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EU-IOM
Joint Initiative for
Migrant Protection
and Reintegration
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Mid Term Review of EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa

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GLOSSARY

AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
EU	European Union
EUTF	European Union Emergency Trust Fund
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MR(R)C	Migration Response (and/or Resource) Centre
MTR	Mid-Term Review
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
ROM	Results-Oriented Monitoring
SSWA	Secretariat for Sudanese Working Abroad
SO	Specific Objective
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
ToR	Terms of Reference
TC	Transit Centre
UMCs	Unaccompanied Migrant children
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Table of Contents

MID TERM REVIEW OF EU-IOM JOINT INITIATIVE FOR MIGRANT PROTECTION AND REINTEGRATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5

1.1 INTRODUCTION 7

1.1 RETURN AND REINTEGRATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA 7

1.2 THE JOINT-INITIATIVE 8

1.3 REPORT OUTLINE 10

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY 10

2.1 AIM OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW..... 10

2.2 METHODOLOGY 10

2.4 LIMITATIONS..... 13

3. FINDINGS..... 14

3.1 OVERALL PROGRESS..... 14

3.2 RELEVANCE 19

3.3 EFFECTIVENESS..... 20

3.4 EFFICIENCY 27

3.5 SUSTAINABILITY 30

4. CONCLUSIONS 31

5. RECOMMENDATIONS 32

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMAINING PROJECT PERIOD 33

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS/PROGRAMMING 36

REFERENCES..... 37

ANNEXES..... 38

ANNEX 1. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SUB-QUESTIONS..... 38

Table 1 Data sources **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Figure 1 Number of Key stakeholder interviews..... 12

Figure 2 Number of focus groups/interviews with returnees..... 12

Executive summary

In response to the increasing numbers of irregular migrants passing through the different migration routes from the Horn of Africa, the European Union has launched several programmes addressing irregular migration in the region. One of the programmes within this framework is EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, which was launched in 2016 with the aim to save lives and protect and assist migrants along key migration routes in Africa. The Joint Initiative in the Horn of Africa, launched in March 2017, assists countries in the region participating in the Khartoum Process to facilitate orderly, safe and regular migration through the development and implementation of rights-based, development-based and sustainable return and reintegration policies and processes.

Maastricht Graduate School of Governance was hired to carry out this mid-term review (MTR) of the Joint Initiative in the Horn of Africa, to capture project progress and lessons learned to date. The MTR builds on fieldwork carried out in the four focus countries (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan), including key stakeholder interviews with government counterparts and key implementing partners and focus group interviews with migrant and returnee programme beneficiaries.

The findings show that despite a far from ideal start of the programme, the programme is now on good track with most of the programme activities, and several thousand migrants have already been assisted to return to their countries of origin. However, the programme is also facing a number of challenges. Despite improved relations and collaborations with government stakeholders, there is still room to improve national ownership, involvement and capacity of government stakeholders through enhanced knowledge transfers and technical and operational capacities to meet objectives of sustainable outcomes beyond the programme period. The report also identified some areas of potential improvement in terms of the implementation of reintegration assistance and resource allocations.

Drawing on the findings and conclusions, the report provides a number of recommendations to improve current and future programme design and implementation:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMAINING PROJECT PERIOD

- Strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders to promote more local involvement and ownership and enhance the sustainability of the return and reintegration activities and outcomes.
- Put emphasis on community-based activities and projects in the remaining programme period, and tie some of the community assistance closer to the individual reintegration assistance.
- Build platforms and infrastructure to support the youth in return communities.
- Strengthen and promote alternative economic support besides business start-ups.
- Ensure that the system of in-kind support is not implying extra costs or barriers for returnees.
- ➔ Review funding to MRCs and align staff with work-load to ensure that equal service is provided across all centres.
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- Shorten time between first visit to centre and actual return in places where migrants are facing long waiting times.
- Investigate the possibility to invest in institutions that are already in place to complement services provided by MRCs.
- Assign sufficient resources and time to the final evaluation of the project, and include non-beneficiaries in the evaluation framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

- Carefully plan and carry out the inception phase to ensure that partnerships and institutional and management capacity is in place from the start.
- Launch mapping and assessment studies early in the process to better feed into the programming and activities.
- Explore land transportation (car/bus and train) as an alternative to return movements by flights, which will be impossible to sustain without donor funding.

- **Where possible, align AVRR programmes run by different organisations/donors to avoid creating confusion and false expectations of available assistance.**

1.1 Introduction

In December 2016, the European Union (EU) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) together launched the Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, with the aim to save lives and protect and assist migrants along key migration routes in Africa. The Joint Initiative in the Horn of Africa was launched in March the following year. This mid-term review report has been commissioned by the IOM Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa, to be conducted by Maastricht Graduate School of Governance.

1.1 RETURN AND REINTEGRATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Migration is a prominent feature in the Horn of Africa, with complex and mixed migration inflows and outflows. Underlying migration drivers include low human and economic development, and additional push factors such as violent conflicts, political oppression and environmental factors affecting food security and livelihoods in some countries.

Migrants leaving the region use four main routes: the Northern/Central Mediterranean route, the Eastern route, the Southern route, and the Sinai route. The Northern/Central Mediterranean route is used by migrants from the Horn of Africa and other parts of Africa to get to Europe, by crossing the Mediterranean Sea mainly from Libya trying to reach Italy. The Eastern route is used by migrants crossing the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden towards Yemen and onwards to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. The Southern route is used to connect the Horn of Africa and East Africa with South Africa, via Kenya as the main transit hub and further south via countries such as Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique. Finally, the Sinai route is used by migrants to pass through Sudan and Egypt into Israel, although relatively few migrants are using this route since 2012.

The most popular route out of the Horn of Africa is the Eastern route. In 2017, IOM estimated that close to 100 000 migrants left the region to cross into Yemen, and similar numbers are estimated for 2018. The Northern route also continues to attract migrants, although numbers are dropping due to actions taken in transit countries along the route, the war in Libya etc. In 2017, almost 17 000 migrants from the Horn of Africa (including Sudan) arrived in Italy. Migrants from the Horn of Africa, regardless of which route they are using, often face protection risks such as arrest and detention, physical violence, robberies and extortion.

Complex migration flows and patterns, including thousands of migrants stranded in transit in and around the Horn of Africa, recent mass-deportations of migrants from Saudi Arabia and increasing flows of return migration from Libya and other countries highlights the need for policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and rights-based migration in the region as well as sustainable solutions for return and reintegration.

1.2 THE JOINT-INITIATIVE

In response to the increasing numbers of irregular migrants passing through the different migration routes from and within the Horn of Africa, the European Union has launched several programmes addressing irregular migration in the region, including the Joint Initiative in the Horn of Africa.

In line with the European Union's foreign policy and development priorities and the European Agenda on Migration, IOM and EU have jointly developed four programmes focusing on migrant protection, dignified voluntary return and sustainable reintegration:

- I. The Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in Africa
- II. Facility on Sustainable and Dignified Return and Reintegration in support of the Khartoum Process; later "re-branded" as *the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa*
- III. Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-based Reintegration in Southern Africa
- IV. Improving Reintegration of Returnees in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan

1.2.1 Programme objectives, results and activities

The EU-IOM Joint Initiative in the Horn of Africa assists countries in the region participating in the Khartoum Process to facilitate orderly, safe and regular migration through the development and implementation of rights-based, development-based and sustainable return and reintegration policies and processes. The priority countries of the programme are Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. In cooperation with state and non-state actors, the Joint Initiative aims to assist migrants who decide to return to their countries of origin to do so in a safe and dignified way, and to provide reintegration assistance to migrants to restart their lives through an integrated approach that targets both migrants and their communities. The assistance is meant to complement local development and mitigate some of the drivers of irregular migration.

The six activity pillars of the programme include:

1. Capacity building

2. Protection and voluntary return assistance
3. Reintegration support
4. Migration data collection and analysis
5. Information and awareness raising
6. Community stabilization

The budget of the programme is 43 million¹, funded by the EU through the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) – Horn of Africa Window.

The programme logic incorporates one overall objective, three specific objectives, 2 outputs (*Results*) tied to each of the specific objectives, and a number of activities to be carried out under each result. Some activities are carried out in all four countries, while others only target host/transit countries, or countries receiving return migrants. The overall objective of the programme is:

To contribute to facilitating orderly, safe, regular and rights-based migration through the facilitation of dignified voluntary return and the implementation of development-focused and sustainable reintegration policies and processes.

Table 1 gives an overview of the specific objective and attached results.

