



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

EVALUATION REPORT

Internal ex-post evaluation of the project
***“Strengthening Readmission Capacity
of the Republic of Belarus”***

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List of acronyms

EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
CBMM	Capacity Building in Migration Management
GoB	Government of Belarus
HQ	Headquarters
IBM	Immigration and Border Management
IOM	International Organization for Migration
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOI	Ministry of Interior
RO	Regional Office
SBC	State Border Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
USD	United States Dollar

Executive summary

Project summary

IOM Belarus has implemented a project focused on Strengthening Readmission Capacity of the Republic of Belarus, funded by the IOM Development Fund¹ from November 2017 till October 2018.

The project builds on previous and ongoing efforts of IOM Belarus in capacity building in border management supported by the Fund in 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 evaluated 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-funded project was ongoing at the time of the evaluation. According to the requirements of the EU project rules the evaluated project served as co-funding project promoting a better framework for targeted actions within more narrow thematic area.

The objective of the evaluated project was to contribute to the capacities of the Government of Belarus (GoB) in addressing irregular migration for effective handling of readmission cases. The project aimed to foster a well-established system of managing irregular migration flows in Belarus with due respect to the rights of vulnerable migrants including women and minors.

IOM Belarus commissioned this internal ex-post evaluation to assess whether the project’s intended results have been achieved or are likely to be achieved and to identify constraints that have been encountered. The evaluation looked at the five main evaluation criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as well as gender and human rights as cross-cutting issues. The evaluation methodology consisted of desk review and qualitative data collection through interviews conducted during a field visit which took place from 28 October – 1 November 2019.

Evaluation summary

The ex-post evaluation of the project was commissioned by the IOM Belarus. This was conducted as an independent internal evaluation led by Nazgul Chubarova, IOM Internal Evaluator based in the IOM Mission in the Kyrgyz Republic and supported by Tatiana Verigo, an IOM Internal Evaluator based in the IOM Mission in the Republic of Belarus. Neither of the evaluators were involved in the design or implementation of the evaluated project.

The ex-post evaluation was carried out twelve months after implementation of the project completed in October 2018, with a field visit to Belarus (Minsk) during 28 October – 1 November 2019, and the evaluation report drafted in December 2019 and finalized in March 2020.

The evaluation was conducted for use by the: a) project management team to improve the implementation of the activities within the ongoing EU-funded border management projects and future project supported by the Fund on media and communication in the Immigration and Border Management (IBM) field; b) the Fund to get familiar with good practices, evaluate the project stakeholder satisfaction with the project activities and results and accordingly assess value for money for the results it has funded; and c) IOM staff supporting similar projects by sharing lessons learned and good practices. The evaluation aims to take a closer look at impact and sustainability after project closure.

¹ The IOM Development Fund supports developing Member States in efforts to strengthen their migration management capacity by providing essential "seed funding" for innovative projects. In operation since 2001, IDF has funded over 700 projects implemented in more than 123 countries worldwide.

The evaluation covered the entire period of implementation (1 November 2017 - 31 October 2018). The field visit took place in Minsk with Skype calls to IOM Regional Office (RO) Vienna and other locations where the project partners were residing during the project evaluation exercise. The evaluation was conducted one year after the end of the project to allow time between the project implementation period and other IOM Belarus-run interventions in this area, for instance EU follow up project in the same thematic area to assess sustainability and impact of the activities.

In terms of methodology, semi-structured key informant interviews and document review were the methods used to collect data. Data analysis relied on qualitative analysis of documentation and notes taken by the Evaluators during interviews. Data collection and analysis was guided by an Evaluation Matrix that the Evaluators created to specify the evaluation question and sub-questions based on the Terms of Reference, along with the indicators and sources of data for answering those questions. A deductive (theory-led) thematic analysis approach was employed, based on the evaluation criteria, questions and sub-questions in the Evaluation Matrix. Collected data was triangulated through cross analysis of data from the various data sources.

Conclusions

The below list compiles conclusions representing a summary of the relevance of project design, effectiveness and performance, efficiency of project management and implementation, and impact and sustainability as well as attention to cross-cutting issues (gender and human rights):

Relevance

- ✓ The project interventions proved to be timely and appropriate for the GoB in view of the upcoming conclusion of the readmission agreement between Belarus and EU.
- ✓ The project proved to be corresponding with existing policies and strategies of the GoB capacity on migration management.
- ✓ The project was aligned with IOM national, regional and global strategies and the Migration Governance Framework and SDGs.
- ✓ The selection of stakeholders was appropriate, however a limited participation of Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in project design and implementation was noticed.

Effectiveness

- ✓ The accelerated readmission procedure mainly involved the State Border Committee (SBC) as the agency which is mandated to its practical implementation at the border. The project envisaged three project partners. It was noted that not all project partners were adequately involved into the project design and implementation.
- ✓ SBC showed extremely high level of ownership of the project achieved results.
- ✓ Indicators for project outcome seems to be partially achieved, as according to the information available for the evaluators, SBC does not have any system of tracking the migrants' complaints available for the external users.

Efficiency

- ✓ The project management was well carried out with very well composed project visibility component.
- ✓ The implementation went smoothly after the project official state registration finalized. This delay did not affect the overall project implementation.

Impact

- ✓ Behavioral change mentioned by the project beneficiaries in regard to perception of migrants as not criminals but rather people in difficult life situations may be considered as the main positive impact noting it is based on perceptions of interviewees.
- ✓ The respondents highlighted positive impact of capacity-building activities, facilitating sharing expertise and experience among participants from neighboring countries.
- ✓ Inadequate involvement of certain stakeholders compared to high-level involvement and role of the key stakeholder in the project design and implementation may potentially act as a negative impact and may lead to dissatisfaction of some stakeholders generally with the project and IOM as a whole as project holder.

Sustainability

- ✓ High level of state ownership in regard to the project achievements was in place from the project development phase, so the Manual developed within the project and serving as 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.

Gender and Human Rights

- ✓ To some extent gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue was addressed during the project activities, *inter alia*, by encouraging the SBC management to adhere to gender balance when nominating participants for the capacity building activities conducted within the project.
- ✓ Neither development of regulations promoting cross-cutting issues as gender or human rights (i.e. gender and human-rights were not mainstreamed in the Manual), nor capacity-building activities targeted gender mainstreaming and human-rights based approach in handling readmission cases were envisaged in the project.

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

1. Mainstream and ensure synergy with national policies and strategies to ensure sustainability and state ownership are important factors in planning of the future similar programming.
2. Importance of empowering and capacitating of the partners, especially representing state authorities, to take ownership for interventions conducted within the project as well as achievements and encouraging further cooperation and interventions at a national level without IOM as the lead agency.
3. Ensuring all project partners are involved in project design, paying special attention to including partners in the plan of activities and organization of trainings based on their capacity needs.
4. Ensuring all the stakeholders are in line with the project plans and aware of the scope of the project and the outcomes.
5. Increasing the government ownership by selecting right modality of partnership would be beneficial for further partnership.
6. Conducting a capacity needs assessment and regulatory frameworks for partners proved to be extremely valuable in determining training needs and manuals / SOPs development.
7. It is recommended to consider a gender-based and human rights approach during development and implementation of future programming.

8. Constant and timely receiving feedback from migrants via system of tracking of complaints would ensure prompt reaction in this regard.

Recommendations

Actions recommended for the IOM Mission in Belarus for design and management of similar projects:

1. Ensure that all involved agencies are aware of their project role and responsibilities to avoid conflict of interest that can affect or diminish any project achievements and potentially affect future projects.
2. Ensure equal participation of all project partners regardless of their level of involvement via developed coordination system, available for timely update on project progress and achievements (regular coordination meetings, information letters, etc.).
3. Keep strong facilitation position, ensuring promotion of IOM mandate in the process of project management. This may include, but not limited to, organizing capacity-building events where one of the key focus will be given to migration-related topics and mainstreaming migration and gender as cross-cutting area in products developed within the project.
4. Develop a system of tracking complaints from the readmitted irregular migrants and use this as a monitoring tool.
5. Explore the possibility of updating manuals or guidelines developed during the project and to explore possibility of development of other tools describing the procedures relevant to border management.
6. Further use study visits for capacitation of respective partners in practical areas as readmission and another border management procedures.
7. Develop a monitoring mechanism for interventions related to increase of knowledge that would allow to assess project contribution to capacity building.
8. Develop an explicit strategy for mainstreaming gender and human rights protection into future projects' interventions.

1. Introduction

This ex-post internal evaluation of the project “Strengthening Readmission Capacity of the Republic of Belarus” was commissioned by IOM Belarus. This was an independent evaluation conducted by a mixed team of evaluators: led by an IOM Internal Evaluator from IOM Mission in the Kyrgyz Republic and supported by an Internal Evaluator from IOM Mission in the Republic of Belarus.

The ex-post evaluation was carried out twelve months after implementation of the project concluded in October 2018 with field visits to Belarus (Minsk) during 28 October – 01 November 2019, and the report drafted in December 2019 and finalized in February 2020.

The report includes the following sections: context and purpose of the evaluation, evaluation framework and methodology, findings and conclusions, and recommendations. Annexes to the report include the evaluation terms of reference, agenda of the field visit, the evaluation matrix used by the evaluators to guide data collection and analysis, a list of documents reviewed, and a list of persons interviewed or consulted.

2. Context and purpose of the evaluation

2.1. Evaluation context

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is a longstanding partner to the Government of Belarus and for more than two decades has been providing comprehensive expertise and technical assistance on various areas of migration governance, including integrated border management, counter-trafficking, migration and health, and others.

