



**UNEG/OECD PEER REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)  
EVALUATION FUNCTION**

**IOM MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

**November 2021**

## 1. BACKGROUND

The Peer Review of IOM's evaluation function was conducted under the provisions contained in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of UN organizations and the OECD DAC. It is the first Peer Review of IOM's evaluation function, and it was conducted at the request of IOM. This Peer Review also builds on the findings of the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) review of 2019.

The exercise was guided by the Terms of Reference (ToR) purpose, namely, to "examine how to strengthen the independence of IOM evaluation function and its financing, and how it can more effectively contribute to organizational decision-making, learning and accountability". In line with the ToR, the assessment focuses on the independence, credibility, and utility of the IOM evaluation function, on the quality of use and follow up of evaluations across IOM, and their contribution to accountability, learning and improvement.

The Peer Review provides recommendations to IOM senior leadership and its governing bodies, as well as the Inspector General, staff of the OIG/Evaluation unit, Regional Offices and Country Offices. The review covers the entire evaluation system comprising both the central and decentralized evaluation functions.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IOM MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The following section includes the recommendations made by the Peer Review and IOM's Management response. Further details on the findings leading to the recommendations can be found in the full report of the Peer Review.

**Recommendation 1: The Panel recommends that OIG/Evaluation remains in its current position as a function within the Office of the Inspector General, whilst recognising that IOM should be aiming to eventually establish an independent evaluation unit.**

**1.1) The Panel recommends the OIG Charter is revised to define in greater detail the evaluation function, its independence, and its contribution to the organisation. (The Panel notes that the OIG Charter will need to be revised in any case if another recommendation – to remove the monitoring function from OIG/Evaluation – is accepted).**

*IOM Management response:* IOM Administration takes note of the recommendation, which recognizes the need to review the location of the IOM central evaluation function and has already undertaken steps to address it in the ongoing Organizational re-structure. The current functions of Monitoring and Evaluation will be moved as a unit under the new Department of Strategic Planning and Organisational Performance that reports to the Director General. The new structure will bring together the core teams tasked with implementation of the Internal Governance Framework, Risk Management, Evaluation and Monitoring, Results Based Management, Operational Compliance, and Management of Implementing Partners. We believe the value gained in bringing Evaluation closer to other planning, managerial and reporting functions offsets any perceived loss of independence. Placing the unit with colleagues concerned with similar oversight mandates will ensure that evaluators have the benefit of additional tools to examine the quality and efficacy of programming (such as PRIMA data, internal risk assessments, results-based management, etc). In doing so, the Administration addresses one of the key recommendations of MOPAN calling IOM's Management to make a better use of a central evaluation function for strategic decisions on IOM policies and global performance. In the meantime, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Charter has already been revised to reflect its focus on audit and investigations, effective 1st of September 2021, which will allow IOM to update the current evaluation and monitoring policies published in 2018 to address the recommendations where applicable.

**Recommendation 2:** The Peer Review recommends the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee consistently reviews the performance and resourcing of the evaluation function, with a view to strengthening it. The Panel recommends that the Committee’s 2013 Terms of Reference are revised as soon as possible and that they:

2.1) Define and elaborate on the role of the Committee in relation to the evaluation function. This could include providing the evaluation function with advice and guidance on identifying strategic evaluations.

2.2) Add a requirement for a specific member of the Committee to have senior-level expertise in evaluation (e.g., as a former head of a UN evaluation function). Given that new members of the committee have just been added, it would make sense for the ToR to require the permanent addition of a new Committee member with evaluation expertise, and this member joins as soon as is feasible.

2.3) Explicitly require the Committee to comment on the adequacy of resourcing for the entire evaluation function (both centralized and decentralized) – and whether new funding agreements are adhered to (see Recommendation 3).

2.4) Specify that the Committee member with evaluation expertise is henceforth always an official member of the recruitment panel for the head of the IOM evaluation function.

*IOM Management response:* Following the revision of OIG’s charter, the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee (AOAC) Terms of Reference are also under review to reflect these changes. The Administration agrees with the recommendation that IOM’s central evaluation function performance continues to be reviewed by the AOAC and endorses the recommendations made on the composition of the AOAC and tasks related, to further strengthen the evaluation function with senior-level expertise.

