

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP OF EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

IOM Central Evaluation Unit
Department of Strategic Planning and
Organizational Performance

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Highlight of key actions:

- The intended use and users of evaluations need to be identified already during the development of the evaluation section of IOM project proposals and considered throughout the evaluation cycle, including the evaluation terms of reference.
- Evaluations users can be better reached if a communication plan is prepared.
- Each evaluation needs to be accompanied by the management response and action plan to ensure the follow-up of evaluation recommendations and IOM's accountability.
- Corporate reporting on the use and utility of evaluations contributes to reinforcing IOM's credibility in using evaluation as an accountability, learning, decision-making, promotion and fundraising tool.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Guidance on the Use¹ of Evaluations and Follow-up of Evaluation Recommendations at IOM is part of a series of guidance material issued by the Central Evaluation Unit (EVA) of the Department of Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance (DPP), which sets out IOM institutional policies, standards and technical requirements in the field of evaluation and provides explanations on the processes and methodologies in place for promoting and conducting evaluation in IOM.² Some of the guidance published can also be consulted if clarifications are needed for instance the IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines³ (2021), which are regularly mentioned here, the Guidance for Evaluation Managers or the Guidance for Evaluators, which clarify the respective roles and responsibilities, including for supporting the publication and use of evaluations.

The main objectives of the guidance are to provide an institutional framework on the use of evaluations and follow-up of evaluation recommendations at IOM, and to raise awareness on the utility of evaluation. It describes the considerations and requirements guaranteeing an effective use of central and decentralized evaluations for decision-making, accountability, learning, and performance improvement, as well as the responsibilities and steps in the related processes, including when designing evaluations. It complements information on the use and utility already mentioned in IOM M&E Guidelines and supersedes the Guidance on Management Response and Follow-up on IOM Evaluation Recommendations of 2019. Information on the use is also available in the *IOM Project Handbook* of 2017.

¹ In the present document, the words "use" and "utilization" are used interchangeably.

² See [IOM Evaluation Website](#) for further technical references and guidance on evaluation.

³ Referred below as the [IOM M&E Guidelines](#)

The target audience includes all IOM staff involved in the various phases of evaluation, including IOM senior management who benefit from evaluation use to inform evidence-based decision-making, and specialized staff who organize the conduct and use of evaluations for generating knowledge, demonstrating accountability and promoting IOM's work (such as project developers, project managers, evaluation managers and M&E officers). External audience for the guidance can include evaluation consultants, IOM Member States and donors, international and local partners and stakeholders, as well as IOM beneficiaries. The roles of evaluation users will be elaborated further in the guidance.

According to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) standards on timeliness and intentionality, "evaluations should be designed to ensure that they provide timely, valid and reliable information that will be relevant to the subject being assessed and should clearly identify the underlying intentionality."⁴ UNEG standards imply that the evaluation should be "determined with a view to generating the most relevant, useful and timely information that will meet the needs of intended users and will be relevant to decision-making processes".⁵ This also relates to the UNEG principle of accountability, which requires to demonstrate commitment to publish, use and act on evaluation evidence and recommendations as part of public accountability and to drive positive change within the Organization and beyond. The evidence-based information should be useful and enable the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations, and lessons into the decision-making processes for IOM, as well as for the external stakeholders.

The UNEG norm of 'Utility' also states that when commissioning and conducting an evaluation, there should be a clear intention to use the resulting analysis, conclusions, or recommendations to inform decisions and actions. The utility of an evaluation is intrinsically related to the timeliness in the delivery of the evaluation findings and recommendations. The evaluation plan should ensure that recommendations are delivered when they are still useful. Also, the inclusion and engagement of stakeholders throughout the follow-up process "is not only important for accountability purposes, but it also builds ownership and increases the potential the evaluation has to impact on organizational learning".⁶

The content of the guidance is also grounded in the Utilization-Focused Evaluation⁷ (U-FE) and participatory approaches applicable to any type of evaluation and methodology. The U-FE specifies that "evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use; therefore, evaluators should facilitate the evaluation process and design of any evaluation with careful consideration of how everything that is done, from beginning to end, will affect use [...] the focus in utilization-focused evaluation is on intended use by intended users".⁸ Involving users throughout the evaluation requires collaborative relationship between the evaluator, evaluation manager and the users, based on the premise that intended users are more likely to use evaluations if they understand and feel ownership over the evaluation process and findings. In that regard, when developing terms of reference for evaluation, the objective or scope section should include information on the intended audience and how the evaluation will be used.

Three levels can be identified in the U-FE on how evaluation use brings changes: i) instrumental, where users directly adopt recommendations; ii) conceptual, where an evaluation changes how stakeholders

⁴ UNEG [Norms and Standards](#) (2017). Page 21, available on [IOM Evaluation Website](#)

⁵ Idem.

⁶ UNEG Good Practice Guidelines for Follow up to Evaluations, 2010. Page 5, available at www.uneval.org.

⁷ For further references see for instance Patton M.Q publications listing in [IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines](#), 2021. Page 220.

⁸ Idem.

think about a programme, or iii) process use, where changes are resulting, either directly or indirectly, from engagement in the evaluation process.

The need to enhance the evaluation dissemination and use in IOM including for lessons learning and decision-making, was highlighted in the report of the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) review of IOM published in 2019.⁹ The MOPAN indicator “*Clear accountability system ensures responses and follow-up to and use of evaluation recommendations*” was rated highly unsatisfactory. An analysis of the use of evaluations was also covered by the external Meta-Evaluation of IOM evaluations published between 2017 and 2019,¹⁰ commissioned by IOM Central Evaluation and issued in 2020. The recommendations included providing access to a systematic classification of evaluation results in the evaluation repository; allowing the identification of key findings, conclusions, recommendations, lessons learned and good practices; and continuing raising awareness of the utility and uses of evaluation among staff to build evaluation culture within the Organization. Also, it highlighted the need to increase the internal communication and information sharing on knowledge management to improve the performance of the use and dissemination of evaluation results.