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.

The project directly addressed the need of the Government of Belarus, particularly the State Border Committee (SBC) in strengthening accelerated readmission capacity of border guards to contribute to effective management of irregular migration.

The project aim was achieved through the following main activities: 1) a number of capacity building activities for the officers of the SBC, as well as the MOI and the MFA of Belarus, such as national workshop on readmission and regional seminar on identification and interviewing of irregular migrants, study visit to Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia chosen as countries that have faced a large influx of migrants during 2014-2015 migration crises; 2) supply of English language self-learning kits to the SBC staff working with migrants; 3) development and production of a manual on accelerated readmission; 4) procurement of equipment for efficient handling of accelerated readmission cases.

The project focused on the capacitation of border guards, sustainability and longer-term impact of the project activities. The border guards actively participated in preparations of all envisaged activities nominating competent officers (front-line practitioners carrying out accelerated readmission procedures) including women, as well as contributed to the development of the agenda of capacity building events based on needs and goals of the project, demonstrating strong ownership and willingness to further develop project’s results, e.g. incorporating the manual on readmission into the curricula of the Border Service Institute of the Republic of Belarus and into the internal SBC procedures for front-line practitioners dealing with accelerated readmission cases by means of the internal instruction.

The Project’s objective envisaged contribution to the Government of Belarus addressing irregular migration through strengthening its capacity to effectively handle readmission cases.

To that end, the project involved three outputs:

Output 1.1 Manual on readmission is developed and available.

Output 1.2 Capacity of the SBC staff as well as MOI / MFA officials is enhanced through training sessions, study visit and distribution of language kits.

Output 1.3 The SBC is appropriately equipped to effectively deliver readmission services.

Building on the outputs, the project intended to achieve one outcome:

Outcome 1 The enhanced capacity of the SBC and its officers facilitates improved performance in accelerated readmission cases.

2.2. Evaluation purpose

This ex-post evaluation was carried out twelve months after the end of the project to allow time to assess sustainability and impact of the project. The objective of the evaluation was to evaluate relevance of the project interventions, effectiveness of the achieved results, efficiency of the project activity, impact of project deliverables and sustainability in terms of the overall objective. The main intended users of this evaluation are a) project management team to improve the implementation of the activities within the ongoing EU-funded border management project and future project supported by the Fund on media and communication in the IBM field; b) donor (the Fund) to get familiar with good practices, evaluate the project stakeholder satisfaction with the project activities and results and accordingly assess value for money for the results it has funded; and c) IOM staff in other missions supporting similar projects by sharing lessons learned and good practices.

The evaluation framework focused on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: relevance of project design, effectiveness and performance of the project, efficiency of project management and implementation, and impact and sustainability of the project interventions.

2.3. Evaluation scope

The evaluation covered the entire period of the project implementation (November 2017 – October 2018). Field visits were carried out to Belarus (Minsk) where the majority of stakeholders of the project were located, also a visit was carried out to border unit to meet with the border guard officers, who was engaged in the project activities, to reach all beneficiaries impacted by the project and to see the procedures developed by the project in place.

In line with the IOM Development Fund Evaluation Guidelines, the ex-post evaluation was planned to take place 6-12 months after the end of project implementation, based on the project end date of 31 October 2018. However, it should be noted that activities continued as part of the EU-funded project implemented by IOM Belarus and also as a part of SBC regular workload and considering availability of the evaluators, the field visit took place in October 2019 (right at the end of the 12 months after the project was completed).

2.4. Evaluation criteria

The following evaluation criteria were assessed, with various questions posed for each criterion as outlined in detail in the attached Terms of Reference (Annex 7.1):

1. Relevance: extent to which the project objective or outcomes remain valid and pertinent either as originally planned or as subsequently modified.
2. Effectiveness: extent to which a project achieves its objectives or produces its desired results.
3. Efficiency: how well the resources (funds, expertise, and time) are used to undertake activities, and how well these resources are converted into outputs.

4. Impact: positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a project, directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally.
5. Sustainability: the durability of the project's results, or the continuation of the project's benefits once external support ceases.

3. Evaluation Framework and Methodology

3.1 Data sources and collection

The evaluation consisted of three main phases: desk review phase, field visit phase and synthesis phase. Desk review took place prior to the field visit and formed the basis of the evaluation matrix and subsequently developed interview questions by type of interviewees and level of involvement into project activities by project partners and beneficiaries. Both evaluation matrix and interview questions were used for data collection through in-depth interviews with IOM project manager and supporting staff, project partners and beneficiaries and other stakeholders during the field visit phase.

Desk review was conducted based on the documents directly linked with the subject of the evaluation, such as project proposal, financial and narrative mid-term and final reports and other project documents, such as media coverage, meeting minutes and reports prepared by the project management and the project partners, and non-project related documents, such as project proposal and first narrative report for ongoing large-scale EU-funded project “Helping Belarus address the phenomenon of increasing numbers of irregular migrants” (IMBEL) to which the project being evaluated contributed to. The list of documents reviewed is attached as Annex 7.3.

During the field visit there were conducted semi-structured interviews with IOM Project Team and project partners and beneficiaries, such as the State Border Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Belarus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus and expert hired for development of the readmission manual. Also, there was organized on-site visit to border crossing point and border detachment for the purpose of overview of the accelerated readmission procedure implementation and meeting with direct beneficiaries. Agenda of the field visit is enclosed as Annex 7.5, and list of persons interviewed or consulted as Annex 7.4.

3.2. Data analysis

The methodology of data analysis applied to this evaluation is a combination of desk review and in-depth interviews. Data gathered during desk review, in-depth interviews and notes taken thereof was analyzed along the evaluation questions from the qualitative prospective. The Evaluation Team followed the IOM Data Protection Principles, UNEG norms and standards for evaluations, and relevant ethical guidelines, ensuring well-balanced and objective assessments and analysis-based and sound recommendations.

3.3. Limitations and mitigation strategies

In terms of the field visit the Evaluation Team faced with the following limitations: opportunity to meet Chief of Mission was limited due to the recent rotation and relocation, in-depth interview with the Project Assistant was conducted through Skype within limited time due to the Project Assistant’s duty travel, and interview with the Mission’s Resource Management Officer was conducted by phone due to her sick leave and medical condition. The representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs rotated and was available via Skype. However, these limitations did not affect the evaluation process as the Evaluation Team had an opportunity to discuss the project with the former Chief of Mission through Skype call after the field visit was completed, interview with the RMO and additional interview with the Project Assistant were organized through Skype calls.

During the desk review the Evaluation Team had to explore extensive strategic documents (draft Migration strategy of Belarus, Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 419-3 dated July 21, 2008 “On the State Border of the Republic of Belarus”, Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 105-3 dated January 4, 2010 “On the legal status of foreign citizens and stateless persons in the Republic of Belarus”) to understand specifics of the project theme, and interview with the Regional Thematic Specialist on Immigration and Border Management thematic area allowed to familiarize with particular aspects of the project theme

in the context of regional and organizational strategy.

There may be some caution regarding the interviewees' perceptions when they were directly involved in the project design and implementation and are very committed. To mitigate this effect, the Evaluation Team strived to draw conclusions, relying on coherence between the project documents and the interviews.

4. Findings

4.1. Relevance

This evaluation criteria relates to the extent to which the project interventions were relevant and appropriate towards national and international legal and policy frameworks, the extent to which the project responded to the needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries and how well was the project aligned with IOM national, regional and / or global strategies and the Migration Governance Framework.

Alignment with national and international legal and policy frameworks:

In view of the upcoming conclusion of the readmission agreement between Belarus and EU the project interventions proved to be timely and appropriate for the Government of Belarus, i.e. the State Border Committee as the main state agency coordinating *inter alia* accelerated readmission procedures.

Draft readmission agreement between Belarus and EU envisages mutual accelerated and effective procedures related to the border management. This supports the role of the SBC in the readmission agreement and general readmission procedures. During the field visit phase, the main project partners highlighted how supportive were the project interventions for their agency considering that it is often when the agency's role is underrated in this area being sector-specific ('accelerated readmission')².

The project interventions did not produce changes in the national and international legal and policy frameworks and were not supposed to, rather supported as it was planned increase of capacity of the SBC in carrying out readmission activities in an effective and rights-based manner.

Alignment with needs and priorities

The project was repeatedly cited by project partners and beneficiaries as corresponding with existing policies and strategies related to the Government's capacity on migration management in a linkage with forthcoming conclusion of the readmission agreement between Belarus and EU.

The State Border Committee responsible for accelerated readmission and the Ministry of the Interior responsible for irregular entry and / or irregular stay are both key state actors of the readmission agreements signed and to be signed by the Government of Belarus. The main project partner role was assigned to the SBC and the agency has initiated development of project proposal and actively participated in the project design and implementation stages since identified strengthening readmission capacity as a priority area. It was expected that with the signing of the Belarus-EU readmission agreement, the SBC would be profound in handling accelerated readmission cases in line with EU best practices and international standards. It can be stated that needs and priorities of the main project partner were fully incorporated into the project design and realized during project implementation. The MOI received a role of supporting agency in the project, and their involvement into the project design and implementation was limited.

Alignment with IOM national, regional and / or global strategies and the Migration Governance Framework

The project is aligned with the strategy of IOM Country Office in providing support to the development and implementation of a migration management framework in Belarus in line with international norms and standards.