**Recommendation 3:** The Panel recommends that the Inspector General and OIG/Evaluation take additional measures to increase the profile of the OIG/Evaluation within IOM, and with the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance and Council, including:

3.1) Ensuring the head of OIG/Evaluation progressively presents evaluation findings to the governance committees.

3.2) OIG/Evaluation routinely reports on performance against its key performance indicators to the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance.

*IOM Management response:* IOM Administration agrees with the recommendation that greater visibility could be paid to the work of OIG/Evaluation and that its transfer to the new department is a good opportunity to revise its reporting to the Governing Bodies, not being anymore included in a section of the OIG report to the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance. The OIG Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy 2021-2023 also includes initiatives intended to build credible, professional, evidence-based M&E functions that are supported by an evaluation culture and institutional commitment, which contribute to IOM’s organizational effectiveness and achievements as a migration agency. Subject to the support of Member States IOM would also propose that the Chief Evaluation provides a report and annual presentation to Member States at the SCPF. Moving forward the strategy will also include reporting on its key performance indicators.

**Recommendation 4:** All responsibility for IOM’s monitoring function should be withdrawn from OIG/Evaluation as soon as practically feasible and assigned elsewhere in the organisation.

*IOM Management response:* IOM Administration takes note of the recommendation and confirms that discussions around the functions that should fall under the responsibility of the new Evaluation and Monitoring unit will continue. In line with recommendation 1 above, the move of the unit may

also positively impact efforts to separate the evaluation and monitoring functions, as it opens the door to a reconfiguration of functions in the long-term.

**Recommendation 5:** The Panel recommends that IOM allocates an agreed percentage of the value of all projects to the evaluation function – to be managed by OIG/Evaluation; and that this percentage gradually increases to allow the evaluation function to grow and professionalise its services.

*IOM Management response:* IOM Administration takes note of the recommendation and will further examine the feasibility of such an interesting suggestion. The project-based nature of IOM's operating model means that it is hard to dedicate predictable, long-term funding to the Evaluation Unit. IOM's leadership is in ongoing discussions with IOM's Member States to reform the core budget of the Organization, which would increase flexibility to invest in core functions such as Evaluation & Monitoring. At this point, however, the recommendation to dedicate 0.3 percent of revenue to evaluation is impossible to commit to, until IOM has a clear perspective on the budgetary reforms that are underway.

**Recommendation 6:** The Panel recommends that OIG/Evaluation produces costed evaluation function Work Plans that are endorsed by the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance and that are henceforth fully financed by IOM. This will enhance the independence of the evaluation function and the utility of its central evaluations. Further the Panel recommends that:

**6.1) OIG/Evaluation produces comprehensive Work Plans that stipulate the human and financial resourcing requirements of the evaluation function (the central evaluation function and supporting the decentralized evaluation function); and specify key performance indicators that OIG/Evaluation will report against. Central evaluations should factor in the cost of external evaluators.**

**6.2) Until a financing agreement is reached (Recommendation 5), IOM commits to providing OIG/Evaluation with the financial requirements to implement its comprehensive Work Plans.**

**6.3) OIG/Evaluation continues to prioritise evaluations on issues that will make a strong and strategic contribution to IOM's efficiency and effectiveness (i.e., delivering utility to the organisation).**

**6.4) The Work Plan sets out the value to be added by the decentralized evaluation function, including the contribution to be made by Regional Evaluation Plans (see Recommendation 7).**

**6.5) OIG/Evaluation routinely disseminates evaluation findings to IOM's governing bodies.**

*IOM Management response:* IOM Administration takes good note of the recommendation and agrees that more information, including financial, can be integrated in Evaluation central evaluation biennial work plan, which is finalized keeping full independence on the selection of central evaluations to be conducted. On the specific points of the recommendation, IOM Administration would like to bring the following clarifications on the status and future plans:

- On point 6.1) and in addition to financial figures, IOM agrees that key performance indicators could be established. For the time being, indicators and results are available for the implementation of the OIG M&E strategy 2021-2023.
- On point 6.2), IOM Administration has been regularly allocating additional resources to OIG/Evaluation since 2017 to implement its biennial evaluation plans and M&E strategies. This specific funding has been possible thanks to unearmarked contributions allocated to IOM by its Member States, but the Administration takes note that sustainable funding schemes should be further examined with IOM Member States given the unpredictability of unearmarked funding and the high financial requirements to fund IOM's core functions, which include the M&E unit.