Table 1. Project objectives and results

OBJECTIVE	RESULTS
<p>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1</p> <p>Partner countries and relevant stakeholders develop or strengthen evidence-based return and reintegration procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result 1.1 Migration related data and evidence generated is available to inform policies, processes and programmes • Result 1.2 Relevant stakeholders have increased capacity to develop and implement orderly, safe and dignified return and reintegration procedures
<p>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2</p> <p>Safe, humane, dignified voluntary return processes are enhanced along main migration routes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results 2.1 Stranded migrants and relevant stakeholders have information about and access to voluntary return and reintegration assistance • Results 2.2 Migrants are assisted to return voluntarily in a safe and dignified manner

¹ In April 2019, DEVCO approved a 12-month extension of the Joint Initiative programme following the submission of the revised set of project documents in December 2018, which expanded the budget from the initial 25 million euros to carry out additional key activities such as capacity building and AVRR assistance, monitoring and communication activities.

SPECIFIC OBJETIVE 3

Migrants rights are promoted and returnees benefit from sustainable economic, social and psychosocial reintegration that also benefits communities

- **Result 3.1** A coherent and integrated approach to post arrival and reintegration assistance is implemented in a consistent manner across the region
- **Result 3.2** Systems for operational data collection, analysis and dissemination on reintegration are reinforced

1.3 REPORT OUTLINE

The report is structured as follows: the next section outlines the objectives and methodology of the MTR, section three presents the findings starting with a brief overview of the status and progress of the programme in all priority countries, to then discuss the findings taking the starting point in four OECD/DAC review criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability). Section four highlights the conclusions extracted from the findings, while the final section provides recommendations for the way forward.

2. Objectives and Methodology

Half way through the programme period of the Joint Initiative, an MTR was commissioned to capture project progress and lessons learned to date. This section describes the objectives of the MTR and the methodology used to carry it out.

2.1 AIM OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

The purpose of the MTR is to analyse the programming and implementation of the programme so far, identify strengths and weaknesses as well as lessons learned. The MTR will further make recommendations on how the programme can be strengthened in the second phase of implementation.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation framework is based on four evaluation criteria developed by the Development Assistance Committee of the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC). The Terms of Reference (ToR) proposed five evaluation criteria to be included in the evaluation. Following discussions between the consultant and the IOM team, it was agreed that the evaluation will include four criteria, excluding the *Impact* criteria as it is difficult to evaluate impacts of the programme before the programme has been fully implemented. In addition, the MTR will also include an assessment of to what extent the Joint Initiative has addressed the recommendations formulated during the results-oriented monitoring (ROM)-evaluation undertaken in October and November 2018, and assess how well cross-cutting issues have been considered in programming and implementation.

After some revisions of the original sub-questions included in the ToR, the IOM team and the consultant agreed on a final list of 19 sub-questions for the MTR (Annex 1).

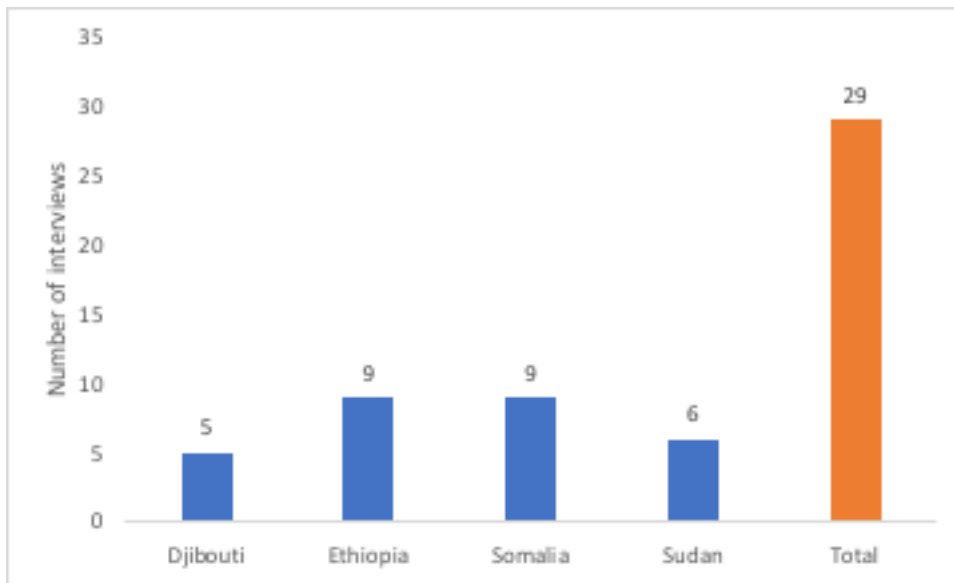
2.2.1 Data collection

The MTR is based on several sources, including review of literature and key documents, semi-structured qualitative interviews with stakeholders, interviews with national and regional programme management and staff, as well as focus group discussions and individual interviews with return migrants that benefited from the programme.

The methodology involved three key stages. In the first stage, a desk review of key project documents and literature on return and reintegration in the region was undertaken. Based on the review, data collection survey tools in the form of a key informant interview guideline and focus group discussion guidelines were developed.

In the second stage fieldtrips were conducted in the four programme priority countries (Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan) from 18 March to 12 April 2019. During the fieldtrip interviews with key stakeholders, programme staff and management and focus group discussions with return migrant programme beneficiaries were carried out. Key stakeholders interviewed included federal, regional, and local level government organisations and ministries; staff at Migration Response Centres (MRC) and Transit centres (TC) and implementing NGOs. In total, 29 Key stakeholder interviews (including visits to reception and transit centres) were carried out across all four countries, both at national and regional level (Figure 1). Most of the interviews were carried out individually. However, the interviews with local governments in the field sites in Ethiopia included multiple stakeholders (relevant government offices involved in the Joint Initiative activities) at once, as it was judged difficult to organise separate interviews with the government representatives given time constraints. Other interviews were carried out with several representatives from the same institution.

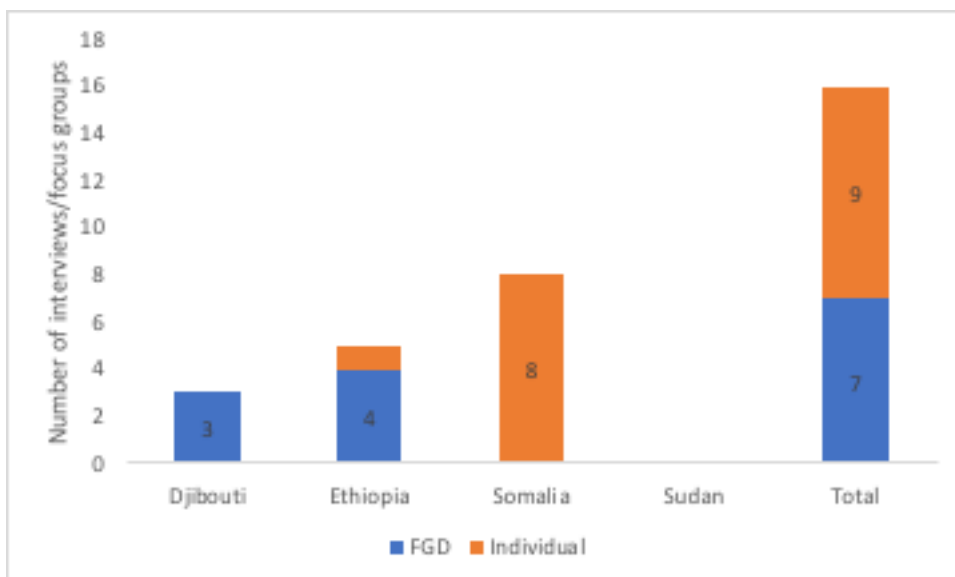
Figure 1 Number of Key stakeholder interviews



Note: this include interviews with external stakeholders and staff at MRCs and TCs. In addition, the consultant spoke with IOM programme staff at all local offices.

In Djibouti and Ethiopia, focus groups were carried out with between 4-6 migrants (in the case of Djibouti) or returned migrants (Ethiopia) in each session. Due to challenges in gathering returned migrants in one spot at a specific time also resulted in one individual interview with a returned migrant carried out in Ethiopia. In Somalia, all interviews were carried out individually. This resulted in a total of 7 focus group interviews and nine individual interviews. The interviews in Somalia were exclusively carried out in Somaliland (Hargeisa). All focus group interviews planned for Mogadishu and Sudan (Khartoum) had to be cancelled with short notice due to security issues.

Figure 2 Number of focus groups/interviews with returnees



In the last step in the MTR process, the data was analysed and the findings were translated into a number of conclusions and recommendations.