² Accelerated readmission falls under jurisdiction of the State Border Committee and represents handling readmission cases identified in the close vicinity from the border within 48 hours, while the general readmission is handled by the Ministry of Interior.

Alignment with IOM global strategy is also traced through the project interventions supporting enhancement of migration management policies, respect for human rights of migrants in accordance with international law, capacity-building and facilitating regional and bilateral cooperation on migration matters, supporting States and migrants in addressing the challenges of irregular migration.

Moreover, while there is no explicit indication of the issues related to the accelerated readmission, the project contributes to the IOM 2015-2020 Strategy for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia by mitigating the negative impact of the accelerated readmission procedures on migrants through increased capacity of the state actors in effective border management procedures.

The project is aligned to the SDG target 10.7: “Facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies” and with the MiGOF’s objective 3: “Ensure that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner” respectively.

Conclusions related to Relevance:

1. The project interventions proved to be timely and appropriate for the Government of Belarus in view of the upcoming conclusion of the readmission agreement between Belarus and EU.
2. The project proved to be corresponding with existing policies and strategies of the GoB capacity on migration management.
3. The project was aligned with IOM national, regional and global strategies and the Migration Governance Framework and SDGs.
4. The selection of stakeholders was appropriate, however a limited participation of MOI and MFA in project designed and implementation was noticed.

4.2. Effectiveness

The evaluated *project objective* was **to contribute to the Government of Belarus addressing irregular migration through strengthening its capacity to effectively handle readmission cases.**

Please refer to the below table for evaluators’ comments on Effectiveness section:

Objective	Cumulative Progress according to the final report	Evaluators’ comments
<p>The project will contribute to the Government of Belarus addressing irregular migration through strengthening its capacity to effectively handle readmission cases.</p> <p><u>TARGET:</u> According to international reports, the Government is able to handle irregular migration in a more efficient and humane way</p>	<p>The project has largely contributed to the Government's capacity and competence in efficiently addressing the issues of accelerated readmission of migrants detained in the border vicinity</p>	<p>In achieving the Objective, the evaluators noted the following:</p> <p>According to the data available for the evaluation, the project provided input into enhanced cooperation between the IOM and the SBC in general; the capacity of the GoB in accelerated readmission was enhanced that can contribute into observance of detained migrants’ rights in accordance with international norms and standards.</p> <p>Besides, the project contributed into partners’ better understanding of their roles and responsibilities in accelerated readmission based on international standards. Therefore, evaluators noted extremely high level of</p>

		ownership of the project achieved results demonstrated by the SBC. In addition, the interviewees mentioned that thanks to the project interventions they could better understand migrant's life situations and vulnerability issues and are able to adequately respond to the detained migrants' needs and requirements within their duties and responsibilities.
Outcome 1	Cumulative Progress according to the final report	Evaluators' comments
<p>The enhanced capacity of the SBC and its officers facilitates improved performance in accelerated readmission cases.</p> <p><u>TARGETS:</u> # 1: the border guard officers conducting readmission of irregular migrants adhere in their work to the recommendations contained in the readmission manual developed within the project. IOM is invited on an ad hoc basis to monitor how readmission are being implemented</p> <p># 2: at least 15% decrease in the number of complaints by readmitted irregular migrants</p>	<p>The manual on accelerated readmission procedures implementation was developed and published and is the first such document in Belarus, representing a comprehensive tool to manage accelerated readmission cases and referring to the international best practices in this field.</p> <p>The manual serves as a daily guidance tool for the first-line practitioners of the SBC in the practical implementation of the accelerated readmission procedures with respect for the human rights of detained migrants.</p> <p>The manual will be included in the curriculum of the Border Service Institute of Belarus ensuring the qualitative preparation of the future specialists in the field.</p> <p>Given the short period of the project implementation and the submission of a manual to the SBC only in the middle of the project implementation period, the progress towards meeting this target will be monitored in the longer term prospective and reported to IOM by the SBC</p>	<p>In achieving Outcome 1, the evaluators noted the following:</p> <p>The partners interviewed by the evaluators highly appreciated development of the manual on the accelerated readmission, highlighting this particular activity as one of the main and very important project results. The manual was officially recognized by the SBC and was approved for the Border Service Institute to be used during the educational process. Besides, the manual is proved to be an important tool and is a part of SOP's, describing a very particular procedure of accelerated readmission, the procedure although existing normal part of border guard's operation, but which has never been put on paper with details and explanations. In addition, the manual contains internationally recognized practices that would definitely enhance the capacity of the SBC staff to comply with international standards while addressing migrants' rights.</p> <p>According to the information available for the evaluators the SBC do not have any system of tracking the migrants' complaints available for the external users. It was noted that no monitoring of the numbers of the complaints was conducted with relation to the project interventions. At the moment of the evaluation it was impossible to gain data on number of complaints submitted by readmitted irregular migrants and to evaluate the impact of the project intervention in this area. In addition, IOM did not intend to track the indicator after the project completion.</p>
Output 1.1.	Cumulative Progress according to the final report	Evaluators' comments

<p>Manual on readmission is developed and available.</p>	<p>Manual developed and approved by the Government.</p> <p>200 copies of the manual published and supplied to the SBC, which in turn circulated them amongst officers dealing with accelerated readmission cases on a daily basis.</p>	<p>The evaluators found the developed manual as an effective instrument in the SBC's daily work and educational process.</p> <p>Some of project partners however indicated that the manual may need regular update in order to reflect the most updated information, in particular on number of countries which have signed the readmission agreements, some structural changes if any occurs in the future. The manual was developed by an independent expert, who being the former SBC officer consulted with the project partners from SBC with no limitations. It was noted that not all partners were involved into development and final review of the manual on an equal basis and expressed their regret about their inadequate participation and lack of coordination.</p> <p>As it was also mentioned by the SBC, they would be interested to gain SOP's / manuals related to other professional topics.</p>
<p>Output 1.2.</p>	<p>Cumulative Progress according to the final report</p>	<p>Evaluators' comments</p>
<p>Capacity of the SBC staff as well as MOI / MFA officials is enhanced through training sessions, study visit and distribution of language kits.</p>	<p>Regional workshop on accelerated readmission conducted, where the issues related to identification and interviewing of migrants were widely discussed by the participants.</p> <p>15 SBC and MOI (including 1 woman), as well as MFA representative participated and provided their contribution during the regional workshop on accelerated readmission which also covered the issues of identification and interviewing of migrants.</p> <p>National training on accelerated readmission successfully conducted for 17 SBC representatives, including 3 female participants.</p> <p>32 immigration specialists, including 4 women, trained on various aspects of accelerated readmission procedures implementation</p> <p>The study visits to North Macedonia and Albania on accelerated readmission procedures implementation conducted, post visit report with findings and recommendations drafted and</p>	<p>The SBC was the main project partner as readmission procedure leads mainly under the SBC mandate as part of the border operational process. Basing on requirements of IOM Development Fund at the project development stage a letter of support was initiated by the SBC and the project interventions were built upon SBC requests and needs.</p> <p>However, it was noted that the SBC gained extremely high level of control over the project implementation which resulted into not equal participation level in the project activities under this Output. According to the desk research and interviews other partners could only participate into one activity within this Output. According to interviews this roles' disbalance affected other state partner roles distribution (where the partner was in charge of) in the ongoing EU funded project.</p> <p>According to observations, project coordination mechanism was established with the SBC, while the MOI and MFA did not participate in the process of decision-making and regular updates.</p> <p>It should be noted that the study visit was very well received by the participants, they claimed it to be the most interesting part of project interventions due to practical procedures they could observe.</p>

	<p>submitted for consideration of the senior SBC management. 12 border SBC representatives, including 3 women, familiarized with best international practices in conducting accelerated readmission</p> <p>56 SBC representatives, including 15 women, were provided with a full set of English self-learning toolkits of different proficiency level</p>	<p>The English self-learning toolkits of different proficiency level were provided to the SBC basing on their requirements. Monitoring mechanism for evaluation of increased knowledge in English of the students, who used these toolkits and / or any other monitoring tools for effectiveness of this intervention are not in place.</p>
Output 1.3.	Cumulative Progress according to the final report	Evaluators' comments
The SBC is appropriately equipped to effectively deliver readmission services	All border units equipped as planned	The equipment was purchased for the SBC operational officers and according to the information available to the evaluators is used <i>inter alia</i> during the readmission cases operation.

Conclusions related to Effectiveness:

1. The readmission procedure mainly involved the SBC as the agency which is mandated to its practical implementation at the border. The project document envisaged cooperation of three project partners, namely SBC, MOI and MFA. It was noted that not all project partners were adequately involved into the project design and implementation. Some project partners regretted they were not involved into the project design and implementation, claiming that they had capacity and willingness to be involved more fully. It was noted that the project coordination mechanism for sharing the project progress and achievements worked only with the main project partner, the SBC. The project mainly focused on the SBC as the main project partner with low level of involvement of other partners, the reason for that may lay out of IOM control.
2. Taking into account that the roles of the project partners were not defined from the very beginning of the project, it resulted into miscommunication and misunderstanding at some points. Basically, the SBC seemed to be dominating in the project, so IOM faced risk of losing leading position over the project implementation.
3. SBC showed extremely high level of ownership of the project achieved results. In addition, the interventions seemed to change attitude of officers toward migrants and their life situations.

4.3. Efficiency

- *Was the project management of the project appropriately carried out?*

The project was managed by the IOM Mission in the Republic of Belarus, with ongoing technical guidance and support from the Regional Office in Vienna. The project coordination mechanism was based on working contacts between IOM and the main project partner, the mechanism which rather limited other project partners' participation and following the project progress by all project partners.

