International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency

Synthesis Evaluation: Extracting Learning from Evaluations of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVR(R)/PARA) Projects and Programmes

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Office of the Inspector General

Department of Migration Management

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Acronyms

AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration[1]
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EMT	Evaluation Management Team
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GEEW	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
MiGOF	Migration Governance Framework
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PARA	Post-Arrival Reintegration Assistance
RBM	Results-Based Management
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

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[1] While this acronym is used throughout the report, the level of reintegration support provided under each project and programme can greatly vary, sometimes with no reintegration included. This also explain the use of parenthesis for the second R. It should also be noted that the formal use of the acronym PARA in IOM programmes is recent and may not have been used in the evaluations examined, even if this type of assistance upon arrival was already provided.

1. Executive summary

This synthesis evaluation was commissioned by IOM's Office of Inspector General (OIG) in collaboration with the Department of Migration Management to examine 42 evaluation reports of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration and Post Arrival and Reintegration Assistance (AVR(R)/PARA) interventions implemented from 2008 until 2020, while noting that such assistance upon voluntary return already existed before 2008. The purpose was to highlight good practices and lessons learned in terms of institutional approaches, evidence collection and analysis.

The synthesis study appraises the significant change that IOM has undertaken in providing a more comprehensive approach to AVRR over the past twelve years. The early reports (2008) show several unanswered questions and gaps regarding AVRR, covering issues such as the "voluntary" dimension of return, sustainable reintegration, or the lack of an agreed definition for sustainability. The more recent reports show a substantial evolution towards a stronger, more comprehensive model of AVRR and that IOM has been able to develop the relevant tools to address the additional challenge of the second "R" (Reintegration). It is widely considered across the reports that IOM is a trusted and effective organization for providing support to migrants upon return. The Organization has also deployed strong efforts in the field of reintegration, and particularly since guidance materials were published in 2017 and beyond, with the Integrated Approach to Reintegration, the AVRR Framework, and the 2019 Reintegration Handbook, covering all relevant AVR(R)/PARA issues.

The data indicate that only 6 of the 42 reports (14 per cent) were produced after 2017. Thus, there is less evidence to appraise through evaluation reports the extent to which IOM related interventions incorporate the content of the guidance on the integrated approach to reintegration and on the different levels of interventions fostering sustainable reintegration (individual, community and structural).

There is a clear consensus on a series of good practices and successful approaches, which are largely incorporated in the recent guidance materials produced by IOM. As a result, there is a strong basis for presenting, defining and undertaking AVRR interventions in a much more holistic and comprehensive manner. Sustainable reintegration was often the subject of criticism across the reports, more than for instance voluntariness, with only few cases where it was determined that sustainable reintegration was achieved. Explanations for this were nonetheless given, such project duration limiting the follow-up on the sustainability of reintegration.

However, with the integrated approach to reintegration in place, a number of factors and results are being identified. These require partnerships to be rolled out as in many cases enabling factors could and should be provided by a wider range of partners, including national and local governments and institutions, civil society, community associations, religious groups, social networks, private sector, etc.

The wider definition of sustainable reintegration opens new venues for IOM to engage more directly with key actors, not only at the institutional level in the host, transit and origin countries, but also with development donors who show a specific interest in ensuring that returning migrants are not just "returned" but actually supported to find themselves "sustainably reintegrated" in their country or area of origin. It also opens doors to programmatic agreements

with other UN agencies such as UNDP and ILO on the nexus between humanitarian and development assistance, as the work of IOM covers both types of interventions, from the life-saving assistance to stranded migrants in Libya to more development-oriented support in Sri Lanka or Central America, or more recently in Africa through the EU-IOM Joint initiative.

This evolution also requires IOM to better balance its Member States and donor interests on the supply side, for instance with Ministries of Interior focusing on migration management within the country and less on sustainable reintegration upon return, and the demand side of providing a principled and sustainable reintegration assistance to address the needs of returning migrants in line with IOM's mandate and values. To reinforce such a structural transformation, more advocacy and external communication on the part of IOM is needed. This would entail adopting a policy that captures the content of the recent guidelines published. IOM experts often use the word "policy" to indicate the internal guidance material, but to have the AVRR solidly anchored in a corporate policy document would be strategically beneficial.

Because of the variety of contexts and regions where AVRR programmes are implemented and given the increasing level of complexity of the interventions, IOM should continue expanding its capacity to communicate on results and achievements, both through a strengthening of the evaluation and monitoring functions and in terms of data and knowledge management. The Knowledge Management Hub set up in 2017 also contributes to this reinforcement and considerations should be given to have it funded as a core activity, rather than dependent on donor funding. IOM needs to have the capacity to provide evidence of its success. This is being reinforced by the new guidance note for Monitoring and Evaluation and by the different tools and mechanisms already developed and rolled out. IOM also should strengthen the programmatic and multisectoral approach in its interventions with larger scope, funding, and timeframe than what is currently in place with its projects. Projects could be comprised of several components that may be funded by different donors.

Another important issue is to separate the analysis of performance and results at the output level and at the higher outcome level where sustainable reintegration is effectively placed. Sustainable reintegration is the result of a combination of enabling factors that are not limited to IOM assistance and the success of IOM interventions cannot be measured only by the results of the sustainable reintegration level usually expected through its projects. M&E tools have to capture the expected results that IOM is responsible for delivering, as well as the results to which they contribute at the outcome level, while identifying the factors that are not under its control and for which the Organization is not accountable. An evaluation report for instance indicated the "adoption of a migration policy" as one of the expected results, which actually requires governmental approval and endorsement, over which IOM has no control on.

Given the complexity of AVRR approaches and requirements, IOM has developed proper tools and mechanisms to show its donors, partners, key stakeholders, and migrants that the Organization is now sufficiently prepared to carry out principled and harmonized AVRR interventions in line with its values and policies. Fundraising efforts are important so that sufficient funding is made available for such endeavor.

2. Purpose, scope and objective of the synthesis evaluation

The overall **evaluation objective** is to examine the evolving knowledge on and operational base of the AVR(R)/PARA interventions in terms of institutional approaches, evidence collection and analysis, including good practices and recommendations, with particular attention to the following objectives:

1. To strengthen evidence-based learning in AVR(R)/PARA,
2. To determine whether the strategic efforts and tools put in place by the AVRR Unit address the most frequent evaluation recommendations, and
3. To inform the AVRR Unit about possible programming adjustments based on common trends, gaps, lessons learned, and good practices identified.

The evaluation **specific objectives are to**:

a) Identify trends and gaps in terms of relevance and effectiveness of the assistance provided that appear in most of the reviewed evaluations related to AVR(R)/PARA approach including at the level of findings and recommendations,
b) Capture knowledge, lessons learned, and good practices identified across the evaluations,
c) Identify design and implementation weaknesses in AVR(R)/PARA programmes and key factors that may explain them with regards to either return or reintegration,
d) Make recommendations on how to improve evaluations of AVR(R)/PARA programming, and
e) Provide key recommendations to improve programming based on the synthesis in terms of project development and resource mobilization.

The evaluation management team agreed that the 20 key evaluation questions listed in the Terms of Reference (ToR, Annex 1) and Inception Report (Annex 5) would be answered through this synthesis exercise. For the selection of the evaluations, on a total of 63 AVR and AVRR reports published since 1987 it was decided that a sample including 40 of the most recent reports would be sufficient, thereby covering the period 2008–2020. Two reports published at the start of the exercise were then added, bringing the total up to 42 reports.

However, it is important to underline that the quality, scope and purpose of the 42 reports greatly vary and that not all are labelled as "evaluations" but sometimes as "reviews". It was therefore not always possible for the data extraction to strictly follow the criteria stated in the ToR (e.g. relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact/outcomes, and sustainability), requiring that each of these reports be more thoroughly reviewed. The rating system (0 to 3) used as part of the methodological approach addresses the statements made in the reports and does not judge the findings themselves.

The findings from the initial content analysis of the reports were further discussed with the Key Informants identified by the evaluation management team. Accordingly, the content of the synthesis is based on a) the data extracted from 42 reports, b) the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and c) the documentation shared by IOM on AVRR, particularly the mandatory documents and the most recent guidance published on AVRR. The list of documents reviewed and of the KIIs are included as Annexes 2 and 3.

Finally, while the title of the synthesis is "extracting learning from evaluations of AVR(R)/PARA projects and programmes", there were no reports specifically referring to "Post-Arrival Reintegration Assistance" (PARA) that were included in the final sample of 42 evaluations/reviews. It should also be noted that the formal reference to PARA is relatively recent and is defined as "the provision of post-arrival reintegration assistance to migrants returned by other actors, voluntarily or involuntarily, after they were formerly admitted to their countries of origin (i.e., after the process of return is concluded), with the consent of the government in the country of origin of the returned migrant"[2].

Further details on the methodology, selection of the reports and limitations can be found in the ToR and inception report in annex. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) recruited an external evaluator, Mr. Christian BUGNION, to conduct the core work of the synthesis analysis as per the inception report and to submit a draft report. As the IOM central and independent evaluation office, OIG is responsible of the final content of the evaluation and its endorsement.

3. Synthesis findings

3.1 Structure of findings

The findings are structured according to the 20 key evaluation questions, which are themselves placed under the corresponding evaluation criterion. The rating system applied to the data extraction was as follows:

Table 1 – Rating system applied to the data extraction

Rating	Meaning	Percentage range
0	Not addressed or insufficiently addressed	0 to 33%
1	Partially addressed	33% to 49%
2	Satisfactorily addressed	50% to 75%
3	Fully addressed	76% to 100%

Note: More details on the rating system are available in the inception report for this synthesis evaluation attached as Annex 5.

The synthesis evaluation assessed five evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Not all reports used or identified these criteria, particularly the two reports which are only "best practice" reports (R10, R24, Central America). The breakdown of the use of these five evaluation criteria across the 42 reports is as follows:

Table 2 – Evaluation Criteria Addressed by Report

Number of evaluation criteria addressed by report						
0	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	Total
2	2	5	7	10	16	42
4,8%	4,8%	11,9%	16,7%	23,8%	38,1%	100,0%

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[2] Post-Arrival and Reintegration Assistance IN/205, February 2012

As shown in Table 2 above, only 62 per cent of the report use four or five evaluation criteria. Of these 26 reports, and as indicated in Table 3 hereunder, 69 per cent are reports from 2013 onwards (R22 to R42), and 31 per cent of reports reviewed up to 2013 (R1 to R21) show a much lower use of the criteria.

Table 3 – Criteria from 2008 to 2013 (R1–21) and from 2013 to 2020 (R22–42)

Number of Criteria	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
R1 to R21	1	2	4	6	5	3	21
R22 to R42	1	0	1	1	5	13	21

For ease of reference, the 42 reports have been coded from R1 to R42 in the order they appear in the ToR. The indication in parenthesis therefore refers to the particular report(s) from which the information has been extracted. The list of coded reports is included in Annex 4.
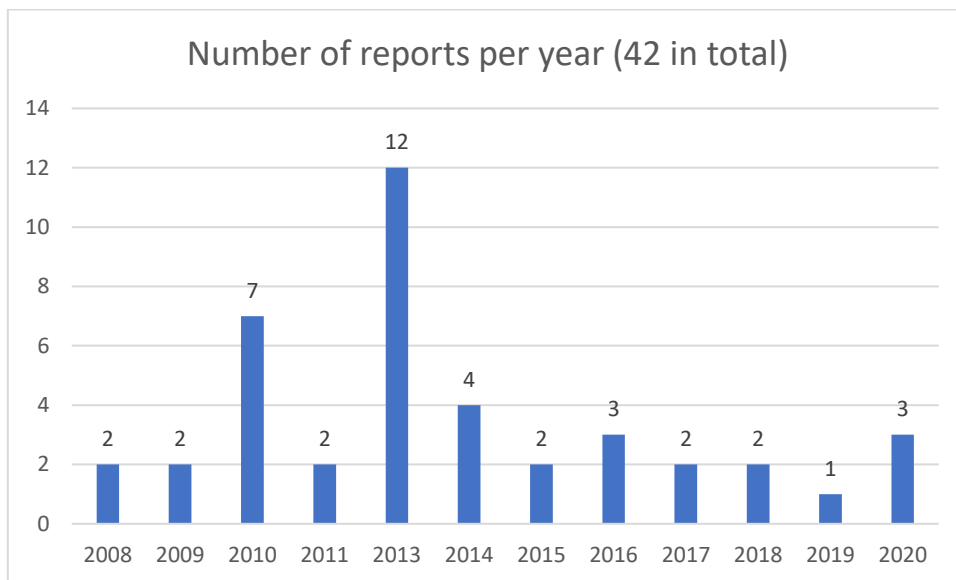
Table 4 – Timeline of the reports

Table 4 indicates that 60 per cent of the reports (25) were undertaken between 2008 and 2013, versus 17 reports between 2014 and 2020. Therefore, there are fewer reports that may incorporate the most recent IOM guidance material, as shown hereunder.

Table 5 – reports pre-2017 and post-2017

Number of reports up to and post 2017

6.00

36.00

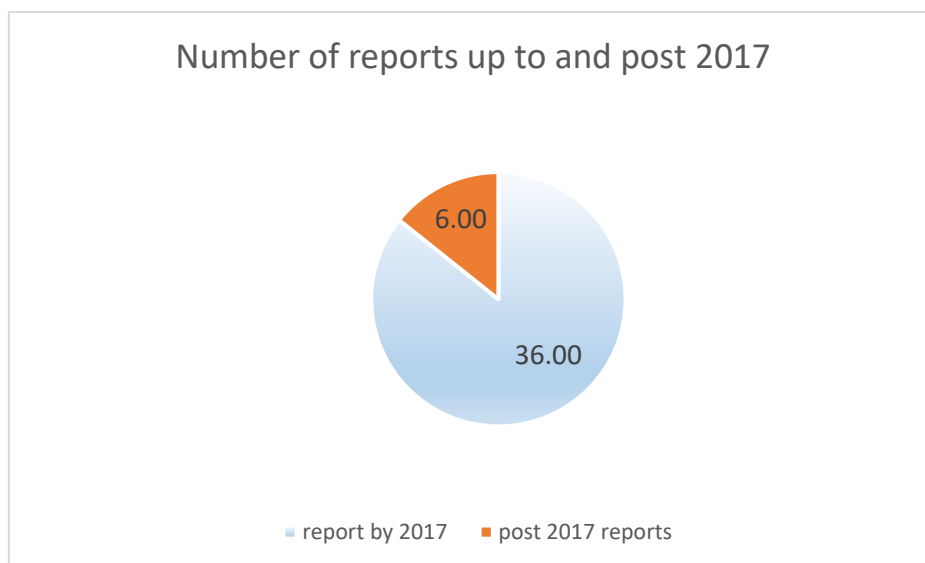■ report by 2017   ■ post 2017 reports

Table 5 reveals that only six reports (14 per cent) were actually undertaken after the release of the IOM guidance relating to the Integrated Approach to Reintegration in 2017. This constitutes a limitation in the sense that few reports are available to appraise to which extent the Integrated Approach has been effectively implemented in the recent AVRR interventions.

Table 6 – Typology of IOM reports (n=42)

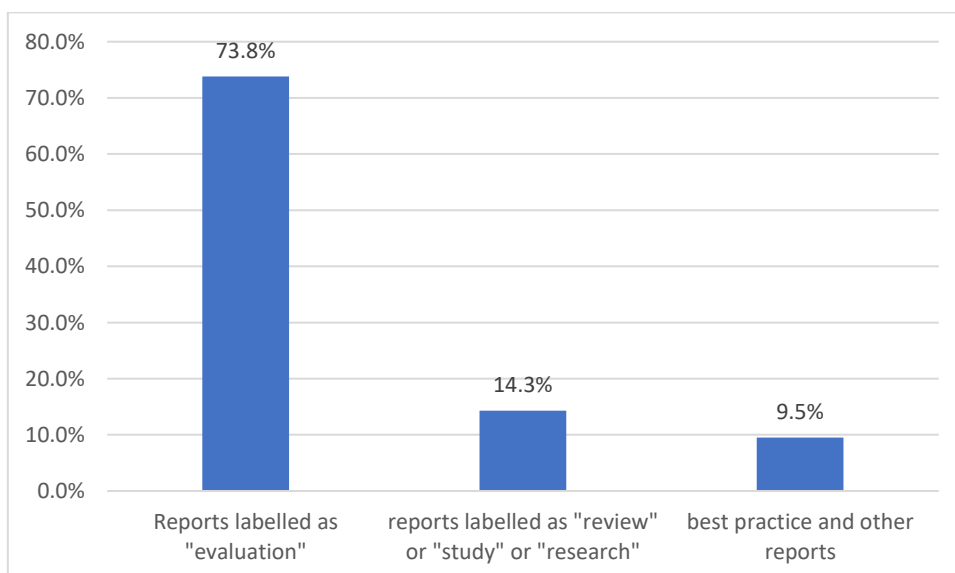| Category	Percentage
Reports labelled as "evaluation"	73.8%
reports labelled as "review" or "study" or "research"	14.3%
best practice and other reports	9.5%

Table 6 shows that slightly under three-quarters of the reports are labelled as "evaluation", and over one-fourth have different headings such as "study, report, review, research, best practices", with however an evaluative perspective that made them relevant to be included.