- On point 6.3), the current biennial evaluation work plan 2021-2022 has been developed in line with the recommendation and future plans will continue to do so.
- On point 6.4), OIG/Evaluation is planning to conduct a more detailed study on IOM decentralised evaluation function in 2022, how it can be further enhanced and organized and how it can complement the contributions of IOM central evaluations. Work is already on-going with the Regional Monitoring and Evaluation officers regarding the coordination of the various regional plans.
- On point 6.5), IOM Administration agrees with the recommendation and the reporting will be further examined in line with what has been mentioned under recommendation 3) above.

**Recommendation 7: The Panel recommends that OIG/Evaluation changes the decentralized evaluation coverage policy to make utility and learning the primary drivers for planning evaluations. In more detail, the Panel recommends:**

**7.1) OIG/Evaluation amends the decentralized evaluation coverage guidance to introduce greater selectivity, whilst retaining an element of choice for country offices. The Panel recommends that Regional Offices and Regional M&E Officers consider collaborating with country offices to combine related interventions into thematic decentralized evaluations. Evaluation topics could be agreed between the country office and the Regional M&E Officer, with the main criteria for selecting the topic being the value the evaluation would add to country and institutional learning.**

**7.2.) OIG/Evaluation cease to classify “self-evaluations” as a form of evaluation and classifies these as internal project completion reviews (changing all guidance accordingly).**

**7.3) In reviewing the current decentralized evaluation coverage norm, OIG/Evaluation could consider adopting some of the following criteria:**

**a) Encourage decentralized evaluations on interventions that are particularly innovative (e.g., significant pilots, new approaches).**

**b) Make it mandatory for all projects over a certain financial value and/or duration to be evaluated. This would exclude all short-term and low-value interventions (e.g., 12-month projects).**

**c) Request country offices conduct at least one decentralized evaluation within each planning cycle (3-5 years).**

*IOM Management response:* IOM Administration agrees with the recommendation and suggestions, and they will be analysed in the framework of the study on IOM decentralised evaluation function already mentioned under recommendation 6) above. IOM agrees that references to self-evaluation should be removed, and that the IOM Project Handbook and IOM Evaluation Policy be revised not to make anymore evaluation mandatory for all projects, which proved to be difficult to implement fully. The suggestions made for the criteria will be examined further in the framework of the study.

**Recommendation 8: The Panel recommends that IOM takes several steps to progressively strengthen the decentralized evaluation function, namely:**

**8.1) That Regional M&E Officers uniformly report to heads of Regional Offices or their deputies, and that IOM considers creating a formal line of accountability between Regional M&E Officers and the OIG/Evaluation.**

**8.2) Mirroring the Panel’s recommendation regarding OIG/Evaluation, the Panel recommends that IOM moves towards divesting Regional M&E Officers of their responsibility for monitoring, to allow them to fully exercise their responsibilities to evaluation.**

**8.3) That IOM upgrades from P2 all Regional M&E Officer posts so that they have the seniority needed to influence regional practice.**

**8.4) That OIG/Evaluation and Regional M&E Officers require all evaluation managers of decentralized evaluations to undertake training in core UNEG norms and standards before or while managing an evaluation.**

**8.5) That when it has flexible resources at its disposal, OIG/Evaluation allocates Regional M&E Officers funds to facilitate their work to build evaluation capability at regional level.**

*IOM Management response:* IOM Administration partially agrees with the recommendation.

- Regarding point 8.1) and 8.3), IOM is currently reviewing the grading of several core positions including the Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Officers, which may also require an adjustment of their roles and responsibilities, including their formal relationship with the Evaluation unit. Their current ToRs already indicate that they are performing their tasks with the technical guidance and support from OIG. Stronger reporting lines with the unit will be given due consideration together with a higher grade as recommended.
- Regarding point 8.2), IOM Administration only partially agrees as mentioned under recommendation 4), and due consideration needs to be given to monitoring as illustrated for instance in the OIG Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy.
- On point 8.5), The Regional M&E officers already benefit from financial support of OIG/Evaluation through the unearmarked funds allocated to OIG/Evaluation to conduct training activities. Further consideration on such financing will be given in the framework of the decentralized evaluation study planned for 2022.
- Regarding point 8.4), IOM agrees with the recommendation and initiatives are already on-going to target IOM Programme Managers, who are often Evaluation Managers, as potential participants to the OIG M&E facilitated e-learning course or for their participation to the OIG Internal Evaluator training.

