



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)  
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

## **Mid-term Evaluation of Open Centre for Migrants Registered for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (OCAVRR) Project**

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**Table of Contents**

- Acronyms ..... 2**
- Executive Summary ..... 3**
- 1. Introduction..... 4**
  - 1.1 Project Background ..... 4
  - 1.2 Evaluation Objective ..... 5
  - 1.3 Evaluation Scope and Methodology ..... 5
- 2. Relevance, Performance and Achievements..... 6**
  - 2.1 Relevance of Project Design..... 6
  - 2.2 Effectiveness of Results Achievement ..... 10
  - 2.3 Efficiency of Implementation ..... 13
  - 2.4 Outcomes and Impact ..... 16
  - 2.5 Project Sustainability ..... 18
- 3. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations..... 19**
  - 3.1 Conclusions ..... 19
  - 3.2 Recommendations ..... 20
- Annex 1 Evaluation Terms of Reference ..... 22**
- Annex 2 Interviews and Bibliography..... 26**
- Annex 3 Project Result Matrix ..... 28**
- Annex 4 OCAVRR Location and Proximity to Hospitals ..... 30**
- Annex 5 Migration Flows in the Mediterranean in 2016 and 2015 ..... 31**

## Acronyms

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
BA	Athens Building Authority
CoO	Countries of Origin
EC	European Commission
ERF	European Return Fund
EU	European Union
FRONTEX	European Agency for Management of Operational Cooperation at External Borders of Member States of European Union (from French: <i>Frontières extérieures</i> for "external borders")
GoG	Government of Greece
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPOCP	Ministry of Public Order and Citizens Protection
MS	Member States
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
OCAVRR	Open Centre for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TCNs	Third Country Nationals
ToR	Terms of Reference

## Executive Summary

The project's objective "*to provide shelter to irregular migrants registered with IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes*" remains highly relevant, strongly targeting the emergency character of the Mediterranean crisis. The needs of returning migrants under IOM's AVRR scheme as a whole are well addressed through the provision of a physical location where irregular migrants can be assessed and provided with the necessary assistance.

The project has only recently started to be effective as it delivered some major outputs that have created a strong foundation for the achievement of results. Adverse relationships with the communities of Agia Varvara Athens (initial choice for the Open Centre location that was not accepted by the local neighbourhood) and Attiko Alsos Athens (current location) delayed the process of the Open Centre set up and decreased project effectiveness. The project came to the end of its cycle, and in case the time extension is not granted, the project results will not be fully reached as the capacity building and technical expertise essential for the running of the Centre will not be available any longer.

Various community, political, economic and financial challenges impeded the project's efficiency. Apart from neighbourhood opposition, the municipal and national elections and the referendum, a difficult economic situation in the country additionally prolonged the efficient Open Centre set up. Capital controls following the parliamentary elections in September 2015 disrupted procurement, contracting and refurbishing procedures. Despite these challenges, project cost effectiveness and funds management remain commendable due to high project diligence.

The planned changes in the management of irregular migration in Greece as per project objective has only recently started to appear with the start of Open Centre operations. Moving destitute and vulnerable (homeless) migrants from streets or temporary shelters is a major project outcome, lessening the likelihood the migrants will change their mind regarding the return or engage in potentially illegal activities with harmful consequences that can impede any further travel. Dignified and respectful accommodation and living conditions are provided, respecting basic Human Rights requirements in terms of assistance to be provided. Outcomes for the Government of Greece (GoG) are visible in the improved operational framework for managing irregular migration and return, with the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and improved infrastructure that supports the implementation of a fair and effective EU Return strategy.

Positive impacts are also visible on the psychological level as the overall well-being of targeted irregular migrants has improved. There was also an unexpected positive impact with a gradually improved mentality of the neighbourhood where the Centre is located.

It is worth repeating that project's purpose and its relevance has not been put into question, and that the policy support remained strong, despite difficult circumstances the country was facing in 2014 and 2015. Humane and dignified approach to the management of irregular migration issues, in spite of country's own calamities, deserve to be underlined and this pilot project replicated in other countries of the Mediterranean region. Greece being in the forefront of the global migration problem, is highly commended for the management of the consecutive migration crises and its assistance to migrants in this project.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background

Based on consultations with the European Commission (EC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Greek Ministry of Public Order and Citizens Protection (MPOCP) designed a 24 months pilot project at the end of 2013, the main objective of which is “*to provide shelter to irregular migrants registered with IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes (AVRR) who have nowhere to stay until their departure*”. The project beneficiaries included vulnerable migrants, i.e. pregnant women, single-parent families, unaccompanied minors, migrants with medical needs, elderly migrants and migrants who were homeless.

The main project activities include:

- The identification and renovation of an Open Centre that will provide accommodation to 100 migrants who have registered to return to their country of origin through one of IOM Greece’s AVRR projects. 60% of the beneficiaries will belong to one of the groups of vulnerable migrants and 40% will be irregular migrants with no place to reside until their departure;
- The provision of reintegration services to 20 vulnerable migrants who do not otherwise qualify for reintegration activities under the European Return Fund (ERF) AVRR programme;
- Work, both within and outside formal protection structures, closely with the MPOCP, the First Asylum Services and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) that currently provide services to irregular migrants in order to identify vulnerable migrants and provide them with the appropriate services;
- Assistance in providing technical expertise to the establishment of the Centre and provision of on-going support in the day-to-day operation of the shelter, thus creating synergies with IOM’s existing AVRR programmes in Greece; and
- Creation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to be used for the daily operation and management of the Open Centre (OCAVRR).

The MPOCP is responsible for the daily operation and supervision of the Centre based on the SOP developed by IOM. MPOCP staff is expected to work closely with IOM Greece and with other governmental authorities and civil society, to provide required services to the targeted beneficiaries and to support all pre-departure and reintegration activities provided to migrants under IOM’s AVRR schemes. MPOCP is also responsible for all procurement necessary to insure the reception Centre and hire security.

IOM Greece is expected to create a network of representatives from government and civil society that can identify vulnerable migrants wanting to return to their countries of origin, and coordinate activities implemented in the framework of other AVRR projects in Greece. IOM is responsible for the registration of migrants, with the implementation of reintegration components, and to refer them to the OCAVRR.

IOM is also responsible for the renovation and refurbishment of the building in order to accommodate targeted beneficiaries and to make it suitable to provide the appropriate services

to both groups of migrants. IOM Greece used IOM procurement procedures for the purchases, and to identify and hire sub-contracting companies and staff.

The total project budget remains EUR 4.13 million, 90% funded by the EC and 10% co-funded by the national partner, MPOCP (EUR 150,000 and in kind services). The project start date was initially agreed for 1 January 2014 for a duration of 24 months. Due to delays in the implementation (see also Section 2 for details), the duration was extended to 36 months, until 31 December 2016. Currently, another time extension of 12 months is being requested to enable the finalisation of all pending activities and the full achievement of project results.

## 1.2 Objective of the Evaluation

*The evaluation aims ‘to evaluate IOM overall performance in the implementation of OCAVRR, to assess IOM partnership with the Government and other counterparts, as well as complementary approaches with other programmes and stakeholders, and to propose recommendations and relevant lessons that could be applied to similar projects in Greece and for the Organisation.’*

An analysis of the outcomes and impact will have to consider the possible extension of the project; if this is the case, the evaluation will focus on expected outcomes and impact and the probability to reach them as planned in the agreement. The same will be applied for the analysis of sustainability.

More specifically, the evaluation will examine the overall performance of the project through the OECD DAC<sup>1</sup> criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, outcome, impact and sustainability, answering a series of related questions as detailed in the ToR for the evaluation (Annex 1). The evaluation will also provide recommendations on the operational aspects of the project, as well as on challenges and lessons learned issuing from the initial 9 months of OCAVRR operations.