Table 7 – Commissioners and authors of the reports

IOM commissioned and external reports (42 in total)

13   11

18

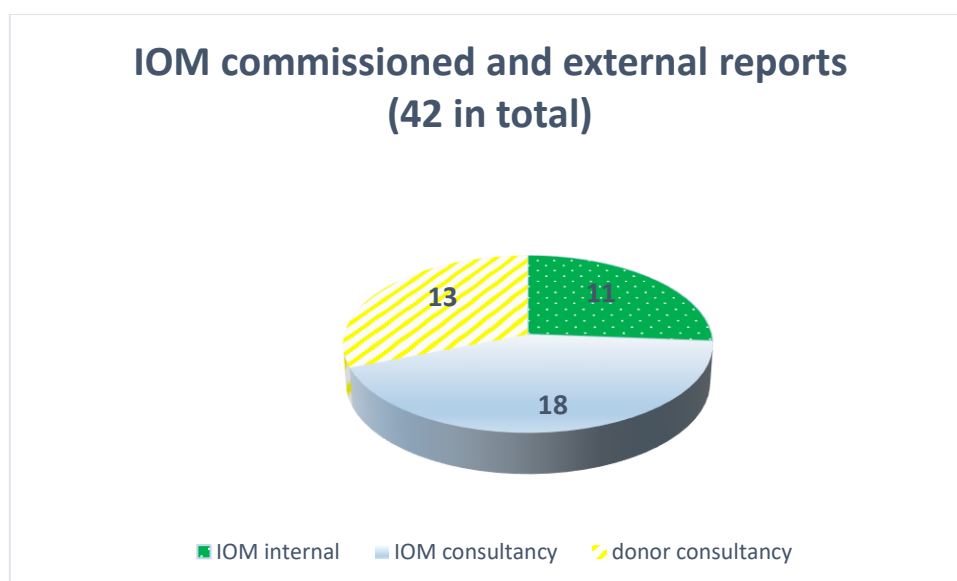■ IOM internal   ■ IOM consultancy   ▨ donor consultancy

Table 7 indicates that the large majority of the reports (69 per cent) were commissioned by IOM, with the remaining reports (31 per cent) directly commissioned by donors. Of the 29 reports commissioned by IOM, 11 (38 per cent) were undertaken internally by IOM Country Offices and/or OIG (R34), while another 18 (62 per cent) were undertaken by either consultancy firms or external individual consultants.

Table 8 – Geographical coverage of the reports (n=42)

Geographical coverage of the reports (42 in total)
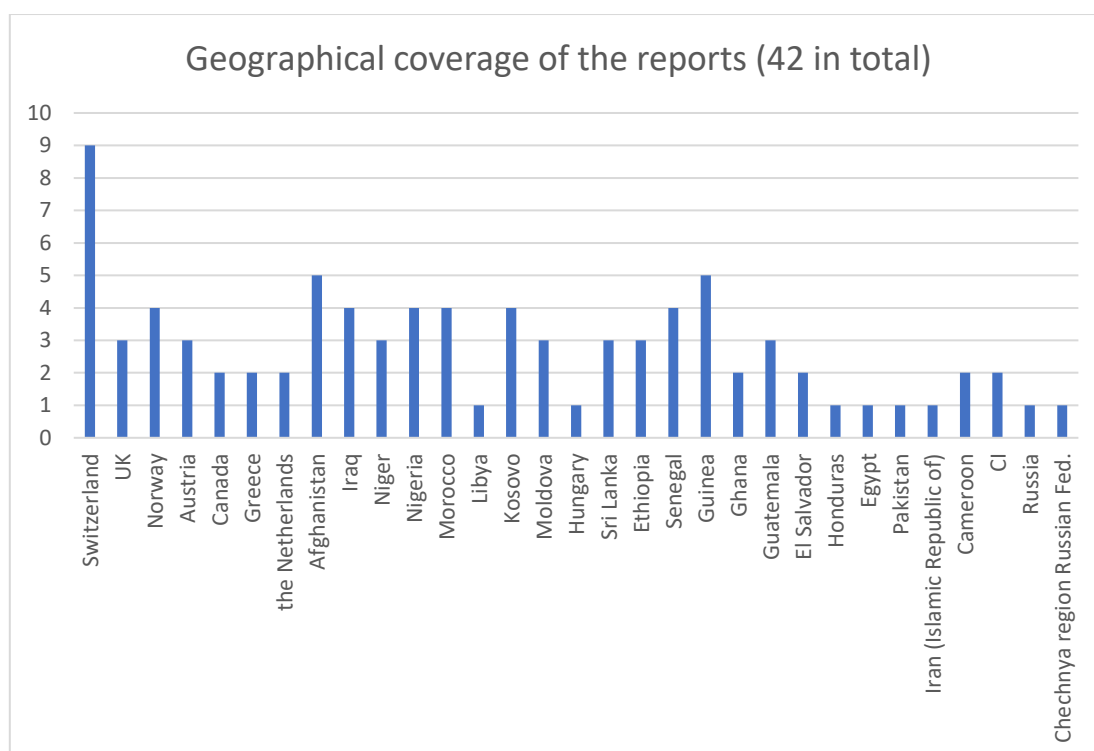
Note: Countries/areas/places mentioned are based on the actual samples of beneficiaries interviewed and not on the stated geographical coverage of the project, which may have been broader.

Table 8 demonstrates a stronger presence of Switzerland among the sending countries, with nine reports, followed by Norway, with four reports. On the receiving end, the countries/areas/places most frequently mentioned are Afghanistan and Guinea in five reports, followed by Iraq, Nigeria, Kosovo[3], and Senegal (four times). Morocco, as a receiving, transit and sending country, is also covered in four reports.

3.2 Relevance

3.2.1 Findings from the reports

The reports show that the different types of support provided by IOM under the AVRR projects are relevant to the needs of the returning migrants, as well as those of the donors who fund these projects, despite an infrequent coverage of this criterion across the 42 reports. Ratings indicate that of the 42 reports, 23 (55 per cent) addressed the evaluation criterion of relevance and for the remaining reports (45 per cent), the relevance of the interventions was not explicitly discussed.

It is noteworthy that the average rating for the 23 reports is high, with 2.08 (out of 3 maximum) and with <u>83 per cent of the 23 reports obtaining a rating of 2 or higher</u>. The four reports which obtained a rating of 1 or above (equivalent to the criterion being partially addressed) correspond to the remaining 17 per cent. It is also interesting to note that relevance is mentioned more often in recent reports. Only six reports from the first 21 reviewed (viz. 2008 to 2013) addressed relevance, versus 17 reports from the more recent 21 reports (viz. 2013 to 2020).

Two reports specify that the decision to return was not a positive opportunity but a means of avoiding worse alternatives (R1 Afghanistan and R28 CBSA Canada), other reports indicate the importance of the project in helping migrants to make the decision to return through counselling and information provision (R4, returnees from Morocco, R25, Nigeria) and others flag the importance of the project to save migrants' lives (R31 and R35 are both about returns from Libya). Overall, the reports that address the evaluation criterion of relevance do so to a satisfactory level.

3.2.2 Answering related evaluation questions

i. To what extent did the AVR(R) intervention respond to the envisaged objective of each project/programme?

The 42 reports include donor and IOM commissioned evaluation reports as well as reviews and there are no standard objectives across these studies to address AVR(R) interventions. Some reports focus the analysis of the relevance of the intervention on the policy environment or historical evolution of government policy, and others compare the models used by donors across various countries or in the same country. Some also include detailed analysis of elements of social research, and two are a collection of best practices. Overall, the interventions analyzed are relevant to their envisaged objective.

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[3] References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

ii. How did the IOM leverage its comparative advantage in implementing AVRR interventions?

This point is hardly specifically addressed in any of the reports. It is noted that IOM's approach is based upon a proven track record dating back to the 1980s and an evolving context in which IOM has grown in line with the complexities and intricacies of an increased demand for a wide range of different AVRR interventions across many varying contexts, countries of destination, transit and/or countries of origin. IOM has adjusted its projects and programmes to reflect learning as also shown in the guidance it has produced for the period under review of this synthesis (2008–2020). Both the contents of the reports and the development of an integrated approach to AVRR interventions, sometimes with the support of the funding agency, illustrate this evolution. Donors and development partners appear to be aware of the key role IOM has played in AVRR interventions and IOM is a reference to undertake AVRR interventions, although in recent times other entities have emerged and some reports do not see IOM as the only and preferred actor for the reintegration component (e.g. R32, commissioned by UDI, p. 22-23 advocating for national NGOs to be better placed for reintegration than IOM).

iii. To what extent are AVRR strategies and policies integrated in the design of the programme or projects evaluated?

There is hardly any reference in the supporting documentation and annexes to the reports that refer to IOM strategies and policies. Over half of the reports (more specifically 23) do not make any reference to IOM related documents, and an additional six reports do not contain a bibliography for the documents used. Among the remaining 13 reports, four reports indicate specific IOM policy/normative documents (2004 IML glossary, 2011 IOM project handbook, IOM migration glossary 2011, and one website link), while another eight reports indicate various IOM guidance documents, mostly AVRR related, and website links as references. Logically, only the most recent reports incorporate and refer to the recent guidance developed such as the Reintegration Handbook published in 2019 (R41 and R42).

iv. What are the main methodologies used for conducting the evaluations and how are limitations addressed in terms of quantitative and qualitative data analysis and impact assessment?

A predominant aspect of the 32 reports labelled as "evaluations" is that those focusing on AVRR interventions have given the centre stage to the feedback and perception from the returning migrants themselves (and for the appraisal about pre-departure information, counselling, and outreach). A number of those reports included migrants interviewed in the host countries. So, a common positive element is that the retuning migrant is the main source of the qualitative findings. Several reports include perception surveys and internal IOM evaluations draw from the monitoring surveys that are used to follow up beneficiaries. The main challenges are linked to insufficient funding and short timeframes to conduct the evaluations, which limit the scope of the findings. Also the sample of the beneficiaries interviewed, who generally are convenience samples, is statistically too small to draw general conclusions. Many reports indicated having a sample bias as the interviewees were often selected by IOM from a list of potential respondents due to time and funding limitations. Some exceptions include the report on Afghanistan (R27) which conducted a wide sampling strategy, including a survey of 588 households, an impact evaluation (R36) that claims the use of a stratified sample of 85 returnees, and the internal report (R41) for which 199 interviews were conducted and 10,052 monitoring forms were used.

It is not possible to appraise whether the limitations regarding the narrow sample of interviewees (particularly for returns to multiple receiving countries) and the lack of time and funding for the evaluation exercises have been solved, although the most recent M&E tools developed by IOM seem to indicate that greater attention and resources are being provided to M&E.

Generally, the methodologies are qualitative and based on key informant interviews and focus group discussions with the different stakeholders (donors, IOM, partners where available, and project beneficiaries). In those AVRR interventions undertaken with a developmental approach some interviews from transit and/or countries of origin national institutions and local organizations were also held.

On the quantitative side, several reports mention the numbers of beneficiaries, but this is not the main thrust of any evaluation report, although it may be more important for those reports commissioned by the donors.

3.3 Efficiency

3.3.1 Findings from the reports

The coverage of efficiency under the reports is similar to that of relevance. Out of the 42 reports, only 22 (52 per cent) deal with efficiency. The overall average rating of these 22 reports is 1.65 out of 3. The ratings are lower than for relevance, with 10 reports (46 per cent) obtaining a rating of two or higher, the same number 46 per cent obtaining a rating of one up to 1.99, and two reports (9per cent) obtaining a rating lower than one. The majority of reports (55 per cent) have therefore a rating of less than two, indicating that they only address partially the question related to efficiency.

In terms of content analysis, no report addresses efficiency from a cost-efficiency perspective (or an economic cost-benefit analysis). Only two reports indicate the burn rate (R33 and R42) and another two (R3and R26) deal with the comparative costs of AVRR returns versus forced returns. Most of the reports analyse the efficiency from the perspective of the reintegration assistance provided, while three reports identify the issue of hiring adequate staff as affecting programmatic efficiency (R23, R28, R42). One report indicated not having access to detailed financial information (R39) and another that such an analysis was outside the scope of the report (R25). One report indicates cost-effectiveness for the project as exemplary, but without providing further details (R34).

Analysis of the efficiency of the reintegration support provides mixed results. Only one report (R29) indicated that 100 per cent of beneficiaries interviewed received the assistance in the promised timeframe. Other reports give a much nuanced perception: 48 per cent reported timely disbursements versus 52 per cent who reported long disbursement rate (R4); 42 per cent received payments within one to three months after contacting reintegration staff, versus 41 per cent who had to wait over three months (R36) or 28 per cent of beneficiaries indicating the assistance was not provided in a timely manner (R41).

Given these findings, it is difficult to draw conclusions beyond the fact that efficiency is not the most commonly used evaluation criterion, and when used, it is not subject to a cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis, and tends to focus on the timeliness of the disbursement of the reintegration assistance. On this issue there are mixed results, and the average rating reflects

this diversity. A general comment from the 42 reports is that both efficiency and relevance are more present in the reports from 2013 onwards and are rarely addressed in the earlier reports.

3.3.2   Answering related evaluation questions

v.   Did AVR(R) interventions deliver results in an economic and timely way?

As mentioned above, none of the 22 reports that address efficiency provides a cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis. There is generally little attention given to the issue of resources in the evaluations, and it is difficult to provide a judgement with the limited information available. Overall, it appears that IOM is able to manage its AVRR interventions efficiently, but there is no evidence to indicate whether it was indeed in an "economic and timely way". Efficiency does not appear to be a key criterion for the evaluation reports, perhaps because as a projectized and/or service fee-based organization, an analysis of a single project or programme would not be able to indicate too much about the efficiency of the AVRR intervention, particularly for returnees from different countries under different projects.

vi.   What are the main constraints identified in the resources available for an effective implementation of the project?

There were limited constraints identified beyond the budget allocation to specific components which had to be constructively funded in contexts where the situation did not evolve in line with the planned scenario. IOM has been able to obtain extensions in certain projects. In other cases, the limited timeframe, and lack of sufficient funding for specific aspects also constrained operational effectiveness. Another challenge was when IOM was taking responsibility for project results which are beyond the control of IOM (such as the development of a migration policy). Finally, one additional issue was related to the coordination challenges between sending and receiving countries where in many cases the service fee approach used to follow up the returning migrant was deemed to be insufficient.

3.4 Effectiveness

3.4.1   Findings from the reports

Almost all reports address effectiveness except the two "best practices" reports (R10, R24) and the historical report on the evolution of the Dutch return policy from 1989 to 2009 (R11). There are therefore 39 reports addressing effectiveness. The overall average for the rating is 1.85 across the 39 reports, with 24 reports (62 per cent) rating between 1 and 1.99, and 13 reports (39 per cent) rating 2 and higher. This is the second highest average after relevance. Because effectiveness applied to all the components of an AVRR project, it needs to be broken down by component, and more particularly for those evaluation reports that focus on specific IOM AVRR projects (as compared to broader scopes including policy decisions and political contexts). The AVRR projects have generally been executed successfully. Most of the limitations reported are linked to the challenge of the reintegration process, and more particularly the business development component of the reintegration package, as well as the corresponding grant amount.

From a global perspective and considering the entire scope covered by each report, IOM has achieved a good level of effectiveness, higher than the overall average suggests. There is no

single report that indicates that IOM was totally off-track in carrying out its intervention(s), and in many cases the pre-departure, return and post-arrival components earn very high marks. However, most reports addressing the effectiveness of the reintegration component have a number of questions regarding the manner in which the reintegration package is provided, and indeed about the objective of the reintegration process itself. While there is a general consensus on the need to have a flexible approach to reintegration, which is a strength for IOM, a large number of recommendations and seemingly necessary improvements bring down substantially the overall rating of effectiveness for each report.

A summary of the findings regarding the different phases of the AVRR process, as described in the reports, is presented hereafter:

Pre-departure assistance:

❖ On issues related to the provision of information
- "The level of information provided by the program before departure from Canada is satisfactory… but information available about the country of origin was not sufficient for some migrants (R28)
- The information campaign can be considered to have been effective … All interviewees declared their satisfaction on the procedure in both Libya and Morocco (R6)
- Most of the respondents (79 per cent) stated they had enough information about the return conditions at home (R12)
- The information component of the project is reasonably distinguished into one of the most important project activity elements (R29)
- Means for informing would-be returnees has diversified in the last years… much more can be done (R7)
- First phase difficult to attract project beneficiaries… promotion materials proved inefficient, so changes in materials significantly increased the number of applicants (R21)
- 76 per cent of interviewees stated to be satisfactorily informed to make a well-founded decision about their return, and a great majority claimed to have got all the needed information (R30)
- In terms of information outreach, the result is overall considered to be satisfactory (R40)
- Eight of eleven returnees interviewed declared that he/she was well informed about the return procedure (R35)
- Visit to Libyan detention centres constituted a key and effective outreach mechanism… all the returnees interviewed confirmed that they had received comprehensive information regarding IOM's program prior to their return (31)
- Financial assistance to start a small business was the key information received while still in Austria … (R25)".

❖ Related to counselling
- "In general, the appreciation of the counselling in Switzerland and the follow-up by IOM after their arrival in Kosovo is described very positively by the returnees (R17)
- 91per cent stated the information received during pre-departure counselling about the benefits and services of the AVRR were clear and concise, and 87 per cent that the information obtained was sufficient to take a decision with regards to their return to their country of origin (R36)".

