



# EVALUATION BRIEF

July 2018

## FINAL INTERNAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT “INTEGRATION AND STABILIZATION SUPPORT THROUGH LIVELIHOODS FOR IDPS AND THE CONFLICT-AFFECTED POPULATION IN UKRAINE”

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

<b>Evaluation type:</b>	Internal independent final evaluation
<b>Evaluator(s):</b>	Sarah Harris, Regional M&E Officer, IOM Regional Office in Vienna
<b>Field visit dates:</b>	October 2017
<b>Final report date:</b>	July 2018
<b>Commissioned by:</b>	IOM Mission in Ukraine
<b>Managed by:</b>	Esther Ruiz de Azua, Project Manager

**Evaluation purpose:** The main purpose is to evaluate the implementation of the project, the overall performance of key stakeholders and achievement of results. The secondary purpose is to assess how the project strategy, which is focused on livelihoods support, aligns with local needs of beneficiaries, stabilization priorities and strategic positioning of IOM Ukraine. The evaluation therefore focused on beneficiaries' feedback on livelihoods intervention provided within the project implementation cycle.

**Evaluation criteria:** Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and cross-cutting issues

**Evaluation methodology:** Desk review, interviews, focus groups and direct observation of beneficiary businesses. Visits were conducted to five cities (Kyiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zhytomyr, Lutsk) to provide diverse sample by including Ukraine's eastern, central and western regions.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The project was designed to mitigate negative impacts of the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine on the well-being of conflict-affected populations by providing livelihoods support to IDPs and host community members through grants for self-employment, micro-enterprise (business development), or vocational courses.

These opportunities for economic empowerment aimed to help direct beneficiaries meet their basic needs, support achievement of business and wider community development goals, and contribute to the integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the stabilization of host communities.

Overall, the long-term **Objective** was to contribute to economic recovery of IDPs and to support the integration of IDPs and stabilize host communities in 24 regions of Ukraine. To that end, the expected **Outcome** is that targeted IDPs and members of host communities are engaged in income-generating activities that cover their basic needs and benefit the community, to be achieved through **three outputs**:

- **Output 1:** IDPs and members of host communities benefit from equipment/tools and vocational professional training sessions in support of income-generating measures available

### Project information:

Geographical coverage:	Ukraine
Project type:	Community Stabilization
Project code:	CS.0845
Project period:	13 December 2016 to 31 March 2018
Donor:	United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID)
Budget:	GBP 1,975,360

- **Output 2:** IDPs and members of host communities benefit from micro-enterprise support for business development and income-generation
- **Output 3:** IDPs and members of host communities benefit from information and best practices shared through a Business Exchange Platform and business improvement sessions

The evaluation was planned to take place just before the end of the implementation period in November 2018. However, a **no-cost extension** was granted by the donor during the evaluation planning.

Finally, it should be noted that a **final impact assessment** was also being planned at the time of this evaluation, which is intended to feed into the final reporting and the design of a next phase or future projects.

## KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

### *Relevance:*

- Strategic focus on livelihoods is highly relevant and project had a clear added value based on needs. Economic challenges emerged as a key concern, particularly limited access to funding but also a need for skills training, facilitation of networking, and support overcoming taxation, legal and other barriers.
- Excellent, extensive assessment of needs during project design including use of data from national monitoring, project monitoring, and national statistics, as well as during implementation including through ongoing consultation, monitoring, and beneficiary feedback.
- Activities and outputs are consistent with intended outcome and objective. There is a clear and consistent theory of change behind the strategy.

### *Effectiveness:*

- Nearly all established output targets were achieved or on track based on data available. Challenges were noted in relation to meeting target proportion of IDPs and women benefitting from business development grants. Beneficiaries and NGO partners were satisfied with the quality of activities and outputs delivered.
- The project appears on track to contribute to the intended outcome of improved income generation and thereby promote additional jobs and services, improve cooperation and connections between IDPs and host community members, and facilitate integration of IDPs.
- Identified challenges to effectiveness include the difficult operating environment and tight timeline, which IOM has actively worked to mitigate .
- Suggestions for improving future projects from stakeholders include: support to business fairs, improve identification of suppliers, allow previous beneficiaries to apply for another grant, and microloan options for previous and additional beneficiaries.

### *Efficiency:*

- The project appears to have been highly efficient in its implementation, making adept use of human and financial resources. The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings:
- This project benefits from an excellent Mission-wide communication and reporting system in IOM Ukraine that includes monthly reports by project managers to IOM management on activities, results, budget and

challenges encountered along with identified follow-up actions. At a project level, a strong monitoring plan is in place to build capacity and monitor NGO partners, ensure quality control of beneficiary selection and procurement processes, and monitor beneficiary needs and progress made.

### *Impact:*

- The evaluation was not able to fully assess impact, though it appears that the project is on track to contribute to economic and social impacts.

### *Sustainability:*

- It is likely that projects supported by the project will be sustainable defined as remaining operational after the end of the project, pending more extensive monitoring of all beneficiaries. The key challenges to sustainability is access to funds needed not only to grow but to sustain businesses.

### *Cross-cutting issues:*

- The project considered protection, gender and human rights in design and implementation, and also particularly vulnerable groups, and responded well to identified considerations in these areas.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are provided for consideration by in the implementation of a next phase and in future projects:

### *Recommendations for IOM:*

1. Include additional grant and/or loan options (e.g. a revolving fund mechanism), to better bridge transition from self-employment to business development, to provide additional support to previous beneficiaries, and to extend support to additional beneficiaries.
2. Revise eligibility criteria to include applicants up to 65 years of age, and allow previous beneficiaries to apply for additional grants.
3. Consider support for business fairs, and review relevance and effectiveness of the business development platform.
4. Increase to the extent possible the frequency of monitoring of outcome-level indicators..

### *Recommendations for donors:*

5. Consider extension of implementation deadlines to ensure that all activities can be carried out and monitored as planned, and to decrease burden on implementing partners and beneficiaries.