## 1.3 Evaluation Scope and Methodology

The “Open Centre for Migrants Registered for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration” project was selected for an evaluation by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) due to the significant budget allocated by the EC and to the geographical importance of Greece in the field of migration, in particular as a point of arrival of irregular migrants and refugees trying to settle in European countries. The recent crisis with migrant flows from Turkey further justified the selection of an IOM pilot project aiming at assisting and protecting vulnerable migrants that could benefit from return assistance, and at providing support to a government facing a major migration crisis.

When the OIG 2015-2016 work plan was finalised, it was expected to be an end of project evaluation; however as another extension until 31 December 2017 is under discussion, the evaluation opted for a mid-term evaluation approach, with recommendations that may be made for further adjustments before completion of the project. The decision on the extension is be

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<sup>1</sup> The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) defines evaluation as an assessment “to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability” of efforts supported by aid agencies: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

taken soon, but it will not affect the overall objective and scope of the evaluation. Adjustments to the Terms of Reference (ToR) were discussed within OIG and with IOM Greece at the start of the evaluation exercise, with a field visit planned for September 2016.

The evaluation methodology consisted of mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis consisted of a documentation review of the reports and documents produced by the project and the qualitative one of a series of interviews with IOM staff, with national authorities, with other agencies and partners who have participated in the implementation of the programme, as well as with the beneficiaries of the Open Centre.

The organisation of interviews was coordinated and supported by the IOM office in Greece, which was also in charge of providing the necessary documentation related to project implementation as well as documentation specific to other projects and activities that were relevant for the evaluation. It included technical and procurement reports, letters, notes for the file of meetings, Memorandum of Understanding with authorities, agreements between agencies and with various contractors, financial records, press releases, e-mail exchanges, concept notes, and a desk research on specific national and EU policies and strategies (a detailed list of interviews conducted and documents obtained is available in Annex 1).

The field visit was conducted during September 19-23, 2016. A work plan was established prior to the field visit and a report drafted by 15 October 2016, and also submitted to IOM Greece for comments.

## **2. Relevance, performance and achievements**

In line with the evaluation objective (Section 1.2), this Section analyses the relevance of project design, effectiveness of results achievement, efficiency of project operations, outcomes and impact (or expected outcomes and impact), and prospects for sustainability of actions, as the project is in the middle of implementation (with the awaited time extension in mind). It also provides conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned per individual criteria.

### **2.1 Relevance of Project Design**

The subsection examines if the project design and strategy have been relevant to respond adequately to the vulnerability of the target groups and to address the problem of irregular migration through the support to AVRRC activities. It also examines the relevance to governmental migration strategies and to the response to other social problems caused by the inflow of irregular migrants, taking also into account cultural factors. Finally, it also analyses how gender issues were taken into account and integrated into the project design.

#### ***Link with the Mediterranean Migration Crisis Response***

The project and its strategy remain highly relevant and continue to provide immediate response to assist those affected by the consequences of conflicts in Asia and Africa. The project targets the emergency character of the Mediterranean migration crisis, which although slowly decreasing will not, realistically, cease altogether given various push-pull factors, i.e. almost 170,000 irregular migrants in Greece recorded until 7 October 2016 compared to over 800,000

in 2015 (see Annex 5 for details). Greece still remains the major gateway of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers from Africa and Asia according to data from Frontex<sup>2</sup>.

Due to the financial crisis in Greece in 2015, and its current economic and socio-political situation, migrants face difficulties in finding jobs legally in Greece and are unable to continue their journey to the rest of Europe. Stranded and with limited options, many choose to voluntarily return to their respective countries of origin (CoO). Police has detained irregular migrants since August 2012, the majority of whom were young men, but many of the other migrants are also vulnerable; in case they are registered for AVRR, departures take longer because of their specific situation, i.e. family tracing, family assessment and best interest determination for unaccompanied minors.

The country was lacking the infrastructure to accommodate irregular migrants, as the seven detention centres in the country are almost always over their maximum capacity. Consequently, irregular migrants are often transferred to centres outside the Attica region. The project not only strongly targets the needs of returning migrants, as it provides a physical location where irregular migrants can be assessed and provided with the necessary assistance, but it also supports the migration management efforts of the Greek government and improves the unfavourable conditions in Greece for migrants willing to return to their CoOs.

Thanks to its large network of government representatives, project partners and civil society but also its long experience and expertise, IOM Greece adequately managed to work with other programmes for identifying vulnerable migrants willing to return to their CoOs (see details in Section 2.2 “cooperation with stakeholders”). The project support to AVRR activities included the identification of an appropriate facility and establishment of a first Open Reception Centre in Greece. Its capacity is 110 placements (10 more when compared with the project proposal), 60% for vulnerable migrants and 40% for able bodied ones. The project also targets 20 vulnerable migrants who are not otherwise eligible based on pre-defined criteria used in other AVRR programmes.

### *Institutional and Policy Framework*

The project is funded through the emergency programme under the European Return Fund<sup>3</sup>, which allocated EUR 676 million for the period 2008–13 aiming to improve return management and to encourage the development of cooperation between EU countries and CoOs. In this context, the Fund provides support for actions assisting migrants' return to their CoOs and their reintegration processes, as well as activities enhancing the quality of information on voluntary return. Other measures financed by the Fund include, for example, the setting up of voluntary return and reintegration programmes, specific assistance for vulnerable returnees (e.g. persons who are ill or disabled, unaccompanied minors) and support for innovative tools and actions supporting the sharing of best practices between EU States. The Fund is mainly implemented by EU countries through shared management. Each EU State implements the Fund through national annual programmes on the basis of multiannual programming.

The project is aligned with the EU and European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (FRONTEX) strategic directives concerning latest developments and trends concerning the migratory flows towards Europe. The Greek government updated the migration legislation in 2011 following the EC Directive conditions of

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<sup>2</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/migratory-routes-map/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/return-fund/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/return-fund/index_en.htm)

entry and residence of Third Country Nationals (TCNs), i.e. Directive 2008/115, on common standards and procedures in Member States (MS) for returning TCNs illegally staying. The deadline for directives transposition in the MS was the end of 2010, since an integrated constitutional framework for the joint operations at sea was required, in full compliance with International Laws and Human Rights. The Greek policy and legislation, in which IOM is operating, is thus aligned with the new European Policy on Migration on the integrity of the European Borders with full respect for Human Rights and the protection of Human Life at sea.

The project is also operating within the EU Return Policy framework (COM 199/2014)<sup>4</sup>; the EC reports on progress of the Return Directive, concluding that Greece, among all other EU countries *have introduced important legislative and practical changes to establish fair and transparent rules and improve the way return procedures are undertaken.*

The project is also complementary to EU Regulations (514/2014 and 516/2014) on establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) that contributes to the development of the common Union policy on asylum and immigration aimed at strengthening the area of freedom, security and justice by applying the principles of solidarity and responsibility-sharing between the MS and cooperation with third countries and to promote the efficient management of migration flows.

Thus, the project complies with Greece's strategy for the management of the external borders of the Union and migrants' entry, ensuring full respect for international and Human Rights laws. The Open Centre was established by the Ministerial Decision published in the Law Gazette in September 2015, for an indefinite period of time as long as it is used for AVRR purposes and there is adequate funding provided by the responsible parties. The First Reception Service of the MPOCP (national project counterpart) provides full support to the project and contributes in funding.

Project relevance never came into question during the interviews or in the documentation review, and policy support remained strong despite Greece facing a very difficult period during 2014 and 2015 with the challenging economic, financial and political situation, i.e. municipal elections in 2014; the national referendum (potentially voting Greece out of the EU) in July 2015; national elections in September 2015 (the time when the Ministerial Decision on the establishment of the Open Centre was issued); the Government of Greece (GoG) resignation prior to the national elections and the setup of the provisional cabinet; and the closing of banks ("Banks Holiday") and capital controls (daily cash withdrawals of 60 EUR).

### *Incorporation of Gender and Cultural Norms*

The project design takes into account cross-cutting issues such as gender, cultural and religious norms and daily customs of irregular migrants (food, dressing etc.). The OCAVRR was designed in accordance with international standards and guidelines, accommodating for instance two different groups of migrants (vulnerable and non-vulnerable), with a focus on the needs of vulnerable migrants, i.e. pregnant women, single-parent families, single women, unaccompanied minors, migrants with medical needs, elderly migrants and migrants who were homeless (more details available under the Effectiveness section).

