



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

Terms of Reference for the External Evaluation of IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme in the Western Balkans for the period 2019-2022

Commissioned by: IOM Country Office in Serbia

1. Evaluation context

Since 2015, the Western Balkans (WB) has emerged as a major region of transit for migrants attempting to reach the European Union. Mixed migration flows in the region are comprised of refugees and migrants in search of a better life. In 2021, mixed migration flows in the WB and along the Eastern Mediterranean Route represented approximately 21 per cent of irregular arrivals into the EU.¹ Return remains a key policy area in the WB, as it perceived to contribute to the integrity of asylum and immigration systems. Ensuring the sustainability of returns through individual and community-based reintegration programming has also been an important element of the assistance provided by IOM.

Migrants often find themselves stranded in host or transit countries because of lack of legal pathways, lack of legal status or because they are not deemed in need of international protection. Moreover, countries of transit often face limitations or lack of capacity and resources to adequately address the situation of irregular migration and provide dignified and rights-based solutions to those who find themselves stranded and without means to pursue their journey onward or homeward. Beneficiaries of the AVRR programmes may include stranded migrants, irregular migrants, regular migrants and asylum seekers who decide not to pursue their claims or who are found not to be in need of international protection. AVRR assistance can be also provided to migrants in vulnerable situations such as victims of trafficking, unaccompanied and separated children, or migrants with health needs.

IOM has been implementing Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) projects in the WB since the 1990s. One of the cornerstones of the work on AVRR in the region has been the development of the national and country owned AVRR frameworks through dedicated AVRR regulations and arrangements governing AVRR operations throughout the region. The introduction and nationalization of AVRR schemes in all six WB partners resulted in improved migration management efficacy and assistance in return of some 2,500 migrants from the WB since 2016. The WB represents the second largest region of return, globally representing 28 per cent of all returns facilitated by IOM in 2018.

¹ DTM Europe, Quarterly Regional Report, October to December 2021. DTM Q4 2021 Mixed Migration Flows to Europe.pdf

To ensure standards in the performance of AVRR as well as consistency in practices across national and regional contexts, IOM developed various institutional policies (e.g., IOM's Policy on the full spectrum of return and readmission, IOM's Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration and IOM's Integrated Approach to Reintegration in the context of Return²) as well as operational guidance and tools (e.g., the Reintegration Handbook³). Some of these resources were developed in the WB and have been expanded with a view to serve IOM's AVRR programmes worldwide (e.g., Toolkit on information and pre-return counselling).

Most AVRR projects in the WB are regional in scope, encompassing activities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo.⁴ Some projects are national in scope. Many donors have contributed/continue to contribute to AVRR programming in the WB, including the European Commission and various countries including Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway.

2. Evaluation purpose and objective

The objective of the external evaluation is to assess the overall programmatic approach of IOM in AVRR, building on the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Through a programme-wide perspective, the evaluation will collect and analyse information about the collective results of the projects; assess the relations between the various projects supporting IOM's protection work in the context of AVRR; and through a thematic lense, discuss the efficiency of IOM's outreach, information and counselling activities.

The evaluation shall offer a comprehensive analysis of AVRR multi-donor approach and programming capacities in the WB. The evaluation shall also inform IOM Management in the WB and thematic specialists in the Regional Office, as well as globally, so that lessons learned and recognized good practices can be internalized to improve AVRR programming and multi-donor work in the future. Specifically, the evaluation shall:

- 1) Review the activities implemented and results obtained against the results matrices;
- 2) Analyze the synergies and complementarities in projects design and targeted results;
- 3) Highlight added value and challenges related to the multi-donors approach;
- 4) Identify further protection mainstreaming priorities to help IOM strengthen its work to support human rights through outreach and counselling;
- 5) Discuss challenges, lessons learned and recommendations to improve IOM's programmatic approach in the area of AVRR.

3. Evaluation scope

In close coordination with the Evaluation Manager (Head of Programme Support Unit in BiH), and other key IOM staff including the Regional Project Manager, the Migrant Protection Officer in Serbia, key resource management and projects' team members in the Western

² All resources easily accessible through the IOM Portal on Return and Reintegration.

³ IOM Reintegration Handbook, Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance, 2019. Available online.

⁴ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Balkans, as well as M&E and thematic specialists in the IOM Regional Office in Vienna (i.e. the Advisory Group), the external evaluator will undertake a review and assessment of all AVRR projects implemented by IOM in the WB in the period 2019–2021. This includes a total of eight projects of various sizes and scope. Project outcomes that are not related to AVRR will not be considered as part of the proposed evaluation matrix, unless relevant findings emerge in relation to the overall coherence and effectiveness of projects and activities.

