

PROJECT EVALUATION LEARNING BRIEF

This learning brief is a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations prepared by the evaluator for use by IOM project staff and management, the (British Embassy in Belgrade) and participating institutions. Details on all of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations can be found in the full evaluation report.

Evaluation type: External independent final evaluation
Evaluator(s): Agnes Ebenberger, external consultant
Evaluation visit: 20-23 March 2018
Commissioned by: IOM Mission in Serbia

Managed by: Tanja Azanjac, Capacity Building Programme Coordinator

Evaluation purpose: To assess whether the planned activities and outputs of the project were achieved, whether the project was relevant and efficient, as well as how effective and sustainable the achievements are likely to be in reaching the mid-term outcomes and long-term objectives/impact; IOM will share the evaluation report with the donor of the project and participating institutions to demonstrate the value of the project, lessons learned and recommendations.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, cross-cutting issues (gender and human rights)

Evaluation methodology: Desk review, stakeholder interviews and direct observations

PROJECT SUMMARY

The migration crisis in the Western Balkan region exposed the need for an effective adjustment of the existing migration and asylum management system in Serbia. IOM Serbia carried out an assessment to identify capacity building needs of Serbian government institutions involved in migration and asylum management in early 2017 and, based on the needs identified, developed a project with the objective to contribute to the strengthening the migration and asylum management systems in Serbia.

The project features four interlinked outcomes and related outputs contributing to this objective, along the following areas of intervention:

- 1) Increasing quality of asylum services/decisions
- 2) Raising awareness on migrant protection
- 3) Enhancing knowledge and skills of staff at reception centres
- 4) Reconstruction of the Migration Training Centre.

Due to the delay of the project inception, it was necessary to revise the initial project plan in order to secure the timely implementation. Furthermore, some activities were amended, cancelled or added later in the project for various reasons, including visa issues and emerging needs.

Support to Strengthening Migration and Asylum Management in Serbia

Geographical coverage: Serbia
Project type: Technical Cooperation on Migration Management and Capacity Building
Project code: TC.1036
Project period: 28 April 2017 – 31 March 2018
Budget: GBP 297,420
Beneficiaries: Ministry of Interior, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, (CRM) Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, Government Working Group on Mixed Migration, Prosecutor's Office, Asylum Office, Asylum Commission
Project partners: Ministry of Interior, CRM, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, Government Working Group on Mixed Migration, UNHCR, UNICEF

The main focus of the project lay on the development of products which shall serve as basis for development of human resource in a potential second phase of the project. While the second phase had not been confirmed or developed at the time of the evaluation, it is likely to happen in the near future. The findings of this evaluation shall feed the design and planning of the second phase.

KEY FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the evaluation indicate that the project has been relevant as it was based on prior thorough assessment of capacity building needs. This has also enhanced the sense of ownership from beneficiaries as they received the kind of support they explicitly asked for.

Despite of the short timeframe, which was further limited by delays due to various reasons, the project has implemented most of its planned activities and widely achieved its outputs. It has generally used resources efficiently and has been good value for money.

As for the achievement of outcomes and likely impact of the project, it may be too early at this stage to draw conclusions, but interviews and desk review suggest that several of the project's benefits may last beyond its cessation.

Further engagement is recommended, as some gaps and needs still persist. A focus should be on enhancing sustainability, among others through supporting institutionalization of the project's products. It will be important to develop a clear vision and strategy for the future of the project and its benefits.

GOOD PRACTICES

- Needs assessment and validation workshop ensuring that proposed activities are fully in line with local needs and priorities
- Thorough consultative process enhancing ownership
- Involvement of many relevant actors enhancing quality and reach of activities and products
- Bringing together stakeholders and supporting establishment of fruitful working relationships
- Developing products based on existing resources to compile national and international good practices, standards and tools
- Publishing content in several formats (e.g. curriculum and handbook) so that it reaches a higher number and variety of beneficiaries and can be used for different purposes
- Holistic approach and synergies between project components enhancing effectiveness and efficiency
- Satisfaction questionnaires and discussion at end of trainings to inform and improve future activities and phases of the project
- Flexibility of project to adapt to changing circumstances, thus remaining relevant

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for development and implementation of the second phase of the project (some will also be valid for future programming more generally):

- IOM, beneficiaries and donor to develop a clear strategy and vision for the future of the project's products and benefits
- Future owner of the online platform, supported by IOM, to expand the platform and commit to its regular maintenance and update
- IOM project staff and relevant national institutions (particularly CRM and Asylum Office) to clarify responsibilities and seek possibilities for future updates of handbooks and curricula developed within the project
- IOM Mission, in consultation with CRM and the donor, to consider further reconstruction of the Migration Training Centre to provide accommodation for trainers and participants
- Support establishment of a centralized institutional training system in institutions benefitting from the project, particularly CRM
- IOM project staff to encourage institutionalization of products developed within the project
- IOM team to assess and respond to capacity building needs related to the recently passed new Law on Asylum and Law on Foreigners
- IOM team to continue monitoring of project benefits six to twelve months after completion of the first phase to gather more conclusive evidence regarding their impact and sustainability

Lessons learned and recommendations for future programming more generally:

- Mitigate negative consequences from delays of funding availability in future projects through IOM team starting preparations already before official project inception, particularly the staff hiring process and liaison with key stakeholders
- Facilitate seamless transition from one project phase to the next through IOM team/project developer preparing the logframe and workplan for the next phase already during the last quarter of the current phase and donor working towards timely agreement and delivery of funds
- Project staff and IOM Mission's senior management to further enhance coordination synergies with other IOM programmes in Serbia
- Consider conducting future study visits in smaller groups