and coordination with partners and stakeholders.	Collaboration and coordination with partners inadequate and evidence of negative impact on results.	Collaboration and coordination with partners inadequate.	Collaboration and coordination with partners effective with some limitations.	Collaboration and coordination with partners effective with very few limitations.	Collaboration and coordination with partners effective.
	● Evidence of involvement of beneficiaries in	No involvement of beneficiaries in the project processes.	Very limited Involvement of beneficiaries in the project processes.	Involvement of beneficiaries in the project processes but with some limitations.	Involvement of beneficiaries in the project processes but	Involvement of beneficiaries in the project processes.

CRITERIA / OECD DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS MEASURED	1-Poor	2-Adequate	3 - Good	4 – Very good	5 - Excellent
	project processes.				with very few limitations.	
	● Resilience/agility to manage and monitor risks, or unexpected internal/external factors	Risks/unexpected factors not managed/monitored adequately	Risks/unexpected factors partially managed/monitored	Risks/unexpected factors were managed/monitored	Most risks/unexpected factors were well managed/monitored	All risks/unexpected were very well managed/monitored
EFFICIENCY *HOW WELL ARE RESOURCES BEING USED?* The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.	● Economic use of resources (human, physical and financial).	Little evidence of efficiency; results disproportionate with resources invested. Under 60% use of budget.	Only some evidence of appropriate use of resources but some results could have been achieved with less budget or fewer resources. Less than 70% use of budget.	Evidence of good use of resources and noticeable efforts to choose cost-effective interventions and approaches. At least 70% use of budget.	Very good evidence that results proportionate with resources invested. At least 80% use of budget.	Excellent use of resources. Strong evidence that the project resources used are proportionate to the results generated. At least 90% use of budget.
	● Timeliness of interventions (ability to stick to project timeline).	One or more no-cost extensions.	One or more no-cost extensions.	One or no no-cost extension.	No no-cost extensions.	No no-cost extensions.
	● Respects reporting requirements	Project reports not submitted to PRIMA on time (with delays between 4 weeks and more).	Most project reports submitted to PRIMA late (with delays between 2 weeks and more).	Most project reports submitted to PRIMA on time (within 1-2 weeks delay).	All project reports submitted to PRIMA on time.	All project reports submitted to PRIMA on time.
IMPACT *WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THE*	● The significance of short- and long-term effects and	No positive short- or long-term incidences of effects/changes of the projects identified.	None or very few positive short-term incidences of effects/changes of the projects	Positive short-term incidences of effects/changes of the projects identified; some	Positive short- and long-term incidences of effects/changes of the projects identified; impact	Positive short- and long-term incidences of effects/changes of the projects identified and estimated to

CRITERIA / OECD DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS MEASURED	1-Poor	2-Adequate	3 - Good	4 – Very good	5 - Excellent
INTERVENTION MAKE? The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.	changes of the project		identified; no indications of potential long-term results.	indications of potential long-term results.	looks significant but too early to be sure.	have significant impact (e.g. policy in place, practices changed, etc.).
	● The significance of negative effects/changes.	Negative effects/changes of the project identified with potential negative impact (e.g. project delay policy process, reputation of IOM negatively affected by project, raised expectations of beneficiaries by project, etc.).	Negative effects/changes as a result of the project identified.	Insignificant or no negative effects/changes of the project identified.	Insignificant or no negative effects/changes of the project identified.	No negative effects/changes of the project identified.
SUSTAINABILITY WILL THE BENEFITS LAST? The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.	● Temporality/ permanence of outcomes achieved	No evidence of sustainability in the design, implementation, and results.	Little evidence of sustainability in the design, implementation, and results.	Good evidence of sustainability in design, implementation, and results.	Strong evidence of sustainability in design, implementation, and results.	Excellent evidence of sustainability in design, implementation, and results.
	● Extent to which processes and deliverables put in place by the project continue to deliver benefits beyond its lifecycle	Processes and deliverables of the project not generating benefits.	Processes and deliverables of the project generating very few results.	Processes and deliverables of the project are still generating a few results.	Processes and deliverables of the project are still generating some results.	Processes and deliverables of the project are still generating considerable results.
	● Extent to integration of	No evidence of integration of project	Little evidence of integration of project	Evidence of integration of project	Evidence of integration of project	Evidence of integration of project

CRITERIA / OECD DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS MEASURED	1-Poor	2-Adequate	3 - Good	4 – Very good	5 - Excellent
	project in national/local structures	processes/deliverables in national/local structures.	processes/deliverables in national/local structures.	processes/deliverables in national/local structures with some limitations.	processes/deliverables in national/local structures with very few limitations.	processes/deliverables in national/local structures.
	● Existence of follow up projects/mechanisms and hand-over	No evidence of an officially documented hand-over / follow-up plan or actions.	Little evidence of an officially documented hand-over / follow-up plan or actions.	Evidence of an officially documented hand-over / follow-up plan or actions but with limitations.	Evidence of an officially documented hand-over / follow-up plan or actions.	Evidence of an officially documented hand-over / follow-up plan or actions.
	● Evidence of resources within IOM and/or partners to continue to deliver project benefits	No consideration of resources within IOM and/or partners for the continuity of the project results.	Little consideration of resources within IOM and/or partners for the continuity of the project results.	Consideration of sources within IOM and/or partners for the continuity of the project results.	Consideration of resources within IOM and/or partners for the continuity of the project results.	Consideration of resources within IOM and/or partners for the continuity of the project results.