



DAC NETWORK ON  
**DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION**



**UNEG**

United Nations Evaluation Group

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

May 2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Peer Review of IOM’s evaluation function was conducted under the provisions contained in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of UN organizations and the OECD DAC. It is the first Peer Review of IOM’s evaluation function and was conducted at the request of IOM. The Peer Review Panel comprised three members:

- Adan Ruiz Villalba, Chair of the Panel, and Head of Evaluation at the World Intellectual Property Organization
- Robert Stryk, Regional Evaluation Advisor, Middle East and North Africa Regional Office at United Nations Children Fund
- Meike Goede, Senior Researcher at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands

Daniel Arghiros was the Senior Evaluation Consultant to the Panel.

The Panel would like to thank the Chief Evaluation of OIG, the OIG team and the IOM for facilitating and engaging with the review in such a collaborative way. The Panel would also like to thank all those to whom they spoke for their open and frank contributions.

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

This is the first Peer Review of IOM’s evaluation function. To date the first and only other assessment of the evaluation function is that of the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), conducted between 2017 and 2018. This Peer Review builds on the findings of the MOPAN assessment.

The Peer Review provides recommendations to IOM senior leadership and its governing bodies, the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance (SCPF) and Council, as well as the Inspector General, staff of the OIG/Evaluation unit, Regional Offices and Country Offices. The review covers the entire evaluation system comprising both the central and decentralized evaluation functions.<sup>1</sup> It assesses the role and strategic positioning of financial and human

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<sup>1</sup> A note on terminology: the terms ‘central evaluation function’ and the ‘decentralized evaluation function’ are used solely to differentiate between the levels being discussed (for definitions, see IOM Evaluation Policy, September 2018). In practice there is just one encompassing evaluation function in IOM.

resourcing, evaluation planning, evaluation use, and quality assurance mechanisms. The review focuses on the period 2016 to the end of 2020.

## I. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

The Panel is impressed by how much OIG/Evaluation has managed to achieve in recent years, especially given its limited human and financial resources. With these constraints, it is hard to imagine that OIG/Evaluation could have made more progress than it has. So, the Panel would like to congratulate its staff for what it has achieved over the last few years, and to the Inspector General for facilitating its work.

The MOPAN assessment highlighted evaluation as an area for improvement. It noted that “The evaluation function is [...] emergent, with limited functional and budgetary independence” and that “Evaluation coverage is patchy...”<sup>2</sup> The body of this report sets out how IOM has strengthened the evaluation function since the MOPAN assessment. Overall, whilst there have been some significant changes, the overall impact has probably been limited: core issues such as independence and budget have yet to be addressed. And whilst OIG/Evaluation has introduced new policies, partly because they are so recent, they have yet to be reflected in what is practiced.

The Panel therefore considers that the MOPAN description of the evaluation function as “emergent” is still appropriate. The Panel also considers that IOM’s evaluation function has not developed to the same degree as UN evaluation functions that were established at about the same time. When it was primarily an operational office, IOM as an organisation did not invest in the organisation’s evaluation function. The Panel would like to stress to IOM management that evaluation is a core corporate function that, if it operates effectively, contributes to the overall credibility of an organisation.

There may still also be an underappreciation of the role and potential contribution that evaluation can make to the organisation. We note in the section on utility that corporately it seems that IOM does not yet appreciate the role of an evaluation function in supporting learning. Whilst the Strategic Vision 2019-2023 aims for IOM to be a “learning organisation”, there is no mention of the contribution evaluation should make. It is hard to see how IOM can become a learning organisation without a fully functioning evaluation service. The Panel therefore encourages IOM’s leadership and the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance to reconsider what kind of evaluation service it needs if it is to become a learning organisation. The Panel hopes they will find the findings and recommendations in this document helpful.

The Panel appreciates the institutional constraints that IOM is operating under. We have therefore been careful to make recommendations that are feasible and can be implemented with realistic cost implications. Indeed, many of the recommendations proposed are cost neutral: there are measures that OIG/Evaluation can take on its own to strengthen the

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<sup>2</sup> MOPAN, 2019, 2017-18 Performance Assessments: International Organization for Migration, p.34

credibility and utility of individual evaluations. But without additional investment in financial and human resources OIG/Evaluation will soon reach the outer limits of what can be achieved. To further deliver for IOM, OIG/Evaluation will need greater, predictable investment in its human capacity; it will need more funds to commission evaluations and develop the decentralized evaluation system, and they will need to be assured.

The Panel considers that if IOM can implement these recommendations, it would set both the organisation and the evaluation function on a “virtuous cycle”: if the evaluation function is better able to demonstrate its value to the organisation and its stakeholders, IOM will be more willing to invest in it. If the evaluation function delivers value to the organisation with these investments – e.g., evaluations that promote greater effectiveness and efficiency - this could stimulate sustained investment and a “virtuous” self-sustaining cycle. To some extent, with the greater investment in the evaluation function from the Migration Resource Allocation Committee (MIRAC), IOM has begun this cycle. However, the short-term investments from MIRAC do not allow the evaluation function to plan strategically over the medium to long term. The Panel offers these recommendations to help guide and accelerate this process.

Before detailing the Panel’s recommendations, the following paragraphs summarise the Panel’s reflections on the three key OECD-DAC/UNEG norms and standards of independence, credibility, and utility.

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## INDEPENDENCE

The OIG/Evaluation unit’s position within the Office of the Inspector General gives it some of the structural independence it needs; but this is undermined by its lack of financial independence, which translates into limited operational independence. It lacks the funds to undertake a central evaluation plan – and so lacks the ability to reflect to the organisation the performance of key operational or programmatic activities. OIG/Evaluation’s mandate to manage both the evaluation function and the monitoring function also undermines its independence since monitoring is a management function. The findings on independence are not new to the organisation and the Panel comes to the same conclusions as the MOPAN assessment.

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## CREDIBILITY

There has been some progress before and since the MOPAN assessment in increasing the credibility of central and decentralized evaluations but there are still challenges. Central evaluations have started to focus on strategic issues. However, if OIG/Evaluation must always conduct evaluations with its own staff because it lacks the funds to hire external subject experts, the credibility and therefore utility of its evaluations will be limited. Decentralized evaluations conducted by staff who have managed the evaluated intervention, as detailed in existing policy and evaluation guidance, cannot be impartial and therefore lack credibility.

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## UTILITY

There are also indications that utility is improving. There is evidence that some central evaluations have led to learning and have been valued by policy and management units alike. But evaluation needs to be at the core of IOM's learning, requiring more changes on the part of OIG/Evaluation but also elsewhere in IOM. OIG/Evaluation and Regional M&E Officers will need to distil and communicate the key lessons from evaluations to those who will use them. And the organisation needs to build in an expectation that those planning new policies and programmes should build on lessons from relevant evaluative evidence. There is also scope for the organisation to ensure there is adequate follow up to agreed evaluation recommendations.

Decentralized evaluations would add greater value to the organisation if they focused, for example, on innovative initiatives, or evaluated similar interventions in different countries. Stronger investment in the decentralized evaluation function could address this. IOM has a very capable network of Regional M&E Officers to take this forward, under the technical guidance of OIG/Evaluation.

## II. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This Executive Summary sets out the 10 key findings and associated recommendations that appear in the full report, with some abbreviation. In some cases, the main recommendation is accompanied by action points. The text in parentheses after each recommendation identifies who would be responsible for implementing it. We have not ranked the recommendations in priority or sequence, as it is hoped that IOM will be able to take these forward together. The Panel is confident that if IOM can adopt and implement these recommends as a package of measures, it will be able to launch a virtuous cycle: building a robust evaluation function and a learning organisation.

### 1. INDEPENDENCE – THE EVALUATION FUNCTION SHOULD REMAIN WITHIN THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

The Peer Review was asked to reflect on the institutional positioning of the evaluation function in IOM, and to inform the ongoing internal governance review.

In an ideal world, the entity that drives IOM's evaluation function would be an independent department or office reporting functionally to the Director General but substantively to the governing bodies. This is the arrangement that exists in other UN agencies and bodies that have well-resourced and sizable evaluation functions. But for this to make sense, IOM's evaluation unit needs to have the human and financial resources – and the structural independence, to make this viable.

Currently it does not make sense for either OIG/Evaluation or IOM. OIG/Evaluation does not have the independent financial resources nor the volume and seniority of staff positions to give it the authority it would need if it were a standalone entity. Its status as a function of OIG gives it a measure of independence and this is extremely valuable. It risks losing this if it is made into a small standalone unit within the Office of the Director General.

The Panel recommends that it should certainly be IOM's long-term vision to establish a strong, independent entity responsible for governing the evaluation function. In the future, after the evaluation function has been strengthened and is more mature, it would be appropriate to revisit the positioning of the central evaluation function. But the circumstances are not yet appropriate.

The Panel also notes that it is not necessary for OIG/Evaluation to be outside the Office of the Inspector General to build a strong evaluation function. Across the UN there are several evaluation functions that are embedded in the equivalent of IOM's Office of the Inspector General. They are still able to operate effective evaluation functions. UNESCO, WIPO and UNWRA are examples.

The current OIG Charter does not spell out the conditions underpinning the evaluation function's institutional independence. A revised Charter would need to spell out the key features of the evaluation function, including its independence.

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

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

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## 2. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN ADVOCATING FOR A ROBUST EVALUATION FUNCTION

IOM has an Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee with responsibility for supporting the evaluation function but as noted in the body of this report, it does not appear to have been active in doing so. The Peer Review recommends measures that would encourage the Committee to systematically play a stronger role in being an advocate for and a "critical friend" to the evaluation function. The Committee's Terms of Reference do not define its role in relation to evaluation in any detail.

**Recommendation 2: The Peer Review recommends the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee consistently reviews the performance and resourcing of the evaluation function, with a view to strengthening it. The Panel recommends that the Committee's 2013 Terms of Reference<sup>3</sup> are revised as soon as possible and that they:**

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<sup>3</sup> IOM, 2013, IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

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

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

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

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

**(For: Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, Senior Management, Inspector General)**

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### 3. STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OIG/EVALUATION AND GOVERNING BODIES

The Panel considers that OIG/Evaluation can enhance its independence and the status of evaluation, whilst remaining within OIG, by deliberately strengthening its relationship with IOM's governing bodies – the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance and the Council. The Panel considers that, as a co-located unit, OIG/Evaluation should continue to build its own profile.

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

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

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

**(For: Inspector General, Chief Evaluation, the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance)**

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### 4. WITHDRAW MONITORING POLICY RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE CENTRALIZED EVALUATION FUNCTION

The Peer Review ToR ask the Panel to assess how appropriate it is for IOM’s central evaluation office to have a mandate for governing the organisation’s monitoring function as well as for evaluation.

It is highly unusual, if not unique, for UN evaluation functions to hold responsibility for both evaluation and monitoring. Monitoring is a management function whilst evaluation is an accountability and learning function. Combining these roles is not compatible with UNEG norms and standards as it weakens the potential independence of the evaluation function. The Panel also notes that the fact that OIG/Evaluation holds responsibility for IOM’s monitoring policy is inconsistent with the OIG’s own Charter. This states that “OIG is not involved in the management of any programmes, operations or functions.”<sup>4</sup>

The Panel therefore recommends to IOM that responsibility for monitoring policy is separated from the central evaluation function. There are further benefits to enacting this change. OIG/Evaluation struggles to establish a quality evaluation function with its existing resources. Removing monitoring would free up time/energy so it can focus solely on evaluation. Where the monitoring function is placed is beyond the scope of the Panel to recommend – but combining it with the unit in IOM responsible for results-based management would be an option.

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

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## 5. FINANCING THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

By any measure the IOM evaluation function has minimal predictable funding and has the absolute minimum number of staff needed to manage the function. The lack of finance undermines its independence. For example, it lacks the funding to independently conduct central evaluations. OIG/Evaluation’s capacity is therefore even more constrained because its staff must conduct many central evaluations themselves. The combination of financial and human resource constraints makes it difficult for OIG/Evaluation to strengthen the evaluation function much beyond what it has already achieved. Recent funding from the MIRAC facility is welcome but these funds do not allow OIG/Evaluation to increase its core human resources as there is no certainty they will continue.

The Panel considered various options for how IOM could allocate adequate, predictable funds to the evaluation function. Any recommendation needs to be feasible within IOM’s “projectised” system (whereby all costs associated with a project are charged to a project). Given this context, the Panel recommends that IOM introduce a system whereby a standardised proportion of all project costs is allocated to the evaluation function. The Panel

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<sup>4</sup> IOM (2015), Charter of the Office of the Inspector General, International Organization for Migration, Section 4.4.1.



is not going to recommend a specific percentage: this will be up to OIG and OIG/Evaluation to discuss with IOM management and the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance. OIG/Evaluation could establish a starting point by costing a full work plan (see Recommendation 5 below). The UN Joint Inspections Unit considers the financial target range should be within the range of 0.5 and 3 percent of revenue.<sup>5</sup> IOM could aim to reach the lower end of the range within a few years. The percentage could start low and, as the evaluation function grows in capacity and coverage, gradually increase.

The Panel is not aware of another agency that has introduced a direct mirror of this proposal. Several agencies, such as WFP, allocate a percentage of their total programmatic spend to their evaluation function. But IOM is relatively unusual because of its projectised management. IOM may be able to draw some lessons from FAO but there are differences: FAO's large internal evaluation team conducts all evaluations and does not outsource them.

The total sum would need to be allocated to OIG/Evaluation and managed by the unit. This funding should in principle finance all central evaluations. OIG/Evaluation would need to make an allocation to Regional M&E Officers and consider a facility to support Country Offices to undertake decentralized evaluations. However, it will still be necessary for projects to budget for and finance their own decentralized evaluations. The percentage allocated to the evaluation function would be intended to cover the costs of the central evaluation function and the development of the decentralized evaluation function only (i.e., projects and programmes would still need to allocate an additional percentage of their project costs to cover the cost of an evaluation).

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

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## 6. PRODUCING WORK PLANS THAT ESTABLISH THE VALUE PROPOSITION OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

The Panel considers that the priority of OIG/Evaluation, once it has been divested of responsibility for monitoring, is to strengthen the quality and value added of central evaluations to the organisation. OIG/Evaluation has already set the objective of ensuring that all central evaluations have strategic value for the organization, and that they are credible and add value. OIG/Evaluation can set the evaluation function's added value in more comprehensive workplans.

The Panel recognizes that OIG/Evaluation has already invested in strengthening the last two Evaluation Plans. The Panel welcomes these changes but considers further measures could

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<sup>5</sup> JIU 2014, Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System, p29.

make them more compelling to both the organisation and its donors. Rather than solely listing intended central evaluations (to be completed only if funding is available as mentioned in the plan), OIG/Evaluation needs to present a consolidated Work Plan. It needs to be strategic and concrete, and meet donor needs and interests.

Further, it needs to be fully costed – and include financial needs of the central evaluations and the cost of developing the decentralized evaluation function. It is recommended that the evaluation function Work Plan and the associated financial requirement is endorsed by IOM's Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance: and that, in a move that will greatly enhance the independence of the evaluation function, the Standing Committee approves the budget to finance the Evaluation Plan.

The Panel also recommends that to add external perspectives to central evaluations, OIG/Evaluation seeks to budget for either external contracted teams to conduct central evaluations; or to conduct central evaluations as hybrid evaluations with internal and external evaluators.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**(For: Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, Senior Management, Inspector General, OIG/Evaluation)**

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## 7. INCREASING THE UTILITY OF DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS

The current expectation that all interventions are evaluated is over-ambitious given the “emergent” status of IOM’s evaluation function. Other better resourced evaluation functions take a much more selective approach to coverage.<sup>6</sup> If IOM takes a more selective approach to conducting decentralized evaluations, OIG/Evaluation and Regional M&E Officers will be able to invest in strengthening their quality and utility.

The independence and impartiality of decentralized evaluations is weakest when evaluations are managed and undertaken by the project manager as reflected in the existing Project Handbook and Evaluation policy. OIG/Evaluation would strengthen the integrity of all decentralized evaluations if these “self-evaluations” were considered internal reviews rather than evaluations. The Panel therefore recommends that OIG/Evaluation ceases to consider “self-evaluations” as a form of evaluation, and that it reclassifies them as reviews. Evaluating unique projects that last only a year adds little value: interventions are not necessarily repeated, and any lessons do not add useful knowledge. Thematic joint evaluations will have greater utility than a series of evaluations of standalone projects. Donors will need to allow flexibility in the use of their funds and agree to their projects (and associated evaluation budgets) being “bundled” with others.

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

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

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

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

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<sup>6</sup> For example, UNESCO mandates that all interventions with a value over US\$2m are evaluated; WFP invites country offices to conduct one decentralized evaluation every planning cycle, which UNHCR is considering replicating.

- a) **Encourage decentralized evaluations on interventions that are particularly innovative (e.g., significant pilots, new approaches).**
- b) **Make it mandatory for all projects over a certain financial value and/or duration to be evaluated. This would exclude all short-term and low-value interventions (e.g., 12-month projects).**
- c) **Request country offices conduct at least one decentralized evaluation within each planning cycle (3-5 years).**

**(For: OIG/Evaluation, Regional M&E Officers, Regional Offices)**

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## 8. STRENGTHENING THE DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION FUNCTION

This section draws together additional recommendations related to strengthening the decentralized evaluation function.

**The reporting line of M&E officers in Regional Offices:** The Panel notes that Regional M&E Officer positions report to different posts, with varying levels of authority, in each Regional Office. Regional M&E Officers need to be able to give advice with authority. This can be enhanced if they report directly to senior position in a Regional Office. This will give them greater ability to promote learning in their regions.

The Panel therefore recommends that all Regional M&E Officer positions report to a head or deputy Regional Office position in each Regional Office – as is the case in both WFP and UN Women. If there is deputy in charge of management/administration rather than programmes, then Regional M&E Officers should report to this position to enhance the independence of evaluation from programmes at regional level. It is also recommended that IOM consider establishing a formal joint reporting line from Regional M&E Officers to OIG/Evaluation.

**Withdrawing monitoring responsibilities from Regional M&E Officers:** Reflecting OIG/Evaluation’s role, Regional M&E Officers have dual responsibility for both monitoring and evaluation – as their official job title makes clear. If IOM is to deepen the evaluation function outside headquarters it will need to separate the monitoring function from the evaluation function. This would allow these officers to commit more time to supporting and enhancing the quality of decentralized evaluations. The Panel notes that this may take some time to achieve but considers it should be a goal towards which IOM should work.

**Regrading Regional M&E Officers posts:** The report notes that all Regional M&E Officers are at Professional Staff Grade 2 (P2). This affects their credibility in interacting with others. To deepen the evaluation culture at regional level Regional M&E Officers need the seniority to be able to convene and talk to country office heads directly. It is therefore recommended that IOM revise upwards these posts to at least P3 so they have greater credibility and have seniority closer to those of peers in IOM and sister UN agencies.