2.2.2 Key concepts

Although return and reintegration are terms widely used, definitions can sometimes vary. The terminology related to return and reintegration used throughout the mid-term review is based on definitions used by IOM (Table 2). When it comes to the term for migrants who returned to their origin country, the report uses the terms *returnee*, *return migrant* and *returned migrant* interchangeably.

Table 2. Definitions of return and reintegration

Return migration	The act of going back from a country of presence (either transit or host) to the country of origin or habitual residence. Subcategories of return can describe the way the return is implemented (e.g. voluntary, forced, assisted or spontaneous return) or describe who is participating in the return (e.g. repatriation for refugees).
Returnee	A migrant who returned to the country of origin. Used interchangeably with return migrant and returned migrant.
Reintegration	The re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or process, for example, of a migrant into the society of his or her country of origin or habitual residence.
Sustainable reintegration	Reintegration can be considered sustainable 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 as a matter of choice rather than necessity.
Individual reintegration assistance	Assistance provided to individual returning migrants. Assistance traditionally delivered in the context of AVRR.
Collective reintegration assistance	Assistance provided to several returning migrants as a group.
Community reintegration assistance	Individual or collective reintegration assistance directly involving local communities and/ or directly addressing their needs.

2.4 LIMITATIONS

The evaluation is subject to a number of limitations. The first limitation stems from the delay in signing the contract. This not only impacted the length of the inception phase but also reduced the support that the project was due to receive from a colleague. These factors undermined the ability of the consultant to influence research schedules in each country. Necessary adaptations of the interview guidelines were therefore made along the way, and the

different set-ups in the different countries somewhat limits the comparability across countries.

Furthermore, the scope of the MTR and security concerns did not allow fieldwork sites that are representative of all regions covered by the programme, and not all MRCs could be visited. Security issues in Mogadishu and Khartoum posed a challenge to carry out the MTR programme as planned. The fact that no FGD or (returned) migrant interviews could be carried out due to security constraints in Mogadishu or Khartoum also constitutes a significant limitation.

3. Findings

This section presents the findings of the study, and are presented in two ways. The first part provides a brief general overview of progress and challenges of the project, globally as well as for each country. The second part presents the findings by evaluation criteria, including the specific sub-questions related to each criterion.

3.1 OVERALL PROGRESS

The Joint Initiative had a far from ideal start from a programming and inception point of view, with the contract signed in June but backdated in March when first activities were initiated. The crises in Libya called for quick actions on the ground, and there was no time for a proper inception phase. This resulted in the return of a significant number of migrants from Libya. However, it also meant that activities on the ground started before institutional infrastructure and government partnerships had been established and developed. This was reflected in the interviews with key partner institutions in the different countries. In all countries, respondents felt excluded from the planning and implementation processes in the initial phase of the project, and stated that information flows and transparency were limited. For example, the regional (Zone level) government representative from Oromia region in Ethiopia explained that in the start-up phase of the programme IOM carried out trainings in Woredas without informing the Zone level government of the activities². In Somalia, the key government partner (the Office of the Special Envoy for Children and Migrants Rights) described the situation as the project being run “on the government rather than with the government”, and pointed out that the engagement of the government and a successful partnership is dependent on the inclusion of the government as a part of the project, which they did not feel was the case in the initial phase of the Joint Initiative. The main government partner in Djibouti, L'Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistré (ONARS), also expressed that they want to be more in the center of the project than that has been the case so far. In Sudan, the Secretariat for Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA) stated that the initial collaboration with IOM was working well, but faced challenges in 2018. However, most government partners felt

² According to IOM staff, several attempts were however made to reach out and discuss the programme with Oromia BOLSA, but meetings were cancelled by BOLSA.

that relations and collaboration significantly have improved since the initial phase, particularly in the past 12 months, and that the collaboration is running more smoothly now.

The lack of proper inception phase, as well as revisions to the programme set-up in the initial phase of implementation, has also delayed the overall progress of the programme, especially in terms of development of key programme documents, tools and background studies such as the nationalised SOPs, the logframes and the community mappings.

Despite some bottlenecks when it comes to the time between registration and actual return in Sudan and Somalia, the programme appears to be on track in meeting the AVRR target numbers. Some other activities are however lagging behind, notably the community reintegration component in Ethiopia and Sudan. The capacity building component appears to be on track, with a significant number of trainings and other measures carried out in 2018 and more planned for 2019. However, many of the stakeholders felt that despite having benefited from trainings, more capacity building is still needed, particularly in the area of psychosocial support which was pointed out by stakeholders in Ethiopia and Somalia³. It will be important to put emphasis on capacity building and community activities in the second phase of the programme period, to further reinforce the capacity of partners and meet objectives of sustainable outcomes beyond the programme period. Despite improved relations and collaborations with government stakeholders, there is still room to improve national ownership, involvement and capacity of government stakeholders.

In summary, the programme has made some important progress in the first half of the programme period, and is on track in meeting the majority of the results and objectives in the programme framework. The main challenges will likely be to meet the objective of sustainable reintegration that also benefits the communities (Specific Objective 3). It should however be acknowledged that the programme is implemented in countries with challenging political, social and security contexts that is beyond the control of the project management, notably Somalia and Sudan. Previous studies have highlighted the role of the political and economic context in the origin country for the reintegration to be sustainable (see for example Flahaux, 2017). In addition, these countries have very limited previous experience in systematically working with return and reintegration, and the national institutional capacity in this area was weak at the start of the programme. In light of these challenges, the programme duration appear relatively short to build up capacity for systematic and sustainable reintegration to be in place at the end of the programme period.

3.1.1 Djibouti

Djibouti is mainly a migrant transit and host country, and activities are hence focused on AVR. Over 2 000 migrants, mainly from Ethiopia, have benefited from return assistance under the

³ The general national capacity in this field is weak in Somalia, with no psychiatrist available in Somalia and only one in Somaliland.

Joint Initiative since the start of the programme. Notably, during the return peak in February 2019 the MRC supported over 1 300 migrants with pre-departure and AVR, out of which 610 were supported under the Joint Initiative. The Joint Initiative has contributed to reinforcing the capacity of the MRC in Obock, established in 2011. Challenges identified in the field include a high pressure on the centre especially during migrant peak seasons, health issues such as yearly outbreaks of acute watery diarrhoea during the hot season, and access to water and sanitation in the city of Obock where migrants gather while waiting to either continue the journey towards Yemen or to be referred to the MRC. Key stakeholder interviews in Obock revealed that local government representatives are very satisfied with the collaboration and work carried out by IOM in the region. However, they expressed concerns about the pressure on already scarce resources and infrastructure such as water and sanitation systems, as migrants are using the public dwells and latrines available in the town centre.

Besides the AVR work in Obock, the Joint Initiative has supported work related to street children originating from Ethiopia residing in Djibouti city, i.e. a study on street children, led by the Directorate of Statistics and Demographics Studies, in partnership with the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs and Caritas Djibouti. An important outcome of the study was the establishment of a night shelter for street children currently being built. Up until now, there has been no way to offer shelter for children or other vulnerable migrant groups (such as victims of trafficking) in Djibouti city. The shelter will be able to take children off the streets at night, and also facilitate the return process by preventing children being detained on the day of their return and therefore unable to travel. In the qualitative interviews for the MTR, the involved stakeholders (the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs and Caritas Djibouti) expressed their satisfaction with the implementation and outcome of the report, and the Ministry representative pointed out that they found the approach of evidence-based policy making using this type of studies the most efficient way to create new policies. In addition, in February 2019 IOM organised a joint learning exchange visit for key stakeholders in Djibouti and Ethiopia to visit two NGOs supporting street children in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia.

Overall, Djibouti seem to be on track with the programme implementation and towards meeting the programme objectives.

3.1.2 Ethiopia

Ethiopia has provided post-arrival assistance to over 4 000 returnees since the start of the Joint Initiative, more than 1 000 returnees have been provided training and 638 have received economic reintegration assistance. Ethiopia is the most advanced country when it comes to national work on return and reintegration assistance, and the only partner country with national directives on reintegration, which facilitate several aspects of the programme implementation and government engagement. Task forces have been created at both national and local level. Several international organisations, such as the ILO, are running return and reintegration programmes in the country, and government stakeholders interviewed for the

MTR expressed clear interest and engagement in the work on AVRR. Ethiopia is also the only country with an IOM operated Transit Centre receiving the returnees under the Joint Initiative, which facilitates post-arrival assistance. Some of the challenges identified in the Ethiopian context is the large number of returned migrants in need of assistance, the dispersed location of returnees in the rural areas, and high expectations on assistance from the returnees. Key stakeholder interviewed, for example local government officials in Hosanna (SNNP Region) and Oromia Zone level government representatives, wished to see more capacity building at local level to increase the engagement among local government stakeholders, and to account for the turnover of staff in the local government office which they felt called for continued training efforts to strengthen and maintain capacity. The capacity building plan for the remaining part of the project offers an opportunity to strengthen the involvement of local government in the AVRR process, and build more leadership and ownership among local stakeholders to ensure sustainability of programme activities.