The project management was well carried out in respective to reports submitted in a timely manner. Regular update on project progress was available mainly for the SBC as the main project partner, but other stakeholders would benefit from regular update on the project interventions too (through a short

newsletter or email) as they were not involved in each activity.

IOM staff all reported that the implementation went smoothly after the project official state registration, which is needed for all international funding in Belarus. This four-month delay with registration did not affect the overall project implementation, as some preparational activities were performed during the registration expectation phase.

It should be mentioned that communication and visibility part was extremely well incorporated into the project. The project information was presented in video format, media coverage was used to refer to articles in the national media, information about the project was placed in the IOM Development Fund Autumn 2018 Newsletter.

It should be also mentioned that according the EU financial rules the evaluated project was used as a co-funding for a project “Helping Belarus address the phenomenon of increasing numbers of irregular migrants”, providing a contribution of 0.71% out of EU proposed funding of EUR 7,000,000.00.

- *How well were the resources (funds, expertise, and time) converted into results?*

The project budget – 100 000 USD – consisted of three components:

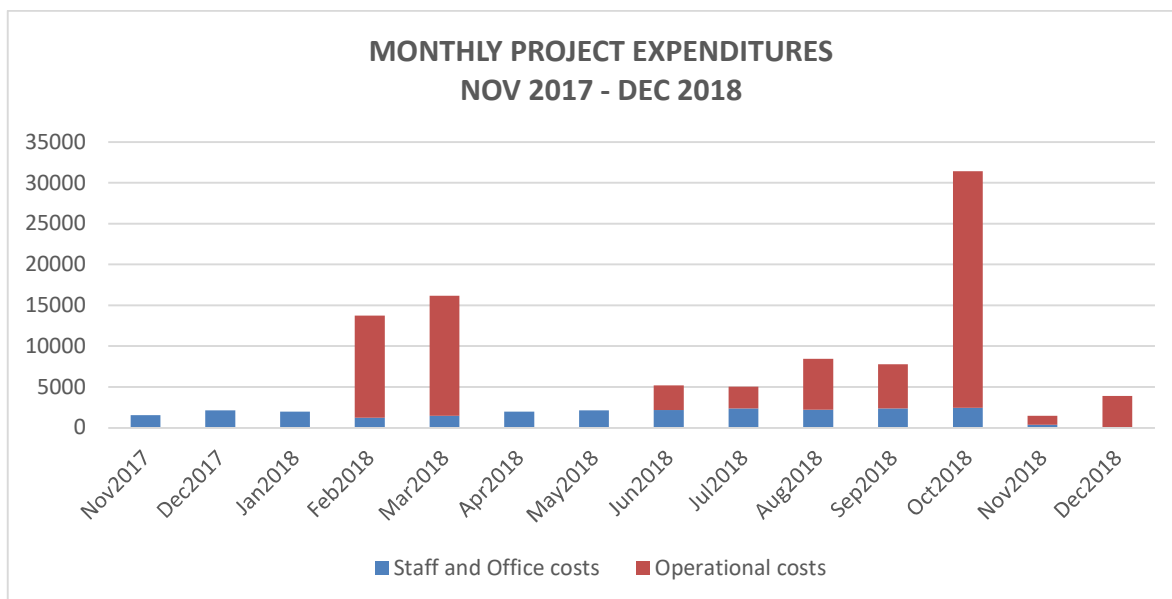
- Staff Costs: about 22 250 USD or about 22%
- Office Costs: about 7 750 USD or 8%
- Operational Costs: about 70 000 USD or 70%

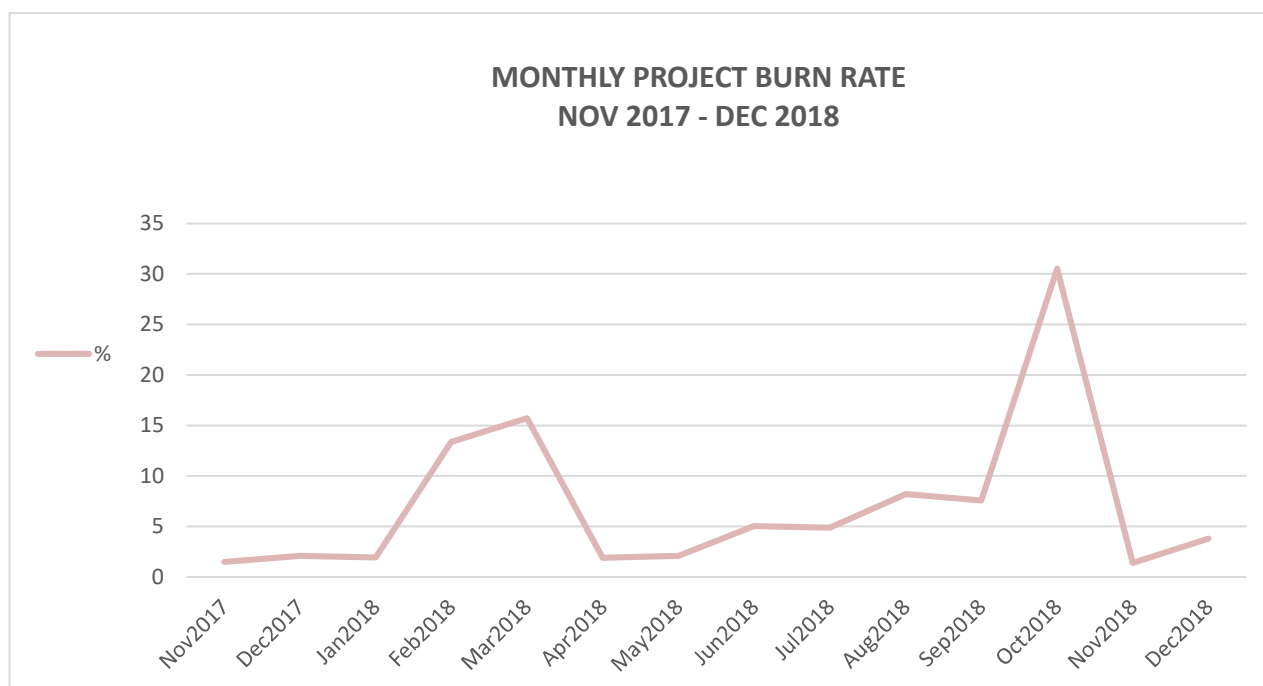
According to the final financial report 97.5% of the project budget was spent. The unspent amount (2,500 USD) was intended to be used for ex-post evaluation.

No budget revisions were made during project implementation, but according to the information available to the evaluators some budget lines required revision and re-allocation of charged amounts at the project final stage due to inconsistency of spending.

The staff allocated to the project for project management (25% of an NOB and 20% of a G5) was in line with the scope of the project.

Fig 1. Monthly expenditures during the project implementation period.





The slight delay at the beginning of the project implementation was caused by the official state registration. The operational expenses in February-March 2018 were related mostly to the study visit on implementation of the accelerated readmission procedures and associated practices to the Republic of North Macedonia (North Macedonia) and Albania, and expenses of that period also included charges related to the first meeting of the project Working Group (WG).

In March 2018, the Recruitment of the National Expert for the development of accelerated readmission manual “The work of the border representatives on receipt/transfer through the state border of violators of border legislation (simplified/accelerated readmission)” took place and the work was completed and charged in June 2018.

Expenses in July 2018 related to procurement and dissemination of English language self-learning toolkits for SBC staff, national seminar on accelerated readmission procedures implementation for immigration specialists representing SBC and the second project WG meeting.

Production of a promotional video about the project, a regional seminar on accelerated readmission procedures implementation, and procurement and handover of the equipment comprised the operational expenses for October 2018.

The no-cost extension of two months (November and December 2018) was used for procurement of equipment for project partners as was envisaged by the project and approved by the donor.

It should be mentioned that according to the information available for the evaluators the indicator on tracking the migrants’ complaints was not achieved as the SBC do not have any system available for the external users. Additionally, it was not planned by IOM to track this indicator after the project ends.

Conclusions related to Efficiency:

1. According to the information available during the evaluation the project management was well carried out.
2. The SBC was the main project partner, however other stakeholders noted that they would have appreciated more regular update on the project progress and interventions.

3. It was reported that the implementation went smoothly after the project official state registration finalized. This delay with registration did not affect the overall project implementation, as some preparational activities were performed during the registration expectation phase. The burn-rate of the project expenditures was affected by the delays in project state registration.

4.4. Impact

This evaluation criteria explores the long-term changes and effects produced by the project, whether intended or unintended, positive or negative. Specifically, this section addresses the following evaluation questions:

- To what extent long-term changes be observed, particularly in relation to building capacities of relevant State actors?
- Can unintended effects be observed on any groups, whether positive or negative, related to gender and human rights?
- What contribution did this project make towards any observed long-term changes, considering also other relevant external factors?
- Did the project take timely measures for mitigating any unplanned negative impacts?
- Has the project served to design or inform follow-up projects? In particular, to what extent has this project's outputs and outcomes shaped or fed into the ongoing EU-funded project and future IOM Development Fund project?