**Training for evaluation managers:** It does not seem to be a requirement for evaluation managers to have received any core training on evaluation norms and standards before they

manage (or conduct) an evaluation. It is recommended that OIG/Evaluation makes it mandatory for all evaluation managers to have taken at least minimum training in UNEG norms and standards in parallel to managing an evaluation.

**Lack of funds to support the decentralized evaluation function:** Just as at the central level, funding at Regional Office level is projectized. Funding was not allocated to Regional M&E Officer posts when they were established or subsequently. It is recommended that, if the central evaluation function receives additional funding that some is allocated to Regional M&E Officers, so they have some capacity to promote evaluation in their regions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**(For: Regional Office Directors, OIG/Evaluation, Regional M&E Officers)**

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## 9. CREDIBILITY: IMPROVING EVALUATIONS WITH QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

OIG/Evaluation is currently considering how to introduce stronger quality assurance systems for all its evaluations. The MOPAN assessment identified this as an area for improvement and OIG/Evaluation commissioned a meta-evaluation partly to help it identify a “systematic quality control mechanism in order to assess evaluations on a regular basis.” The Panel endorses this intent and offers a few specific recommendations.

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

**9.1) Introduces a quality assurance system for all central and decentralized evaluations, based on UNEG norms and standards – ensuring that there is quality**

assurance for decentralized evaluations at ToR, Inception, Draft & Final Report stages.

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

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

(For: OIG/Evaluation)

## 10. UPDATING THE EVALUATION POLICY TO ENHANCE THE INDEPENDENCE, CREDIBILITY, AND INTEGRITY OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

The Evaluation Policy will need to be updated following the Peer Review to integrate recommendations that IOM accepts and agrees to implement. The Panel recommends that the revised Evaluation Policy should be approved by the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance so that it has the authority of governing bodies and cannot be changed by the position of the Administration. This would contribute to the independence of the function.

As it expands, the credibility of the evaluation function will be enhanced if OIG/Evaluation is permitted to recruit external evaluation specialists. The evaluation function should still benefit from internal knowledge and expertise from rotational staff. Other evaluation functions, such as WFP and UNHCR, stipulate in their Evaluation Policies that they are staffed by a 50:50 mix of externally recruited evaluation specialists and current staff with the required competency for evaluation, appointed in line with their organisation's reassignment policy. This would appear appropriate for IOM and would help it professionalise its function.

The independence of the evaluation function can be further enhanced by ensuring the Evaluation Policy spells out provisions for the recruitment and dismissal of the head of evaluation function. It is not clear what the procedures for the recruitment and dismissal of the head of evaluation are, given that the post has not been advertised for more than a decade. These need to be established so that the position has a degree of independence. For both recruitment and dismissal, best practice would be for the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance to be consulted.

OIG/Evaluation has recently strengthened accountability by making it mandatory for evaluations to contain a management response and for this to be tracked. This change will need to be reflected, and given authority, in a revised Evaluation Policy.

IOM would benefit from a second Peer Review of its evaluation function in around five years.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**(For: Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, Inspector General, OIG/Evaluation)**





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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 ABOUT THE PEER REVIEW

This Peer Review of IOM’s evaluation function was conducted under the provisions contained in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of UN organizations and the OECD DAC. It is the first Peer Review of IOM’s evaluation function and was conducted at the request of IOM. The Peer Review Panel comprised three members:

- Adan Ruiz Villalba, Chair of the Panel; Head of Evaluation at the World Intellectual Property Organization
- Robert Stryk, Regional Evaluation Advisor, Middle East and North Africa Regional Office at United Nations Children Fund
- Meike Goede, Senior Researcher at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands

Daniel Arghiros was the Senior Evaluation Consultant to the Panel.

The Panel would like to thank the Chief Evaluation of OIG, the OIG team and the IOM for facilitating and engaging with the review in such a collaborative way. The Panel would also like to thank all those to whom they spoke for their open and frank contributions.

The views expressed in this report are those of the members of the Peer Review Panel in their individual capacities.

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

This is the first Peer Review of IOM’s evaluation function. To date the first and only other assessment of the evaluation function is that of the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), conducted between 2017 and 2018. The MOPAN assessment reviewed IOM’s evaluation function in the context of its IOM-wide assessment. It examined the status of the evaluation function and its contribution to IOM’s performance management systems — the extent to which IOM manages for results and applies evidence-based planning and programming to operations. This Peer Review builds on the findings of the MOPAN assessment.

The Peer Review provides recommendations to IOM senior leadership and its governing bodies, the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance (SCPF) and Council, as well as the Inspector General, staff of the OIG/Evaluation unit, Regional Offices and Country Offices. The review covers the entire evaluation system comprising both the central and decentralized

evaluation functions.<sup>1</sup> It assesses the role and strategic positioning of financial and human resourcing, evaluation planning, evaluation use, and quality assurance mechanisms. The review focuses on the period 2016 to the end of 2020.

### 1.3 PEER REVIEW APPROACH, PROCESS AND LIMITATIONS

The review was guided by the three core criteria, defined in the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, that need to be satisfied for evaluation functions and products to be considered of high quality: i) the independence of evaluations and of the evaluation system, ii) the credibility of evaluations and iii) the utility of evaluations.

The Peer Review Panel was formed in August 2020 and reviewed and subsequently agreed on the Terms of Reference. The external consultant was recruited in December 2020. The consultant conducted remote interviews with IOM staff in December 2020 and January 2021. Based on interviews, an extensive literature review and the OIG/Evaluation's self-assessment, the consultant produced a Preliminary Assessment document. Building on the observations in the Preliminary Assessment, the Panel then held remote meetings primarily in the week of 25 January 2020. The Panel met a broad range of stakeholders. This included IOM senior managers from Departments, Divisions and Regional Offices, members of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance and Regional M&E Officers (see Annex 2 for a full list of interlocutors). The Panel was interested in meeting members of the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee. However, four of the five members had just been appointed and had not yet met IOM's leadership at the time of the Peer Review, so this was not possible.

To prepare for this Peer Review, OIG/Evaluation produced a Self-Assessment Report against the UNEG Norms and Standards. The framework analyses the level of maturity of the evaluation function and was developed by the UN Evaluation Group in 2019. The Panel considers the Evaluation Office's self-assessment is a helpful reflection on IOM's evaluation practice. The present draws on evidence and analysis from all these inputs.

Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions the entire assessment was conducted remotely. The Panel sought to attain the same degree of engagement and understanding as a face-to-face mission. Possibly because all involved were attuned to engaging virtually, the Panel felt that it achieved a similar degree of engagement and understanding as would be achieved from a face-to-face mission. The Panel also held a peer exchange meeting with OIG/Evaluation staff, in which the Panel shared their experience on issues chosen by IOM.

From the broad range of issues set out in the Peer Review Terms of Reference the Panel chose to focus on a subset of issues considered of the greatest future strategic importance for the evaluation function.

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<sup>1</sup> A note on terminology: the terms 'central evaluation function' and the 'decentralized evaluation function' are used solely to differentiate between the levels being discussed (for definitions, see IOM Evaluation Policy, September 2018). In practice there is just one encompassing evaluation function in IOM.

## 1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report first outlines the key features of IOM's evaluation function then assesses the independence, credibility, and utility of the evaluation function. The concluding section sets out how the Panel considers the evaluation function can be enhanced: it brings together key findings and sets out 10 key recommendations the Panel considers IOM should take forward.

## 2. IOM IN TRANSITION

IOM's role and profile has grown in recent years because of increased migration and greater international attention to it. IOM joined the United Nations (UN) system in 2016. It is the coordinator of the UN Migration Network and has a primary role in the Global Compact for Migration. With its accession to the UN system and in addition to its humanitarian mandate, the organisation also supports migration-related commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs). IOM has grown exponentially in the last ten years, its income rising from \$1.359 billion in 2010 to \$2 billion in 2020.<sup>2</sup> IOM has a reputation for flexibility and responsiveness.

IOM's last major corporate structural reform initiative was undertaken in 2010. This sought to revise and consolidate operations and resources at field level and improve coherence at headquarters. It aimed to rationalise functions between Regional Offices and Headquarters and reduce its costs - for example by moving back-office functions to Administrative Centres in Manila and Panama.

IOM has traditionally focused on implementing operational projects. Since joining the UN system it has adopted greater responsibility for developing global norms and policies in the field of migration. It also engages more with partner governments to build their capacity to integrate such norms into the national systems. However, engagement in the 'normative space' has stretched the Organization partly because it requires new ways of working and partly because its operating model and financial framework are almost completely 'projectised'. 'Projectised' is a within IOM officially used term to mean 'activity-based costing, whereby staff and office costs associated with implementing a project are charged to projects.'<sup>3</sup> Almost all of IOM's operational financing is earmarked for specific projects and initiatives. A seven percent overhead charge is made on all projects (included in 'Operational

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<sup>2</sup> IOM, 2011, Report of the Director General on the work of the organization for the year 2010.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.iom.int/organizational-structure>

Support Income' [OSI]) to finance core functions. This income has not been sufficient to finance new organisational requirements.

The high degree of earmarking and somewhat unpredictable Operational Support Income limits IOM's ability to support core functions, and to some degree explains the low level of investment in its evaluation function – as well as in other central functions such as knowledge management and results-based management.

### **BOX 1: ABOUT IOM**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration. It was established in 1951 to help European governments identify resettlement countries for those uprooted by the Second World War.

From its roots as an operational logistics agency, it has broadened its scope to support migrants across the world, developing responses to the shifting dynamics of migration. It is now a key source of advice on migration policy and practice. It works in emergency situations and builds governments' capacity to manage different forms and impacts of migration. IOM formally joined the United Nations system in 2016 and is now the Coordinator and Secretariat for the UN Migration Network, established in 2019.

**Governance:** IOM has 173 member states, and a further eight countries hold observer status. Its highest authority and main governing body is the Council, which normally meets in session once a year. The Council determines IOM's policies, programmes and activities; and reviews and approves its programme, budget, expenditure and accounts.

The Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance (SCPF) is a subcommittee of the Council that is open to the entire IOM membership and usually meets twice a year. It examines and reviews policies, programmes and activities; and discusses administrative, financial and budgetary matters.

**Organisational structure:** Headquartered in Geneva, IOM's structure is highly decentralised with 97% of the organisation's 13,844 staff (as of June 2019) based in 436 offices of various kinds. Its field structure consists of nine Regional Offices, two administrative centres (Manila and Panama), and two special liaison offices (Addis Ababa and New York).

The Director-General is elected by the Council for a period of five years. A new Director General was elected in June 2018. In 2020, the IOM Council adopted a resolution that replaced the election of the Deputy Director General by the appointment of two Deputy Directors General (Operations; Management and reform). They are selected by the Director General based on recommendations on shortlisted candidates made by a panel comprising Member States.

**Finances:** IOM's combined revenue was approximately \$2 billion in 2020. It is highly dependent on voluntary contributions, with assessed contributions providing only approximately 3% of the administrative part of the budget.

IOM has had some success in raising unearmarked contributions and these have enabled the implementation of corporate reform initiatives and investment in the evaluation function. A few Member States do consider that IOM does not have enough funds to cover core functions, so they have allocated additional budgets for loosely earmarked needs. A facility called the

Migration Resource Allocation Committee (MIRAC) was established in 2017 to encourage donors to provide unearmarked or softly earmarked funds. The flexible MIRAC funds are intended to allow IOM to implement strategic or institutional initiatives. In 2018 the funds disbursed by the Migration Resource Allocation Committee amounted to 1.7% of IOM's total voluntary contributions (\$30m): i.e., they are minimal in comparison to the \$2 billion total of IOM's earmarked financing. There is also competition for these funds internally. As described below the evaluation function has benefited from them.

At the time of the Peer Review IOM was conducting a review to create a stronger internal governance framework (IGF). The IGF review was initiated following recognition within IOM and among Member States that after a period of significant growth it needed to strengthen the 'core of the Organization and retool IOM support operations'.<sup>4</sup> Whilst the organisation's finances and the volume of its work has grown rapidly, its central control and support mechanisms have not kept pace. The Internal Governance Framework aims to address this. The aim is that by mid-2021 internal restructuring will be agreed and complete. The ToR for the Peer Review anticipated that it would contribute recommendations to the governance review.

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<sup>4</sup> IOM, July 2020, Application of the IGF Work Plan.

### 3. THE EVALUATION FUNCTION AND ITS INDEPENDENCE

#### 3.1 THE EVOLUTION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE CENTRAL EVALUATION FUNCTION

***UNEG Norm 4: Independence (of Evaluations & Organizational)***

*Independence of evaluation is necessary for credibility, influences the ways in which an evaluation is used and allows evaluators to be impartial and free from undue pressure throughout the evaluation process. The independence of the evaluation function comprises two key aspects — behavioural independence and organizational independence. Behavioural independence entails the ability to evaluate without undue influence by any party. Evaluators must have the full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially, without the risk of negative effects on their career development, and must be able to freely express their assessment. The independence of the evaluation function underpins the free access to information that evaluators should have on the evaluation subject.*

*Organizational independence requires that the central evaluation function is positioned independently from management functions, carries the responsibility of setting the evaluation agenda and is provided with adequate resources to conduct its work. Organizational independence also necessitates that evaluation managers have full discretion to directly submit evaluation reports to the appropriate level of decision-making and that they should report directly to an organization’s governing body and/or the executive head. Independence is vested in the Evaluation Head to directly commission, produce, publish and disseminate duly quality-assured evaluation reports in the public domain without undue influence by any party. (UNEG Norms and Standards, p.11)*

IOM’s central evaluation function is located in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and is a function alongside Internal Audit, Investigation and Inspection. The function has formal responsibility for both ‘institutional’ monitoring and for evaluation. Its role in relation to monitoring is to set IOM’s global monitoring policy and M&E institutional guidelines and training. It does not have responsibility for operational monitoring. In IOM documents the monitoring and evaluation function is referred to as “OIG/Evaluation” and this term will be used in this report.

IOM’s central evaluation function was formally established in 1989 with the creation of a ‘Programme Evaluation Section’. The first Evaluation Policy was approved in 1992 and it established an IOM Evaluation System and an Evaluation Unit. In 2000, the Evaluation Unit was merged with the Internal Audit Unit and integrated in the newly created Office of the Inspector General. The Evaluation Policy was then included in an ‘OIG Charter’ and in IOM Evaluation Guidelines.



## **BOX 2: ABOUT THE IOM EVALUATION FUNCTION**

### **Governance**

The evaluation function was established in IOM in 1989. In 2000 the evaluation unit became a function (OIG/Evaluation) of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). The Chief Evaluation provides leadership for IOM's central and decentralized evaluation functions. In 2015 OIG/Evaluation adopted responsibility for institutional monitoring as well as evaluation within IOM.

### **Resources**

#### *Staffing:*

OIG/Evaluation comprises three Professional staff positions funded by the Administrative and OSI budgets including the Chief Evaluation. All have responsibility for both monitoring and evaluation. One of these positions is based in Manila. OIG/Evaluation also has two temporary staff financed by Migration Resource Allocation Committee funds.

Eight of the nine IOM Regional Offices fund a Regional M&E Officer position in their office. They are responsible for supporting the decentralized evaluation function in their regions and work closely with OIG/Evaluation on the set-up of evaluation and monitoring functions, including training.

#### *Budget:*

The three staff positions in OIG/Evaluation are paid from core funds. OIG/Evaluation does not receive any additional core funds to manage the evaluation function or conduct central evaluations with external consultants. It has successfully applied for *ad hoc* funds from the Migration Resource Allocation Committee since 2017 for the implementation of its M&E strategy and for funding external consultants. When funds are not sufficient, the OIG/Evaluation officers themselves conduct the central evaluations set out in the central evaluation plans.

### **Central evaluations**

Conducted and managed by the Central Evaluation Office. Five central evaluations were completed in the 1 July 2019-31 August 2020 reporting year (one year).

### **Decentralized evaluations**

They are managed by country, regional or other headquarters-based units. 51 decentralized evaluations were published on IOM Evaluation website in the same 2019-20 reporting year (of which 29 were "external" and 22 "internal").

### 3.2 PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS OF IOM'S EVALUATION FUNCTION

The MOPAN report highlighted evaluation as an area for improvement. It noted that “[t]he evaluation function is [...] emergent, with limited functional and budgetary independence”. Further, it noted that “[e]valuation coverage is patchy, and largely dependent on donor interest and provision of finance.” The MOPAN assessors rated the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) that reflects the quality of the evaluation function overall as “unsatisfactory” with a score of 1.11 out of 4. Several of the component KPI scores were judged “highly unsatisfactory”. Some relate to issues OIG/Evaluation can influence, but others relate to the evaluation function’s operating context, such as its independence.

The MOPAN study noted that improvements were ongoing at the time of the assessment – that an evaluation policy architecture was being developed and efforts were being made to build a culture of evaluative understanding and practice. The Peer Review Panel confirms that improvements have been introduced since the MOPAN assessment: in line with the Peer Review ToR, this report seeks to build on the MOPAN findings and to update them to reflect recent developments.

### 3.3 RESOURCING THE CENTRAL EVALUATION FUNCTION: FINANCE AND STAFF FOR OIG/EVALUATION

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#### FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND INDEPENDENCE

IOM’s evaluation function has very limited financial and human resources. In effect it has no budgetary independence due to the combination of a lack of control over funds and the minimal volume of funds it receives.

IOM’s overall investment in evaluation is low compared to that of other UN evaluation functions. IOM had the eighth largest amount of revenue and expenditure of all UN agencies in 2018 and the sixth largest in 2019, at \$1.7B.<sup>5</sup> Largely because IOM has a combined monitoring and evaluation function, it is not possible to identify how much the organisation spends on the evaluation function.<sup>6</sup> The UN Joint Inspection Unit considers the financial target range should be from 0.5 percent to 3 percent of revenue, depending on the size of the

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://unsceb.org/content/FS-A00-03?gyear=2018>

<sup>6</sup> All central and decentralised staff have combined roles. OIG/Evaluation also noted that when entering costs on IOM’s project management system, staff tend not to disaggregate costs allocated to monitoring and to evaluation. It is also the case that the time staff commit to internal evaluations is rarely costed: offices sending staff tend not to cross-charge the beneficiary office.

Organization.<sup>7</sup> It is unlikely that IOM spends more than 0.05 percent of its total expenditure on the evaluation function – though this is just a very rough estimate.

The Governing Board-endorsed evaluation policies of some UN agencies state a target for the proportion of income or programme spending that the agency will commit to evaluation. IOM's does not. The Evaluation Policy does not state a financial target for either the central evaluation function or decentralized evaluation function; and simply notes the evaluation function operates within limitations in both budget and human resources.

OIG/Evaluation does not have a separate budget line that is approved by the governing body. OIG/Evaluation's three M&E/evaluation staff are funded from IOM's annual budget made available to OIG by management, including for OIG/Evaluation.<sup>8</sup> Whilst core funding pays for three posts (and \$30,000 for a travel budget) these funds do not finance the central evaluation programme (as identified in successive Evaluation Plans).