Ethiopia is hence on a good track to achieve the objectives of the programme by the end of the programme period in terms of the number of returnees assisted in return and reintegration. Although no community project has yet started, several projects are about to start in the near future. The challenge will be to make sure that the reintegration assistance is sustainable, as discussed further in section 3.3.

3.1.3 Somalia

Programme implementation in Somalia has been faced with multiple challenges due to security and political issues. Programme implementation in two separate territories, which implies duplicated activities, and being both a host/transit country and a country receiving returnees poses challenges in terms of resources, management and reporting. AVRR is new to the government, and key stakeholder interviews revealed some internal issues across government stakeholders that poses challenges to the programme implementation. For example, the Ministry of Immigration and Naturalization expressed some discontent with having a policy office, i.e. the Office of the Special Envoy of Children and Migrant rights, leading the government side of the project, and stated that it would have been better to have an implementing institution such as the Ministry for Immigration and Naturalization to take the lead. They also expressed that they felt out of the loop in terms of information sharing, and seemed to have limited information about the Joint Initiative activities currently being implemented⁴.

The political context is challenging, and the National Programme Steering Committee has not met since March 2018, despite repeated efforts and requests from the IOM to bring the Committee together. The committee formed in Somaliland is however meeting on a regular

⁴ As an example, they were under the impression that the only business activity offered to the returned migrants is investments in a Tuc Tuc.

basis (monthly). Other challenges identified in the field include some shortage of staff, and gaps in psychosocial support provided to migrants and returnees to date, and long waiting time between registration of migrants for AVR and actual movement. The need to strengthen psychosocial support was brought up by IOM staff in the Somalia office, as well as by stakeholders such as representatives from the Ministry of health and the Ministry of Immigration and Naturalization who wished to see more Psychosocial training undertaken by stakeholders and offered to returned migrants. However, it should be noted that there have been efforts from the IOM-side to offer additional psychosocial training, which the Government key partner has turned down. The delay in return movements is largely due to security challenges that has prevented the Ethiopian embassy staff to visit MRCs to issue travel documents.

Despite these challenges, Somalia has provided assistance to 347 migrants returning to their origin countries, and post-arrival/reintegration assistance to 598 returned migrants arriving in Somalia. In addition to the individual return assistance, a number of community projects have been carried out in Somalia (Bosaso, Baidoa and Kismayo), and new collaborations with non-governmental actors with innovative ideas on reintegration support are in the early stages, notably with the UNDP, Hano Academy and SomTac (Somali Technology Association Centre).

Overall, positive steps in the implementation of the programme have been taken, both in terms of individual and community level AVRR assistance, and the collaborations with external partners on reintegration seems promising. The main constraints in achieving the objectives of the programme are related to external political and economic factors beyond the control of the programme management.

3.1.4 Sudan

In Sudan, 284 migrants have been given assistance in returning to their origin countries, and 1 048 returned migrants have received post-arrival assistance by the Joint Initiative. In contrary to other countries, the collaboration with government stakeholders seem to have been running smoothly in the beginning of the programme period, while the collaboration experienced some challenges closer to the mid-term of the programme period. Some of the activities under the Joint Initiative were suspended by the main government focal point the Secretariat for Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA) in the beginning of 2019. Most programme activities have however now been resumed, with the exception of the labour market assessment study, no contract has yet been signed and discussions about the nationality of the external consultant to carry out the assessment is an ongoing discussion between the IOM and SSWA. Other challenges identified during the fieldtrip include long waiting times between migrant registration and assistance to return back to countries of origin, and waiting times to receive reintegration assistance. These challenges are mainly due to external factors such as cash shortage and high inflation which negatively affect the operations on the ground,

including procurement for economic reintegration assistance and payment of exit fees⁵ for departing migrants.

The obstacles to achieving the objectives in Sudan thus seems largely related to external factors. Actions to mitigate the challenges, such as negotiating down the exit fees for departing migrants and to streamline procurement procedures and focus on a few business options where in-kind goods can be purchased in larger bulks, have been implemented by the IOM to try to make the AVRR assistance procedures more efficient. In light of these challenges, it might be necessary to revise the target numbers for AVRR assistance under the Joint Initiative programme in Sudan, which seems motivated given the challenging context that were difficult to foresee in the beginning of the programme period.

3.2 RELEVANCE

RELEVANCE: SUB-QUESTIONS

- √ Is the programme relevant to the identified needs?
- √ To what extent are the objectives still valid?
- √ Are the activities of the programme consistent with the overall objective and the attainment of the specific objectives?
- √ Are activities sufficient to meet the beneficiary needs and programme objectives?
- √ Do programme activities and objectives take the needs of particularly vulnerable groups (i.e. women, children and youth) into account?
- √ How well are principles of environmental sustainability and humanitarian action incorporated into programming?

The programme is highly relevant to the identified needs to assist stranded and vulnerable migrants to return and reintegrate in their countries of origin, and to support communities receiving significant numbers of return migrants to strengthen their capacity to provide reintegration assistance. In addition, the programme helps to fill gaps in terms of return and reintegration data. In light of continued irregular migration flows, and significant numbers of stranded migrants along the main migration routes out of the Horn of Africa, the objectives of the programme are still highly valid and relevant. The programme design, focusing beyond short-term interventions and aiming at building capacity and sustainability in the longer term, also makes it highly relevant in a context where national and regional AVRR capacity in general is weak.

The programme logic includes one overall objective, three specific objectives, six results (outputs) and a list of activities to achieve the results and objectives of the programme. The

⁵ The government required the exit fees to be paid in cash. The IOM mission is working on finding a solution to this issue.

activities, between 1 and 4 per result, are found to be in line with the objective and results framework. It is however noted that the community-based reintegration approach is given limited attention in the description of activities in the overall Framework SOPs. More details are given in the country plans for each country, but given that this is a new approach in the context of AVRR more emphasis on this in the overall design and programming would be valuable to better integrate and mainstream this approach into the programme.

The sequencing in the implementation of the activities raises some concerns. For example, labour market assessments to support reintegration activities were only finalised in the beginning of 2019, half-way through the programme.⁶ Ethiopia is the only country with a finalised national SOPs, which also hampers the programme implementation. Furthermore, some activities have been postponed, notably the mapping and socio-economic profile of areas of return⁷, which would have provided useful information to feed into the programme activities, especially to inform community-based reintegration component. The delay in initiation and implementation of some of the key activities, such community projects, in the first part of the project may pose some challenges in achieving all results and objectives by the end of the programme period.

The particular needs of vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs) and victims of trafficking are recognised in the programme documentation and highlighted in the programme activities. Studies to better understand the specific needs and vulnerabilities of children and youth are also being undertaken within the scope of the project. The specific vulnerabilities of women are acknowledged in the description of the action document, women are however not explicitly targeted in any programme activities.

The programme set-up and specified objectives and activities are well in line with the principles of humanitarian action (humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence). However, environmental sustainability is not explicitly mentioned in relation to any activities of the programme, or explicitly incorporated in the programme logic in general, and do hence not seem to be accounted for in the programming.

3.3 EFFECTIVENESS

<p>EFFECTIVENESS: SUB-QUESTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">√ How effective is the project in reaching the target population?√ How effective is the project in reaching vulnerable populations (e.g. women, children/youth)?
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⁶ However, it should be noted that the studies were carried out in mid-2018 and some results and recommendations were incorporated into the programming already before the finalisation of the reports.

⁷ Discussions with the implementing consultancy about updated contractual arrangements are currently ongoing.

- √ To what extent are the objectives achieved / likely to be achieved at the end of the project?
- √ How well are cross-cutting issues reflected in programme implementation?
- √ What are the major obstacles/barriers to achieving the project objectives within the timeframe of the project?

The programme seems effective in reaching the target population in terms of individual migrants, and the programme has so far assisted several thousands of stranded migrants to return back to their origin countries and communities. However, it should be noted that the migrants who receive assistance across the target countries have relatively diverse migration histories, with some spending years in detention centres or prisons in countries along the Southern route and in Libya, while others having spent considerably less time abroad, notably migrants in Djibouti. Ethiopian migrants interviewed in focus groups in the MRC in Obock and the returned Ethiopian migrants from Djibouti interviewed in Ethiopia, had all spent between 1-3 months abroad when they arrived in the MRC. This can be compared to the interviewed returned migrants in Somalia and Ethiopia who had been stranded in Libya or along the Southern route (mainly Zambia), which all had spent between 1 to 4 years abroad. The time spent abroad and the challenge the migrants face in the country of destination affect the return and reintegration process in general, and the sustainability of reintegration in particular (Flahaux, 2017, van Houtte and de Koning, 2008). The diversity of migration experience among beneficiaries of assistance under the Joint Initiative target group is hence likely to affect the return and reintegration process, and should also be taken into account in the final evaluation of the programme.