A feasibility study on the use of evaluation at IOM and proposals for evaluation follow-up mechanisms was conducted in 2021 with additional recommendations on evaluation use, including establishing a mechanism to ensure that:

- Evaluation findings of a higher level enter IOM policies and strategies
- Lessons learned and best practices developed by IOM in one country or region, are both known and adopted in other countries and regions and
- Evaluation findings on a relevant number of projects in a country or region are aggregated into management information useful for and accessible to IOM managers for informed decision-making.

The feasibility study also suggested to develop a data management system to track the implementation of evaluation recommendations. According to its Evaluation Policy (2018), IOM is committed to publish, use and act on evaluation evidence and recommendations as part of public accountability and drive positive change within the Organization and beyond. To be transformative, evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reach the right people in the right form at the right time, which includes satisfying accountability obligations in a timely manner, informing decision-makers on the factors that contributed to success/failure of an intervention for corrective measures when required and feeding the design, planning and implementation of future interventions, strategies and processes, within overall knowledge management approaches.¹¹

Still according to the Evaluation Policy, “the utilization and benefits of evaluations are the responsibility of every entity inside IOM that can consider its use with a view to improve activities, policies, strategies, operations, and project design and delivery, to learn from experiences as well as for showing accountability to Member States, stakeholders and beneficiaries.”¹²

This guidance is developed along the following axes:

- Potential uses of evaluation
- Identifying the evaluation users

⁹ See MOPAN (2019) [2017-2018 Performance Assessment: International Organization for Migration](#).

¹⁰ See [IOM Meta evaluation report](#) (2020).

¹¹ [IOM Evaluation Policy](#) (2018).

¹² *Idem*.

- Ensuring that evaluations are used by the right audiences
- Contributing to the development of an evaluation culture.

However, it does not cover the importance of the quality of the evaluation for its use, considering that good quality encourages its use, as there is a separate guidance covering the set-up of quality review mechanisms in IOM,¹³ also in line with MOPAN and Meta Evaluation recommendations mentioned above. The guidance does not cover either the allocation of resources for the communication of evaluation findings, which should be discussed at the project development phase when budgeting the conduct of an evaluation.

2. POTENTIAL USES OF EVALUATION

As mentioned in the introduction, evaluation serves multiple purposes for decision-making, accountability, generating knowledge and learning, improving performance, fundraising and promoting IOM's work.¹⁴

2.1. Informing decision-making

Evaluation can positively feed and influence evidence-based decision-making and advocacy. Using evaluation outcomes for decision-making requires understanding the type of decision to take, who is involved in the validation of the decisions before being taken, who is the decision maker, and when and where the decisions are to be made.

Decisions related to evaluation reports and related findings, conclusions and recommendations may be routine or strategic; policy or operational; programmed or unprogrammed. Some decisions can be pre-validated by one or more individuals before being handed over to decision makers.

External decision makers may be IOM Member States, donors, UN coordination mechanisms, and national or local government authorities. Internally, they may be the Director General, the Deputy Directors General, Department or Regional Directors, Heads of Divisions or Units, Chiefs of Mission (CoMs), Heads of Office and/or project managers.

Some decisions may be taken by an individual while others in a collaborative and consensual effort in the framework of a group. Decisions can be discussed in formal meetings organized for specific reasons, through regular channels such as the Governing Bodies meetings, or be taken in the framework of the daily work of a department for instance, depending on the level and requirements for the implementation of the recommendations. IOM will be in charge of organizing follow-up discussions on issues stemming from evaluations that may also require informed decisions by external partners.

The elements of what, who, how and when can already be examined when assessing the utility of the evaluation at the initial stage of the evaluation process.

¹³ See Guidance on quality management of IOM Evaluations (2022).

¹⁴ For further references on these concepts, see also IOM M&E Guidelines, Chapter 5.

2.2. Demonstrating accountability

Evaluation also serves to meet accountability obligations by informing donors, beneficiaries and other stakeholders on IOM's performance and progress made in the achievement of results and the utilization of resources. As per IOM M&E Guidelines, accountability is defined as “the obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in compliance with agreed rules and standards or to report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans. This may require a careful, even a legally sound, demonstration that the work is consistent with the contract terms”.¹⁵ Evaluation norms and standards are related to it, for instance transparency and consultation, which can establish trust, build confidence, enhance ownership and finally increase accountability.

UNEG suggests that reporting on the implementation of evaluation recommendations takes place at regular intervals, in line with planning processes. Corporate reporting should also be considered at the level of the Organization's governing bodies and stakeholders for accountability and as a spur to timely support to the implementation of follow-up actions on the use of evaluation.

Evaluations can document accountability to affected populations by presenting evaluation findings and conclusions to beneficiaries and their representatives or be formally used through workshops to show governments, donors and other stakeholders IOM performance and impact of its activities and adherence to its related commitments.

2.3. Generating knowledge and learning

Learning is the process by which individuals or organizations acquire and use skills and knowledge. Disseminating evaluations contributes to fulfilling the purpose of learning by ensuring that the knowledge gained through evaluation can be widely used to improve the quality of new interventions, fundraising as well as implementation methods. It is recommended to think early in the planning phase about how evaluations will be shared, and with whom for knowledge purposes and be included in the terms of reference.