Because no additional core IOM funds are available for the implementation of the central evaluation programme, IOM's central evaluation function cannot independently work to achieve the objectives it sets out in its core policy and strategy documents. OIG/Evaluation also does not have sufficient core funds to build evaluation capacity to support the quality of decentralized evaluations. The Evaluation Policy explicitly recognises these limitations. It notes that "[a] financial provision is allocated to the OIG budget to cover travel costs for field visits, but no funds are allocated to the OIG annual budget to implement additional evaluations through the recruitment of external consultants or firms working under the responsibility of OIG or to complement OIG conducted evaluations with specific external expertise".<sup>9</sup>

To conduct central evaluations or to implement the activities identified in the strategy it must apply for funds from the MIRAC facility, raise funds directly from donors or other departments, or request one-off allocations. These additional allocations are temporary and have not been consolidated into permanent increases in OIG/Evaluation's budget allocations. They are generally given on an annual basis and are not added to its core budget. Thus, OIG/Evaluation

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<sup>7</sup> JIU 2014, Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System, p29. According to unofficial figures compiled by WFP, in 2019 these agencies invested UNICEF 0.86%, UNFPA 0.98% and UN Women 2% of revenue in evaluation. UNHCR spent 0.11% in 2019.

<sup>8</sup> In more detail, the budget allocation is as follows: the Inspector General does not receive funding for OIG as a whole that (s)he can redistribute according to his/her priorities. Each function submits a budget to the Inspector General in line with global instructions from the Budget Department based on preliminary discussions between the Inspector General and Director General, or in response to Member State requests. The Inspector General consolidates the figures and sends them to the Office of the Director General/Chief of Staff, who decides on the final budget figures to be presented to an internal budget allocation committee, before being finalised and approved by Director General. The budget is then presented to Member States in the Annual Programme and Budget for approval by the Council.

<sup>9</sup> Evaluation Policy p.9.

is not able to forecast these additional funds into a sustained improvement programme: it can only plan for short-term investments, if and when an allocation is confirmed.

Over the last three years OIG/Evaluation has been successful in obtaining around \$0.5m a year from IOM's Migration Resource Allocation Committee to build IOM's institutional capacity on monitoring and evaluation. It applied for these funds as though the activities were an IOM project rather than part of its routine work. OIG/Evaluation has submitted applications to the Internal Governance Framework and Migration Resource Allocation Committee for funds in 2021, 2022 and 2023 – requesting \$540,000 for 2021, and bidding for \$1.38m for the other two years combined.

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## HUMAN RESOURCES

Even though it currently has more staff than it ever had, the Panel considers that OIG/Evaluation still does not have sufficient staff capacity to manage a central evaluation function or to provide overall management of a growing decentralized evaluation function - particularly considering the scale of IOM's activities and expenditure.

For many years the OIG Evaluation function was staffed by one person. In 2013, IOM Member States agreed to increase the number of positions in OIG/Evaluation from one to three and the two additional staff members joined OIG/Evaluation in 2015 and 2016 respectively (as "approved staff"). However, reflecting OIG's mandate, the two additional staff members have ToR that combine responsibilities for both monitoring and evaluation – both have M&E in their job titles. Whilst the current job title of the head of the OIG/Evaluation unit reflects only responsibility for evaluation, this position also has responsibility for guiding the organization's monitoring policy. Of the two additional "approved staff" one is based in Geneva and one in IOM's Manila office, as a cost-saving measure. Between 2018 and 2020 OIG/Evaluation has had two short-term or project funded staff from MIRAC funding sources.

The fact that OIG/Evaluation has a small team with one of the team members based in a time zone with a 7-hour difference has inevitably limited what OIG/Evaluation has been able to achieve.

### 3.4 THE EVALUATION POLICY, PLAN AND STRATEGY

This section outlines the main features of IOM's Evaluation Policy, the Evaluation Strategy, the Evaluation Plan, and seeks to identify some of their strengths and areas for improvement.

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## A MANDATE FOR MONITORING AS WELL AS EVALUATION

In 2015 the OIG Charter was revised, and the Office of the Inspector General, as an internal oversight body, adopted expanded responsibilities in relation to monitoring in addition to its functions of internal audit, evaluation, investigation and inspection. OIG/Evaluation therefore adopted responsibility for IOM's monitoring policy and practice in 2015. There was previously no entity in IOM outside of OIG responsible for setting its monitoring policies. The clause in OIG's Charter that establishes what OIG/Evaluation does with respect to both monitoring and to evaluation is brief; the Charter alone does not give OIG/Evaluation a clear, specific, or

strong mandate for evaluation.<sup>10</sup> The Panel notes that it is highly unusual for UN evaluation functions to hold responsibility for both evaluation and monitoring at headquarters level: IOM is unique within the UN for combining these functions within one unit.

OIG/Evaluation subsequently issued two separate foundation policies: a Monitoring Policy and an Evaluation Policy. OIG/Evaluation documents state that “the two functions are separate but mutually beneficial” noting that “[b]oth functions are key to the achievement of institutional accountability and learning.” The Monitoring Policy document outlines the institutional framework IOM units should use to establish monitoring as a management tool and the role of Regional M&E Officers in supporting it.<sup>11</sup> In terms of the actual support OIG/Evaluation provides to monitoring in IOM, the Monitoring Policy states that: “OIG/Evaluation, [...] provides upon request, technical support to offices worldwide for monitoring requirements, and develops and/or assists in the development of monitoring policies and guidance materials.” Interviews indicate that OIG/Evaluation staff and Regional M&E Officers provide policy advice on monitoring but do not do monitoring work.

The Peer Review ToR ask the Panel to comment on how appropriate it is for OIG/Evaluation to have responsibility for monitoring. The Panel considers that OIG/Evaluation should not have responsibility for monitoring in future and sets out the arguments for this in the final section.

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## IOM’S EVALUATION POLICY AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

OIG/Evaluation issued a new IOM Evaluation Policy in September 2018. This superseded IOM Evaluation Guidelines issued in 2006, and complement guidance embedded in IOM’s 2017 Project Handbook.<sup>12</sup>

In terms of the independence of the evaluation function, OIG/Evaluation operates under the direct authority of both the Inspector General and the Director General. The Inspector General approves “policies, guidelines and strategies related to evaluation” and approves the OIG evaluation work plan and central evaluation reports before they are submitted to the Director General. The Director General “endorses” the OIG/Evaluation work plan and “supports the conduct of broad thematic, process and strategic evaluations by OIG”. As part of the Office of the Inspector General, OIG/Evaluation sees itself as contributing to the “3rd line of defence” – providing “independent assurance”. It sees itself as contributing to “the oversight,

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<sup>10</sup> The Charter simply states under Article 1: “The consolidated internal oversight mechanism provided by OIG covers internal audit, monitoring, evaluation, investigation and inspection” and the subsequent articles refer to all its functions.

<sup>11</sup> September 2018, IOM Monitoring Policy International Organization for Migration

<sup>12</sup> IOM (2006), IOM Evaluation Guidelines, International Organization for Migration, and IOM (2017), IOM Project Handbook, International Organization for Migration

accountability, transparency, strategic guidance and organizational leadership and learning of the Organization.”<sup>13</sup>

The policy’s objectives are clear and reflect UNEG norms and standards. OIG/Evaluation identifies its role as follows:

- Set the norms and standards of evaluation,
- Prepare relevant institutional policies, guidelines, and instructions,
- Harmonize procedures and set up relevant networks to channel them,
- Provide technical guidance and support to IOM departments and offices,
- Guarantee quality of decentralized systems related to the function,
- Conduct central and corporate evaluations as well as specific evidence-based assessments and independent reviews,
- Contribute to policy-making and decision-making and promote effective as well as innovative approaches in the management of migration.<sup>14</sup>

The Policy sets out how UNEG Norms and Standards are to be applied in IOM. The evaluation function is intended to meet accountability needs, inform decision making, identify lessons learned, contribute to the development of an evaluation culture, and to facilitate cross-cutting issues such as gender and accountability to affected populations into IOM’s interventions (p.3). The Evaluation Policy does not contain a theory of change.

The Evaluation Policy notes that central evaluations “are mainly conducted by OIG evaluation staff, and in few cases by external consultants” (p.4). Decentralized evaluations are conducted by “independent internal or external evaluators, and managed by Country Offices, Regional Offices and Headquarters Departments”. However, the policy also cites “self-evaluations” as a form of evaluation, noting that they are “internal but not independent” as they are “conducted by the programme manager or someone involved in implementation of the project or strategy”.<sup>15</sup> IOM’s current guidance on conducting evaluations (the Project Handbook) also notes that conducting an “internal self-evaluation” is one of the three main ways in which an evaluation can be conducted in IOM.<sup>16</sup> The Panel notes that it is unusual to consider “self-evaluations” as “evaluations” and that doing so is not in keeping with UNEG standards of structural impartiality. Evaluators need to be impartial: evaluation team members must not have been directly responsible for the policy, design or management of the evaluation subject. OIG/Evaluation would strengthen the integrity of all decentralized evaluations if these “self-evaluations” were formally redefined as internal reviews rather than evaluations.

The Panel notes that OIG/Evaluation does not include “self-evaluations” on the Evaluation Repository website, as it considers them to be, in practice, internal reviews – despite the

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<sup>13</sup> Evaluation Policy p.2.

<sup>14</sup> Evaluation Policy p.4.

<sup>15</sup> Evaluation Policy pp4-5.

<sup>16</sup> IOM, 5 July 2017 IOM Project Handbook - Module 6, p.424.

name. This is positive. However, OIG/Evaluation has yet to revise the Project Handbook, Evaluation Guidance and the Evaluation Policy to reflect this. A related recommendation is set out in the concluding section.

In terms of its decentralized evaluation coverage policy, the Evaluation Policy notes that, in line with IOM's Project Handbook, all project proposals "must include an evaluation component" or justify why an evaluation is not planned. Beyond this expectation, the Evaluation Policy does not set out IOM's evaluation coverage norms. The Panel considers that OIG/Evaluation should review this norm to ensure that utility determines decentralized evaluation coverage. This is also discussed in the final section.

The Evaluation Policy was approved by the Office of the Director General. The fact that it was not approved by the Council or the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance gives it only administrative status and means that it can be changed by a Director General. When an Evaluation Policy is approved and endorsed by an agency's governing bodies (becoming a Governing Board paper) the contents of that policy are protected from administrative changes. It gives the policy greater independence. The Panel recommends that OIG/Evaluation consider submitting their future or updated policy for official endorsement/approval by the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance or the Council.

The Evaluation Policy contains a table setting out roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. It does not include a role for IOM's governing bodies (the IOM Council or its Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance).

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## EVALUATION STRATEGY

Whilst OIG/Evaluation developed standalone Evaluation and Monitoring policies, reflecting its dual mandate, in 2018 OIG/Evaluation produced a three-year strategy that covers both evaluation and monitoring.<sup>17</sup> It has continued this approach, producing a 2021-2023 Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy in early 2021, the draft of which was shared with the Panel. Both the 2018 and 2021 strategies set out three outcomes that relate to both the central and decentralized evaluation functions as well as institutional monitoring.

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<sup>17</sup> IOM, 2018, OIG Strategy for the management of its Evaluation and Monitoring Functions 2018-2020 and IOM, 2021, [IOM OIG M&E Strategy 2021-2023](#)

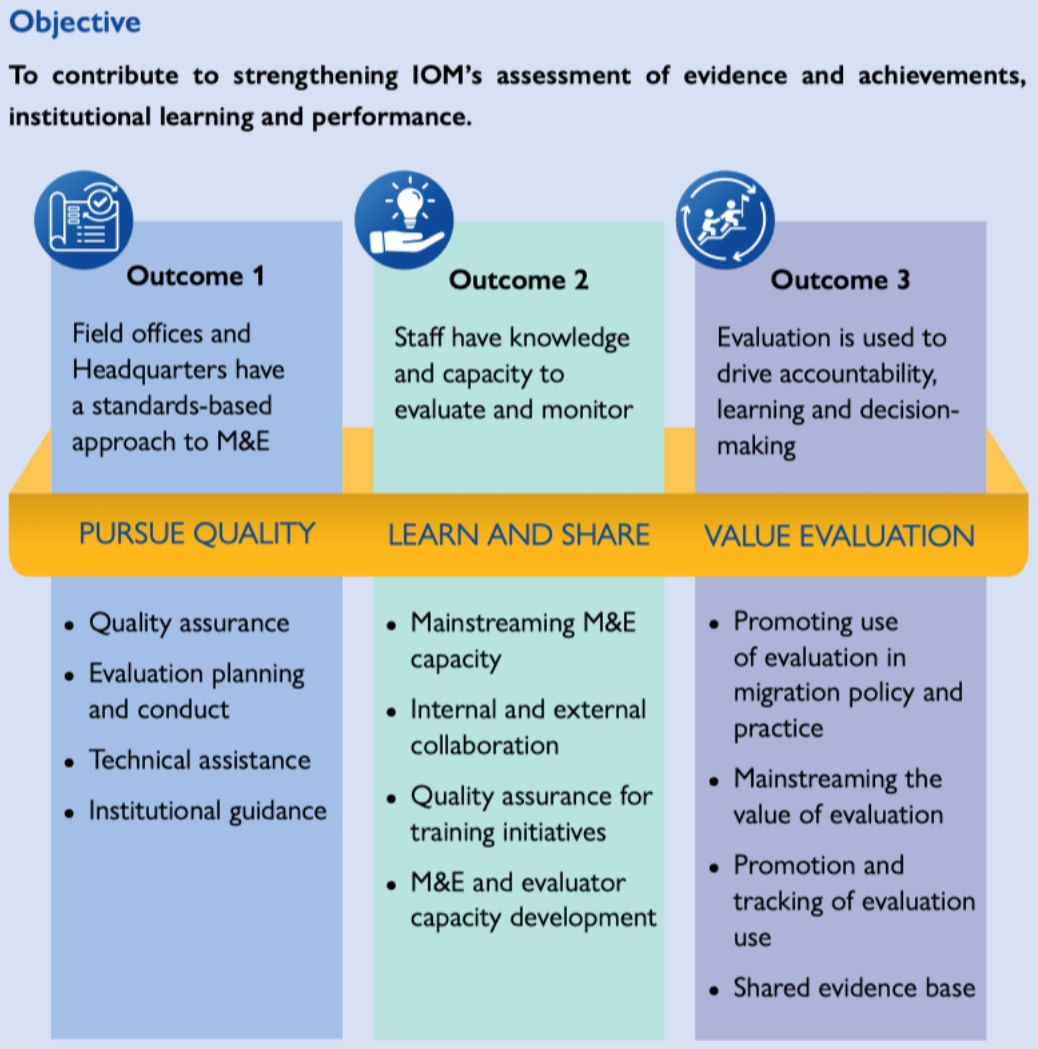


Figure 1: Overview of 2021-2023 Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

Under each of the three outcomes are a series of concrete outputs/work stream(s). However, neither of the strategies attach timelines or key performance indicators to the outputs set out in the Workstreams. OIG/Evaluation noted that they have been developed separately and are not published. Both strategy documents note that “OIG will develop a monitoring framework to track the progress of the objective and outcomes”. So, it is not clear from the strategy documents made available to the public by when certain actions are to be achieved. Both strategy documents note that “OIG will develop a monitoring framework to track the progress of the objective and outcomes”. OIG/Evaluation reports on the implementation of the strategy in the OIG annual report to IOM Governing Bodies, as well as to the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee. Reporting seen on performance of the 2018 strategy is relatively brief.

In terms of financing the Strategy, both documents note that OIG/Evaluation seeks to raise funds for evaluation annually from flexible donor funds to complement the core funding to implement the strategy. It does not give budget breakdowns. The 2018 Strategy set out new criteria for selecting topics for central evaluations, as set out below.



With the increase of staffing agreed upon in 2014, OIG/Evaluation has since 2015 developed and issued biennial evaluation plan documents. The Plans list the thematic and strategic evaluations that OIG/Evaluation intends to undertake in the period covered. The Panel reviewed OIG/Evaluation's 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 Evaluation Plans. The Plans list between seven and eight central evaluations OIG/Evaluation intends to conduct in the two-year period (seven for 2019-2020 and eight for 2021-2022). The plans are reviewed at the end of each year and adjusted when needed, with the option of adding central evaluations if necessary.

OIG/Evaluation has made a concerted effort to ensure that central evaluations address more strategic themes than previously. Topics selected for a central evaluation should now meet the following criteria:

- It is a strategic activity, policy, or pilot project/programme with high institutional visibility, of interest to our Member States or with a potential to be replicated elsewhere.
- There is a critical connection with IOM's strategic goals and there is a potential for important impact (operational and institutional) on the Organization.
- It is a project, programme, intervention, thematic area, or policy raising important questions and/or challenges for its implementation, or with high risks being institutional, operational and/or reputational.<sup>18</sup>

The 2019-2020 Plan notes that no traditional projects or programmes evaluations were selected for evaluation as it prioritised "thematic and strategic evaluations for institutional and organisational learning and accountability" and given the criteria above, this also guided the selection of evaluations in the 2021-2022 plan.<sup>19</sup> In doing this, OIG/Evaluation has addressed an area for improvement the MOPAN study identified.<sup>20</sup>

The Evaluation Plans set out a consultative and collaborative process for identifying central evaluations. Several evaluations in the plans were proposed by IOM offices and departments following an OIG call for proposals; proposals are then shifted in line with the criteria set out above. OIG/Evaluation also selects evaluations to be included in the plans and discusses them with departments and offices before the final decision is taken. In the last biennial plan, four evaluations were decided by OIG/Evaluation.

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<sup>18</sup> IOM, 2021, Biennial Evaluation Workplan Office of the Inspector General 2021-2022, p.1.

<sup>19</sup> IOM, 2019, OIG Evaluation Plan 2019-2020, p.1.

<sup>20</sup> The MOPAN study noted that "As yet, IOM's evaluation function has produced few corporate, strategic or policy-level evaluations, with most relating to individual projects or programmes" (MOPAN, p.18).

The plans do not constitute a comprehensive work plan for the evaluation function. They do not set out the overall requirements of the evaluation function. Reflecting the resource realities OIG/Evaluation has operated in, the plans do not include a budget or specify the human or financial resources needed to implement the central evaluations. Both documents also note that implementing these plans is contingent on OIG/Evaluation receiving sufficient additional funds: they note that it has no budget to conduct central evaluations. In this sense, the central evaluation function does not have the financial independence to evaluate issues/topics it deems appropriate. Whilst OIG/Evaluation has a two-year plan, it receives annual allocations of discretionary funds. As noted above, the plan is approved by the Inspector General rather than the IOM Council or its Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance.

Furthermore, the plans do not operationalise the Strategy: they do not set out how OIG/Evaluation will implement the broader evaluation activities embedded in the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies described above. For example, they do not elaborate on the OIG/Evaluation's plans for supporting the decentralized evaluation function or any other aspects of the IOM evaluation function. This remains a gap in public documents produced by OIG/Evaluation: there is no concrete timebound plan for how the unit intends to support IOM's overall evaluation function. This is partly a reflection of the financial uncertainties it faces. The Panel recommends in the final section of the report that OIG/Evaluation produces consolidated work plans that set out the operational requirements of the evaluation function and include costings for the central evaluation plan.