The project produced standard operating procedures (SOPs) according to which 60% of placements are reserved for vulnerable migrants who would reside in the Centre until the

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/com/com\\_com\(2014\)0199\\_/com\\_com\(2014\)0199\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/com/com_com(2014)0199_/com_com(2014)0199_en.pdf)

necessary procedures for their departure have been completed. For migrants with medical needs, a doctor and two nurses reside in the Centre to provide medical assessments and medical clearance for departure. Unaccompanied minors stay at the Centre until the necessary family tracing, family assessment and best interest determination are concluded, staying an average three to five months. There are special facilities accommodating single or pregnant women but also women with children, such as nursery, separated toilets and rooms, but also recreational and religious facilities.

IOM advises migrants on the conditions, obligations, rights and responsibilities prior to their admission to the Centre. Information is provided in writing, translated into several languages and explained to each migrant, taking into account their individual vulnerabilities. Should migrants registered to leave with IOM’s AVRR programme change their minds, the Ministry staff is responsible for liaising with IOM Greece and for notifying the migrants that they must depart the Open Centre.

*Relevance of Project Objective*

Despite the delayed project start, the situation on the ground provides enough evidence to support the validity of project objective and results. Changes to project design were not detected apart from changes to project timeframe due to external factors (see Sections 2.2 and 2.3). The project successfully mitigated risks (i.e. change of location for the OCAVRR due to neighbourhood unrests), which were not appropriately identified during the design phase.

A semantic discrepancy between results (outputs) listed in the Grant Agreement Annex 1 and project’s Results Matrix from Grant Application was noted, i.e. Annex 1 lists four expected outputs: 1) Support and technical expertise provided to the GoG in establishing an Open Centre; 2) Vulnerable migrants provided with shelter and services; 3) Irregular migrants registered to voluntarily return provided with temporary shelter; and 4) Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; while the Results Matrix lists a single objective of providing shelter to irregular migrants registered with the IOM’s AVRR programmes, and three Results: 1) Operational Open Centre to provide accommodation to the TCNs; 2) Data gathered regarding beneficiaries and disseminated information regarding the Open Centre; and 3) Supply of subcontracted services. Detailed outputs and performance indicators listed in the Results Matrix greatly support measuring of progress and project management and evaluation.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
<p>The project remains highly relevant and overall well designed. Humane and dignified attention and approach to solving the irregular migration issues in spite of Greece’s own crisis is undoubtedly a case study for other countries of how to flexibly adapt during implementation to ensure results are being achieved.</p> <p>Risks were successfully mitigated (i.e. change of location for the OCAVRR due to neighbour unrest) but not appropriately identified during the design phase. The needs of returning migrants in the country were properly targeted, with the physical location well identified where irregular migrants can be assessed and provided with the necessary assistance. Changes to project design were not detected apart from extended project timeframe due to external factors. Discrepancies noted when project outcomes are compared between Grant Agreement and Result Matrix did not impede on the process of monitoring and evaluating the achievement of project results.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>

- 1) Identification of risks during the design phase, preparation of a risk mitigation strategy and its continuous update during the project lifetime prevent risk materialisation and any impeding effects on project effectiveness and efficiency.
- 2) Avoiding discrepancies in result and/or outcome definitions in the design of the project and subsequent contract agreements clarifies follow-up and project management, monitoring and evaluation (assessment). It also prevents contractual disputes if discrepancies are important.

## 2.2 Effectiveness

This sub-section examines the effectiveness of programme implementation in reaching the planned outcomes and expected results through the provision of assistance to the beneficiaries. It also covers aspects of coordination and partnerships with the national authorities, donors, in particular the EC, partners and other relevant programmes.

### *Results and Outcomes Achievement*

Major outputs have been delivered creating a strong foundation for the results achievement. The Open Centre for voluntary return is up and running with 11 staff members and the capacity to accommodate 116 migrants daily (target for location 1 was 100, and for location 2 is 110 due to a bigger building; 60% vulnerable and 40% invulnerable). All facilities were successfully built and in some cases targets were exceeded for the same budget (see Section 2.3 for further details), i.e. 116 beds instead of 110 (i.e. 114 beds for beneficiaries and two for the beneficiary in wheelchair and for short term medical treatment); four kitchens (target: 2); five bathrooms (target: 2); two laundry and washing facilities (target: 1); and two private counselling rooms (target: 1).

So far, the Centre has provided services to a total of 1,223 beneficiaries: 132 vulnerable migrants (target: 320) staying at the Centre from three to five months and 1,091 able bodied migrants (target: 2,560) staying at the Centre approximately 10-15 days. The numbers of migrants assisted are only half of the projected targets but taking into account the delays in construction, the continuous arrival of migrants and the possible time extension, there are good prospects for reaching the targets. The project still has not started to provide reintegration services but the identification process for four vulnerable migrants is currently underway (target: 20). The SOPs were produced to enable functioning of the OCAVRR and accommodating the needs of beneficiaries. At the time of evaluation visit, 55 beneficiaries were accommodated in the Centre.

The above created a strong foundation for the achievement of the first result (listing provided in the Results Matrix, Annex 3), i.e. a fully operational Open Reception Centre that provides accommodation to TCNs. In addition, the second result is also being achieved as beneficiary data is gathered and disseminated concerning the OCAVRR services, i.e. database contains data on 1,223 beneficiaries accommodated in the Centre; 1,150 beneficiaries who received psychological support; and 1,216 who received medical support. The same goes for the third result, as the supply of subcontracted services for the Centre including food, cleaning, security, insurance, provision of psychological and medical support, continues to be provided on a daily basis.

Overall, the total number of beneficiaries who departed for their CoOs is 1,082. There are still 88 pending cases: 37 who await departure (on the waiting list) but who have departed the Centre for various reasons, i.e. family and friends; and 51 for whom arrangements were made to depart but never left for the CoOs and are no longer living in the Centre. There is no information on what they have decided to do instead, i.e. if they left for another country in Europe or if they are still in Greece.

The project will certainly effectively contribute to outcomes and results achievement despite significant delays caused by outside factors (see Section 2.3 for details). But in case the time extension is not granted, the project will not be able to fully reach its objective and results (outcomes). Support to project results is furthermore welcome beyond current project, considering that a migration crisis is still prevailing with huge death tolls in the Mediterranean (over 3,600 people dead or missing in 2016; see Annex 5 for details).

### *Reaching Beneficiaries and Target Groups*

The OCAVRR is fully operational since December 2015 and effectively provides accommodation for TCNs, per its main objective. The Centre is situated in the urban neighbourhood of Athens where most of the embassies are located, which greatly supports the effectiveness of obtaining travel documents for the beneficiaries. It is close to four hospitals (see Annex 4 for OCAVRR location maps) so in case the Centre staff cannot address more complicated and urgent medical needs of the beneficiaries (regardless of gender, ethnical or religious background), immediate assistance can be provided in the hospitals nearby.

The beneficiaries from Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan and Pakistan confirmed a strong appreciation of the support and all services the Centre provides, as well as a dignified solution for their difficult situations. Most of the beneficiaries were dealing with a sense of defeat at the time they were admitted to the Open Centre, as they were not able to reach the European country in which they have relatives or friends and were planning to work to provide for their families. But the Centre gave them a sense of purpose and acceptance and prepared them for the return to their countries.

### *Coordination with Stakeholders*

Coordination, communication and working relationships between stakeholders are fully effective. Partnership relations were created and meetings regularly held on both the official and ad hoc bases providing for efficient follow-up, issue resolution and guidance.

