

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by IOM partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

Evaluation type: Central evaluation
Evaluator(s): CD-BE Consulting & Development
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Commissioned by: IOM Central Evaluation

Managed by: IOM Central Evaluation

Evaluation purpose: The main objective of the mid-term evaluation of the IOM EHoA Regional Strategy 2020-2024 is to assess the relevance, coherence and efficiency of the mid-term implementation of the Regional Strategy and its effectiveness as a planning, monitoring, and management tool able to inform and guide IOM's activities in the region, as well as to assess its expected and potential impact and sustainability. The evaluation also identifies good practices and recommendations to improve the performance of the ongoing implementation before closure, and for preparation of the new strategic planning cycle.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Regional Strategy 2020-2024 for the East and Horn of Africa (EHoA) was formally launched on the 1st of December 2020. The strategy offers an overview of the migration and policy trends in the region, and a set of seven priorities for the Regional Office and Country Offices, clustered around the three pillars of Resilience, Mobility, and Governance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Strategic Vision 2019 – 2023. It also includes four areas to improve institutional development enabling the organization to deliver on its strategic priorities.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Most Country Offices recognize the value of the guidance and priorities outlined by the Regional Strategy, which also plays an important role in leveraging regional priorities for donor engagement, including at country level.
2. The gender perspective was significantly integrated into the Regional Strategy both as a cross-cutting issue and as a distinct area of work to empower women. The strategy does not explicitly mention Disability and Accountability to Affected Populations as cross-cutting issues but it includes the promotion of human rights as a central guiding principle.
3. While the strategy acknowledges that natural hazard-induced disasters, environmental degradation and climate change are contextual factors shaping migratory trends, these issues are not sufficiently addressed in the regional strategic priorities section.
4. The implementation of the Regional Strategy is already

Geographical coverage: East and Horn of Africa

yielding tangible outcomes in terms of institutional development and policy capacity, reflecting IOM's performance in the region.

5. Limiting factors to the implementation of the strategy include discrepancies in the understating of the functions of the Regional Strategy, the broadness of the strategy, the fragility of the context, resource constraints including for institutional development, and reluctance by some staff to embark on strategic processes.

6. The Regional Strategy was developed in parallel to the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and does not fully align with it, but already includes some parts of the SRF. An exercise to develop a theory of change was organized after the formulation of the Regional Strategy including a results matrix for measuring strategic achievements using the SRF as a backbone.

7. The Regional Strategy has generally been relevant for the formulation of country strategies and is the main entry point to orient interventions with local governments and the United Nations Country Teams (UNCT). Most Country Offices recognize the value of the guidance and priorities outlined by the Regional Strategy.

KEY CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS

Overall, the elaboration of the Regional Strategy is a useful process to orient the transition of IOM from a service and assistance-oriented organization to a strategic and opera-

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tional UN agency, creating an intermediary step between the global vision of the organization and the national strategic dimension.

The alignment of country and regional strategies in terms of strategic mindset, identification of core areas of work in the region and collaboration, as well as with the SRF, will be key for effective strategic planning, implementation and reporting on results. This should be reinforced by an appropriate allocation of resources and availability of tools that support project implementation areas.

The evaluation has also identified lessons learned that complement its recommendations:

- The formulation exercise needs to be participative and to consider the migratory context and the development priorities.
- The Regional Strategy must be accompanied by a specific results-based and process-based monitoring and evaluation framework.
- The use of the Regional Strategy as a main planning tool in the Regional Office is an indispensable condition to ensure effectiveness.
- The use of the Regional Strategy as a fundraising instrument increases its effectiveness, potential impact, and sustainability.
- Communication, including internal communication and external visibility, is a key tool to increase internal and external acknowledgment of the strategy.
- The Regional Strategy is a guiding instrument that ensures a shared and stable framework to understand and prioritize areas and strategies of intervention.

Several interventions are also contributing to the achievement of results and to the promotion of long-lasting changes, including through capacity building and knowledge sharing; coordination and synergetic programming among projects with the Migration Response Plan; and consolidation of the Regional Data Hub.

Externally, Memorandums of Understanding and workplans were agreed with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Community (EAC), including within joint regional programmes with EAC and IGAD on migration and health. Actions were also developed within the Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate Change.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations should be considered for the completion of the current strategy and/or for the preparation of the next Regional Strategy:

Recommendation 1: The EHoA Regional Strategy is established through internal and external consultative processes, considering the migration realities at the global, regional and country levels, as well as the UN and other international frameworks. Close collaboration is required between the Regional and Country Offices. In that regard, it remains important to:

- Continue engaging with civil societies organizations and right holders for the implementation of the current strategy and for the preparation of the next Regional Strategy.
- Establish and/or maintain formal regional and national consultation mechanisms to discuss migration trends and drivers, to align IOM's regional and country priorities, to increase ownership by governments and to reinforce IOM's regional leadership.
- Consolidate partnerships with regional and national strategic players.
- Continue guaranteeing coherence with internal institutional priorities and frameworks.

Recommendation 2: The EHoA Regional Strategy has already integrated components of the SRF to improve institutional reporting on IOM results. The Regional Office has taken steps to encourage offices of the region to work along the same strategic lines to develop their strategy and programmes. In that regard, it remains important to:

- Increase socialization of the Regional Strategy among Country Offices' staff, with practical orientations on how to integrate regional strategic approaches and indicators in national strategies and projects' management.
- Agree on minimum standards for the development of Country Strategies in the region that contribute to IOM global and regional strategic results .
- Continue to offer capacity building activities in policy and strategy set-up for IOM staff in the region.

Recommendation 3: The EHoA Regional Strategy has already registered interesting results in the field of migration management in the region, for instance within UNCTs, and in terms of visibility and recognition of IOM leadership role in migration. In that regard, it remains important to:

- Continue using the Regional Strategy to illustrate IOM's leadership and added value in migration management when discussing with governments, donors and partners, and to negotiate unearmarked/softly earmarked funding to support its implementation and for measuring its impact.
- Ensure the formulation of a comprehensive theory of change for the next Regional Strategy, and to define drivers of change to be mainstreamed in all priorities of the forthcoming strategy .
- Continue using the Regional Strategy as a management tool, with the development of annual work plans and internal and external communication strategies linked to it.