❖ Level of migrant satisfaction with pre-departure assistance
- "79 per cent satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance, operations segment successful (R3)
- All migrants are satisfied with the services received in Morocco and the information received to envisage the micro-project upon return (R4)
- Overall, regarding pre-departure assistance, of 71 respondents interviewed, 42 consider IOM's assistance very satisfactory, 18 satisfactory, 9 somewhat satisfactory, and 2 unsatisfactory (R40)
- The pre-departure phase was particularly difficult for migrants, whether in detention or not, and IOM did not have the opportunity to provide them with assistance (R31)
- The programme worked very well in assisting Afghans to prepare for their return (R32)
- Reaching out and assisting individual potential AVRR beneficiaries does not seem to pose any major problem (R39)".

Return assistance:

Generally, the appraisal about the return assistance and journey is positive and there have not been any major issues identified which required changes to the procedures. Some examples are as follows:

- "The return to the home countries went well and Regional AVRR program for stranded migrants in Libya (RAVL) beneficiaries received assistance at the beginning and at the end of their journey (R31)
- The return journey was well organised (R32)
- The return journey happened as planned, and the IOM receiving Country Offices welcomed the returnees on their arrival and provided them with transportation stipends (R35)
- Return assistance in Tanzania, Yemen and Morocco was highly effective at adapting itself to the changing context (R38)".

Post-arrival assistance:

This component is sometimes separate, sometimes a part of the reintegration assistance, depending on the project. The findings here relate to those reports that dealt with post-arrival assistance as a specific component of the AVRR process.

- "Arrival and first phase of return smooth and well-run processes (R3)
- The operational procedure for return can be defined as quick and efficient, and the airport assistance as sufficient (R6)
- What is very positively perceived is how the return travel is organised and the cash assistance received at the airport upon return (R12)
- Even if the figures are small, the possibility of AVR clearly does promote return to Guinea, and it importantly contributes to the quality of return. (R15)
- The assisted return to Kosovo shows good results within the overall performance of Swiss return assistance (R17)
- Overall, qualitative data and the high level of beneficiary selection show that the implementation of post-arrival assistance is going relatively smoothly… and answers a key need of the population upon return (R27)
- IOM staff was present at the airport to welcome the returnees and this assistance was highly valued (R31)

- The direct assistance to migrants… has performed very well, including all the operational aspects and going well beyond the initial efforts foreseen… this has allowed to save human lives and curb suffering and trauma (R37)
- Guatemala: mixed results, Honduras: the majority of products were achieved, El Salvador: all outputs were achieved (R42)".

Reintegration assistance:

This component has systematically been the most challenging across all AVRR projects and programmes. The findings are divided into two blocks, the first about the positive aspects of reintegration assistance, the second about its identified gaps and weaknesses. It is important to remember that each project and programme had its own structure and dynamic in terms of the contents of the reintegration component, which vary widely in time and across the range of interventions carried out. Assistance for business start-ups is the main form of reintegration assistance provided and merits a separate section, so it is included under point c) in this section.

a) Positive overall reintegration assistance findings:
- "Ratio of returnees still in-country engaged in reintegration assistance versus total returnees still in country 90 per cent (R2)
- 94 per cent of returnees were satisfied with the (global) services and support provided by IOM (R5)
- In Mali 82 per cent of returnees expressed their satisfaction with regards to the reintegration assistance received so much that 95% stated they felt fully reintegrated (R6)
- The majority of interviewees stated that the cash relocation grant was very useful to meet initial living costs (R8)
- Cash component is one of the most successful elements of the return and reintegration programmes (R9)
- Assessment of IOM's support for the reintegration process were uneven, 43 per cent of returnees to Iraqi Kurdistan were positive, 23 per cent negative, 25 per cent mixed and 8 per cent unclear (R12)
- The programme clearly supports social integration of returnees, allows returnees to have a perspective for starting their economic reintegration (R15, R16, R17)
- In a majority of instances, the project clearly made a great difference for returnees (R18)
- The provision of basic assistance, reintegration services, and counter-trafficking activities were the most effective project activities (R23)
- The returnees were satisfied with the reintegration assistance they received… the programme provides effective types of reintegration assistance (R28)
- There is a common agreement among returnees on the importance of the cash component received upon arrival (€ 500). It allows to cover immediate expenses upon return until reintegration support is secured. (R29)
- 87 per cent report satisfaction with the reintegration assistance provided by IOM (R30)
- Those who benefited from reintegration support indicate a reasonable degree of satisfaction (R37)
- The programmes' reintegration assistance has been proven to be effective for the majority of returnees. Community-based cash-for-work schemes have proven effective in bringing together host community members and providing income to beneficiaries in a transparent and timely manner (R41)".

b) Negative overall reintegration findings:

The two more objective recurrent aspects that are linked to a negative perception of reintegration are: 1) the amount of the reintegration grant, deemed as insufficient to develop a successful business, and 2) the sustainability of the businesses developed. The first point is addressed under the "sustainability" section 3.5 in this report, while the amount of the reintegration grant is discussed under point c). Other more subjective negative aspects identified were linked to the unfulfilled level of the migrant's expectations regarding reintegration.

c) Business development/start-ups

Business development has been the most common and preferred form of reintegration assistance provided across the 42 projects. This section does not discuss whether business development should be the preferred reintegration option but does summarize the mixed findings related to the challenge of developing sustainable businesses (e.g. capable of generating sufficient resources to cover the living expenses of the migrant and his/her family). Almost all of the reports, with some notable exceptions (R35), indicate that the returnees find the amount of the reintegration assistance to be insufficient for developing a business. On the positive side, the following was found:

- "86 per cent of beneficiaries opted for starting a business, of which 81.4 per cent satisfied with the start-up assistance received (R3)
- 76 per cent of micro projects are operational and make a modest contribution to the needs of migrants and families (R4)
- In Kosovo seven businesses were operational and generating income, two closed and one [was] operational but run by another person…In Moldova two were operational but did not generate income, two were closed (R7)
- The majority of migrants said the business was profitable to the point of making a living and enough to support the family (R8)
- Returnees' satisfaction with their labour and economic entrepreneurship: 4 per cent very satisfied, 24 per cent satisfied, 41 per cent are somewhat satisfied and 31 per cent unsatisfied (R13)
- Some of the returnees can cover their living costs, others are only able to cover some costs and are dependent on additional income through other work or assistance (R18)
- Of seven more recent returnees, four of them are doing very well, two were OK and one intends to switch business (R20)
- 38 new businesses have been opened, creating earning opportunities and workplaces for more than 60 people (R21)
- Selection of project locations were highly satisfactory… livelihood support projects have ... increased their income by 60 per cent to 70 per cent (R22)
- Among repatriates who chose to open their own business, all said they would not have opened their businesses without the emotional and financial support provided by the Guatemala Repatriates Project (GRP) (R23)
- 40 per cent of those interviewed indicated they are able to generate enough income to support themselves and their families, and 56 per cent are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their reintegration (R25)

- All the interviewed returnees fulfilled their reintegration plans…. The majority was satisfied with the result of their business activities (R29)
- All of the RAVL beneficiaries interviewed were satisfied with IOM's assistance with their business plan (R31)
- Six of eleven returnees confirmed that the amount …was sufficient to effectively start their micro-business (GBP 1,000). They shared that the grant enabled them to become self-sufficient (R35)".

On the negative side, in addition to a generally very low use of the training offer made available to business development beneficiaries across the projects, the following findings were made:

- "Most returnees have found a way to support themselves and their families, mostly not through the business projects support by AVRR (R18) indicating that alternative income generating sources have been used outside of the reintegration assistance
- Out of the returnees from 2008 up to 2011, one is still in the original business and doing very well, three can survive but cannot really save income, one has changed the business and three have lost their original businesses and have no regular income (R20)
- Only 15 per cent of respondents considered the grant as sufficient to cover business activities… 33 per cent stated they had to close their business and 21 per cent indicated the business is operating but without profits yet, versus 14 per cent indicating the business is operating and turning profit and 12 per cent reporting their business as struggling and possibly having to close down (R36)
- The assistance is relatively limited to finance business start-up… some are struggling and may face challenges to sustain their business in the medium to long term (R39)".

3.4.2   Answering related evaluation questions

vii.   To which degree have the expected results of the AVR(R) interventions been achieved?

On the whole, the expected results of the AVR(R) interventions are achieved as planned. IOM has been widely recognized in the majority of the reports for its high staff quality and commitment, effective assistance during the various phases (despite more challenging results in the reintegration phase, given the concern about the sustainability of the reintegration) and its tailored, flexible, humane and enduring support to its beneficiary groups. The additional assistance that was provided in many cases, including through innovative ways to support the reintegration process with a wide range of services and assistance schemes, including cash and in-kind support and the targeting of the vulnerable groups, families, unaccompanied and separated children and victims of trafficking, have earned IOM a reputation for providing effective safe and dignified migrant return assistance. A wide range of support schemes are mentioned across the reports including individual, collective and community-based assistance and, more recently, structural assistance. While assistance to individuals and communities proved generally effective in terms of alleviating the burden of the return and providing a source of income, it is also clear that IOM is not responsible for all the dimensions related to the reintegration, and that the commitment and partnership with government counterparts ultimately depends on the political willingness to engage in these partnerships. Nevertheless, IOM did provide valuable capacity-building, awareness raising and networking support, both at national and international levels between civil society actors and national institutions under a number of AVRR interventions, particularly in the more recent reports.

viii. What are the common trends identified across the evaluations, in terms of the effectiveness of the implementation of AVR(R) and of the assistance provided?

The most common trend is to ensure a flexible, tailor-made and informed assistance package that is inclusive of the key services, as detailed in the IOM Reintegration Handbook. An important finding is that to be effective, reintegration assistance should be informed by the context of the area of return (economic assessment) and not based on a donor-determined reintegration grant amount. Another important aspect is the importance of psychosocial support (related to anger/stress management and mental health issues) both during the pre-departure phase in destination and transit countries, and upon arrival in countries of origin. This is also important in terms of managing realistic expectations, and therefore complements the information/counselling provided prior to return.

The push factors related to the decision to return (changes in asylum law, legal conditions to stay in host countries, detention, fear of forced return, lack of alternatives etc. mentioned in R1, R14, R28, R30) are widely seen as more important than the pull factors across the reports (reintegration assistance is not a decisive factor, nor is having support mechanisms in the country of origin including family/social networks). Although the assistance package is not the defining element in the decision regarding a migrant's return, it does play a key role in facilitating a safe and dignified return.

Another positive trend is the flexibility and capacity of the IOM Country Offices to adapt the projects to the evolving needs on the ground and provide targeted assistance within its range of services and capacities. This includes additional assistance, medical support, special assistance to vulnerable groups, families, unaccompanied and separated children and victims of trafficking, housing/shelter/rent assistance, transportation costs, payment for services in caring for the returned migrant, education grants for the children, cash disbursement before and after arrival, creation of a trusting relationship with IOM. All these aspects figure as some of the trends that contributed to a successful implementation of the AVR(R) assistance and played an important role in migrant assistance.

Another important consideration raised is that most, if not all, migrants have paid large fees to reach their destination countries, often using smugglers and owing them an important debt. This debt is not considered in the assistance provided by IOM; but it entails a large financial weight that is often financially greater than the amount of the assistance received. This raises the issue of how to deal with debts contracted by migrants as most are still unpaid when they return to their country of origin, which may affect the prospects of sustainable reintegration.

The most common reintegration assistance chosen by returning migrants across the 42 reports has been that of the business start-up. While in many cases sustainability of the business is questioned and the majority of reports show weaker results than anticipated in terms of sustainability, there is a strong appreciation for this option, which seems to have been more heartily promoted by IOM in some cases. The explanation for the business start-up as the preferred reintegration option is that it is generally seen as the option that allows to generate cash faster, and therefore speaks to the common need of returnees to obtain early financial gains upon return in their country of origin. Vocational training was generally appreciated but dependent on the context of the countries of return, and the small number of returnees that opted for job placement/employment also appreciated the support, but again depending on the context of the country of return.

An interesting example was the case of Sri Lanka (R22) in targeting communities rather than individuals with a developmental approach, before the integrated approach to reintegration now used by IOM was published. More recent reports that can draw from the latest published guidance show that targeting the community can be a valid alternative, including working on infrastructure (bridges, roads) using a cash-for-work approach, allowing to inject much needed cash into the local economy to boost the initial efforts and foment participation by the local community.

The incorporation of the structural assistance is an interesting effort to provide a comprehensive reintegration framework, and it is well detailed in the Reintegration Handbook. In practice, a few reports dealt with structural assistance with varying levels of success. While capacity development activities along with regional exchanges and networking are generally highly appreciated and mentioned as such in the reports reviewed, the level of ownership and commitment to partnerships on the part of governmental institutions, regional and local actors depends on their degree of political will. IOM has limited space to influence this but should certainly advocate for such issues to be further discussed to reinforce international and national collaboration in support of the migrant reintegration process and more generally to the benefit of local communities.

ix. What are the main gaps, key lessons learned, and good practices across the evaluations in terms of effectiveness of implementation?

Keeping in mind the variation in return contexts (conflict, unemployment, personal security, political considerations) in which AVRR interventions are implemented, the following are some of the main recurring and contributing factors to the success of such efforts, identified in the evaluation reports reviewed:

- <u>Committed, dedicated and prepared/trained staff</u>. IOM staff has often been praised in the reports for the quality of the counselling provided and their humane and caring attitude. This visible part of IOM needs to be maintained. Thus, looking ahead adequate resources and training must be provided to keep the committed staff in all Country Offices. It is noteworthy that three reports indicated difficulty with staff management, which was also linked to a lower returnee level of satisfaction with IOM services.
- <u>Flexibility</u>. This is a constant good practice across the interventions reviewed. In part it is necessary given the projectized nature of the Organization, but in many cases it shows IOM's capacity to be responsive to a changing context and adapting to unforeseen circumstances, always mindful of the needs of migrants. This flexibility has given rise to creative approaches to assistance services, including different forms of cash grants, educational grants for children, health services, accommodation grants, as well as grants for persons caring for returning migrants, among other forms of responsive support. One particular example was provided from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq through the Socio-Economic Orientation (SEO): this stemmed from the analysis by IOM staff of the migrants' needs to respond to orientation gaps and create group dynamics conducive to engaging on questions which are normally not addressed during the individual counselling. These one-day orientation sessions seem to hold great potential and were mentioned as a good practice to be widely replicated (R32). Other potentially promising aspects include using reintegration assistance to buy participation in existing businesses and ensuring second and third grants for sustainable businesses.
- <u>The integrated approach to reintegration</u>, where used, provides more comprehensive assistance and allows for a fuller range of services to be provided. However, this is also

dependent on the objectives of the project or programme that is funded which is itself dependent on the context in which AVR(R) is implemented.

- <u>Transferable skills</u> training (such as IT, English, business) prior to departure can contribute positively to the impact of the assistance.
- <u>Cash grants upon arrival</u> are highly appreciated at a time when returnees still need to secure a livelihood and a source of income.
- <u>Diverging views</u> in the reports recommending cash grants versus in-kind grants for reintegration assistance. It is considered likely that a combination of the two, with one part of the grant given in cash upon arrival, could be a constructive form of assistance.
- Two reports provide a list of <u>good practices</u> and are generally applicable to most of the contexts where IOM intervenes (R10, R24). A summary of these good practices is included in the following text box:

Good Practices Summary

➢ **Support is multidisciplinary and follows an integrated approach including various services**

➢ **Activities are implemented through psychosocial assistance that prevents secondary trauma**

➢ **Reintegration includes a series of sessions with the returnees and psychosocial counselling which is the basis for reintegration**

➢ **Support is provided together with complementary interventions aimed at fomenting the practical social and work-related integration**

➢ **Creating a reintegration route**

➢ **Social counselling, reconstruction of the family and social network, and reconstruction of skills and abilities and employability are critical components**

➢ **A possible support from the "old" returnees to serve as "ambassadors" and witnesses for the reintegration processes positively achieved**

➢ **Reconstructing competencies and skills and work-related reintegration**

➢ **Defining the education or professional route, involve vocational training centres, as well as services aiming to provide private or public employment, potential businesses/employers**

➢ **Facilitate micro-credit counselling**

➢ **Definition and development of a personalized reintegration route**

➢ **Provide psychological assistance upon arrival … involving a team of psychologists prepared to handle severe cases of emotional distress, identify victims of trafficking, providing support for cases that require prolonged psychosocial care, refer cases to the competent institutions, and provide guidance on social reintegration. Psychosocial attention soothes the fragile emotional state in which returnees arrive and the psychosocial team also uncovered cases of human trafficking**

➢ **Provide support to temporary shelters, for processing basic documents for socioeconomic reintegration**

➢ **Train civil servants in key agencies in charge of combatting human trafficking**

➢ **The provision of phone calls, national and international, reduces the levels of vulnerability of repatriates**

➢ **Transportation services ease the process of returning to home communities**

> ➢ **Temporary shelters lessen the levels of anxiety and risks returnees face upon arrival**
> ➢ **The provision of temporary shelters to migrant minors helps protect their human rights**

x. What are the main gaps and recommendations made in the evaluations reviewed for an effective reintegration addressed in the new integrated approach to reintegration?

As the integrated approach to reintegration in the context of return was published in 2017, only six of the reviewed reports made reference to the document. That said, the major gaps identified related to effective reintegration were : a) the amount of the reintegration grant, which is deemed to be insufficient to ensure a sustainable business, b) the scant use of educational (vocational or skills training) and job placement/employment opportunities as alternatives to starting a business, particularly where the enabling conditions in the areas of return do not favour the development of businesses (e.g. due to armed conflict and insecurity). The follow-up was also challenged in conflict environments such as Afghanistan and the monitoring was generally deemed to end too early and to cover insufficiently the different dimensions of reintegration. The integrated approach does recognize the multidimensional nature of reintegration, but sustainable reintegration is a process that is primarily the responsibility of the returning migrant over which IOM has limited control (see also section 3.5 on sustainability).