The project provided technical expertise in the procurement and renovation of the OCAVRR, and continues to support its partner, MPOCP, in the daily functioning of the Centre. The GoG ensures that contracted staff fulfills their professional obligations and IOM makes monthly payments to the contracting companies upon confirmation by the GoG. The MPOCP is also responsible for the daily operation and supervision of the Centre, based on implementation of the SOP developed by IOM. MPOCP manages the security of the Centre since January 2016 (initially the Centre was secured by the Hellenic Police) and IOM advises migrants on their living conditions and obligations, rights and responsibilities prior to their admission to the Centre.

The project is well coordinated with other EU interventions, primarily funded through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).<sup>5</sup> Good synergy with these IOM implemented programmes was noted, which include: “Return of TCNs to their CoO” (funded through AMIF); “Assistance for the Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Returnees from Greece” (funded through AMIF); “Assisted Voluntary Return for Irregular Migrants in Greece” (UK Home Office funded via Returns and Reintegration Fund); and “Implementation of Assisted Voluntary Returns including Reintegration Measures” (funded through AMIF). The synergies resulted, for instance, in accommodating 605 returnees in the Open Center out of the overall number of 2,500 TCNs from the above programmes, who were returned to their respective CoOs (25% of the total number).

### *Community Contribution*

The communities of Agia Varvara Athens (initial OCVRR location) and Attiko Alsos Athens (current OCAVRR location) played adverse roles and delayed the process of OCAVRR set up thus decreasing the project’s effectiveness. Although the locations were identified by the national partners (MPOCP), the project faced riots in the first selected location and now a lawsuit has been filed against the Chief Mission by the neighbours of the second location, mainly due to the lack of information on the living conditions the Centre would be providing, but more importantly on the background of migrants soon to be their neighbours. This is an example of what happens when the beneficiary municipalities are not involved in the design process but also in the discussions on future OCAVRR location and functioning.

### *Gender Mainstreaming and Assistance to Vulnerable People*

As mentioned under Section 2.1, the project design focuses on needs of vulnerable individuals and respects their gender, ethnical, religious and cultural differences.

So far, most of the OCAVRR beneficiaries were male (60% of cases, having in mind also that a majority of the migrants are male). Almost 200 beneficiaries, or 16%, were women and 300 beneficiaries were children (11.6% female and 12.2 % male). The project still has not fully started with reintegration activities, but encouraging women to apply (especially single women or single parents who are women) is an important aspect of the project strategy.

In terms of nationalities, beneficiaries were mainly from Afghanistan (27%), Iraq (24%), Morocco (23%), Iran (14%), Pakistan (6%) and Lebanon (3%). Other nationalities represent 3% and include migrants from Jordan (11 beneficiaries), Egypt (nine beneficiaries), Algeria (eight), Tunisia (four), Nepal (two), with Bangladesh, Guinea and Nigeria each represented by a single beneficiary.

Out of 132 vulnerable beneficiaries (11% of the total number), 67% or 88 of them were single parents, 31 pregnant women, 12 receiving medical care and one was elderly. The project continues to ensure that specialised services and facilities are provided for single women (who are either parents or simply travelling alone), youth, disabled individuals and all vulnerable beneficiaries in general.

## **CONCLUSION**

The project has only recently started to be effective, but it has already delivered some major outputs that have created a strong foundation for the results achievement. Adverse

<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund/index_en.htm)

relationships with the communities of Agia Varvara Athens (initial OCVRR location) and Attiko Alsos Athens (current OCAVRR location) delayed the process of OCAVRR set up and decreased project effectiveness. If the time extension is not approved, the project may not be able to fully reach its purpose and results as the capacity building and technical expertise essential for the fully operational OCAVRR will not be available any longer.

### RECOMMEDATIONS

- 1) The 12 months' time extension is highly recommended to support full achievement of project objective and results, and the provision of technical expertise by IOM Greece to support the efficient functioning of the Centre and coordination with other AVRR projects.
- 2) Involvement of beneficiary municipalities in the design process and discussions regarding future OCAVRR locations are essential in preventing delays in the opening of other Centers.

## 2.3 Efficiency

The sub-section highlights the challenges faced by the project during the implementation of activities with a major impact on funds disbursements, as well as the measures taken to ensure that resources were efficiently used and in line with the agreed budget and project strategy. The section also analyses cost-effectiveness to verify if activities could have been implemented with fewer resources without reducing the quality and quantity of the results.

### *Set-up of the Open Center*

Numerous factors outside direct IOM's control impeded efficiency. Firstly, the refurbishment of the initial building chosen by the national partner (MPOCP) in Agia Varvara Athens was stopped by the local authorities and citizens of the surrounding areas objecting to having an Open Centre for migrants in the vicinity of their homes. Citizens held public protests due to which reconstruction of the selected building never started. The municipal elections of June 2014, during which the renovation was restarted, had an outcome of newly selected officials stopping the construction again.

Following these developments, the Government of Greece (GoG) decided to choose another location but it was difficult to find a governmentally owned building that fit the strict requirements for an Open Centre (over 10 motels and hotels were assessed for this purpose). Finally, the current (privately owned) building located in the very heart of Athens, Attiko Alsos, was identified in December 2014. Amendment No. 1 to the Grant Agreement was signed in April 2015, extending the project timeframe to 36 months (until 31 December 2016), with no changes to the overall project budget.

Additional delays were caused by the Athens Building Authority (BA) that issued the building permit only in June 2015 due to new complains by the neighbours (IOM was sued by over 200 following neighbours who initially signed a petition against the OCAVRR). Residents filed an official complaint to the BA against the refurbishment of the Open Centre, stating that the building was not suitable for the intended purpose as it lacked building permits and requested the BA to inspect the site. The project installed all the additional equipment requested by the BA, including fire proof doors, internal atrium sealed with special fire proof glass panels and external emergency exit, fire escape (steel staircase). The findings from the BA site inspection showed everything in order and per building permit. However, some residents did not give up (44 of them out of 211) and filed a restraining order against the OCAVRR to the Athens Court of Appeal. The hearing is organised for the end of October 2016.

Furthermore, the MPOCP was unable to provide insurance services to the Centre, so a second amendment was approved in December 2015 formalising the provision of insurance by IOM Greece. The amendment also included additional staff needed for the Centre (caretakers) as civil servants could not be subcontracted by projects according to the Hellenic Labour Law, as well as the purchase of air-conditioning units and construction of external staircase, fire proof atrium, and lobby. The budget was reallocated between budget lines without a change in the overall budget amount.

The country was also facing a very critical period during this initial implementation. In July 2015 the national referendum was organised to decide whether Greece will stay in the EU. National elections were held in September 2015 as an outcome of the referendum, at the same time when the Ministerial Decision on the establishment of the Open Centre was issued. Currently, the project proposed a third amendment, which will enable the use of the remaining funds (54%) for the implementation of planned assistance to destitute and vulnerable migrants still stranded in Greece.

### *Allocation of Resources*

Appropriate resources and inputs were deployed to ensure activities are implemented under the activity components of: 1) Renovation and refurbishment of the Centre; 2) Operation of the Centre; and 3) Monitoring and Evaluation. Technical expertise was provided by the project and staff hired in December 2015/January 2016 including the project manager (IOM focal point) and his counterpart on behalf of MPOCP, security staff, one doctor, two medical nurses, three social workers, two cultural mediators, two caretakers and one psychologist (working in two shifts during the day).

The Centre was fully refurbished in order to provide accommodation for 116 beneficiaries (target: 110) including vulnerable migrants, able bodied migrants, and minors – children. It provides high quality services and sufficient space, including sleeping facilities, kitchens, dining and recreational areas, bathroom facilities, wheelchair user room, private counselling rooms, medical examination room, and laundry and washing facilities. Sleeping facilities can fit to 65 migrants per day, equipped with bed, cribs and closets. The building contains six floors with separate rest rooms and toilets for males and females but also areas where only vulnerable migrants can be accommodated. Each floor has a basic kitchen for the preparation of snacks and cold/hot drinks, as full three meals are provided by the catering company. There are also joint dining and recreational areas with TVs and musical equipment.

