



Executive Summary of an

## EX-POSTE INTERNAL EVALUATION

October 2017

Project title:

### Identifying Gaps and Assessing Needs: A Comparative Assessment of Counter Trafficking Efforts in Countries in the South Caucasus

This regional counter-trafficking (CT) project was designed with dual intentions.

First, it was intended that the assessment reports would be useful and used by IOM and other stakeholders in the three countries. A rapid assessment of the CT landscape resulting in evidence-based recommendations was identified as a useful approach for supporting CT efforts in the region. Though the intention was to create one assessment report with a comparative analysis, it was later decided to produce three separate reports due to geopolitical issues in the region, which had some implications in terms of the stated aims to support regional analysis and cross-border initiatives.

At the same time, the project had a secondary objective to develop an assessment tool that could be replicated globally, based on experience of piloting in the South Caucasus. A Counter-Trafficking Response Needs Assessment Tool (CT-NAT) was developed as a standardized rapid assessment tool with instructions for its local adaptation and application.

**Countries:** Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia

**Project type:** Counter-Trafficking (CT)

**Project code:** CT.0887

**Project period:** 31 March 2016 to 30 March 2017

**Beneficiaries:** Governments in the South Caucasus, Civil Society/NGOs assisting Victims of Trafficking in the South Caucasus

**Donor:** IOM Development Fund (IDF)

**Budget:** USD 130,000

This is an *executive summary of the evaluation*. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

This **internal, independent evaluation** was carried out by Sarah Harris, Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for the IOM Regional Office in Vienna.

The field visits to Armenia (Yerevan) took place during 15-16 May 2017, to Georgia (Tbilisi) during 18-19 May 2017, and to Azerbaijan (Baku, Ganja) during 19-23 June 2017.

**Evaluation purpose:** This ex-post evaluation was carried out several months after the end of the project, to allow time for stakeholders to receive final validated reports. The objective was to evaluate effectiveness of the achieved results, impact of project deliverables, and sustainability in terms of the overall objective.

**Evaluation criteria:** 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.

**Intended evaluation users:** The main intended users are the donor (IDF) and IOM staff in the Migrant Assistance Division (MAD) in both HQ and the Regional Office in Vienna.

**Evaluation methodology:** The data collection for the evaluation involved the following: Document review, Key-informant interviews with relevant government, civil society stakeholders, independent experts and donors in the three countries Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia; Electronic surveys after the field visits to reach additional stakeholders in each country; and Interviews with relevant IOM colleagues from RO Vienna and HQ Geneva primarily to gauge the extent to which tool has been or is able to be replicated or scaled up.

## Global IOM activities

The **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration globally and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. With 166 member states, 8 states holding observer status and offices in over 100 countries, IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants.

In support of these objectives, IOM has been working to **counter the trafficking in persons** since 1994. In this time, we have assisted approximately 70,000 trafficked persons. IOM's primary aims are to prevent trafficking in persons and to protect victims from the trade while offering them options of safe and sustainable reintegration and/or return to their home countries. IOM approaches trafficking in persons within the overall context of managing migration and IOM's broad range of activities is implemented in partnership with governmental institutions, NGOs and international organizations.



### Project context

Over the last half decade, IOM has implemented multiple counter-trafficking (CT) actions in the **South Caucasus**. Although there have been major improvements in efforts to combat Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) within the region, as the modus operandi of traffickers evolve, states need to ensure that interventions continue to address the needs of victims on the ground, while at the same time focusing on the targeted capacity building of law enforcement bodies. This has become particularly true in light of recently identified global trends, e.g. the increased incidence of THB for purposes of labour exploitation, the recognized under-identification of male victims and an observed rise in the number of children being identified as victims. Experience has been gathered through the implementation of past interventions, from which stakeholders may learn which actions were successful and which require additional efforts.