In addition to discussing the overall performance and achievement, evaluations may include weaknesses identified during the development and implementation of activities and propose corrective measures and lessons to be drawn in case of interest for the revision of a policy, strategy, or the replication of a programme.

Evaluators can include sections in the evaluation reports that discuss lessons learned and good/best practices¹⁶ to provide feedback into the planning, design and implementation of future interventions and improve service delivery. Evaluation managers are also encouraged to identify if any specific intervention is an example of a best practice, and to reflect this in the evaluation report. Some evaluation types can also focus more specifically on lessons to be learned, for instance, formative, ex-post and synthesis evaluations.

¹⁵ OECD Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management (2010), page 14, as cited in M&E Guidelines, page 245.

¹⁶ As per the IOM M&E Guidelines “Lessons learned can be understood as generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programmes, strategies or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations... good practices... can be seen as the identification of a procedure that has proven to produce results in a satisfactory way and that is proposed as a “standard” practice suitable for widespread adoption. A lesson learned with an identified practice that produces such satisfactory results is identified to be worthy of replicating and possibly upscaling, may, over time, become an ‘emerging good practice’ “.

2.4. Improving performance

Evaluations provide evidence about the performance and achievements of the interventions by providing information on their relevance and results reached, in line with agreed-upon expectations, being for ongoing or completed activities. Evaluations can also provide evidence about the degree to which the Organization and the interventions operate according to specific criteria/standards/guidelines. Evaluating performance enables informed decision-making for policymakers, managers and other key stakeholders on corrective measures or for the continuation of activities.¹⁷

Performance is also an element of the results-based management (RBM) approach in IOM. By focussing on results and outcomes, which are defined as the intended change in institutional performance, individual or group behaviour or attitudes, or the political, economic or social position of the beneficiaries, RBM lays the foundation for evaluations to capture and report on the performance and expected changes.

Evaluations are also used to improve the IOM's performance at the corporate level in particular when focussing on IOM corporate policies and strategies, and on IOM commitments to external frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2.5. Contributing to the promotion of IOM's work

Several IOM documents indicate that the Organization's strategic focus is to be also a primary reference point for migration information, research, best practices, data collection, compatibility and sharing. Achieving such a goal requires, among others, capturing lessons learned and good practices of IOM policies, strategies, programmes and projects through evaluations.

As independent and comprehensive assessments of an activity or policy, evaluations support the increasing demand for evidence-based analysis and can also be used as a promotion tool to present IOM's work and mandate, as well as for partnerships, fundraising and visibility. One of the advantages of evaluation compared to other promotional tools is that it offers an independent opinion on the success of an intervention for its replications, and strengths and weaknesses are documented.

The evaluation reports can also include 'academic' perspectives in the analysis when discussing relevance or in presenting the background of the intervention in a holistic view, as is the case with research for instance. They can serve to present considerations related to IOM's mandate and value of strategic services provided by IOM.

3. IDENTIFYING THE EVALUATION USERS

The identification and involvement of evaluation stakeholders are relevant throughout the entire evaluation cycle, from the planning stage to the implementation and reporting stages, by using the participatory and utilization-focused approaches. Each stage should require the engagement of specific actors, most of them being potential users of evaluation. Evaluation users include entities or persons participating in the activities evaluated and in the evaluation process, or concerned by the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations, directly or indirectly.

¹⁷ Idem, page 204.

Within IOM, evaluation users may include senior management, the evaluation commissioner, programme or project managers, thematic specialists, project developers, and other staff involved in the activities evaluated. Outside IOM, these may include IOM Member States, donors, national and local governments, UN partners and other international and local governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as project beneficiaries, and more broadly affected populations.

As already mentioned, IOM senior management may include the Director General, Deputy Directors General, Departments and Regional Directors, Divisions or Units Heads, Chiefs of Mission and Heads of Office, who can use evaluations results to feed evidence-based decisions on IOM's political, institutional, policy, strategic and thematic advocacy, fundraising and promotional work.

Project developers, regional thematic specialists, regional liaison and policy officers and other specialized staff at Headquarters or in the field are also identified as evaluations' users in line with the potential use identified in the previous section.

4. ENSURING THAT EVALUATIONS ARE USED BY THE RIGHT AUDIENCES

4.1. Submission and publication of the evaluation report

The IOM Evaluation Policy¹⁸ states that all evaluation reports are to be made public, in line with the accountability principle embedded into the UNEG Ethical Guidance for Evaluation. Sharing and publicizing the evaluation reports is a major step for guaranteeing the relevant use of evaluation.

To allow uploading the evaluation report through the repository to the internal [Monitoring and Evaluation portal](#) and to the external [IOM evaluation website](#), after quality check,¹⁹ the following actions need to be taken:

- For all evaluations, the evaluation report, the evaluation brief,²⁰ and the management response need to be shared by the evaluation manager with the relevant Regional M&E Officers (ROMEO) and the IOM Central Evaluation unit (eva@iom.int) for publication when completed, together with a form that indicates basic information to be listed in the repository about the report, and which will be useful for the search function.²¹
- For evaluations related to projects, the project manager is also required to upload the evaluation report to PRIMA²² so PRIMA dashboard and data analysis can take such figures into account, and to facilitate the future review and publication of the report and related annexes in the external evaluation repository by the IOM Central Evaluation unit.

¹⁸ IOM Evaluation Policy (2018), Page 7.

¹⁹ See Guidance on quality management of IOM Evaluations (2022).

²⁰ See the [IOM Evaluation Brief Guidance](#).