➤ **CONCLUSION # 1: THE PROJECT CONTRIBUTED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BELARUS ADDRESSING IRREGULAR MIGRATION THROUGH STRENGTHENING ITS CAPACITY TO EFFECTIVELY HANDLE READMISSION CASES BY DEVELOPING THE TOOL TO MANAGE ACCELERATED READMISSION CASES**

While there is limited evidence of the long-term changes, as mentioned under Effectiveness, the observed positive benefits of the project are likely to contribute to positive long-term impacts based on the programme logic and the available data. Institutionalization of the Manual on “The work of the border representatives on receipt / transfer through the state border of violators of border legislation (simplified / accelerated readmission)” by adding into the curricula of the Border Service Institute of the Republic of Belarus and distribution among border crossing points and border detachments facilitates systematical enhancement of staff capacity. As mentioned by interviewees from the SBC, availability of this Manual implies that any border staff can proceed with accelerated readmission process in the field in line with national legislation and international norms and standards by following step-by-step guidelines contained in this Manual. Review and approval of the content of the Manual by competent employees of the SBC prior to the publication indicates high level of ownership of the project partner as well as its intention to adopt project results.

➤ **CONCLUSION # 2: THE PROJECT IS POTENTIALLY CONTRIBUTED TO A BEHAVIORAL CHANGE TOWARDS MIGRANTS AMONG THE SBC STAFF**

Project beneficiaries capacitated in the course of project activities noted behavioral change in regards to perception of migrants: according to the interviewees following the project interventions they could better understand difficult situation of irregular migrants, their vulnerability as well as basically good migrants' aspirations pushing them into irregular, insecure and informal actions. And although at the end of the day the project beneficiaries, SBC staff, strictly follow internal SOP's, rules and procedures, the project interventions are likely to contribute to make their attitude to migrants more sensitive.

Detainment of irregular migrants for 48 hours is not considered informally as the best option during accelerated readmission process and the focus is given to smooth, effective and facilitated readmission handling in line with international norms and standards. It should be noted that this is a tricky question: accelerated readmission process is a complicated procedure requiring quick decision-making and sometimes it may cause inadequate compliance of human rights. However, as per the interviews with the SBC an individual approach is applied to each accelerated readmission case.

“Irregular migrants are only humans forced to search for better opportunities, we cannot consider them only as violators of border regime” – SBC staff

➤ **CONCLUSION # 3: THE PROJECT COORDINATION MECHANISM CONCENTRATED ON THE MAIN PROJECT PARTNER, WITH POTENTIAL NEGATIVE UNINTENDED EFFECTS RELATED TO DIMINISHED ROLE OF IOM AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

During project design and implementation, the main project partner (the SBC) showed a high level of ownership which is a positive feature for guaranteeing impact and sustainability of project results, but at some point, the high level of ownership and involvement of the main project partner into the decision-making process may have diminished IOM’s and other stakeholders’ role.

Government’s buy-in to the project was secured before developing the project, and the project team facilitated involvement of relevant government stakeholders during the project implementation. However, formally, certain project partners were involved only at the final stage of implementation process and did not manage to share their expertise and experience over the course of project implementation. This may be considered as a negative impact as the limited participation of project partners in the activities conducted may lead to dissatisfaction of some stakeholders generally with the project and may potentially undermine IOM’s image as the project holder.

In this regard, it would be beneficial for the Project Team to develop and introduce project coordination mechanism which foresees participation and inputs from each project partner stated in the project proposal.

➤ **CONCLUSION # 4: THERE IS CLEAR READMISSION POLICY COHERENCE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION.**

The objective of the project had a dual nature: while the main objective was to contribute to the Government of Belarus to strengthen capacity on effective handling accelerated readmission cases, the project also complemented large-scale EU-funded project IMBEL, which shall support under the Component 3 the modernization and construction of several Migrant Accommodation Centres (MACs), administered by the MOI and the SBC, based on international standards, good practices of EU Member States and taking into account the needs of persons with special needs and vulnerabilities. In this way it can be stated that the project produced prerequisites to future development of favorable conditions of the detained migrants, thus creating positive unintended effect.

While the accelerated readmission refers generally to readmission process, two state entities are dividing their roles in this area – MOI to a greater extent and SBC in a sector-specific activity. With this project IOM Belarus addressed sector-specific needs and priorities of the state entity at the same time contributing to the country’s CBMM strategy. This points to consistent and sophisticated approach of the Project Team and IOM Belarus in general and may be a good example for other missions.

➤ **CONCLUSION # 5: PROJECT ACTIVITIES POTENTIALLY CONTRIBUTE TO ESTABLISHING BENEFICIAL COOPERATION AND DIALOGUE WITH STATE ACTORS FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES**

It is also worth mentioning that interview respondents highlighted positive impact of capacity-building

activities, such as the study visit, national and regional workshops, facilitating sharing expertise and experience among participants and building strong relationships with state actors of neighboring countries. As stated by interviewees from the SBC, these types of capacity-building activities allow them not only to familiarize with best practices and good examples in border management area and share expertise and experience, but also to analyze what can / cannot work in the local context, make connections with the colleagues from neighboring countries and discuss certain practical issues they face in daily work. However, more data would be needed to fully assess contribution to that impact

Conclusions related to Impact:

1. The main positive impact of the project was behavioral change in regard to perception of migrants as not criminals but people in difficult life situations, however it should be noted that the developed Manual does not include gender or human rights mainstreaming.
2. The respondents highlighted positive impact of capacity-building activities, facilitating sharing expertise and experience among participants from cross border countries. At the same time limited participation of certain project partners comparing with the main one in project design and implementation may potentially reduce overall positive impact of the project and may lead to dissatisfaction of some stakeholders generally with the project and IOM as a whole as project holder.

4.5. Sustainability

This evaluation criteria explores the durability of the project results and the continuation of the project benefits once external support ceases. Specifically, this section addresses the following evaluation questions:

- To what extent have the interventions made during the project continued to be applied after the project ends?
- What are the main factors affecting sustainability, including any identified challenges face by the main implementing organization and partner organization?
- To what extent have beneficiaries been actively involved in decision-making concerning project orientation and implementation?
- Are necessary structures, resources and processes in place to ensure that benefits generated by the project continue without external support?

IOM Development Fund projects aim to provide seed funding for capacity building initiatives in the area of migration management. As was mentioned the evaluated project was conceptualized at the same time as a CBMM project “Helping Belarus Address the Phenomenon of Increasing Numbers of Irregular Migrants (IMBEL)” started, the project funded by EU was ongoing at the time of the evaluation. It was noted by the respondents that the results of the evaluated project would support the EU projects.

The evaluation team has noted the following factors reflected sustainability:

- ✓ Development and adoption of the Manual is the key element of the project sustainability, as it formulates SOP’s on accelerated readmission for target beneficiaries based on **existing** legislation and best international practices, ensuring continuous learning. Institutionalization of the Manual by adding it to the curricula of the 2019-2020 educational year of the Border Service Institute and distribution among border crossing checkpoints and other related project stakeholders (MFA and MOI) indicates embedding the project’s results into the national institutional framework. At the same time, during interviews it was mentioned that there might be reasonable to review and update the content of the Manual in the future in case of changes in relevant legislation and / or conclusion of new readmission agreements by the GoB. It should also be noted that not all project partners contributed to the development of the Manual through reviewing and providing feedback to the content.

- ✓ Procurement and distribution of self-learning English language kits to the SBC also represents a benefit produced by the project and included into the institutional structure as it is used in a daily activities of the SBC. The self-learning English kits were distributed among border crossing checkpoints for self-learning by border staff and at the central level it is used by the staff of the Border Service Institute. It should be noted that there are no mechanisms on monitoring of knowledge and skills gained by users of the English kits.
- ✓ To ensure the sustainability of the project results the Project Team facilitated high level of involvement of the main project partner during project design and implementation. This approach inevitably resulted in accomplishment of set tasks and activities and achievement of outcome and outputs. The project interventions focused, however, only on the main project partner and contribution and participation of other project partners at some point was limited.

Conclusions related to Sustainability:

1. Covering the narrow-thematic component the evaluated project's capacity building will enhance the sustainability of the EU-funded project, thus contributing to complementarity, harmonization and co-ordination of interventions.
2. High level of state ownership in the regard of the project achievements was in place from the project development, so the Manual developed within the project and serving as a SOP's for accelerated readmission was institutionalized and incorporated into curricula of the Border Service Institute.
3. 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.

4.6. Cross-cutting: Gender and Human Rights

Project document was designed prior to the launch of the IOM Gender Marker and did not contain the explicit activities on gender equality mainstreaming and human rights protection rights (e.g. no prior gender analysis and data collection conducted).

As a cross-cutting issue, gender was partially mainstreamed during the project activities by encouraging the SBC to nominate female participants for the capacity building activities conducted within the project. It was noted by the Evaluation Team that the SBC demonstrated their interest to improve the gender equality among the participants for each of the event, however, traditionally there still are more male SBC officers than female dealing with the issues of accelerated readmission.

In terms of gender and human rights approach the project beneficiaries are guided by internal rules and regulations, specifying rights of detained irregular migrants, segregation of irregular migrants by gender during screening procedures. During the interviews it was revealed that families with children were considered as vulnerable and handled separately in better conditions, but it resulted in separation of fathers to be kept in detention facilities.

The evaluated project did not envisage neither development of regulations for promoting cross-cutting issues as gender or human rights, nor capacity-building activities targeting gender mainstreaming and human-rights based approach in handling readmission cases. The developed Manual also did not target gender or human rights mainstreaming, although the accelerated readmission is supposed to be a process where the decisions are made within 48 hours and there is a potential risk of human rights violations.