Cultural and religious backgrounds of beneficiaries are fully respected, with a religious room available as well as literature for all religions (toilets were built to respect religious beliefs, and not facing Mecca). There is also a private counselling room and a medical examination room, as history of each beneficiary is prepared based on consultations with social workers, psychologists and medical staff. The beneficiaries can do their laundry, apart from the specifically designed laundry and washing facility with professional washing and dry-cleaning machines to do the Centre laundry. The Centre also provides cleaning services. The entire building is wheel-chair accessible, and there is also one sleeping room in the ground floor designed for people in wheel chairs.

The beneficiaries are admitted to the Centre based on thorough medical (x-ray and skin test) and psychological (consultation) check-ups, as well as interviews conducted by the social workers, which form part of the beneficiary history. Following admittance, the beneficiaries are

provided with basic non-food items (hygiene and sanitary supplies, clothes, products for infants, and similar) to be used during their stay in the Centre. In terms of outputs under reintegration activities, four beneficiaries are currently identified as eligible.

Project cost efficiency and funds management are commendable. Expenditures are monitored on a regular basis, and changes and adjustments to budget justified thoroughly to reflect actual costs, actual needs, impact of the Greek economic situation and timeframe. Expenditures relate to staff salaries, office costs, building costs, maintenance, equipment room costs, utilities, communication costs. Expenditures are also regularly reported to the donors and approved by the IOM Chief of Mission. Currently with almost 92% time elapsed for the project, inputs and resources were used only at a level of 46%, the reasons for which have already been explained in the report.

*Cost-effectiveness*

Cost effectiveness for the project is exemplary, with sound project management and coordination, considering in particular the difficult financial situation in Greece, for instance in June 2015 with a short term “Bank Holiday” imposed on the Hellenic banking system accompanied by capital control for all bank accounts, limited access to cash and no payments possible to suppliers outside Greece. During the same period, the project was finishing the refurbishment of the Open Centre, but at the same time the economic crisis with reduced sales also implied a diminution of prices on the local market thus lowering considerably the overall expenses (i.e. cleaning material, mattresses, wardrobes, linens, tables were provided at least a 25% lower price than originally budgeted).

The majority of contractors either paused their operations during that time or stopped completely so it was difficult to find a contractor who refrained from participating in the expressions of interest and procurements and were hesitant to sign binding agreements unless they were fully reimbursed in cash. Payments could not be supported if not accompanied by a bank guarantee, but contractors could not furnish bank guarantees and could not obtain supplies for renovations (tiles, doors) due to capital controls.

The “Bank Holiday” stopped in July 2015, but the cash withdrawal limits continued. Today, only EUR 420 can be withdrawn per week. The project was however able to finalise the reconstruction and refurbishment of the Centre in August 2015 and the fire protection certificate was obtained in October 2015 making the Centre fully operational. The initial security of the building was provided in November 2015 by the Hellenic Police (one police officer per shift) before hiring a security company in January/February 2016 (police continued support until the transition process was over in April 2016). IOM Greece started informing the potential beneficiaries registered to AVRR programmes on 18 December 2015 and the first beneficiaries were accommodated on 22 December 2016.

CONCLUSION
Various community, political, economic and financial challenges were faced by the project management: 1) the selection of location for the OCAVRR was opposed by the two neighbourhoods of Athens; 2) municipal, national elections and referendum also impacted an efficient OCAVRR set up; 3) the difficult economic situation and capital controls disrupted procurement, contracts issuance and refurbishing processes. This all impeded on efficient input utilisation, i.e. with 92% of time elapsed for the project and only 46% of inputs utilised. Despite challenges, project cost effectiveness and funds management remain commendable.

Expenditures are monitored on regular basis, and changes and adjustments to budget justified thoroughly to reflect actual costs, actual needs, the impact of the Greek economic situation and timeframe.

## 2.4 Outcome and Impact

The sub-section analyses if planned changes expected to occur in the management of migration are taking place in line with the overall objective, results and project strategy, and what the Government of Greece, as the main partner, considers as the main outcomes of the project (or soon to be achieved). It will also briefly cover what are the impacts, or expected impacts, on migration management in the region that can be specifically attributed to project implementation, in particular impact on vulnerable groups.

### *Planned Changes and Main Outcomes*

The planned changes in the management of irregular migration, and more precisely in the return and reintegration of migrants registered with IOM, have only recently started to occur. With the official set up and functioning of the Centre, the project improved the infrastructure conditions in the country as it offered a first AVRR shelter that now accommodates irregular and vulnerable migrants registered under IOM AVRR projects who have nowhere to stay until their departure.

If the time extension is granted, more positive changes can be expected when the project reaches its purpose and results, enabling the adopted SOPs to be fully and efficiently implemented and the national capacity for managing and running the Open Centre to be completely built. The expected outcome of improved migration management in the country can also be expected. If the benefits of the changes are noticeable, the project can be replicated as a success story in the neighbouring countries.

So far, the project provided services to 48% of the planned migrants registered for AVRR. This means the same amount of destitute and vulnerable (homeless) migrants are moved from the streets, improvised shelters or overcrowded rented apartments. Migrants are provided with decent treatment, counselling and high quality living conditions in the Centre, which supports their decision to return and prevent them to continue the journey to countries they wanted to reach, and to take desperate measures, engaging in potentially harmful activities.

The GoG strongly appreciates the main outcomes from this pilot project, namely the improved operational framework for irregular migration but also improved infrastructure that provides favorable conditions for the return of irregular migrants thus supporting the implementation of a fair and effective EU Return policy. In addition, the migrants assisted appreciate being treated with respect and as decent human beings, have the feeling they are not forgotten and that the services provided in the Centre fully respect their personal, cultural and religious beliefs. These outcomes contribute to address the issue of irregular migration and increase the sustainability and effectiveness of the return process. As a pilot project, it can also be examined as an option for strengthening the common European migration system by ensuring the EU legislation in this field is properly applied.

Outcomes from project will be even greater if experience from this pilot project is replicated in other countries in the region, which are experiencing similar issues with irregular migration and AVRR, with the creation of cooperation platforms among partner countries, solidarity and

partnerships facilitating the exchange of good practices and lessons learned with the purpose of improving the quality of the implementation of the EU return policy; in this case of the Mediterranean migration crisis.

*Expected and Unexpected Impacts*

The expected positive impact from the project is certainly a psychological one, seen in the improved well-being and psychological behaviour of beneficiaries accommodated in normal living conditions that help them cope better with the circumstances, prepare to go home in a dignified way and face all the awaiting challenges.

Good visibility was noted for the project: information on the Centre and services provided is regularly shared and disseminated as 2,000 booklets were printed containing information material in nine languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Dari, Urdu, Bengali and Georgian). More impact is expected once the reintegration measures are fully implemented at the Centre to support the initial living and working conditions in the CoOs upon return.

An unexpected positive impact from the project, in particular bearing in mind previously mentioned challenges brought about by the neighbourhoods, are the warm reactions from other neighbours, boy scout associations and local schools, who upon seeing that the beneficiaries of the Centre are also families with children, started donating their clothes, toys, medicine and similar. Such behaviour has only recently started to materialise, showing a positive impact that a well-organised Open Centre can have on the mentality of people.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
The planned changes in the management of irregular migration in Greece for migrants registered under the IOM AVRR projects have only recently started to occur with the official set up and functioning of the Centre. Moving destitute and vulnerable (homeless) migrants from the streets or improvised temporary shelters and providing human treatment, counselling and good quality living conditions in line with Human Rights requirements, prevent desperate measures and engagement in potentially harmful activities for the migrants. The GoG shows strong appreciation for project outcomes, which fully supports the implementation of a fair and effective EU Return Strategy. Positive impacts are also visible on the psychological situation of migrants and their well-being; worth to underline is also the unexpected positive impact in the mentality of some of the neighbourhoods.
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
IOM Greece should design the second phase of the programme aiming at exchanging the good practices in the region, which can be learned from this pilot phase, and include additional activities, such as awareness raising through the Centres on prevention of irregular migration, handbooks on good practices, or increased integration for specific migrants assisted by the Centres.

