



# EVALUATION BRIEF

## FOURTH EVALUATION OF THE IOM DEVELOPMENT FUND

September 2019

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

**Evaluation type:** Internal-Office of the Inspector General

**Evaluator:** Elma Balic Colak, Oversight Officer, OIG, IOM Headquarters

**Evaluation period:** 2016-2019

**Final report date:** September 2019

**Commissioned by:** OIG

**Managed by:** IOM Development Fund

**Evaluation purpose:** As noted in Document S/23/10 presented at the Twenty-Third Session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance (SCPF) of October 2018, a fourth evaluation of the Fund is conducted by the Office of the Inspector General to “evaluate the relevance of the criteria, guidelines and administrative management of the IOM Development Fund considering the Fund’s original intent, the efficiency of its fundraising and funding mechanisms, as well as the performance and achievements of projects implemented within the framework of the Fund, with a focus on outcome, impact and sustainability of projects funded and of the Fund itself”.

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

**Evaluation methodology:** Desk research, key informant interviews, online and questionnaire surveys.

## BACKGROUND & SUMMARY

The IOM Development Fund – *Developing Capacities in Migration Management*, was established by the IOM Council Resolution No. 1035 (LXXX) of November 2000 as a global resource to support and strengthen the migration management capacities of IOM’s developing Member States.

The Fund implemented more than 700 projects in over 120 countries worldwide, becoming a unique source of funding that contributes to the elaboration, harmonization and management of migration policies and practices of eligible Member States. Its priority remains addressing capacity-building needs and providing essential “seed funding” for innovative projects.

Its overall budget fluctuates: the annual budget line referred to as Line 1 amounts USD 1.4 million; while funds received under Line 2, under which the total amount could not exceed the “total miscellaneous income (un earmarked contributions and interest income)” gradually increase. The funding made available for Line 2 in 2016, 2017 and 2018 was USD 6.0 million, USD 6.1 million and USD 7.2 million respectively (the amounts exclude recovered funds and direct voluntary contributions).

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration projects are approved on an exceptional basis, for projects focusing on government capacity-building activities. Emergency operations and migrant return schemes are not covered under the Fund as such projects are funded by the specific budgets under IOM movements (transport and resettlement) and emergency operations.

### IOM Development Fund information:

**Geographical coverage:** Global

**Priorities funded:** Counter-trafficking; intergovernmental cooperation; labour migration; migration and development; migration, environment and climate change; migration health; border management; policy and legal framework development; and research and assessment.

**2019 Budget:** USD 15.0 million

Eligible Member States access one of the two funding lines with projects ranging from USD 50,000 to USD 200,000 for national and USD 100,000 to USD 300,000 for regional projects. Country eligibility is based on the most recent version of the list of low-income to upper middle-income economies as designated by the World Bank.

Equitable allocation of the funds across and within regions remains a core management principle in assessing requests for funding. The guidelines established under the Fund provide details on the operation of the two funding lines, including eligibility criteria, funding limits, timing and process of decision-making and project tracking. Line 2 for national projects does not authorize access to the fund for Member States subject to Article 4 of IOM Constitution regarding delays in their assessed contributions.

Demand for funding from eligible Member States exceeds the available funding levels; the IOM Development Fund has started bridging the gap through fundraising campaigns to increase awareness of the Fund and to meet the global demand for funding projects, which is currently estimated in the range of USD 20.0 million.

## KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The IOM Development Fund criteria, guidelines and administrative management remain relevant and transparent. The same conclusion is made concerning the formulation of the list of eligible Member States. Seventy per cent of surveyed Member States concluded that the 2018 budget used in the survey questionnaire of USD 6.7 million was not adequate, when considering the increase in eligible Member States from 88 in 2010 to 123 today. But then only three MS who responded were ready to financially contribute to the Fund with an earmarked contribution.

While the overall budget for the Fund has been increasing by 10 to 20 per cent each year since 2011, the project budget's ceilings and exclusion criteria remain unchanged. For 2019, the overall budget is USD 15 million, which might allow for an amendment of project budget ceilings under Line 1 and Line 2 and for the adequate resource capacity of the Unit.

As confirmed by IOM Country Offices, in over 60 per cent of cases IOM initiates the project design, often in line with broad discussions with respective governments. IOM then approaches them for endorsement, weakening Member States' proactive ownership and commitment, which may not be fully rooted in the project design. The triangulation of findings shows that the involvement of other national stakeholders in project design is insufficient especially during the design phase; this also concerns the regional projects.

In terms of effectiveness of projects funded, results were achieved in over 80 per cent of cases, but on average, with at least two projects and budget revisions, and less than 30 per cent of projects completed within the originally specified timeframe. The average time for no-costs extension was six months with a maximum extension of 18 months, showing unrealistic timeframes for most projects. In most cases, external risks that have not been envisaged but materialized, including the inability of both the project and IOM to influence government decision-making or time frames.

In terms of sustainability, the evaluation noted that when partner governments are involved from the inception of a project and throughout its implementation, the sustainability of benefits upon completion is better guaranteed.

Concrete evidence in terms of the Fund's impact and that of selected projects has been noted, as over 90 per cent of Member State respondents confirmed that the Fund continues to serve its capacity-building func-

tion and remains a source of seed funding. This was also confirmed by IOM offices in the surveys.

Governments state that the funding provided remains an important financial source that supports the reinforcement of capacities in migration management worldwide. The consistent growth of projects funded over the past two decades and the recognition of the Fund's valued support by Member States speak positively on its importance.

All survey respondents expressed high satisfaction with the Fund's Support Unit. This included: satisfactory administration, management and reporting besides application of procedures and guidelines.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fund Unit is advised to:

1. With the increased overall budget in mind: (i) prepare a financial analysis of the actual demand for projects by Member States versus the approved allocations; (ii) consider revisiting the budget ceilings and exclusion criteria under national and regional projects; (iii) ensure adequate staffing levels within the Unit; and (iv) review how updates are provided to Member States at both SCPF sessions.
2. Update: (i) financial guidelines to include detailed instructions on budget preparation; and (ii) the Fund's visibility strategy to increase visibility of investments in the field.
3. Instruct Unit staff to (i) standardize PRIMA data recording/inputting processes; (ii) provide written guidance on reporting for project managers; and coordinate an official feedback mechanism with ROs for all rejected applications.
4. Establish an official collaboration with the Donor Relations Division to implement a fundraising strategy.
5. Instruct RO and CO project developers to submit a draft risk management strategy and an exit strategy within the first quarter of project implementation.
6. Standardize reporting under ex-post evaluations to ensure relevant but concise information of 20 pages at maximum.
7. Grant ROs and COs access to the "self-evaluation" database to establish a platform for the exchange of best practice in terms of results/impact achievement.

Country Offices are advised to:

8. Proactively involve the national stakeholders in the needs' assessments and participative workshops, as well as the representatives from migrant communities, to ensure national commitment and local ownership.