²¹ The publication of evaluation reports on the [IOM Evaluation Repository](#) is mandatory. For any exceptions, please contact EVA (eva@iom.int).

²² PRIMA is IOM's project information and management application. It supports the entire project management cycle, including the endorsement of project proposals, and project monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Evaluation managers and/or project managers are expected to disseminate the evaluation report, related annexes and evaluation brief to external and internal stakeholders.

There have been cases when two reports were prepared, one for internal consumption and another one for external publication. If such practice is accepted, it should remain on an exceptional basis. As stated in the M&E Guidelines: “Generally, it is recommended to have just one version of a report that can be shared both externally and internally and that serves all stakeholders with varied points of view... If uncertain about the dissemination of an evaluation report, the evaluation manager should consult with the Chief of Mission for country-level interventions, Regional Directors for regional or cross-regional interventions and/or the Regional M&E Officer or with the Central Evaluation unit”.²³

Once the evaluation report and related material are shared with EVA, they are published through the monitoring and evaluation portal²⁴ (internal) and the IOM evaluation repository, which makes them accessible to the public.²⁵ The management response will also be published once available after having completed all the steps (see Section 5 below). The IOM repository is also made publicly available and accessible through the UNEG Website.

In addition to IOM evaluations, the repository also includes joint and system-wide evaluations conducted with UN Agencies or with donors when the case. It can also include other types of reports using an evaluative approach, such as synthesis evaluations, peer reviews or rapid evidence assessments. The search function of the repository facilitates the location of the reports through several parameters such as document name, publication year, thematic areas, countries covered and type of evaluator.

Sharing the evaluation reports with the IOM Central Evaluation unit allows IOM to report on the status of evaluations conducted in IOM during a year and to guarantee that reports published meet evaluation quality standards agreed upon in IOM. The repository is also used for conducting meta-evaluations, synthesis evaluations or for contributing to research and evaluations done jointly with UN Agencies.

4.2. Communication strategy for a shared knowledge of evaluations

Publishing an evaluation report and related material is an important step in making evaluation accessible to a broad range of stakeholders, who may be interested in using it for the various reasons highlighted above. Ensuring that evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reach the right audiences could be ensured by the elaboration of a communication strategy or plan to convey this knowledge to the relevant entities, noting that such an activity may require financial provisions to be added to the costs for the conduct of the evaluation.

Considering the intended use of the evaluation, the evaluation manager or designated person could discuss a communication strategy with the commissioner that outlines the approaches to be used to communicate the knowledge generated by the evaluation in a timely and effective manner. The communication plan can also be discussed with relevant stakeholders such as donor and government, including if limitations for publicizing the report are envisioned. The evaluations should ideally be published in an IOM official language that can maximize its use by stakeholders. If not the case (English being more often used in IOM), the communication plan could consider the translation in the relevant

²³ *IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines* (2021), page 244.

²⁴ Available at www.evaluationportal.iom.int

²⁵ See <https://evaluation.iom.int>

IOM official language of the communication material (see below) and evaluation brief, which does not exceed two pages.

In parallel with the publication or before the finalization of the report, webinars, workshops or debriefing sessions with IOM staff, Member States and/or stakeholders can ensure awareness of the findings and recommendations, build internal ownership and solicit stakeholder suggestions. These meetings are even more important if some members of the target audience were not fully involved in the review of the draft report.

Additional communication material may include press releases,²⁶ infographics and audio-visual products delivering the key messages outlined in the communication plan to be transmitted through the various channels (e.g., e-mail, internal and external websites, meetings in person or online, and social media channels²⁷) in a language suitable for the target audience(s). IOM has various global, regional and country-level accounts to channel the messages. For further guidance on using external channels, drafting news releases, and preparing media content, the IOM media focal point can be of good advice.

A communication plan could indicate the findings, conclusions or recommendations that deserve to be conveyed, to whom they will be conveyed, how these will be conveyed, and the related deadlines to ensure messages reach the target audiences in a timely manner. It can also be determined by the evaluation intended use as described in the terms of reference, and further elaborated as part of the evaluation inception phase.

For decision-making, the communication plan may consider the decision(s) to be taken, who is involved in the validation of the decision(s), who is/are the decision maker(s), and when and where the decisions are to be taken. For accountability purposes, the details on the communication of the evaluation may be included in the donor agreement too. A broader dissemination strategy may be considered for some complex and/or joint evaluations to ensure that lessons can be extracted by all key users and that a broad range of partners can benefit from the evaluations based on their knowledge, needs and interest.

The target audiences of the evaluation vary according to the evaluation scope (project, programme, policy, strategy, thematic) and purpose of the evaluation. Internally, the evaluation manager should consider what needs to be disseminated at the country office, regional office and Headquarters levels, and within each level the destinations of the evaluation products or messages. While the evaluation of a policy or corporate strategy are often shared at the departmental level, evaluations of projects, programmes, as well as local or regional strategies, are more valuable for the field offices concerned and relevant thematic specialists at the regional and departmental levels. If the dissemination of evaluations of policies and corporate strategies is mainly at the department level for the purpose of organizing the follow-up of recommendations and lessons learning, it can also be shared more broadly, including to all IOM offices worldwide given their possible interest in the policy and strategy.

Externally, an evaluation of an IOM strategy (corporate, regional or country) or policy (usually corporate) could be of interest to IOM Member States, donors and some governments, while the interest for a project evaluation may be limited to the local government(s), the specific donor(s) who funded the project, implementing partners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participating to the project, as well as project beneficiaries.²⁸

²⁶ Please refer to IN12 [Building Bridges with the Media: A Tool Kit for Media Focal Points](#), available for IOM staff.