Outreach activities have been carried out in countries of transit to inform migrants of the available assistance, through face-to-face outreach and using different kinds of media. In addition, news about the assistance is also spread by word of mouth among migrants in transit. Among the returnees interviewed for the MTR, the latter seem to have been the most common way migrants first learned about the AVRR assistance. Thus, reaching out and assisting individual potential AVRR beneficiaries does not seem to pose any major problems in terms of reaching the target number of migrants to assist. The programme has been less successful in implementing activities targeting communities with high number of return migrants. Given the community-based reintegration approach, these communities are also part of the beneficiaries of programme assistance, but given the low number of community projects carried out so far, the programme has not yet been effective in reaching out to this target population.

When it comes to vulnerable populations, the programme has been able to assist a significant number of UMCs within the framework of its operations, particularly in the Djibouti-Ethiopia corridor. Women constitute a minority of the return migrants who received return and reintegration assistance, mainly because fewer women are found along the migration routes.

The fieldwork identified some gaps in relation to addressing the specific needs of women in psychosocial counselling assistance. For example, the MRC in Hargeisa has no female counsellor despite the high number of migrant women visiting the centre. The staff at the centre acknowledged that women who are victims of abuse are unlikely to seek assistance at the centre given the lack of female counselling staff.

Half-way through the programme period, some elements of the programme is progressing well while others are lagging behind. Activities and results under Specific Objective (SO) 1 (*To increase the capacities of partner countries and relevant stakeholders to develop or strengthen return and reintegration policies and processes, including identification and referral*) seem to be relatively well on track when it comes to Result 1.1 on migration related data and evidence. Most activities under this result are launched and ongoing, and regional research initiatives have been initiated or planned to be carried out in the near future. As mentioned in the previous section, one exception is the community mapping and socio-economic profiling, which has been postponed due to contracting process with the chosen service provider who IOM judged not having the necessary capacity to carry out the envisaged activity. In addition, the labour market assessment reports for Ethiopia and Somalia have only been disseminated in December 2018 and January 2019 respectively (still no progress in Sudan), which is a bit late in the process as it is meant to guide the reintegration activities. The preliminary results and recommendations from the report were however already received, reviewed and discussed internally in the third quarter of 2018, and resulted in a number of actions in terms of new or adjusted strategies for reintegration. Important steps towards reaching Result 1.2 related to stakeholder capacity reinforcement were made through capacity building of stakeholders in 2018, but is also facing some delays and challenges in other areas: SOPs have not yet been nationalised in the majority of partner countries and national coordination platforms have not been very active in the majority of countries based on the number of meetings held so far (with the exception of Ethiopia which has a more developed institutional framework around coordination with coordination platforms at both national and local level). Given the strong programme focus on developing national ownership and building national capacity, focus will need to be put on continuing the efforts to improve relations with government stakeholders, particularly in Somalia and Sudan where the political landscape is complex. Capacity training with stakeholders have been carried out as foreseen, although several of the stakeholders interviewed, from local government representatives in Ethiopia to representatives from Ministry of Health in Mogadishu and the Ethiopian community representative in Hargeisa, expressed that they wish to see more training to strengthen their capacity in the area of psychosocial support.

Specific Objective (SO) 2 is related to return assistance (*Safe, humane, dignified voluntary return processes are enhanced along main migration routes*), and activities are linked to outreach, pre-return assistance and return movement. As discussed above, outreach activities

on the ground seem effective and many migrants have registered for return, and several thousand have already been assisted. Return migrants interviewed in the field in Ethiopia and Somalia expressed deep gratitude to the return assistance received, and many underlined that this help was the difference between life and death for them. The biggest challenge related to SO 2 is the time between migrant registration for return and actual movement. Stakeholders in both Somaliland and Sudan were concerned about the long waiting times, which in some cases have led to migrants choosing alternative ways to return, or choosing to continue their journeys along the Eastern or Northern migration routes.⁸ The prolonged waiting time is often related to external factors (security issues that prevents representatives from the Ethiopian embassy to travel to Bosaso and issue travel documents, cash-shortage that makes it difficult to pay exit fees in Sudan, for example). However, stakeholders also felt that the fact that return movements are carried out by air is a bottleneck. Stakeholders in both Somaliland and Sudan brought up the option of using land transport as a complement to air transport in the return process, which they felt would speed up the return process and save costs. Some alternative transportations have been evaluated by the Joint Initiative project management, but with the exception of using train transport in the return of Ethiopian migrants from Djibouti, no alternatives are currently judged feasible from a cost and safety point of view, although IOM is considering resuming land transportations in the future if the security situation allows⁹.

Another challenge highlighted by the stakeholders related to safe return is the lack of shelter for migrants who are waiting to return in Somalia and Sudan. None of the centres established offers shelters for the night (shelter capacity was not foreseen in the programme set-up), which stakeholders in both countries considered a weakness. The Ethiopian community centre in Somaliland has however received some (limited) IOM support to offer shelter to migrants in precarious situations. The MRC in Hargeisa also lack a medical doctor based at the centre. Furthermore, the capacity of the TC in Ethiopia, the country that receives the highest number of returns, is limited and sometimes contributes to prolonging the waiting time in the short-term.

Finally, SO 3 is related to sustainable individual and community reintegration (*Migrants' rights are promoted and returnees benefit from sustainable economic, social and psycho-social reintegration that also benefits communities*). The activities and results under this objective are related to post-return assistance, reintegration assistance and data collection and monitoring related to reintegration. Post-return assistance and individual reintegration

⁸ It should be noted that this was something brought up by migrants in the MRC in Obock, Djibouti too. The time between arriving to the MRC and return is however considerably shorter in Djibouti compared to Somalia and Sudan (a couple of weeks at max in Djibouti while it can take many months to get assistance in Somalia and Sudan).

⁹ Land transport was used between Somalia and Ethiopia in Year 1, when the security situation was more conducive.

activities are currently carried out in all three return migration countries of the programme (Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan). All dimensions of reintegration (economic, social and psychosocial) are addressed, although the implementation vary slightly across countries, especially considering that Ethiopia has an established TC to receive and host returnees upon arrival, while the set-up is different in Somalia and Sudan (in Mogadishu, there is a waystation run by the government in collaboration with UNHCR which serves the TC function, while an MRC (without shelter facilities) is under construction). Having a centre considerably strengthens the post-return assistance provided, and it would be desirable to have a similar approach in the other countries with larger inflows of returnees¹⁰.

A challenge related to the reintegration assistance is sustainability. The great majority of economic assistance provided so far has been carried out in the form of support for business start-ups, based on the returned migrants' own choices. However, return migrants interviewed pointed out that the assistance given is relatively limited to finance a business start-up¹¹, and the majority of returned migrants interviewed in Somalia and Ethiopia had no prior experience of running a business. The reintegration assistance includes a short business training component. However, as has been shown in other studies (Flahaux, 2017; van Houte and de Koning, 2008), all return migrants cannot be expected to become successful entrepreneurs, and factors such as conditions in the host country (e.g. whether migrants accumulated savings abroad, had time to prepare their return) and in the origin country (e.g. networks in the origin country, access to credit) are important factors for successful reintegration through business investment. Interviews with return migrants in the field revealed that some are struggling and may face challenges to sustain their businesses in the medium- to long-run. This is particularly the case since the programme explicitly target the most vulnerable, who on the one hand are the most in need of assistance, but on the other hand may face additional challenges sustaining their business activities due to lack of own resources/access to credit, and also facing more challenges due to their mental state and psychosocial wellbeing. Several returnees pointed out that they were facing challenges of covering costs related to rents and other operational costs, and lacking means to expand the business beyond what was provided by IOM in the initial phase. Returned migrants who stated that their businesses were doing well seem to be individuals with access to some credit to top-up the in-kind contribution from IOM (through for example loans from family or from friends), or those that has previous skills or specific networks in the community to turn to for additional assistance¹².

¹⁰ In Sudan, the creation of a TC has not been considered cost-efficient due to the limited number of returned migrants and limited frequency of large-scale returns.

¹¹ Concerns about the level of amount in relation to reintegration assistance to start a business has also been highlighted in previous studies, see for example van Houte and de Koning (2008).