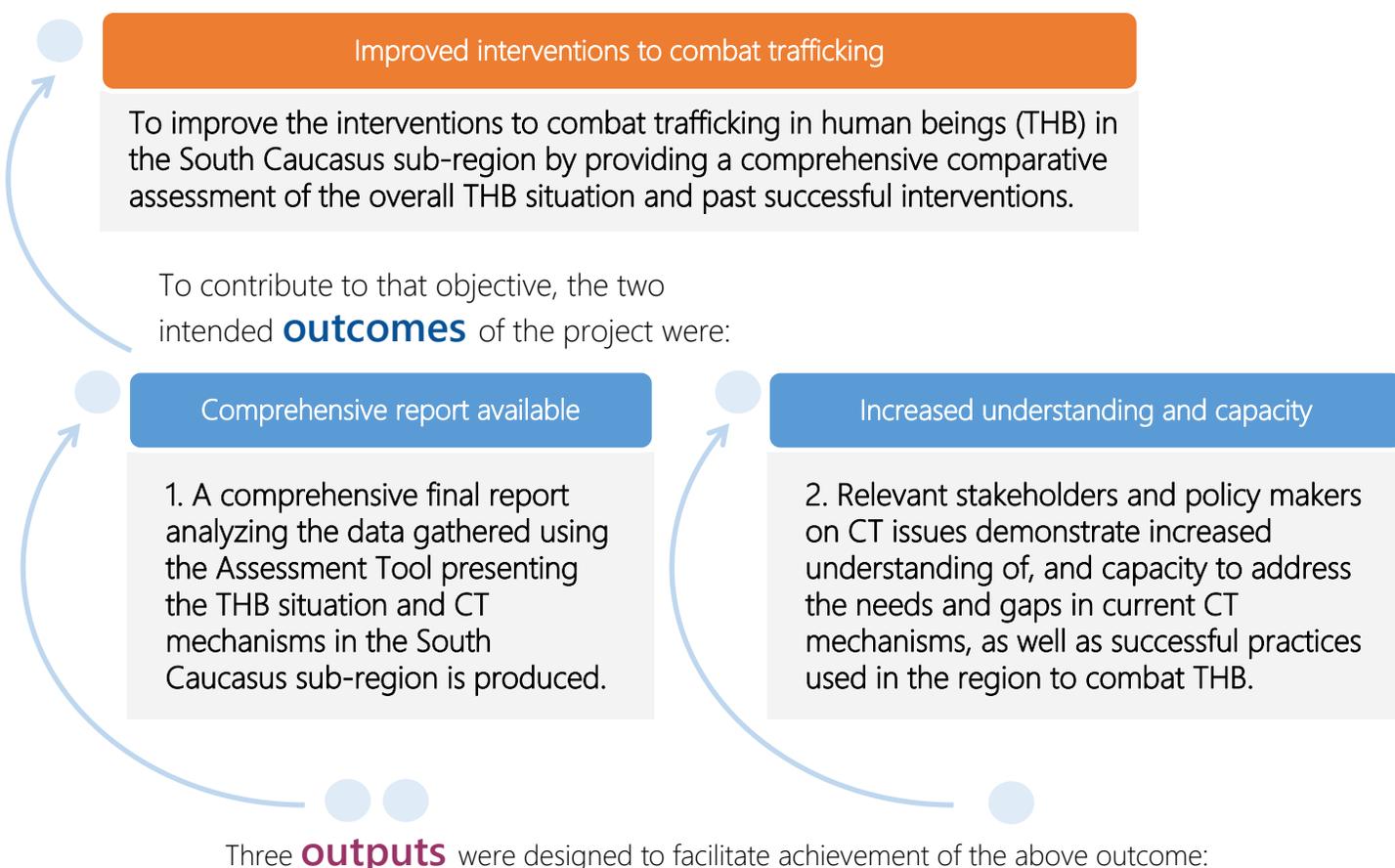
The project's main objective was to use a comparative analysis to generate current evidence of the regional CT landscape, on which to base future results-oriented interventions and ensure more holistic approaches at the national level and, where possible, build cross-border initiatives in the region.

The project developed a streamlined comprehensive assessment tool, in line with international standards, to serve as a basis for the comparative needs assessment of all existing state, IOM, NGO and other CT mechanisms in the region and measures required to address urgent needs. The use of the tool aims to produce results by identifying and highlighting the gaps in the existing frameworks, as well as the successful practices that may be replicated in the other countries. It was designed for future replication internally and in other parts of the world. The project was implemented individually in each country with the following outputs: i) a comprehensive and streamlined assessment tool of CT intervention, ii) a report analysing and comparing existing CT mechanisms that each country already has in place and indicating needs and opportunities for future interventions; iii) list of recommendations for policymakers and, iv) a presentation of the tool, comprehensive final report and list of recommendations/successful at a regional validation workshop.

## Project design

The project's main objective was to use a comparative analysis to generate current evidence of the regional CT landscape, on which to base future results-oriented interventions and ensure more holistic approaches at the national level and, where possible, build cross-border initiatives in the region.