Another aspect that is addressed in the integrated approach to reintegration is the importance of considering the community and the structural dimensions when dealing with returnees. A number of questions and issues were raised in earlier reports, particularly when one considers that IOM has operated both in life-saving environments, such as with the returns from migrants in detention centres in Libya, and in development contexts such as in Sri Lanka or in Central America where the community and structural dimensions are critical factors supporting the enabling conditions for sustainable reintegration.

xi. How did the evaluations use the feedback and experience of returnees to make recommendations and to propose better target interventions?

As previously mentioned, most reports have based their analysis to a large degree on a sample of interviews with potential and returning migrants. Thus, in most reports voices of returnees have been heard and their views expressed, as well as their recommendations incorporated into the respective section of the reports. Another question is to appraise to what extent the samples of beneficiaries were representative of the overall beneficiary caseload, which is not systematically covered.

3.5 Sustainability

3.5.1 Findings from the reports

The reports indicate that the issue of sustainability has probably been the most challenging aspect of the reintegration process. On one hand, some reports address the fact that there was no accepted definition of sustainability before the issuance of the recent guidelines, while other

reports (from donors) looked at the sustainability of return (and avoiding re-migration) instead of looking at the sustainability of the reintegration process. With the publication of the recent guidance, and notably the Reintegration Handbook, the latest reports have been able to have a reference framework and one of the reports (R41) presents the composite reintegration sustainability score of 0.62 for the Sahel and Lake Chad region, above the 0.5 threshold that determines sustainable reintegration. However, this report, based on 10,052 monitoring forms, is not supported by the findings of the other evaluation reports, most of which find sustainability a difficult objective to achieve. In addition, some reports deal with the sustainability of the benefits after the end of the projects, hence implying that national counterparts or other actors should be able to provide the services needed to the retuning migrants, something which is still appearing as largely problematic in a number of receiving countries.

IOM defines sustainable reintegration as "when returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with re-migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than a necessity."[4]. The reports reviewed rarely consider such a wide dimension for sustainable reintegration, and the majority have focused on the capacity of the returnees to generate income either through business development, job placement or vocational training. In other words, few reports deal with the broader dimension of reintegration. The definition is a conceptual one, but it needs to be grounded in operational tools (the application of AVRR guidance notes and M&E tools) to appraise sustainable reintegration. This now has been complemented by the sustainable reintegration score index, which is detailed in the 2019 reintegration handbook and had been rolled out since 2018.

From the 42 reports, 30 have addressed the issue of sustainability, which obtains an average score of 1.27, the lowest of the five criteria. Of these, 27 reports (90 per cent) score from 1 to 1.99, while the remaining three reports (10 per cent) are rated 2 or above (R18, R20, R30) and deal with returns to Sri Lanka, Nigeria[5] and Kosovo. The rest of the reports indicate a lower level of sustainability, particularly given the fact that sustainability is seen from different angles in the various reports: project sustainability, sustainability of return, sustainability of reintegration, etc.

Some reports indicate the lack of a clear definition for sustainability (R7, R12, R20, R27) while others take care to specify the object of sustainability: sustainability in generating income (R21) or whether it is the sustainability of the return defined in terms of the length of time the returnees will stay in their country of origin (R28 – sustainability of return).

It is important for IOM therefore to note that while the rating system was applied consistently in the data extraction, different concepts were actually being appraised in the reports under the "sustainability" criterion.

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[4] IOM, Towards an integrated approach to reintegration in the context of return, 2017, p. 3
[5] The rating of 2 is based on the following statement in the report: "The term "sustainable" must be interpreted in a different way. The sustainability of the business is less decisive than the capability of the returnee to develop a sustainable perspective to continue his/her professional career. In this sense, all but one of the returnees are satisfied with their voluntary return and do not want to migrate to Europe again".

3.5.2 Answering related evaluation questions

xii. What are the main criteria used in the evaluations for discussing sustainable reintegration of the returnees and the sustainability of the AVR(R) programmes?

As mentioned above, the majority of the reports reviewed for this exercise do not concern themselves with the existing definition of sustainability; rather, they consider that the economic viability of the reintegration grants, and in particular those for business start-ups, as the main proof of success (e.g. in allowing the returnee to make sufficient income to cover their living expenses and those of their family). Some of the reports commissioned by donors discuss the issue of sustainable return, while a few reports do recognize that the lack of a definition makes the appraisal of sustainability difficult, and sometimes impossible. In relation to the sustainability of the AVR(R) programmes, it is generally linked to the degree of preparedness of other actors, normally national and institutional actors, to take over the services and assistance after the end of the project. However, from the reports reviewed, the likelihood of reintegration assistance being sustained after the end of the IOM project does not seem to be feasible given a) insufficient capacity or resources in some countries of origin, and b) insufficient political will to commit to the process.

xiii. What are the identified factors (both internal and external to the project) that contribute to sustainable results?

Sustainable results are essentially related to the reintegration components of the projects and programmes and their various forms, and not so much to other components such as pre-departure counselling. As discussed previously, for years there was no standardised approach of sustainability making it difficult to identify and promote factors that can contribute to sustainable results, aside from continued funding to support migrants with development assistance, for instance. The main factors identified for guaranteeing sustainability of results can be summarized as follows:

a) IOM application of the integrated approach as an element contributing to sustainability,
b) National and local ownership and support in line with the new integrated approach,
c) Psychosocial support provided to migrants to be able to take advantage of the reintegration support.

xiv. To what extent were project interventions able to create sustainable results? Which type of intervention proved more likely to be sustainable?

Some elements of the achievement of results were discussed under the Effectiveness section, including information on their sustainability. As already mentioned, not all interventions were able to create sustainable results. For instance, reports mentioned that the success rate for business start-ups was around 70 per cent, but there was no statistical data available to support the analysis of sustainability (R1), as just over half said they were still running their business (13 of 27 had closed down by the time of the visit). In most cases, it is mentioned that market access and connections were predominant conditions for success. There is little evidence to support the claim that the reintegration programme will be continued (R2) after project completion by national authorities. Lack of sufficiently broad, specific and comparable data (R12) is mentioned to inhibit any firm conclusion on the sustainability of the business establishments as well as systematic follow-up from IOM, which makes it difficult to document the sustainability of reintegration.

Still on post-arrival assistance, the lack of articulation with longer-term needs, especially shelter and livelihoods, limits the sustainability and safety of the return and reintegration of IOM beneficiaries (R27). Several returnees indicated that IOM could have helped them to reintegrate better if it would increase the amount of assistance and continue providing them with long-term support (R36).

3.6 Impact

3.6.1 Findings from the reports

Out of the 42 reports, 35 discussed the impact (or outcomes) of the interventions, while others indicated that it was too soon to appraise such efforts on this criterion (R15, R16). More than half of the reports (21 specifically) were rated between 1 and 1.99, while 14 reports were rated 2 or above. The average score for the 35 reports is 1.73. Generally, the impact is positive for the overall AVRR process, and sometimes it is critical and clearly lifesaving. Given the variety of situations and contexts, the impact is widely positive. However, considering that a large number of the reports deal with reintegration, and given the challenges linked to the sustainability of the reintegration process, several reports contain statements that lower the overall impact rating (R3, R17, R19, R37). As in the analysis of sustainability, the reports address the impact or outcomes from a very wide range of different perspectives, some focusing on specific output indicators linked to the projects, some looking at the wider effects on the returnees. A sample of the variety of responses under "outcome" or "impact" is provided in the following text box:

Examples of Impact or Outcome statements
➢ **The Effect of return is not discouraging for potential migrants given returnees do not share willingly their difficulties (R4)**
➢ **99% of returnees declared they did not intend to leave Mali again (R6)**
➢ **The provided assistance proved crucial for many of the returnees especially that most did not possess any savings and were depending on assistance from friends or relatives (R7)**
➢ **As indicated no statement on long-term outcomes based on evidence is possible (R15)**
➢ **The project impact is expressed by the increase in the awareness level and understanding of representative of public authorities and civil society … new policy paper on the reintegration support and establishment of a working group (R21)**
➢ **Stakeholders felt a noticeable and positive change in the attitude of migration authorities towards returnees (R23)**
➢ **The project helped to change for the better migrant's visions and enhance self-trust (R29)**
➢ **The assisted return programme allows for a dignified return (R32)**
➢ **The expected positive impact is certainly a psychological one, seen in the improved well-being and psychological behaviour of beneficiaries (R34)**
➢ **The grant offered by the IOM has a direct causal effect on helping the migrants settle down in their country of origin (R36)**
➢ **The major impact of the project is directly related to the important proportion of the operations devoted to search and rescue and direct beneficiary assistance (R37)**
➢ **During the study tour an attitude shift was notable amongst the participants as delegates began articulating their priorities around voluntary return as opposed to deportation**

> ➢ **Across government participants, the idea emerged of developing a common policy to enforce mutual cooperation between countries of origin, of transit and of destination (R39)**
> ➢ **The programme's "integrated approach" of providing both economic and psychosocial assistance often led to a shift in mental health and more positive outlook (R41)**

There is, however, a common view across the reports that the AVRR projects have contributed to the safe and dignified voluntary return of the migrants, and that, in many cases the assistance provided through the reintegration component had a positive effect on the migrants, even in the cases where the majority of the businesses were not successful (R14, R18, R23, R28, R30, R32, R34). While the impact or outcome categories covered are too many to be fully detailed, the main statements made relate to the:

- Utility of the training opportunities received (for vocational training and skills training, but excluding business development training) to facilitate reintegration,
- Usefulness of the cash grants received at different stages of the return process (in some cases before departure at the airport, in others at the airport upon arrival or after returning to the area of origin) contributing to facilitating the transition from coming back empty-handed from the host country, and
- Personalized attention and support to vulnerable groups, including additional assistance and services for unaccompanied and separated children, families and victims of human trafficking.

3.6.2   Answering related evaluation questions

xv. Were the evaluations able to assess changes and/or expected impact in terms of contributions to the outcomes and objectives of the AVR(R) projects?

As mentioned above a number of positive impacts, with a few less positive outcomes, were identified in the various reports. The summary of the extracted impact/outcome from the reports is listed above.

xvi. Are there any indications on the impact that the projects have had on IOM's image and international recognition of its role that also led to change in strategic approaches and coverage?

Not to the extent that the assessment has been able to identify. Some reports recognize the role of IOM as an efficient and trusted partner for AVRR and its long experience (see for instance 3.2.2 – ii, or 3.4.1), but the linkages to the international recognition of its role and changes in strategic approaches and coverage are not specifically addressed in the reports.

3.7 Cross-cutting issues

3.7.1   Findings from the reports

With the exception of gender, the four cross-cutting issues selected by IOM in its Project Handbook and subsequent guidance[6] have hardly been covered in any of the reports. Regarding

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[6] IOM cross-cutting issues are: Gender mainstreaming, Environment, Human Rights Based Approach,

the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), the criterion has been systematically rated as 3, given that it is a requirement for any migrant benefitting from AVRR that he/she does so out of his/her own choice without coercion or any pressure to decide. Therefore, the conclusion is made that the AVRR essence, as well as AVRR procedures, are respectful of the HRBA. However, that does not indicate that the reports addressed HRBA, although some reports questioned the "voluntary" character of return. The concepts of Accountability to the Affected Population (AAP) and Disability, have been mentioned in one report only. It is important to note that disability was a specific cross-cutting issue and was not considered as part of the "health, mental health or medical condition" of returning migrants, many of whom benefitted from medical assistance services (R14) sometimes linked to substance abuse. All these cases were not counted among the "disability" cross-cutting issue from the perspective of the evaluator, although a number of reports do tackle the "vulnerable cases" categories as a special component with additional support and services.

Gender is the only cross-cutting issue which is addressed in 14 of the 42 reports (33per cent). The overall average rating is 1.5 with 7 reports being rated a 1 and 7 reports being rated a 2. Possible explanations for gender not being addressed in more reports include that: a) a number of reports have largely male caseloads, and women interviewed as part of the sample in the reports are too few to be able to draw conclusions (with one report that attempted, but failed, to have a parity interview sample, and ended with 60 per cent men and 40 per cent women), b) in some contexts it is not possible to interview women individually, and c) gender is not yet mainstreamed in the project documents to enable the systematic analysis of gender across the various types of assistance and the differences between the needs of women and men. Granted that this has sometimes been partially covered under the "vulnerable groups" section, and thus treated together with other aspects, rather than as a stand-alone analysis of gender mainstreaming.

3.7.2 Answering related evaluation questions

xvii. Do the evaluations capture how the projects have contributed to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE)?

There is no such stated objective of GEWE in the majority of reports. However, some reports show greater sensitivity to women's issue, particularly those dealing with mixed migration flows that include families and single female migrants. In one case, particular attention was brought to the project assistance in order to neutralize the negative social bias associated with single female migrants (R33). But none of the reports are fully gender sensitive or address GEWE comprehensively.

xviii. To what extent did the reports indicate the use of a human rights-based approach (HRBA) during AVR(R) implementation?

As mentioned under point 3.7.1, very few reports discuss extensively the issue of an HRBA, with some exceptions relating to the fact that IOM contributes to a "dignified return" which could be interpreted as respectful of human rights, and those donor reports that discuss the "voluntary" character of return. When voluntariness is discussed, it is further clarified that IOM is never involved in deporting migrants or in forced returns operations. This does not however prevent IOM from assisting those migrants when they are back in their country of origin in agreement

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Accountability to Affected Population and Disability.

with the government and under specific conditions as specified in the Post-Arrival Reintegration Assistance (PARA) approach.

xix. Are appropriate systems in place to ensure AAP? What good practices or recommendations exist in this regard within the evaluations?

The analysis was not able to identify any such systems in the reports nor was there any specific recommendation made regarding this issue.

xx. Have evaluations captured points on how disability inclusion was addressed within the projects? What good practices or recommendations exist in this regard?

Disability inclusion is not mentioned in any of the reports nor are there any good practices or recommendations made in this regard.

4. Analysis and interpretation of findings

4.1 Findings that are not linked to the evaluation criteria but relevant to AVRR interventions

- Reports indicate almost consistently that the decision to return appears to be more driven by push than pull factors.
- Return decisions are not made in a vacuum. Normally these are made collectively through discussions or consultations with family members and/or one's social network, highlighting the need to consider the family in the decision-making process.
- The management of expectations pre-return, including during information and counselling, is an important factor contributing to sustainable reintegration in the area/country of origin.
- Reintegration grants need to be tailored to the context in which returns take place (sometimes even within a country there can be wide disparities in the cost of living between the cities and rural areas, e.g. Nigeria and Iraq) and the amount should not be determined by the requirements of donors but rather based on an economic assessment that would ensure equal benefit to migrants returning from different countries (i.e. harmonizing returnees' assistance).
- As IOM works across a variety of contexts including life-saving assistance to stranded migrants and on developmental approaches to reintegration, IOM project documents should clearly state the intent of the approach used and the threshold for success. The integrated approach to reintegration identifies the need for the developmental processes to be supported through strong linkages and partnerships with national and local institutions and actors, CSOs, as well as micro-credit and micro-finance organizations, business development services, and the private sector, but such an approach does not necessarily apply to each and every AVRR project or programme.
- IOM should continue advocating for flexible funding to be authorized by donors to give the option to vulnerable migrants (such as returned unaccompanied and separated children or victims of trafficking) to appoint someone from his/her family or from social assistance entities to benefit from reintegration assistance support, when he/she is not able to benefit personally from the type of assistance offered. This would help to focus on a sustainable reintegration process based on a broader social understanding of the migrant's interaction with the family/social network that are essential pillars of support or at times influence the

decision of the migrant to re-migrate. This has been done in some cases where a caregiver was receiving the reintegration grant to care for the migrant, or where assistance was provided to groups rather than individuals (R2, R22, R33, R41, R42).

- The systematic inclusion of both pre-departure and post-arrival psychosocial counselling addressing anger or stress management, trauma and mental health conditions should be mainstreamed in all AVRR interventions.
- Sufficient funding and time should be allocated for post-return monitoring as a number of challenges were identified in the follow-up procedures and access to the returnees (e.g. length of monitoring, access/distance issues, logistics means to ensure monitoring in remote locations).

4.2 Beyond AVRR evaluations – looking at the broader dimensions of AVRR

The basis of the synthesis evaluation has been the 42 reports identified and analysed. In addition, eleven key informants were interviewed (eight of the nine IOM Migrant Protection and Asiistance Regional Thematic Specialists and three AVRR experts in HQ, as suggested in the list provided by the evaluation management team) who provided additional insights to the wider context in which AVRR takes place. This section therefore builds upon such intense discussions and is meant to provide a concluding reflection on a variety of themes which affect the nature and environment of AVRR, and the wider context of IOM's position on the international stage.

4.2.1 Supporting existing frameworks and guidance/compulsory documents through the establishment of relevant policy documents

IOM needed to evolve rapidly in recent years, in line with the increased complexity under which migration takes place today. Massive migrant flows such as those in 2015 through the Balkans to reach European Union countries, have shown the difficulties linked to the response to massive mixed migration flows. The actions of IOM in the field of AVRR are grounded on policies, normative frameworks and guidance documents which have also been analysed during this evaluation[7]. In particular, the latest three documents published by IOM[8] on AVRR provide: a) a holistic reference framework to understand the purpose of the AVRR process, its procedures and its different phases; b) non-IOM actors and partners, including donors, with an increased understanding of the IOM AVRR process, underlying philosophy and goals; c) IOM Country Offices with reference materials that can be used to develop both project documents and implement AVRR interventions in line with the good practices identified therein, particularly the reintegration handbook which is more operationally-oriented.