### 3.5 OIG/EVALUATION'S INDEPENDENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNING BODIES

Within IOM the Office of the Inspector General has a degree of independence, as set out in its 2015 Charter. As a subordinate unit within the Office of the Inspector General, OIG/Evaluation has the same degree of independence afforded to its parent entity. According to the 2015 Charter, the Inspector General is appointed by the Director General. The Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance or IOM Council does not appear to have a role in the selection of the Inspector General. As indicated above, OIG/Evaluation reports through the Office of the Inspector General to the Director General. The OIG report is shared with IOM's Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee and the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance of the IOM Council.<sup>21</sup> The independence of both the OIG and OIG/Evaluation would be enhanced if reporting were direct to IOM's oversight bodies.

OIG/Evaluation does not appear to have a strong relationship with the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance. As a unit within the OIG, OIG/Evaluation is not expected

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<sup>21</sup> "4.4.2. An annual report is prepared by the Inspector General for the Director General and shared with the AOAC summarizing significant oversight activities, conclusions, recommendations, and action taken in response, with due regard for confidentiality of non-public information. This annual report is presented by the Inspector General to the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance." (OIG Charter 4.4.1).

independently to present its part of the report to the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance or Council. Beyond a few key donors, there does not seem to be a great deal of interest from the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance in evaluation. For example, members do not ask to be briefed on individual central evaluations.

#### OVERSIGHT OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION BY THE AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AOAC)

The IOM has an Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee (AOAC), and this has a mandate to “Review the functioning, operational independence and effectiveness of OIG as the main internal oversight body, including the evaluation function”. It is supposed to “provide advice on the status of evaluation in IOM”.<sup>22</sup> The Committee acts in an advisory, non-executive capacity to assist the Director General in “fulfilling oversight responsibilities, including on the effectiveness of audit and oversight, risk management and internal control”. It also reports to IOM Member States on the appropriateness and effectiveness of internal oversight, risk management and internal controls at IOM.<sup>23</sup> The Committee reports annually to the IOM Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance.

However, despite its mandate in relation to evaluation, the AOAC’s terms of reference do not require a specific member to have a stated level of competence in evaluation: the requirement is vague and undefined. The ToR (4.b) asks for “experience in the inspection, monitoring, evaluation and investigative processes” (sic).<sup>24</sup> Interviews and a review of all the Committee’s reports to the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance since 2014 indicate that the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee has only to a very limited extent provided advice on the evaluation function to date. Only three of six the Committee’s reports since 2014 referred to the evaluation function. And those reports that refer to evaluation do so only briefly. The 2018 report is the most detailed and simply notes that: “The Committee is of the opinion that IOM needs to give more importance to the work and impact of the central evaluation function and that this function of the Office of the Inspector General needs further strengthening.”<sup>25</sup> This statement was not followed up in the subsequent annual report.

Comparable committees in two other UN bodies, UNHCR’s Independent Audit and Oversight Committee and UNESCO’s Oversight Advisory Committee, have proved effective in ensuring that the respective organisations’ evaluation functions retain their independence, and are properly resourced. They have also provided advice on the strategic direction of the evaluation function in both these bodies. For example, when UNHCR’s evaluation service also

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<sup>22</sup> Evaluation Policy p.9.

<sup>23</sup> IOM, August 2013, Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee (AOAC) – Terms of Reference.

<sup>24</sup> IOM, August 2013, Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee (AOAC) – Terms of Reference.

<sup>25</sup> IOM, 2018, Report of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee Activities from September 2017 to August 2018.

had responsibility for policy development, the Committee recommended this function should be separated from evaluation.<sup>26</sup> This recommendation was acted upon. The parallel is with OIG/Evaluation's responsibility for monitoring. UNESCO's committee always has at least one member with senior evaluation experience.

As noted in the introduction, at the time of the Peer Review all but one new Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee members were taking up their positions. IOM considered it would not be appropriate for the Panel to meet the Committee as they were still being onboarded and a meeting with the Panel did not take place.

## 4. DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION IN IOM

The Evaluation Policy defines decentralized evaluations as those that are conducted by "independent internal or external evaluators, and managed by Country Offices, Regional Offices and Headquarters Departments". This section describes the way OIG/Evaluation and IOM has built support systems for evaluations conducted by Country Offices and Regional Offices. Few if any Headquarters Departments have conducted decentralized evaluation evaluations.

The Evaluation Policy notes that, in line with IOM's Project Handbook, all project proposals "must include an evaluation component" or justify why an evaluation is not planned. The Evaluation Policy does not make it mandatory for either IOM or donors to finance decentralized evaluations, but recommends an allocation is made.<sup>27</sup> Some donors require an evaluation to be conducted on their project and agree to the inclusion of a budget line to finance it. If a budget line has not been created for an evaluation it is unlikely that an evaluation will take place: there are no central funds to facilitate them.

IOM strengthened its capacity to manage decentralized evaluations in late 2016 when it created Regional M&E Officer posts in the Regional Offices. As their titles suggest, these officers have dual responsibility for both monitoring and evaluation in their region. Their roles and responsibilities are spelled out in detail in the Evaluation Policy.

In principle regional evaluations are determined by the Regional Office, though few have been conducted to date. The Regional M&E Officers coordinate the establishment of regional plans with IOM Country Offices in their region and the plans are updated twice a year.

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<sup>26</sup> UNHCR (2016) Report of the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee, 2015-2016, p.6.

<sup>27</sup> It states: "For decentralized evaluations, the costs are usually covered by a specific budget within the projects. In some cases, departments, regional and country offices can allocate specific resources or raise funds to conduct evaluations. Donors may also propose to fund and conduct evaluations of IOM's work, in coordination with IOM." Evaluation Policy p.9.

OIG/Evaluation and the Regional M&E Officers share the plans so they can develop an overview of the evaluations expected each year.

Projects financed by the IOM Development Fund are treated differently to other projects. The IOM Development Fund is a funding mechanism established by an IOM Council resolution to finance projects that build the migration management capacity of developing country or transition economy Member States to. The fund has an annual budget of approximately USD 20 million and has around 230 active projects. Since 2017, the IOM Development Fund has required all projects to include an evaluation 6-12 months after project completion. It requires 5% of project budgets to be set aside to finance them. Evaluations are intended to assess the relevance of project design, coherence of the interventions, the effectiveness and performance of the project, efficiency of project management and implementation, and the impact and sustainability of the project. Initially all evaluations were conducted by Regional M&E Officers. However, as demands increased, with 70 new Development Fund projects a year, this has changed: currently around half of IOM Development Fund evaluations are conducted by a company contracted by the unit managing the fund and around half by IOM staff as independent internal evaluators.

#### 4.1 THE ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF REGIONAL M&E OFFICERS

Regional M&E Officers provide guidance to Country Offices on how to undertake evaluations, they sometimes manage evaluations, but they also sometimes conduct evaluations of programmes themselves, where there is no budget to hire an external evaluator or when they cannot find an internal evaluator. Regional M&E Officers are expected to review ToR, inception reports and draft evaluation reports of evaluations managed by Country Offices.

Regional M&E Officers plan their work around an evaluation plan that reflects Country Offices' needs. In a region there may be 20 evaluations in any given year; with 10 of them internal (conducted by other IOM staff or by the Regional M&E Officer). For example, in the Southern Africa region there were 31 evaluations in 2019. The numbers vary between regions.

Regional M&E Officers' salaries are paid by the Regional Office through core funding (OSI), and their reporting line/accountability line is to managers in the Regional Office, not OIG/Evaluation. They have a "technical link" to OIG, which is not formalised in their ToR. The Evaluation and Monitoring Policies and the OIG Monitoring and Evaluation strategies highlight the areas of technical collaboration and networking between the Regional M&E Officers and OIG/Evaluation. Some other professional staff in IOM do have dual formal reporting lines, but Regional M&E Officers do not.

The position and reporting lines of Regional M&E Officers in Regional Offices are not standardised. Some Regional M&E Officers report to relatively junior staff in the Regional Office; others report to more senior staff, including the Regional Director.<sup>28</sup> This is relevant

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<sup>28</sup> By contrast, in WFP all regional evaluation officers report to the same position in each Regional Office: namely, the Deputy Regional Director/Management.

because Regional M&E Officers' authority derives partly from the status of the position they report to. If a Regional M&E Officer reports to the Regional Director, their advice is perceived to have the authority of the Regional Director.

Compared to sister UN agencies and peers with similar responsibility, the post grading of Regional M&E Officers roles is unusually junior given the responsibilities these roles carry.<sup>29</sup> All Regional M&E Officers roles are graded at Professional Staff Grade P2.<sup>30</sup> Professionals in Regional Offices who have comparable roles, such as Regional Thematic Specialists are mostly P4. In interviews Regional M&E Officers and OIG/Evaluation staff noted that their P2 status affects their credibility, authority, and ability to influence others. Their grading level was under review at the time of the Peer Review.

The “projectisation” of IOM’s funding model means that there is little sustained investment in decentralized evaluation. This mirrors the situation with the central evaluation function. Regional M&E Officers do not have access to a budget to facilitate their work – apart from a travel budget. They do not have regular funds to facilitate training events within their regions. They also do not generally have funds to hire additional staff – thus there are no “Regional M&E Units” – just single officers.

Interviews indicated that there is a relatively undeveloped evaluation culture in Regional and Country Offices. Evaluation is not yet valued highly as a way of generating useful lessons. However, the work of Regional M&E Officers is clearly having an impact on staff understanding both of what evaluation is and what its potential value is.

There are project-specific M&E officers in Country or Regional Offices, paid to perform a role in relation to specific projects. They are mostly on short-term and projectised contracts that end with the project. There may therefore be high turnover and a loss of knowledge. The Regional M&E Officers have created M&E networks in their regions to facilitate collaboration with all M&E officers. There is also a perception that these M&E staff are overburdened and that they do not have the capacity to fulfil evaluation duties effectively, often focussing on monitoring and data collection.

## 4.2 IOM’S “POOL OF INTERNAL EVALUATORS”

Innovating in response to a constraint, OIG/Evaluation established a pool of internal evaluators in 2018 to create an alternative to “self-evaluation” and to address the constraints in conducting external evaluations. Many projects in IOM have limited evaluation budgets that do not stretch to paying for a consultant or a consulting company. IOM’s only option was for Country Office staff (including project managers) to conduct the evaluation as a so-called “internal evaluation” or “internal self-evaluation” when done by project staff. This

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<sup>29</sup> Equivalent positions in WFP and UNHCR are graded at P4 (“regional evaluation officers” in WFP and “senior regional evaluation officers” in UNHCR).

<sup>30</sup> Eg, WFP regional evaluation officers are at P4.

arrangement meant that impartiality was potentially compromised. Regional M&E Officers were also sometimes asked to conduct evaluations – but have limited time and availability. To address this constraint, in 2018 invited staff from across the organisation interested in conducting evaluations to join an internal pool of evaluators.

OIG/Evaluation has sought to develop their evaluation skills with the development of OIG Internal Evaluator training so that this set of people constitutes a pool of evaluation expertise that Country Offices can draw on.<sup>31</sup> The evaluation manager (often an M&E officer) posts the ToR to a “roster” and staff who are part of the pool but from other parts of IOM can apply to undertake the evaluation mission. It is a voluntary scheme to pool members. As of September 2020, there were 83 evaluators on its Internal Evaluator Roster.<sup>32</sup>

## 5. CREDIBILITY

### *UNEG Norm 3: Credibility*

*“Evaluations must be credible. Credibility is grounded on independence, impartiality and a rigorous methodology. Key elements of credibility include transparent evaluation processes, inclusive approaches involving relevant stakeholders and robust quality assurance systems. Evaluation results (or findings) and recommendations are derived from – or informed by – the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence. Credibility requires that evaluations are ethically conducted and managed by evaluators that exhibit professional and cultural competencies”. (UNEG Norms and Standards, p.10)*

This section reviews OIG/Evaluation’s systems for ensuring the credibility of central and decentralized evaluations. OIG/Evaluation uses UNEG norms and standards as benchmarks both central and decentralized evaluations should reach. Self-evaluations by their very nature do not meet independence and impartiality standards. Future iterations of the Evaluation Policy will need to be more explicit on measures needed to secure the independence and impartiality of both central and decentralized evaluations. Evaluations have been improving over the last few years – and OIG/Evaluation and Regional M&E Officers should be congratulated for this. Integrating quality assurance in evaluation workflows, and conducting

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<sup>31</sup> IOM, 2020, Agenda Internal Evaluator Training.

<sup>32</sup> OIG, September 2020, Evaluation Monitoring and Evaluation Initiatives at IOM (infographic), IOM

annual quality assessments of all evaluations, could help lift the quality of evaluations in future.

## 5.1 EVALUATION INDEPENDENCE AND IMPARTIALITY

### CENTRAL EVALUATIONS

OIG/Evaluation unit staff manage central evaluations. When they have the funds they contract consultants or companies to conduct evaluations, but OIG/Evaluation staff still conduct several central evaluations themselves. Central evaluations conducted by external evaluators meet the basic UNEG standard of independence and impartiality because they are managed and undertaken by personnel uninvolved in the programme or policy.

However, there is a potential risk of impartiality being compromised with respect to evaluations conducted by OIG/Evaluation unit staff. IOM has a rotational staff policy, unless the skills are not available within IOM, staff are appointed to OIG/Evaluation from other positions in the organisation. After serving in OIG/Evaluation staff are expected to rotate out to other IOM positions. If OIG/Evaluation staff have either come from or move into IOM operational or policy units whose interventions or policies they are evaluating, then there is a potential for impartiality to be compromised. Given that there are currently only two M&E staff in OIG/Evaluation aside from the Chief, this risk can be managed. However, as set out in the concluding section of this report, the Evaluation Policy could be made more explicit on managing this risk in future, especially if more staff are recruited.

### DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS

In any evaluation function, the independence and potential impartiality of decentralized evaluations is never going to be fully assured because, by definition, the entity that has managed and/or implemented the programme also manages the evaluation. This is to be expected with decentralized evaluations and would be the case even if IOM contracted out all decentralized evaluations to companies/consultants.

Most decentralized evaluations are undertaken by IOM staff, either from a Country Office or the internal pool of evaluators, whilst about half IOM Development Fund projects are evaluated by a company. Decentralized evaluations managed by Country Offices but conducted by externally contracted companies have the highest potential for independence and impartiality.

Independence and impartiality are somewhat weaker when evaluations are conducted by an “internal independent evaluator” from IOM’s evaluation “pool”, described above. This is because there are no guarantees that the individual conducting the evaluation will not have a future relationship with the entity for whom the evaluation is being done. IOM’s guidance



does recognise this, noting that “in general, external evaluators are perceived to be more impartial and independent than internal evaluators”.<sup>33</sup>

The independence and impartiality of decentralized evaluations is weakest when evaluations are managed **and** undertaken by the project manager. These “evaluations” are called “self-evaluations” in IOM’s policy. The policy acknowledges that “self-evaluations” are “internal but not independent” as they are “conducted by the programme manager or someone involved in implementation of the project or strategy”.<sup>34</sup> IOM’s current guidance on conducting evaluations (the Project Handbook) also notes that conducting an “internal self-evaluation” is one of the three main ways in which an evaluation can be conducted in IOM. The concluding section of the report recommends that in future IOM recategorizes these as end of project performance reviews rather than evaluations.

The meta-evaluation of 2017-2019 (see below) also notes that evaluation managers are “in most cases programme managers” and they “are the key stakeholders in the process. They are the ones who validate evaluation reports”.<sup>35</sup> Further, as the meta-evaluation noted, most programme managers/evaluation managers surveyed received no training on evaluation. They may not have been exposed to UNEG norms and standards related to impartiality.

The table below shows the different permutations and the degree of impartiality each can yield.

Table: Degrees of Independence and Impartiality of decentralized evaluations

Relationship of the Evaluation Manager with the intervention/programme	Decentralized evaluation conducted by:	Degree of structural independence/Impartiality
Evaluation manager from outside the Country Office	“External evaluator” or “internal independent evaluator” (or melded team)	Satisfactory
Evaluation manager is Country Office staff but not Programme Manager	“External evaluator” (contracted individual or firm)	Satisfactory
Evaluation manager is Country Office staff but not Programme Manager	“Internal independent evaluator” (IOM Pool Evaluator)	Adequate only with safeguards (pool evaluator has no connection to evaluand; with Evaluation Reference Group and external quality assurance)
Evaluation Manager is Programme Manager	“External evaluator” (contracted individual or firm)	Could be satisfactory is procurement of services is

<sup>33</sup> IOM, 5 July 2017 IOM Project Handbook - Module 6, p.424.

<sup>34</sup> Evaluation Policy pp4-5.

<sup>35</sup> Meta-Evaluation of IOM's Internal and External Evaluations (2017-2019) p.49.

		in line with IOM procurement guidelines, and with consistent use of an Evaluation Reference Group.
Evaluation Manager is Programme Manager	“Internal independent evaluator” (IOM Pool Evaluator)	Could be satisfactory if there is independent quality assurance, of the ToR and reporting, by an Evaluation Reference Group. Otherwise, inadequate.
Evaluation Manager is Programme Manager	“Internal self-evaluation” (individual from team that developed or implemented the project)	Structurally unsatisfactory: no independence in any respect.

## 5.2 EVALUATION QUALITY

Prior to the MOPAN assessment OIG/Evaluation had not conducted a quality assessment of either central or decentralized evaluations. OIG/Evaluation did not commission annual post-hoc quality assessments and therefore did not have insight into common strengths and weaknesses of IOM evaluations. Following this observation in the MOPAN report, OIG/Evaluation commissioned an external meta-evaluation of all IOM evaluations undertaken between 2017 and 2019 (88 in total). The study was also intended to help inform the design of a new quality assurance system.

The study notes that: “one third of the evaluation reports assessed meet or exceed quality requirements” and that “around 20% of the reports did not meet the minimum requirements of quality.” It concludes that there has been a “positive evolution over time in the quality of evaluation reports”. There has been a gradual though uneven improvement in quality between 2017 and 2019. Significantly, the proportion of evaluations that have “missed requirements” decreased from 29% to 18% then 14% in 2017, 2018, 2019 respectively.<sup>36</sup> The study also concludes that “there are no relevant differences on the quality of internal and external evaluation reports” and that “internally trained evaluators reach an overall rating considerably higher than the global average”.<sup>37</sup>

The study concludes that three OIG/Evaluation measures have driven the improvements. The Panel agrees that these are likely to be behind the improving trends and comments OIG/Evaluation for driving them. They are:

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<sup>36</sup> IOM, October 2020, Presentation: Opening Webinar for OIG M&E Strategy Development (2021-2023)

<sup>37</sup> Artival, 2020, Meta-Evaluation of IOM's Internal and External Evaluations (2017-2019) p.12

- the creation of Regional M&E Officer positions, with their quality assurance and capacity building role,
- the roll out of an updated evaluation policy, manuals, guidelines, and templates
- the introduction of the evaluation training package in late 2017.”<sup>38</sup>

The Peer Review ToR invited the Panel to undertake a quality review of a sample of evaluation reports and benchmark this assessment against the IOM meta-evaluation. However, the Panel reviewed the quality assurance methodology used by the contracted company and concluded that it applied UNEG quality assurance standards rigorously.<sup>39</sup> The Panel therefore accepts the existing report on the quality of 2017-2019 evaluations as fair and valid and considered it unnecessary to conduct a separate baseline, on the grounds that this would simply duplicate existing work.