The following projects will be included as part of the programme evaluation:

Project code	Managing Mission	Donor	Project start date	Project end date
RR.0066	Serbia	Netherlands	Jan 2019	Dec 2022
RR.0230	Serbia	Germany	Aug 2021	Dec 2021
RR.0090	Serbia	Germany	June 2019	July 2021
RR.0212	BiH	Austria	May 2021	Feb 2022
RR.0074	Serbia	Austria	June 2019	Dec 2020
RR.0139	Serbia	Denmark	Aug 2020	July 2022
IB.0067	Serbia	EU	June 2019	Dec 2021
RR.0271	Serbia	EU	Jan 2022	Dec 2025

4. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation matrix and inception report will provide the detailed list of questions and sub-questions that will be analyzed during the evaluation, based on the six OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The evaluation will be guided by the following evaluation questions, which shall be refined and further detailed during the inception phase and through the evaluation matrix:

Relevance

- Are the projects aligning with and contributing to existing national strategies?
- Are the projects and activities compatible with the desired outcomes and objective?
- To what extent did the projects meet the needs of the beneficiaries?

Coherence

- Are the projects consistent, aligned and complementary to each other's?
- To what extent does IOM create synergies and linkages with interventions of state authorities and other stakeholders/donor community in related thematic area?
- To what extent are the projects' interventions aligned with SDG target 10.7, the Global Compact for Migration and relevant human rights considerations?

Effectiveness

- To what extent were activities carried out as planned?
- Were the outputs and outcomes of the projects achieved?
- What are the main factors influencing the achievement of results of the projects?
- To what extent has IOM adapted to external factors and changes to ensure the achievements of the targeted results?

Efficiency

- Were the projects activities undertaken and outputs delivered on time?
- Did the management approach of the projects lead to increased efficiency compared to other management strategies?
- To what extent have resources (funds, technical skills, time) been converted into results?

Impact

- Are the beneficiaries satisfied with the projects' results?
- What are the positive / negative and intended / unintended effects of the AVRR programming over the past years?
- To what extent did the IOM projects contribute to the observed changes, considering also other likely contributing factors?

Sustainability

- To what extent is the programme anchored in institutional structures likely to remain in place once the projects are completed?
- Do the project partners have sufficient capacity (technically, financially and in terms of management) to continue to provide the benefits / services of the project?

5. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation will draw on available qualitative and quantitative data collected from key stakeholders at different points in time. During the evaluation, additional information will be collected from stakeholders using interviews and focus groups. Project documents and reports will be made available to the evaluator. These documents will include correspondence with the Government and partners involved. Following receipt of the project documents and in coordination with the Evaluation manager, the evaluator will develop a detailed methodology for the evaluation, including quantitative and qualitative tools. The data collection tools will be developed in English and translated by the evaluator, based on needs. Interpreters will support interviews with beneficiaries when required, as per decision of the evaluator and in compliance with the conditions set below.

The methodology will include:

- Review and analysis of proposals, reports and projects documents (i.e., written outputs such as standard operating procedures, toolkits, manuals, activity/meeting reports).
- Discussions and interviews with projects' management team and staff in the field.
- Key informant interviews with government and donor officials.
- Focus group discussions with beneficiaries of AVRR projects.
- Review by an Advisory Group including regional monitoring and evaluation specialists and migrant protection and assistance thematic experts.

Considering the regional scope of the AVRR activities in the WB, interviews and focus groups will be planned in all WB6, with field visits when needed (priority to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia). The logistical arrangements will be facilitated by the Evaluation manager, in coordination with the Regional Project Manager and AVRR team based in Belgrade, Serbia.

6. Ethics, norms and standards for evaluation

The evaluation process will be carried out in accordance with the IOM's personal data protection principles. IOM abides by the [norms and standards](#) of UNEG and expects all evaluation stakeholders to be familiar with the [ethical conduct guidelines](#) of UNEG and the consultant(s) with the [UNEG codes of conduct](#) as well. The evaluator should also read and seek to integrate [IOM's core values and competencies](#) in the evaluation process.

7. Deliverables

The internal evaluation is expected to generate key **deliverables**:

Inception report: Following the desk review of projects documents, the Inception Report will detail the methodology and data collection tools planned for the evaluation, along with all proposed interviews and focus groups to be organized online and in-person. It will include at minimum an Evaluation Matrix.