All these normative documents are therefore important to support and structure the implementation of AVRR interventions. They need to be rolled out and owned by all the Chiefs of Mission, so IOM can present a corporate model of AVRR interventions, in which flexibility is also a factor that enables IOM to adjust the response to the operational context, while remaining aligned to its normative principles regardless of the context. The IOM focus in ensuring a safe and dignified return is itself a key programmatic principle. Others, such as gender equality, protection or disability inclusion could be made more visible in the intervention design.

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[7] The list of the "compulsory" documents was given by the evaluation manager and is mentioned in annex 3
[8] Towards an integrated approach to reintegration, a framework for AVRR, and the Reintegration Handbook

In communicating with an external audience, IOM should continue promoting a clear corporate position that lays down its core values across any and all AVRR interventions, thereby restating its rules of engagement for providing its support. A comprehensive policy on return and reintegration that elevates the internal guidance documents to an institutional level deserves to be developed, an effort currently ongoing in IOM.

4.2.2   Defining the future clients' profile for AVRR/PARA

IOM is both supply-driven to respond to the requests of its Member States and demand-driven in providing support to migrants in need. This means that some of the interventions are defined at the request of a specific donor, while others are designed to service the needs of the migrants in a variety of situations that require IOM support in line with its mandate; at times interventions reflect a combination of both. Having a consistent institutional framework that lays out the rules of engagement for IOM (core principles and values), supported by the corresponding policy can only strengthen the perception of IOM as a flexible, yet principled service provider that can intervene, accounting for both the supply and demand sides.

Discussions with IOM key informants indicate that AVRR interventions are based on a principled human rights-based approach and in view of protection concerns for the migrants, reintegration assistance can be extended to other categories of 'non-IOM returned' migrants as proposed in the Post-Arrival Reintegration Approach (PARA).

The standing policy of IOM is that the actual journey and transportation of any migrant has to be done with her/his consent and without coercion and IOM's information to migrants in the destination and/or transit countries before their returns insist on the dignified return assistance option that is offered through its AVRR. In several destination countries where AVRR is offered, forced returns and deportations are also diminishing and sometimes stopped. By its Constitution, IOM does not participate to the organization of forced returns travels and deportations. Assistance upon arrival done at the request of the government and under certain conditions is where IOM's work can begin in such cases.

4.2.3   Branding the "V" in AVRR interventions

Another recurring debate is around the "voluntariness" of the return. In some of the donor commissioned reports, there are statements indicating that the migrants did not have in fact a choice in terms of return as it was either AVRR or forced return (R1, R26). The term "mandatory return" (R12) was found to be a more accurate description as suggested by the European Council on Returnees and Exiles. Conversely there were also a number of reports that indicated that the migrants clearly wanted to return to their countries of origin (R25 100 per cent of interviewees, R35) giving full meaning to the term "voluntary". IOM experts indicated that the term "voluntary" as used in the AVRR projects has a specific connotation and now is somewhat of an IOM "brand" compared to what other actors do in terms of supporting returns (for instance development NGOs through the Platform on Sustainable Return (R11), NRC, ACT Alliance, or the British NGO model (R32, p. 21-22)). The term "voluntary" is important for IOM to signal that the informed consent of the migrant is the key element of the return and that he/she always has an opt-out option. It is imperative for the external audience to understand that "voluntary" does not imply a better alternative as suggested in some of the reports, but simply the fact that the migrant is making freely an informed choice to register for return through IOM AVRR programmes.

4.2.4 The importance of communication and of the need for robust M&E and RBM approaches

While IOM has been substantially evolving both on the technical side and on its positioning in regard to the AVRR over the recent years, it is unclear that such a progress has been fully captured by its Member States or that enough visibility has been given to its integrated approach to reintegration. As more donors are now mindful of the need and importance of sustainable reintegration, it is particularly important to provide evidence of the progress achieved so far in this field and bolster the efforts for inclusive partnerships across the range of stakeholders involved – from the donors to the national institutions in sending, transit and receiving countries, including civil society organizations (CSOs), local community-based organisations, UN agencies, the private sector, diaspora, religious groups – all of whom have a role to play in sustainable reintegration.

To improve its management and communication capacity, IOM has improved ICT information materials through platforms, specific websites and dashboards and has recently developed new tools for monitoring and evaluation of its programmes.

The innovative development of a sustainable reintegration score index is a useful and welcome tool to provide evidence of results. It is currently being implemented and has provided some interesting information as mentioned in one report (R41). However, the high sustainable reintegration score of 0.62 mentioned for the countries of the Sahel and Lake Chad region having used the index has not been matched by the other reports reviewed, which indicate that sustainable reintegration remains a challenge (R37, R39, R40).

It is also important to differentiate clearly what IOM is directly responsible for and what IOM supports and facilitates through partnerships that go sometimes beyond the scope and full control of IOM's direct assistance. To communicate the subtle difference between what IOM is able to achieve with its direct assistance and what IOM is contributing to, a proper set of M&E tools has recently been developed with the internal M&E guidance, which presents questions and tools to capture results at three levels: the Assisted Voluntary Return, the Reintegration Assistance, and the Reintegration Sustainability.

Improvements can however still be brought to the Results Framework of Annex 2 of the guidance. For instance, an outcome can be defined as the result of a change process caused by a number of factors (or actors), not simply the result of activities undertaken by a single actor and therefore, the formulation of the outcome statements should be revised to better reflect which change process is being pursued and to whom it can be attributed. The current wording under each level appear to be articulated more as outputs and they are too similar to the output statements they are measuring.

In line with the more complex migration environment in which different actors are responsible for multiple components of the assistance provided, it is therefore essential that IOM be able to report on both the achievements that are within its remit and those to which it is contributing. While ultimately the migrant is responsible and accountable for the use of the assistance received, a large number of actors can also intervene in the sustainable reintegration process (family, social network, local NGOs and civil society organizations, religious groups, government institutions at national and local level, IOM, authorities in the sending and receiving countries, etc.). As described in the IOM guidance on sustainable reintegration, the sustainable reintegration scores ultimately measure the perception of the migrant in terms of his/her

reintegration, but incorporating all the different supports and services that he/she has benefited from during the period that is monitored.

4.2.5   Improved tools for follow-up of the migrants' sustainable reintegration

IOM recommends now to extend the monitoring to 18 months for measuring sustainable reintegration according to the latest M&E guidance and tools, which will address several issues raised in the 42 reports reviewed regarding the <u>lack of sufficient time</u> allocated to follow-up after the return and to appraise the effects of the assistance over a more significant timeline.

It is also important to take into account that sustainable reintegration is dependent of several factors in addition to the direct assistance provided by IOM to support its reintegration at the various levels of the process (pre-departure counselling on the options available, immediate assistance upon return, reintegration assistance through the selected scheme etc.). Sustainable reintegration can include informal support received from the migrant's family and/or social networks, other financial support from associates or friends for business start-ups, additional training in cases of vocational training, psychological support etc. Such informal support is not necessarily fully covered through the current measurement systems.

4.2.6   AVRR and the support of M&E on the way forward

This synthesis evaluation takes place at a moment of strong innovation and creativity within IOM to address the new challenges in the field of migration and at the institutional level, for instance through the creation of the UN Migration Network, the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) or in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In this context, AVRR is playing an important role in contributing to the orderly, safe, regular and responsible management of migration, providing principled, dignified and human rights-based services to returning migrants.

The conceptual and operational guidance on sustainable reintegration is showing a large expanse of future partnerships in which IOM can and should become involved, especially with the increasing concern to ensure that AVRR is not just an assisted return but a truly integrative process in the migrant's country of origin. IOM is well positioned to consolidate its comparative advantage in undertaking AVRR interventions by continuing strengthening its policies, communication and M&E activities.

Given the fact that AVRR takes place in a variety of contexts, project documents, results frameworks and evaluation ToRs should be mindful to define and inform the expected project results in a manner that can be readily captured during the evaluation process. The M&E guidance tools of the AVRR Results Framework are very useful and well thought-out, to be used in all types of interventions, regardless of its objectives. IOM should also have a differentiated set of tools depending on the nature of AVRR interventions: for instance, those taking place in a humanitarian/life-saving context with a focus on safe return and short-term reintegration (e.g. basically providing a cushion to start the longer-term reintegration process), versus those with more comprehensive scenarios, such as the EU-IOM Joint Initiative, that put great focus on sustainable reintegration.

In recent years, IOM has also been investing into the reinforcement of its M&E culture and set-up as well as in its capacity to implement results-based management approaches for bringing

stronger evidence on the results achieved. Hence, the need also to tailor the M&E services to the strategic function of knowledge management and to communicate more clearly across the range of AVRR interventions the specific successes, lessons learned and good practices linked to the operating context and the manner in which AVRR is undertaken. This is actually in part what IOM is doing through its Knowledge Management Hub.

4.2.7 IOM's role in the "nexus" between humanitarian and development contexts

The synthesis findings show that IOM has a corporate advantage in its position within the current discussion in the UN regarding the "nexus" between humanitarian and development. AVRR is carried out in humanitarian as well as development settings and IOM is drawing experiences from both contexts. The development approach included in the sustainable reintegration concept gives IOM a relevant entry point to engage with the international community, national governments and institutions in the development field. This is already illustrated through programmatic partnerships with UN agencies such as UNDP (as development programme) and ILO (for livelihoods and income-generating). Partnerships can also include local actors and organizations, including the private sector, that understand better the dynamics of the context in those areas where migrants are returning to.

4.2.8 Towards programme and multisectoral approaches[9]

As a projectized organization, IOM has been rolling out interventions largely on the basis of a project approach, which makes a comprehensive approach more challenging. Yet it could also happen that many of the IOM Country Offices in the receiving countries and/or countries of origin have other projects funded by different donors providing similar support and it would be desirable to consider creating multi-donor programmes whenever possible rather than single donor project related interventions. The recent approval of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative can be a particularly good example of a comprehensive collaboration across a range of components applying the integrated approach to return and reintegration.

5. Overall Conclusion

This synthesis evaluation has been based on an analysis of 42 reports from 2008 until 2020 selected by the AVRR unit and OIG. The reports show a constant evolution in both the concepts related to AVRR, but also in the operationalization of AVRR. With an increasingly complex international scenario regarding migration, IOM has shown a good level of flexibility and adaptability and has been responding well to the evolving needs of the new complex migration environment. In recent years however, a strong push for the institutional reinforcement of AVRR has led to the publication and roll-out of critical guidance such as the Integrated Approach to Reintegration, the Framework for AVRR and the Reintegration Handbook.

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[9] While the term "Project" and "Programme" is used indistinctively across the reports and in this evaluation, the term "Programme" refers here to a longer-term intervention, often with more resources, and to a wider scope that covers different but mutually reinforcing components and possibly a wider geographical region.

As such, only a few reports were produced after 2017 (six of the 42 i.e. 14.3 per cent) that can be related to the most recent reflection of IOM engagement in AVRR and in a more integrated approach to reintegration. A wider sample of recent reports would have allowed a better comparison in the application of the recent guidance regarding the integrated approach, and therefore more evidence of results linked to the various aspects which are more thoroughly covered in recent interventions such as the EU-IOM Joint Initiative.

But previous reports have raised and discussed issues such as the "voluntary" character of the return, the "sustainability" of return or of reintegration, the lack of an agreed definition for sustainable reintegration and other conceptual challenges, which have been instrumental in the understanding of the gaps and weaknesses that have been addressed in the recent IOM guidelines and publications. It is also understood that IOM is now working at the policy level to frame the IOM AVRR and PARA institutional approaches.

Most of the groundwork towards defining conceptually sustainable reintegration, developing the related policy, providing the tools to establish an evidence base of results, and supporting management functions at the M&E level appear to be gradually put in place for AVRR. There is no doubt that IOM is not the organization it was ten years ago, and it has adapted its work in the field of AVRR accordingly as illustrated in this synthesis report. Institutional changes by joining the UN, the approval of the Global Compact for Migration, an evolving and intensifying migration scenario across a wider range of countries, and a more mature reflection on the nature, mandate and objectives of the Organization have allowed IOM to be well positioned to advocate for harmonization of the AVRR procedures with the international community while at the same time providing operational guidance to further enhance its performance in providing AVRR services.

Certainly, there remain a number of challenges, including the difficult balance between the donor-driven supply side approach to AVRR and the migrants' needs-driven, demand side for sustainable reintegration, which will hopefully become an increasingly accepted model for AVRR. Critical partnerships will need to be established to collectively contribute to the objectives of AVRR for the assistance to migrants across the many contexts and countries in the world. IOM has the tools and experience to address the challenge of a new generation of increasingly complex and sophisticated AVRR/PARA interventions and maintain the adequate balance between high-level advocacy and flexible and effective field-based operations.

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

SYNTHESIS EVALUATION

Extracting Learning from Evaluations of Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVR(R)/PARA) Programmes

Context:

A key outcome of this evaluation is to improve learning, inform decision-making and offer the possibility to make a condensed analysis of what lessons can be learned from multiple evaluations conducted over time. The Evaluation function under the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has identified 26 IOM fields of activity that could benefit from a synthesis evaluation among which the voluntary return and reintegration (AVR(R)/PARA) of migrants. Since 1987, 63 evaluations related to voluntary return and reintegration (AVR(R)/PARA) have been conducted and published at IOM.[10]

A synthesis evaluation can be defined as the systematic procedure of collecting findings from various evaluation studies and putting it together to identify patterns and provide an overview across the documents being reviewed. OIG and the Department of Migration Management will work together for the implementation and management of the synthesis evaluation of the AVR(R)/PARA-related evaluations.

Background on AVR(R)/PARA:

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) is part of a comprehensive approach to migration management aiming at orderly and humane return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host or transit countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin.

IOM's AVRR programmes strive to ensure that migrants in need are assisted to return voluntarily, safely and in dignity, and are supported in achieving sustainable reintegration, in full respect for human rights, regardless of their status. IOM's AVRR-related activities are guided by the Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration[11], which outlines seven principles, such as 'voluntariness', 'sustainability of reintegration' or 'evidence-base programming, and six objectives such as 'returnees are able to overcome individual challenges impacting their reintegration' or 'adequate policies and public services are in place to address the specific needs of returnees and communities alike'.

Reintegration assistance is equally relevant for those migrants who are assisted to return voluntarily by actors other than IOM or are forcibly returned by governments and who may find themselves in a vulnerable situation due to extended periods of time spent abroad, a lack of preparedness before return and stigmatization linked to deportation. These migrants, and the communities to which they return, need post-arrival support through comprehensive reintegration assistance. For this reason, under very specific conditions, in cooperation with governments of both origin and host countries, IOM has also been providing post-arrival

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[10] These evaluations may also cover other thematic areas but contain an AVRR component. These are the evaluations that were stored and published by the Office of the Inspector General.

[11] https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/a_framework_for_avrr_online_pdf_optimized_20181112.pdf

reintegration assistance (PARA) to migrants returned by other actors, voluntarily or involuntarily, after they were formally admitted to their countries, that is, after the process of return concluded.Successful implementation of AVR(R)/PARA programmes requires the cooperation and participation of a broad range of actors, including the migrants, civil society and the governments in both host and transit countries and countries of origin. The partnerships created by IOM and a diverse range of national and international stakeholders are essential to the effective implementation of AVR(R)/PARA – from the return preparation to the reintegration stage.

Specific guidelines are also available to manage reintegration programmes in both AVRR and PARA contexts, the most recent being the Reintegration Handbook[12] providing practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance – aligned with IOM's Integrated Approach to Reintegration[13].

The return and reintegration of migrants have gained renewed political importance on the agenda of national and international policy makers around the world as it can be noted through the recent migrants and refugees' movements and crisis, which is also reflected in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in particular its Objective 21, which calls on governments to cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return (…), as well as sustainable reintegration.

In reviewing the evaluation reports, it is important to keep in mind that the there is no agreed upon definition of sustainability and that success of AVR(R)/PARA interventions is defined differently by donors. Importantly, since 2016 an important interest from development donors towards AVRR has been observed. This, coupled with the evolution of migratory trends, has led IOM to conceptualise a new model (or Integrated Approach to Reintegration), which may already incorporate some of the findings of the evaluations carried out in the past. In the same vein, IOM has recently improved its M&E framework, including through the identification of standard indicators to measure sustainability.

OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF SYNTHESIS EVALUATION:

The overall objective of the synthesis evaluation is to examine the evolving knowledge on and operational base of AVR(R)/PARA interventions in terms of institutional approaches, evidence collection and analysis (including), good practices, and recommendations, with particular attention to the following objectives:

1. To strengthen evidence-based learning in AVR(R)/PARA.
2. To determine whether the strategic efforts and tools put in place by the AVRR Unit address the most frequent evaluations recommendations.
3. To inform AVRR Unit about possible programming adjustments based on common trends, gaps, lessons learned and good practices identified.

More specifically, the synthesis will:

   a. Identify trends and gaps in terms of relevance and effectiveness of the assistance provided that appear in most of the reviewed evaluations related to AVR(R)/PARA approach including at the level of findings and recommendations.

