



REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2017 EVALUATION OF IOM GENDER EQUALITY POLICY AND MOPAN ASSESSMENT

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

Evaluation type:	Central - Office of the Inspector General (OIG)
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Evaluation purpose: To assess the status of IOM gender related work in light of the recommendations of the 2017 mid-term evaluation and of MOPAN review, and to promote the use of evidence-based learning to inform new IOM policy on gender and gender-responsive organizational practice within IOM.

Evaluation methodology: Desk research, surveys and key informant interviews (semi-structured).

General information:

Geographical coverage: Global

Budget: USD 9,000

CONTEXT

Gender equality and women's empowerment (GEEW) remains high priority on the agendas of countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and social movements calling for social and political equality among people of all genders. GEEW is one of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and integral to all dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development. The Beijing Platform for Action set out in 1995 aimed removing systemic barriers that hold women back from equal participation in all areas of public and private life. Despite some progress, real change has been slow.

IOM acknowledged the strong links between gender and migration and endorsed in 1995 the Staff and Programme Policies on Gender Issues (MC/1853). In November 1995, IOM's Council adopted a resolution approving the gender policy and invited the Director General to take all the necessary steps to implement it. In 2000, the responsibility for gender mainstreaming was transferred under the leadership of the Deputy Director General, assisted by the Gender Officer/Head in the Executive Office, with the adoption of a "Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy" and the creation of Gender Coordination Unit (GCU).

In 2015, IOM adopted a new Gender Equality Policy (GEP) 2015–2019 that addresses programmes and activities, gender balance in staffing and gender-sensitive

organizational culture. The policy focuses on results reporting, in alignment with the United Nations System Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on GEEW and its United Nations Country Team equivalent. Gender Focal Points (GFPs) play a key role in operationalizing the GEP, however, per OIG's mid-term evaluation of GEP, a more strategic prioritization of their activities—both as individuals, as well as part of the GFP network—is needed to ensure that their role can effectively support gender mainstreaming.

The technical expertise and support provided by GCU has contributed substantially to improve capacities in Regional and Country Offices (ROs and COs) to mainstream gender. More recently GCU has been subject to an organizational review which led towards its reorganization into a new Diversity, Gender and Inclusion Unit, which reflects the need for deepening institutional commitments within IOM with the aim to address a broad range of areas of potential inequity, such as sexual orientation, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and/or Intersex (LGBTI), race, and disability, to realize a fully diverse and empowered work environment.

In the 2019 IOM UN-SWAP Report, OIG committed to discuss with GCU the conduct of a final evaluation or a review of IOM's corporate performance in the implementation of GEP. It was agreed to focus the review on the implementation of recommendations of the OIG mid-term evaluation of the policy conducted in 2017, in light also of the objectives and expected results of the policy, as well as on the implementation of Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) recommendations finalized in 2019. The exercise will also document the preparation of a new IOM policy on gender.

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The triangulation of data collected under this thematic review shows that the current GEP has been relevant and in line with the frameworks on gender equality and mainstreaming such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals. The importance of gender equality has grown both thematically and in tendency within IOM, and the understanding of what elements need to be included in the next generation of GEP is now refined. The new GEP will be vital to ensure that accountability for IOM's work on gender equality is strengthened.

The review in addition assessed a degree of achievement of the objectives and results from the current GEP and concluded that IOM's performance and effectiveness in relation to the IOM Gender Marker and gender-responsive performance management have been partially satisfactory, despite successful initiatives in the implementation of the marker, while partnerships and knowledge generation and communication have been highly satisfactory.

In terms of implementation of recommendations from the mid-term evaluation of GEP, the review concluded that some recommendations have been partially implemented and others not. A global gender capacity assessment for instance has not been conducted to support the integration of gender perspectives into enhanced operational effectiveness of the Organization. Although the need for creating gender advisor posts has been identified, and earmarked funding put aside, dedicated gender advisor positions in the ROs are yet to be created. The recognized value of the mid-term evaluation is in accentuating the need for senior-level commitment, which is the transformative aspect of mainstreaming, and it serves as a potential for bringing about the types of structural changes required for achieving gender equality mainstreaming.

With regard to the implementation of MOPAN recommendations relating to gender, the review determined that systems and practices that enable the implementation of recommendations include strong IOM presence at field level ensuring relevance to needs, which demonstrate agility and flexibility at the field level and enable responsiveness to need. IOM has been able to align interventions with national migration priorities and strategies, an approach that is highly valued by partners and delivers result for good migration governance, often in challenging operating contexts.

With the ongoing Organization's restructuring in mind, the review noted that GCU might need specific attention as the process might adversely affect a range of key roles that GCU played thus far. The reorganization might have

implications on the efforts of progressing gender equality in programming, and if not carefully tackled, the process might direct IOM's attention towards gender parity, culture in the workplace while neglecting the essential part of Organization's work linked to gender mainstreaming in programs. The upcoming reorganization may not be either fully in line with MOPAN recommendations, which repeatedly call for GCU consolidation (amidst other reasons) to support and provide further contributions to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and UN System Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP).

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The review identified seven sets of recommendations, summarized as follows:

1. A more comprehensive policy analysis is needed ahead of the next IOM policy cycle to unambiguously specify targets related to the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the nine targets of SDG 5.
2. In terms of operational framework updates, IOM should revise the Project Handbook and provide guidance to ensure that minimum gender standards in the reports are met.
3. IOM should apply the Gender Marker in consultation with gender experts (with verification from quality control unit) from early project design.
4. IOM should strengthen its reporting practice by moving the focus from reporting on activities to reporting on gender equality results within the global online institutional questionnaire. Gender could also be mainstreamed in all thematic areas and reflected accordingly in the Annual Report.
5. Regarding Gender Focal Points, IOM should consider revising GFP ToR by setting specific gender-related requirements (gender academic or professional background) and promoting a higher level of seniority. Appointing gender advisors in each RO still deserves close consideration.
6. IOM should consider conducting a comprehensive capacity assessment of individuals, with attention placed on the knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding gender equality.
7. In terms of MOPAN assessment, IOM should consider further integration of RBM and gender related results to respond to IOM's growing portfolio and effective gender mainstreaming.