## 2.5 Sustainability of the Project

The sub-section examines which measures have already been put in place to guarantee sustainability in the management of the Centre and migrants processing without a new project, but considering that an extension is approved, and if the support from other donors has already been explored.

### *Ownership and Sustainability*

The national contribution to the current project is 10% including EUR 150,000 and in kind services. Having in mind the current economic situation in Greece, the country may not be able to provide a higher contribution (more than 10 or 25%) to support similar initiatives in the medium to long term. However, being a European crisis, the Greek government can certainly still heavily rely on the EC/EU support when it comes to implementing the EU Return Policy.

The government intended to further demonstrate local ownership through the provision of a state owned facility for the OCAVRR but neighbourhood protests prevented this solution from materialising. The need to rely on the selection of a privately owned building for the location of the OCAVRR, seems like an uncustomary solution, raising also questions regarding the sustainability of the Centre. There are positive signs however for a change in mentality of the neighbourhood and interviews with project partners and the building owner showed that sustainability can be further ensured with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be signed on the use of the building for the AVRR purposes indefinitely. The owner also is extremely flexible and “pro-migrant” (as the project partners put it) when it came to significant alterations and refurbishing to the building, as well as changes to the internal and external looks (glass atriums, external iron stairs, and similar), all providing enough evidence that local ownership is not missing for the current project.

In terms of the financial exit strategy, the national partners (officials from the AMIF programme) realised upon several OCAVRR inspections that the Open Centre provides high quality service, addresses human rights requirements and most importantly brings back dignity and gives respect to the suffering migrants. The project has explored the possibility that the OCAVRR be funded through AMIF programmes (where the national contribution amounts to 25% of EU overall funding), under the National Target “Means of Repatriation” and through the sub – programme of “Implementation of alternate means of detention”. This alternative may also support project’s sustainability.

### *Other Donor Support*

There are no other donors besides the EU for this specific project. The programmes mentioned under Section 2.2 are mostly financed through the AMIF mechanism, implemented by IOM via UK and Norwegian governmental funds to enable the return of TCNs to their respective CoOs, to assist voluntary return and reintegration of returnees from Greece, to assist voluntary return of irregular migrants in Greece and to implement assisted voluntary returns including reintegration measures. Good synergy among programmes was noted.

## CONCLUSION

With the current economic situation in Greece in mind, the country may not be able to provide a higher contribution to support similar initiatives in the medium to long term. The selection of privately owned building for the location of the OCAVRR, although an uncustomary solution, is working out. An observed change in mentality of the local population in the

neighbourhood and the MoU to be signed with the owner of the building confirming that it can be used for AVRR purposes indefinitely further ensures sustainability. The closure of the current lawsuit remains however a concern. In terms of the financial sustainability, the project is exploring the possibility for the OCAVRR to be financed through the AMIF mechanism as well.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Even if the new extension is approved, the project should: 1) Prepare the exit strategy detailing operational, financial and political sustainability for the OCAVRR. 2) Support the signing of the MoU between the owner of the building and project partners confirming that the building can be used for AVRR purposes indefinitely.

### 3. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

This Section provides overall conclusions per evaluation criteria defined under Section 1.1, as well as recommendations and lessons learned.

#### 3.1 Conclusions

The project remains highly relevant and well designed. Humane and dignified approach to solving the irregular migration issues in spite of country's own crisis are well supported in the structure of the project and remained relevant during implementation.

Risks were successfully mitigated (i.e. change of location for the OCAVRR due to neighbour unrest) but not appropriately identified during the design phase. The needs of returning migrants in the country were properly targeted, with physical location well identified where irregular migrants could be assessed and provided with the necessary assistance. Changes to project design were not detected apart from extended project timeframe due to external factors. Semantic discrepancies noted when project outcomes are compared between Grant Agreement and Result Matrix did not impede on the process of evaluating the achievement of project results.

The project has only recently delivered some major outputs that have created a strong foundation for the results achievement. If the time extension is not approved, the project may not be able to fully reach its purpose and results as the capacity building and technical expertise essential for the fully operational OCAVRR will not be available any more.

Various community, political, economic and financial challenges were faced by the project management: 1) the selection of location for the OCAVRR was opposed by the two neighbourhoods of Athens; 2) municipal, national elections and referendum also impacted an efficient OCAVRR set up; 3) difficult economic situation and capital controls disrupted procurement, contracts issuance and refurbishing processes. This all impeded on efficient input utilisation, i.e. with 92% of time elapsed for the project and only 46% of inputs utilised. Despite challenges, project cost effectiveness and funds management remain commendable. Expenditures are monitored on a regular basis, and changes and adjustments to budget justified thoroughly to reflect actual costs, actual needs, the impact of Greek economic situation and timeframe.

The planned changes in the management of irregular migration in Greece for migrants registered under the IOM AVRR programmes have only recently started to occur with the official set up and functioning of the Centre. A dignified and respectful accommodation is provided to the beneficiaries, in respect of Human Rights requirements. The GoG also highly appreciates the improved operational framework for the management of irregular migration, which was facilitated and supported by the project but also infrastructure created that further supports the implementation of fair and effective EU Return Strategy. Positive impacts are also visible on the psychological situation of migrants and their well-being.

In terms of sustainability, the current economic situation in Greece prevents any additional financial contributions that might support similar interventions in the medium to long term. The selection of privately owned building for the location of the OCAVRR, although uncustomary solution, is working out. An observed change in mentality of the local population in the neighbourhood and the verbal agreement to sign the MoU with the owner of the building show that sustainability can be further ensured. The closure of the current lawsuit remains however a concern. In terms of the financial sustainability, the project is exploring the possibility for the OCAVRR to be financed through the AMIF mechanism.

### **3.2 Recommendations**

The following recommendations were identified for the project:

- 1) The 12 months' time extension is highly recommended to support full achievement of project objective and results, and the provision of technical expertise by IOM Greece to support the full and efficient functioning of the Centre and coordination with other AVRR projects.
- 2) IOM Greece should design the second phase of the programme aiming at exchanging the good practices in the region, which can be learned from this pilot phase, and include additional activities, such awareness raising through the Centres on prevention of irregular migration, handbooks on good practices, or increased integration for specific migrants assisted by the Centres.
- 3) Even if the new extension is approved, the project should prepare the exit strategy detailing operational, financial and political sustainability for the OCAVRR.
- 4) The project should facilitate the signing of the MoU between the owner of the building and project partners confirming that the building can be used for AVRR purposes indefinitely.
- 5) Identification of risks during design phase, preparation of risk mitigation strategy and its continuous update during project lifetime prevent risk materialisation and any impeding effects on project effectiveness and efficiency.
- 6) Avoiding discrepancies in result and/or outcome definitions in the design of the project and subsequent contract agreements clarifies follow-up and project monitoring and

evaluation (assessment). It also prevents contractual disputes if discrepancies are materialised.

- 7) Involvement of beneficiary municipalities in the design process and discussions regarding future OCAVRR locations are essential in preventing delays in the opening of future centers.

## Annex 1: Term of Reference

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT “OPEN CENTRE FOR MIGRANTS REGISTERED FOR ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN & REINTEGRATION (OCAVRR)”

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE

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#### 1. BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Ministry of Public Order and Citizens Protection (MPOCP) in Greece proposed, end of 2013, to pilot a project that provides shelter to migrants in Greece who have registered with IOM Greece’s “Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration Programme” (AVRR) and who have no place to stay until their departure. The project includes as part of its beneficiaries, vulnerable migrants which are defined for the purpose of this project as pregnant women, single-parent families, unaccompanied minors, migrants with medical needs, elderly migrants and migrants who are homeless.

