

Evaluation Strategy

2024-2028

IOM Central Evaluation Division

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DPP	Department of Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance
CED	Central Evaluation Division
IAHE-SG	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group
IOM	International Organization for Migration
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOPAN	Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PRIMA	Project Information and Management Application
RBM	Results-Based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UK FCDO	United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

1. Introduction

The *Evaluation Strategy 2024-2028* intends to guide the work of IOM's Central Evaluation Division (CED) in its oversight role for the next five years taking into account adjustments brought to it in response to recommendations from a UNEG/OECD-DAC¹ Peer Review of IOM Evaluation Function of 2021, the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK FCDO) review of IOM published in 2022 and the most recent Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) review of IOM of 2023. The strategy will be developed considering the IOM [Strategic Plan 2024-2028](#) as well as the IOM [Strategic Results Framework](#) (SRF) 2024 that is accompanying the implementation of the strategic plan.

The document also provides an historical overview of achievements of the previous [Monitoring and Evaluation \(M&E\) Strategy 2021-2023](#) when IOM Central Evaluation was still in charge of institutional monitoring, the implementation of which constitutes a solid foundation to support the changes in the management of IOM evaluation function made in the framework the overall IOM restructuring process of 2023. The 2021-2023 strategy aimed to improve the use of monitoring and evaluation in strategic decision-making, promote evidence-based programming, and enhance the Organization's performance assessment capacity, learning and use of evaluative approaches. All technical tasks related to evaluation such as the production and updating of guidance documents, have been completed as planned.

In addition to its alignment with IOM Strategic Plan 2024-2028, the evaluation strategy reflects IOM adherence to [UNEG Norms and Standards](#) for evaluation and to IOM's evaluation policy², guaranteeing the independence of the central evaluation function in conducting its work, promoting the overall use of evaluation and related recommendations in IOM and assuring the quality of evaluations, both central and decentralized. A Theory of Change (ToC) for the implementation of the strategy is also included.

In 2022, IOM's central evaluation function was transferred from the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to the Department of Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance (DPP) as a Central Evaluation Unit, the monitoring function being moved to the Results Based Management (RBM) Unit in 2023 located within the same department. This dual M&E responsibility was challenged by the MOPAN review of 2019 and the UNEG/OECD-DAC Peer Review of 2021, which recommended that monitoring be separated from IOM Central Evaluation to enhance the independence of the evaluation function from managerial responsibilities associated with a second line role, as is the case with monitoring.

In the framework of IOM's overall restructuring of 2023, and as a follow-up to the UNEG/OECD Peer Review, UK FCDO assessment and 2023 MOPAN recommendations, IOM has decided to move the DPP unit within a newly created and independent Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), being at the third line level in the Three Lines Model of the Institute of Internal Auditors, and to upgrade it to the level of a division - CED, with an implementation to be finalized during the first quarter of 2024. The OIOS also includes the Investigation, Intake and Internal Audit Divisions and the OIOS Director reports to IOM Director General and Governing Bodies.

¹ United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC)

² The IOM Evaluation Policy of 2018 is currently under review and the new one is not yet published. A draft of it will be used for reference to develop the strategy when needed.

2. Institutional context and recent developments

“This Strategic Plan reflects IOM’s mandate to facilitate orderly and humane migration. It combines our wisdom and experience gained over the past 70 years with our ambition to apply innovative thinking for the benefit of migrants, their families, their communities and societies”.

Amy E. POPE, IOM Director General

In 2023, IOM adopted the *Strategic Plan 2024-2028* to guide the work of the organization and to give a new strategic direction for IOM and renewed energy to deliver on the promise of migration. This plan is intended to address an evolving landscape of migration and the challenges it poses, with a world facing major transformations – from climate change, demographic transition, and urbanization to digitalization. Migration can and should be part of the solution as it has the power to transform the lives of individuals, their families, their communities, and societies for the better. The Sustainable Development Goals cannot be reached without safe, orderly, and regular migration and IOM vision is *‘to deliver on the promise of migration, while supporting the world’s most vulnerable’*.