**Recommendation 9: The Panel recommends that OIG/Evaluation introduces measures that progressively strengthen the quality of both central and decentralized evaluations on a sustained basis. Specifically, the Panel recommends OIG/Evaluation:**

**9.1) Introduces a quality assurance system for all central and decentralized evaluations, based on UNEG norms and standards – ensuring that there is quality assurance for decentralized evaluations at ToR, Inception, Draft & Final Report stages.**

**9.2) Consider, finances permitting, commissioning an external annual Post-hoc Quality Assessment of all evaluations to help identify common strengths and weaknesses and drive improvements.**

**9.3) Encourage the use of Evaluation Reference Groups for all central and decentralized evaluations to increase credibility and utility.**

*IOM Management response:* IOM Administration agrees with the recommendation and confirms that several activities are already on-going in that regard.

- On point 9.1), OIG/Evaluation has issued a call for proposal for a ‘Feasibility Study on Quality Management Mechanism’ in June 2021 that will allow IOM to have a strong basis for deciding on a system that considers IOM specificities and constraints. The consultant contract has been signed and progress is underway.
- On point 9.2), a meta-evaluation of IOM evaluations has been published in 2020 conducted by an external company and IOM is considering the possibility to conduct such exercises on a more regular basis, not being sure that it will be possible to conduct it yearly. This will be further examined in the framework of the feasibility study.

- On point 9.3), the new IOM M&E Guidelines published by OIG in 2021 are encouraging such a practice and this recommendation will be promoted further for instance through the OIG M&E facilitated e-learning course.

**Recommendation 10:** The Panel recommends that IOM revises the Evaluation Policy following the Peer Review and that it should be submitted for the approval of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance and/or the Council. The Panel recommends that the Evaluation Policy also includes the following conditions:

**10.1)** To support the professionalisation of the function, introduce a policy whereby the evaluation function is comprised of a 50:50 mix of externally recruited evaluation specialists and IOM staff with the required competency for evaluation, appointed in line with IOM's reassignment policy.

**10.2)** Update the Evaluation Policy to reflect recent guidance that enhances accountability and compliance, namely: making it mandatory to produce a management response; and making reporting on implementation mandatory.

**10.3)** To institutionalize the status of central evaluations, the next Evaluation Policy should establish clear central evaluation coverage norms.

**10.4)** Reflect that "self-evaluations" are not considered evaluations (reflecting this also in the Project Handbook); define measures to enhance impartiality when IOM Pool Evaluators conduct evaluations; and define how impartiality will be preserved in central evaluations conducted by OIG/Evaluation staff.

**10.5)** Spells out the recruitment and dismissal procedure for the position of head of the evaluation function, that this includes the requirement that the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance is consulted in both cases, and that the evaluation specialist from the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee is on the recruitment panel in addition to the Inspector General.

**10.6)** Makes a commitment to request a second OECD DAC/UNEG Peer Review within five years.

*IOM Management response:* IOM Administration agrees with the recommendation that the IOM Evaluation policy published in 2018 needs to be updated and has no objection to having it approved by IOM Governing Bodies.

- The suggestions made under point 10.1) and point 10.5) on the staffing are duly noted and will be examined carefully in the context of our existing Human Resources rules and regulations.
- On point 10.2), management responses for evaluations are already mandatory and IOM is currently conducting a 'study on the use of evaluation at IOM and proposals for evaluation follow-up mechanisms', which should lead to the set-up of relevant systems.
- Points 10.3) and 10.4) are well noted and due consideration will be given in the revision of the policy.
- Point 10.6) is noted and IOM Administration will resume discussions in due time, noting that a review conducted by external consultants and not managed by the new Department will also be considered as done by some UN Agencies, instead of a second UNEG/OECD DAC Peer Review.