### 5.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR CENTRAL AND DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS

The Evaluation Policy does not state explicitly what measures provide quality assurance of evaluations. It notes that “[q]uality control mechanisms should be put in place at each stage of the evaluation process”, that “OIG can provide such services”, and “Regional M&E Officers can be consulted” for decentralized evaluations. Given the limited number of staff at both headquarters and regional level, the expectation that they will be able to provide regular and sound quality assurance is probably not realistic.

IOM’s guidance in the IOM Project Handbook (2017) helps evaluators identify the stages the evaluation manager should check and gives some practical guidance. Project Managers are responsible for “quality control” (i.e., quality assurance). As stated above, entrusting quality control to an individual who was involved in managing the evaluated project weakens independence and impartiality.<sup>40</sup> Whilst the Handbook advises staff to conduct a quality review it has lacked detailed checklists of what evaluation managers should look out for. OIG/Evaluation is currently filling this gap and is developing quality checklists that will be part of new M&E guidelines. They will form the basis of a quality assurance mechanism and are based on the meta-evaluation (they will address evaluation ToR, the final report and a more detailed template for final evaluation reports). Funding permitting, later in 2021 OIG/Evaluation wishes to conduct a feasibility study to identify options for developing a systematic quality assurance system. The intention is that it would include external review of final evaluation reports, and potentially review of ToR and inception reports. In the meantime,

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<sup>38</sup>Artival, 2020, Meta-Evaluation of IOM's Internal and External Evaluations (2017-2019) p.12.

<sup>39</sup> Artival, 2020, see pages 67 forwards.

<sup>40</sup>The Handbook states that: “The Project Manager is to implement quality control measures throughout the evaluation process including, but not limited to, at the time of submission of the inception report, during data collection, at the review of initial findings, and at the final report stage.” (p.453)

OIG/Evaluation recommends use of the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports, as well as the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports (posted on the IOM Evaluation website).

The quality of evaluations could be further enhanced if stakeholder groups (i.e., evaluation reference groups) are involved in reviewing key outputs. OIG/Evaluation guidance does not require the use of evaluation reference groups for central or decentralized evaluations. Evaluation reference groups may also help to enhance the impartiality and utility of central evaluations in particular – but could also be established for more important decentralized evaluations. This is something OIG/Evaluation could consider for the future.

The quality assurance meta-evaluation made a series of recommendations to OIG/Evaluation on how it can systematically improve the quality and credibility of evaluations. OIG/Evaluation produced a management response in late 2020 setting out how it will apply the findings.<sup>41</sup> The Panel endorses OIG/Evaluation’s management response and does not want to go over the same ground. The Panel makes a few complementary suggestions on how quality and impartiality can be strengthened in the last section of this report.

#### 5.4 PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY/TRAINING

In the last few years OIG/Evaluation has introduced several new initiatives to develop evaluation skills across IOM – and to support the decentralized evaluation function. As mentioned, in 2018, OIG launched the IOM internal evaluator training aimed at contributing to the creation and development of a pool of internal evaluators who could conduct evaluations. It has also developed a “core monitoring and evaluation e-learning course”. The training includes pre and post-tests to measure knowledge: participants are asked to complete a form 3-6 months after the training to assess how they apply what they learned. The Panel commends these initiatives and encourages OIG/Evaluation to continue benchmarking the skill levels achieved by trainees. This will help OIG/Evaluation assess knowledge gaps and future training needs.

OIG/Evaluation has created a network of M&E practitioners – a “community of practice”. The network is based around meetings and information exchange via SharePoint. OIG/Evaluation assessed the value of this network in 2019 (and intends to repeat the exercise in 2021). Interviews indicated it is a loose group of people interested in M&E, but many do not have the time or space to engage meaningfully. As noted elsewhere, Regional M&E Officers lack an operational budget and therefore cannot fund regional activities to build on any interest from these M&E practitioners. However, they have created a regional network of M&E focal points for sharing ‘regional’ experiences and capacity building opportunities (through webinars for instance).

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<sup>41</sup> IOM, December 2019, Management Response Matrix.

There is evidence that the training that OIG/Evaluation has provided has been effective. As noted above, the meta-evaluation of 88 reports found that “internal trained evaluators reach an overall rating considerably higher than the global average for both internal and external evaluators”, which led them to conclude that “efforts made in terms of capacity building appear to be paying off”, and that “[s]urveyed IOM staff have expressed their satisfaction with the applicability of the training to their daily work”.<sup>42</sup>

As part of internal evaluator training, OIG/Evaluation and Regional M&E Officers began to coach internal evaluators as they conduct their first evaluation - to strengthen the quality of evaluations they produce.<sup>43</sup> Any internal evaluator can request the support and guidance of experts and staff within the organization during the evaluation process. The coaching initiative has the potential to not only strengthen staff capacities but also to help develop an evaluation culture. It has published guidelines specifically for the evaluation of IOM Development Fund projects.<sup>44</sup>

There does not appear to be a requirement for evaluation managers to complete any mandatory training before they manage an evaluation. Nor does there appear to be data on the proportion of evaluation managers who have received training. The meta-evaluation study notes that “[p]roportionally speaking, evaluation managers have received less specific evaluation training than internal evaluators.”<sup>45</sup> This appears to be a relatively important gap in competence. OIG/Evaluation is currently reviewing it, with a view to addressing it.

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<sup>42</sup> Artival, 2020, Meta-Evaluation of IOM's Internal and External Evaluations (2017-2019), p.12.

<sup>43</sup> IOM, 31 May 2018, A Guide for Coaching Internal Evaluators.

<sup>44</sup> IOM, 2021, Evaluation Guidelines for IOM Development Fund Projects 2021, IOM.

<sup>45</sup> Meta-evaluation p.51.

## 6. UTILITY

This section comments on the contribution the evaluation function and evaluation products make to various aspects of IOM's operations, policy-making and delivery. As an organisation IOM has yet to appreciate the contribution that a strong evaluation function can make to

### *UNEG Norm 2 Utility*

*In 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 evaluation is manifest through its use in making relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, informed decision-making processes and accountability for results. Evaluations could also be used to contribute beyond the organization by generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders (UNEG Norms and Standards, p.10).*

learning and improving performance. OIG/Evaluation is taking steps to enhance the utility of the evaluations it produces – and in communicating the learning they generate. It has responded to a number of gaps identified by the MOPAN study. But it is limited in what it can achieve by its minimal resource base. With greater investment and corporate commitment, and a continued focus within OIG/Evaluation on distilling and communicating the value-added of evaluation, this could change. IOM could embark on a self-sustaining virtuous cycle whereby a stronger evaluation function produces learning that strengthens IOM.

There is little corporate recognition of the role and contribution evaluation can make to helping IOM become a “learning organisation”. IOM's Strategic Vision 2019-2023, which was presented to the Council, illustrates this. The document sets out a clear strategic direction for the organization. One of its strategic goals is for IOM to be, by 2023, a “learning organisation”. However, in the text describing how the organisation will achieve this evaluation is not identified as a source of learning. Sources of learning are identified only as “data it collects through its operational and research activities”, not evaluation. The single substantive reference to evaluation in the Strategic Vision is in the context of developing knowledge management. It simply notes that if knowledge management is to be strengthened it “also requires investment in IOM's capacity to undertake qualitative evaluation of its work” (p.15). It is difficult to see how IOM can become a learning organisation without a robust evaluation function.

The Evaluation Policy is explicit on the contribution it expects evaluation to make to learning. Evaluation aims to: “Draw lessons learned and to provide institutional perspective into the design, planning and implementation of future interventions, strategies and processes, within overall knowledge management approaches”.<sup>46</sup> The Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy is also clear on the value of evaluation to improving organisational learning: it sets out initiatives to improve the evaluation portal, develop learning briefs or summaries of evaluations and to

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<sup>46</sup> Evaluation Policy p.3.

strengthen the quality control of evaluations. IOM's Project Review and Information Management Application (PRIMA) is also designed to contribute to the capture and sharing of best practices/lessons learnt.

However, IOM as an organisation does not yet have a formal institution-wide requirement to ensure lessons from past interventions are systematically considered in project design. The exception is IOM Development Fund projects whose mandatory evaluations ensure lessons learned and best practices are integrated in subsequent projects. These projects tend to be comparatively small in scale compared to thematic IOM projects.

As noted above, OIG/Evaluation has now started to focus on producing central evaluations with greater strategic significance for the organisation. OIG/Evaluation highlighted to members of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance that it is seeking "to improve the learning from evaluation and the uptake of lessons to inform decision-making"<sup>47</sup> Both the OIG Biennial Evaluation Plans 2019-2020 & 2021-2022 demonstrate this trend.

The Panel saw evidence that central evaluations have added value to IOM's operations, particularly over the last few years. The Panel heard, for example, how an evaluation of IOM's emergency work led to structural changes in how the Department of Operations and Emergencies operates; that an evaluation of one of IOM's former flagship publications (Migration Initiatives) led to a new more efficient approach to communicating IOM's work to its stakeholders and funders. The Panel also heard how findings from periodic IOM Development Fund central evaluations have led it to make changes in how it operates and is managed: evaluations led it to add thematic areas, change financing ceilings, increase its staffing, and incorporate a system to track projects into a global system that has now become the IOM-wide Project Review and Information Management Application (PRIMA). Donors also indicated how they had made funding decisions based on the findings of specific evaluations.

It is currently hard to comment on the contribution that decentralized evaluations make to learning in IOM. This is partly because, except for IOM Development Fund projects, no synthesis reports have been produced in recent years – although OIG/Evaluation recently completed its first synthesis evaluation in cooperation with the Department of Migration Management.<sup>48</sup> OIG/Evaluation and Regional M&E Officers do plan to commission more synthesis evaluations, funds permitting.

Interviews highlighted individual evaluations that had clearly added value. With the support of OIG/Evaluation, the IOM Development Fund produces annual synthesis reports. These collate lessons from project evaluations, particularly where they have relevance for future programming. Its synthesis reports have led it to encourage those designing projects to

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<sup>47</sup> IOM 17 October 2019, M&E Briefing for Donors: Q&A.

<sup>48</sup> "Extracting Learning from Evaluations of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration – AVR(R)/PARA Projects and Programmes", [Evaluation Repository | Evaluation\(iom.int\)](#)

develop theories of change and to develop results matrices, with clear outcomes and indicators.

The Panel notes that the utility of evaluations of short-term standalone projects for learning is always going to be limited. Accountability requirements for these kinds of interventions could be satisfied by “end of project” reviews. The Panel considers that OIG/Evaluation should review the criteria for commissioning a decentralized evaluation. Currently the expectation is that all projects will be evaluated regardless of size, duration, or strategic importance. Many interviewees said that utility of evaluating most IOM projects is weak because of the ‘projectised’ nature of IOM’s work. At any one time IOM has, as one interviewee estimated, 2,500 active projects. Most of these are standalone 12-month projects, securing only short-term donor funding. They noted that a project is unlikely to be replicated so knowledge from an evaluation has limited relevance. The implementation team will also likely have moved on to other positions. The result is that the utility of such evaluations is weak.

The contribution decentralized evaluations makes to organisational learning would be enhanced if, rather than focusing on small individual projects, evaluations were conducted on thematically related interventions. Both OIG/Evaluation staff and Regional M&E Officers made this point. However, they noted that some donors are reluctant to forgo evaluations of their individual projects – thereby effectively preventing this. OIG/Evaluation will require either capacity in OIG/Evaluation to lobby donors, or Regional M&E Officers will need to be able to speak with greater authority at the regional level.

OIG/Evaluation is taking steps to improve the communication of evaluative learning. OIG/Evaluation issued guidance in June 2018 asking all staff managing or conducting evaluations to develop and disseminate an evaluation brief alongside the evaluation.<sup>49</sup> OIG/Evaluation reports that the proportion of evaluations with an evaluation brief has increased from 43 percent in 2018 to 77 percent in 2020.<sup>50</sup> This is very positive. If it had more resources, OIG/Evaluation and Regional M&E Officers could explore additional innovative ways of strengthening communication. This could include using YouTube, infographics, one-pagers, etc. to communicate evaluation findings.

For IOM to benefit fully from the learning created by evaluations the organisation needs to have ways of making this knowledge accessible. The MOPAN assessment commented that IOM lacked an organisation-wide system or mechanism to gather and capitalise on the lessons learned from past interventions. This gap is one of the 11 overall “areas for improvement” highlighted by the assessment.<sup>51</sup> In response in April 2019 IOM established a “Policy Hub” in the Office of the Director General. The Policy Hub is now responsible for leading knowledge management across the organisation and strengthen its policy development and coordination

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<sup>49</sup> IOM, 8 June 2018, M&E Guidance: Developing an Evaluation Brief.

<sup>50</sup> IOM, October 2020, Presentation: Opening Webinar for OIG M&E Strategy Development (2021-2023).

<sup>51</sup> MOPAN (p.52).



capacities. OIG/Evaluation is a member of the Policy Hub and participates in its Data Steering Group. It is strategically important for IOM that OIG/Evaluation and the Policy Hub work together: OIG/Evaluation needs to consider how it packages findings from central and decentralized evaluations, so they feed into the Policy Hub's thinking; and the Policy Hub needs to keep OIG/Evaluation apprised of strategic knowledge gaps so that OIG/Evaluation and Regional M&E Officers factor them into central and decentralized evaluation plans.

## 6.1 FOLLOW UP AND USE OF EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

At the time of the MOPAN assessment IOM did not produce a timeline for the implementation of key evaluation recommendations; nor did it have a system to track implementation. The MOPAN assessment identified this as an area for improvement and OIG/Evaluation has responded by strengthening its guidance and creating practical systems to track implementation.

All central evaluations contain, together with the final report, an action-plan for the follow-up of recommendations. The IOM project handbook (2017) states that decentralized evaluations should include a management response. The current Evaluation Policy also refers to management response and follow-up as optional rather than obligatory and will need to be updated.<sup>52</sup> In early 2020 OIG/Evaluation issued new mandatory guidance to encourage staff to produce management responses and follow up agreed actions.<sup>53</sup> Evaluation managers are responsible for entering the data to PRIMA.

The guidance requests that all evaluations along with a completed management response matrix and an evaluation brief are shared with Regional M&E Officers and OIG/Evaluation. In terms of follow-up to the management response, the guidance states that the unit responsible for the evaluation should oversee the implementation of the recommendations and conduct regular reviews of progress and of implementation. The guidance states a review should be undertaken every six months until the closure of recommendations. Currently a relatively low proportion of evaluations include a management plan for evaluation follow up.

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<sup>52</sup> It notes that: "...evaluations may also require an explicit response by the management to endorse or challenge the report and its recommendations. This may take the form of a management response, an action plan on the follow-up of recommendations and/or an agreement on the assignment of responsibilities and accountabilities. A periodic report on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations may be asked to the office/manager too, particularly with sensitive reports requiring close follow-up." Evaluation Policy p.7

<sup>53</sup> The guidance notes states that: "All IOM evaluations (internal and external) should include a management response for the implementation and follow-up of their recommendations." It notes they should be annexed to the evaluation report and accessible to primary evaluation stakeholders and the public through the IOM evaluation repository. IOM, December 2020, Evaluation Guidance on Management Response and Follow-Up on IOM Evaluation Recommendations. p.1.

OIG/Evaluation reports that as of October 2020, 29 percent of evaluations had management responses.<sup>54</sup> However, in time this should improve.

OIG/Evaluation has participated to the development of a new system in PRIMA for follow-up of evaluation recommendations but it has yet not been fully tested. It is still in a 'roll-out' phase and there is no formal data yet available.<sup>55</sup> It is not clear whether IOM will begin to produce an annual report on the status of use and implementation of evaluation recommendations and if it will make it public. OIG/Evaluation could strengthen compliance if these data were included in OIG's annual report to the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance.

## 7. PARTNERSHIPS/NETWORKS AND GENDER

Given its capacity and challenges, OIG/Evaluation is as engaged in partnerships and networks to an extent that could be expected. It would be unrealistic to expect more of it until it is better resourced.

OIG/Evaluation is a member of the UN Evaluation Group and was a member of the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation that preceded UNEG. IOM became a member of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group in 2018 and has joined the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action.

In terms of joint evaluations OIG/Evaluation staff participated in several inter-agency evaluations in the 2019/20 period. They served as members of the management group of the Cyclone Idai response evaluation in Mozambique conducted by the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) Steering Group; in the joint review of Rohingya response evaluations conducted by IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR in Bangladesh; and in the joint rapid evidence assessment of what works to protect children on the move conducted by UNICEF, UNHCR, the International Labour Organization and IOM. They are currently participating in other similar joint initiatives, such as IAHE of the COVID-19 response.

Interviews with Regional M&E Officers indicate that they do not have the capacity to be outward facing and to support the capacity of partner Governments. Therefore, IOM has not yet engaged in national evaluation capacity development (NECD).

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<sup>54</sup> IOM, October 2020, Presentation: Opening Webinar for OIG M&E Strategy Development (2021-2023).

<sup>55</sup> However, it estimates in the self-assessment that between 50% to 80% of all recommendations are acted on within three years. Without data it is impossible to confirm this (Question No.44 on the self-assessment).

## 7.1 MAINSTREAMING CROSS-CUTTING AGENDAS IN EVALUATIONS

The Panel congratulates OIG/Evaluation for integrating gender equality into evaluation policy and practice to the extent it has. IOM has strong, up to date policies for integrating gender equality into evaluation. In addition to its recent guidance on Gender and Evaluation in line with UNEG guidance, the previous IOM Evaluation Guidelines (2006) and the current Project Handbook (2017) have guidance on integrating gender and human rights in evaluation.<sup>56</sup>

OIG/Evaluation also collaborates with the Gender Coordination Unit (GCU) to conduct UN SWAP reviews. A sample of central and decentralized evaluations are assessed annually against the UN-SWAP scorecard. The last one was commissioned by OIG/Evaluation externally. The assessment included reviewing and rating final evaluation reports by using the UN-SWAP EPI Evaluation Scorecard. The 2020 analysis concluded that: “It is evident that there is an increase in the overall score over time, which shows a positive trend for Gender Equality (GE) integration in the evaluation reports”.<sup>57</sup>

The Gender Coordination Unit and OIG/Evaluation have also conducted two evaluations of gender mainstreaming (thematic and policy evaluations) since the creation of the unit in the late 1990s. These help promote the mainstreaming of gender equality more broadly. A 2017 mid-term evaluation of the IOM Gender Equality Policy 2015-2019 found that whilst the Policy provided a strong foundation and impetus for gender mainstreaming within IOM, more work was needed to produce lasting results. This evaluation notes that “effort is needed to ensure that the policy spreads to all of IOM’s programmatic work”.<sup>58</sup> Currently, OIG/Evaluation is commissioning an external evaluator to conduct a review of the implementation of recommendations from the 2017 mid-term evaluation of IOM Gender Equality Policy and of MOPAN assessment.