To do so, the IOM Strategic Plan has three main objectives: 1) *Saving lives and protecting people on the move*; 2) *Driving solutions to displacement*; and 3) *Facilitating pathways for regular migration*. Each of them contains a series of outcomes and outputs that will guide their implementation. The plan also has enablers some of them being of high relevance to the work of evaluation such as *‘Data and evidence’*, *‘learning and innovations’*, and *‘communication’*. Finally, it includes four cross-cutting priorities, the first one *‘Integrity, Transparency, and Accountability’* being also the essence of Evaluation, while the three remaining ones are part of cross-cutting issues to be examined during the conduct of evaluations and included in IOM and UNEG guidelines for evaluation³: i) *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion*; ii) *Protection-Centred Approaches*; and iii) *Environmental Sustainability*. The Evaluation Strategy will highlight its link with them whenever needed in the text.

The IOM Strategic Plan is accompanied by the SRF, which will also be used to support the work of evaluation. In addition to the specific indicators related to evaluation in IOM used for reporting on results and contained in the cross-cutting priorities indicators section of the SRF under *‘Integrity, Transparency and Accountability’*, IOM Evaluation Strategy also intends to consider the long-term outcomes included in the SRF and linked to the objectives of the Strategic Plan, for instance when examining programmes’ performance and impact in the light of them. The following are examples of such outcomes:

- *‘Human suffering is alleviated while the dignity and rights of people affected by crises are upheld’* under objective 1,
- *‘The quality of humanitarian assistance and response is enhanced’*, still under objective 1,
- *‘The adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their homes are minimized’* for objective 2,
- *‘Displaced people of all genders, ages, abilities and other diversities, recover, are resilient and self-reliant’* under objective 2,
- *‘Channels for regular migration are sustainable and responsive to current and emerging trends’* under objective 3, and/or
- *‘Migration policy and legal frameworks are coordinated through a whole-of-government approach and are aligned with international standards’*, still under objective 3.

³ IOM Evaluation cross-cutting issues include: (a) rights-based approach (RBA); (b) protection mainstreaming; (c) disability inclusion; (d) gender mainstreaming; (e) environmental sensitivity and sustainability; and (f) accountability to affected populations (AAP) - [Evaluation | M&E Guidelines \(iom.int\)](#)

The CED mandate in IOM is strategically pivotal in supporting oversight and guaranteeing accountability and learning in the management of the work and mandate of the Organization. This role has regularly been underlined in the reviews mentioned in the introduction and their recommendations, as well as in the IOM evaluation policies and guidelines. The CED's main functions cover providing institutional and strategic direction to central and decentralized evaluation approaches, setting norms and standards for evaluation, and developing relevant institutional policies, processes, and guidelines, as well as providing technical support and capacity building activities for the reinforcement of an evaluation culture in IOM. An Annual Report on Evaluation is also prepared by the Division to document the work of IOM in the field of evaluation, which will be aligned to this evaluation strategy for the years 2024 to 2028.

As part of its mandate, CED conducts corporate and strategic evaluations through the implementation of its biennial evaluation plans, as well as specific evidence-based assessments and independent reviews, contributing to policy and decision making of IOM departments and offices. In terms of partnerships and external collaboration, the Division actively participates to the technical work of UNEG and of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group (IAHE-SG), as well as to the conduct of UN joint and system-wide evaluations.

The 2021-2023 Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy has been instrumental in strengthening IOM's accountability through monitoring and evaluation functions, assessment of performance and achievements, building institutional capacity in M&E and learning, and enhancing the management and use of evaluations and follow-up of recommendations. Drawing from the [Meta-evaluation](#) of 2020, the strategy also supported the implementation of a quality assurance system. The M&E strategy had three outcomes: i) Field offices and Headquarters have a standards-based approach to M&E; ii) Staff have knowledge and capacity to evaluate and monitor; and iii) Evaluation is used to drive accountability, learning and decision-making.

