



EVALUATION BRIEF

August 2021

MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

“Strengthening Counter-Trafficking Response by Improving Identification, Investigation and Prosecution of Trafficking in Persons in Kazakhstan”

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

Evaluation type: Internal independent mid-term evaluation

Evaluator: Laura Smith, Associate M&E Officer, IOM Regional Office in Nairobi

Evaluation visit: 6-11 June 2021

Final report: 19 July 2021

Commissioned by: IOM Mission in Kazakhstan

Managed by: Aliya Belonossova, Project Manager IOM Kazakhstan

Evaluation purpose: to assess the progress of the project towards achieving results in the first year of implementation

Evaluation criteria: the evaluation assessed the project performance against the following OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability as well as crosscutting issues of gender and human rights

Evaluation methodology: Data collected using document review; monitoring data; semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. Data analysis relied on qualitative analysis of documents and transcripts.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Since 1998, IOM has been working in Kazakhstan to combat human trafficking and in 2002 the IOM Counter-Trafficking Programme began. Over the past decade, IOM had implemented projects in the country focusing on prevention of human trafficking, protection of victims of trafficking, and prosecution of recruiters and traffickers. In this work, IOM has built partnerships with government and civil society.

In recent years, Kazakhstan has made significant progress towards the elimination of trafficking in persons in the country (e.g. improvement of anti-trafficking legislation, training for law enforcement agencies, actions to end the use of child labour during the annual cotton harvest, establishing government-funded assistance to victims of trafficking, and increasing state funding to anti-trafficking NGOs).

However, notable gaps remain such as low identification rate among migrant workers, limited access to government-funded assistance to foreign victims of trafficking, and limited efforts of law enforcement agencies to investigate, persecute and convict individuals conducting labour trafficking crimes.

In the 2019 United States Trafficking in Persons Report 2019, Kazakhstan was downgraded from “Tier

Strengthening Counter-Trafficking Response by Improving Identification, Investigation and Prosecution of Trafficking in Persons in Kazakhstan

Geographical coverage: Kazakhstan

Project type: Protection and Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants

Project code: PX.0179

Project period: 20 June 2020 – 19 December 2021

Budget: USD 350,000

Donor: United States Department of State – International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL)

2” to “Tier 2 Watch list”. In the 2020 TIP report, Kazakhstan remained on the Tier 2 Watch List.

It is in this context that IOM Kazakhstan is implementing the project “Strengthening Counter-Trafficking Response by Improving Identification, Investigation and Prosecution of Trafficking in Persons in Kazakhstan,” funded by INL.

The overall objective of this project is to improve the identification, investigation and prosecution of crimes of trafficking, especially labour exploitation. The project seeks to influence this objective through two outcomes:

- Anti-trafficking legislation is improved and applied.
- Improved identification for all trafficking victims, especially labour and foreign victims.

KEY FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

- The majority of project activities are embedded within the national action plan, these are agreed-upon priorities of critical stakeholders. The changes noted related to the attitudes of stakeholders show that this project is in line with the external reality.
- The one finalized project product is in line with international standards and consultants with ongoing project products have identified relevant international standards and best practices, including the Palermo protocol, to use in the creation.

Effectiveness

- It is promising that the project will be effective by project closure. Due to gaps in implementation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, onboarding and other logistical challenges the project has not been implemented according to schedule.

Efficiency

- Largely due to implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, expenditures are not in line with the agreed upon budget. As of this evaluation, May 2021, 48% of the budget had been spent – addition of expenses, commitments and pre-commitments – with 52% remaining.

Impact

- The early changes reported focus on knowledge, attitude and IOM-supported behaviour change. The increase in knowledge is likely directly related to the project. The attitude changes are likely a combination of factors between this project and external factors. The behaviour change is currently supported by IOM.
- Additionally, there have been a few unexpected changes: increased collaboration between local NGOs and their government counterparts as well as the additional uses of the assessment report produced by the IOM consultants which did not bear additional costs

Sustainability

- the project is supported by local institutions and by local partners. Additionally, local partners and stakeholders have been participating in the implementation of the project.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Agree on the main purpose of the task forces: awareness raising, identifying victims of trafficking/labour exploitation, or an advocacy tool and communicate this clearly with task force members. Depending on the main purpose, consider what necessary tools/resources the task force needs to meet this purpose.
2. Decide how task force success should be assessed through conversations with task force members and task force consultant. Formalize key performance indicators (KPIs) on this, in addition to current monitoring practices, and monitor these new KPIs.
3. Consider using available IOM monitoring templates to track activities, risk, and results more regularly (bi-weekly/monthly).
4. Make a decision jointly with the donor on output 1.2. The evaluator sees three paths forward: 1) proceed as initially planned, 2) adapt the guidelines so that it can serve as a transition document, 3) drop the activity and use the funds for a complementary activity.
5. Have a conversation with the donor related to the budget. As of now, there are unspent funds from savings in activity cost due to online modalities. In this conversation, it could be beneficial to decide whether the next national dialogues are going to be online or in person and what to do with current savings and possible future savings. There may be room in the budget to implement an additional activity.
6. Create a list of what minimum circumstances would need to occur for a phase two to be successful (e.g. passage of the draft law, reaction to upcoming TIP report, current champions maintain current position/standing).
7. Begin conversations with stakeholders regarding which of the recommendations from the assessment report would be most feasible to achieve for a potential phase two of this project.