The **objective** of the project as stated in the results matrix was:



**1.1. Assessment tool:**

A streamlined assessment tool covering the different areas of CT intervention is developed and available to produce comprehensive data indicating the needs and gaps in CT mechanisms in the region, as well as current successful interventions.

**1.2. Assessment reports:**

A comprehensive final report analyzing the data gathered using the Assessment Tool presenting the THB situation and CT mechanisms in the SC sub-region is produced.

**2.1. Validation:**

The comprehensive final report and assessment tool are presented to relevant stakeholders and policy makers at a Regional Validation Workshop.

*Output 1.1 also supports a secondary objective.*

It should be noted that the project had a secondary intention, stated in the project proposal's rationale but not reflected in the results matrix, to develop a standardized assessment tool that could be replicated globally based on the experience of piloting it in the South Caucasus.

## Conclusions

The main conclusions are summarized below according to the evaluation criteria:

### Relevance:

- The project was based on identified needs and the project's approach remains relevant to those needs. Though based mainly on IOM's own strategic needs and its general understanding of the situation, with limited direct stakeholder consultation in its design, implementation was coordinated with government partners and is designed to promote inclusion and participation by government, NGOs, donors and other relevant CT actors in each country.
- Internally in IOM, the project was aligned with the RO Vienna MAD Action Plan, and further replication of the assessment tool has since been incorporated in MAD strategic plans at HQ.
- It was not apparent whether and to what extent relevant policies and strategies of identified relevant stakeholders were considered in the project design. While all reports referred to the NAP, the assessment was timed to feed into the NAP only in Georgia, and to some extent in Armenia, though apparently not intentionally in either case. While most stakeholders noted that there is always a need for such assessments, they also noted that it is important to time them to coincide with existing decision-making processes and to ensure that it does not duplicate other recent assessments in order to maximize the usefulness..

### Effectiveness:

- Stakeholders appreciated the reports and found them to be useful. Most stakeholders found the report to be very useful or useful to some extent (n=32), and roughly three out of five reported having actually used the report. Examples of usefulness cited by stakeholders included knowledge and learning, information sharing, an evidence-base for making changes, comprehensive understanding of the CT landscape and donor engagement and fundraising. Overall, it appears that the project was largely successful in the design of a replicable assessment tool and the production of evidence-based assessment reports that contribute to improved CT responses.
- **Assessment tool.** The CT-NAT tool appears to comprehensively cover all CT areas and align with international instruments, standards and best practices, as intended. However, testing of the methodology's usefulness for comparative analysis and validation of the tool by external experts is suggested in future. Finally, various potential modifications to CT-NAT were identified along with elements to keep in mind for future replications.
- **Assessment reports.** The assessment reports appear to align with a general need for such report in terms of identifying gaps and providing evidence-based recommendations. However, if the intention was that the recommendations are acted on and lead to longer-term changes, then it could have been more useful to better align and time the reports to feed into existing strategies, policies and decision-making processes, particularly the NAPs, and/or linked to follow-up projects funded by international donors.
- The project appears to have contributed to increased capacities to address challenges to combatting THB, with factors facilitating this being the participative and inclusive process of developing and sharing the findings and the additional workshops to target specific gaps. Factors that hindered contributions of the project included existence of similar recent assessments and the extent to which the project was timed to align with the NAP. Other factors that could potentially obstruct the long-term aim, which were not fully captured in the results matrix and its assumptions, include (again) alignment with existing decision-making processes such as the NAP, availability of further support to implement the recommendations, and appropriateness of this CT-NAT methodology to achieving the intended long-term aim as compared to alternative approaches.

### Efficiency:

- Start-up and implementation of the project went smoothly, with a few exceptions. First, the CT-NAT tool was not validated with national partners at the start, as originally planned, based on perception that it wasn't needed and on perceived lack of time.
- Second, issues with translation and production of the printed reports led to a few months' delay in distribution, related to various unforeseen issues that came up at the end, as well as limited time allocated for editing and printing and budget allocated for staff time and translation costs.