As mentioned, IOM conducted two studies, one to assess evaluation use and follow-up of recommendations and the other to establish a quality management system for evaluation. They have led to the development of two guidance documents in 2022 in line with the commitment of IOM to reinforce positive evaluation culture, based on the recommendations of the MOPAN 2019 and UNEG/OECD-DAC reviews. The [Guidance on the use of evaluations and the follow-up of recommendations](#) supports the utilization focused approach of evaluation and ensures that IOM evaluations incorporate a management response and action plan for implementing their recommendations and the [Guidance on Quality Management of IOM Evaluations](#) is designed to be used by evaluation commissioners, managers, evaluators, donors, governments, and other partners interested in and/or having to implement quality management processes.

While guidance on quality is mandatory, there is no mechanism yet in place for regular monitoring of its use, but meta-evaluations will be conducted every three to five years, the next one being planned in 2024/2025. Regarding the follow-up of recommendations, CED is managing it for its central evaluations, while the decentralized evaluations benefit from the monitoring in place through PRIMA, the IOM Project Information and Management Application. All evaluation reports, briefs and management responses are published under the IOM Evaluation repository and dashboard of IOM evaluation website.

Another guidance was published in 2023, the [Manual on Real-Time Learning and Performance Monitoring Review](#) in response to the increasing demand to deliver reflective activities in 'real-time' that generate evidence-led insights for decision making, accountability and learning across IOM's work in addition to evaluations. The demand is often for humanitarian interventions at the early stages of implementation when there are needs for rapid feedback for decision-making, but not limited to it.

3. Evaluation Strategy 2024-2028

Based on the positive assessment and recommendations of the MOPAN 2023 review and in line with IOM Strategic Plan, CED will continue strengthening its capacity and independence in the conduct of its mandate through the implementation of its Evaluation Strategy 2024-2028, with the main objective being ***to strengthen IOM's independent oversight and evaluation culture, thereby contributing to accountability, performance assessment, innovation, learning and evidence-based decision-making.***

Financial needs for its full implementation will be regularly reviewed through the preparation of accompanying workplans, which will be developed on an annual basis. External fundraising efforts may be required to support the core funding allocated to CED.

Regarding its scope, the 2024-2028 strategy will focus on the three main areas of CED work stemming from its evaluation mandate:

- The conduct of strategic and thematic evaluations in the framework of its biennial plans developed considering the priorities of the IOM Strategic Plan, and active participation in joint and UN-system wide evaluations, also promoting areas of work related to the Strategic Plan,
- The reinforcement of IOM capacities for the management and use of evaluations and of IOM reporting on the status of evaluation in IOM, also using the SRF outcomes as a framework for reporting whenever relevant and the Strategic Plan cross-cutting priorities,
- Active representation and contribution in discussions and activities within international evaluation fora and meetings, including for sharing IOM experiences and learning in the field of evaluation.

Following the move of monitoring and decentralized M&E under the responsibility of RBM Unit, guidance, capacity building and reporting on M&E and decentralized evaluation in IOM will be done in collaboration with the unit and IOM M&E networks in country and regional offices, CED remaining the entity in charge of the establishment of evaluation overall policies and institutional guidance in IOM.

The Evaluation Strategy 2024-2028 includes four main outcomes and related outputs. They apply to both central evaluations managed by CED, and decentralized evaluations commissioned and managed by departments and country and regional offices, application being specified when needed.

Outcome 1: Evaluations in IOM are independent and credible

➤ **Evaluations are independent and management is effective and adaptive:**

- Central and decentralized evaluations are managed timely and according to UNEG norms and standards, also covering cross-cutting themes in line with IOM guidance and Strategic Plan (see Section 2 above).
- Central and decentralized evaluations are conducted by independent consultants and/or consulting firms, in alignment with UNEG norms and standards and IOM procedures.
- Long-term agreements for the conduct of evaluations are examined and established.

➤ **Quality assurance and quality assessment systems are established and regularly reviewed:**

- Quality assurance and control tools are used for the review of all evaluations ToRs, inception and final reports, in line with related guidance on quality management as well as the guidance on the use of evaluations.
 - Quality assurance systems are regularly reviewed, including through PRIMA recorded data, are adjusted when needed, and CED Annual Report includes a section on the use of and results on quality from the systems.
 - An external meta-evaluation of IOM evaluations is conducted.
- **Institutional guidance on decentralized evaluations is effective and up to date:**
- IOM evaluation policy, guidance and standards for decentralized evaluations are monitored and updated when needed, including the related chapters in the IOM M&E e-guidelines, the quality management and evaluation use guidance and tools, as well as the evaluation sections of the IOM Project Handbook, PRIMA and other departmental guidance.
 - Access to evaluation tools and guidance is ensured through IOM portals and websites that should include such information, outside of the CED managed portal and website.