¹² These findings should however be interpreted with caution given the limited number of returnees interviewed for the MTR. More insights to success factors of business activities will be provided by the M&E programme activities.

Another challenge identified in relation to the economic assistance is the returnees' own expectations. Many of the return migrants invested large sums of money during their migration journey, and some returnees, especially in Ethiopia, were comparing the assistance they received to the sums that they lost to be compensated by the Programme. These expectations seem partly correlated with returned migrants feeling 'left on their own' as some Ethiopian return migrants expressed it in the focus group interviews. After the process of receiving business training and economic reintegration assistance, the return migrants expressed that they felt a bit left alone with limited support from local government and IOM. This was particularly the case for those that stated that they had difficulties to reintegrate into the community.

Misinformation¹³ about what assistance they can receive upon return in transit countries also seem to create unrealistic expectations of the return migrants. IOM staff interviewed pointed out that it is important that migrants receive correct information about the assistance already in the transit countries. Several activities to address these issues have been initiated by the IOM, including harmonized flyers distributed in the pre-departure stage and outreach processes, and documents for the migrants to sign confirming that the information was shared with them in the pre-departure stage (notably Ethiopian migrants). A challenge does however arise in countries where economic assistance is given to a sub-sample of the returnees (such as in Ethiopia) and eligibility is decided at the time of return in the country of origin. This makes it hard to give precise information about the individual assistance that potential return migrants can expect upon return, as pointed out by IOM staff in Djibouti. Efforts to develop information kits to be distributed to migrants in host countries pre-return has been developed in an effort to strengthen information dissemination.

The great majority of beneficiaries of economic assistance in all countries chose support to start a business, and very few chose alternatives such as education and trainings or job-placements in the private sector. Exploring ways to broaden the economic assistance to include more livelihood options (such as offering trainings for self-employment activities and job placement in sectors where there is an identified demand and where links with (the private) sector has been established), and put emphasis on making them more attractive to returnees, could be a way to ensure more sustainable economic reintegration. The economic assistance could also be strengthened by investments in community infrastructure to support economic activities for youth. This could offer a way to tie individual and community (social and economic) reintegration activities closer to each other, and build platforms that stimulates for example experience sharing around business and entrepreneurship, motivate youth to take more ownership of their economic situation, and link youth to employment opportunities. A starting point for such platforms could be the establishment of youth centres, which was something brought up by both stakeholders and return migrants in Ethiopia, and

¹³ Which seems to be the result of information spread by word of mouth among migrants.

project applications to establish such centres are currently being reviewed by the IOM mission in Ethiopia.

When it comes to psychosocial assistance, key stakeholders requested more capacity building, and also specific training tailored to the return migration context. Stakeholders in Somalia pointed out that many return migrants suffer from specific traumas and challenges, and that their problems and needs may differ from those in the country of origin. This has partly been addressed through a Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) workshop in Nairobi in March 2019 with 17 stakeholders from the Joint Initiative. However, there seem to be additional needs in this area.

As for Result 3.2 and related activities, reintegration assistance compact monitoring surveys and reintegration sustainability surveys are currently being rolled-out in all countries, and data management capacity building of stakeholders has been initiated in the beginning of 2019. The evaluation of project activities is crucial, especially given that the project is applying a community-based reintegration approach, which is relatively new to the organisation in the context of AVRR. Besides the monitoring and evaluation surveys carried out with return migrants, it would also be useful to extend the scope of the evaluation surveys beyond those that directly benefited from the assistance and include a baseline of youth without migration or return experience, to better understand and compare outcomes in the context of the migrant origin communities.

The programme implementation has taken cross-cutting issues (including mainstreaming gender, environmental sensitivity and sustainability, applying a rights-based approach to programming, and principled humanitarian action) into account to a varying degree. Gender is as mentioned not very prominent in the programming framework. Stakeholders in the field did not report many activities explicitly targeting women, likely linked to the fact that the majority of migrants and returnees under the Joint Initiative are men. Some activities to target the needs of women are however carried out. The MRCs in Sudan and Ethiopia (as well as in Bosaso, but covered under another project) have installed playrooms where children can be looked after while mothers are given care. In Sudan, psychosocial counselling is offered by a female counsellor, while this option is not available in Hargeisa. Djibouti is about to launch a study to better understand the drivers and barriers faced by women migrants¹⁴. The programme and its activities rely on a rights-based approach, and migrants' rights are considered both explicitly in the objectives of the programme and implicitly in activities carried out, through for example information at MRCs. Migrants interviewed in the field felt that their rights have been respected and taken into account through the AVRR process. Environmental sustainability is not mentioned anywhere in the programme activities. However, two of the community projects that are planned to be carried out in Ethiopia and

¹⁴ The study is funded under the Better Migration Management programme, but the findings will benefit the Joint Initiatives work in the country.

Somalia specifically target environmental sustainability. Modifications in activity implementation (for different reasons) may have indirect positive impacts on the environment, such as the use of tablets instead of paper-based data collection, Ethiopia switching to only buying goods from the local market and Djibouti using train instead of flights for certain return movements.

Some of the main barriers to achieving the objectives at the end of the programme include relationships with government stakeholders and related to this limited sense of ownership and leadership of key stakeholder institutions, as well as limited progress of the community-based reintegration component.

3.4 EFFICIENCY

EFFICIENCY: SUB-QUESTIONS

- √ Are activities cost-efficient? Have funds been utilized as planned?
- √ To what extent are the project processes, procedures and structures in place capable of delivering project activities and targets in a timely manner?
- √ To what degree is the project taking advantage of existing resources, capacities and infrastructure already in place?
- √ Do project activities complement, overlap or duplicate other similar interventions (funded internally and /or by other donors)?
- √ How efficient is project management and planning?
- √ How well have recommendations from the ROM evaluation been taken into account in project implementation?

The MTR consultant did not have access to any detailed financial documentation related to the project, and can therefore not analyse the cost-efficiency of the project in great detail. However, observations in the field indicate that staff resources are sometimes unevenly distributed, especially in the MRCs¹⁵. The MRC in Djibouti is hosting migrants 24/7 and register new migrants on a daily basis, but operates with relatively few staff. The MRC in Khartoum register less people per day, but the staff are engaged in many external activities such as visits to the migrant communities, schools, detention centres etc. The MRC in Hargeisa does not host migrants and offers limited activities and services to migrants on a daily basis, but still operate with a relatively large amount of staff. A more detailed review of activities and staff in all centres would reveal if resources could be reallocated in a more cost-efficient way.

¹⁵ The funding allocation may vary depending on whether the Centre is run by the IOM or the national Government, which should also be taken into account in the suggested review of allocations.

Carrying out return movements by air traffic is an expensive undertaking, and not sustainable without the funding from international initiatives such as the Joint Initiative¹⁶. Several stakeholders suggested to offer land transportation as an alternative or supplement to the air transport. An example of this is the return of Ethiopian migrants from Djibouti by train which was initiated in 2018, which can save costs.¹⁷

Several return migrants in Somaliland brought up costs related to the procurement process. They were stating that the in-kind goods that they received to open a grocery shop were closer to retail price rather than wholesale prices. It is also important to remove any potential other barriers that in-kind assistance may face. For example, return migrants choosing a business that involves a motor vehicle can get support to obtain a drivers' license. However, in Somaliland it was revealed that returnees face challenges to pay the fees for the license as IOM only offers reimbursement of the costs once the license has been obtained.

So far, the project has been relatively successful in implementing a majority of the activities in a timely manner, while some activities are lagging behind or suffer from some bottlenecks in implementation (such as some capacity building activities focusing upon the SOPs), and return assistance in Somalia and Sudan as previously discussed). An important task in the remaining programme period will therefore be to make sure that all activities are initiated and up to speed in order to meet the objectives by the end of the programme period.

With respect to the effective use of existing resources and infrastructure in place on the ground, some potentially underutilised resources were identified during the fieldwork. For example, the Ethiopian community centre in Sudan pointed out that they have equipment to carry out skills trainings (sewing machines, computers) that could be used to train migrants that are waiting to return to Ethiopia, but they currently lack financial resources to run these trainings. The MRC in Somaliland has a medical lab with some equipment, but no staff qualified to use the lab. Migrants are instead referred to hospitals for tests.

The Ethiopian communities in Somaliland, Bosaso and Sudan have access to manpower and in some cases shelters and buildings, but lack resources to properly run a shelter for migrants. A closer collaboration with these partners, to complement the services provided by MRCs, could be efficient to strengthen capacity and build durable solutions within and beyond the lifetime of the programme. An inventory of these resources on the ground and potential future collaboration could give more insights to more efficient use of resources.