Conclusions related to Cross-cutting: Gender and Human Rights:

1. While gender was mainstreamed to some extent in the design and implementation of the project, a gender analysis was not conducted. In terms of project implementation, data was disaggregated by sex, but project products contained limited attention to gender.
2. The project contributed to some extent to enhancing migrant's rights by its nature through supporting the procedure of accelerated readmission, which envisages smooth, effective and facilitated readmission handling in line with international norms and standards.

5. Conclusions

The below list compiles conclusions representing a summary of the relevance of project design, effectiveness and performance, efficiency of project management and implementation, and impact and sustainability, as well as attention to cross-cutting issues (gender and human rights):

Relevance

- ✓ The project interventions proved to be timely and appropriate for the GoB in view of the upcoming conclusion of the readmission agreement between Belarus and EU.
- ✓ The project proved to be corresponding with existing policies and strategies of the GOB capacity on migration management.
- ✓ The project was aligned with IOM national, regional and global strategies and the Migration Governance Framework and SDGs.
- ✓ The selection of stakeholders was appropriate, however a limited participation of MOI and SBC in project designed and implementation was noticed.

Effectiveness

- ✓ The readmission procedure mainly involved SBC as the agency which is mandated to its practical implementation at the border. The project envisaged three project partners. It was noted that not all project partners were adequately involved into the project design and implementation.
- ✓ SBC showed extremely high level of ownership of the project achieved results.
- ✓ Some project outcome seems partially achieved as according to the information available for the evaluators the SBC do not have any system of tracking the migrants' complaints available for the external users.

Efficiency

- ✓ The project management was well carried out with very well composed project visibility component.
- ✓ The implementation went smoothly after the project official state registration finalized. This delay did not affect the overall project implementation.

Impact

- ✓ Behavioral change towards migrants is observed among the SBC staff, it may be considered as the main positive impact.
- ✓ Project coordination mechanism worked mainly with the project partner and this potentially may be as a negative impact potentially undermining IOM's role as the project holder.
- ✓ Readmission policy coherence at the national level is traced throughout the project.
- ✓ Project activities contributed to establishing beneficial cooperation and dialogue at the national and regional level among relevant state actors.

Sustainability

- ✓ High level of state ownership in regard to the project achievements was in place from the project development phase, so the Manual developed within the project and serving as a 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.

Gender and Human Rights

- ✓ To some extent gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue was addressed during the project activities by encouraging the SBC management to nominate female participants for the capacity building activities conducted within the project.
- ✓ Neither regulations promoting cross-cutting issues as gender or human rights, nor capacity-building activities targeted gender mainstreaming and human-rights based approach in handling readmission cases were elaborated.

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

1. Mainstream and ensure synergy with national policies and strategies to ensure sustainability and state ownership are important factors in planning of the future similar programming.
2. Importance of empowering and capacitating of the partners, especially representing state authorities, to take ownership of interventions conducted within the project as well as achievements and encouraging further cooperation and interventions at a national level without IOM as the lead agency.
3. Ensuring all project partners are involved in project design, paying special attention to including partners in the plan of activities and organization of trainings based on their capacity needs.
4. Ensuring all the stakeholders are in line with the project plans and aware of the scope of the project and the outcomes.
5. Increasing the government ownership by selecting right modality of partnership would be beneficial for further partnership.
6. Conducting a capacity needs assessment and regulatory frameworks for partners proved to be extremely valuable in determining training needs and manuals / SOPs development.
7. It is recommended to consider a gender-based and human rights approach during development and implementation of future programming.
8. Constant and timely receiving feedback from migrants via system of tracking of complaints would ensure prompt reaction in this regard.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions described above, the following recommendations are provided by the Evaluators:

Actions recommended for the IOM Mission in Belarus for design and management of similar projects:

1. Ensure that all involved agencies are aware of their project role and responsibilities to avoid conflict of interest that can affect or diminish any project achievements and potentially affect future projects.
2. Ensure equal participation of all project partners regardless of their level of involvement via developed coordination system, available for timely update on project progress and achievements (regular coordination meetings, information letters, etc.).
3. Keep strong facilitation position, ensuring promotion of IOM mandate in the process of project management.
4. Develop a system of tracking complaints from the readmitted irregular migrants and use this as a monitoring tool.
5. Explore the possibility of updating manuals or guidelines developed during the project and to explore possibility of development of other tools describing the procedures relevant to border management.
6. Further use study visits for capacitation of respective partners in practical areas as readmission and another border management procedures.
7. Develop a monitoring mechanism for interventions related to increase of knowledge that would allow to assess project contribution to capacity building.
8. Develop an explicit strategy for mainstreaming gender and human rights protection into future projects' interventions.

7. Annexes

Annex 7.1 – Evaluation terms of references

Annex 7.2 – Evaluation matrix

Annex 7.3 – List of documents reviewed

Annex 7.4 – List of persons interviewed or consulted

Annex 7.5 – Agenda of the field visit

Annex 7.1. – Evaluation terms of references

Evaluation Terms of Reference

Ex-post internal evaluation of the project “Strengthening Readmission Capacity of the Republic of Belarus”

Commissioned by: IOM Mission in Belarus

1. Evaluation context

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is a longstanding partner to the Government of Belarus and for more than two decades has been providing comprehensive expertise and technical assistance on various areas of migration governance, including integrated border management, counter-trafficking, migration and health and others.

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. The project directly addressed the need of the Government of Belarus (in particular the State Border Committee (SBC)) in strengthening accelerated readmission capacity of border guards to contribute to effective irregular migration management.

The project aim was achieved through 1) a number of capacity building activities for the officers of the SBC, as well as the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Belarus, such as a national workshop on readmission, a regional seminar on identification and interviewing of irregular migrants, a study visit to Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia as countries that have faced a large influx of migrants during 2014-2015 migration crises; 2) supply of English language self-learning kits to the SBC personnel working with migrants; 3) development and production of a manual on accelerated readmission; 4) procurement of equipment for efficient handling of accelerated readmission cases.

The project focused on the capacitation of border guards, sustainability and longer-term impact of project activities. The border guards actively participated in preparations of all envisaged activities nominating competent officers (front-line practitioners carrying out accelerated readmission procedures) including women, as well as contributed to the development of the agenda of capacity building events based on needs and goals of the project, demonstrating strong ownership and willingness to further develop project's results: e.g. incorporating the manual on readmission into the curriculum of the Institute of Border Service of the Republic of Belarus and into the internal SBC procedures for front-line practitioners dealing with accelerated readmission by means of the internal instruction.

Evaluation purpose

This evaluation is being conducted in accordance with the evaluation guidelines of the donor, the IOM Development Fund which calls for the internal ex-post evaluation of the project to be carried out 6 to 12 months after the end of the project.

The evaluation is being conducted for use by the: a) project management team to improve the implementation of the activities within the ongoing EU-funded border management projects and future project supported by the Fund on media and communication in the IBM field; b) the Fund, to get familiar with good practices, evaluate the project stakeholder satisfaction with the project activities and results and accordingly assess value for money for the results it has funded; and c) IOM staff supporting similar projects by sharing lessons learned and good practices.

The evaluation aims to take a closer look at impact and sustainability after project closure.

2. Evaluation scope

This evaluation will cover the entire project implementation period. It will take place in Minsk, Belarus, to meet with all the major stakeholders in the project and, if necessary, through field visits to meet with the border guard officers, who engaged in the project activities, to reach all beneficiaries impacted by the project.

3. Evaluation criteria

Given the above stated purposes this evaluation will emphasize mainly impact and sustainability, with some attention also to relevance and effectiveness, and more limited attention to efficiency. Attention to gender and human rights is integrated into the list of questions below and should also be taken into account by the Evaluators.

4. Evaluation questions

The evaluation should answer the following questions:

Relevance

- To what extent are the project interventions relevant and appropriate in relation to national and international legal and policy frameworks?
- Has the project responded to the needs of the target beneficiaries?
- Is the project aligned with and supportive of IOM national, regional, and/or global strategies and the Migration Governance Framework?

Effectiveness

- To what extent were intended outputs and outcomes achieved in accordance with stated plans?
- To what extent did the project adapt to changing external conditions to ensure project outcomes?
- What are the major factors influencing the achievement of the project's expected outcomes?
- To what extent are the target beneficiaries satisfied with the services provided?
- To what extent were rights- and gender-based approaches integrated into the implementation of the project?

Efficiency

- Was the project management of the project appropriately carried out?
- How well were the resources (funds, expertise, and time) converted into results?

Impact

- To what extent can long-term changes be observed (whether intended or unintended, positive or negative), particularly in relation to building capacities of relevant State actors?
- Can unintended effects be observed on any groups, whether positive or negative (e.g. related to gender and human rights)?
- What contribution did this project make towards any observed long-term changes, considering also other relevant external factors?
- Did the project take timely measures for mitigating any unplanned negative impacts?
- Has the project served to design or inform follow-up projects? In particular, to what extent has this project's outputs or outcomes shaped or fed into the ongoing EU funded projects and future IOM Development Fund project?

Sustainability

- To what extent have the interventions made during the project continued to be applied after the project ends?
- What are the major factors affecting sustainability, including any identified challenges faced by the main implementing organization and partner organizations?

- To what extent have beneficiaries been actively involved in decision-making concerning project orientation and implementation? How were rights- and gender-based approaches taken into consideration during these stages?
- Are necessary structures, resources and processes in place to ensure that benefits generated by the project continue without external support?

Though the Evaluators should collect findings and draw conclusions on the above questions, particular emphasis should be placed on questions of impact and sustainability. Recommendations should focus on how to deal with identified challenges in the future if they have not been overcome during the project.