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[12] https://publications.iom.int/books/reintegration-handbook-practical-guidance-design-implementation-and-monitoring-reintegration

[13] https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/Towards-an-Integrated-Approach-to-Reintegration.pdf

b. Capture knowledge, lessons learned and good practices identified across the evaluations
c. Identify design and implementation weaknesses in AVR(R)/PARA programmes and key factors that may explain them with regards to either return or reintegration.
d. Make recommendations on how to improve evaluations of AVR(R)/PARA programming.
e. Provide key recommendations to improve programming based on the synthesis in terms of project development and resource mobilization.

The synthesis evaluation will focus on specific learning in line with existing guidance and is not intended to provide general guidance for AVR(R)/PARA programmes.

Evaluation Questions:

Taking into account the scope of the individual evaluations reviewed and the above objectives, the synthesis evaluation will examine the following questions:

Relevance:

1. To what extent did the AVR(R)/PARA intervention respond to the envisaged objective of each project/programme?
2. To what extent are AVR(R)/PARA strategies and policies integrated in the design of the programme or projects evaluated?
3. How well did IOM leverage its comparative advantages in the implementation of the AVR(R)/PARA programmes?
4. What are the main methodologies used for conducting the evaluations and how are limitations addressed in terms of quantitative and qualitative data analysis and impact assessment?

Effectiveness:

1. What are the common trends identified across the evaluations, in terms of the effectiveness of the implementation of AVR(R)/PARA and of the assistance provided? Which criteria, if any, were used to conclude that an AVR(R)/PARA project was successful?
2. What are the main gaps, key lessons learned and good practices identified across the evaluations in terms of effectiveness of implementation?
3. What are the main gaps and recommendations made in the evaluations reviewed for an effective reintegration addressed in the new integrated approach to reintegration?
4. How did the evaluations use the feedback and experience of returnees to make recommendations and to propose better target interventions?
5. To what extent was IOM able to attain its results within the programmes evaluated?

Efficiency:

1. How well have programmes been implemented in accordance to agreed timeframes/deadlines and budget expenditure?
2. How well have resources been invested to contribute to the results?
3. What are the main constraints identified in the resources available for an effective implementation of the projects?

Sustainability:

1. What are the main criteria used in the evaluations for discussing sustainable reintegration of the returnees and sustainability of the AVR(R)/PARA programmes?
2. To what extent were project interventions able to create sustainable results? Which type of intervention proved more likely to be sustainable?
3. What factors (both internal and external to the project) may have made the outcomes more sustainable?

Impact:

1. Were the evaluations able to assess changes (e.g. social, institutional, individual behavioural changes) and/or expected impact in terms of contributions to the outcomes and objectives of the AVR(R)/PARA projects?
2. Are there any indications on the impact that the projects have had on IOM's image and international recognition of its role that also led to changes in strategic approaches and coverage?

Cross-cutting issues:

1. Do the evaluations capture how the projects have contributed to gender equality and women's empowerment?
2. How did the projects ensure to have a rights-based approach during implementation?
3. Are appropriate systems in place to ensure accountability to affected populations? What good practices or recommendations exist in this regard within the evaluations?
4. Have evaluations captured points on how disability inclusion was addressed within the projects? What good practices or recommendations exist in this regard?

Audience for the Evaluation:

The main audience of this synthesis evaluation is internal: the AVRR Unit and the Regional Thematic Specialists supporting MPA in the 9 regional offices at IOM. The audience will use it to determine how to improve programming worldwide on AVR(R)/PARA and integrating the learning from the synthesis evaluation. External stakeholders such as donors and partners may find the findings relevant as well.

Indicative Methodology:

The synthesis evaluation will review 40[14] evaluations identified from 2008 to 2020 as per the list in annex. The reports have been identified applying the following criteria:

- **Thematic relevance**: evaluations cover projects fully relevant to AVR(R)/PARA activities (evaluations of projects with multiple areas of work have not been taken into consideration).
- **Time of publishing**: priority is given to evaluations published over the last 12 years.
- **Geographical coverage**: evaluations cover projects located in a balanced set of countries/regions.

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[14] Depending on the availability of a few additional reports that may be made available at the end of April, this figure may be around 42 evaluations.

Other documents to review will include strategic-level documents related to AVRRAVR(R)/PARA including guidance notes, policy documents and reports/newsletter.

The evaluator will also have the opportunity to interview a few key staff. It is recommended that a few interviews (remotely, as necessary) are conducted with AVRR staff in Headquarters and Regional Offices in order to ensure understanding of the programme and the key thematic elements of AVR(R)/PARA. An estimated 10 interviews will be undertaken.

Consolidation of quantitative and qualitative data from both the evaluations and the interviews are expected in order to provide a strong analysis and respond to the questions of the evaluation synthesis.

The methodology to be used should ensure that the findings are accurate, methodologically sound, comprehensive, and unbiased. It is required to have:

a. Explicit and comprehensive search strategy.
b. Systematic and replicable coding and data extraction strategies and procedures.
c. Acknowledge potential biases and the measures taken to mitigate or reduce these.
d. Clear data analysis approach to be employed (e.g. descriptive statistics, qualitative data analysis and/or a mixed approach, etc.).
e. Quality data (valid, reliable, consistent and accurate).

The following steps are expected:

1. Meet with the Evaluation Management team (the Office of the Inspector General/Evaluation and the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Unit) (remotely, as necessary) to discuss the Terms of Reference, intended information to be gleaned, and note any concerns with feasibility and to discuss the nature and acquisition of the evaluations and confirm any required data protection protocols.
2. Do an initial review of the evaluations in order to develop the inception report which will describe the selection of reports to analyse, the framework for reviewing the evaluations and the approach for triangulating information from other sources.
3. Undertake a review of the agreed upon collection of evaluation reports, aiming to analyse and respond, to the criteria and questions indicated above.
4. Conduct the review of the evaluations in accordance with agreed process from the inception phase. Conduct the relevant interviews and survey during the data collection phase.
5. Provide updates to the Evaluation Management team as the review/examination progresses, to provide feedback on initial findings and challenges, so that the review of evaluations can be fine-tuned in response to the information available.
6. Present the findings to an internal IOM audience (remotely or in person, depending on location and available funds), permitting a discussion about the outcomes and recommendations.

Deliverables:

The consultant is expected to provide the following deliverables:

1. Inception report outlining the process of reviewing all documents and tools for interview
2. Final evaluation synthesis report of no more than 30 pages (excluding annexes)

3. Evaluation brief (template provided by IOM)
4. Presentation of key findings

Roles and Responsibilities:

Management: The management of the evaluation will comprise of OIG and Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Unit that will work together to approve the processes and be available for support to the evaluators. OIG will provide evaluation-specific support to guidance the technical process and the AVRR Unit will provide thematic-level discussions to ensure that the process remains in line with agreed objectives and contributes to their learning.

Evaluator: The evaluator will submit the deliverables according to the timelines agreed upon with OIG and the AVRR Unit. The final versions of the deliverables submitted should reflect inputs of the parties consulted and as agreed upon with the OIG and the AVRR Unit, as well as be in line with IOM editing and formatting requirements. Evaluator is expected to write the report in an evidence-based manner such that all observations, conclusions, recommendations, etc. are supported by evidence and analysis.

Indicative Timeline:

This is a proposed timeline to guide the consultancy; to be agreed with the selected consultant.

Activity	Timeframe	Working days (if relevant)	Responsibility
Inception phase (including briefing meeting)	Beginning/mid-June	5 days	Consultant
Review of the inception report	End of June	4 days	IOM evaluation management team
Evaluations review and interviews	July	15 days	Consultant
Synthesis evaluation draft report	August	5 days	Consultant
Review of the evaluation draft report	August	10 days	IOM Evaluation management team
Finalise report and evaluation brief and presentation	September	4 days	Consultant
TOTAL DAYS		**29 days**	

Call for Proposals:

Interested consultant should have:

1. At least 15 years of evaluation experience (or 10 years evaluation experience and advanced degree in social and political sciences).
2. Preferably 5 years of migration experience, including on return and reintegration-related issues.

3. At least 5 years of experience in synthesis work, advanced coding and mixed methods skills.
4. Knowledge of French and Spanish languages is an asset.

And should send the following information:

5. A short proposal explaining the understanding of the assignment and methodology.
6. Sample of similar work.
7. Three references.
8. Budget for the assignment.

Please send the above information to eva@iom.int by 15 May 2020

Annex – List of Evaluations

Evaluation Title	Year of Publication	Countries Covered
Return in Dignity, Return to What? Review of the Voluntary Return Programme to Afghanistan	2008	Norway; Afghanistan; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Denmark
Evaluation of the project "Coordination of the Return and Reintegration Assistance for Voluntary Returnees to Moldova"	2008	Republic of Moldova (the)
Evaluation of Reintegration Activities in Afghanistan: IOM	2009	Afghanistan
Retour volontaire assisté et réinsertion dans leur pays d'origine de migrants irréguliers présents au Maroc (AVRR 2008) Mission d'évaluation du volet réinsertion au Sénégal, Congo Brazzaville et Guinée Conakry	2009	Morocco; Senegal; Congo (the); Guinea
Monitoring Report August 2009 - January 2010 RAS - Reintegration Assistance from Switzerland	2010	Worldwide
Regional Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Morocco	2010	Libya; Mali; Morocco; Niger (the)
Assessment of the Assisted Voluntary Return Projects in Hungary	2010	Hungary
IOM UK's Reintegration Assistance to Returnees under VARRP's New Approach (2007-2009)	2010	Afghanistan; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Iraq; Pakistan; Sri Lanka; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration of Iraqi Nationals From Selected European Countries - An analysis of policies and practices	2010	Austria; Bulgaria; Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Norway; Romania; Sweden; Switzerland; Netherlands (the); Iraq
RECOPILACIÓN DE BUENAS PRÁCTICAS QUE PUEDEN SERVIR PARA LA REINTEGRACIÓN DE NIÑOS, NIÑAS Y ADOLESCENTES MIGRANTES NO ACOMPAÑADOS	2010	Argentina; Colombia; El Salvador; Ecuador
Leaving the Netherlands. Twenty years of voluntary return policy in the Netherlands (1989-2009)	2010	Netherlands (the)

Between two Societies: Review of the information, Return and Reintegration of Iraqi Nationals to Iraq (IRRINI) programme	2011	Iraq; Norway
Evaluación a programas de Asistencia al Retorno Voluntario y propuestas de reintegración económica para Bolivia	2011	Bolivia (the Plurinational State of)
Return and Reintegration Assistance, External Evaluation, Country Study Georgia, Final Report	2013	Switzerland; Georgia
Return and Reintegration Assistance, External Evaluation, Country Study Guinea, Final Report	2013	Switzerland; Guinea
Return and Reintegration Assistance, External Evaluation, Country Study Iraq (Focus on the Kurdistan Region), Final Report	2013	Switzerland; Iraq
Return and Reintegration Assistance, External Evaluation, Country Study Kosovo, Final Report	2013	Switzerland; Kosovo (References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999))
Return and Reintegration Assistance, External Evaluation, Sri Lanka, Final Rep	2013	Switzerland; Sri Lanka
Return and Reintegration Assistance, External Evaluation, Turkey, Final Report	2013	Switzerland; Turkey
Return and Reintegration Assistance, External Evaluation, Country Study Nigeria, Final Report	2013	Switzerland; Nigeria
Degree of Implementation and effects of the project "Support to Reintegration Mechanism in Moldova for Readmitted and Returned Moldovan Nationals" Good Practices and Lessons Learned (Evaluation Report)	2013	Republic of Moldova (the)
An External Evaluation of IOM Sri lanka's - "Community Based Reintegration and Economic Recovery Support To Vulnerable Communities in The Newly Resettled Villages in the Northern and Eastern Districts in Sri Lanka"	2013	Sri Lanka
Evaluation Report - Guatemalan Repatriates Project (GRP)	2013	Guatemala
IOM Guatemalan Repatriates Project: Best Practices Report	2013	Guatemala
Away and Back Home "Assistance ForThe Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Returnees To Nigeria" (AVRR Nigeria IV) Report	2013	Austria; Nigeria
Evaluation of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Pilot Program - Final Report	2014	Canada
Evaluating IOM's Return and Reintegration Activities for Returnees and Other Displaced Populations - Afghanistan	2014	Afghanistan
Evaluation of the Reintegration Component of Canada's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Pilot Program	2014	El Salvador; Mexico; Canada
Assistance for the Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Returnees to the Russian Federation/the Chechen Republic - AVRR Chechnya VI Final Report	2014	Russian Federation (the)

Evaluation Report - Complex Reintegration Assistance for assisted voluntary returnees to Kosovo (UNSCR 1244)	2015	Hungary; Kosovo (UNSCR 1244)
Evaluation of IOM RAVL - Final Report	2015	Libya; Ghana; Togo
Programmes for assisted return to Afghanistan, Iraqi Kurdistan, Ethiopia and Kosovo: A comparative evaluation of effectiveness and outcomes	2016	Afghanistan; Iraq; Ethiopia; Kosovo (References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999))
Rapport d'évaluation externe Projet de réintégration et d'appui psychosocial des migrants retournés de l'Algérie et renforcement de leurs communautés d'accueils a Zinder	2016	Niger (the)
Mid-term Evaluation of Open Centre for Migrants Registered for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (OCAVRR) Project	2016	Greece
Evaluation of the Voluntary Return Assistance in Libya	2017	Libya; Senegal; Nigeria
IMPACT EVALUATION OF IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme - FINAL REPORT	2017	Egypt
Evaluation de mi-parcours du projet "Migrant Response and Resource Mechanism (MRRM) Phase II"	2018	Niger (the)
Final Evaluation of the Project "Addressing the needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Sending, Transit and Receiving Countries"	2018	Morocco; Yemen; United Republic of Tanzania (the); Guinea; Ethiopia
Mid-Term Review of EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migration Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa	2019	Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan
Final Evaluation of the Project "FORAS-Reinforcement of Reintegration opportunities"	2020	Morocco
Evaluations to be analysed once available		
Evaluation of EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in Sahel and Lake Chad	*Forthcoming*	*Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal*
Evaluation of the Return and Reintegration Program in Northern Triangle	*Forthcoming*	*El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras*

Annex 2 – AVRR guidance and reference documents

1. MC/INF/222 – Policies and Practices with respect to rejected asylum seekers, 3rd November 1992
2. MC/EX/INF/51 - IOM Policy concerning its assistance to unsuccessful asylum seekers and irregular migrants returning to their country of origin, 29 March 1996
3. MC/INF/236 - IOM return policy and programmes - A Contribution to Combating Irregular Migration, 5 November 1997
4. MC/INF/287 – IOM strategy, 9 November 2007
5. MA/00448, IOM, AVRR Handbook, April 2010
6. IOM, Towards an INTEGRATED APPROACH TO REINTEGRATION in the context of return, 2017
7. IOM, a framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, 2018
8. IOM, Reintegration Handbook, 2019

Annex 3 – List of Key Informants Interviewed

Nr	KII Name	date	minutes
1	Yitna Getachew	18.9.20	
2	Nicola Graviano	21.9.20	65
3	Irina Todorova	21.9.20	70
4	Alem Makonnen	22.9.20	45
5	Ali Abdi	23.9.20	60
6	Sacha Chan Kam	25.9.20	60
7	Peppi Siddiq	28.9.20	60
8	Nazanine Nozarian	29.9.20	75
9	Laurence Hunziger+Maria Voica	29.9.20	65
10	Nassima Clerin	30.9.20	60
11	Rosilyne Borland	1.10.20	75
	total		**710**
	Average interview time		**64,5**

Annex 4 - Referencing of 42 reports (R1 to R42)

Ref	Year	Comm. Agency	Author	Title
1	2008	UDI	CMI	Return in Dignity, return to What? Review of AVRR to Afghanistan
2	2008	**IOM**	*S&A*	Evaluation of the project "coordination of the R&R assistance for voluntary returnees to Moldova"
3	2009	UK	Altai	Evaluation of Reintegration Activities in Afghanistan: IOM for DFID
4	2009	**IOM**	*Kane cons.*	AVRR 2008 au Maroc, mission d'évaluation du volet réinsertion au Sénégal, Congo Braza et Guinée Conakry
5	2010	**IOM**	IOM CH	Monitoring Report, August 2009-January 2010, RAS Reintegration Assistance from Switzerland
6	2010	**IOM**	IOM Limo	Regional AVRR programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Morocco
7	2010	**IOM**	IOM Hu	Assessment of the Assisted Voluntary Return Projects in Hungary
8	2010	**IOM**	IOM UK	IOM UK's Reintegration Assistance to returnees under VARRP's New Approach 2007-2009
9	2010	**IOM**	IOM	AVRR of Iraqi nationals from selected European countries: an analysis of policies and practice
10	2010	**IOM**	*consultant*	Recopilación de buenas prácticas que pueden servir para la reintegración de niños/as y adolescentes NA
11	2010	**IOM**	IOM	Leaving the Netherlands, 2 years of Voluntary Return Policy in the Netherlands 1989-2009
12	2011	UDI	CMI	Between two societies, review of the IRRINI (information, return and reintegration of Iraqi Nationals Program)
13	2011	**IOM**	IOM Bol	Evaluación a programas de AVRR para Bolivia
14	2013	FOM	KEK	RRA external evaluation : Country Study Georgia
15	2013	FOM	KEK	RRA external evaluation : Country Study Guinea
16	2013	FOM	KEK	RRA external evaluation: country study Iraq (focus on Kurdistan)
17	2013	FOM	KEK	RRA external evaluation: country study Kosovo
18	2013	FOM	KEK	RRA external evaluation: country study Sri Lanka
19	2013	FOM	KEK	RRA external evaluation: country study Turkey
20	2013	FOM	KEK	RRA external evaluation: country study Nigeria
21	2013	ADC	consultant	Degree of implementation and effects of the project Support to Reintegration Mechanism in Moldova
22	2013	**IOM**	*EML*	Community-based reintegration and economic recovery support to vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka
23	2013	**IOM**	*Manaus*	Evaluation Report: Guatemalan Repatriates Project (GRP)
24	2013	**IOM**	*Manaus*	IOM GRP Best Practices Report
25	2013	**IOM**	*consultant*	Away and back home AVRR Nigeria IV
26	2014	CBSA	CBSA	Canada Border Services Agency Evaluation of the AVRR pilot programme final report
27	2014	**IOM**	*S. Hall*	Evaluating IOM's RR Activities for returnees and other displaced populations Afghanistan
28	2014	**IOM**	*Int. Gouv.*	Evaluation of the Reintegration Component of Canada's AVRR Pilot Program
29	2014	**IOM**	*Dev. Sol.*	Final evaluation of the Project AVRR Cechnya VI Final Report
30	2015	**IOM**	IOM HU	Evaluation Report - Complex reintegration assistance for AVR to Kosovo (UNSCR 1244)
31	2015	**IOM**	*Altai*	Evaluation of the IOM RAVL - Libya