¹⁶ IOM has however negotiated down the air fares and are given a 50% discount on Ethiopian Airline flights on the return of Tanzanian nationals.

¹⁷ However, a condition for the train transportation option has been that there is a way to host migrants in Loyado the night before departure, as the train leaves early in the morning. The transit center in Loyado is currently under construction.

In some of the countries, other return and reintegration programmes with similar target group and interventions are running in parallel. Notably in Ethiopia, where ILO has recently finalised a programme supporting AVRR, and in Somalia where UNDP provides assistance to IDPs and returnees, and UNHCR is providing cash assistance (during 6 months) to Somali returnees returning from Libya. No direct duplication of activities was identified in the field, as other projects either has a slightly different target group, or provide a different type of assistance. The activities are sometimes complementing each other, such as the case of support to Somali returnees returning from Libya. In Somalia, a collaboration with UNDP has also been initiated, which appears to be a great learning opportunity given the broad set of economic assistance and job creation activities carried out by UNDP in Somalia. In Ethiopia, the ILO run AVRR project has provided useful lessons learned in terms of linking Micro finance institutions (MFI) to the reintegration assistance, which will be piloted within the framework of the Joint Initiative in some communities in Ethiopia. More knowledge exchange and stock taking of for example labour market assessments and other background documents at the beginning of the project should be encouraged.

The fieldwork also revealed that the various bilateral and multilateral AVRR projects in place in the countries sometimes poses a challenge in terms of expectations from returnees. Return migrants learn about other programmes with different type (such as cash assistance) or higher amounts of assistance, which affects their satisfaction with the assistance received.

The lack of inception phase and proper infrastructure for planning and monitoring (such as logframes, nationalised SOPs etc.) has been a challenge in the management and planning of the programme, as well as sequencing of interventions. Some countries also seem to have lacked adequate management staff at national level in the initial phase of the programme. Ethiopia had the programme manager replaced one year into the programme period and Somalia was operating with an interim programme manager in the initial phase, which resulted in a longer time to build up relations and seek project support from government stakeholders.

In November 2018, a ROM evaluation was carried out, resulting in ten recommendations for the project. The recommendations focused mainly on capacity building and training of programme staff and key stakeholders, promoting a regional approach to programming and implementation, and initiating programme activities not yet implemented. Several of the recommendations are under way to be implemented, such as Recommendation 1 regarding the logframe, where the revised version of the logframe was recently adapted, Recommendation 4 related to the roll-out of community projects, which are currently being implemented or planned in Somalia and Ethiopia (although lagging in Sudan). Recommendation 7 to shape the programme into a more regional programme has been addressed by for example a common results and indicator framework across all four countries in the logframe, a joint M&E framework for monitoring and evaluation, and regionally led

activities such as high-level inter-governmental consultations preparations and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) workshop carried out in March 2019. It should however also be noted that IOM staff in the various countries also pointed out that some differences in the approach to the AVRR processes is motivated due to the different contexts across focus countries. However, a step in the direction of more knowledge exchange across countries was taken through a joint study visit to Dire Dawa (Ethiopia) by programme staff and key stakeholders in Djibouti and Ethiopia to NGOs working on child rights and support. Others seem more challenging, such as strengthening the NPSCs which is continuous work through strengthening the relations with stakeholders but that is hampered by challenging political contexts in Somalia and Sudan, as discussed in previous sections. Regarding Recommendation 8 about extending the use of transit centres to Somalia and Sudan, Sudan is currently investigating the use of a guest house to provide post-arrival assistance, while Somalia is using the government-run waystation that serves transit functions. Recommendations 3, 5 and 9 are related to strengthening the reintegration activities in different ways through training and partnerships, which was an identified need/gap also in this review. Some steps in this direction has been taken by for example initiate a partnership with UNDP in Somalia. More work in this area is recommended for the remaining programme period.

3.5 SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABILITY: SUB-QUESTIONS

- √ How likely will the activities continue after donor funding has been withdrawn?
- √ What capacities is the project developing among beneficiaries and stakeholders to sustain gains made?

Sustainability appear at this point to be somewhat of a weakness in the programme implementation. No stakeholders interviewed in the countries believed that the programme activities could be sustained beyond the programme framework if donor funding would be withdrawn due to limited national capacity. Although many stakeholders acknowledged that the programme have strengthened their financial and institutional capacity, there seem to be limited sense of ownership and leadership in most countries and communities with the exception of Ethiopia where institutional infrastructure around return and reintegration processes is more developed and capacity is stronger. More emphasis on capacity building, and better integrating stakeholders in all aspects of the programme implementation would be needed in order to promote more sustainable programme outcomes. It should also be recognised that most partner countries have limited experience of return and reintegration activities, and capacity needs to be built-up from the ground. The economic, political and security contexts are also complex, and many external factors beyond the control of the IOM

missions are also likely to influence the programme outcomes, which should be taken into account when evaluating the results and impacts of the programme at the end of the programme period.

4. Conclusions

- **The programme remains highly relevant to the identified needs, and is successful in reaching the target group.** It is also filling an important gap in terms of data collection and capacity building related to return and reintegration in the Horn of Africa.
- **The lack of proper programme inception phase has negatively affected programme management and implementation of programme activities.** Logframe and national SOPs development has been lagging, and the sequencing of activities have been affected. An important challenge in the remaining programme period will be to launch and strengthen activities that have not yet been fully rolled-out.
- **Creating close partnership with stakeholders and building local ownership has been a challenge.** The programme put emphasis on active local involvement and project ownership, while progress in this area has been limited in most countries. More efforts to strengthen partnerships should be a focus of the remaining part of the programme period.
- **Overall target numbers for AVRR is likely to be met by the end of the programme period...** The programme has been effective in reaching out to the target population in transit countries, and the Joint Initiative have supported many returns and reintegration cases. Interviews with return migrants who benefited from the AVRR reveal that the beneficiaries in general are very happy and grateful for the support received.
- **... but activities related to community reintegration is lagging behind.** A limited number of community activities have so far been implemented, and the community-based approach do not seem to be mainstreamed throughout the programme implementation but rather be seen as ad-hoc. This is a lost opportunity as community projects should go hand in hand with other reintegration activities and reinforce the impacts of the individual reintegration assistance and ensure that the outcomes of the programme are sustainable beyond the programme period.
- **Time between registration and actual return movement is long in Sudan and Somalia.** Migrants often have to wait many months for return, which sometimes implies that they no longer want to return or that they return or travel onwards by their own means. The bottlenecks seem to be related to external and internal factors. This led stakeholders in both Somalia and Sudan to suggest the use of land transport to complement the flights used by IOM for return movement.
- **The capacity of the TC in Ethiopia has significantly been reinforced by the support from the programme, and should be seen as a good role model.** Having a centre to

receive return migrants upon arrival facilitate post-return and reintegration assistance.

- **The economic reintegration assistance has almost exclusively focused on business start-ups so far.** This may not be sustainable, and other means of economic reintegration support should be supported and promoted. A good example is the programme activities carried out by UNDP and Hano academy in Somalia, that has strong links with the private sector and the diaspora community, use various forms of crowd-funding and incubator platforms and provide skills trainings that are demanded on the local labour market. Linking economic assistance to available forms of credit on the ground, such as Microfinance Institutions could also strengthen the support and increase likelihood of business sustainability.
- **Psychosocial assistance and counselling services could be strengthened.** Several stakeholders expressed demand for more psychosocial training. Training particularly tailored to the context of return migration was brought up in Somalia. It was also noted that the MRC in Hargeisa lack trained staff, and particularly a female counsellor while the majority of the beneficiaries in the centre are women.
- **The programme could benefit from an overview of staff resources in the different MRCs.** It was noted that the activity level varies substantially in the different MRCs, and an overview may contribute to a more efficient allocation.
- **The migrant community centres can be good partners in places where no MRC exists or have limited capacity.** The community associations have access to manpower and in some cases shelters and other buildings and equipment, but lack resources to properly run a shelter for migrants. Reinforcing their capacity could help building more sustainable solutions and infrastructure beyond the project.
- **Many return migrants have high and sometimes unrealistic expectations on the economic assistance.** This is particularly the case for economic assistance and is partly due to the variety of programmes in place to support return migrants. It could also be linked to a lack of sense of ownership of their own economic situation.
- **Thorough evaluation of project activities and outcomes at the end of the project will be highly important for lessons learned.** The community-based approach to reintegration is relatively new to the organisation in the context of migrant protection, and the final evaluation at the end of the programme period can provide important lessons learned. Extending the target group to also include non-beneficiaries would give more insights into challenges for youth in the community and more accurately capture the impacts of the project.