The main objective of the project is “*to provide shelter to irregular migrants registered with IOM’s AVRR programmes who have nowhere to stay until their departure*” and the following activities were to be implemented:

- The identification and renovation of an open centre that provides accommodation to 100 migrants who have registered to return to their country of origin through one of IOM Greece’s AVR(R) projects; 60% of the beneficiaries should belong to one of the groups of vulnerable migrants and 40% to other irregular migrants with no place to reside until their departure;
- The provision of reintegration services to 20 vulnerable migrants who do not otherwise qualify for reintegration activities under the European Return Fund’s AVR(R) programme;
- To work, both within and outside formal protection structures, with the Ministry of Public Order, the First Asylum Services and NGOs in order to identify vulnerable migrants and assist them with the appropriate services;
- The provision of technical expertise for the establishment of the centre and support in the day-to-day operation of the shelter, creating also synergies with other IOM’s AVRR programmes in Greece;
- The establishment of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to be used for the daily operation and management of the open centre.

The MPOCP is responsible for the daily operation and supervision of the centre based on the SOP developed by IOM. MPOCP staff is expected to work closely with IOM Greece and with other governmental authorities and civil society, to provide required services to the targeted

beneficiaries and to support all pre-departure and reintegration activities provided to migrants under IOM AVRR schemes. MPOCP is also responsible for all procurements necessary to insure the reception centre and hire security.

IOM Greece was expected to create a network of government representatives and civil society that can identify vulnerable migrants wanting to return to their countries of origin, and coordinate activities implemented in the framework of other AVRR projects in Greece. IOM is responsible of the registration of migrants, with the implementation of reintegration components, and to refer them to the centre.

IOM is also responsible for the renovation and refurbishment of the building in order to accommodate targeted beneficiaries and to make it suitable to provide the appropriate services to both groups of migrants. IOM Greece proposed to use IOM procurement procedures for the purchases, and to identify and hire sub-contracting companies and staff.

The total budget is amounting to € 4,129,915.00, 90% being funded by the European Commission and 10% to be co-funded by other financial sources. The project was expected to start in January 2014 for a duration of 24 months. However due to delays in the implementation of the project, in particular related to the building of the centre, the period of implementation was extended in February 2015 to 36 months instead of the initial 24 months, with the new end date being on December 2016.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION**

The “Open Centre for Migrants Registered for Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration” project was selected for an evaluation by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) due to important budget allocated by the EC and to the geographically sensitive place of Greece in the field of migration, in particular as a point of arrival of irregular migrants and refugees trying to settle in European countries. The recent crisis with migrants’ flows from Turkey further justified the selection of an IOM pilot project aiming at assisting and protecting vulnerable migrants that could benefit from return assistance, and at providing support to a government facing a major crisis.

When OIG 2015-2016 work plan was finalized, it was expected to be an end of project evaluation; however as another extension until December 2017 is under discussion, the evaluation may opt for a mid-term evaluation approach, with recommendations that may be made for further adjustments before completion. The decision on the extension should be taken soon, but it will not affect the overall objective and scope of the evaluation. Any adjustments to the Terms of Reference will be discussed with the OIG evaluator at the start of the evaluation exercise, planned with a field visit in September 2016.

The overall objective of the evaluation is: *‘To evaluate IOM overall performance in the implementation of OCAVRR, to assess IOM partnership with the Government and other counterparts, as well as complementary approaches with other programmes and stakeholders, and to propose recommendations and relevant lessons that could be applied to similar projects*

*in Greece and for the Organisation.”*

An analysis of the outcomes and impact will have to consider the possible extension of the project; if the case, the evaluation will focus on expected outcomes and impact and the probability to reach them as planned in the agreement. The same will be applied for the analysis of sustainability.

More specifically, the evaluation will examine the overall performance of the project through the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, outcome, impact and sustainability.

Relevance:

- Is the project design and strategy relevant to respond adequately to the vulnerability of migrants of the target groups and to address the problem of irregular migration through a support to AVRRE activities?
- Is the programme strategy relevant to governmental migration strategies and to the response to other social problems due to the important flows of irregular migrants, taking also into account cultural factors?
- Have gender issues been taken into account and properly integrated into the project design and implementation?
- To what extent did the objective and project purposes remain valid during implementation, in particular with the two amendments already signed?

Effectiveness:

- Is the programme effective in reaching planned outputs, results and outcomes and in bringing expected changes?
- Did the programme results effectively reach the planned target groups and beneficiaries?
- Was the coordination and partnerships with the national authorities, donors, in particular the EC, partners and other relevant programmes effective?

Efficiency:

- What measures have been taken to ensure that resources are efficiently used?
- Are the project expenditures in line with the agreed budget, and the costs incurred consistent with the strategy of the project, including for co-funding?
- Could activities have been implemented with fewer resources without reducing the quality and quantity of the results (cost-effectiveness)?

Outcome and impact:

- Are the planned changes in the management of migration expected to occur in line with the overall objective, results and project strategy?
- What does the Government of Greece as the main partner consider to be, or soon to be achieved as main outcomes of the project?
- What are the impacts, or expected impacts, on migration management in the region that can be specifically attributed to its implementation, in particular on vulnerable groups?

#### Sustainability:

- Are there measures already being put in place to guarantee sustainability in the management of the centre and migrants processing without a new project?
- Has the support from other donors already been explored?

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

Mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative analysis will be used. The methodology will mainly consist of a documentation review of the reports and documents produced by the project and of a series of interviews with the IOM staff, with national authorities, with other agencies and partners having participated in the implementation of the programme, as well as with the donor. The evaluation may also conduct surveys and/or focus group discussions with the direct beneficiaries. The list of interviews as well as the relevance of a survey will be coordinated with the IOM office in Greece.

The IOM office will be in charge of providing the necessary documentation related to project implementation as well as documentation specific to other projects and activities that could be relevant for the evaluation. It can include regular activity/monitoring reports, letters, notes for the file of meetings, Memorandum of Understanding with authorities, between agencies and with various partners when relevant to the analysis, and any other documentation that IOM office considers worth sharing.

OIG will conduct a field visit in September 2016. A work plan will be established at the start of the evaluation, including a refinement of the methodology, also considering a possible extension of the project.

### **4. RESOURCES AND TIMING**

The cost of the evaluation will be borne by the Office of the Inspector General and a draft report should be made available to IOM Greece by early November 2016, at the latest.

## Annex 2: Interviews and Bibliography

### *Interviews Conducted*

- 1) Daniel Esdras, Chief of Mission, IOM Greece;
- 2) Vasileios Anastasopoulos, OCAVRR Project Coordinator, IOM Greece;
- 3) Paul Vatalakis, OCAVRR Assistant Project Coordinator, IOM Greece;
- 4) Zoi Vanikioti, Head of Reintegration Unit, IOM Greece;
- 5) George Tsioumpos, IOM Focal Point, IOM Greece;
- 6) Dr Georgiadis Dimitrios, OCAVRR Manager, Reception and Identification Service within Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction;
- 7) Stavros Litinas, Owner of OCAVRR Building;
- 8) Jihane Antar, OCAVRR Beneficiary from Lebanon;
- 9) Hamid Khalaid, OCAVRR Beneficiary from Lebanon;
- 10) Shahad Latlawy, OCAVRR Beneficiary from Iraq;
- 11) Fahim Goi, OCAVRR Beneficiary from Pakistan;
- 12) Musfisa Goi, OCAVRR Beneficiary from Pakistan;
- 13) Zavif Akbari, OCAVRR Beneficiary from Afghanistan;
- 14) Joanna Ksirogiann, OCAVRR Social Worker, IOM Greece;
- 15) Chrysoula Katsavouni, Focal Point at OCAVRR, Reception and Identification Service within Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction;
- 16) Anna Pavlou, OCAVRR Duty Officer; Reception and Identification Service within Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction;
- 17) Ioanna Zachari, OCAVRR Security Manager;
- 18) Christianna Outsika, AVRR Focal Point, IOM Greece;
- 19) Olesia Gklazatova, Financial Assistant for Norwegian Asylum Seekers Programme, IOM Greece;
- 20) Besim Ajeti, Senior Operations Officer, IOM Greece;
- 21) Ulan Kerimbaev, RMO, IOM Greece;
- 22) Helen Gonalaki, European Development Programmes Division, Hellenic Police;
- 23) Theodora Suter, Head of Gender Coordination Unit, ODG, IOM HQ;
- 24) Nicola Graviano, Senior Advisor for AVRR, IOM HQ.

