



# EVALUATION BRIEF

February 2019

## EX-POST EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT “STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF ARMENIAN NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE AND BORDER GUARDS IN THEIR RESPONSE TO MIGRATION CRISIS”

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 project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

<b>Evaluation type:</b>	Internal independent ex-post
<b>Evaluator(s):</b>	Ms. Oksana Nazarchuk, Immigration and Border Management Unit, IOM Regional Office in Vienna
<b>Field visit dates:</b>	17-19 July 2018
<b>Final report date:</b>	28 February 2018
<b>Commissioned by:</b>	IOM Mission in Armenia

**Evaluation purpose:** To evaluate effectiveness of achieved results, impact of project deliverables and sustainability of project actions in terms of the project’s overall objective, to document lessons learned and best practices from a completed set of activities and for use by IOM and project stakeholders so they can assess organizational effectiveness in implementing the project and assess the value for money.

**Evaluation criteria:** Relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact, as well as the extent to which the cross-cutting issues of gender and human rights were addressed by the project.

**Evaluation methodology:** The evaluation involved the documents review, initial reflection session with IOM project management team facilitated by the evaluator, interviews with project partners and stakeholders, and debriefing with IOM staff including participative identification of initial recommendations.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The objective was to strengthen institutional capacities of the Armenian National Security Service (NSS) and Border Guard Troops (BGT) to respond to migration crises and enhance their role in inter-agency cooperation. This project intended to provide the Government of Armenia (GoA) with technical assistance to strengthen the legal, institutional and operational framework for implementing HBM related components to enhance the national capacity to adequately respond to migrants’ needs in cases of emergency.

At the time this project was designed, it was observed that existing national coordination mechanism, though robust and well-developed, did not adequately include the BGT of the NSS of Armenia, nor was there a comprehensive coordination and cooperation mechanism involving all relevant governmental and non-governmental actors to respond to migrants needs and provide for their rights in cases of emergency. Inter-agency cooperation at the national level was weak, most national agencies viewed emergency-related responsibilities as falling only to the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES), any issues related to dealing with refugees were seen as the domain of the State Migration Service (SMS), and anything related to border crossing was to be covered by BGT.

Such a clustered division of responsibilities lead to a number of aspects and functions that were not covered by any of the governmental institutions which would

### Project information:

Geographical coverage:	Republic of Armenia
Project type:	IBM
Project code:	TC.0870
Project period:	01 October 2015 – 31 August 2017
Donor:	IOM Development Fund (IDF)
Budget:	100,000 USD

not allow the GoA to provide its crisis management related functions in line with the whole-of-government approach especially in the area of IOM’s primary focus, namely in relation to addressing migrants’ needs in the context of cases of crisis involving massive movement of mixed migration flows across the border. The project therefore aimed to achieve the following outcomes and outputs:

- **Outcome 1: Enhanced institutional preparedness of BGT in HBM and improved coordination in the area.**

*Output 1.1: Needs of BGT in HBM mapped and standard operating procedures (SOPs) developed.*

*Output 1.2: Inter-agency dialogue on HBM-centred response to migration crises initiated.*

- **Outcome 2: Enhanced HBM capacity in place.**

*Output 2.1: Training for BGT and other services delivered*

## KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Assessing **relevance**, findings indicated that the project is *widely relevant to the target groups as well as the international and partner government policies and strategies* in the domain of emergency preparedness as well as migration and asylum. It Integration of the additional activity, namely the joint interagency cross-border simulation exercise (SIMEX), which was conducted upon the request of the beneficiary agencies in the end of the project, allowed to further enhance projects relevance to the national agencies. Project resulted in increased relevance of national HBM framework and the increased understanding among all the beneficiary agencies of the need to enhance the governmental crisis response capacity as an unintended outcome of the project thus making the further assistance and capacity building in the area of HBM more relevant.

With regards to **effectiveness**, findings indicated that *both outcomes were effectively achieved and contributed to the achievement of the project objective*. At the same time, due to changing environment in which the project was implemented some of the outputs were modified in the process of project implementation. Evaluation indicated that, overall, *the project has been implemented in an efficient manner, compared to potential other means of implementation, and was good value for money*.

*It was too early at the time of evaluation to assess the project's long-term impact*. Evaluation, however, indicated that, overall, the project impact is likely to be higher than expected due to higher impact of the first project outcome boosted by the unexpected impact of the additional project activity, namely SIMEX exercise. It became clear that the project – due to inclusion of SIMEX exercise – encouraged the government to realistically assess its capacities and realize the urgent need to enhance them. It also allowed IOM to position itself as the major partner of the Government of Armenia in developing its HBM related capacity.

**Sustainability** was moderate and proportionate to the scale, scope and the cost of the project with positive outlook with regards to sustainability in the area of institutional capacity building id not prevented by political developments. Institutional developments that were generated by SIMEX exercise were likely to continue upon project completion demonstrating the sustainability of the relevant project output and contributing to high sustainability of the first project outcome.

The project incorporated **cross-cutting issues** at the stage of its development and in the process of implementation to a limited extent. While the focus on gender equality and other cross-cutting issues in HBM NGA report was weak, the HBM training materials and the Guidance on

Preparation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for HBM at Border Crossing Points (BCPs) are fully gender sensitized and incorporate the clauses aimed at enhancing the beneficiary services understanding and skills to integrate cross-cutting concerns like gender, race, religion, socio-economic status, migrants vulnerability, interests of children and unaccompanied and separated children, etc.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Within the next six months, the IOM Mission in Armenia is recommended to:

1. Organize a series of bilateral meetings with relevant stakeholders, to remind them of important products developed in the course of the project and discuss ways to implement and institutionalize them.
2. Reduce length of the HBM NGA publication and distribute to relevant national, international and non-governmental stakeholders to encourage its integration into further HBM capacity building.
3. Get in touch with participants of ToT components of the project in order to obtain their ideas on possible ways to enhance the impact of the training.
4. Remain involved in the interagency coordination mechanism created to update and implement the HBM related national capacity.
5. Continue supporting future SIMEX exercises (the next one planned for May 2019).
6. Follow-up with more substantial projects in the area of HBM.

In development of all future projects, the IOM Mission in Armenia is recommended to:

7. Give greater focus on working with mass media and with local population in crisis management context.
8. Promote more international, national and non-governmental actors involvement into future projects on HBM implementation in Armenia.
9. Support the development of the institutional training capacities of the relevant border management and disaster preparedness agencies in Armenia.
10. Ensure better involvement of all the relevant stakeholders into project development.
11. Improve responsiveness to gender and human rights concerns through a systematic and comprehensive mainstreaming strategy, spanning the entire project development and implementation cycle.