OIG/Evaluation is drafting new M&E Guidelines (to be issued in May 2021) that include an annex on IOM cross-cutting issues and how to address them in evaluation. In addition to Gender Mainstreaming, it contains guidance on Accountability to Affected Populations, Rights-Based Approach, Protection Mainstreaming, Disability Inclusion and Environmental Sensitivity and Sustainability.

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<sup>56</sup> IOM (2006), IOM Evaluation Guidelines, International Organization for Migration.

<sup>57</sup> IOM, 2020, External Assessment of Gender Inclusion in IOM Evaluations, p.13.

<sup>58</sup> IOM, 2017, Mid-Term Evaluation of the IOM Gender Equality Policy 2015-2019, p.5.

## 8. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is impressed by how much OIG/Evaluation has managed to achieve in recent years, especially given its limited human and financial resources. With these constraints, it is hard to imagine that OIG/Evaluation could have made more progress than it has. So, the Panel would like to congratulate its staff for what it has achieved over the last few years, and to the Inspector General for facilitating its work.

The MOPAN assessment highlighted evaluation as an area for improvement. It noted that “The evaluation function is [...] emergent, with limited functional and budgetary independence” and that “[e]valuation coverage is patchy, and largely dependent on donor interest and provision of finance.”<sup>59</sup> IOM’s management response noted that the organisation “is keenly aware of the need for improvement in this area”.<sup>60</sup> The Panel notes that IOM and OIG/Evaluation have tackled several of the issues identified by the MOPAN assessment since it was issued. The management response states that IOM introduced the following changes:

“Through unearmarked funding allocated to the Evaluation Unit within the Office of the Inspector General in 2018 and 2019, IOM has taken steps to increase its focus on thematic and strategic evaluations by the central office, as well as on the issuance of technical guidelines and processes for quality assurance, for planning and utilization of corporate and decentralized evaluations and for the follow-up of recommendations.”<sup>61</sup>

The Panel confirms that all these initiatives have been undertaken or started. We noted in the report that the two post-MOPAN Evaluation Plans (2019-2020, 2021-2022) clearly focus on more strategic/thematic centralized issues - and do not contain project level evaluations. The Panel notes four further improvements introduced since the MOPAN assessment, some of which have been described in the report:

- OIG/Evaluation replaced the 2006 Evaluation Policy statement with a more comprehensive policy in 2018. This is welcome though the Panel considers that, in the light of the Peer Review findings, it will need to be revised again.
- To try to ensure managers consider the implications of evaluations, OIG/Evaluation issued a mandatory guidance note setting out the need to produce a management response to each evaluation.<sup>62</sup> It was previously optional.

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<sup>59</sup> MOPAN p.34.

<sup>60</sup> IOM, 1 July 2019, IOM Management Response to the 2017-18 MOPAN Assessment, p.4

<sup>61</sup> IOM, 1 July 2019, IOM Management Response to the 2017-18 MOPAN Assessment, p.4

<sup>62</sup> Management Response and Follow-up on IOM Evaluation Recommendations, February 2020.

- Through its website, IOM has given public access to all evaluations. This is a significant step forward as formerly anyone wanting an evaluation had to email OIG/Evaluation for a copy.
- OIG/Evaluation commissioned an external meta-evaluation to assess the quality of centralized and decentralized evaluations. It is using this to help inform new quality standards and tools. This is a welcome initiative and has provided OIG/Evaluation with a baseline from which it can begin systematically strengthening the quality of evaluations.

However, some of the fundamental issues identified by the MOPAN assessment have yet to be addressed. The IOM management response notes that “The issue of financial support to, and budgetary independence of, the central evaluation office, will be examined in the framework of the organizational reform”.<sup>63</sup> The present report aims to contribute to this. Further, the management response notes that: “Concerns raised regarding the independence of IOM’s evaluation office as per UNEG norms, will require further discussions with Member States.”<sup>64</sup> These discussions had not taken place when the Peer Review Panel met, so it is assumed they are planned.

So, overall, whilst there have been some significant changes, the overall impact has probably been limited: core issues such as independence and budget have yet to be addressed. And whilst OIG/Evaluation has introduced new policies, partly because they are so recent, they have yet to be reflected in what is practiced.

The Panel therefore considers that the MOPAN description of the evaluation function as “emergent” is still appropriate. The Panel reflects that IOM’s evaluation function has not developed to the same degree as UN evaluation functions that were established at about the same time. When it was primarily an operational office, IOM as an organisation did not invest in the organisation’s evaluation function. The Panel would like to stress to IOM management that evaluation is a core corporate function that, if it operates effectively, contributes to the overall credibility of an organisation. The MOPAN assessment framework illustrates this: evaluation is one of just eight core areas that the framework assesses (KPI 8: Evidence-based planning and programming applied). As such, it needs to be developed and strengthened just as audit and investigation capability are.

There may still also be an underappreciation of the role and potential contribution that evaluation can make to the organisation. We noted in the section on utility that corporately it seems that IOM does not yet appreciate the contribution evaluation makes to learning. Whilst the Strategic Vision 2019-2023 aims for IOM to be a “learning organisation”, there is no mention of the contribution evaluation should make to learning. It is hard to see how IOM can become a learning organisation without a fully functioning evaluation service. The Panel

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<sup>63</sup> IOM, 1 July 2019, IOM Management Response to the 2017-18 MOPAN Assessment, p.4

<sup>64</sup> IOM, 1 July 2019, IOM Management Response to the 2017-18 MOPAN Assessment, p.4

therefore encourages IOM's leadership and the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance to reconsider what kind of evaluation service it needs if it is to become a learning organisation. The Panel hopes they will find the findings and recommendations in this document helpful.

The Panel appreciates the institutional constraints that IOM is operating under. We have therefore been careful to make recommendations that are feasible and can be implemented with realistic cost implications. Indeed, many of the recommendations proposed are cost neutral: there are measures that OIG/Evaluation can take on its own to strengthen the credibility and utility of individual evaluations. But without additional investment in financial and human resources OIG/Evaluation will soon reach the outer limits of what can be achieved. To further deliver for IOM, OIG/Evaluation will need greater, predictable investment in its human capacity; it will need more funds to commission evaluations and develop the decentralized evaluation system, and they will need to be assured.

The Panel considers that if IOM can implement these recommendations, it would set both the organisation and the evaluation function on a "virtuous cycle": if the evaluation function is better able to demonstrate its value to the organisation and its stakeholders, IOM will be more willing to invest in it. If the evaluation function delivers value to the organisation with these investments – e.g., evaluations that promote greater effectiveness and efficiency - this could stimulate sustained investment and a "virtuous" self-sustaining cycle. To some extent, with the greater investment in the evaluation function from the MIRAC, IOM has begun this cycle. However, the short-term investments from MIRAC do not allow the evaluation function to plan strategically over the medium to long term. The Panel offers these recommendations to help guide and accelerate this process.

Before detailing the Panel's recommendations, the following paragraphs summarise the Panel's reflections on the three key OECD-DAC/UNEG norms and standards of independence, credibility, and utility.

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## INDEPENDENCE

The OIG/Evaluation unit's position within the Office of the Inspector General gives it some of the structural independence it needs; but this is undermined by its lack of financial independence, which translates into limited operational independence. It lacks the funds to undertake a central evaluation plan – and so lacks the ability to reflect to the organisation the performance of key operational or programmatic activities. OIG/Evaluation's mandate to manage both the evaluation function and the monitoring function also undermines its independence since monitoring is a management function. The findings on independence are not new to the organisation and the Panel comes to the same conclusions as the MOPAN assessment.

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## CREDIBILITY

There has been some progress before and since the MOPAN assessment in increasing the credibility of central and decentralized evaluations but there are still challenges. Central

evaluations have started to focus on strategic issues. However, if OIG/Evaluation must always conduct evaluations with its own staff because it lacks the funds to hire external subject experts, the credibility and therefore utility of its evaluations will be limited. Decentralized evaluations conducted by staff who have managed the evaluated intervention, as detailed in existing policy and evaluation guidance, cannot be impartial and therefore lack credibility.

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## UTILITY

There are also indications that utility is improving. There is evidence that some central evaluations have led to learning and have been valued by policy and management units alike. But evaluation needs to be at the core of IOM's learning, requiring more changes on the part of OIG/Evaluation but also elsewhere in IOM. OIG/Evaluation and Regional M&E Officers will need to distil and communicate the key lessons from evaluations to those who will use them. And the organisation needs to build in an expectation that those planning new policies and programmes should build on lessons from relevant evaluative evidence. There is also scope for the organisation to ensure there is adequate follow up to agreed evaluation recommendations.

Decentralized evaluations would add greater value to the organisation if they focused, for example, on innovative initiatives, or evaluated similar interventions in different countries. Stronger investment in the decentralized evaluation function could address this. IOM has a very capable network of Regional M&E Officers to take this forward, under the technical guidance of OIG/Evaluation.

### 8.1 KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report now sets out 10 key findings and associated recommendations. In some cases, the main recommendation is accompanied by action points. The text in parentheses after each recommendation identifies who would be responsible for implementing it. We have not ranked the recommendations in priority or sequence, as it is hoped that IOM will be able to take these forwards together. As stated above, the Panel is confident that if IOM can adopt and implement these recommends as a package of measures, it will be able to launch a virtuous cycle: building a robust evaluation function and a learning organisation.

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#### 1. INDEPENDENCE – THE EVALUATION FUNCTION SHOULD REMAIN WITHIN THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

The Peer Review was asked to reflect on the institutional positioning of the evaluation function in IOM, and to inform the ongoing internal governance review.

In an ideal world, the entity that drives IOM's evaluation function would be an independent department or office reporting functionally to the Director General but substantively to the governing bodies. This is the arrangement that exists in other UN agencies and bodies that have well-resourced and sizable evaluation functions. But for this to make sense, IOM's evaluation unit needs to have the human and financial resources – and the structural independence, to make this viable.

Currently it does not make sense for either OIG/Evaluation or IOM. OIG/Evaluation does not have the independent financial resources nor the volume and seniority of staff positions to give it the authority it would need if it were a standalone entity. Its status as a function of OIG gives it a measure of independence and this is extremely valuable. It risks losing this if it is made into a small standalone unit within the Office of the Director General.

The Panel recommends that it should certainly be IOM's long-term vision to establish a strong, independent entity responsible for governing the evaluation function. In the future, after the evaluation function has been strengthened and is more mature, it would be appropriate to revisit the positioning of the central evaluation function. But the circumstances are not yet appropriate.

The Panel also notes that it is not necessary for OIG/Evaluation to be outside the Office of the Inspector General to build a strong evaluation function. Across the UN there are several evaluation functions that are embedded in the equivalent of IOM's Office of the Inspector General. They are still able to operate effective evaluation functions. UNESCO, WIPO and UNWRA are examples.

The Panel notes that this recommendation contradicts a position taken by the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee in its 2016-2017 report. This report states that "the Committee commented on the potential move of the evaluation function from the Office of the Inspector General ...and confirmed the Committee's support for the establishment of a separate office for evaluation and monitoring".<sup>65</sup> Because the Committee's report does not explain the basis for the Committee's recommendation, the Panel cannot go beyond noting the difference of view.

The current OIG Charter does not spell out the conditions underpinning the evaluation function's institutional independence. A revised Charter would need to spell out the key features of the evaluation function, including its independence.

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

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

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<sup>65</sup> IOM 2017, Twenty-First Session Report of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee September 2016 to August 2017.



## 2. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN ADVOCATING FOR A ROBUST EVALUATION FUNCTION

IOM has an Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee with responsibility for supporting the evaluation function but as noted in the body of this report, it does not appear to have been active in doing so. The Peer Review recommends measures that would encourage the Committee to systematically play a stronger role in being an advocate for and a “critical friend” to the evaluation function. The Committee’s Terms of Reference do not define its role in relation to evaluation in any detail.

**Recommendation 2: The Peer Review recommends the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee consistently reviews the performance and resourcing of the evaluation function, with a view to strengthening it. The Panel recommends that the Committee’s 2013 Terms of Reference<sup>66</sup> are revised as soon as possible and that they:**

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

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

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

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

**(For: Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, Senior Management, Inspector General)**

## 3. STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OIG/EVALUATION AND GOVERNING BODIES

The Panel considers that OIG/Evaluation can enhance its independence and the status of evaluation, whilst remaining within OIG, by deliberately strengthening its relationship with IOM’s governing bodies – the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance and the

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<sup>66</sup> IOM, 2013, IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee Terms of Reference.

Council. The Panel considers that, as a co-located unit, OIG/Evaluation should continue to build its own profile.

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

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

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

**(For: Inspector General, Chief Evaluation, the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance)**

#### 4. WITHDRAW MONITORING POLICY RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE CENTRALIZED EVALUATION FUNCTION

The Peer Review ToR ask the Panel to assess how appropriate it is for IOM’s central evaluation office to have a mandate for governing the organisation’s monitoring function as well as for evaluation.

It is highly unusual, if not unique, for UN evaluation functions to hold responsibility for both evaluation and monitoring. Monitoring is a management function whilst evaluation is an accountability and learning function. Combining these roles is not compatible with UNEG norms and standards as it weakens the potential independence of the evaluation function. The Panel also notes that the fact that OIG/Evaluation holds responsibility for IOM’s monitoring policy is inconsistent with the OIG’s own Charter. This states that “OIG is not involved in the management of any programmes, operations or functions.”<sup>67</sup>

The Panel therefore recommends to IOM that responsibility for monitoring policy is separated from the central evaluation function. There are further benefits to enacting this change. OIG/Evaluation struggles to establish a quality evaluation function with its existing resources. Removing monitoring would free up time/energy so it can focus solely on evaluation. Where the monitoring function is placed is beyond the scope of the Panel to recommend – but combining it with the unit in IOM responsible for results-based management would be an option.

This said, it is important that there is continuous dialogue between OIG/Evaluation and the unit responsible for developing IOM’s monitoring and results-based management policy in future. The “evaluability” of policies and interventions is determined to a large extent by how

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<sup>67</sup> IOM (2015), Charter of the Office of the Inspector General, International Organization for Migration, Section 4.4.1.

monitoring is structured. So, for evaluations to be based on sound data, the needs of evaluation should be considered in monitoring and results-based management systems.

**Recommendation 4: All responsibility for IOM's monitoring function should be withdrawn from OIG/Evaluation as soon as practically feasible and assigned elsewhere in the organisation. (IOM management, Inspector General, OIG/Evaluation)**

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## 5. FINANCING THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

By any measure the IOM evaluation function has minimal predictable funding and has the absolute minimum number of staff needed to manage the function. The lack of finance undermines its independence. For example, it lacks the funding to independently conduct central evaluations. OIG/Evaluation's capacity is therefore even more constrained because its staff must conduct many central evaluations themselves. The combination of financial and human resource constraints makes it difficult for OIG/Evaluation to strengthen the evaluation function much beyond what it has already achieved. Recent funding from the MIRAC facility is welcome but these funds do not allow OIG/Evaluation to increase its core human resources as there is no certainty they will continue.

The Panel considered various options for how IOM could allocate adequate, predictable funds to the evaluation function. Any recommendation needs to be feasible within IOM's "projectised" system (whereby all costs associated with a project are charged to a project). Given this context, the Panel recommends that IOM introduce a system whereby a standardised proportion of all project costs is allocated to the evaluation function. The Panel is not going to recommend a specific percentage: this will be up to OIG and OIG/Evaluation to discuss with IOM management and the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance. OIG/Evaluation could establish a starting point by costing a full work plan (see Recommendation 5 below). The UN Joint Inspections Unit considers the financial target range should be within the range of 0.5 and 3 percent of revenue.<sup>68</sup> IOM could aim to reach the lower end of the range within a few years. The percentage could start low and, as the evaluation function grows in capacity and coverage, gradually increase.

The Panel is not aware of another agency that has introduced a direct mirror of this proposal. Several agencies, such as WFP, allocate a percentage of their total programmatic spend to their evaluation function. But IOM is relatively unusual because of its projectised management. IOM may be able to draw some lessons from FAO but there are differences: FAO's large internal evaluation team conducts all evaluations and does not outsource them.

The total sum would need to be allocated to OIG/Evaluation and managed by the unit. This funding should in principle finance all central evaluations. OIG/Evaluation would need to make an allocation to Regional M&E Officers and consider a facility to support Country Offices to undertake decentralized evaluations. However, it will still be necessary for projects to budget for and finance their own decentralized evaluations. The percentage allocated to the

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<sup>68</sup> JIU 2014, Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System, p.29.

evaluation function would be intended to cover the costs of the central evaluation function and the development of the decentralized evaluation function only (i.e., projects and programmes would still need to allocate an additional percentage of their project costs to cover the cost of an evaluation).

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

## 6. PRODUCING WORK PLANS THAT ESTABLISH THE VALUE PROPOSITION OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

The Panel considers that the priority of OIG/Evaluation, once it has been divested of responsibility for monitoring, is to strengthen the quality and value added of central evaluations to the organisation. OIG/Evaluation has already set the objective of ensuring that all central evaluations have strategic value for the organization, and that they are credible and add value. OIG/Evaluation can set the evaluation function's added value in more comprehensive workplans.

The Panel recognizes that OIG/Evaluation has already invested in strengthening the last two Evaluation Plans. The Panel welcomes these changes but considers further measures could make them more compelling to both the organisation and its donors. Rather than solely listing intended central evaluations (to be completed only if funding is available as mentioned in the plan), OIG/Evaluation needs to present a consolidated Work Plan: this needs to be more comprehensive and to set out all that OIG/Evaluation intends to do to strengthen the evaluation function in its totality. It needs to be strategic and concrete, and meet donor needs and interests.

Further, it needs to be fully costed – and include financial needs of the central evaluations and the cost of developing the decentralized evaluation function. It is recommended that the evaluation function Work Plan and the associated financial requirement is endorsed by IOM's Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance: and that, in a move that will greatly enhance the independence of the evaluation function, the Standing Committee approves the budget to finance the Evaluation Plan. The Work Plan needs to set out the specific deliverables for the period.

The Panel also recommends that to add external perspectives to central evaluations, OIG/Evaluation seeks to budget for either external contracted teams to conduct central evaluations; or to conduct central evaluations as hybrid evaluations with internal and external evaluators. To date, most evaluations have been conducted with OIG/Evaluation's own limited internal capacity. This not only limits the volume of issues OIG/Evaluation can evaluate, but it also means that external perspectives are absent. Subject-specialist contracted experts could add value to central evaluations. OIG/Evaluation would then need to proactively disseminate evaluation findings, including to governing bodies. It does already present some evaluations

to governing bodies when the evaluation topic relates to a Council Resolutions, but it could try to do this more broadly.<sup>69</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

**(For: Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, Senior Management, Inspector General, OIG/Evaluation)**

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## 7. INCREASING THE UTILITY OF DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS

The current expectation that all interventions are evaluated is over-ambitious given the “emergent” status of IOM’s evaluation function. Other better resourced evaluation functions

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<sup>69</sup> Examples include the evaluation of the Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF), the Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism (MEFM) and the evaluation of the Gender equality policy. OIG/Evaluation notes that they were presented to Member States as the topics were linked to Council Resolutions”. IOM 17 October 2019, M&E Briefing for Donors: Q&A.

take a much more selective approach to coverage.<sup>70</sup> If IOM takes a more selective approach to conducting decentralized evaluations, OIG/Evaluation and Regional M&E Officers will be able to invest in strengthening their quality and utility.

