



EVALUATION BRIEF

March 2020

EX-POST INTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT “STRENGTHENING READMISSION CAPACITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS”

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator(s) 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:	Internal independent evaluation
Evaluator(s):	Nazgul Chubarova, IOM Evaluator Tatiana Verigo, IOM Evaluator
Field visit dates:	28 Oct to 1 Nov 2019
Final report date:	10 March 2020
Commissioned by:	IOM Mission in the Republic of Belarus
Managed by:	Pavel Kholod, Project Manager

Evaluation purpose: To assess the extent to which the project entitled “Strengthening Readmission Capacity of the Republic of Belarus” performed against its set objectives and against key evaluation criteria with a closer look at impact and sustainability after project closure

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as well as gender and human rights as cross-cutting issues

Evaluation methodology: Combination of desk review and key informant interviews to gather and triangulate data from beneficiary and partner perceptions with secondary quantitative project data

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project “Strengthening Readmission Capacity of the Republic of Belarus” was implemented by the IOM Mission in Belarus from November 2017 to October 2018 with funding from the IOM Development Fund (IDF).

The project is part of IOM’s global portfolio in migration management and intended to assist government to better manage migration related procedures to address the vulnerability of migrants which face accelerated readmission when the risks of human rights violations are higher than during regular readmissions.

The project builds on previous and ongoing efforts of IOM Belarus in capacity building in border management supported by IDF recent years. In particular, projects “Risk Analysis in Border Management in the Republic of Belarus (RANBEL)” implemented in 2013 and “Strengthening the Security of the Belarus-Ukraine Border – Co-funding contribution to the EC project SURCAP II” completed in 2016.

The project was conceptualized at the same time as an EU-funded project on capacity building in migration management (CBMM) “Helping Belarus Address the Phenomenon of Increasing Numbers of Irregular Migrants (IMBEL)” started, and this EU-

Project information:

Geographical coverage:	Belarus
Project type:	TC (Technical Cooperation)
Project code:	TC.1066
Gender marker:	N/A
Project period:	1 November 2017 to 31 October 2018
Donor:	IOM Development Fund
Budget:	USD 100,000

funded project was ongoing at the time of the evaluation. The project supported the capacity building of Belarus state institutions, especially the State Border Committee (SBC) to contribute to the project’s overall objective: **contribution to the Government of Belarus addressing irregular migration through strengthening its capacity to effectively handle readmission cases.** To contribute to that objective, the project had one intended outcome: enhanced capacity of the SBC and its officers facilitates improved performance in accelerated readmission cases.

In light of the imminent conclusion of Belarus-EU and Belarus-Ukraine readmission agreements, readmission management related issues are of high importance for the Republic of Belarus.

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

1. The project is widely relevant to target groups and the international and local government policies and strategies. This was ensured from the development phase based on comprehensive consultations with potential beneficiaries and desk review of relevant national and international policies.
2. The project aligned with IOM national, regional and global strategies, the Migration Governance Framework and SDGs.

Effectiveness

3. All planned outputs were achieved and activities were implemented according to the work plan. The result matrix served as a project performance plan. Targets and indicators outlined in the results matrix were used to measure progress of project implementation, and project activity was monitored and updated regularly. One indicator for project outcome seems to be partially achieved but cannot be fully assessed as the SBC does not have any tracking system for number of migrants' complaints available for external users.
4. The accelerated readmission procedure mainly involved the SBC as the agency mandated to its practical implementation at the border. The SBC showed very high level of ownership over the project achieved results.

Efficiency

5. The project official registration was delayed, however project management was carried out efficiently to make sure all was in place to start the coordination and preparation activity once government gave the green light. Project activities were completed during the implementation period of the project. Some stakeholders would have been grateful for a more regular update of the project activities and progress through a short newsletter or email.
6. Resources (funds, expertise and time) were effectively converted to results and project management was well carried out with very well composed project visibility component.

Impact

7. The project potentially contributed to a behavioral change towards migrants among the SBC staff. In addition, the project beneficiaries highlighted positive impact of capacity-building activities, facilitating sharing expertise and experience among participants from cross-border countries.
8. Project coordination mechanism focused on the main partner, while other key state entities were engaged only at the final stage of project implementation. Potentially this may act negatively and lead to a certain level of misunderstanding and critical feedback of insufficiently involved stakeholders with the project and IOM as a whole as project holder.

Sustainability

9. High level of state ownership in regards to the project achievements was in place from the project development phase, so the Manual developed within the project and serving as a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) for accelerated readmission was institutionalized and incorporated into curricula of the Border Service Institute. High level of involvement of the main project partner and capacity building interventions were seen as the main factors of sustainability which could ensure project results to be valid and applicable in the future.

10. Compatibility, harmonization and co-ordination of project interventions with priority areas of government stakeholders and mission's portfolio enhance the sustainability of the project achieved results and EU-funded project.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Gender and Human Rights

11. While gender was mainstreamed to some extent in the design and a section of the project document was focused on gender mainstreaming planned during implementation, an actual gender analysis was not conducted and therefore results of such an analysis could not be used to inform gender-sensitive planning of the project strategy, results and activities. In terms of implementation, some data was disaggregated by sex and project products incorporated attention to gender, *inter alia* by encouraging the SBC management to adhere to gender balance when nominating participants for the capacity building activities conducted within the project.
12. Gender mainstreaming and human-rights based approach was not adequately applied during the project.

GOOD PRACTICES

The project also identified a number of good practices that would be useful for all IOM missions in designing or managing similar projects. These good practices include:

- Mainstream and ensure synergy with national policies and strategies to ensure sustainability and state ownership;
- Empower and capacitate partners to take ownership of interventions and achievements, and encourage further cooperation and interventions without IOM as the lead agency;
- Ensure all the stakeholders are in line with the project design, plans and aware of the project outcomes.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Actions recommended for the IOM Mission in Belarus:

- Keep strong facilitation position in the process of implementation, ensuring promotion of IOM mandate
- Ensure that all key agencies are aware of their project role and responsibilities, equal participation of all project partners regardless of their level of involvement via developed project coordination mechanism, available for timely update on project progress and achievements;
- Ensure use of different instruments and channels for dissemination of information among beneficiaries;
- Develop a tracking system for complaints from readmitted irregular migrants to be used, *inter alia*, as monitoring tool;
- Develop monitoring mechanism for interventions aimed at improving skills and knowledge would allow to evaluate project contribution into capacity building;
- Develop an explicit strategy for mainstreaming gender and human rights protection into future projects' interventions.