

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluators for use by key stakeholders, including internally by UN staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the final evaluation report.

Evaluation type:	External final evaluation
Evaluators:	Thomas Vasseur and Vlado Rikalovski
Field visit dates:	July– October 2023
Final report date:	31 October 2023
Commissioned by:	IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR and UN RCO
Managed by:	Jelena Krasic, JP Manager IOM

Evaluation purpose: The objective of the final external evaluation was to assess the performance of the project, identify the challenges and constraints encountered during the project implementation, identify important lessons learnt and make recommendations for the implementation of future projects.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability and cross cutting themes.

Evaluation methodology: Document review, semi-structured interviews.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The objective of the project ‘Evidence-based migration policy planning and discourse in North Macedonia’ implemented from 28 October 2020 –31 October 2023, was to contribute to good migration governance in North Macedonia through enhanced evidence-based and data-driven migration discourse and policy development, through the (1) the Development of evidence-based migration policies based on: a. Improved systemic data collection and analysis of migration dynamics; b. Enhanced institutional data exchange mechanisms and collaboration and (2) the collective engagement of broad range of partners aimed to increase the positive perception of the general public for effective management of immigrants and refugees. These objectives were intended to be reached through three outcomes: 1: Institutional stakeholders design and implement evidence-based and coordinated migration policies, 2. Inter and intra institutional data exchange mechanisms and collaboration among key institutions with competences on migration management are enhanced and 3. The general public and the policy makers view migrants and refugees as development actors.

KEY FINDINGS

Relevance: the evaluation has found the project to be of high relevance as rationale guiding the long-term goal, the approach, the stakeholder engagement, and activities show that its formulation is the result of a thorough needs assessment, long-standing relations with institutions and analytical capacity of fundamental drivers of migration management.

Coherence: There are not many comparable projects in the field of migration governance. However, the strong consultative orientation of the project has ensured it is coherent with state programmes as well as initiatives from civil society. This project is an example of coherence of efforts among UN agencies as it has been assessed, designed, and implemented in a true collaborative spirit as a joint project.

Effectiveness: The project is assessed as highly effective since all of the numerous planned activities have been implemented timely, even during the COVID context, and this is once again, explained, by the collaborative spirit of IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR and RCO. The multi-agency project team dedication has also been supported with a strong distribution of roles, responsibilities and (flexible) process (e.g., organization of procurement).

Efficiency: The efficiency is rated as strong, in regard of the complexity of the project, the substantial awareness raising, mind-shifting activities in the initial phase of the project, the number of activities and the quality of the outputs, also considering the strong innovation orientation of the project and its technicality in term of data collection and analysis.

Impact: The sense of impact of the project the evaluation was able to gather is strong, though its lasting effect requires continued attention. One first major impact of the project is that all relevant institutions, and representatives

Project information:

Geographical coverage:	North Macedonia
Project type:	Migration Policy
Project ID:	PO.0165
Gender marker:	1
Project period:	28 October 2020 to 31 October 2023
Donor:	Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund

EVALUATION BRIEF

of the civil society have come together to take a new stance on migration and jointly developed a new policy orientation and formulation, tackling the root causes of a system, inefficient in managing the diverse and increasing challenges related to migration.

Sustainability: The project has a strong sustainability with regards to the tangible results it has been able to institutionalize in a relatively short time, considering this has involved substantial consultation, awareness raising and training. However, political will, more resources, ideally under the impetus of an external project are important conditions to maintain a coherent commitment across institutions

Cross cutting themes: The project design and proposal also clearly refer to the GCM principles as well as the gender dimension and human rights. The whole-of-government approach has stood at the core of the various project activities, from the involvement in the resolution formulation process, to the supported inter-institutional mechanisms. The project has systematically collected gender-disaggregated data and has overall recorded a higher female participation rate in project training events.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion #1: The project has reached its intended results, institutional stakeholders are supportive of and committed to evidence-based and data-driven policy development. Non-governmental actors involved in the policy making and positive communication on migration.

Conclusion #2: Migration-related evidence and data has effectively been enhanced through the introduction and application of innovative tools and approaches.

Conclusion #3: The level of inter-institutional collaboration and coordination has increased thanks to the support of the project in facilitating regular exchanges at policy and operational levels. As a result, there is now greater exchange and harmonization of migration-related data.

Conclusion #4: The attention paid and supported provided by the project in building the understanding, increasing the awareness and getting the buy-in and commitment of stakeholders understanding of a new and systematic Migration Policy has proven crucial to the development of the forward-looking Resolution on Migration.

Conclusion #5: The short-term impact from Communication for Social Change's approach which have guided most of the communication campaign, events, trainings have confirmed it is efficient in turning public perceptions and discourse towards positive attitude and feedback.

Conclusion #6: The results obtained so far have been effective and impactful, though these recognize that building a systematic and effective migration policy requires a longer-term support while institutions lack the *financial (and to*

some extent the human) resources to pursue the institutional commitment and necessary capacity building.

Conclusion #7: There are several country-level and Western Balkans publications describing these (transit, immigration, emigration, intra-regional) share common migration characteristics, challenges, stakes, institutional development and an EU accession perspective.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Support the continuation of the intervention as the project approach remains necessary to continue the stakeholder mobilization and technical support, in order to reach a sustainable, institutional model of migration management in North Macedonia.

1.1: Continue supporting the further development of innovative approaches and tools (at minima until financial resources are mobilized), which require consolidation or support to develop further its potential.

1.2. Continue supporting the inter and intra-institutional data exchange and collaboration mechanisms (at minima until financial resources are mobilized: e.g. facilitating, attending inter-institutional coordination meetings).

Recommendation #2: Actively fundraise for the continuation of the project, prioritizing targeting IPA III funds under chapter 24 (justice, freedom, and security). It is recommended that IOM/UNHCR/UNFPA consult and support the relevant institutions in the formulation of a project to continue the efforts from the initial phase, by highlighting how it has supported the various priorities highlighted in the latest (20 July 2023) EU Screening report for North Macedonia.

Recommendation #3: Engage a consultative process to develop an institutional vision and model for the management of the Migration Policy and the implementation of its action plan. This process could take place between the earliest convenience so it can be introduced during the preparation phase of the next Resolution on Migration, where relevant actors could provide their inputs.

Recommendation #4: Allocate sufficient time for the elaboration of the next Migration Resolution, in order to grant sufficient time for a thorough and wide consultation process (with a greater space for civil society, the private sector and the diaspora). It is also recommended for consultations about the future institutional model (see recommendation 3) during the preparation period of the next Migration Resolution.

Recommendation #5: Organize a Western Balkans regional consultation on migration management support initiatives and experiences among the UN agencies involved in the project (IOM/UNFPA/UNHCR). Based on the understanding that similar or related initiatives have been implemented in the region, the evaluation believes any exchange of technical knowledge and experience can be beneficial to future interventions in support of migration management.