5. Recommendations

Based on the analysis and conclusions, this section presents a number of recommendations to consider for the remaining part of the JI programme period, as well as for future

programming. The main target country/countries of the intervention and suggested steps to be taken are specified below the recommendation.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMAINING PROJECT PERIOD

→ **Strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders to promote more local involvement and ownership and enhance the sustainability of the return and reintegration activities and outcomes.**

- **Djibouti:** the expanded mandate of the key stakeholder L'Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistré (ONARS) to also focus on migration at large (not just refugees) offers a possibility to strengthen the partnership and national ownership. ONARS representatives interviewed during the MTR expressed an interest and wish to be (more) involved in the programme.
- **Ethiopia:** is on a good track with the involvement of the Government in programme activities and implementation. Key stakeholders at local level is asking for some more capacity building especially of people in coordination positions to strengthen the coordination between national and local level.
- **Somalia:** despite efforts of initiating more collaboration with stakeholders, the partnership with the Government is facing some challenge given the political context. More transparency and information sharing to all Government partners involved in the programme seem to be the best way forward.
- **Sudan:** challenges in the partnership with the key stakeholder SSWA seem to be largely based on some challenges at individual level, but relations has been improving lately. IOM should continue the work of improving relations, particularly by being very transparent with the steps in the programme implementation, involve the SWWA in activities when possible, and to the extent possible involve local IOM staff and consultants in activities as this seem to be an important point for the Government.

→ **Put emphasis on community-based activities and projects in the remaining programme period, and tie some of the community assistance closer to the individual reintegration assistance.** A good role model for this is the activities implemented by UNDP in Somalia, which involves close links with the private sector and the diaspora to identify promising sectors and demanded skills.

- **Ethiopia:** Ethiopia has just signed contracts with implementing partners to carry out community projects. Some of these projects could be focused on strengthening the individual reintegration assistance by for example creating platforms to support entrepreneurship and promote other livelihood

activities among the youth (those that received assistance but also other youth with business ideas), and build links facilitate access to credit for youth.

- **Somalia:** has started collaborations with UNDP in the area of skill development and job creation which is a promising step in this direction.
- **Sudan:** Sudan could follow the example of Somalia and create collaborations with other international and local organisations and institutions already carrying out this type of activities.

➔ **Build platforms and infrastructure to support the youth in return communities.** The starting-point could for example be in the form of youth centres, as suggested in Ethiopia, which can serve as a platform that offers activities to motivate youth to take more ownership of their livelihoods, exchange ideas around business/entrepreneurship, link youth to the local private sector and labour market matching mechanism etc.

- **Ethiopia:** Related to the previous recommendations, platforms to strengthen livelihood activities and integration of youth through for example mentorship programmes (involving for example the diaspora and the private sector, using example of return migrants with successful businesses as role models for), specialised skills trainings and job matching mechanisms.
- **Somalia:** analyse the need for youth centres or other types of platforms, use the UNDP model of creating incubators for the youth as inspiration.
- **Sudan:** similar activities as suggested for Ethiopia could be considered also for Sudan, but probably need to start in smaller scale as existing infrastructure is limited. Such platforms will be particularly important to offer to recently returned migrants in the wait of reintegration assistance, as they sometimes tend to get impatient and the risk of remigration increases.

➔ **Strengthen and promote alternative economic support besides business start-ups.** Make skills training more attractive by for example building closer links to job opportunities in the private sector or as self-employed.

- **Ethiopia:** investigate how the private sector can take a more active role, and how to make other options business activities attractive. Possible steps along this way may include to identify return migrant role models in the private sector, reach out to diaspora active in the private sector in the communities etc. The UNDP in Somalia is also using crowd-funding as a mean to raise more funding for its activities by for example reaching out to banks with a CSR budget and an interest in supporting local development projects.
- **Somalia:** Same steps as in Ethiopia, and further investigate if a similar approach as the UNDP using crowd-funding and private sector CSR work/budget to expand collaborations.

- **Sudan:** similar steps as in Ethiopia and Somalia.

➔ **Ensure that the system of in-kind support is not implying extra costs or barriers for returnees.** This involves procurement processes and potential obstacles in relation to the in-kind system are mitigated.

- **Somalia:** particularly related to identified barrier to obtain driver's license through in-kind assistance, may require pre-set agreements with the Government if demand is high. Also review the efficiency of the procurement process in terms of prices payed for in-kind groceries.

Sudan: procurement processes are a challenge given high inflation, cash shortages etc. In this context it might be motivated to limit the options for returned migrants to a few pre-set options and focus procurement efforts in these areas to make processes more cost and time efficient.

➔ **Review funding to MRCs and align staff with work-load to ensure that equal service is provided across all centres.**

Regional office: this activity is best implemented at regional level as it aims at ensure equal service provision across all MRCs. The recommendation involves taking stock of the work and resource allocation of IOM- and Government-run centres established in Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan (taking into account the different funding schemes of each centre, where some centres are fully funded by the IOM and others co-funded and run by national stakeholders) with the aim to identify gaps in service delivery.

➔ **Shorten time between first visit to centre and actual return in places where migrants are facing long waiting times.** The process of return involves the participation of governments of both the sending and the receiving country. Barriers are thus highly country specific and therefore require further country-level analysis to determine which actions to take.

- **Somalia:** review the external and internal factors that are causing long waiting times, for example the barriers to Ethiopian embassy staff visiting MRCs outside Mogadishu and Hargeisa, and evaluate options to address these challenges (e.g. issuing documents from a distance) through close collaboration with government stakeholders from both and Ethiopian governments.
- **Sudan:** positive steps have already been taken in terms of negotiating down exit fees (charged by Sudanese government) and cutting the costs of issuing national documents (charged by Ethiopian government). Remaining barriers include for example the need for cash to pay for visa exits. Devoting time and resources to the continue to work towards close collaboration and negotiation with governments involved will be important to remove further barriers.

➔ **Investigate the possibility to invest in institutions that are already in place to complement services provided by MRCs.**

- **Somalia and Sudan:** analyse needs and existing resources in Ethiopian community centres and MRCs, and reinforce capacity of centres in Hargeisa, Bosaso and Khartoum wherever it is judged feasible and motivated, which is a process that has already started..

➔ **Assign sufficient resources and time to the final evaluation of the project, and include non-beneficiaries in the evaluation framework.**

- **Regional office:** this will be on the regional office to integrate into the planning of the final evaluation.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS/PROGRAMMING

- **Carefully plan and carry out the inception phase to ensure that partnerships and institutional and management capacity is in place from the start.** This would ensure better multidimensional planning and sequencing of activities carried out.
- **Launch mapping and assessment studies early in the process to better feed into the programming and activities.** Encourage more alignment and knowledge sharing with ongoing and recently finished activities on the ground would also be beneficial, though for example sharing labour market assessments carried out by previous programmes.
- **Explore land transportation (car/bus and train) as an alternative to return movements by flights, which will be impossible to sustain without donor funding.** Attention should be given to the safety return processes when using alternative transports.
- **Where possible, align AVRR programmes run by different organisations/donors to avoid creating confusion and false expectations of available assistance.** This will require work at both national, regional and Headquarter level to harmonise assistance across international donors and regional and national programmes.

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Annexes

ANNEX 1. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SUB-QUESTIONS

CRITERIA	SUB-QUESTIONS
RELEVANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the programme relevant to the identified needs? • To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid? • Are the activities of the programme consistent with the overall objective and the attainment of the specific objectives? • Are activities sufficient to meet the beneficiary needs and programme objectives? • Do programme activities and objectives take the needs of particularly vulnerable groups (i.e. women, children and youth) into account? • How well are principles of environmental sustainability and humanitarian action incorporated into programming?
EFFECTIVENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective is the programme reaching the target populations? • How effective is the project in reaching vulnerable populations (e.g. women, children/youth)? • To what extent are the objectives achieved / likely to be achieved at the end of the project? • How well are cross-cutting reflected in programme implementation? • What were the main challenges/barriers to achieving the objectives within the timeframe of the project?
EFFICIENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are activities cost-efficient? Have funds been utilized as planned? • To what extent are the project processes, procedures and structures in place capable of delivering project activities and targets in a timely manner? • To what degree did the project take advantage of existing resources, capacities and infrastructure already in place? • Do project activities complement, overlap or duplicate other similar interventions (funded internally and /or by other donors)? • How efficient is the project management and planning? • How well have recommendations from the ROM evaluation been taken into account in project implementation?
SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How likely will the activities continue after donor funding has been withdrawn? • What capacities is the project developing among beneficiaries and stakeholders to sustain gains made?