5. Evaluation methodology

The methodology will involve a combination of desk review and in-depth interviews to gather and triangulate data from beneficiary and partner perceptions with project data (secondary quantitative data). Specifically, the following methodology is proposed, to be revised as needed during the inception phase:

- Review and synthesize project documents, including reports, plans, surveys and other relevant documentation (home-based, desk study).
- Meet/talk to the relevant IOM Belarus staff partners/beneficiaries and expert hired for the manual development and assess implementation of the project and its effects through in-depth interviews using question guides.
- Collect and analyse key findings, make informed and analysis-based conclusions and develop recommendations (home-based).
- Produce final evaluation deliverables in English language (home-based).

The evaluation data should be disaggregated to the extent possible by gender, age, and other categories of social vulnerability. The evaluation must follow the IOM Data Protection Principles, UNEG norms and standards for evaluations, and relevant ethical guidelines.

6. Evaluation deliverables

The Evaluators should provide the following deliverables as part of this evaluation:

- ✓ **Evaluation Matrix** to demonstrate the Evaluators' understanding of the ToR and outline data collection and analysis plans, to be completed and reviewed with the Project Manager prior to the field visit
- ✓ **Draft Evaluation Report to be submitted for review by the Project Manager**
- ✓ **Final Evaluation Report** in professional English language, incorporating feedbacks compiled by the Project Manager from IOM and others involved in the review of the report

The minimum report content requirement is as follows:

- Cover page, list of acronyms
- **Table of contents**
- **Executive summary**
- **Methodology**
- **Findings**
- **Conclusions**
- **Recommendations in order of priority**
- **Annexes (itinerary, people met, question guides, etc.)**

- ✓ **Two-page Evaluation Brief** following the IOM guidance and template, to provide a summary of key findings, conclusions and recommendations for easy sharing with IOM staff, donor, partners, and other stakeholders.

7. Evaluation workplan

The evaluation is **planned to start in October 2019. A precise timeline will be established with the selected internal evaluator(s), and will consist of the following stages:**

1. Planning and Desk Research Phase: 7-11 October 2019

In the desk research Phase, the relevant project documents should be reviewed: the project proposal, the contract, the relevant guidelines, 6 monthly reports.

Deliverable: The evaluators will prepare a detailed evaluation matrix with an indicative list of people to be interviewed.

2. Field Phase: 14-18 October 2019

The evaluators will carry out the assessment (**5 working days in Belarus**). The data will be collected according to the following methods:

- ✓ **Briefing meeting** with project management staff at the beginning of the Field Phase.
- ✓ **In-depth interview** with the key project partners and relevant stakeholders in the government and private recruitment sector (face to face and via telephone).
- ✓ **Focus group discussion** with partners, donor, IOM staff supporting similar projects.
- ✓ **Debriefing meeting** with project management staff at the end of the Field Phase.

3. Synthesis Phase: by 18-January 2020

This phase is mainly devoted to the development and submission of the final evaluation report and two-page brief.

Deliverable:

- **Draft Evaluation Report (to be submitted one month after the visit)**
- A final report and two-page brief (to be submitted within one week of receiving Mission feedback)

This evaluation will be carried out by a Lead Evaluator selected from IOM's global roster, with the support of a Supporting Evaluator (Tatiana Verigo, IOM Minsk) who is also part of the global evaluation roster. The respective duties are outlined below.

The Evaluator(s) will be responsible for:

- Preparing for and carrying out data collection and analysis and delivering the products outlined above. The Lead Evaluator will be responsible for leading the process and compiling the draft of each product, with the support and inputs from the Supporting Evaluator throughout all steps of the process. Further coordination details will be decided by the evaluators, with guidance from the Regional M&E Officer who will act as a remote coach during the evaluation process following the established internal guidelines for coaching internal evaluators.
- Providing periodic feedback as needed to the Project Manager on progress and any challenges faced.
- Providing a debrief at the end of the field visit (in country or a few days after the field visit) to present on the initial findings and tentative conclusions. This will allow for any obvious oversights, misinterpretations, or information gaps to be identified and addressed before the evaluator begins drafting the full report.

The Project Manager will be responsible for:

- Arranging meetings in Minsk as well as field visit logistics if the need occurs, including arranging meetings, transportation, and external interpretation services as needed.
- Managing the evaluation process including feedback and comments to the inception report and draft evaluation report and helping to address any issues or challenges flagged by the evaluator.

Annex 7.2. – Evaluation matrix

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Indicators	Sources of data						Data collection tools				
				Prodoc	Interim narrative report	Interim financial report	Final narrative report	Final financial report	Other supplementary documents	Interview	Document review	Interview with IOM project staff	Interview with project stakeholders	
Relevance	To what extent are the project interventions relevant and appropriate in relation to national and international legal and policy frameworks?	Are the project interventions aligned with and supportive of national and international legal and policy frameworks?	Alignment with national and international legal and policy frameworks	X	X		X				X	✓	✓	✓
		Were there any changes in national and international legal and policy frameworks during project implementation?	Description of changes		X		X				X	✓	✓	✓
	Has the project responded to the needs of the target beneficiaries?	Is the project strategy relevant to existing policies and strategies in order to increase the government capacity on migration management?	Explanation of the policies and strategies (formal or informal) related to government capacity on migration management					X			X	✓	✓	✓
		To what extent is the project aligned with priorities and needs of the project	Alignment with priorities and needs	X							X	✓	✓	✓

		stakeholders (State actors)?												
	Is the project aligned with and supportive of IOM national, regional, and/or global strategies and the Migration Governance Framework?	To which IOM national, regional and/or global strategies does the project relate to? Was the project well aligned with those strategies?	Alignment with IOM national, regional, and/or global strategies and the MIGOF	X			X		Relevant strategies		√			
Effectiveness	To what extent were intended outputs and outcomes achieved in accordance with stated plans?	Do project stakeholders demonstrate increased commitment, knowledge and skills?	Description of capacity building and commitment of stakeholders				X		Agenda and minutes/report, if any, of study visit, national and regional seminars	X	√	√	√	
		Did the project lead to improvement of legal and regulatory frameworks?	Explanation of change in legal and regulatory frameworks				X			X	√	√	√	
	To what extent did the project adapt to changing external conditions to ensure project outcomes?	Were there any external conditions influencing the achievement of the project outcomes? If yes, what kind of measures has been applied?	Description of external conditions and taken measures		X		X				X	√	√	
		What are the internal factors influencing the achievement of the project's expected outcomes?	Description of internal factors		X		X				X	√	√	
	What are the major factors influencing the achievement of the project's expected outcomes?	What are the external factors influencing the achievement of the project's expected outcomes?	Description of external factors		X		X				X	√	√	√
		Did the project effectively reach the target beneficiaries?	Stakeholders' views and perception								X		√	√
To what extent are the target beneficiaries satisfied with the services provided?														

	To what extent were rights- and gender-based approaches integrated into the implementation of the project?	Has the gender-based approach been adequately applied during project design and implementation?	Description of gender-based approach during project design and implementation	X	X		X				X	√	√	√
		Are the project activities ensuring rights-based approach?	Description of rights-based approach	X	X		X				X	√	√	√
Efficiency	Was the project management of the project appropriately carried out?	Was a workplan available and was it used by the project management?	Degree of compliance with the original workplan	X	X	X	X	X				√		
		What measures have been taken to ensure that resources are efficiently used?	Description of resources and their usage	X	X	X	X	X			X	√	√	
		Were project activities carried out in a timely manner?	Perception of stakeholders on the timeliness								X			√
	How well were the resources (funds, expertise, and time) converted into results?	Are the project expenditures in line with the original budget, and the costs incurred consistent with the project strategy?	Comparison of project budget with financial reports	X		X		X				√		
		Were there any modifications to the original plan in terms of adapting the timeline or planned activities or results?	Comparison of project document with donor reports	X	X	X	X	X				√		
Impact	To what extent can long-term changes be observed (whether intended or unintended, positive or negative), particularly in relation to building	What intended or unintended long-term changes can be observed? What positive or negative long-term changes can be observed?	Description of changes								X		√	√

capacities of relevant State actors?	What do direct beneficiaries (State actors) do differently after the project?	Description of changes in practices and behaviours								x		√	√
	Are there any identifiable changes in developing readmission policy?	Indication of changes occurred / occurring								x		√	√
Can unintended effects be observed on any groups, whether positive or negative (e.g. related to gender and human rights)?	What can be observed in terms of the direct beneficiaries (State actors) applying gender and human rights approaches in their work?	Indication of applying gender and human rights approach								x		√	√
	What changes can be observed in the conditions of the detained migrants subject for readmission?	Description of changes in the conditions of migrants								x		√	√
What contribution did this project make towards any observed long-term changes, considering also other relevant external factors?	To what extent did the project contribute to the observed changes? What were the particular features of the project that made a difference?	Perceptions of contribution of project activities, outputs, and outcomes					x			x	√	√	√
	What was the influence of external factors? What were the particular features of the context that made a difference?	Indication of existing external factors	x	x		x				x	√	√	√
Did the project take timely measures for mitigating any unplanned negative impacts?	Was the project team aware of any unplanned negative impacts? Did it take any measure to mitigate them?	Indication of measures		x		x				x	√	√	