32	2016	UDI	CMI	Programmes for Assisted return to Afg, Iraqi Kurd, Eth, and Kosovo: a comparative evaluation of effectiveness
33	2016	**IOM**	*consultant*	Rapport d'évaluation externe - projet de réint. Et appui psychosocial des migrants retournés de l'Algérie
34	2016	**IOM**	**IOM OIG**	Mid-term evaluation of Open Centre for Migrants Registered for AVRR (OCAVRR) project
35	*2017*	**IOM**	*Altai*	Evaluation of the Voluntary Return Assistance in Libya
36	*2017*	**IOM**	*CDS*	Impact evaluation of IOM's AVRR Programme
37	*2018*	**IOM**	**IOM AFO**	Evaluation de mi-parcours du projet Migrant Response and Resource Mechanism (MRRM) Phase II
38	*2018*	**IOM**	Altai	Final eval. of the Project "addressing the needs of stranded and vulnerable migrantes in targeted countries"
39	*2019*	**IOM**	MGSC	Mid-term review of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the HoA
40	*2020*	**IOM**	Van Lidth	évaluation finale du projet - FORAS renforcement des opportunités de réintégration
41	*2020*	**IOM**	**IOM**	EU-IOM Joint initiative - Sahel and Lake Chad Region
42	*2020*	**IOM**	consultant	evaluación final del proyecto retorno y reintegración en el Triángulo Norte de Centroamérica

Note: titles have been kept in their original language

Bold font is used to highlight IOM commissioned reports, versus donor commissioned reports in regular font

Synthesis Evaluation Extracting Learning from Evaluations of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVR(R)/PARA) projects and programmes

Evaluation commissioner: IOM OIG and AVRR Unit

Evaluator: Christian Bugnion

Inception report and work plan

4th August 2020

Note: the contents of this report reflect the views of the evaluator and not necessarily those of the commissioning agency

Content

Annexes:

- 1. ToR
- 2. Preliminary findings on the 42 reports
- 3. IOM table for AVRR guidance/reference documents
- 4. Pilot data extraction tool (CMI report 2008)

Acronyms

AVRR:	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration[15]
DAC:	Development Assistance Committee
EMT:	Evaluation Management Team
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
KII:	Key Informant Interview
MiGOF:	Migration Governance Framework
M&E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PARA:	Post-Arrival Reintegration Assistance
RBM:	Results-Based Management
ToC:	Theory of Change
ToR:	Terms of Reference
UNDG:	United Nations Development Group
UNEG:	United Nations Evaluation Group

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[15] While this acronym is used throughout the report, the level of reintegration support provided under each project and programme can greatly vary.

Background and Context

The Evaluation function under the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has identified 26 IOM fields of activity that could benefit from a synthesis evaluation among which are the assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) as well as the post-arrival and reintegration assistance (PARA) of migrants[16]. Since 1987, 63 evaluation related to AVRR or PARA programmes have been conducted and published at IOM. A key outcome of the current synthesis evaluation is to improve learning, inform decision-making and offer the possibility of having a condensed analysis of what lessons can be learned from multiple evaluations conducted over time.

To undertake the synthesis evaluation, IOM OIG has recruited an external evaluator to carry out the assignment. A synthesis evaluation can be defined as the systematic procedure of collecting findings from various evaluation studies and putting it together to identify patterns and provide an overview across the documents being reviewed. Furthermore, the initial discussion with OIG and the AVRR Unit indicates that the synthesis will also analyse to what extent the recent guidance documents on AVRR produced by IOM (e.g. Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration and an Integrated Approach to Reintegration in the Context of Return) are addressing the findings and recommendations from the reports reviewed during the synthesis and if the integrated approach has been implemented and could be a potential model for all upcoming AVRR activities.

AVRR is a part of a comprehensive approach to migration management aiming at orderly and humane return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host or transit countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin.

PARA refers to the provision of post-arrival reintegration assistance to migrants returned by other actors, voluntarily or involuntarily, after they were formerly admitted to their countries of origin (i.e., after the process of return is concluded), with the consent of the government in the country of origin of the returned migrant.[17]

IOM's AVRR programmes strive to ensure that migrants in need are assisted to return voluntarily, safely and in dignity, and are supported in achieving sustainable reintegration, in full respect for human rights, regardless of their status. IOM's AVRR-related activities guided by a Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, which outlines a vision, seven principles, and six objectives (see Figure 1 below).

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[16] It is important to note that these are two different concepts AVRR and PARA, and not one
[17] As indicated in the internal document Post-Arrival and Reintegration Assistance IN/205 of February 2012

VISION

Migrants in need are assisted to return voluntarily, safely and in dignity, and are supported in achieving sustainable reintegration, in full respect for human rights, regardless of their status.

PRINCIPLES

1. Voluntariness
2. Migrant-centred response
3. Safety
4. Sustainability of reintegration
5. Confidentiality
6. Dialogue and partnerships
7. Evidence-based programming

OBJECTIVES

1	2	3	4	5
Migrants can make an informed decision and take ownership of the voluntary return process.	Migrants reach their countries of origin in a safe and dignified manner.	Returnees are able to overcome individual challenges impacting their reintegration.	Communities have the capacity to provide an enabling environment for reintegration.	Adequate policies and public services are in place to address the specific needs of returnees and communities alike.

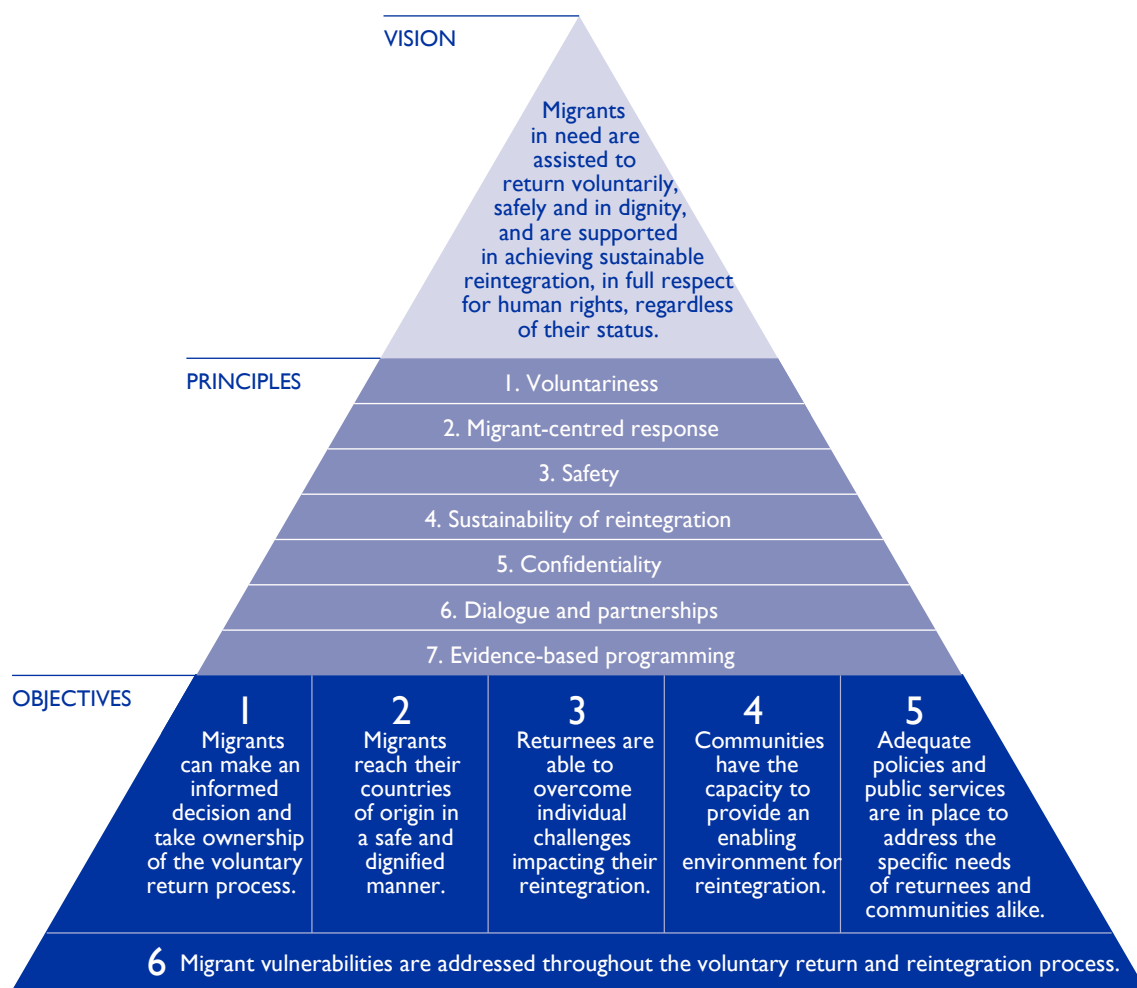6 Migrant vulnerabilities are addressed throughout the voluntary return and reintegration process.

Figure 1: IOM, a framework for assisted voluntary return and reintegration (2018)

Reintegration assistance is equally relevant for those migrants who are assisted to return voluntarily by actors other than IOM or are forcibly returned by governments and who may find themselves in a vulnerable situation due to extended periods of time spent abroad, a lack of preparedness before return and stigmatization linked to deportation. These migrants, and the communities to which they return, need post-arrival support through comprehensive reintegration assistance. For this reason, under very specific conditions, in cooperation with governments of both origin and host countries, IOM has also been providing post-arrival reintegration assistance (PARA) to migrants returned by other actors, voluntarily or involuntarily, after they were formally admitted to their countries, that is, after the process of return concluded.

Successful implementation of AVR(R)/PARA programmes requires the cooperation and participation of a broad range of actors, including the migrants, civil society and the governments in both host and transit countries and countries of origin. The partnerships created by IOM and a diverse range of national and international stakeholders are essential to the effective implementation of AVR(R)/PARA – from the return preparation to the reintegration stage.

Specific policy and operational guidelines available to manage reintegration programmes in both AVRR and PARA contexts, the most recent being the Reintegration Handbook (2019), provide practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance – aligned with IOM's Integrated Approach to Reintegration (2017).

Purpose, scope, and objective of the synthesis evaluation

The overall **evaluation objective** is to examine the evolving knowledge on and operational base of the AVR(R)/PARA interventions in terms of institutional approaches, evidence collection and analysis, including good practices and recommendations, with particular attention to the following objectives:

4. To strengthen evidence-based learning in AVR(R)/PARA.
5. To determine whether the strategic efforts and tools put in place by the AVRR Unit address the most frequent evaluation recommendations.
6. To inform the AVRR Unit about possible programming adjustments based on common trends, gaps, lessons learned, and good practices identified.

The evaluation **specific objectives are to**:

f) Identify trends and gaps in terms of relevance and effectiveness of the assistance provided that appear in most of the reviewed evaluations related to AVR(R)/PARA approach including at the level of findings and recommendations.
g) Capture knowledge, lessons learned, and good practices identified across the evaluations.
h) Identify design and implementation weaknesses in AVR(R)/PARA programmes and key factors that may explain them with regards to either return or reintegration.
i) Make recommendations on how to improve evaluations of AVR(R)/PARA programming.
j) Provide key recommendations to improve programming based on the synthesis in terms of project development and resource mobilization.

The **scope** of the evaluation is defined by 42 reports which make up the universe for the documentary analysis. Reports range from 2008 to 2020 and will be the primary source of data. IOM has also supplied a range of guidance and policy documents regarding AVR(R)/PARA. Given that the evaluation reports spread from 2008 to 2020, IOM has provided a chronological table indicating per year which mandatory documents applied to AVR(R)/PARA interventions (included as annex 3). This is necessary in order to define the framework at the time of the interventions being evaluated in these reports, especially since AVR(R)/PARA guidance and programming have been evolving and gradually, culminating in the most recent guidance documents (e.g., the AVRR Framework and the Integrated Approach to Reintegration). Additional data collection (and triangulation) will be made through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with key IOM staff which will be identified by the evaluation management team.

The analysis will be done through qualitative data extraction from each report which defines the universe for the synthesis evaluation as defined in the ToR, in addition to the relevant IOM compulsory guidance documents regarding AVR(R)/PARA from 2008 to 2020, which will be referenced in the bibliographical annex.

Audience

The main audience of this synthesis evaluation is internal: the AVRR Unit and the Regional Thematic Specialists supporting MPA in the 9 regional offices at IOM. The audience will use it to determine how to improve programming worldwide on AVR(R)/PARA and integrating the learning from the synthesis evaluation. External stakeholders such as donors and partners may find the findings relevant as well.

Recent AVR(R)/PARA background

The return and reintegration of migrants have gained renewed political importance on the agenda of national and international policy makers around the world as it can be noted through the recent migrants and refugees' movements and crisis, which is also reflected in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), in particular its Objective 21, which calls on governments to cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return (…), as well as sustainable reintegration.

In reviewing the evaluation reports, it is important to keep in mind that there is no agreed upon definition of sustainability of reintegration. Different actors including donors, governments of origin, migrant associations, etc. have different perspectives on what success of AVR(R)/PARA is.

Importantly, since 2016 an important interest from development donors towards reintegration has been observed. This, coupled with the evolution of migratory trends, has led IOM to conceptualise a new model (known as the Integrated Approach to Reintegration), which may already incorporate some of the findings of the evaluations carried out in the past. In the same vein, IOM has recently improved its M&E framework, including through the identification of standard indicators to measure sustainability of reintegration.

Evaluability

The evaluability of each report will be commensurate to its quality and the application of professional standards. An initial review of the universe of reports shows that very few reports provide all the necessary information to appraise fully all the questions mentioned in the TOR. It is important to underline that IOM has a decentralised evaluation function and only one report has been undertaken by OIG, while others have been undertaken by consultants, consultancy firms, or IOM offices. Some have been commissioned by donors, others by IOM, with different objectives and scopes. An initial mapping of the reports was prepared as annex to this inception report. The preliminary findings already address point d. of the specific evaluation objectives as regards to how to improve evaluations of AVR(R)/PARA programming. It is clear however that the quality of the reports vary as they are not all based on the same format, template or do not all share the same objectives, although all reports do have at least an AVRR or PARA component.

Approach and methodology

This evaluation is a synthesis of formative and summative evaluations, and is looking at good practices and learning from the past evaluation reports to inform future projects and interventions, particularly in line with the new comprehensive approach to reintegration prepared by IOM, i.e. Integrated Approach to Reintegration (2017), AVRR Framework (2018) and Reintegration Handbook (2019). Another aspect is to review whether with the integrated approach to reintegration and the AVRR framework, the recommendations made in the 42 reports have been addressed, and whether the new integrated model encompasses these points and can be expected to guide future AVR(R)/PARA interventions.

The evaluation follows a "utilization-focused evaluation" approach that is described by M. Q. Patton in his book "utilization-focused evaluation[18]" that continues to be a good practice reference material for the conduct of evaluations. Furthermore, the evaluation is aligned with the "IOM Project Handbook 2.0" established by the IOM in 2017, which is compatible with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation norms and standards (2017 revision) and the UNDG RBM guidance (2012). This evaluation also

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[18] "Utilization-focused Evaluation", Michael Quinn Patton, 3rd Edition, Sage publications, 1997

adheres to the UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluation. The evaluation is compliant with the OIG "evaluation guidelines" and aligned to the IOM Evaluation Policy of September 2018 (IN/266). Finally, the evaluation is using the latest definition of the revised standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria[19], which read as follows:

"Relevance: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

Efficiency: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

Impact: The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

Sustainability: The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue."

Furthermore, the synthesis will appraise the extent to which gender equality, rights-based approach, accountability to affected populations, and disability inclusion have been addressed in the reports.

The six evaluation criteria for this synthesis evaluation will therefore be: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and cross-cutting issues, but through the overall lens of a formative analysis identifying trends, good practices, gaps, lessons learned and recommendations across the 42 reports.