Outcome 2: Evaluation coverage is balanced and supports accountability, Innovation and learning

- **Evaluation planning meets organizational coverage needs, as well as accountability, innovation and learning purposes:**
- The CED biennial plans reflect evaluations that are of strategic importance to the Organization and are prepared with contributions from headquarters departments and regional offices, ensuring a balanced coverage of topics based on evaluation needs and IOM Strategic Plan.
 - Planning of decentralized evaluations through PRIMA and in coordination with the relevant IOM M&E network(s) is reinforced and monitored by relevant regional staff to ensure that evaluations are conducted as planned.
 - Learning from and innovation through evaluations are supported by the promotion and wide publication of evaluation reports as part of IOM knowledge management efforts, strengthening IOM evaluation use and culture.
- **Partnerships and collaborations in the field of evaluation are increased internally and with external stakeholders, including with professional networks:**
- Engagement with donors and UN partners to conduct joint evaluations is promoted and encouraged, including at decentralized evaluation level.
 - Collaboration with headquarters departments, regional and country offices to conduct tailored assessments, for instance through synthesis evaluations, are promoted to enhance learning from and use of evaluations.
 - Collaboration with Internal Audit Division within OIOS is explored and encouraged, in line with UNEG related discussions and good practices.
 - Participation of CED in the management groups of strategic UN joint evaluations, including the IAHE-SG and UNEG ones, is reinforced including with financial contributions.
 - The development of Communities of Practices on evaluation led by regional and country offices and their participation in external evaluation networks such as [ALNAP](#) are encouraged and supported by CED.
 - Active participation of CED in UNEG initiatives is reinforced to be aligned with common UN practice and to reinforce accountability, learning and innovation in evaluation.

Outcome 3: Evaluation evidence is relevant, timely and is used across the Organization, including for decision making

- **The use of evaluation for accountability, decision-making and learning is promoted as per existing guidance:**
 - Access to and dissemination of evaluation evidence using communication strategies and tools, such as webinars, videos, blogs, debriefing sessions are improved.
 - A utilization-focused approach for the conduct and publication of evaluations, including regarding their timeliness, is promoted to support accountability reporting and decision-making at all levels.
 - Opportunities to highlight the added value of the conduct and use of evaluations and recording of good practices identified through evaluations are promoted and reinforced, including as a contribution to knowledge management and innovation in programming.

- **Application of guidance and instructions on the usefulness of evaluations for learning and decision-making is monitored:**
 - The application of the management response processes for recommendations is reviewed regularly to adjust them if needed for an effective and full establishment of the system.
 - Thematic reviews of recommendations made in IOM evaluations and management responses are conducted to synthesize learning and identify recurrent recommendations. They can be conducted by themes and evaluation criteria.
 - Reviews of recommendations and related decisions highlighted in the management responses are included in CED annual report, in particular those that are related to IOM Strategic Plan.

