



EVALUATION BRIEF

December, 2022

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT: STRENGTHEN OPERATIONAL CAPACITIES FOR GAMBIAN AUTHORITIES TO MANAGE BORDERS, RESPOND TO HEALTH CRISIS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COVID-19

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator(s) 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:	Final Internal Evaluation
Evaluator(s):	Krishna Vyas, Tijan Njie, Nfamara Kinteh
Field visit dates:	October—November 2022
Final report date:	December 2022
Commissioned by:	IOM The Gambia
Managed by:	Stephen Matete

PROJECT SUMMARY

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Committee declared the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic. The Government of The Gambia (GoTG) declared a State of Public Emergency (SOPE) on 27 March 2020. Amongst the restrictions put in place, closure of its borders to contain COVID-19 was a priority. The Gambia has a vast and sparsely monitored border with its neighbor Senegal, whose cases continues to rise, which in turn makes The Gambia more susceptible, especially given the nascent capacity of its security operatives to effectively patrol its borders.

The declared SOPE expired on 15 September 2020 and borders re-opened as in the rest of the ECOWAS region. This requires preparedness of border authorities to facilitate an effective flow of travelers and goods while maintaining operational efficiency, not only to respond to the health crisis, but also to mitigate security threats.

In the framework of ongoing projects implemented by IOM that are addressing border management needs in The Gambia, the further enhancement of border management and strengthen surveillance of land and maritime borders have been stressed as a priority by the national authorities.

Evaluation purpose: To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project and the extent to which it achieved its objectives as set out in the project documents. The evaluation also needed to identify key lessons and good practices.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability as well as gender & human rights.

Evaluation methodology: The evaluation used a combination of methods: (1) Review of project documentation and reports submitted by IOM; (2) six key informant Interviews with high level ministerial staff; (3) 147 surveys with the project's main stakeholders, including direct beneficiaries; and (4) three focus-groups with the project's direct beneficiaries.

The evaluation covers the following localities as key project intervention areas in The Gambia: Giboro, Kerr Ali, Kartong, Amdallai, Dasilameh, Nyamanarr, Tanji, Fatoto and Banjul.

Project information:

Geographical coverage:	The Gambia
Project type:	Immigration & Borders (IB)
Project code:	IB.0239
Gender marker:	N/A
Project period:	31 MAR-2021 to 30-SEP-2022
Donor:	Government of Japan
Budget:	(\$ 742,574)

Funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by IOM in The Gambia, the project "Strengthening Operational Capacities for Gambian Authorities to Manage Borders, Respond to Health Crisis and Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19" objectives are:

1. Strengthening maritime and border management capacities;
2. Strengthening health emergency preparedness and response, including COVID-19 infection, prevention, and control; and
3. Addressing socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on cross-border traders.

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

- The design and objectives of the project are addressing the needs of the Government of The Gambia and in line with national and global strategies and priorities.
- Activities and outputs sampled are consistent with the expected outcome pathways identified in the project results matrix and overall goal of the project.

Effectiveness

- All output indicators have been achieved across project implementation and the project is showing promising signs of achieving its higher-level objective and outcomes.
- Border officials have enhanced their capacities in using MIDAS and the system has proven to fasten the processing of traveler information and waiting times.
- The project has enabled many effective, multisectoral and local to national level stakeholder collaborations resulting in integrated and harmonized border management across land Point of Entries, through the establishment of Inter -Agency Border Coordinating Committees (IABCC's).
- The Infection Prevention Control (IPC) training resulted in increased knowledge; however, implementation of good practices is challenged by limited IPC resources. 4 posts were provided with WASH facilities in line with targets set, however, water shortages remain a challenge in some communities due to maintenance issues.
- The cash grant provided to female traders to cope with the losses from COVID-19 has been a source of revival for most of the businesses, and all beneficiaries reported their satisfaction with the support provided.

Efficiency

- The project utilized 100% of the budget and was cost-effective. The human and financial resources were appropriately utilized and internal and external collaboration for project delivery was optimal. Expenditures and activity implementation were overall timely, albeit some activities that were reported 'off track' within the original timeframe resulting in a No Cost Extension of 6 months resulting from the presidential election, COVID-19 and poor access to remote locations due to the flooding crisis.

Impact

- Some early impacts are reported by the project's ben-

eficiaries and partners such as the improved border coordination and operational procedures (e.g. (i.e., through the development of COVID-19 SOPs); the formation of partnerships between different stakeholders at the border for enhanced border management (through IABCC's); strengthened capacities of border officials at land borders (MIDAS, training lab, speed boat and vehicle for mobility); and improved socio-economic conditions of vulnerable cross border traders (through cash assistance).

Sustainability

- Some elements of sustainability are emerging, such as the commitment of border agency members to create a durable basis for continuation of the IABCC's, the facilitation of continuous learning through the MIDAS training lab and plans for decentralization of the COVID specific SOP. Sustainability of some successful project outputs are at risk without adequate policy, institutional, technical, and financial conditions to ensure continued positive effects are sustained (IPC and WASH maintenance). A clear sustainability (or exit) strategy needs to be established.

GOOD PRACTICES

- IOM's full transparency in sharing the project's objective and outcomes with government counterparts has created a conducive environment for fostering national level ownership and accountability for achieving desired outcomes.
- Uptake of regional and global best practice in integrated Health, Border and Mobility Management has proven beneficial. For example, interagency partnerships are a key differentiator of the project and has resulted in established partnerships that are valued, mutually beneficial and will be sustained long-term.

KEY-RECOMMENDATIONS

- IOM to put in place transfer mechanisms which are coordinated, agreed upon and formalized with key project stakeholders (e.g., government, CSO's) so benefits achieved can be sustained after IOM exits.
- Through strengthening IABCC's in The Gambia, IOM to further help broaden the scope through cross border partnerships with Senegal, to identify potential areas of collaboration and a long-term joint vision of enhanced cross border immigration management.
- IOM to continue strengthening national capacities in border management with the goal to gradually transfer knowledge and skills across the rest of The Gambia's' key entry points, with emphasis on the roll out of a Training of Trainer modality.