²⁷ [Guidelines for the use of social media in IOM](#) available for IOM staff in the [MCU Shared Space](#).

²⁸ See also [IOM Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines](#) (2021),

About the issue of lessons learning and good practices, the evaluation report template has an optional section, in which lessons learned and good practices can be presented. Evaluation managers may identify different target audiences with whom to share lessons learned and good practices to incorporate them into future IOM interventions, including through existing knowledge management initiatives and portals.²⁹ They may also consider involving regional thematic specialists as they play a significant role in the sharing and replication of lessons learned and good practices in their area of expertise and throughout the regions. For evaluations of policies and strategies, departments at Headquarters are well placed to ensure that lessons learned and best practices are considered in the development of updated/new strategies and policies. They can also publicize them widely within IOM, and when relevant, reach Member States and donors.

5. MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND FOLLOW-UP ON THE USE OF EVALUATION FINDINGS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As per the IOM M&E Guidelines 2021, a [management response and action plan matrix](#) (MR) on the follow-up of recommendations is an integral part of the evaluation exercise and presents IOM's views and understanding of the evaluation by the entities that are tasked to implement its recommendations.³⁰ It also strengthens the utilization of the evaluation by ensuring that the evaluation findings and recommendations are reviewed and considered when planning future interventions. All IOM evaluations (internal and external) must include a MR for the implementation and follow-up of their recommendations.

The MR constitutes the key tool for confirming the full or partial acceptance, or rejection of a recommendation and for monitoring the implementation of agreed upon recommendations. As an accountability mechanism, the evaluation requires an explicit response and action to its recommendations by the IOM staff responsible for managing the project, programme, policy and/or strategy evaluated. The MR also confirms organizational accountability for results and transparency in the process of determining how results were achieved. As a learning tool, the follow-up process is required for the purpose of integrating evaluation recommendations and lessons learned into IOM programming, policies and strategies.

5.1. Sections of the management response and action plan matrix

The MR includes the following fields, with further explanations on how to complete it also included in the form:

- a) **Background and overall comment:** this introductory heading section includes the evaluation title, name and function of the MR coordinator (see section 5.2 for more detail), and date of publication that

²⁹ Idem, page 248.

³⁰ Idem, chapter 5.

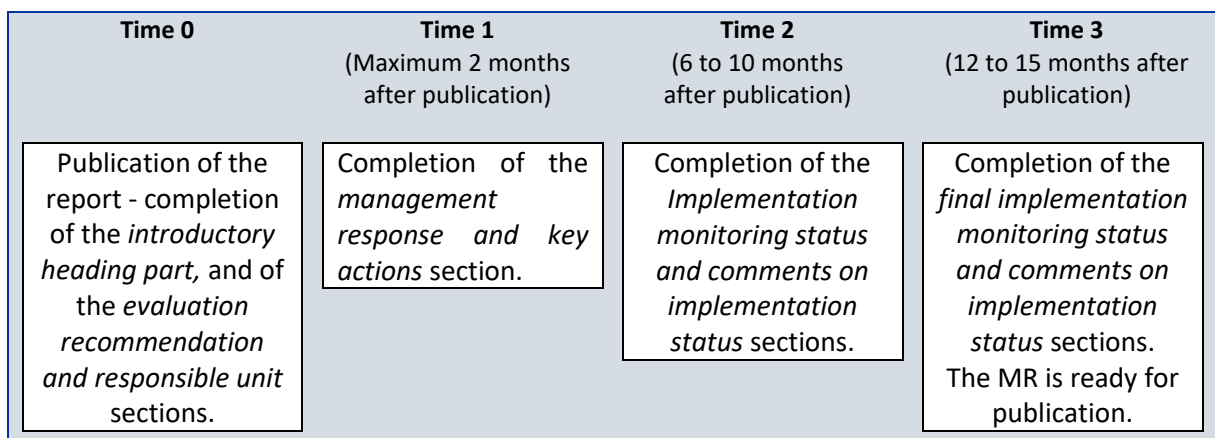
is used as reference for follow-up timeframe described below. Any overall comment on the evaluation process, as detailed in the standard template, can be added here.

- b) **Evaluation recommendation:** based on evaluation evidence and findings, the section reflects the actions recommended to bring about the agreed upon changes and corrective measures to contribute to the expected results, outcomes and impact of the activity evaluated. The recommendations must correspond to the ones listed in the evaluation report and cannot be amended. Lessons learned and good practices related to recommendations and identified in the report, if any, can also be listed in this section for information, not requiring any specific follow-up measures.
- c) **Responsible unit(s):** are the actor(s) designated to implement required actions for implementation of the recommendations and to update the management response.
- d) **Management response and key actions:** informs if the recommendation is *rejected, partially accepted or accepted*, with relevant justifications if rejected or only partially accepted. During the finalization of the evaluation report, evidence has been provided and commented to document a recommendation and there should not be too much disagreement on it. Disagreements can however still prevail on some points, and it is acceptable to reject or only partially accept a recommendation with justifications. The section should also include key actions for the implementation of accepted or partially accepted recommendations, as well as the entities to be involved and expected deadlines.
- e) **Implementation monitoring status and comments:** indicates the level of implementation of the recommendation and key actions between 6 and 10 months after publication. Three levels can be assigned to the status of implementation: *discarded, open and completed*. Recommendations that are not anymore relevant or applicable should be tagged as “discarded”, and an explanation should be provided. If key actions are delayed, the reasons should be indicated. If ongoing or still relevant but not yet implemented or in process, it should be marked as “open”. “Completed” should be used if all actions are implemented, or at least part of the key actions are implemented and there are no plans to implement the remaining actions.
- f) **Final implementation monitoring status and comments:** Captures the implementation status and comments of the recommendations not being closed during the first round of monitoring (point e) above), in line with the definitions provided above. Steps and roles in the completion of the management response and action plan matrix

The MR is mandatory for the follow-up of the recommendations that are actionable by IOM. For recommendations directed at external stakeholders (i.e., implementing partners and/or governments), IOM remains responsible for completing the related sections, but the response and actions must be coordinated with them.