Outcome 4: Evaluation capacity and culture are strengthened throughout IOM

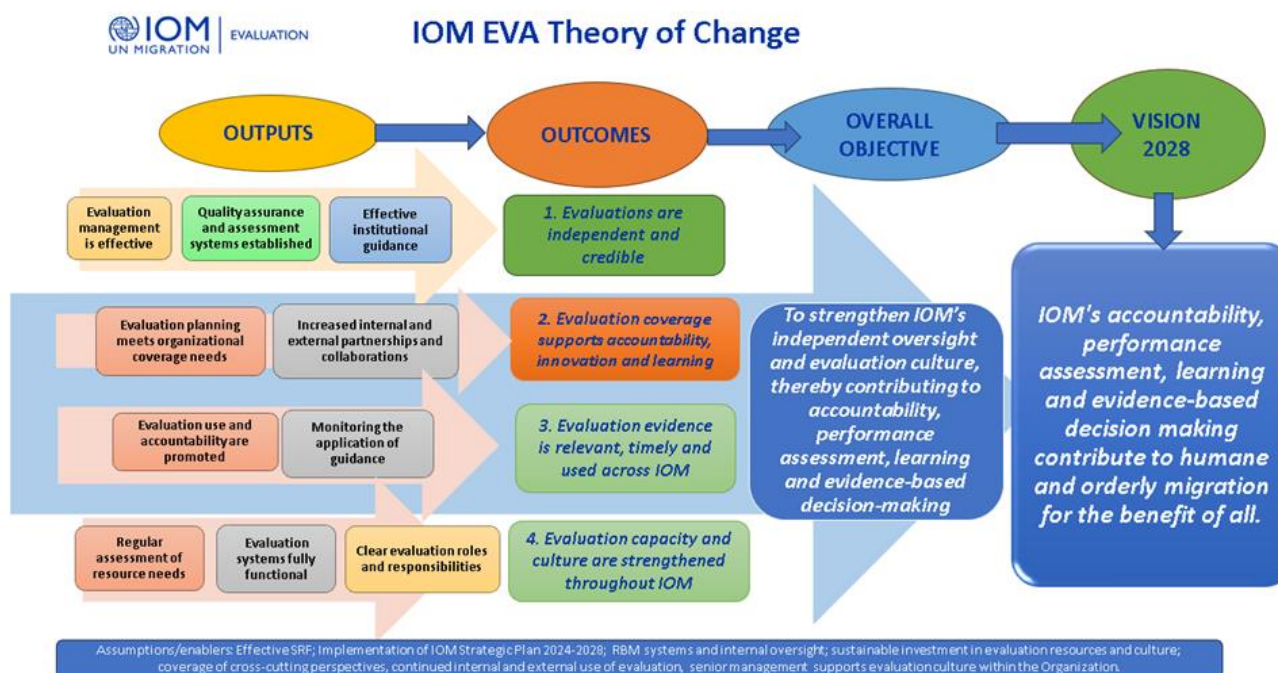
- **Resource needs are regularly assessed and covered for effective capacity building in Evaluation:**
 - Costed workplans for capacity building activities in evaluation within the organization are developed and implemented in close coordination with IOM Integrated Talent Management Unit.
 - Evaluation staff in CED are selected and/or trained based on needs of evaluation knowledge and technical requirements to support the implementation of CED mandate.
 - Capacity building in Evaluation for IOM staff worldwide is managed by CED, in coordination with M&E regional staff; evaluation I-learn and E-Campus training options are updated.

- **Systems are in place to provide effective training in evaluation and promote an evaluation culture:**
 - Systems and tools are operational to support evaluation in IOM and effective training is provided to staff in charge of using them.
 - Evaluation references in IOM manuals, instructions and related training developed by departments and regional and country offices are reviewed by CED, and support for training is offered whenever necessary, for instance for project management or M&E training.

- **Evaluation roles and responsibilities are clear to stakeholders:**
 - Further exposure to evaluation for programme managers, regional technical staff and/or Chiefs of Mission is supported by CED.
 - A communication plan is developed to deliver messages on evaluation values, targeting IOM community and senior leadership, as well as partners, donors and Member States.

4. Theory of Change

A [Theory of Change](#) (ToC)⁴ for the management of the 2024-2028 strategy objective and outcomes is proposed, which also provides a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen. It also identifies the vision guiding the strategy based on the IOM Constitution and the Strategic Plan 2024-2028, short and long-term implementation and impact and the conditions (or assumptions) and causal links that must be in place for the outcomes achievement and change to occur.



5. Monitoring of the strategy

As the owner of the Evaluation Strategy 2024-2028, CED will closely monitor its implementation, in coordination with Headquarters departments, divisions and regional and country offices. Costed annual workplans with related results for the management of the strategy will be developed and updated.

The status of implementation will be reported through the evaluation annual report and regular updates will be provided at the meetings with the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee.

A mid-term review of the strategy's relevance and implementation will also be conducted, and objectives and outcomes will be updated as part of the recommendations of the review if needed.

⁴ [Click here for a better view of the ToC](#)