EVALUATION BRIEF

December 2019

INTERNAL INDEPENDENT MID-TERM EVALUATION OF IOM'S GLOBAL MIGRATION DATA PORTAL

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

Evaluation type:	Internal independent mid-term
Evaluator:	Sarah Harris, Regional M&E Officer, IOM Regional Office in Vienna
Field visit dates:	No field visit was carried out.
Final report date:	December 2019
Commissioned by:	IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Center (GMDAC)

Managed by: Carla Rojas, Migration Data Editor, GMDAC

Evaluation purpose: For use by project and senior management to assess whether the Portal is reaching its intended beneficiaries and achieving intended results, and by donors to better understand the extent to which the Portal content is relevant to the beneficiaries or how the content could be more relevant.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance and Effectiveness

Evaluation methodology: Document review, analysis of secondary data (results of on online survey of Portal users, and Google Analytics data) and phone interviews with a sample of 43 users of the Portal.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Global Migration Data Portal was developed and is managed by IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) in Berlin, Germany.

The development of the Portal began in 2016 and includes three phases to date. Phase I, which involved conceptualization, design and programming of the website, is not covered by this evaluation. The evaluation covers only Phase II (launch of the Portal) and Phase III (expansion of the Portal). Though specific dates vary by donor, Phase II began in June 2017, with launch of the Portal in December 2017, and Phase III started in early 2018 and will continue to early 2020.

This mid-term evaluation covers a period of one-and-a-half years since the Portal was launched in Dec 2017, until Jun 2019 when evaluation data collection began. No field visits were carried out. Analysis relied on project documents and reports, results of an online survey of Portal users, Google Analytics for the period from Portal launch until 30 June 2019, and 43 short phone interviews that included follow-up interviews with survey respondents and a sample of additional informants.

The intended results of Phase II and III:

- **Outputs**: launch of the Portal (Phase II) and scale up of the Portal (Phase III), availability and quality of Portal content (types of content, amount of content, updates to content, translation of

Project information:

Geographical coverage:	Global
Project type:	Migration Research and Publications
Project codes:	PR.0204, PR.0189, PR.0214, PR.0215, PR.0229, PR.0187
Gender marker:	2A (for Phase IV)
Project period:	Multiple (varies per project). Analyzed period is 1 Dec 2017 to 30 Jun 2019.
Donors:	Germany, United States (PRM), Switzerland
Budget:	Multiple (varies per project). Total of all six project budgets is around 1.4 million USD.

content), and promotion of content (launch events, social media).

- **Outcome**: access to and use of content by target users.

- **Objective**: Contribute to improved policy making and public debate on migration.

The project has a wide range of identified target users, including several 'key' target users:

- **Key target users:** National statistics officers (NSOs), other government policymakers, and media and journalists.

- Other target users: International agencies, NGOs and civil society working in the migration field, academia and research institutes, migrants, and the general public.

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KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

1.1 Portal content is in alignment with original intent to facilitate access to migration data and provide capacity building tools. It is less clear the extent to which the Portal aligns to higher-level results (outcome and objective), related to weaknesses in project logic, which focuses on availability of a Portal (output) rather than how the Portal is used by target users and how that contributes to improved policy making and public debate. This poses challenges to monitoring and evaluating higher-level changes.

1.2 The current Portal content aligns well to target user needs and expectations identified in conceptualization. It provides a one-stop-shop for migration data that is useful, comprehensive, timely, and reliable. However, there are sometimes trade-offs between those areas and also a few aspects that could be improved, particularly related to usefulness and timeliness.

2.1 While the Portal content aligns with initial intentions, there are some related to originally proposed content that are not fully reflected. Many of those were also identified in survey and interview responses, and could be areas for potential expansion or improvements, such as: linking to national sources and contact persons; improving country profiles; exploring other data sources that could be used, including data on current migration issues and events; and improving the map visualization.

Effectiveness

3.1 Visits to the Portal have steadily increased since its launch in December 2017 with the most visited sections being Data and Themes. However, it was not possible with available data to determine the extent to which the specific target users are visiting the Portal – a question posed in the initial Terms of Reference (ToR). Thus, more data would be needed to explore this further.

3.2 Most of those interviewed are visiting the Portal at least once in 3-6 months (70%) and most first visited either soon after launch or within the past year (84%).

4.1 Most of those surveyed or interviewed appear to be finding the content they are looking for. Most are looking for content related to Data (87%), followed by Themes (55%), and Overviews (40%). There was a moderate interest in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) (32%) as well as Tools (30%), with the lowest interest being in Blogs and Videos (19%).

4.2 As for user satisfaction with the content, overall there is a high degree of satisfaction. However, concerns were raised relating to Portal functions and organization, such as user-friendliness of navigating it, explanations of scope and content covered, and clarity on the timeline and content of the updates made to the Portal.

4.3 The Portal is perceived to be very useful overall. Only 3% found the Portal was not useful at all. The highest ratings were given by government. Academia/research ratings were more mixed but remained high. Civil society organizations (CSOs), IOM, international organizations (IOs), private sector and media gave the lowest ratings.

5.1 A majority (53%) report that they are using the Portal. The most common uses are to gather background data or statistics. Many are also using the Portal to stay informed. However, there is limited evidence of contribution to policymaking and public debate.

5.2 The evidence available is insufficient to draw conclusions on alignment of observed use to the intended uses. More data is needed from the users, particularly from the target groups (policymakers and media), together with a more explicit theory of change.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In the next three months, GMDAC is recommended to:

1. Develop a theory of change on user interaction with and use of the Portal, as well as capacity building.

Within the next year, GMDAC is recommended to:

2. Plan for more monitoring and feedback mechanisms.

3. Improve targeting of content to users, to the extent possible with available resources and funds.

4. Consider ways to reach non-users for feedback, to the extent possible with available funds and resources.

5. Refine as needed the theory of change based on monitoring data.

6. Add links to national data sources, to the extent possible with available funds and resources.

7. Add explanations in each section of the Portal of what was included in the last update and projections for future updates.

8. Continue adding Regional Pages.

9. Include a more prominent explanation of the Portal scope and contents.

10. Add explanations in the Portal, for instance in the About page, of why categories for indicators were selected and what each contains.