The steps and roles for the completion and follow-up of the [evaluation management response and action plan matrix](#) are allocated as follows:





Time 0: Publication of the report and initiation of the MR process

- The evaluation manager completes the background, overall comment (optional) and recommendations sections of the MR. If specifically requested in the terms of reference, the evaluator may complete the “evaluation recommendation” field of the management response and action plan matrix ([MR template](#)).³¹
- The evaluation manager also completes the background, overall comment and recommendations sections of the MR in **PRIMA** for evaluations of projects registered in PRIMA (including the *responsible unit* – see below). For evaluations of strategies, thematic areas or policies not recorded in PRIMA, the evaluation manager completes these sections in the draft [MR template](#) and shares it with EVA (eva@iom.int).
- For decentralized evaluations of projects covering a single country, the evaluation manager sends the evaluation report, brief and draft MR to the Chief of Mission, with the Regional M&E Officer (ROMEEO) in copy, who can then forward them to the relevant staff within the Regional Office (for instance the Regional Director and Regional Thematic Specialists - RTS).
- For L3 projects/operations and corporate evaluations not conducted by EVA, the evaluation manager sends the evaluation report, brief and draft MR to the departmental director or equivalent office (for instance IOM Director General’s Executive Office).
- EVA publishes the evaluation report, evaluation brief and its annexes in the IOM evaluation repository. The MR will be published after completion of the Time-2 or Time-3 phases.

Time 0: Designating responsibilities

- The *Management Response coordinator (MR coordinator)* in charge of following-up and finalizing the MR process is designated in the matrix by the evaluation manager in agreement with the commissioner of the evaluation. For decentralized evaluations, the MR coordinator role can be assumed by the evaluation manager. If the evaluation manager, who can also be the programme manager of the project, is no more available at project’s end, the Chief of Mission of the managing

³¹ Preparation of the draft matrix needs to be agreed upon with the evaluator(s) as part of the evaluator’s deliverables and specified in the evaluation Terms of Reference (Tour).

office designates the MR coordinator for national projects. In case of evaluations covering multiple offices, the Chief of Mission of the managing office coordinates the designation with the Regional Director.³²

- For thematic and/or strategic evaluations conducted within a region and if the evaluation manager is no more available, the MR coordinator can be the RTS or the person in charge of institutional learning for the region.
- The MR coordinator, in consultation with relevant IOM management entities, identifies to whom each recommendation is addressed and referred as the *responsible unit(s)*. For project evaluations, the entities responsible are often the project/programme manager or the designated official if the project is closed; for ‘regional evaluations’ (see above descriptions), the relevant regional thematic specialists; and for L3, global and/or corporate central evaluations, the head of the unit, division or department. Responsible unit(s) can also be designated among senior management officials (e.g. Director General, Deputy Directors General or Chief of Staff), in particular for IOM central evaluations or corporate evaluations requiring high-level follow-up (for instance L3 evaluations).

Time 1: Recording the management response

- The MR coordinator asks the *responsible unit(s)* (office(s), entity(ices) and/or department(s)) to complete the management response section of the matrix no later than two months after the publication of the evaluation report, in line with instructions contained in this guidance and the MR template.³³
- The responsible unit(s) to whom a recommendation is addressed, indicates in the management response section if it accepts, partially accepts, or rejects the recommendation, and provides relevant justifications in case of disagreement or rejection.
- The responsible unit also determines the critical follow-up action(s) and deadlines for implementation of the recommendation in coordination with relevant stakeholders at country offices, regional offices, or Headquarters. This step can be done in [PRIMA](#) for evaluations of projects registered in PRIMA, and otherwise in the [MR template](#).

Time 2: First follow-up on the MR process

- After having completed the previous step with information on the follow-up actions, the MR coordinator sends a message to the designated responsible unit(s) six to ten months after the publication of the report to follow up on the implementation of the recommendation, and when possible, to determine which ones are already completed or partially completed. For evaluations registered in PRIMA (see above), the system generates a reminder six months after the upload of the evaluation report.
- After having received the reminder and if no action has been taken, the responsible unit(s) reviews and updates the status and progress made on the implementation of the recommendation in [PRIMA](#),

³² For evaluations of a project covering multiple country offices (CO), the MR coordinator may also be located in another participating CO than the managing office of the project.

³³ The ultimate responsibility falls to the Chief of Mission in IOM country offices and to the Regional Director in the regional offices. For Headquarters, it lies with the department director or a division/unit head, as delegated by the Director. Such responsibility may be shared across several actors in the case of projects, policies or strategies managed jointly by several units, offices or departments.

or in the template otherwise. If a recommendation cannot be monitored, receives insufficient support to be implemented, or goes beyond the sphere of influence of the responsible unit(s), this should be underlined in the comments.

- The MR coordinator reviews the responses provided to (a) ensure that the actions contained in the management response are addressed and reported upon, (b) check if any recommendation needs to be reassigned, and (c) raise any outstanding issue or delay in the implementation of the management response.
- The MR coordinator informs the evaluation commissioner and the person who designated him/her as MR coordinator, as well as relevant stakeholders on the progress made on the implementation of the recommendations, with the relevant ROMEEO added in copy. EVA should also be copied for reporting purposes on the implementation of the MR, especially if the MR process can be closed at Time-2 with all recommendations' follow-up properly addressed.