	Has the project served to design or inform follow-up projects? In particular, to what extent has this project's outputs or outcomes shaped or fed into the ongoing EU funded projects and future IOM Development Fund project?	How do outcome and outputs of the project contribute to the ongoing EU-funded project?	Evidence of using and building on results of this project in EU project	X	X		X		ProDoc of EU-funded project	X	√	√	
		How well does the project respond to design and inform follow-up projects, including IOM Development Fund projects?	Evidence of using and building on results of this project in IOM Development Fund or other projects	X	X		X		ProDoc of IOM Development Fund project, if any	X	√	√	
Sustainability	To what extent have the interventions made during the project continued to be applied after the project ends?	Will the benefits generated by the project continue once external support ceases? Can we already see evidence of this?	Indication of factor of institutionalization and funding sources				X			X	√	√	√
	What are the major factors affecting sustainability, including any identified challenges faced by the main implementing organization and partner organizations?	What does the project design have as an element of sustainability?	Analysis of project development process	X						X	√	√	
		How far the project is embedded in institutional structures?	Indication on inclusion of project results				X			X	√	√	√
		Do the project stakeholders have the financial capacity and are they committed to maintaining the benefits of the project in the long run?	Indication of financial capacity and commitment of project stakeholders				X			X	√	√	√
	To what extent have beneficiaries been actively involved in decision-making concerning project orientation and implementation?	To what extent and how the project stakeholders were involved during the project design and project implementation process?	Inclusiveness of stakeholders in project design and implementation	X			X			X	√	√	√

Are necessary structures, resources and processes in place to ensure that benefits generated by the project continue without external support?	Is the project supported by the national government and well-integrated into national priorities?	Description of the capacity and priorities of the project stakeholders	X	X		X				X	√	√	√
	What was the level of ownership of the project stakeholders during project design and implementation?	Description of level of ownership demonstrated	X	X		X				X	√	√	√

Annex 7.3. – List of documents reviewed

Categories		Documents
Concept papers		None
Technical proposal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Proposal in IOM format
Donor agreement(s) and other sub-contracts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM Development Fund Award Notification letter; • Signed DG Memo.
Budget		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget in IOM format
Donor reports (narrative and financial) including all annexes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative Interim Report; • Financial Interim Report Checklist; • Financial Interim Report; • Narrative Final Report; • Financial Interim Report Checklist; • Financial Interim Report. • Annexes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annex 1_List of participants of the study visit; - Annex 2_Agenda of the study visit; - Annex 3_SBC report on the study visit; - Annex 4_Photos from the study visit; - Annex 5_Media Coverage; - Annex 6_Terms of reference for the national expert; - Annex 7_Manual on accelerated readmission procedures implementation; - Annex 8_Agenda of the national seminar on accelerated readmission procedures implementation; - Annex 9_List of participants of the national seminar on accelerated readmission procedures implementation; - Annex 10_Photos from the national seminar on accelerated readmission procedures implementation; - Annex 11_Specifications for the English self-learning toolkit; - Annex 12_Agenda of the regional seminar on accelerated readmission procedures implementation; - Annex 13_List of participants of the regional seminar on accelerated readmission procedures implementation; - Annex 14_Photos from the regional seminar on accelerated readmission; - Annex 15_Publication in IDF autumn newsletter; - Annex 16_Promotional video about the project; - Annex 17_List of procured equipment.
Other project-related documentation such as steering committee meetings, output related reports, etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of project coordination meetings (4 documents)
Monitoring framework(s) and tools (matrices,	Activity (e.g. workplan)	
	Results (e.g. results monitoring framework, or M&E Plan)	None

work plans, logframe)	Risks (e.g. Risk Management Plan)	None
	Financials (e.g. PRISM reports, other tailored tools, etc.)	None
Monitoring reports / data	Activities	None (included in the narrative reports)
	Results	None (included in the narrative reports)
	Risks	None (included in the narrative reports)
	Financials	None (see financial reports)
Evaluation reports		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Country strategy(ies) linked to the project or sector, and/or regional strategy if applicable		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM Country Strategy • IOM RO Vienna Strategy • Belarus Migration strategy draft
External reports, research, evaluations linked to the project or thematic area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Non-project related documents such as Government strategies, donor strategies or assessments or documents from other stakeholders		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda 2030 • Project document of EU funded project “Helping Belarus address the phenomenon of increasing numbers of irregular migrants”
Legislative framework related documents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law of Republic of Belarus No. 419-3 dated July 21, 2008 “On the State Border of the Republic of Belarus” • Law of Republic of Belarus No. 105-3 dated January 4, 2010 “On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Republic of Belarus”

Annex 7.4. – List of persons interviewed or consulted

Category	Stakeholder	Stakeholder role / involvement in the project	Relevant individuals
IOM	Senior Management in the Mission	Senior management and oversight; high-level liaison with government and donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Zeynal HAJIYEV, (Chief of IOM Belarus Mission at the moment of project implementation)
	Project Manager	Day to day management of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Pavel KHOLOD, Project Coordinator
	Other members of the project team	Support to PM in daily management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Olga BORZENKOVA, Project Assistant (by skype)
	Resource management officer	Financial oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Svetlana VELIKORODNOVA, Resource Management Officer
	Other IOM staff from RO, HQ or other offices	Technical guidance and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Livia STYP-REKOWSKA, IBM RTS in RO Vienna
Government partners	State Border Committee (SBC)	Key project partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Roman KOZLOV, Deputy Head of International Cooperation, Head of Unit • Mr. Taras SEREDYUK, Deputy Head of Unit (ICD) • Mr. Henadzi ALEKSEYUK, Desk Officer (ICD) • Mr. Yury PANOU, Senior Officer at the Pre-Investigation Department • Mr. Leonid SEREKHAN, Border Representation Activities, Assistant to the Head of the Smorgon Border Group • Mr. Maxim KHOMENOK, Head of the Kotlovka Border Group • Mr. Dmitry SIMONCHIK, head of Border Group “Kamenny log” • Mr. Alexander TSARIK, Assistant to administrative department on operational activities, Border Group “Gudogay”
	Ministry of Interior (MOI)	Benefited from capacity building event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Olga STANKEVICH, Head of Cooperation with International Organizations, International Cooperation Department, the Ministry of Interior • Mr. Mikhail CHUTKOV, Deputy Head of Department on migration, foreigners and stateless persons
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)	Benefited from capacity building event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Yaroslav KHYMYL, Consular Department, MFA (at the moment of project implementation, by skype)
Expert	National expert	Development of the manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Alexei RADOSTEV, independent expert

Annex 7.5. – Agenda of the evaluation visit

Ex-post evaluation of the project “Strengthening Readmission Capacity of the Republic of Belarus”

AGENDA
29-31 October 2019, Minsk

Evaluators:

Ms. Nazgul CHUBAROVA, Lead evaluator;
Ms. Tatiana VERIGO, Supporting evaluator.

28 October 2019	
	Arrival of the lead evaluator. Accommodation at the hotel.
29 October 2019	
10:30-11:00	Pick up at the hotel (IOM Minsk car)
11:00-11:30	Meeting with IOM Mission to Belarus COM, briefing. <i>Venue: IOM Belarus Office, Conference Room, Gorny pereulok 3.</i>
11:30-13:00	Meeting with the Project team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Pavel KHOLOD, Project manager; • Ms. Olga BORZENKOVA, Project assistant (Capacity Building and Public Information) - available through Skype. <i>Venue: IOM Belarus Office, Conference Room, Gorny pereulok 3.</i>
13:00-14:30	Lunch break
15:00-17:00	Meeting with border guard officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Roman PODLINEV, Head of International Cooperation Department; • Mr. Roman KOZLOV, Deputy Head of International Cooperation, Head of Unit; • Mr. Taras SEREDYUK, Deputy Head of Unit (ICD); • Mr. Henadzi ALEKSEYUK, Desk Officer (ICD); • Mr. Nikolai BOREIKO, Head of Pre-Investigation Department. <i>Venue: State Border Committee HQ, 24 Volodarskogo str.</i>
17:00-17:30	Transfer to the hotel.
30 October	
09:00-11:00	Pick up at the hotel. Transfer to Smorgon Border Detachment.
11:00-12:30	Visit to Smorgon Border Detachment, meetings with beneficiaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Maryna TARASKEVICH, Officer of the Management Division of the Smorgon Border Group • Mr. Leonid SEREKHAN, Border Representation Activities, Assistant to the Head of the Smorgon Border Group <i>Venue: Smorgon Border Detachment</i>
12:30-13:30	Lunch break
13:30-14:30	Transfer to “green border” unit “Molodechnenskaya”
14:30-15:30	Overview of the accelerated readmission procedure implementation at the BCP. <i>Venue: BCP “Kamennyi log”, “green border” unit “Molodechnenskaya”</i>
31 October 2019	
10:00-11:00	Meeting with Mol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Olga STANKEVICH, Head of Cooperation with International Organizations, International Cooperation Department, the Ministry of the Interior. <i>Venue: BCP “Kamennyi log”, “green border” unit “Molodechnenskaya”</i>
11:30-12:00	Skype talk with MFA representative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Yaroslav KHYMYL, Head of Consular Section/Counsellor, Embassy of Belarus to Lithuania (current position). <p>available through Skype.</p>

12:00-13:00	Meeting with expert Mr. Alexei Radostev, expert for accelerated readmission manual Development <i>Venue: IOM Belarus Office, Conference Room, Gorny pereulok 3.</i>
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:30-15:30	Meeting with the PM, debriefing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Pavel KHOLOD, Project manager. <i>Venue: IOM Belarus Office, Conference Room, Gorny pereulok 3.</i>
15:30-16:30	Meeting with COM, debriefing
1 November 2019	
	Departure from Minsk