### Impact:

- The recommendations appear to have contributed to results-oriented and holistic approaches at the national level. Some progress has been made in all three countries to implement the recommendations, albeit with various degrees of contribution by this IOM report specifically. IOM was able to support progress by using cost savings to carry out additional workshops on victim identification in Armenia and Azerbaijan. The reports were reportedly useful in identifying gaps, but the extent of usefulness in terms of leading to improved CT interventions depends on whether other recent reports are available, how the reports are timed to align with national processes, and other factors beyond just the report itself.
- There was no identifiable progress in cross-border initiatives. Although needs and gaps were identified in a way that is comparable, no comparative analysis was actually carried out. Various stakeholders including IOM staff lamented that the planned regional element was lost, both in terms of the original plan to have one comprehensive comparative report and in terms of lack of any effort to carry out any even internally a comparative analysis i.e. by the Regional Office. This appears to be partly related to staffing changes at the Regional Office, but also to perception that an in-depth comparative study would not have been useful. The lack of comparative analysis had implications in terms of lost opportunity to further engage and empower national stakeholders, involve representatives from outside agencies, and test the extent to which the tool facilitates such analysis. Suggested modifications to the tool and lessons learned are provided on pages 28-33.

### Sustainability:

- A final CT-NAT tool was provided by the consultant along with instructions for future replication, including a PDF document with guidance and templates (Needs Assessment Template) and an accompanying Excel document (Data Analysis Metrics). Overall, the tool appears to be of high quality and well designed for future replication and scalability. However, in addition to the suggested modifications and lessons learned on pages 28-33, other elements could be added to future versions of the tool. For examples, there are various important considerations raised in the implementation plan, many of which are not ultimately reflected or referenced in the final assessment tool.
- As for exit strategy, the general perception of IOM staff was that assessments are one-off products, and in this case sustainability was focused on developing an assessment tool that could be further used and built upon in future. It was expected that IOM Headquarters would take over its use and promotion. In terms of taking forward action on the assessment reports, it appears that the main exit strategy was for IOM staff in each Mission to use the report to feed into existing and future projects to support the national partners in implementing recommendations.
- Of the external stakeholders who indicated how long the reports would remain relevant (n=26), most felt that they would still be useful for 1-2 years (n=17). At the same time, various constraints and limitations were highlighted, such as lack of human and financial resources, structural issues related to mandates and legislative frameworks, and technical capacity gaps that challenge the ability of stakeholders to act on the recommendations.

## Recommendations

### Recommendations for Headquarters IOM staff in Migrant Assistance Division (MAD):

- Develop and share a strategy for refinement and replication of the tool. Many IOM staff interviewed expressed an interest in participating in further discussion, but were unaware of any progress to date or future plans since the end of the pilot project. One person suggested that champions are needed to take it forward, either at HQ or RO level. Another suggested that the CT focal point network could be included in future discussions.
- Facilitate further discussion and engagement of CT focal points in terms of lessons learned to date and future planning for replication of the tool, given that IOM staff did not feel equally consulted and included in the process for this pilot, the perception by some that they missed what happened in other countries after the comparative assessment was not done, and the indications from some staff that further discussion led by HQ would be welcomed. In general, suggest to gather wider and more systematic feedback from IOM staff that have piloted the tool and those that have replicated the tool to check the perceived quality and capture lessons learned in its adaptation and replication for improving future iterations.
- Suggest to validate the tool with external experts, once further refined and ready for sharing externally, since this did not take place to the extent envisaged in the project document, as the decision was made to start with a rough tool and refine based on stakeholder feedback.
- Consider how to pilot comparative analysis across countries, given that this was planned initially but not done in the end in this pilot. The CT-NAT was designed to be comparable, and appears to be well-suited, but suggest that this be tested and confirmed. Related instructions and guidance on such comparative analysis could then be integrated into the CT-NAT.
- Consider observations, lessons learned and suggested modifications related to the CT-NAT tool and implementation modalities, including those listed on page 20, pages 22-23, and pages 28-33.

### Recommendations for Regional Office IOM staff in Migrant Assistance Division (MAD):

- Support HQ to develop and share a strategy for refinement and replication of the tool, given that the tool was piloted in RO Vienna region and the role that the RO can play in facilitating inclusion of CT focus points and championing future replication efforts.

### Recommendations for future implementing missions and donors:

- Suggest to consider more time for editing and printing, and expanding the budget for allocated staff and translation costs.
- Consider alignment with external stakeholder strategies and priorities in future replications, based on the ways this pilot was well aligned with external stakeholder needs, and the ways in which it was less well aligned (pages 13-14). Suggest in particular to strengthen promotion of stakeholder participation and discussion in both project design and implementation, ensure added value for stakeholders in light of recent or planned reports by other international actors, and better link to existing decision-making processes. In particular, consider how the assessment can support the NAP, either by feeding into its development (e.g. recommendations that can be included in the NAP, or recommendations on how to develop the NAP such as development of specific working groups) or supporting monitoring

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