The independence and impartiality of decentralized evaluations is weakest when evaluations are managed and undertaken by the project manager as reflected in the existing Project Handbook and Evaluation policy. The Panel notes that it is unusual to consider “self-evaluations” as “evaluations” and that doing so is not in keeping with UNEG standards of structural impartiality. Evaluators need to be impartial, implying that evaluation team members must not have been responsible for the policy, design or management of the evaluation subject. OIG/Evaluation would strengthen the integrity of all decentralized evaluations if these “self-evaluations” were considered internal reviews rather than evaluations. The Panel therefore recommends that OIG/Evaluation ceases to consider “self-evaluations” as a form of evaluation, and that it reclassifies them as reviews. Logically, supporting them should no longer be the responsibility of the evaluation function.

Evaluating unique projects that last only a year adds little value: interventions are not necessarily repeated, and any lessons do not add useful knowledge. Because IOM is so heavily projectised “tracking” agreed actions of one-off projects also adds little value. Staff involved in the delivery of a project move on; and the project is likely to have ended. Internal project completion reviews could replace evaluations for such projects and would provide adequate lessons for other interventions.

Thematic joint evaluations will have greater utility than a series of evaluations of standalone projects. Donors will need to allow flexibility in the use of their funds and agree to their projects (and associated evaluation budgets) being “bundled” with others.

The Panel appreciates that these comments may logically also apply to projects funded by the IOM Development Fund. The fund managers will want to consider these points. But the recommendation is not made specifically to these projects – as the Panel understands the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance asked for all projects to be evaluated.

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

**7.1) OIG/Evaluation amends the decentralized evaluation coverage guidance to introduce greater selectivity, whilst retaining an element of choice for country offices. The Panel recommends that Regional Offices and Regional M&E Officers consider collaborating with country offices to combine related interventions into**

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<sup>70</sup> For example, UNESCO mandates that all interventions with a value over US\$2m are evaluated; WFP invites country offices to conduct one decentralized evaluation every planning cycle, which UNHCR is considering replicating.

thematic decentralized evaluations. Evaluation topics could be agreed between the country office and the Regional M&E Officer, with the main criteria for selecting the topic being the value the evaluation would add to country and institutional learning.

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

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

- d) Encourage decentralized evaluations on interventions that are particularly innovative (e.g., significant pilots, new approaches).**
- e) Make it mandatory for all projects over a certain financial value and/or duration to be evaluated. This would exclude all short-term and low-value interventions (e.g., 12-month projects).**
- f) Request country offices conduct at least one decentralized evaluation within each planning cycle (3-5 years).**

**(For: OIG/Evaluation, Regional M&E Officers, Regional Offices)**

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## 8. STRENGTHENING THE DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION FUNCTION

This section draws together additional recommendations related to strengthening the decentralized evaluation function.

**The reporting line of M&E officers in Regional Offices:** The Panel notes that Regional M&E Officer positions report to different posts, with varying levels of authority, in each Regional Office. Regional M&E Officers need to be able to give advice with authority. This can be enhanced if they report directly to senior position in a Regional Office. This will give them greater ability to promote learning in their regions.

The Panel therefore recommends that all Regional M&E Officer positions report to a head or deputy Regional Office position in each Regional Office – as is the case in both WFP and UN Women. If there is deputy in charge of management/administration rather than programmes, then Regional M&E Officers should report to this position to enhance the independence of evaluation from programmes at regional level. It is also recommended that IOM consider establishing a formal joint reporting line from Regional M&E Officers to OIG/Evaluation.

**Withdrawing monitoring responsibilities from Regional M&E Officers:** Reflecting OIG/Evaluation’s role, Regional M&E Officers have dual responsibility for both monitoring and evaluation – as their official job title makes clear. If IOM is to deepen the evaluation function outside headquarters it will need to separate the monitoring function from the evaluation function. This would allow these officers to commit more time to supporting and enhancing the quality of decentralized evaluations.

The Panel notes that this may take some time to achieve but considers it should be a goal towards which IOM should work. Given that Regional M&E Officer positions are funded by the budget of Regional Offices, Regional Offices will need to find replacement capacity to provide monitoring guidance to country offices.

**Regrading Regional M&E Officers posts:** The report notes that all Regional M&E Officers are at Professional Staff Grade 2 (P2). This affects their credibility in interacting with others. Other professionals with comparable responsibilities in IOM, such as Regional Thematic Specialists, are mostly P4. It is also the case that equivalent positions in sister UN agencies are graded at P4.

To deepen the evaluation culture at regional level Regional M&E Officers need the seniority to be able to convene and talk to country office heads directly. It is therefore recommended that IOM revise upwards these posts to at least P3 so they have greater credibility and have seniority closer to those of peers in IOM and sister UN agencies.

**Training for evaluation managers:** It does not seem to be a requirement for evaluation managers to have received any core training on evaluation norms and standards before they manage (or conduct) an evaluation. It is recommended that OIG/Evaluation makes it mandatory for all evaluation managers to have taken at least minimum training in UNEG norms and standards in parallel to managing an evaluation. Importantly, this would ensure they are exposed to requirements relating to impartiality and independence.

**Lack of funds to support the decentralized evaluation function:** Just as at the central level, funding at Regional Office level is projectized. Funding was not allocated to Regional M&E Officer posts when they were established or subsequently. Thus, Regional M&E Officers do not have money to do any additional activity such as training. They also lack the funds to build small teams and therefore to extend the support they can give country offices to manage evaluations. It is recommended that, if the central evaluation function receives additional funding that some is allocated to Regional M&E Officers, so they have some capacity to promote evaluation in their regions.

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

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

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

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



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

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

**(For: Regional Office Directors, OIG/Evaluation, Regional M&E Officers)**

## **9. CREDIBILITY: IMPROVING EVALUATIONS WITH QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS**

OIG/Evaluation is currently considering how to introduce stronger quality assurance systems for all its evaluations. The MOPAN assessment identified this as an area for improvement and OIG/Evaluation commissioned a meta-evaluation partly to help it identify a “systematic quality control mechanism in order to assess evaluations on a regular basis.” The Panel endorses this intent and offers a few specific recommendations.

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

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

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

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

**(For: OIG/Evaluation)**

## **10. UPDATING THE EVALUATION POLICY TO ENHANCE THE INDEPENDENCE, CREDIBILITY, AND INTEGRITY OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION**

The Evaluation Policy will need to be updated following the Peer Review to integrate recommendations that IOM accepts and agrees to implement. The Panel recommends that the revised Evaluation Policy should be approved by the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance so that it has the authority of governing bodies and cannot be changed by the position of the Administration. This would contribute to the independence of the function.

As it expands, the credibility of the evaluation function will be enhanced if OIG/Evaluation is permitted to recruit external evaluation specialists. The evaluation function should still benefit from internal knowledge and expertise from rotational staff. Other evaluation functions, such

WFP and UNHCR, stipulate in their Evaluation Policies that they are staffed by a 50:50 mix of externally recruited evaluation specialists and current staff with the required competency for evaluation, appointed in line with their organisation's reassignment policy. This would appear appropriate for IOM and would help it professionalise its function.

The independence of the evaluation function can be further enhanced by ensuring the Evaluation Policy spells out provisions for the recruitment and dismissal of the head of evaluation function. It is not clear what the procedures for the recruitment and dismissal of the head of evaluation are, given that the post has not been advertised for more than a decade. These need to be established so that the position has a degree of independence. For both recruitment and dismissal, best practice would be for the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance to be consulted. The Director General should present the final selection to the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance/Council for approval. In addition to the Inspector General, a member of UNEG panel and the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee could be on the recruitment panel. IOM may want to consider introducing a condition that the head of evaluation cannot rotate to any other positions in IOM after filling this post.

OIG/Evaluation has recently strengthened accountability by making it mandatory for evaluations to contain a management response and for this to be tracked. This change will need to be reflected, and given authority, in a revised Evaluation Policy.

IOM would benefit from a second Peer Review of its evaluation function in around five years.

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

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

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

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

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

**10.5) Spells out the recruitment and dismissal procedure for the position of head of the evaluation function, that this includes the requirement that the Standing**

**Committee on Programmes and Finance is consulted in both cases, and that the evaluation specialist from the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee is on the recruitment panel in addition to the Inspector General.**

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

**(For: Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance, Inspector General, OIG/Evaluation)**

## ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: ACRONYMS

IAHE	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IGF	Internal Governance Framework
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MiGOF	Migration Governance Framework
MCOF	Migration Crisis Framework
MIRAC	Migration Resource Allocation Committee
MOPAN	Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OSI	Operational Support Income
PRIMA	Project Review and Information Management Application
RBM	Results-Based Management
RO	Regional Office
SCPF	Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

### ANNEX 2: PERSONS MET

#### OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Mati Hashemee, Inspector General, Head of Office of the Inspector General  
Christophe Franzetti, Chief Evaluation, OIG/Evaluation  
Diana Cartier, Oversight Officer (Monitoring & Evaluation)  
Elma Balic, Oversight Officer (Monitoring & Evaluation)

#### IOM HEADQUARTERS

Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General  
Joseph Samuel Appiah, Director of the Department of Resources Management  
Jeffrey Labovitz, Director of the Department of Operations and Emergencies  
Theodora Rachel Suter Head, Gender Coordination Unit, Office of the Director General  
Alessia Castelfranco, Head of IOM Development Fund  
Gregoire Goodstein, Donor Relations Division, Department of International Cooperation and Partnerships

#### REGIONAL OFFICES

Marcelo Pisani, Regional Director Buenos-Aires

Nenette Motus, Regional Director Bangkok  
 Renate Held, Regional Director Regional Office Vienna  
 Christopher Gascon Regional Director Dakar  
 Angeline Wambanda, Regional M&E Officer, Bangkok  
 Jennifer Hollins , Regional M&E Officer, Brussels Focal Point  
 Sarah Lynn Harris, Regional M&E Officer, Vienna  
 Jhonn Rey, Regional M&E Officer, Buenos-Aires  
 Maite De Muller Barbat, Regional Office, Pretoria  
 Rogers Mutie, Regional M&E Officer, Pretoria  
 Theogene Nshimiyimana Regional M&E Officer, Cairo  
 Vanesa Vaca, Former Regional M&E Officer at Regional Office, San-Jose

#### REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBER STATES

Monica Eimert, Counsellor, Humanitarian Affairs, Permanent Mission of Denmark to UN Geneva  
 Edo Driessen, Economic Affairs Attaché, Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Geneva  
 Yasuo Kitano, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Geneva  
 Susan Dragan First Secretary (Humanitarian Affairs) Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN in Geneva  
 Donald Cochrane, Minister-Counsellor (Humanitarian Affairs), Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN in Geneva  
 Veronica Nordlund, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations, Geneva  
 Ingela Winter-Norbert, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Government of Sweden  
 Monica Greco, Humanitarian Advisor, Permanent Mission of the United States of America, Geneva  
 Shanna Devoy, PRM/MCE (Multilateral Affairs Office), U.S. Department of State  
 James Martin PRM/PRP (Policy and Resource Planning Office), U.S. Department of State  
 Irene Onyeagbako Mofunanya PRM/ANE (Middle East), U.S. Department of State  
 Jim Dasney PRM/PIM (Migration Office), U.S. Department of State  
 Caroline Holdren, PRM/Admissions (Resettlement), U.S. Department of State  
 Anne Shaw, USAID/BHA, USAID  
 Kate Peng, USAID/BHA, USAID

#### ANNEX 3: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

YEAR	RELEVANT IOM DOCUMENTS
2006	IOM Evaluation Guidelines
2011	IOM Report of the Director General on the work of the organization for the year 2010
2013	IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee (AOAC) – Terms of Reference
2015	IOM Gender Equality Policy 2015–2019
2015	Charter of the Office of the Inspector General
2017	IOM Gender & RBM Guidance
2017	IOM Mid-Term Evaluation of the IOM Gender Equality Policy 2015-2019
2017	IOM Project Handbook second edition – Module 6 (Evaluation)
2017	Twenty-First Session Report of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee September 2016 to August 2017
2018	IOM Evaluation Policy

- 2018 IOM Report of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee Activities From September 2017 to August 2018
- 2018 OIG Strategy for the Management of its Evaluation and Monitoring Functions 2018 –
- 2018 IOM M&E Guidance: Developing an evaluation brief
- 2018 IOM Evaluation Brief Template
- 2018 IOM Guidance for Addressing Gender in Evaluations
- 2018 IOM Monitoring Policy
- 2018 IOM A Guide for Coaching Internal Evaluators
- 2019 IOM PPR Guide and annexes: Planning, Conducting and Using Project Performance
- 2019 IOM Management Response to the 2017-18 MOPAN Assessment
- 2019 IOM Management Response Matrix
- 2019 IOM Snapshot OF IOM 2019
- 2019 IOM M&E Briefing for Donors: Q&A
- 2020 IOM Evaluation Monitoring and Evaluation Initiatives at IOM (infographic)
- 2020 IOM, Agenda Internal Evaluator Training
- 2020 IOM Continuity of Monitoring and Evaluation Interventions during Covid-19
- 2020 IOM Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General (S-27-6)
- 2020 IOM External Assessment of the Inclusion of Gender in IOM Evaluations
- 2020 IOM Application of the IGF Work Plan
- 2020 IOM Presentation: Opening Webinar for OIG M&E Strategy Development (2021-2023)
- 2020 IOM (Artival) Meta-Evaluation of IOM's Internal and External Evaluations (2017-2019)
- 2020 IOM Evaluation Guidance on Management Response and Follow-Up on IOM Evaluation Recommendations
- 2020 IOM Self-assessment for OECD DAC/UNEG Peer Review
- 2021 IOM OIG Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy 2021-2023
- 2021 IOM Evaluation Guidelines for IOM Development Fund Projects
- 2021 IOM Biennial Evaluation Workplan Office of the Inspector General 2021-2022

#### ASSESSMENT

- 2019 MOPAN 2017-18 Performance Assessments: International Organization for Migration.

#### RELEVANT UN DOCUMENTS

- 2008 UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation
- 2010 UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation ToR and Inception Reports
- 2010 UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports
- 2013 UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work
- 2014 JIU Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System  
UNEG: Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation
- 2014 UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System
- 2016 UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation
- 2016 UNHCR Report of the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee, 2015-2016
- 2019 UNHCR Revision of the terms of reference and criteria for membership of the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee. UNEG/OECD-DAC, 2020, Professional Peer Review of the UNESCO Evaluation Function

#### ANNEX 4: PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

### **UNEG-DAC/Peer Review of the Evaluation Function of IOM**

#### **Terms of Reference**

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## Introduction

The OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation and the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) maintain a Joint Task Force to support professional Peer Reviews of Evaluation in UN organizations. The Peer Review is intended to assess the status of the evaluation function of the entity under review and identify good practice and opportunities to further strengthen the function, with a view to contributing ultimately to improved performance and accountability in international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

In June 2019, the Deputy Director General of the International Organisation for Migration Office (IOM) informed the Joint Task Force of IOM interest to undertake the first Peer Review of its evaluation function with the aim to assess the progress of the ongoing restructuring of the function in line with UNEG Norms and Standards.

IOM Central Evaluation function is located in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), which reports to the IOM Director General and once a year, to the IOM Governing Bodies. IOM has not undertaken a Peer Review of its evaluation function but the *Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network* (MOPAN)<sup>1</sup> carried out an assessment of IOM in 2017-2018, in which IOM central evaluation function was rated 'unsatisfactory' to 'highly unsatisfactory', with a series of recommendations to improve its status and functioning. The MOPAN analysis of the evaluation function was mainly relying on the adherence to UNEG Norms and Standards and to internationally recognized practice.

During the conduct of the MOPAN exercise, several initiatives were already on-going to improve the evaluation function, which were not included in their performance ratings but which were reported as being good steps in the right direction, such as the issuance of the 2018 Evaluation Policy. The Peer Review will also be an important step in assessing the status of the implementation of the recommendations made by MOPAN, as well as their continued relevance.

It is also important to underline that IOM Central Evaluation function in OIG (OIG/Evaluation) has received the mandate to be the main institutional locus for Monitoring in IOM in 2015; the two functions being separate but mutually beneficial, as summarized by the concept of 'M&E', to guarantee that evaluation and monitoring are well established in IOM for an effective oversight and management of IOM activities. Both functions are key to the

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<sup>1</sup> MOPAN is a network of like-minded countries evaluating the performance and development effectiveness of UN organizations and International Financial Institutions.

achievement of institutional accountability and learning . Monitoring has gained in importance and recognition for the conduct of performance and accountability reviews.<sup>2</sup>

The Peer Review will be conducted in-line with the UNEG Peer Review framework,<sup>3</sup> which lays emphasis on three important principles: the independence, credibility, and usefulness of the evaluation function. UNEG norms and standards for evaluation<sup>4</sup> will provide a key reference point for the Peer Review. The Peer Review is intended to be forward-looking, providing guidance on how the evaluation function can be further strengthened to meet emerging challenges and opportunities both within the UN system and more broadly. One of the issues to be examined in IOM will be related to the relevance of including monitoring in the role of a central evaluation office.

The primary audiences for the Peer Review are IOM Senior Management and Governing Bodies, as well as the staff of the OIG/Evaluation and more widely across the organisation. The Peer Review report will be presented to IOM Senior Management and the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance(SCPF). It will be made publicly available through the IOM and UNEG websites. The Peer Review will also be shared with the members of UNEG and of the DAC Evaluation Network for information and feedback on new developments in the evaluation approach and on the utility of the peer review instrument.

This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the Peer Review of the evaluation function of IOM. It describes the background and rationale for the Peer Review, its purpose, the scope, the general approach, the methods, the time schedule and funding arrangements. A draft version of the document was revised and commented upon by the Peer Review Panel and shared with IOM Management.

## **Background**

IOM's internal and external environment has undergone significant changes in recent years, with an increased focus on migration worldwide; the number of migrants has risen, and migration has become a key political focus. With IOM's accession to the United Nations (UN) system in 2016, the organisation became a main reference on migration supporting the attainment of migration-related commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and contributing to the elaboration and implementation of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), being tasked to coordinate the UN Global Migration Network. IOM aims to be an important contributor on migration data and

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<sup>2</sup> The 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals refer for instance to such reviews and not to evaluation. The Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) also included such performance reviews in its revised structure, leaving the conduct of evaluations and their financing to the independent Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group (IAHE).

