



EVALUATION BRIEF

May 2024

EVALUATION OF IOM'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE MIGRATION DIALOGUE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA (MIDSA)

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

Evaluation type: Central

Evaluator: Obando Ekesa, Dr Glenn O'Neil and Nyambura Kimani

Evaluation period: 2017-2022

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Commissioned by: Central Evaluation Division

Managed by: Central Evaluation Division

Evaluation purpose: To assess IOM's contribution to MIDSA.

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

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

Project Information:

Geographical coverage: Global

BACKGROUND & SUMMARY

The MIDSA is an Inter-State Consultation Mechanism (ISCM) on migration created by Member States (MS) of Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 2000 to develop a forum for further exchange of information, experience and perspective among governments on migration policy and practice and to facilitate cooperation. The MIDSA brings together the 16 MS of the SADC: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The IOM has a triple role in MIDSA: i) it is an observer organization of the MIDSA, ii) it is acting as the technical secretariat for MIDSA, and iii) the organization provides technical advice and programme support to MIDSA.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation approach and methodology involved data collection from: case studies on four countries (Comoros, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe); a document review; an online survey targeting SADC MS representatives (37 responses); and semi-structured interviews with IOM staff and external stakeholders (53 interviews).

KEY FINDINGS

Relevance: The multiple roles of IOM in support of MIDSA were thought to be relevant to the requirements of MS, though there was some overlap and conflation of these roles, with the observer role considered the least understood, while the technical adviser role was the most clearly defined. The secretariat role was relevant and despite resource constraints, adapted to emerging needs and priorities, for instance in integrating the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) into MIDSA activities. Regarding cross-cutting and emerging themes such as environmental sustainability and gender, IOM strived to ensure those were integrated into MIDSA meetings, with a greater focus on climate change and less so on gender.

Coherence: IOM's support to MIDSA has ensured consistency with the principles of GCM, and in the period under review GCM has been a constant feature of MIDSA deliberations. The MIDSA was also found to be well aligned to IOM's mandate and framework. The main area of coordination of IOM's support was with MS in the organizing and convening of the MIDSA meetings, notably with the MS that was holding the chair of the MIDSA meeting for the given year. The IOM was also coordinating closely with the SADC Secretariat with the aim of increasing their involvement to ensure sustainability.

KEY FINDINGS (CONT.)

Effectiveness: The success indicators and expected results of the MDSA meetings were present in IOM global and regional strategies but only in general terms. Although no formal document was identified outlining the role for IOM in the follow-up of MDSA recommendations as secretariat and technical adviser, a detailed recommendations action plan was developed for the first time by IOM Regional Office (RO) in Pretoria following the 2021 MDSA meeting. IOM has been effective in supporting the implementation of the frameworks and action plans that resulted from the MDSA recommendations.

Efficiency: MDSA's financial viability has mainly relied on IOM securing funds from existing regional programmes and projects rather than having a standing budget. Only the Government of South Africa was currently funding their own participation in MDSA. It was suggested that MDSA should rely less on IOM funding and move towards being financially self-supporting, as seen with other ISCM. MDSA secretariat relied largely on one IOM staff member only, the Regional Policy and Liaison Officer (RPLO). The IOM was efficient in its role as observer and provider of technical advice to promote well-managed migration policies and convergent approach among SADC MS but this role was also affected sometimes by IOM's limited financial resources and aspects that were outside of its control.

Impact: IOM's support to MDSA has contributed to positive changes in migration governance and policies in Southern Africa, with the greatest impact seen in migration governance, labour migration, combating human trafficking and smuggling. The IOM as an observer and technical adviser has been influential on the changes/results seen, while recognising the contributions of other IOM programmes, UN agencies, International Non-governmental Organizations (INGO), Local National Non-Governmental Organizations (LNNGO), Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and MS themselves.

Sustainability: Sustainability enablers for guaranteeing MDSA's long term survival included funding, MS and IOM's proactivity in the follow up on recommendations, alignment of outcomes to instruments such as GCM, binding outcomes, as well as anchoring further the process to SADC. On continuity and flow of thematic areas, GCM featured throughout the five years under review. Migration data and labour migration featured 80 per cent of the time while border management and diaspora engagement had a 60 per cent frequency rate. In terms of stakeholder perceptions, MS overwhelmingly believe that MDSA is for their benefit and the responsibility for its longevity lies with SADC. They also believe that IOM has a technical role in supporting this dialogue in the long term.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings have shown that MDSA remains a vital platform for MS to freely discuss and share on migration-related themes in an informal setting. The evaluation found that it is quite relevant to MS needs and the impact of the MDSA meetings continue to be felt by MS, both individually and collaboratively. It is imperative to note that IOM has played a pivotal role in MDSA since its inception, playing a complementary role to the SADC secretariat.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

IOM's multiple roles: A comprehensive document should be developed describing the distinct roles, Terms of Reference and operating modalities of IOM in support of MDSA. This exercise should be done in coordination with the SADC secretariat and MS to ensure inclusivity, ownership and sustainability of the MDSA. Additional support should be provided to MDSA including at least a dedicated staff for the MDSA Secretariat functions and a dedicated budget line through IOM Operational Support Income (OSI) for MDSA activities, such as the follow-up of the MDSA meetings recommendations.

IOM Secretariat: The MDSA Secretariat (RO Pretoria) should develop a guide and/or framework that stipulates the working modalities with the MDSA Chair-in-office during its chairmanship term, supporting for instance the Chair in the establishment of collaborative processes for developing the MDSA meeting agenda. The IOM should develop a dedicated website for MDSA including password-protected sections for sharing internal documents between MS.

MDSA Meeting: The MDSA Chair-in-office, MS and Secretariat should consider how key themes can progress between MDSA meetings, for instance through working groups, also encouraging consistency of migration governance themes from meeting to meeting. The IOM Country Offices (CO) should be encouraged to meet with the returning delegations from the MDSA meetings to support them in prioritizing actions in line with the recommendations and determining what IOM programming / support is possible.

Sustainability: The IOM, as MDSA Secretariat, should propose options for a self-sustainable financial model for MDSA in consultation with the Chair-in-Office and MS, as well as within the SADC framework. The IOM projects and programmes developed in Southern Africa region should consider the MDSA meetings recommendations whenever relevant.

Monitoring: IOM as MDSA Secretariat should develop and propose to the MDSA Chair-in-office and MS a mechanism for the follow-up of the implementation of MDSA recommendations, including also information on the respective responsibilities and modalities.