Tools and methodology

The evaluation will use mixed-methods and work with different units of analysis: data extraction will be from each report (first unit of analysis) based on the contents of the report. The second unit of analysis will be the comparison across the reports of the six criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues). The third unit of analysis will be to make a synthesis of the findings from the first and second units and taking into consideration information gathered from the reports' analysis and the KIIs with key IOM staff to inform the overall appraisal by the evaluator. Some aspects are linked to an agreed-upon four-point rating system, but the weighting of each element has been abolished per discussion with the Evaluation Management Team (EMT) as explained below.

The pilot data extraction tool containing two tables was shared with the EMT and accepted. The specific methodology for the use of the two tables is explained in this section. Table I (conformity with UNEG quality checklist for evaluation reports) is filled for each report according to the extent to which the report addresses the different elements of the UNEG section 8. Since section 8 of UNEG Gender and Human Rights has been included in the cross-cutting issues section, which additionally encompasses accountability to affected populations and disability inclusion, for the purpose of the rating, the number of sections is limited to 7, the cross-cutting issues being slotted under section 5 on findings. For table I, the rating corresponds to the degree to which the contents mentioned under each UNEG sub-section is addressed in the report. The four-points scale ranges from 0 (minimum) to 3 (maximum), as per the

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[19] Originally definitions dated back to the OECD/DAC glossary of key terms in evaluation and results-based management in 2002, and have been updated in 2019 through the "Better Criteria for Better Evaluation", Revised Evaluation Criteria, Definitions and Principles for Use, OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation

following details: 0=not addressed/poor (e.g. less than 33%), 1=partially addressed (between one third and 50%) 2=satisfactorily addressed/good (between 50 and 75%), 3=fully addressed/excellent (75% and over).

For example, under the first section (The structure of the report), point 1.2. refers to six specific types of information that need to be mentioned, point 1.3 refers to five elements, and point 1.4 to seven annexes. To obtain a rating of 3, the report needs to have fully responded to these requirements (over 75%). A rating of 2 indicates a compliance of more than 50% up to 75%, and a rating of 1 indicates a compliance of more than 33% and less than 50%, whereas a rating of 0 indicates compliance from 0 to 33%). This rating is based on the evaluator's judgement from the review and analysis of each report. It was further indicated by the EMT that in case of non-existing sections under reports that are not labelled as "evaluation reports" but "study, research" or similar, the N/A (Not Applicable) mark will be indicated for table I.

For table II, the rating reflects the contents of each report per specific criterion/issue. It is not based on the evaluator's judgement (which will be the case for the third unit of analysis) but the extent to which the criterion / issue is addressed. For example, in the pilot data extraction tool shared with the EMT based on the CMI report of 2008 (see Annex 4 for details), the first rating under point. 2.1. effectiveness of AVR(R)/PARA programming is given a 0. This doesn't indicate IOM's inability to deliver on the result, but reflects the report's finding which is that "the choice of voluntary return was shaped by factors other than IRRANA components", so IOM's intervention was not a decisive factor for the return. The evaluator further indicates the location of the evidence/finding so it can be traced back to its source. Where there are several elements under the same criterion/issue, these are rated separately (again under 2.1. there are six different findings related to effectiveness). For each evaluation criterion, a rating is given, while some issues do not possess a rating (as the data will be used for the second unit of analysis or the third unit of analysis) and do not therefore require a rating (for example sub-section 2.3. on good practices, or the sections "conclusions" or "recommendations". The rating structure allows for a quantitative indication of the manner in which findings relating to each criterion was addressed in the report.

The qualitative analysis will be further expanded after the individual reports have been rated through a thematic cross-comparison of results (second unit of analysis). This will be done for each evaluation criterion and the unrated aspects relating to good practices and lessons learned. The third and final unit of analysis will be the evaluator's judgement which will stem from the results of the findings from the second unit of analysis, complemented by the analysis from the 12 KIIs. The list of KIIs was facilitated by the EMG, and will be informing the contents of the draft evaluation report.

Primary data sources

As specified in the TOR the primary documentary universe from which findings are to be extracted are the 42 reports selected by IOM for this synthesis evaluation. In order to systematically obtain reliable data to provide an evidence-base for the analysis and the synthesis, the evaluator will:

1) Use a qualitative data extraction tool which has been presented in the original proposal for the synthesis evaluation. It consists of **a matrix in which the evidence links to the corresponding parts of the report by criterion** (so it can be verified) and is rated on a four point scale in line with the UNEG compliant UN GERAAS (Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System): *fully integrated (3), satisfactorily integrated (2), partially integrated (1), Not integrated at all (0)[20].*

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[20] Guidance Note, Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS), IES, IEAS, UN Women,

Considering the diversity of reports, the ratings will remain at the individual report level to indicate evaluation performance *per report*, but it will not compare across reports (thereby providing the requested recommendations regarding how to improve future AVR(R)/PARA evaluations). **The qualitative findings referenced for each report by criterion will be extracted and a table summarising key findings, recommendations, good practices, and gaps will be presented as the main output**. The table will also indicate the frequency of the findings (if one finding, or several similar findings appear across the reports, and their numbers). Obviously the more often a specific recommendation, finding, good practice or lesson is identified in the reports, the more it is considered to be relevant for the AVR(R)/PARA synthesis evaluation.

2) Analyse the synthesis table in chronological order to see if: a) trends can be identified from the 2008 until 2020 reports in AVR(R)/PARA, b) changes and evolution of particularly the reintegration component have taken place, and, if so, what kind of changes and in response to what factors.

Key IOM policy and reference documents

IOM has developed relevant reference materials regarding AVR(R)/PARA over the years. While the most recent guidance mentioned is the "Reintegration Handbook" dated 2019, the reports have been produced between the years 2008 and 2020. The initial review of the reports shows that very few reports indicate or refer to IOM policy and reference documents, so it is difficult to understand the framework against which the AVR(R)/PARA interventions are taking place. This is critical to the synthesis evaluation because:

a) Some reports have been commissioned by donors and governments with a different scope than IOM AVR(R)/PARA and therefore are not bound by IOM's AVR(R)/PARA guidance materials. IOM on the other hand has to be accountable to ensure the AVR(R)/PARA interventions have been undertaken in line with the corporate tools, guidance and policy documents. It is important to separate those reports that deal exclusively with IOM AVR(R)/PARA projects (without the involvement of other actors) and those that cover a wider unit of analysis. A separate matrix will be used to differentiate the AVR(R)/PARA specific reports from *those* dealing with broader IOM programming (where AVR/AVR(R)/PARA are small components of a larger programme, so there is no confusion in the unit of analysis of the reports (IOM AVR(R)/PARA versus broader AVR(R)/PARA programmes).

b) Some of the reports cover specific IOM AVR(R)/PARA **projects**, others refer to governments' AVRR **programme** (such as Switzerland) which go beyond IOM interventions, and there is no consistency in the terminology used between the term "programme" and "project". The initial discussion with the AVRR unit indicated that there is no model for or an AVRR programme as such, and that IOM is a project-based organisation, with a specific donor funding each project. In order to ensure coherence and consistency in the different units of analysis, the synthesis evaluation will use the term "projects and programmes" when referring to AVRR interventions part of IOM-specific projects and those led by other AVRR actors.

As a result, the evaluator has requested from the AVRR Unit a table that clearly identifies from 2008 to 2020 which are the compulsory documents that need to be applied when undertaking AVR(R)/PARA interventions. A number of policy and guidance documents have been provided, out of which eight are the compulsory documents as indicated by IOM, with the rest being provided as background information that does not necessarily need to be analysed in detail by the evaluator in order to undertake the synthesis evaluation, as is the case with the compulsory documents. Their use could be relevant when specifically mentioned in the evaluation report reviewed, or in case there are major discrepancies between a report

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August 2019. This is a suggested rating scale, others can be used as well if needed.

implemented eight years ago and a recent one, to check if this may be due to the content of a different instruction. This means that before analysing the 42 reports, the evaluator will have to get acquainted with the compulsory and main background documents which are mentioned in the table from IOM which is included as annex to this report. These documents are:

1. IOM Policy and Practice with respect to Rejected Asylum Seekers (1992)

2. IOM Policy Concerning its Assistance to Unsuccessful Asylum Seekers and Irregular Migrants Returning to their Country of Origin (1996)

3. IOM Return Policy and Programmes: A Contribution to Combating Irregular Migration (1997)

4. IOM Strategy (2007)

5. AVRR Handbook (2010)

6. Integrated Approach to Reintegration (2017)

7. A Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (2018)

8. Reintegration Handbook (2019)

Key Informant Interviews (KII)

According to the ToR and in order to ensure triangulation and probing of specific findings from the data extraction, analysis and synthesis of the 42 reports in line with IOM's policy and reference documents, an estimated ten KII will take place after the original data extraction from the reports has been made. This will allow to triangulate and probe the findings and obtain clarification from the IOM key informants. The evaluation management team will provide the complete list of individuals as well as their contact details in order to arrange for an interview through remote communication means (Skype, Zoom, MS Team, etc.). The KIIs will be semi-structure interviews, using a protocol to ensure consistency and comparability. Given the fact that the questions will depend on the findings from the analysis and review of the 42 reports, it is not yet possible to provide the tool itself at the inception stage. Such a protocol will be shared with the evaluation management team after the analysis of the 42 reports is completed and the corresponding outputs (matrix and tables) have been produced. The evaluator will take notes for each KII which is expected to last some 60 minutes per KII. The KIIs should be undertaken during July/August 2020 subject to availability of the respondents.

Specific methodological aspects

In regards to the evaluation criteria, some of the indicative questions may not be applicable to the synthesis evaluation. Questions such as under relevance the extent to which AVR(R)/PARA strategies and policies were integrated in the design of the projects evaluated may be difficult to answer considering the initial findings from the enclosed preliminary findings documents on the 42 reports which show that few refer to IOM guidance documents while 23 reports don't mention IOM materials and 6 don't contain a bibliography/reference list. Questions related to the efficiency criterion may not be possible to answer if these aspects have not been identified in the reports, leaving some room for recommendations or lessons learned from the synthesis on the difficulty in/absence of information for quantifying resources and costs of AVRR programmes (the initial review shows very few providing detailed resources information). The questions related to sustainability will be identified from the specific understanding of the sustainability made in each report, which may or may not allow an aggregation given different views and definitions. The question regarding impact of the projects on IOM's image and international

recognition will depend to the extent that this is addressed in the reports, the same as the degree to which the cross-cutting issues have been addressed.

Preparation of the draft synthesis evaluation report

After completing the KII, the evaluator will review the initial findings from the analysis of the 42 reports. If there are contradictions between the KII data and the analysis in the reports, this will be mentioned and raised with the evaluation management team.

Management of the evaluation

The evaluation manager is the Oversight Officer on behalf of the Evaluation function of IOM OIG and the EMT is composed of the OIG and the AVRR Unit focal points. The synthesis evaluation is undertaken through a desk-based study, research, and communication.

Risks and limitations

The synthesis evaluation requires a previous knowledge of the IOM corporate materials informing AVR(R)/PARA projects and programmes, which the evaluator confirmed as having received, and the Management team will guide him through the document review with separating compulsory reading with other material as explained above. It is important to facilitate the work of the evaluator in that regard to acquire the sufficient knowledge of the corporate culture on AVR(R)/PARA and its materials before undertaking the reports' review and analysis. When the reading of the compulsory material will be finalised, a conference call could be organized to present and discuss the main elements of the corporate culture extracted by the evaluator from that review.

Another aspect is linked to the expectations from the AVRR unit regarding the synthesis evaluation. As discussed, the primary utility of the synthesis evaluation is to appraise the extent to which the recent approach developed by IOM through the "Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration" (2018), "Integrated Approach to Reintegration" (2017), and "Reintegration Handbook" (2019), is conducive to incorporating the recommendations, lessons and findings from the 42 reports reviewed and if the integrated approach has been implemented and could be a potential model for all upcoming AVRR activities. This aspect will be tackled following the finalization of the review of the 42 reports and KIIs, to be addressed under a specific chapter of the synthesis evaluation.

The variety and diversity of the 42 reports show different scopes and purposes. Some reports have a broader scope than the AVR(R)/PARA interventions from IOM, and also appraise governmental interventions and/or policy or NGO interventions. Although all are supportive of AVR(R)/PARA and are partners to IOM, other actors are not bound by the same corporate policies and procedures that IOM is. It will be important to note that the reports address different scope and focus of the project/programmes, and therefore the synthesis will reflect the different levels of result in line with the scope and focus of the different reports.

Given the potential limitations regarding the evaluation questions, a revised evaluation matrix with the key questions has been included for review and approval by the evaluation management team.

The timeframe is short as the contract started at the end of June 2020 and the period coincides with annual leave for a number of staff so it is hoped that the KIIs will be able to take place in July/August with the support of the EMT.

The evaluator is trilingual French-English-Spanish which cover the different languages in which the 42 reports have been written.

Evaluation workplan

Contract and access to the documentation: 29 June 2020

Submission of the inception report (after initial review of the documentation): 7th July 2020

Review and analysis of the reports and conduct of KIIs: July/August 2020

Submission of the draft synthesis evaluation report: 30 August 2020

Review of the draft synthesis evaluation report: up to 15th September 2020

Submission of the final report, evaluation brief and presentation: 30th September 2020

Key evaluation questions and framework

The key questions to be addressed by the evaluation have been structured along both the main purpose of the evaluation and methods used for the synthesis evaluation. It draws from the questions mentioned in the ToR and rewords some of the key question in order to ensure the different units of analysis are being respected. The two last columns indicate the data source and methods and the means of verification.

Table 1 Evaluation framework

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	ISSUE	DATA SOURCE & METHODS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
1. Relevance			
1.1. To what extent did the AVR(R)/PARA intervention respond to the envisaged objective of each project/ programme?	Relevance	Documentary analysis of reports and IOM references, KIIs, tables and matrix for data	42 reports, IOM guidance materials, 12 KII, data extraction, notes
1.2. How did the IOM leverage its comparative advantage in implementing AVR(R)/PARA interventions?	Responsiveness adaptability		
1.3. To what extent are AVR(R)/PARA strategies and policies integrated in the design of the programme or projects evaluated?"	Positioning, alignment		
1.4. What are the main methodologies used for conducting the evaluations and how are limitations addressed in terms of quantitative and qualitative data analysis and impact assessment?	Quality of evaluation reports		
2. Effectiveness			
2.1. To which degree have the expected results of the AVR(R)/PARA interventions been achieved?	Key results obtained	Documentary analysis of reports and IOM references, KIIs, tables and matrix for data	42 reports, IOM guidance materials, 12 KII, data extraction, notes
2.2. What are the common trends identified across the evaluations, in terms of the effectiveness of the implementation of AVR(R)/PARA and of the assistance provided? Which criteria, if any, were used to conclude that an AVR(R)/PARA project was successful?	RBM value, accountability, M&E		
2.3. What are the main gaps, key lessons learned, and good practices identified across the evaluations in terms of effectiveness of implementation?	Good practice and evidence of results		
2.4. What are the main gaps and recommendations made in the evaluations reviewed for an effective reintegration addressed in the new integrated approach to reintegration?	Replication and learning		
2.5. How did the evaluations use the feedback and experience of returnees to make recommendations and to propose better target interventions?	Inclusion of migrants' experience		
3. Efficiency			
3.1. Did AVR(R)/PARA interventions deliver results in an economic and timely way (in accordance to agreed timeframes/deadlines and budget expenditures)?	Cost-efficiency	Documentary analysis of reports and IOM references, KIIs, tables and matrix for data	42 reports, IOM guidance materials, 12 KII, data extraction, notes
3.2. What are the main constraints identified in the resources available for an effective implementation of the projects?	Learning and quality of evaluations, M&E value		

4. Sustainability			
4.1. What are the main criteria used in the evaluations for discussing sustainable reintegration of the returnees and the sustainability of the AVR(R)/PARA programmes?	M&E, RBM, accountability, common language and positioning	Documentary analysis of reports and IOM references, KIIs, tables and matrix for data	42 reports, IOM guidance materials, 12 KII, data extraction, notes
4.2. What are the identified factors (both internal and external to the project) that contribute to sustainable results?	Learning and replication		
4.3. To what extent were project interventions able to create sustainable results? Which type of intervention proved more likely to be sustainable?	Longer-term results		
5. Impact			
5.1. Were the evaluations able to assess changes (e.g. social, institutional, individual behavioural changes) and/or expected impact in terms of contributions to the outcomes and objectives of the AVR(R)/PARA projects?	Higher-level results analysis (in line with UNDG definition of *outcome* including institutional, social and behavioural changes)	Documentary analysis of reports and IOM references, KIIs, tables and matrix for data	42 reports, IOM guidance materials, 12 KII, data extraction, notes
5.2. Are there any indications on the impact that the projects have had on IOM's image and international recognition of its role that also led to changes in strategic approaches and coverage?	Learning and quality of evaluations, external perception, international positioning		
6. Cross-cutting issues			
6.1. Do the evaluations capture how the projects have contributed to gender equality and women's empowerment?"	GEWE, gender mainstreaming	Documentary analysis of reports and IOM references, KIIs, tables and matrix for data	42 reports, IOM guidance materials, 12 KII, data extraction, notes
6.2. To what extent did the reports indicate the use of a rights-based approach during AVR(R)/PARA implementation?	HRBA approach		
6.3. Are appropriate systems in place to ensure accountability to affected populations? What good practices or recommendations exist in this regard within the evaluations?	Accountability to affected population		
6.4. Have evaluations captured points on how disability inclusion was addressed within the projects? What good practices or recommendations exist in this regard?	Disability inclusion		

Total: 20 questions