Time 3: Second follow-up and final status of the MR process

- If recommendations are still open, a second follow-up message should be sent to the responsible unit(s) twelve to fifteen months after publication of the evaluation for finalization of the MR process. As for Time 2, the MR coordinator should report on any recommendation that cannot be closed with relevant justifications. For PRIMA registered evaluations, the system generates a reminder message to update the implementation status 12 months after the upload of the evaluation report if at least one recommendation is still in process.
- For country and regional evaluations, the quality control of the finalized management response is done by the ROMEEO. For L3, global and centralized evaluations, the quality control is done by EVA.
- When completed (after Time 2 or Time 3), the MR matrix should be shared with EVA (eva@iom.int) for publication in the repository, together with the evaluation report and related material. Only in exceptional cases the MR may not be published, and justifications should be provided (for instance, if sensitive details related to security are included in follow-up actions). If not published, a note in the repository on the restricted access will be added by EVA.

5.2. Report on the status of IOM MR processes

In line with UNEG standards, IOM is committed to ensure that IOM senior management and governing bodies receive progress reports on the implementation of the central evaluation plan and on the implementation of the recommendations emanating from these evaluations. This reporting falls within the responsibility of IOM Central Evaluation unit and the report will be made public under the IOM evaluation Webpage.

The report will summarize the evaluation activities in IOM under the responsibility of EVA and DPP, the progress made on the implementation of its recommendations, and draw any recommendations that could be relevant for decision-making at the senior management level. The report can also include information on the implementation status of decentralized evaluation recommendations, as recorded in the repository and PRIMA (see above Time 2 and 3).

The report on both central and decentralized evaluations will be based on strict adherence to the MR process described under chapter 5. Therefore, evaluation commissioners and managers are encouraged to ensure that the management response is completed and updated accordingly.

5.3. Overall challenges

Certain challenges and limitations to the MR process can be encountered:

- It may happen for evaluations of projects or programmes, which have been completed, or for recommendations, which have been directed to other stakeholders (such as other offices, governments, or donors) that the follow-up cannot be properly monitored by the office or department in charge of it. In such cases, the rationale and reasons should be mentioned in the comments of the *implementation monitoring status* section of the matrix.
- The implementation of some recommendations may be ambitious or complex, requiring coordinated efforts, and in some cases, the deadline of 15 months after publication of the evaluation may not be respected and remedy actions may not be easily identified. The review of the status of such recommendations may focus more on the learning dimension of the evaluation report and related recommendations that could inform senior management on best practices identified during the exercise. In such cases, there may be no further specific follow-up requirements after 15 months. Workshops for the various actors can be organized instead, to discuss the status and implementation of the recommendations.
- Some all-encompassing recommendations may refrain the responsible staff from endorsing them because they have the responsibility of the follow-up of the management response process and consider not having the time and resources to undertake meaningful actions to address them. A MR process should not become a project with extensive coordination, implementation of activities, deadline management and close follow-up monitoring and such challenges when they exist should be raised. Such time and staff constraints could also apply in offices where multiple evaluations are ongoing at the same time and a better repartition of related tasks between staff should be examined.

5.4. Management opinion on the evaluation

The management entity being subject to an evaluation may provide a “Management Opinion” on the overall relevance and quality of the evaluation report and its analysis when there is persisting disagreement with the report and when consensus was not reached during the process of commenting on the draft report. The management opinion takes a narrative form not exceeding three pages, is disclosed together with the evaluation report as annex and is published by IOM together with the evaluation report.

The management opinion may include overall comments regarding the relevance of the evaluation methodology, of data collected and disagreements with the evaluation findings and conclusions and highlight strong divergence of opinion with regards to the overall evaluation content and analysis that could not be raised in the MR matrix. Disagreements on the recommendations are however covered by the MR matrix.

6. CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EVALUATION CULTURE

The utilization of and communication on evaluation reports are important elements of an evaluation culture and contribute to the reinforcement of IOM as a learning organization, in the use of evaluation for knowledge management, and to support a culture that understands the importance of evaluations for policy, strategic and operational work and management. Several actions can promote further an evaluation culture in IOM for a better use of evaluations and other evaluative approaches, as highlighted in the feasibility study of 2021.

Attract and retain personnel who understands the value of evaluation: the management and use of evaluation requires competencies valuable for many managerial positions. It is recommended whenever relevant to include in the vacancy notice of these positions an incentive for the selection of personnel having evaluation experience as an advantage. It may also increase the interest of IOM staff to learn more and participate in the effective use of evaluation.

Building the capacities of new and existing staff on the implementation, utility and use of evaluation: EVA in collaboration with the ROMEOS and trained facilitators, organizes e-learning M&E courses and internal evaluators training, develops an M&E community of practice, and provides technical support to IOM departments and offices on evaluation. The ROMEOS conduct activities to also promote the use of evaluations within their respective regions, which include the promotion of evaluation use.

Encourage the planning of new evaluations: While all projects and programmes are required to include an evaluation component in the project proposal, additional evaluative initiatives in the field could complement projects evaluations and increase the use of evaluation. This may include the conduct of strategic or synthesis evaluations.

Promote the use of evaluation findings, conclusions, recommendations during the development of new project proposals: Project developers are encouraged to review the evaluation repository during the development of new project proposals and extract relevant evaluation reports, which could ensure access to lessons learned and good practices.

Promote the inclusion of corporate evaluation findings into IOM policies and strategies: one of the good uses of evaluation is ensuring that evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations feed into IOM corporate policies and strategies. To address it, the evaluation manager and/or the management response coordinator must elevate the evaluation recommendations to the appropriate level, including the senior management of IOM.

Promote the aggregation of evaluation findings for informed decision-making: while the evaluation reports and related documentation are easily accessible through the evaluation repository and portal, aggregating the results from different evaluations into specific reporting on the follow-up of recommendations or through synthesis reports provides additional advantages on the utilization of evaluations. Central evaluation offices are well placed to conduct these exercises.

Contribute to national evaluation capacities related to migration management: IOM is committed to develop the capacity of States and other relevant partners to enhance the management of national,

regional and global migration evidence-based data. Evaluation can contribute to it for instance when related to migration and the 2030 Agenda or in the framework of the global compact on migration (GCM).

Further encouraging internal communication and knowledge management: facilitating storytelling, communication and dialogue on the knowledge generated by evaluations can be promoted through available communication channels, in addition to what is described in the sections above. Existing initiatives include: 'the discussion board on the Evaluation and Monitoring Portal';³⁴ newsletters; IOM Yammer Groups;³⁵ 'IOM Thematic Teams³⁶ and SharePoint³⁷ groups'; as well as other knowledge management platforms, such as 'POEM³⁸ on policy development on migration. The participation of IOM staff in external evaluation forums and networks can also be beneficial, for instance, through dialogue and feedback loop between evaluators and evaluation users.

³⁴ www.evaluationportal.iom.int/DiscussionBoard

³⁵ www.yammer.com/iom.int/ including the monitoring and evaluation group.

³⁶ <https://teams.microsoft.com/>

³⁷ https://iomint.sharepoint.com/_layouts/15/sharepoint.aspx

³⁸ See <https://poem.iom.int/>

7. ANNEX: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN MATRIX

“Evaluation title”

Name and function of the management response coordinator (MR coordinator): *Insert the name and title of the person responsible for managing the management response (MR) process and matrix.*

Date of publication: *Insert the date of publication of the evaluation report, which will be used to monitor the timeframe of implementation of recommendations. The date of publication is when the report is officially released.*

Overall comment on evaluation process (optional): *Insert an overall opinion (affirmative or adverse) on the evaluation process as an introduction to the detailed recommendation follow-up proposed in the management response.*

<p>Evaluation recommendation # 1: (Time 0) <i>Cut and paste the first recommendation from the evaluation report. Note that the recommendations cannot be changed once an evaluation report has been accepted and finalized. Lessons learned and good practices identified in the report and related to the recommendation, if any, can be listed for information in this section (no specific follow-up required).</i></p>
<p>Responsible unit(s): (Time 0) <i>Specify to whom the recommendation is assigned for implementation. Usually, this will be one or more of the following: project management, senior management (including financial and human resources managers), project implementation and oversight bodies such as the project steering committee, or a specific department/division/unit in IOM Headquarters.</i></p>
<p>Management response - accept/partially accept/reject: (Time 1) <i>Indicate if management (i.e., the responsible unit) accepts, partially accepts or rejects the recommendation. Provide an explanation if management only partially accepts or rejects.</i></p> <p>Key actions: (Time 1) <i>The key actions for implementation, entities to be involved as well as expected deadlines must also be specified in the section by responsible unit(s).</i></p>
<p>Implementation monitoring status - discarded/open/completed: (Time 2) <i>Complete this field when following up for the first time on the management response and key actions. Indicate if the implementation of the recommendation is discarded, open or completed. “Discarded” should be used if the recommendation is no longer relevant or applicable. E.g., if the recommendation suggests preparing a second phase of the project with the donor, which is however confirmed as not possible by the donor in the meantime, then the recommendation can be discarded. The “completed” option should be used if all actions are implemented, or at least part of the key actions are implemented and there are no further plans to implement the remaining key actions for this recommendation. The “Open” option should be used if still relevant but not yet implemented or in process.</i></p> <p>Comments on implementation status: (Time 2) <i>Add brief explanations and/or description of the status of actions taken. For instance, if partially completed, or no longer applicable; if insufficient support is received to implement the recommendation; if some actions go beyond the sphere of the responsible unit(s), and therefore need to be reassigned; if there is any outstanding issue or delay in the implementation of the recommendation.</i></p> <p><i>These fields are to be completed by the responsible unit(s) and coordinated by the MR coordinator. Complete the field when following up and monitoring the implementation of the key action described in the previous box.</i></p>

<p>Final implementation monitoring status - discarded/open/completed: (Time 3) Specify the final status of the implementation of the key actions according to the definitions provided above. The final status section does not need to be completed if all recommendations have been completed and closed at Time-2 above.</p> <p>Final comments on implementation status: (Time 3) Use the field to provide further clarifications on the final implementation monitoring status. If a recommendation is still open after 15 months, considerations will be given on the status related to the closure of the MR process.</p> <p>The 'Time-3' fields are to be completed by the Responsible Unit(s) and coordinated by the MR coordinator as the second and final round of monitoring between 12 and 15 months after the publication of the evaluation report.</p>
<p>Evaluation recommendation # 2: (Time 0)</p>
<p>Responsible unit(s): (Time 0)</p>
<p>Management response - accept/partially accept/reject: (Time 1)</p> <p>Key actions: (Time 1)</p>
<p>Implementation monitoring status - discarded/open/completed: (Time 2)</p> <p>Comments on implementation status: (Time 2)</p>
<p>Final implementation monitoring status – discarded/open/completed: (Time 3)</p> <p>Comments on implementation status: (Time 3)</p>

(...)