Restitution Meeting: Immediately following the desk review and field data collection phase, the evaluator will organize a meeting with the relevant IOM staff (i.e. Regional Project Manager, Protection Officer, key projects' team members and M&E and thematic specialists in the IOM Regional Office in Vienna) to outline the main findings and discuss them in the scope of the evaluation process and objectives.

Draft Evaluation Report: Following the data collection and analysis, the evaluator will draft a preliminary version of the report and key findings, which will be submitted to the Evaluation Manager for coordinated review and feedback from the Project management team and the regional Advisory Group for review and feedback.

Final Evaluation Report: The final report will provide a contextual analysis of the period before and during the projects being evaluated, underlining the internal and external factors affecting the projects' design, implementation and results. The Final Evaluation Report will integrate the feedback received by the IOM Advisory Group through the Evaluation Manager during the review of the draft. The evaluation report will be in English.

Evaluation Brief: A two-page brief of the evaluation will be developed as per IOM standard evaluation practice/template. The Evaluation Brief will be translated into local language (tbc).

Presentation of key findings: Presentation will be organized online. The Evaluation Manager is responsible for inviting people and for the logistical arrangements.

Draft management response: The evaluator will prepare a partially-filled draft management response with suggested actions to take for each of the recommendations, to be coordinated with and later completed and finalized by the Evaluation Manager.

8. Specification of roles

The Evaluation Manager (EM) will coordinate and oversee the evaluation process and serve as primary point of contact with the Evaluator.

The evaluator will:

- Implement the data collection, analysis, and reporting activities of the final evaluation
- Flag any challenges or emerging issues to the project team.
- Prepare and deliver the inception report, final report, two-page evaluation brief and the visual presentation of the evaluation of the findings and recommendations.

The Evaluation Manager (EM) will:

- Oversee the general process of the evaluation.
- Act as the primary point of contact with the evaluator, including facilitate communication as needed between the evaluator and other IOM staff.
- Coordinate communication with and feedback from the Advisory Group.

The Advisory Group will:

- Contribute to discussions and provide technical guidance as the evaluation progresses.

A quality assurance process shall be integrated into the evaluation, as follows:

- Final terms of reference (ToR) shall be agreed between EM and evaluator.
- The inception report shall be reviewed by the EM and other IOM staff, revised by the evaluator, and finalized only upon EM's acceptance.
- The evaluator will timely raise any emergent challenges or barriers with the EM, who will support with finding appropriate solutions to facilitate the evaluation process.
- The final report and brief shall be reviewed by the EM and other IOM staff, revised by the evaluator, and finalized only upon evaluation manager's acceptance.

9. Time schedule

The estimated number of working days planned for the completion of the evaluation tasks by the evaluator is a total of 30 working days. This schedule below is indicative of the distribution of the working time required to ensure coordination and review processes. It will be finalized after conforming the availability of relevant stakeholders. The evaluator will regularly update the Evaluation manager on its progress so that the timelines can be adjusted if needed.

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	WORKING DAYS (Evaluator)	DUE DATE
Application to the call for expression	Evaluator	-	07 OCT 2022
Endorsement of the TORs	Evaluator	1	21 OCT 2022
Desk Review of project documents	Evaluator	3	28 OCT 2022
Drafting of the inception report, methodology and tools	Evaluator	3	28 OCT 2022
Data collection and field visits	Evaluator	10	18 NOV 2022
Submission of the draft report	Evaluator	5	09 DEC 2022

Submission of the final report	Evaluator	5	31 DEC 2022
Submission of the evaluation brief	Evaluator	1	31 DEC 2022
Presentation of the evaluation findings	Evaluator	1	TBD
Drafting of the Management response	Evaluator	1	TBD

10. Evaluation requirements

The external evaluator should meet the following requirements:

- Advanced degree in a relevant field such as social sciences or statistics is required.
- Minimum of five years of experience conducting evaluations is required.
- Experience in the country or region, and in return and reintegration or other related migration programming is preferred.
- Skills in evaluation design, qualitative data collection and analysis, drafting and editing in English, communication, time management and cultural sensitivity are required.

11. Submission of application

Documents to submit as a part of the application should include:

- Letter of expression of interest
- Technical proposal outlining the proposed methodology for the evaluation, including data collection and analysis techniques, and quality control measures
- Budget proposal (all-inclusive, detailing consultancy fees, travel, accommodation, subsistence, data collection and analysis costs, translation, interpretation, etc.)
- CV of the main evaluator and other team members if relevant
- A sample of previous evaluation work
- References letters (2)

Please send your application package via email to jdurocher@iom.int no later than 07 October 2022.