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## Annex 3: Project Results Matrix

Outcome / Output / Activities	Indicators	Baseline	Target	Assumptions
<b>Objective : Provide shelter to irregular migrants registered with IOM's AVRR programmes who have nowhere to stay until their departure</b>				
<b>OUTCOME 1 : Operational open reception centre that will provide accommodation to TCNs</b>				
<b>Output 1.1 : Standard Operating Procedures Manual is produced and creating facilities to accommodate the needs of the beneficiaries</b>	Number of vulnerable migrants registered for AVRR who stay at the reception centre for 3-5 months	Baseline: 0	Target: 320	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political and economic situation in Greece will remain the same and migrants will continue to need shelter</li> <li>• Time estimate required between registration and departures will remain the same</li> <li>• The number of able bodied and vulnerable migrants have been accurately estimated and divided (60/40)</li> </ul>
	Provision of reintegration activities to vulnerable migrants	Baseline: 0	Target: 20	
	Number of able bodied migrants registered for AVRR who stay at the reception centre for 10-15 days	Baseline: 0	Target: 2240	
	Number of facilities created for accommodating beneficiaries (beds)	Baseline: 0	Target: 100	MPOCP will comply with National and EU legislation regarding the reception centre
	Kitchens and dining areas and food preparation to take into account the dietary and religious restrictions of migrants.	Baseline: 0	Target: 2	
	Bathroom Facilities (areas with multiple facilities)	Baseline: 0	Target: 2	
	Laundry and Washing Facilities	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	
	Recreational Area	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	
	Private Counselling Room	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	
	Medical Examination Room	Baseline: 0	Target: 2	
IOM will produce SOP manual to be used for operation of the reception centre	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPOCP will use the IOM SOP in operating the reception centre.</li> </ul>	
<b>Activities</b>				
■ Provision of guidance and support in the development and implementation of individual reintegration plans				
■ Conducting of interviews with potential candidates interested in reintegration and selection of those eligible for reintegration support with emphasis on vulnerable cases				
■ Subcontracted Services				
■ IOM expert providing expertise regarding SOP				

**OUTCOME 2: Data gathered regarding beneficiaries and disseminate information regarding the Open Centre**

<b>Output 2.1 : Collection of data / Information Material</b>	Database of beneficiaries who were accommodated in the centre	Baseline:0	Target: 2560
	Database of beneficiaries who were provided with psychological support	Baseline:0	Target: 320
	Database of beneficiaries provided with medical support	Baseline: 0	Target: 50
	Booklets in multiple languages	Baseline:0	Target: 2000

■ The Open Centre Focal Point will keep an updated list of the beneficiaries

■ The Open Centre Psychologists and Social Workers will keep an updated list with the social history of the vulnerable beneficiaries

■ The Open Centre Doctor will keep an updated list with the beneficiaries who are examined

**OUTCOME 3: Supply of subcontracted services (food - cleaning - security -insurance - provision of psychological and medical support).**

<b>Output 3.1: Provision of services by IOM Greece &amp; Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection</b>	Provision of food in daily basis to all beneficiaries	Baseline:0	Target: up to 100 daily
	Provision of cleaning services	Baseline: 0	Target: 1 (All areas of the building)
	Provision of security services	Baseline:0	Target: up to 100 daily
	Provision of psychological support	Baseline:0	Target: 320
	Provision of Medical Support	Baseline:0	Target: All beneficiaries who are in need of medical support
	Management of Open Centre by the Ministry of Public and Citizen Protection	Baseline: 0	Target: 8 members of staff

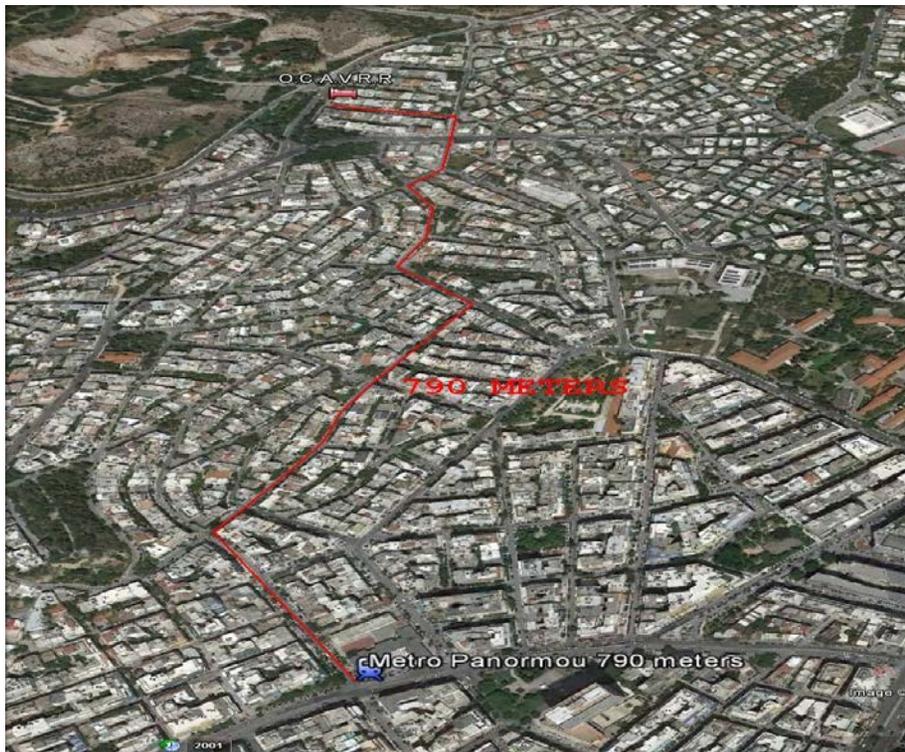
**Activities**

■ Subcontracted services (food - cleaning - security -insurance - medical - provision of psychological and medical support) until the centre is refurbished.

■ Cooperation between IOM Greece and the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection

■ Holding 6 meetings with Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection

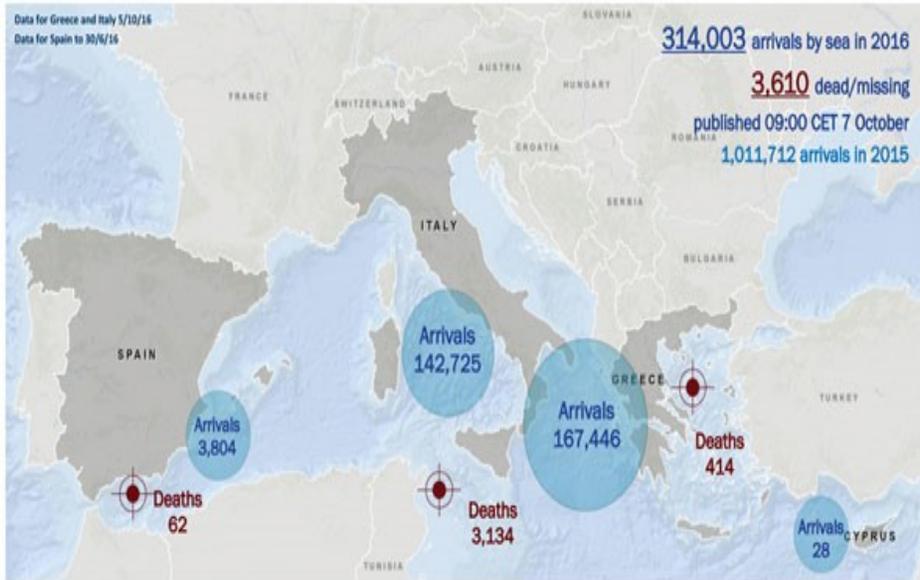
## Annex 4: OCAVRR Location and Proximity to Hospitals



## Annex 5: Migration Flows in the Mediterranean in 2016 compared to 2015



### Mediterranean Update Migration Flows Europe: Arrivals and Fatalities



### 1 million arrivals by sea in 2015