<sup>3</sup> UNEG Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of Evaluation Function of UN Organizations, approved by the Annual General Meeting of the UN Evaluation Group in 2011.

<sup>4</sup> UNEG: *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*, June 2016. <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914>



analysis for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and is praised for its operational and pragmatic approach to managing migration. IOM is also an important actor in the humanitarian field and closely follows the developments in the humanitarian international architecture following the World Humanitarian summit. IOM is a member of the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

The evaluation function in IOM was formally set-up in 1989 with a specific Programme Evaluation section and a first evaluation policy was approved in 1992 establishing an IOM Evaluation System and an Evaluation unit. In 2000, the Evaluation unit was merged with the Internal Audit Unit and integrated in a newly created Office of the Inspector General. The evaluation policy was then included in an OIG Charter and in the IOM Evaluation Guidelines, and for years the OIG Evaluation function was staffed with one person and with limited budget. In 2013, IOM Member States agreed to increase the staffing level of OIG/Evaluation from one to three persons in the framework of a budget reform process.

Following the inclusion of an institutional role for monitoring formalized through a revision of the OIG Charter in 2015, OIG/Evaluation decided to issue specific policies for IOM Monitoring and for IOM Evaluation, both documents having been finalized and approved in 2018<sup>5</sup>, clarifying also the role of the OIG central evaluation function and of decentralized entities such as the Regional M&E Officers based in each of IOM Regional Offices. At the same time, OIG/Evaluation has developed a three-year strategy 2018-2020 for the management of its evaluation and monitoring functions, requiring its limited resources to be shared between both functions. Specific fundraising was undertaken every year to complement the core funding in order to implement the strategy and funds received.

Some of the main challenges with its limited core resources are to keep pace with the recent developments that IOM is facing and to align its evaluation work accordingly, considering also how evaluation is perceived and evolving internationally. Evaluation is at a crossroads with pressures to become more relevant to ever more rapid cycles of decision-making, to adopt new ways of visualizing and transmitting information and of learning in a digital age, and to remain effective in methodological choices and rigour, dealing with a variety of approaches and concepts, each with its technical and conceptual specificities, such as real-time evaluation, impact evaluation, evaluation of normative work, evaluation in complex settings, contribution analysis, evaluation of humanitarian principles, synthesis evaluations and assessment of value for money.

IOM Evaluation unit has been a member of the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation and among the founding members of UNEG that succeeded it in 2003. This membership allows IOM to closely follow developments related to evaluation inside and outside the UN and adapt its work to the evolving role of evaluation. IOM uses UNEG documents as its main

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<sup>5</sup> IOM Evaluation policy: [https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/evaluation/iom\\_evaluation\\_policy\\_in\\_266\\_external\\_18.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/evaluation/iom_evaluation_policy_in_266_external_18.pdf). IOM Monitoring policy: [https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/evaluation/in\\_31\\_rev1\\_iom\\_monitoring\\_policy.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/evaluation/in_31_rev1_iom_monitoring_policy.pdf)

institutional references for evaluation, such as the UNEG Norms Standards, Ethical Guidelines and key indicators such as the one on budget targets. Active OIG/Evaluation participation in key indicators UNEG working and interest groups is also very useful in framing its work and strategy, for instance with the discussions on decentralized evaluations, on humanitarian evaluations, on the contribution to the SDGs or for the set-up of a system wide evaluation in the UN. IOM became a member of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group in 2018.

The MOPAN 2018 assessment of IOM recognizes the institutional and operational changes that IOM has been facing in recent years, with an important increase of resources during the last decade, its annual budget of 2019 reaching USD 2 billion. The MOPAN assessment of IOM's central evaluation function, and what can be expected in terms of governance and independence, was done taking the new IOM context into account.

The report considers that IOM's evaluation function is still nascent and corporate evaluation is not functionally independent, with limited budgetary independence. Decentralized evaluation coverage is patchy and largely dependent on donor interest and willingness to finance evaluations of their interventions. Quality assurance systems are lacking, and implementation of evaluation recommendations is not regularly tracked. However, an increasing culture of evaluative understanding and practice is emerging, although this needs further active direction, management and resources.

Regarding its limited independence, MOPAN considers that IOM evaluation function does not meet the functional independence criteria established by the global evaluation community. It forms one part of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), which in turn reports directly to the Office of the Director General. The evaluation function has developed a central, biennial evaluation plan, which is submitted to the Director General rather than remaining at the full discretion of the Evaluation Office. Budgetary independence is similarly limited, with evaluation staff funded from the annual budget made available to OIG by management. No additional funds are available for implementation of the central evaluation programme limiting the number of evaluations per year and no annual synthesis report has been produced also due to a lack of resources.

At the time of writing the MOPAN report, the evaluation policy and the architecture for evaluation in IOM was still under development, which has been partially addressed since then. The MOPAN report also notes that no rigorous quality assurance systems is in place and the development of management responses for evaluation reports is voluntary at present. There is no organisation wide system or timeline for tracking implementation of evaluation recommendations, or consequently any annual reporting on this. However, a meta-evaluation is currently on-going to review the quality of evaluation reports published since 2017 and the request for recommendations for the set-up of a quality system is included in the Terms of Reference of the meta-evaluation. The issuance of a new guidance for a mandatory management response and follow-up of evaluations recommendations will also be issued in 2020, addressing MOPAN's recommendation.

MOPAN recognizes that IOM's central evaluation function has worked hard to develop an evaluation culture across the organisation, for example creating a network of M&E

practitioners which acts as a community of practice or developing and delivering M&E and evaluation training events. Demand for evaluation has reportedly increased from country offices, in large part due to outreach efforts by the central evaluation office and supported by the demonstrated utility of existing evaluations where these have been conducted.

In terms of data on evaluation coverage, in 2018 five evaluations were completed by OIG/Evaluation, in addition to 42 decentralized evaluations (28 internal evaluations conducted by IOM trained staff and 14 externally commissioned evaluations). In 2019, five evaluations were completed by OIG/Evaluation in addition to 31 decentralized evaluations (18 internal and 13 external evaluations). All the evaluations are listed on the IOM Evaluation Webpage and are publicly available upon request. OIG/Evaluation is currently working with the IOM Web designers to have the reports directly available through the IOM Website.

### **Purpose of the Peer Review**

In her letter of 21 June 2019 addressed to the UNEG Chair, the IOM Deputy Director General specifies that *“the aim of the Peer Review is to assess the progress of the ongoing restructuring of the function in line with the Norms and Standards established by the UN Evaluation Group. It will also be an opportunity to report on the follow-up of the recommendations of IOM’s first MOPAN assessment (Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network) covering 2016 to mid-2018, whereby the Evaluation function was rated unsatisfactory to highly-unsatisfactory”*.

More precisely as a follow-up of MOPAN recommendations, the review will examine how to strengthen the independence of IOM evaluation function and its financing, and how it can more effectively contribute to organizational decision-making, learning and accountability considering the recent developments in the work and mandate of IOM. Governance and reporting aspects will also be reviewed, including the role, responsibility of, and relationship with IOM Senior Management and Governing Bodies.

In line with this goal, the Peer Review will undertake an assessment based on the UNEG Norms and Standards<sup>6</sup> with a focus on the norms for independence, credibility and utility of the evaluation function at IOM. The definitions of the norms as presented in the UNEG document will be used as reference for the selection of the elements to be reviewed, and if necessary, further clarification can be brought to/by the Peer Review team at the start of the review. Issues of quality and follow up of evaluations across the organization, as well as the leadership and strategic vision of OIG/Evaluation, including its capacity to adjust to the changing environment and to promote an evaluation culture, will be examined. Regarding quality and as already mentioned, an external meta-evaluation of IOM evaluations conducted during the period 2017-2019 should be available at the start of the second quarter 2020.

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<sup>6</sup> See UNEG: *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*, June 2016. <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914>

The Peer Review will provide an analysis of the performance of the evaluation function in IOM and recommendations on the set-up of the Central Evaluation Office to the the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance (SCPF), IOM Director General and other Senior Staff, in particular those involved in the Internal Governance Framework restructuring. More specifically, it will inform discussions and decisions about the role, positioning, leadership, vision, resourcing (including capacity) and mandate of the IOM central evaluation office, as well as arrangements for the evaluation function at decentralized levels.

The Peer review will assess the role of the use of evaluation in institutional- and policy learning and knowledge management. In particular, how knowledge and insights from evaluations are made functional through the follow-up, and feeding insights back into policymaking, programme development, and project design.

### **Subject, Scope, and Limitations**

The Peer Review will assess both the strategic positioning of evaluation in IOM as well as its functioning at an operational level, including the analysis of those factors affecting the quality, credibility and usefulness of evaluations. Such elements have also been covered in the MOPAN report. The UNEG-DAC-Peer Review follows an agreed framework with a blend of standardized and flexible elements to reflect the diversity of UN organizations and their respective evaluation arrangements.

The UNEG guidance for professional Peer Reviews outlines several uses linked with the purposes of the review:

To provide an independent and professional assessment of evaluation functions on the extent to which the UNEG Norms and Standards have been adopted in the organization. In addition to accountability, Peer Reviews identify areas for improvement in relation to evaluation policy and practice, mandate, independence and credibility of the evaluation function.

To enhance the use of evaluation by management, governing bodies and other stakeholders. Peer Reviews lead to increased understanding of the utility of evaluation but also of the need for credibility. Such reviews can recommend needed improvements in the planning, conduct (improved evaluation practice) or use of evaluations, including better integration of the evaluation function and findings into performance management, project/programme development, strategy and policy development. In addition, peer reviews provide a suitable way of “evaluating the evaluators” against the UNEG Norms and Standards, which has led to increased trust and confidence in UN evaluation functions and increased accountability.

To provide support and mutual learning through the sharing of good practice, tools and experiences, and contribute to enhanced professionalization of UN evaluation functions.

IOM Evaluation Policy (2018) and IOM Monitoring Policy (2018), both under the institutional responsibility of OIG/Evaluation, will be important reference documents for the Peer Review, together with the OIG Strategy for the management of its evaluation and monitoring functions. The Peer Review Panel will focus on the adequacy of the present policies, on the efforts made for their implementation, including challenges, and on the central and decentralized evaluation arrangements in the light of IOM’s corporate objectives and

organizational structure. More precisely, the review will examine operational and strategic issues grouped under the following questions/themes:

#### IOM Evaluation and Monitoring Policies:

To what extent IOM evaluation policy conforms with UNEG Norms and Standards, internal and external contextual changes? Should it be updated?;

How well-aligned the IOM monitoring policy is with the IOM evaluation policy? and To what extent is appropriate the monitoring role vested in OIG/evaluation with the role and mandate of a central evaluation office;

How well-aligned is the IOM Evaluation policy with other organisational policies or frameworks relevant to the evaluation function?, (e.g the IOM project handbook and project recording system, results-based management strategy, research, data collection and analysis, knowledge management human resources and budgeting management

To what extent the evaluation policy sufficiently safeguards adequate provision of human and financial resources for evaluation at central level and decentralized levels, including for maintaining and updating technical skills and knowledge for evaluation within IOM?;

How far the policies set out clear functional and organizational arrangements to ensure that evaluation, both at central and decentralized level, is independent / impartial and contributes effectively to learning, accountability and performance improvement within IOM?, And the the development of an IOM evaluation culture.

In what way does the evaluation and monitoring policy respond to an active and relevant learning agenda and knowledge management system and decision-making within IOM?

#### Governance arrangements:

To what extent the organizational and functional relationships of OIG/Evaluation with IOM Management and Governing Bodies are adequate to fulfil its function?;

To what extent are mechanisms in place to protect financial and human resources for evaluation from influence that might undermine the independence and impartiality of centralised and decentralised evaluation work?;

What are the adequate arrangements to ensure independence required for the post of Chief Evaluation, including recruitment, performance management and termination?;

What are the mechanisms to provide IOM Chief Evaluation with adequate access and opportunities to contribute to key corporate processes and decisions, and safeguards in place to avoid conflict of interests between contributions made to decision-making and later evaluations? (e.g arrangements for periodic review of the evaluation functTo what extent are the arrangements for the oversight and quality control of the decentralized evaluation function adequate to fulfil the required quality?

### Management of OIG/Evaluation:

How far management arrangements, working procedures and the internal organization of OIG/Evaluation can support the fulfilment of evaluation and monitoring policies commitments and the achievement of OIG/Evaluation strategic objectives?;

To what extent are approaches used to plan and manage evaluations and follow up, including arrangements to manage the quality and duration of the evaluation process adequate?

What are the development, provision and use of guidance, methods and tools to support and strengthen management of evaluations at central and decentralized levels;

How far the office provides effective oversight of the evaluation function and provides satisfactory reporting on evaluation performance across the organization; (e.g the extent to which OIG/Evaluation staff are seen as influential internally at headquarters and regionally/nationally – and how they can become more so)

To what extent IOM engages with discussions globally on trends in evaluation? (IOM embraces and integrates new technologies in data collection and analysis, new thinking in innovation, trends and dynamics in evaluation and the use of evidence beyond individual evaluations)

To what extent the OIG strategy on regards of evaluation and monitoring is aligned with the actual needs of the Evaluation and Monitoring Policies?.

### Evaluation planning:

To what extent are the methods and criteria used for strategic planning and prioritization of evaluation activities appropriate to UNEG standards?

To what extent and which topics selected for evaluation meet the needs and demands of IOM's key stakeholders? (central and decentralized planning);(e.g topics selected by OIG/Evaluation reflect the strategic directions and concerns of the organization as well as of the UN system and the wider humanitarian system, including challenges around the sustainable development goals and the global compact on migration)

What has been the progress in the efforts made for undertaking meta-analysis and synthesis evaluations for disseminating existing findings and lessons as well as conducting joint and system-wide evaluation work?.

### Evaluation quality<sup>7</sup>:

What is the quality and credibility of the evaluations, from the planning process through the conduct of the evaluations to the quality of the evaluation reports and of evaluation results;

What is the adequacy of the quality assurance system?.

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<sup>7</sup> As already specified, the meta-evaluation will bring responses to those points.

### Evaluation use:

What is the absorptive capacity of the organization for managing evaluation results in terms of knowledge management;

What is the impact of the evaluations (to the extent this can be assessed in detail through a Peer Review), including their influence in supporting learning, enhancing accountability and organizational improvement at the relevant levels;

What are the ways evaluation results are communicated and lessons used both within IOM and by others (such as member states, donors, and cooperating partners);

How adequate are the responsibilities for the follow-up of lessons learned and recommendations, including arrangements for preparation and implementation of a formal management response?;

To what extent management implements decisions based on evaluation recommendations in developing organisational policy, strategy and programming.

### External partnerships and positioning:

How is engagement with external stakeholders including national partners, donors, NGO partners, and the global development/humanitarian evaluation community, including UNEG?;

What is the balance of effort between partnership activities (including participation in relevant networks, conferences and support for national evaluation capacity development) and other priorities set out in the evaluation policy and OIG strategy;

How does IOM evaluation function support the capacity and skills of its stakeholders to use the results of evaluations?;

How does the IOM evaluation function promote the use of evidence and knowledge externally?.

A professional Peer Review of the evaluation function is not a fully-fledged evaluation that can comprehensively evaluate practices, processes, and outcomes in depth. The Panel will report on the limitations of its work accordingly.

The Peer Review will undertake a quality review of a sample of evaluation reports and benchmark this assessment against the IOM meta-evaluation mentioned previously, which should be finalized and made available during the conduct of the Peer Review.

### **Approach, methods and tools**

OIG/Evaluation will undertake a self-assessment using the standard UNEG format to be shared with the Panel before the start of the review. The framework for the self-assessment is consistent with the ToR for the Peer Review. The self-assessment will include all of the items contained in paragraph 26 (section a through f). This will be supplemented by further information to be assembled by the Panel's members/consultant, based on a review of relevant documentation, interviews and round table discussions.

*[To be further developed by the panel members if needed].*

## **Reporting**

The final report of the Peer Review will present an overview of the evaluation function at IOM and key findings relating to its independence, credibility and utility, leadership and vision. The report will present conclusions and recommendations for action. The report will have a maximum of 30-40 pages, supplemented by an executive summary and annexes. The report will be made available to key implementing partners and stakeholders, particularly to those consulted in the course of the Peer Review.

The draft report will be circulated to OIG/Evaluation and Senior management for comments and factual corrections.

The Peer Review team will submit the report to IOM Senior Management through the OIG/Evaluation office. It is expected that the Chair of the Peer Review Panel would present the findings to the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance and that Management would submit and present a formal Management Response.

The final report will also be provided to the joint UNEG/DAC-Task Force for dissemination among its respective constituencies and to interested cooperating partners. The Peer Review team will report on the review's progress to OIG/Evaluation and to the joint DAC/UNEG Task Force and will provide the DAC-UNEG Task Force with feedback on the experience of the Peer Review to enable the members of UNEG and DAC evaluation network to learn from experience and further strengthen the peer review mechanism.

## **Responsibility of OIG/Evaluation**

OIG/Evaluation serves as the main contact point within IOM for the conduct of the review. It will provide requested information and data, including the following:

Names and details of contact persons whom the Panel wish to contact;

List of persons to meet among IOM Management;

E-library of evaluation products accessible via Internet;

Organigram of IOM showing the position of Evaluation and decision-makers;

Documents specific to evaluation at IOM and those outlining the leadership role that IOM plays in the UN system and in the broader development, humanitarian and evaluation fields.



### **Documents to be consulted (not exhaustive)**

Guidelines, templates, and other evaluation tools as published by OIG/Evaluation or other units, including those related to evaluation capacity development;

Relevant IOM documents including documents concerning IOM strategic vision, RBM, monitoring, operational procedures, and risk management;

Evaluation Policy and Monitoring Policy, OIG/Evaluation strategy and other relevant documents.

### **Review Process and Schedule**

Peer Review activities began in July-August 2020. A preparatory information gathering phase will take place between September and November, while the Peer Review Panel will undertake formal visits to IOM Headquarters in November-December 2020, and provide a final report for presentation to IOM Senior Management in February 2021.

The Peer Review main phases consist of (*indicative timing is shown in brackets*):

Preparation (July- August 2020): Mobilization of the Panel.

Fact-finding September-December 2020:

Visit by the Panel to IOM Headquarters (November/December 2020); interviews with selected staff of relevant IOM units and Senior Management; analysis and triangulation of findings; preparation of draft report.

Peer Exchange (November/December 2020): visit of Panel to IOM HQ for peer exchange; further consultations; presentation of key findings and conclusions to Senior Management ; preparation of final report, incorporating feedback from Senior Management

Presentation of Final Report (February 2021):

### **Resources**

The Peer Review budget will be shared between UNEG and IOM, IOM already having committed a contribution of USD 25,000 and UNEG being ready to allocate a maximum amount of USD 15,000.

### **Panel Composition**

Adan Ruiz Villalba, Head of Evaluation at the World Intellectual Property Organization

Robert Stryk, Regional Evaluation Advisor Middle East and North Africa Regional Office at United Nations Children Fund

Meike Goede, Senior Researcher at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands