



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency

MIDTERM INTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE “REGIONAL PROGRAMME AGAINST
HUMAN TRAFFICKING (UKRAINE, MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, BELARUS) PHASE II”

Project data

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1. Executive summary

This internal mid-term evaluation of the Regional Programme Against Human Trafficking (RPaHT 2) implemented in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Belarus was commissioned by the IOM Mission in Ukraine to review the project's performance and achievements to date, to identify best practices and aspects that could be improved, as well as to propose any correctional/additional/follow-up activities, as necessary and depending on resource availability. Based on the lessons learnt, needs identified and good practices developed in the first phase of the project (CT.0795), the second phase aims to strengthen cooperation and dialogue in the sphere of combating human trafficking through regional exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice between Governments and civil society in targeted countries.

The evaluation was conducted in line with IOM standard evaluation methodology and sought to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the programme in the fulfilment of its objective and outcomes, as well as the extent to which the results have been reached, ascertain the efficiency of the project implementation, assess the likely impact and potential for achieving sustainability, while paying attention to cross cutting aspects of gender, youth and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

The RPaHT2 was found to be very relevant to the current and emerging contexts in all four countries individually and within the region. The project recognizes the heterogeneous nature of vulnerability to Human Trafficking (HT) in the respective countries and has demonstrated flexibility by specific targeting of areas of high risk.

The project is largely on track to meet its planned outputs and targets even though there was late start-up. However, the project needs to focus on strengthening programme monitoring and evaluation to enable better tracking of progress towards results at all levels and documenting good practices for scalability within the region and beyond.

The programme has demonstrated good potential and is on course to achieve most of its expected outputs and outcomes, effectively contributing towards improved prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships on TIP in the country. The programme responds to a critical need in the project countries and region and has can be considered for continuation and expansion.

2. List of acronyms

CT	Counter-Trafficking
CSO or NGO	Civil Society Organization or Non-Governmental (Non-Commercial) Organization (used interchangeably in the report)
ECC	
GBV	Gender-based violence
GRETA	Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
HT	Human trafficking
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key informant interviews
DGs	MDGs Multidisciplinary groups (in Belarus)
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
OECD/DAC	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
PSEA	Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse
RPaHT 2	Regional Programme Against Human Trafficking, second phase
SDG	Sustainable development goal
SMART indicators	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound
TIP	Trafficking in persons
ToC	Theory of change
ToR	Terms of references
VoT	Victim of Trafficking
WHO	World Health Organisation

ToC

3. Introduction

This internal mid-term evaluation of the Regional Programme Against Human Trafficking (RPaHT 2) implemented in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Belarus was commissioned by the IOM Mission in Ukraine, which serves as the management site for the project. The mid-term evaluation covered the period from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2019¹ and four project countries: Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and Georgia. Interviews with project implementers (IOM and La Strada), their implementing partners in the four countries, and stakeholders (state agencies and NGOs) took place in the country capitals of Kyiv, Chisinau and Minsk, except for Georgia where an IOM representative was interviewed from Kyiv. Furthermore, in Ukraine, field visits were conducted in Chernihiv, Nizhyn and Ivanivska territorial communities.

The evaluation was conducted to respond to questions according to the OECD/DAC criteria as per the Terms of Reference (Annex 8.1). Additional questions were included into the evaluation matrix to measure Accountability to Affected Populations including Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of beneficiaries, as well as good practices and drawbacks experienced by the project. Further, specific questions looked at consideration made during project design and implementation on the cross-cutting themes of gender and human rights.

¹ Although the project formally started at the beginning of 2017, in fact the first instalment was received and the activities started only at the end of 2017. Due to this it was agreed with the donor, that a project will be extended for 1 more year (2020) to be able to finalize all the committed activities. The no-cost extension amendment was signed on 29 November 2019.

4. Context and purpose of the evaluation

4.1. Context

The project is being implemented in Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and Georgia, part of the South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia region where according to data accumulated by IOM, the situation is, *among others*, characterized by the following common trends:

- Most of the human trafficking originating in the region is intraregional, more specifically within sub-regions (Central Asia, South Caucasus, Western Balkans and Eastern Europe).
- Forced labour, including in the construction and agricultural sectors, domestic servitude and begging, is still the main purpose for human trafficking in the region.
- Rising share of trafficking in men and trafficking for labour exploitation.

In Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, the situation is additionally characterized by the specific risks of human trafficking induced by the protracted conflict in Ukraine that also impacted neighbouring Belarus and Moldova. Crisis-affected and displaced population in Ukraine and Ukrainians who fled the conflict to neighbouring Moldova and Belarus face heightened risks, including fraudulent offers of recruiters, due to their irregular situation. Similarly, in Georgia people living in economically deprived rural areas, including internally displaced persons from the occupied territories of the country (Abkhazia and South Ossetia), are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Besides increased vulnerabilities of the population induced by the conflict and crisis situations, the project countries evidenced newly emerging (or less visible before) forms of human trafficking, such as trafficking for illicit drugs transport (“drug mules”), trafficking for appropriation of social allowances that calls for consolidated efforts in prevention and protection. Trafficking in children remains highly under-reported in all project countries and requires further attention to identify and assist child trafficking survivors. In IOM’s experience globally and also in the region, crisis and conflict often disrupt traditional response mechanisms and lead to deprioritizing combatting human trafficking on the agenda of government, law enforcement and civil society, and limit adequate funding, thus making perpetrators invincible. Therefore, additional effort is required from the international actors to strengthen states’ capacity and commitment to proactively prevent human trafficking, to conduct educational campaigns that target at-risk population, to identify and protect trafficking survivors and to improve overall response and referral mechanisms by sensitizing non-specialised service providers and responding to issues that trigger human trafficking (such as gender-based violence).

Based on the lessons learnt, needs identified and good practices developed in the first phase of the project (CT.0795), the second phase aims to strengthen cooperation and dialogue in the sphere of combating human trafficking through regional exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice between Governments and civil society of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus through achieving the following three Outcomes:

- (1) Regional and national response to TIP (and protection of Victims of Trafficking (VoTs)) is improved through consolidated coordination platforms, cooperation among all relevant actors and improved counter trafficking policies.
- (2) Civil society organizations in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus take a lead advocating for improved counter-trafficking policies and state response
- (3) Knowledge base on human trafficking is solidified and used to adjust prevention and protection strategies in the region.

The project's initial timeline was between January 2017 and December 2019; the project has been extended on a no-cost basis till December 31, 2020, upon agreement with the donor. Project start was delayed by almost 12 months due to delays in signing project agreement and subsequent disbursement of funds. The total project funding is NOK60,200,000.

4.2. Evaluation purpose

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to review the project's performance and achievements to date, to identify best practices and aspects that could be improved, as well as to propose any correctional/additional/follow-up activities, as necessary and depending on resource availability.

The evaluation is being conducted for use by: a) the project management team to re-direct if necessary the implementation of the activities within the project; b) the project partners in the four countries to identify the project strengths and weaknesses and to improve the performance based on the mid-term evaluation findings; c) the donor, Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs to assess value for money for the funded activities.

5. Evaluation framework and methodology

The evaluation used a mixed methods design with both quantitative and qualitative data being collected. This entailed simultaneous examination of routinely collected programme data and analysis of the perspectives of various stakeholders who had been involved in its design and implementation. This was accomplished through a review of programme indicators at start and mid-term of the programme, and interviews with key stakeholders and program beneficiaries at national and sub national levels. The programme's result framework was used to extract quantitative data on the programme's indicators which was used to evaluate performance to date. The generated results were triangulated with the qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of programme performance against the agreed evaluation criteria.

The mid-term evaluation was conducted in line with IOM standard evaluation methodology and procedures as outlined in the IOM Project Handbook, consisting of three main stages:

1. Desk review – project document, interim reports to the donor, key outputs to date, as well as final documents on the predecessor programme, stage which resulted in an Inception Report;
2. Field Visit to observe project activities and interview project stakeholders; and
3. Analysis and Synthesis Phase in which the results were compiled into this evaluation report, along with an accompanying evaluation brief to summarize the main findings and recommendations.

5.1. Data sources and collection

An *Evaluation Matrix (Annex 8.2)* was developed to outline how the field data collection and analysis aligned to the evaluation questions posed in the *Evaluation ToR* (Annex 8.1), according to the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability while paying attention to cross cutting aspects of gender, human rights, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

The evaluators also added two additional questions – one under effectiveness related to good practices or drawbacks, and a second under an added section on Accountability to Affected Populations related to PSEA and beneficiary feedback and complaint mechanisms. Data collection tools were developed following the evaluation matrix for use in the field work.

Document Review

The first phase of the evaluation involved a desk review of existing documentation from government departments in the four project countries, IOM and other stakeholders to better understand the design and implementation of the regional programme. This helped to bring clarity on the original design of the

programme, changes that have been made from Phase 1 and since inception of this phase, successes scored as well as challenges faced, key enablers and barriers to programme implementation. Activities under this phase included:

1. An assessment of programme goals, objectives and implementation plan.
2. Review the phase 1 evaluation report and the extent to which recommendations from the review informed the development and implementation of Phase 2.
3. Mapping of routinely collected data on all programmed indicators.
4. Review and consolidation of information relating to program activities from progress and activity reports.
5. Identification of information gaps and selection of the best ways to collect data that would fill information gaps and needs through subsequent qualitative and quantitative data collection.

Quantitative data collection

The results framework of the programme was reviewed to identify input, output, outcome, process and other indicators that are measurable and whose analysis can be compared over time. Available routinely collected data was examined to determine its appropriateness (data quality and completeness) to answer the evaluation questions. Data collected at baseline was used for analysis of progress towards programme success. The data was extracted from inception report and interim narrative report different documents, including activity reports and routine data sources and cleaned for analysis.

Qualitative data collection

The qualitative arm of the evaluation utilized key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. All respondents who took part were sampled purposively. Key informant interviews (KII) were conducted with a broad range of key project stakeholders at national level in the three countries of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova based on their roles as implementing, coordinating and cooperating partners. In Ukraine, field work was also conducted in three sub national regions located in close proximity to the capital. Further, KII were conducted with the programme regional management team. Semi structured in-depth interviews were conducted with project beneficiaries. Selection of these beneficiaries was based on consultations with IOM offices and took into account age, sex and category (victim or potential victim of trafficking) in line with WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Interviewing Trafficked Women².

5.2. Data analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed using framework analysis based on the program's logic framework and implicit theory of change which was applied to identify recurring themes in implementation sites and to draw comparisons necessary for identifying differences and similarities in the context that may have

² [www.who.int/gender/documents/en/final%20recommendations% 2023%20oct.pdf](https://www.who.int/gender/documents/en/final%20recommendations%2023%20oct.pdf)

affected implementation. Quantitative data was summarized using proportions and counts to measure progress towards the targets sets for the outcome and output indicators in the results framework.

5.3. Sampling

All participants were purposively sampled based on their roles in project implementation or as beneficiaries of different services under the programme. Five projects beneficiaries have been interviewed in total, including individuals from diverse groups (VoTs, potential VoT, youth participating in prevention activities)

Secondary data sources for the evaluation were programme monitoring reports, whereas primary data sources included key informant and in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussions. A total of 41 key informant interviews (KIIs) with project staff, government and non-government stakeholders were conducted through face to face interviews. There were 5 in depth interviews conducted with project beneficiaries. 3 focus group discussions were conducted with key stakeholders from the Oblasts in Ukraine. All participants who took part in the data collection were provided with enough information on the purpose of the evaluation to make informed choice on being included as well as their right to withdraw.

5.4. Limitations and mitigation strategies

The project did not have an explicitly articulated Theory of Change and hence the evaluators had to envision one based on project documents and information from stakeholders. While the monitoring data received from the project team was useful, it was insufficient for the team to fully quantify progress toward meeting all of the outputs, outcomes and objectives. There was insufficient evidence to show that there was a comprehensive and uniform M&E system used in all the four countries to measure and track results at various levels. An additional challenge was that most of the programme indicators were quantitative and numerical, without any qualitative indicators and did not do full justice in showcasing the complex results the project has contributed to, particularly in influencing institutional practices.

Due to time and resource constraints the team had to split during the second week to cover Moldova and Belarus independently, which affected the quality of the work done. However, this was mitigated by using agreed standard tools for the field work, while the first week in Ukraine where the evaluators worked together allowed for the refining and synchronization of approaches. Evaluators could not visit Georgia and had to rely on one KII with the IOM project officer who travelled to Ukraine for the meeting. Further, most interviews were conducted through interpreters and while these were professionals, the use of interpreters could have affected the flow of the discussions and Interviews with VoT beneficiaries were conducted with IOM project staff as interpreters due to issues of client safety and confidentiality. To manage this, effort was made to simplify the questions so that they could easily be explained in the local language to the respondent, while probing was also done where the response did not correspond to the question, pointing to some misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the question. Due to time limitations, very few project beneficiaries were reached, especially victims of trafficking. Further there

was not enough information on some indicators for outcomes one and three to enable a full analysis towards achievement of these results or project contribution.

6. Findings

This section presents the findings of the evaluation, organized according to the evaluation criteria, with the related conclusions in italic text.

Relevance

The Regional Programme Against Human Trafficking (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia) Phase 2 was found to be very relevant to the current and emerging contexts in all of the four countries individually and within the region.

Appropriateness of programme logic and results framework

The evaluation reviewed the programme documents to determine how appropriate the design of the programme had been in realizing the overall goal of the RPaHT 2. The objective of the project was appropriate but seemed to be more suited to an outcome than objective as it represents a means to an end rather than the logical end of preventing and responding to TIP. The evaluation assessed the outcomes to gauge whether they were specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound (SMART). The outcomes were clearly defined, and respective outputs were found to be suitable in meeting the outcomes. The outputs were specific and had quantitative or qualitative measures suitable to the category of support that was being received. However, it was noted that most of the indicators were quantitative in nature and thus tended to under represent the qualitative results of the project.

The design and formulation of the RPaHT 2 was relevant in supporting the implementation of the various national Counter Trafficking strategies and National Action Plans in place, whose interventions were structured around the 4 Ps of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnerships, with varying degrees of emphasis on each according to the national context. Stakeholders felt that support to VOTs for reintegration was a weak link, without which VOTs are at risk of being re trafficked. Thus they, felt more needed to be done in this aspect both within and beyond the project scope.

The project outputs and outcomes within the results framework had time and budget allotments to ensure that results would be achieved within the three-year programme duration. However, the late start of the project resulted in delays in achievement of results as well as affecting other linked results. Further, the project monitoring, evaluation and learning component was found to be quite weak, with routine implementing being done by project staff who had other competing project tasks, and hence could not dedicate full attention to a robust monitoring framework. Increasing project staff complement

and skills sets to include Monitoring and evaluation experts would alleviate the limited harvesting and documentation of higher level results.

Based on the evolving needs on the ground, the project has been flexible enough to accommodate additional interventions towards achieving its stated results. The addition of activities such as training of airlines, road and sea transport sectors, as well as members of the amalgamated territorial communities in Ukraine has been driven by the changing dynamics of human trafficking as well as the national governments decentralization reform agendas.³ These changes were found to be appropriate as they were responding to the identified needs on the ground, by curbing the means by which VoTs are moved from point of recruitment to point of exploitation.

Programme assumptions and risks

During the initial development of the RPaHT 2, an assessment was made of the risks and assumptions that would impact on project results. The majority of assumptions seemed to hold true, including strong government commitments towards addressing TIP in all the project countries, civil society actors remain engaged and committed to joint action on CT including facilitating identification of cases of TIP, referral of the cases to the appropriate stakeholders and providing response services to VoTs.

However, it was noted that two assumptions did not hold true. The first assumption was a commitment of the Belarusian Government to implement its obligations stipulated by Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings⁴ and GRETA⁵ recommendations⁶. Findings suggest that the Government of Belarus has only adopted those recommendations from the GRETA report that align to their own findings, thus negating or weakening the monitoring role of civil society organisations. This is likely to impact on achievement of project outcomes on cooperation and coordination by all stakeholders as well as the advocacy role of civil society on CT being weakened.

Secondly, in Moldova, a major assumption was that there would be no major reforms impacting on project implementation. However, the government reformed the national coordination mechanism for CT

³**Amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs)** were created in the context of **Ukraine's decentralization reform**, which aims to form effective local government and territorial organization of authority to create and support a genuine living environment for people, provide high-quality and accessible public services, raise the institutes of direct rule by the people, align the interests of the government and territorial communities. This reform makes local government accountable to the electorate for operational effectiveness and to the Government for lawfulness. Ukraine started decentralization in 2014 with the adoption of the Concept of the Reform of Local Government and Territorial Organization of Authority (4/1/2014) Laws on Cooperation of Territorial Communities (6/17/2014), On Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities (2/5/2015), and financial decentralization amendments to the Budget and Tax Codes. Based on provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, this process enabled creation of an effective and capable institute of local government on a basic level - amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs). 882 ATCs were created in the 4 years of reform by amalgamating 4,043 communities (36.7% of the total number of local councils as of 1/1/2015), accounting for 38% of the area of Ukraine and about 69% of its population. More information on the reforms is available here:

<https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/reformi/efektivne-vryaduvannya/reforma-decentralizaciyi>

⁴<https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008371d>

⁵<https://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/greta>

⁶<https://rm.coe.int/greta-2017-16-fgr-byr-en/168072f2bf>

by creating a Directorate of Permanent Secretaries within the State Chancellery, which effectively saw CT coordination being brought under this unit. However, this resulted in a reduction of staff from 4 to 1 person working fully on CT issues, thus affecting national coordination. While, reports indicate that this has not negatively impacted achievement of project results this is likely to affect programme efficiencies in the medium to long term as the one person tasked with coordinating CT initiatives becomes increasingly overwhelmed with work.

One risk that the project anticipated at design was that State bodies of Belarus could negatively react on monitoring activities of NGOs. This has been evidenced by the challenges that La Strada Belarus has experienced in getting registration to conduct their activities under this project, thus limiting their monitoring role within the project. Quite a lot of project implementation time has been lost to resolve this issue, which remained unresolved at the time of the evaluation although there was indication that a potential solution had been found around the problem, which would require La Strada Belarus to register under a different status⁷.

The programme is experiencing some difficulty in realizing some of its targets due to i) Political changes in the operating environment linked to elections and decentralization reforms, necessitating some reorganisation of the work to be done. For instance, in Moldova the coordination structure for counter trafficking response was reorganized into part of a larger body on human rights with resultant loss of staff, which has slowed down some implementation ii) issue of the registration of funds allocated for La Strada in Belarus iii) staff turnover especially within government departments.

Stakeholder engagement

As a successor to the RPaHT 1, this regional programme was found to be quite responsive to the needs of stakeholders and was lauded by many stakeholders as being flexible and responsive to the evolving and ever-changing land scape of HT in the four countries. Stakeholders thus reported that the programme was a good fit with their needs and the national priorities. However, there was indication that consultations during programme design within the various IOM country offices had been sub optimal, with some missions, namely IOM Belarus, reporting that they had had little input into the budget allocation and breakdown and thus affecting their ability to deliver optimally on project design.

The regional Dialogue Initiatives were lauded as a success by creating networks of partnerships that stakeholders that one could turn to in times of need. This was viewed as particularly pertinent for those human trafficking cases that occurred across borders. Stakeholders indicated that knowing the counterpart to call for assistance and having met in these forums helped to move the process along faster and break down many bureaucratic barriers that would otherwise exist. The RPaHT 2 brought together different stakeholders whose expertise in various areas provided strategic support to the implementation of the programme across all the 4 Ps. Through interactions with the different government departments as part of the evaluation, it was felt that the objectives and the activities that had been set out in the programme documents, were relevant to their respective mandates and strategic directions as they

⁷This issue was finally resolved at the time of evaluation report writing and implementation has since commenced.

enhanced their ability to provide effective counter trafficking prevention, protection and prosecution services. Despite promoting greater participation of the government entities in programme implementation, there was limited demonstration of their involvement in the planning and design of the programme. *A notable achievement is that despite the changing political landscape, inclusive of the decentralization reforms in Ukraine and Moldova, and realignment of coordination functions from one authority to another in Moldova, the project had continuous engagement with respective government departments that enabled smooth and ongoing realignment to government priorities.*

During the implementation of the RPaHT 2, a project Steering Committee was put in place to ensure effective and efficient delivery of technical assistance. The steering committee brings together internal and external multi sectoral stakeholders from all four project countries and provides an opportunity for the different actors to play an active role in the review of programme activities, progress achieved and provide input that could be used to guide effective implementation as well as sharing lessons learnt and good practices. The committee meets biannually and there is active participation by the different stakeholders to ensure enhanced coordination.

Policy alignment

The RPaHT 2 was found to be aligned to the principal acts governing counter trafficking efforts in all the four countries, which provide the overarching national operation frameworks in the respective countries. Further, the programme was in alignment with national counter trafficking strategies and National Action Plans in the various countries, which were largely modelled around the 4 Ps (prevention, protection, prosecution, partnerships). In Belarus, counter trafficking has been declared a priority by the national government and a special rapporteur has been designated from the Ministry of the Interior who reports to the president, demonstrating high level political commitment to the issue. However, such progress is hampered by restrictive government policies on registration of NGOs, which has affected project implementation by La Strada Belarus since project start. In Moldova, efforts have been made to integrate the coordination of HT activities under a larger body on Human Rights, while operationally the national government has moved away from vertical HT programming to integrating HT with other victim related offences such as GBV.

There is recognition that the HT landscape in the project countries and in the region is evolving, with new forms of trafficking emerging. For instance, in Belarus there has been an increase in cases involving child grooming for pornography, while in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia there has been more cases of VoTs being recruited and engaged in criminal activities such as being drug mules, which the current legislative and technical framework have limited capacity to deal with. The programme will thus need to explore means and ways of expanding its support to also build capacities in these areas. Some forms of HT are not recognized as such in national legislation and thus present both opportunities and challenges to the project. For instance, in Belarus, labour exploitation is not recognized as a form of HT.

The project recognizes the heterogenous nature of vulnerability to HT in the respective countries and has demonstrated flexibility by specific targeting of areas of high risk inclusive the conflict areas in Ukraine

and the Transnistria region⁸ in Moldova, a territory with an undetermined international-legal status where persons are at heightened risk of being trafficked.

Ukraine and Moldova have recently experienced political changes in government and with these changes there has been and still ongoing redefining of government priorities. The project through the various stakeholders, thus needs to keep track and engaged in this process to lobby for the retention of TIP in the national agendas.

Relevance of selected project countries

There is good evidence to support the selection of the current countries into the regional programme, as they share common borders as well as having similar trends which allows for joint programming and experience sharing. For instance, the conflict in Ukraine has affected both Belarus and Moldova with heightened risk of people in the conflict zones being trafficked. However, it would seem that all the project countries experience challenges of their nationals being trafficked into Russia and Romania and thus would be worth considering having some engagements with Russia within the regional programme. For instance, Russian representatives could be invited to some of the regional consultative meetings as the situation demands. Several of the project countries have since been granted visa free entry into the European Union and this is seen to have led to a shift in trends of trafficking and the methods used by traffickers, given that this has reduced the trap used by traffickers of offering to assist their would-be victims get into the European Union.

Global and Donor priorities

Counter trafficking remains a priority on the agenda of several bilateral donors in the project countries. Notably, for the Norwegian government, counter trafficking is a significant priority and with the EU visa free protocol, a considerable number of victims are being trafficked into Europe. Other donors who maintain trafficking in persons as a priority include Canada, the United States of America and the European Union.

The RPaHT 2 is also aligned to the sustainable development goals (SDGs) as prioritized by the project countries. The SDGs specifically mention human trafficking in the targets of three goals: 5, 8, and 16⁹:

- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

In Ukraine, countering non-declared labour has been identified as a national priority and is in line with SDG 8 on decent work. In all project countries, the GRETA assessments, findings and recommendations

⁸**Transnistria**, also spelled Transdniestria and also called Pridnestrovskiaia Moldavskaia Republic and Pridnestrovie, is a territory with an undetermined international-legal status in Moldova, located on the east bank of the Dniester River. More information is available here: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Transdniestria>

⁹<https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/sustainable-development-goals-aim-end-human-trafficking/29864>

help shape the national response. This aligns to the project second outcome on strengthening civil society advocacy role on HT, as these GRETA assessments serve as an independent reflection of national performance in addressing HT and identifying where gaps and weaknesses in the national response still persist.

Effectiveness

The project is largely on course to meet its results and targets. The project tracking of results is rather weak with little collection of evidence on achievements of outcomes. Much of the available information is on outputs and hence it was difficult for the evaluators to quickly gather information on these high-level results. In the remaining implementation period, the project would do well to focus on strengthening its monitoring and evaluation systems.

The evaluators assessed the achievement towards the results using the following ranking, which was developed based on progress made towards achievements of stated indicators and targets. Results were stated to be achieved, if all the set targets for the indicators had been met fully or surpassed, while those targets which were found to be at least on 67% progress or more were on track (given that this is a three year project, for purposes of assessing progress, the evaluators assumed that each year would account for at least one third of project results achievement). Indicator targets that were below 67% were reported to be off target, while only those indicators for which no activities had been initiated or were in the very early stages were categorized as no progress.

Progress towards achievement of outcomes was evaluated both on progress towards achieving contributing outputs as well as progress towards contributing to the stated indicator results for the particular outcome. Thus, an outcome could be on track despite having several off-track outputs.

Achieved	On track	Off track	No progress
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Progress against results is presented below, divided according to regional (REG) results and the national results in Ukraine (UA), Moldova (MD), Belarus (BY) and Georgia (GE).

Objective: To strengthen cooperation and dialogue in the sphere of combating human trafficking through regional exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice between Governments and civil society of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus

Ranking – Offtrack towards achievement

The project is off course to meet its objective, having so far catalyzed three formal and informal initiatives with a regional outlook out of a total target of seven, namely the “Invisible in Plain Sight” campaign that has been carried out in all project countries, the first Regional Dialogue initiative for the four project countries as well as the successful inclusion of HT issues in the curriculum and job tasks of labour inspectors, firstly in Ukraine and then also in the other countries in the region. This represents about 43% indicator target achievement to date. Notably the project only has one indicator to measure this result and could benefit from having more than one measure of success. Stakeholders found the

regional cooperation and dialogues quite beneficial as they also fostered creation of networks that they could rely on in situations requiring cross border action on HT. Further, the creation of multi country, multi stakeholder task forces to investigate and respond to HT incidents have been lauded by stakeholders as a fruitful initiative.

Outcome 1:Regional and national response to TIP, including protection of VoTs, is improved through consolidated coordination platforms, enhanced cooperation among all relevant actors and improved HT policies.

Ranking – On track towards achievement

Noteworthy progress has been made towards achieving this outcome, with at least 67% achievement of the planned regional meetings held to date. These have included regional policy dialogues, regional capacity building events on child pornography as well as the media. Further, through the project progress has been made on legal reforms with both Article 149 of the Criminal Code and the HT Law in Ukraine being reviewed. During the remaining project implementation time, it is anticipated that the balance of regional meetings will be convened.

The project has been able to capacitate at least 70% of its targeted beneficiaries on economic empowerment and with at least 50% of those trained successfully starting and running a business enterprise. There would be need for further analysis to investigate how sustainable these business initiatives are and if at all they have led to long term financial independence for the VoTs. In Ukraine, following project capacity building and advocacy, 47 local governments subsequently included counter trafficking in their local development policies.

In Ukraine, the capacity building of Justice stakeholders has contributed to increased prosecution of cases, with more convictions secured.

Output UA1.1: NRM stakeholders have enhanced understanding of new or less known forms of THB and are enabled to better prevent and prosecute it

Ranking – On track towards achievement

The programme target in Ukraine was to train 9,450 people by the end of the project. At the time of the evaluation, 3,289 people (2,648 female) had been trained.

In line with the governmental decentralization reforms, these trainings largely targeted the Ukrainian ATCs and Local Governments with 258 representatives being reached and trained. Following these trainings, these ATCs were able to identify and provide services for 386 VoTs. Of the two planned information campaigns, one has been conducted and during this campaign, 39 VoTs were identified as people came forward after receiving information. This demonstrated the immediate impact of the intervention as people were able to utilize the given information to self-identify as VoTs. All but the first indicator on training of NRM stakeholders was on course at the time of the evaluation.

Output MD1.1: National HT platforms have consolidated their efforts to prevent human trafficking through national information campaigns

Ranking – On track towards achievement

The project has conducted at 3 of the total 3 targeted national information campaigns including the “Invisible in plain sight” campaign. The project planned to reach at least 12 districts with information campaigns, however, at the time of evaluation, about half of those had been reached. Thus far, the geographic reach of the campaigns has been largely focused on Chisinau and surrounding areas and deliberate planning needs to be made to reach other at risk geographic locations.

BY 1.1: Mechanisms for regular coordination between the state and civil society for implementation of the GRETA recommendations are established

Ranking – On track towards achievement

Significant efforts have been demonstrated in strengthening multi sectoral coordination of the national HT response, including recommendations made towards improving the NRM. Although the government of Belarus has not adopted all the GRETA recommendations, they have taken steps to implement those they have accepted including engaging stakeholders and civil society on the same.

REG 1.1. Governments and civil societies of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus competencies raises through the regional dialogue platforms

Ranking – On track towards achievement

The project supported the convening of two regional dialogues and one training for stakeholders from the project countries. Over and above the knowledge transfer gained during these forums, stakeholders alluded to the network building opportunities this presented. In cases spanning national boundaries, they are able to use these networks to expedite action. The platforms have been useful in sharing information on successful interventions initiated in one country, which have been adopted and adapted by other project countries. For example, Ukraine pioneered the “Invisible in plain sight” campaign and this has since been conducted by Belarus and Moldova following exchange of information.

Output UA1.2: Labour inspectors have improved competencies to counter trafficking for labour exploitation

Ranking – Achieved

The project has been able to meet and exceed its target of 100 labour inspectors trained on HT by reaching and training 120 labour inspectors (65 Females). Following the trainings, post training assessments conducted did demonstrate knowledge improvement amongst at least 90% of training participants. Following the training, a screening tool has also been developed to aid in identification of cases of labour exploitation. Post training, twoVoTs had been identified by the labour inspectors and referred to the relevant authorities for assistance. Although the number ofVoTs identified may be low, it

however, demonstrates utilization of knowledge gained on HT with the expectation that with the passage of time more cases may be identified.

Output MD1.2 Transnational referrals between Ukraine and Moldova are supported through ad hoc transnational referral mechanism (TRM)

Ranking – On track towards achievement

Due to the political situation in the Odessa region, the project has provided significant support towards prevention and identification ofVoTs and at the time of the evaluation had achieved 95% of its target number ofVoTs identified and assisted. Furthermore, capacity building of local state and non-state actors is ongoing and broad based to address issues including challenges in accessing legal documentation to reintegration assistance.

Output UA1.3: Personnel of major travel hubs have increased competencies to identify VoTs and refer them for further assistance

Ranking – Achieved

The project has already met and surpassed its target of training 90 staff from transport hubs by reaching and training 190 personnel (109 Female), inclusive of pilots, cabin crew and various staff members from ground handling services, Immigration and Customs working in two international airports in Kyiv and one airline. The trainings have been well received and engagements have continued requesting for more support in this area. While noVoT cases have been identified following these trainings, heightened awareness by service providers of potentialVoTs has been reported.

Recently one of our ground handling staff noted a teenage girl who was travelling alone and seemed nervous. They quickly took an interest in the girl and spoke to her to establish all was in order and upon further investigation her parents confirmed that she was indeed ok and travelling to a known destination – KII airline official

Output MD1.3 Staff of the newly created National Agency for Social Assistance and social workers within the social protection system have their knowledge on identifying and assisting VoTs enhanced

Ranking – Off track towards achievement

One of the key tools to achieve this result is the establishment of an e-learning platform. However, at the time of the evaluation this had not yet been completed. The process of recruiting consultants to undertake the exercise had just been completed. However, of note is that the National Agency on Social Assistance has already created a link within their website where this course will be accessed from.

Output UA1.4: Male and female VoTs are granted access to needs-based reintegration services and justice

Ranking – On track towards achievement

Out of a targeted 1,500 beneficiaries to be assisted, the project has reached 971 (674 male) [65%]VoTS with comprehensive reintegration services inclusive of transportation, medical and psychological assistance, legal services and economic empowerment support. Of theVoTs assisted, 108 (55 Males) received medical assistance at the Medical Rehabilitation Centre, representing 33% of the project target; while 154 (85 Males) were trained in business or self-employment initiatives, which accounted for 70% of the project target.

Output MD1.4 On-board/ground staff of international transport systems in Moldova have their knowledge on identification and referral of VoTs consolidated

Ranking – Off track towards achievement

At the time of evaluation, 28 out of a targeted 90 on board and ground staff from international transport systems had been trained. This activity is driven by the private sector entity and scheduling of the trainings depends on their programming. However, indications were that sufficient engagement had been done to ensure the target is met by the end of the project.

Output UA1.5: Criminal justice chain practitioners have enhanced capacity to apply victim-centered and gender-sensitive approach in investigation and prosecution of TIP-related crimes

Ranking – On track towards achievement

The project has since inception produced, printed and distributed two out of the targeted five publications. A bench book for judges was produced and disseminated to judges to aid in their interpretation and application of counter trafficking law. The project also undertook and documented an analysis of Judicial practice in application of Ukraine legislation on counter trafficking, which sought to examine trends in application of the CT law.

Since project inception the project has trained 156 (94 Male) of its targeted 180 law enforcement officers on victim centred approaches to dealing withVoTs. Further to that, 24 lawyers who provide legal services toVoTs were trained and equipped with skills to supportVoTs through the legal processes as per the law. These trainings as well as the technical publications have been well received by the officials and have contributed to improvements in practice of investigation and prosecution of cases.

Thanks to the capacity building activities for criminal justice chain practitioners, their investigative and prosecution skills have improved. The number of initiated criminal cases on trafficking in persons has increased by 11 per cent (204 cases in January – June 2019 as compared to 186 for the same period in 2018). The number of criminal cases submitted to court – has increased also by 4% (104 cases in January-June 2019 as compared to 100 for the same period in 2018). – IOM project report June 2019.

Outcome 2: CSOs in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus take a lead advocating for improved counter trafficking policies and state response

Ranking – On track towards achievement

La Strada and other CSOs, including Donbass SOS have been actively engaged in advocacy efforts in all the three targeted countries with some measure of success. For instance, in Ukraine active advocacy by La Strada on improving knowledge on TIP amongst learners, led to the government taking an official position on this through a letter from the office of the First Vice Minister to all regional departments of education and institutions of learning to include counter trafficking in their educational activities. In Belarus, CSOs are engaging the government on the addition of storing of child pornographic materials as a criminal offence in legislation. Furthermore, CSOs in all the project countries, especially La Strada are involved in producing the alternative GRETA report, which is used as an advocacy tool. However, the current project indicators for this outcome are quite limited and do not adequately allow for measurement of the project contribution towards it. It would be prudent to add more indicators.

Output UA2.1 CSOs in Ukraine have standardized procedures for service delivery and increased understanding of HT advocacy, social contract, monitoring, strategic litigation, and related topics

Ranking – On track towards achievement

The indicators for this output were found to overlap with those of the outcome, hence there is need for consideration of review of indicators for both the output and outcome to ensure that they correct measure the stated results without overlap. La Strada undertook and led four (4) CSO monitoring interventions, thereby surpassing the project target of three (3); monitoring of implementation of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the sale of children/ child prostitution and pornography, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on Trafficking in Children and Kidnapping. Further, La Strada produced an alternative report on GRETA recommendations which was reviewed by about 105 state and non-state actors before submission for consideration by the regional state administrations before submission to the ECC. La Strada also monitored the implementation of Order #405 of the Ministry of Education and Science on Trafficking prevention in educational institutions and the analysis of the New School curricula, which action led to the First Vice Minister issuing a directive to all regions on implementation of counter trafficking educational activities in schools.

La Strada has also undertaken two of the targeted six campaigns. The themes for the two campaigns were “Victims need compensation” and “Crimes should be punished” and were aimed at stimulating the Ministry of Social Policy to improve procedures for granting VoTs appropriate status as provided for in the law as well as calling upon the Ministry of Internal Affairs to strengthen investigation of all cases of suspected human trafficking to ensure justice for victims.

La Strada also initiated one of the six targeted litigations. At the time of the evaluation the case was at preparatory stage. The development of national standard operating procedures for hotline services were being developed at the time of the midterm evaluation.

Output MD2.1 CSOs on both banks of Moldova are proactive in counter-trafficking advocacy and prevention

Ranking - Achieved

Two CSOs, namely NGO Interaction and La Strada were active in counter trafficking advocacy in the country. NGO Interaction continued to provide hotline services and reached 2,072 out of a targeted 1,000 callers with HT information, demonstrating high demand for information on human trafficking. This output and the outcome it contribute to are rather overlapping and have similar indicators and may need to be revised.

Output BY2.1: HT CSOs in Belarus provide standardized and professional services to at-risk groups and are engaged in advocacy and monitoring.

Ranking – Off track towards achievement

The project has been working closely with NGO Brest Women Club and La Strada Belarus on advocacy and awareness raising, providing hotline services as well as an internet counter trafficking campaign. Despite the challenges of registration for the project activities or La Strada, they have been able to support the project in advocacy and awareness raising. There is need for the project to urgently resolve the La Strada issue to be able to salvage the lost time this has an effect on programme performance as well as financial expenditure.

Output UA2.2 CSO hotline services in Ukraine on safe migration and trafficking prevention are advertised and accessible for at-risk groups

Ranking - Achieved

The project created and broadcast 2 public service announcements (PSA) under a campaign theme “@Danger might be invisible at first!” and through this reached over 3 million views on YouTube with about 90,000 viewers being directed to the hotline website for more information. Through partnerships, this PSA was also viewed in cinemas countrywide and possibly reached over 25 million people. An additional three information campaigns, namely the “Alley of dreams”, “Maze of risks and opportunities” and “The hook” were also conducted with success. A total of 114 (61 Male) presumed VoTs were identified during the campaigns and linked to services.

The project-supported Youth Summer School reached 23 participants with knowledge and skills to take action on human trafficking. Following the Summer School, several participants developed action plans on how to reach their peers with information on HT. Some have since conducted this awareness raising. In Belarus, one participant from a Music Academy who participated in the Summer School, recognized that her peers were also at risk of being VoTs and decided to use music as a medium to reach them but also to hold concerts to raise funds to support further awareness raising initiatives. This model has been

successful to the extent that other UN agencies have indicated interest to use it for their own thematic area topics.

Output UA2.3: At-risk groups access targeted prevention sessions and materials

Ranking – Achieved

The project has been able to reach more than 130% of its targeted 15,000 vulnerable persons with information on prevention and response to TIP.

Output 2.1 REG2.1: Human rights groups and media are engaged in counter-trafficking advocacy to amplify the message.

Ranking – Off track towards achievement

The project has supported regional capacity building of media practitioners aimed at harnessing media power to amplify the message on TIP. The project will need to invest in monitoring the results of this training in achieving this amplification.

Outcome 3: Knowledge base on human trafficking is solidified and used to update presentation and protection strategies

Ranking – On track to achieve results

Both IOM and its partners have produced various knowledge products that have been useful in informing prevention and protection strategies. For instance, La Strada monitoring of Order 405 led to the Vice Prime Minister letter to all regions to include counter trafficking messages in educational activities. At least two information campaigns, including the “Invisible in plain sight” campaign, have been up scaled to other project countries and have received support from the governments as good practices worth replicating.

About five studies have been undertaken by IOM and its partners including La Strada, which have contributed to enhanced understanding of the trafficking situation as well as informing policy and practice. These studies are in various stages of completion and it is anticipated that the results of these will inform on going prevention and protection strategies. However, several stakeholders in the project countries indicated that they were not aware of these studies and this could thus negatively impact on the acceptance and utilization of the findings.

Output REG3.1: Best practices in the region on prevention, protection and prosecution are scaled-up and adjusted to the national context

Ranking – On track towards achievement

The project has been successful in modelling and scaling up several initiatives within the region, inclusive of the various information campaigns, materials targeting younger persons, for example the “What is trafficking” cartoon. *The project will however need to invest in documenting these best practices for better visibility and replicability beyond the project countries.*

Output REG3.2: Regional data on human trafficking prevalence and public awareness in Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus and Moldova is available to all stakeholders and wider public

Ranking – On track towards achievement

The regional Omnibus survey is ongoing and is expected to be completed by the end of the project. However, there seemed to be limited knowledge about the survey from stakeholders outside of IOM, casting doubt on the extent of stakeholder information sharing and dissemination beyond those directly consulted. The project may need to explore and invest in more robust system for information sharing across all stakeholder institutions, including consideration of the use of briefing notes.

Output REG3.3: Regional knowledge base on new trends and challenges, as well as less known or new forms of human trafficking is built and popularized to relevant stakeholders

Ranking – On track on track towards achievement

An exploratory study on HT in Crisis is currently being undertaken in the conflict affected region in Ukraine and seeks to explore the drivers and risk factors for trafficking in the region as well as identifying the persons most at risk of being trafficked. However, there is an overwhelming need for more knowledge on HT in the region and project countries. *Some trends that were observed in the project countries that may need further research include; identifying drivers of HT in the region; investigating the reasons behind the different forms of HT being reported in the project countries, impact on EU visa reforms on HT risk, vulnerabilities and trends and investigating what influences people’s reporting and case withdrawal patterns in the different countries, among other topics.*

Output REG3.4: Project implementing partners, national stakeholders and the donor are informed of the situation and developments at the regional level

Ranking – On track towards achievement

Project coordination and information sharing has been on going through biannual meetings of the Steering Committee, which has met eight out of the eleven planned times. The steering committee

meetings have been instrumental in sharing of project best practices, identification and sharing of information on emerging trends on trafficking and experience sharing on dealing with cases.

Table 1: Summary progress towards achievement of results

Achieved	On track	Off track	No progress
<i>Result</i>		<i>Ranking</i>	
Objective: To strengthen cooperation and dialogues in the sphere of combatting human trafficking through regional exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice between Governments and civil society of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus		<i>On track</i>	
Outcome 1: Regional and national response to TIP, including protection of VoTs, is improved through consolidated coordination platforms, enhanced cooperation among all relevant actors and improved HT policies.		On track	
Output UA1.1: NRM stakeholders have enhanced understanding of new or less known forms of THB and are enabled to better prevent and prosecute it		<i>On track</i>	
Output UA1.2: Labour inspectors have improved competencies to counter trafficking for labour exploitation		Achieved	
Output UA1.3: Personnel of major travel hubs have increased competencies to identify VoTs and refer them for further assistance		Achieved	
Output UA1.4: Male and female VoTs are granted access to needs-based reintegration services and justice		<i>On track</i>	
Output UA1.5: Criminal justice chain practitioners have enhanced capacity to apply victim-centred and gender-sensitive approach in investigation and prosecution of TIP-related crimes		<i>On track</i>	
Output BY 1.1: Mechanisms for regular coordination between the state and civil society for implementation of the GRETA recommendations are established		<i>On track</i>	
Output BY 1.2: Labour inspectors' competencies and knowledge on how to address THB are improved		<i>Off track</i>	
Output BY 1.3: Improved knowledge and expertise of NRM stakeholders to address		<i>Off track</i>	

cases of labour exploitation	
Output MD1.1: National HT platforms have consolidated their efforts to prevent human trafficking through national information campaigns	On track
Output MD1.2: Transnational referrals between Ukraine and Moldova are supported through ad hoc TRM	On track
Output MD1.3: Staff of the newly created National Agency for Social Assistance and social workers within the social protection system have their knowledge on identifying and assisting VoTs enhanced	Off track
Output MD1.4: On-board/ground staff of international transport systems in Moldova have their knowledge on identification and referral of VoTs consolidated	Off track
Output REG1.1: Governments and civil societies of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus competencies raised through the regional dialogue platforms	On track
Outcome 2: Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus take a lead advocating for improved counter-trafficking policies and state response	On track
Output UA2.1: CSOs in Ukraine have standardized procedures for service delivery and increased understanding of HT advocacy, social contract, monitoring, strategic litigation, and related topics	On track
Output UA2.2: CSO hotline services in Ukraine on safe migration and trafficking prevention are advertised and accessible for at-risk groups	Achieved
Output UA2.3: At-risk groups access targeted prevention sessions and materials	Achieved
Output BY2.1: HT CSOs in Belarus provide standardized and professional services to at-risk groups and are engaged in advocacy and monitoring.	On track
Output MD2.1: CSOs on both banks of Moldova are proactive in counter-trafficking advocacy and prevention	Achieved
Output 2.1 REG2.1: Human rights groups and media are engaged in counter-trafficking advocacy to amplify the message.	Off track
Outcome 3: Knowledge base on human trafficking is solidified and used to update prevention and protection strategies.	On track
Output REG3.1: Best practices in the region on prevention, protection and prosecution are scaled-up and adjusted to the national context	On track

Output REG3.2: Regional data on human trafficking prevalence and public awareness in Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus and Moldova is available to all stakeholders and wider public	On track
Output REG3.3: Regional knowledge base on new trends and challenges, as well as less known or new forms of human trafficking is built and popularized to relevant stakeholders	On track
Output REG3.4: Project implementing partners, national stakeholders and the donor are informed of the situation and developments at the regional level	On track

In terms of country performance towards achieving results, Ukraine is largely on track or has achieved on all their direct outputs, while Belarus and Moldova are slightly off track and need to expedite efforts to catch up within the remaining implementation period. Georgia did not implement any country level interventions but has only contributed to regional results. *However, during regional engagements there was reportedly identified need for country level interventions in Georgia.* This may need further exploration. It is likely that most, if not all the outstanding outputs will be achieved during the remaining project period.

The issue of La Strada Belarus needs to be resolved quickly or a decision taken to re programme the money to other activities. From an evaluation perspective, findings show that despite challenges in disbursement, La Strada Belarus has been able to provide support towards advocacy efforts. Upon engagement with the funder, the earmarked funds could be reprogrammed to support improved documentation of high level project results (outcome harvesting) as well as documentation of good practices for possible replication in future projects of in other countries with similar contexts.

Replicability of programme approaches

There are various outputs of the programme that have started in one country and following their success been shared with other countries in the programme and replicated there. For instance, the “Invisible in plain sight” campaign which started in Ukraine has also been rolled out to Moldova and Georgia with great success, while the “Lisa and her friends travel the world” campaign targeting school age children which started in Ukraine was also being expanded to Moldova. The e-learning platform on TIP for various state actors is one product of delivering knowledge on counter trafficking that has been used in all the project countries, as well as the “Твоє право”¹⁰ app in Ukraine, which have very good chances of being replicated to other countries in the region and beyond. The e-learning has received wide support from governments; in Moldova, while the content was found to be still under development, provision had already been made that it be hosted on a government website.

Efficiency

¹⁰http://www.donbasssos.org/mob_zastosynok/

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the programme's outputs were being cost effectively delivered during implementation.

Further, Moldova and Ukraine experienced a change in government which affected programme timing. Given the delays in the start of project implementation, a one year no cost extension has already been discussed and agreed with the donor and will thus allow some time for the project to achieve its stated results. Despite the initial delays, the programme managed however to make commendable progress towards the achievement of its output targets and outcomes. Most of the outstanding targets are most likely to be achieved during the one-year no cost extension period.

The operational challenges occasioned by the inability of La Strada Belarus to commence implementation have also affected the project burn rate. However, at the time of evaluation discussions had already been carried out to reprogramme some of these funds to other activities given that a solution had not been arrived at despite all efforts. The project was also able to make savings in achieving some results at minimal costs through partnerships. For instances, trainings of transport sector workers in Moldova and Ukraine were conducted in the company premises at their costs. Such a model for partnerships with the private or for-profit sectors is a possible good practice worth exploring to enable the project to do more for less.

The use of online training approaches being employed by the project is also another efficient way of delivering trainings at minimal costs. Ukraine was able to reach a considerable number of persons with training information using this approach, while the use of Apps will also have a similar effect. The project was also able to achieve results by creating synergies with other ongoing interventions, where an activity cost was cost shared with other ongoing projects. For instance, direct assistance to identified VoTs has been supported through various other projects with varying degrees of assistance according to donor agreements.

The evaluation established that programme partners consistently upheld the principles of economy and efficient use of programme finance by applying stringent procurement procedures based on competitive technical and financial bidding for all goods and services according to IOM procurement and financial management guidelines. Also, as per IOM fiscal management rules regarding funding to project implementing partners, disbursements are being done in tranches to minimize risk. The project has been subjected to an external financial audit whose overall findings were satisfactory, although indications were made to improve internal controls for instance by ensuring that the delegation of authority in approval of expenditures is adhered to always.

Project implementing partners were required to submit periodic reports, which allowed for monitoring of achievements against targets. Furthermore, periodic field visits were conducted with the implementing partners to take stock of progress and achievements based on the funds disbursed. Efficient monitoring and evaluation was however compromised by the lack of a dedicated monitoring and evaluation specialist to support the project teams in all the countries as well as lack of clarity amongst stakeholders of the project theory of change. Project stakeholders were not clear on what results were expected from the various interventions they were engaged in as supported by the project.

The programme management and monitoring systems were found to be sub optimal with IOM Moldova and Belarus not having the same level of information on the project as Ukraine. Improved consultation on programme decision making is needed. The project monitoring is largely done by project staff hence the weak focus on results. There is need to consider having full time project M&E personnel to support the project offices and ensure full tracking of results at all levels as well as documentation of good practices on a more regular basis.

Impact

The project countries have largely maintained their classification on the US annual TIP reports, with Georgia being the highest ranked at Tier 1, while Moldova, Ukraine are on Tier 2 and Belarus is on Tier 3. In Moldova and Ukraine, legislative reforms on the role of labour inspectors has opened avenues for increased identification of VoTs in labour exploitation particularly those engaged in unregulated labour. These countries have previously been on Tier 2 watch list and following concerted measures been upgraded back to tier 2. There has been improved reporting of cases of trafficking in the project countries, which can be linked to project interventions and other factors such as improved legislation or increased availability of mainstream knowledge in the public domain. The strengthening of information management systems for TIP could also be linked to increased numbers of cases reported and assisted.

The inability of the project to articulate a theory of change has been a missed opportunity for project stakeholders to relate their efforts (activities) to the effect of the project at output, outcome and impact level. While it is easier for stakeholders to relate their direct interventions to outputs because these are directly linked to what they have done, subsequent levels of results (outcome and impact) become very difficult to visualize and track unless earlier defined in the theory of change.

Sustainability

In all the project countries, the key government stakeholders demonstrated sound understanding of counter trafficking issues and the role of the government and were categorical on the clear role of the state (at whatever level – national or sub national) in discharging these functions, with or without donor support. Governments in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova allocate some state funding to finance HT interventions, for instance, in Moldova, a shelter for VoTs that was initially established and run by IOM with project other donor funds has since transitioned fully to government management.

The evaluation found that there is high likelihood of political sustainability of the interventions after project closure due to all the four governments (Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia) commitment to countertrafficking issues by having anti trafficking laws, policies, strategic or national action plans in place. These are supported by having dedicated units of governments funded through the state budgets tasked on trafficking issues, inclusive of the Ministry of Social Policy and the Counter Trafficking Department of the National Police issues in Ukraine, and the Directorate of Permanent Secretaries within the State Chancery in Moldova. Further, the integration of counter trafficking within other human rights issues such as gender-based violence in Moldova creates avenues for sharing of common resources to reach those with human rights abuses including VoTs.

The use of innovative and low-cost interventions such as e-learning is another measure on sustainability, as this reduces the cost of capacity building. Further, the Moldova e-learning portal is to be hosted within an existing government website, ensuring that any recurrent maintenance costs are integrated into government recurrent expenditure. Partnerships with the private sector is another innovation that has been found to be bearing results and will ensure sustainability of interventions. At the time of the evaluation, for instance Ukraine Airlines representatives proposed to integrate the content into their training curriculum and be supported with initial training of trainers who would then be able to routinely offer this training alongside their other ongoing continuous improvement for their staff.

While the project has largely been successful in achieving its stated results, some results are still largely dependent on project support and would not be sustained should such support end. For instance, in all the project countries, identification and profiling of VoTs has largely been supported by the project, while most direct assistance to VoTs still relies on non-state interventions. *Further, coordination and cooperation within and between countries is still in its fledgling stages and needs to be nurtured further before it can sufficiently be left to state action. The continuation of the programme would thus ensure that the gains made are sustained and scaled up while efforts continue to be fostered for state action.*

Accountability to affected populations

The evaluation found limited focus on accountability to affected population including addressing issues of prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) of beneficiaries. While all IOM standard implementing partner, contracts have a clause on PSEA there was little indication that much had been done practically to advance this agenda. For instance, in all the project countries, no trainings of project staff or implementing partners has been conducted on PSEA, neither is awareness raising on PSEA included for beneficiaries. Implementing partners relied on generic staff codes of conduct to address this aspect. Only one partner, NGO Interaction in Moldova had somewhat robust systems including Dos and Don'ts between staff and beneficiaries in staff contracts, personnel manuals outlining code of conduct in dealing with beneficiaries. The NGO also regularly conducts training for its staff on such issues. *The project could use these as a reference for strengthening systems with other implementing partners.*

The project and partners have feedback mechanisms for beneficiaries to use on any assistance related matters, which aid in ensuring the project is responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries. However, not all partners have these systems in place. *There is a need for the project to strengthen its systems for accountability to affected populations using good practices from IOM and NGO Interaction as a point of departure.*

Cross cutting issues

Several cross-cutting issues were noted to be mainstreamed in the project.

Gender: Gender was noted as an important consideration for the project. Men, women, boys and girls are differently affected by human trafficking. For instance, the project noted that female VoTs tended to experience and express psychological and mental traumas linked to the trafficking episode and actively sought mental health support, while men tended to be more concerned about regaining livelihood and

actively sought economic reintegration assistance as an immediate and felt need. *However, the project did not demonstrate that gender considerations were sufficiently mainstreamed in project interventions, including gender analysis of beneficiary needs in reintegration as well as in vulnerabilities and risk to trafficking. The project would benefit from a greater focus on gender within interventions and this could be mainstreamed into monitoring tools.*

Youth: Young people are disproportionately targeted by traffickers and are more vulnerable and need more targeted and specific messaging to reach them. The project has actively sought to reach young people with strategies that are relevant to them including the use of the Summer School and use of social media to inform and educate them on human trafficking.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1. Conclusions, good practices and lessons learnt

Good practices

The project has not had a uniform approach of identifying and documenting good practices. However, during the evaluation several interventions were noted which would need to be subjected to rigorous criteria for identification and documentation of good practices in order to confirm them. Still, during the evaluation a number of promising interventions were identified that could meet the criteria of good practices upon further verification, namely:

1. **Youth Summer school** – the project has used this intervention to identify and empower young people to be agents of change against trafficking in persons in their communities and amongst their peers. The model has been adapted for use in both Ukraine and Belarus and there is high interest from other UN agencies to adapt it to their own mandates.
2. **E-Learning platform** as well as the use of a **mobile app** for sharing of knowledge with stakeholders. This approach is both cost effective and efficient as it does not take staff away from their work stations, while it enables training to be delivered at minimal cost to as many people. This approach also has high chances of sustainability after project end as the system once designed needs minimal maintenance costs.
3. **Private sector collaborations** in capacity building and information sharing – The project has been collaborating with various transport operators, land, air and sea, where the project has provided technical support for the training and the private sector players have met the logistics costs related to the trainings.
4. **Information sharing platforms** including the “Invisible in plain sight” campaign which were accompanied by identification of probable VoTs. The modus operandi of traffickers continues to evolve with the global technological developments and in response the project has been able to adapt its information sharing approaches to reach people using various media platforms.

5. **Regional informationsharing platforms** for exchange of ideas and lessons learnt – have contributed to building networks for information sharing as well as cross fertilization of ideas, leading to replication of interventions across the project countries.

6. **Revision of the NRM** to accommodate the decentralization of some state functions to the Amalgamated Territorial Communities in Ukraine and Moldova. Trainings of territorial communities such as those in Chernihiv have started to bear fruit with case identification, community awareness raising, and prevention efforts being initiated at local level. Some local governments have included counter trafficking in their local development plans.

Lessons learnt

Several key lessons emerged from this evaluation based on review of programme documents, interviews and discussions with key stakeholders and field observations.

Programme Design: in designing a coordinated regional programme with a number of initiatives implemented by different partners, there is need to harmonise results and indicators to demonstrate regionality rather than several country initiatives combined into one project. Further, there is need to ensure the programme has a well elucidated ToC, which is communicated to all stakeholders and allows clarity of understanding of the results logic.

Multi-Sectoral Approach to HT: in dealing with a multi-faceted phenomenon such as TIP, the multi-sectoral coordinated approach provides a holistic and effective platform where different key stakeholders with complementary skills, roles and responsibilities come together to respond to TIP in a coordinated manner. The evolving role of different stakeholders such as the Amalgamated Territorial Communities needs to be better reflected and the NRMs revised accordingly.

Development of tools to strengthen implementation: the development of the judges'bench book for instance is a useful innovation to strengthen the prosecution pillar of HT interventions, while the SOPs for hotline services serve a similar function of streamlining and standardising provision of services/ information and referral to callers in accordance with international best practice. The project needs to strengthen such approaches and possibly evaluate the impact of these tools on practice, with a potential of being a good practice.

Knowledge generation: The various researches that have been conducted by the programme will provide knowledge that is critical in delivering evidence-based programmes and formulation of guidelines. While knowledge has been generated, the project needs to invest more in dissemination of findings and promotion of utilisation of such findings by stakeholders to inform policy and programming.

Increased awareness TIP: platforms such as the internet, campaigns and other innovations have been employed to increase community awareness on TIP. This is critical for both prevention as well as for identification of VoTs and providing them appropriate services. The use of a mixed media approach ensures that a multiplicity of the target population sub groups are reached with messaging. The project needs to consider assessing the impact of the different media methods to inform future programming.

Conclusions

The following are the key conclusions of the evaluation:

Relevance: the programme was found to be largely relevant to the HT context in the four countries and the region. This conclusion is based on the following observations: (1) there was consensus amongst all key stakeholders interviewed on the problematisation of the phenomenon of TIP in the four countries and the need to take action to address this issue; (2) the programme holistically addresses all the four Ps (prevention, protection, prosecution, partnerships) of HT response; (3) the programme is in strong alignment with national, regional and international frameworks and provisions on HT such as national Anti-Trafficking Laws, GRETA recommendations, SDGs and annual TIP reports and the design was based on a strong evidence base. The programme design particularly the objective and outcomes and related indicators require review to ensure that they appropriately measure the intended results. More indicators may need to be developed for the objectives and outcomes to allow for a broader measurement of results at that level. The programme has no elucidated theory of change, and consideration should be given to developing one and using available opportunities to articulate the same to stakeholders to ensure a common understanding of the project results. Further, the programme monitoring is rather fragmented and relies on programme staff who may not have the technical expertise or the time to dedicate to ensure programme results are adequately measured at all levels.

Effectiveness: the project is largely on track to meet its planned outputs and targets even though there was late start-up. However, a number of outputs are off track, particularly in Moldova and Belarus, and thus the programme will need to develop an acceleration plan to ensure that these are also met within the remaining programme period. Should these not be met this would have any impact on overall project performance. However, based on progress demonstrated so far it is likely that the project will be able to meet most, if not all, of its outputs by the end of the no cost extension period. At outcome level, there is evidence of regionality of approaches and action as well as demonstration of the effects of advocacy on influencing policy and practice.

Efficiency: The late start-up of the programme affected timely onset of implementation of the programme activities, which necessitated an immediate request for one year no-cost extension to December 2020. The challenges of disbursement of funds to La Strada Belarus have also had an impact on project burn rate and ability to achieve its planned results in that country. Collaboration with the private sector in capacity building has resulted in cost savings which should continue to be explored for other sectors and interventions.

Sustainability: The programme has certain strong sustainability elements, mainly through (1) integration of TIP in the national and sub national development agendas (2) working with existing national and sub national state and non-state structures with long term presence in the project countries, (3) and capacity strengthening of stakeholders through innovative means including e-learning and mobile applications. There has been some demonstration of government commitment by taking over funding of some interventions such as shelters. Governments in the three countries of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus also provide some limited funding from the national fiscus towards HT activities. However, the funding commitment towards HT programmes is quite small and the successes achieved to date would still require additional external support to strengthen and nurture until sufficient capacity is realized for their independence. The findings show that the more progress has been made in areas of prosecution, while more support is needed on prevention, protection and partnerships.

Impact: The programme is contributing to improvements in the national HT response in the target countries through a range of interventions, including (1) policy reforms by supporting review of legislation; (2) institutionalization of best practices such as innovative information sharing; (3) supporting the strengthening of state mandated established national coordination structures. Ukraine and Moldova have a fair rating on the US TIP report, while there is scope for improvement for Belarus. The national reforms and ongoing conflicts in Moldova and Ukraine also contribute negatively to the trafficking situation in the countries, exposing people to vulnerabilities and risks and these could negatively affect programme impact.

Accountability to affected populations: There has been limited focus on elements of PSEA in the project and may need strengthening in the remaining period of the project. Beneficiary feedback and complaint mechanisms are not uniformly available and used by all project stakeholders to desired effect and will need strengthening. While some gender considerations have been included in programme implementation, there is need to consider strengthening this aspect through for instance ensuring gender is mainstreamed in analytical works and documentation.

Best practices: There has been evidence of several interventions that have potential to be best practices. However, the project needs to focus on assessing these and documenting them for scalability within the region and beyond.

The programme has demonstrated good potential and is on course to achieve most of its expected outputs and outcomes, effectively contributing towards improved prevention, protection, prosecution

and partnerships on TIP in the country. The programme responds to a critical need in the project countries and region and has can be considered for continuation and expansion.

7.2. Recommendations

Based on review of literature, key informant interviews with stakeholders and discussions with communities, the following recommendations are put forward by the evaluation team.

1. Strengthen programme monitoring and evaluation to enable better tracking of progress towards results at all levels.

Priority: High

Responsibility: Managing mission – IOM Ukraine

Timeline: Within the next three months

Operational actions

- ✓ Consider reprogramming some available resources towards engaging a dedicated programme M&E focal point/ team that coordinates with all project countries and stakeholders. Depending on the decision taken regarding the position of La Strada Belarus, some of the funds initially programmed towards their support could be diverted towards this. Develop and promote use of harmonized monitoring and evaluation tools and make reporting more uniform for all project countries and stakeholders.
- ✓ Review and adapt a common set of indicators for all project countries to track progress towards results.

2. Revise and strengthen programme design to ensure better fit of interventions with desired results.

Priority: High

Responsibility: Managing mission – IOM Ukraine

Timeline: Within the next three months

Operational actions:

- ✓ Elucidate a programme theory of change
- ✓ Disseminate the programme theory of change widely to all stakeholders and ensure that there is full understanding of the logic between project interventions and the results chain.
- ✓ Revise some project indicators to be more qualitative and focused on the results being measured.

3. Consideration should be given to continuation of the programme of support and potentially contributing to further strengthen national and regional capacities on prevention, protection and partnerships while sustaining the gains on prosecution.

Priority: Moderate

Responsibility: IOM, Governments

Timeline: next phase

Operational actions:

- ✓ Identify and outline areas of project continuation and expansion. The areas of prevention, protection and partnerships would be amenable for continuation, while prosecution could be expanded.
- ✓ Develop a concept note for fund raising
- ✓ Identify potential funding partners including current funder – Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

4. Conduct documentation of good practices by the end of the project, to feed into final reporting and the development of new programming, depending on resource availability. Depending on the decision taken regarding the position of La Strada Belarus, some of the funds initially programmed towards their support could be diverted towards this.

Priority: Moderate

Responsibility: Managing mission - IOM Ukraine

Timeline: end of project

Operational actions:

- ✓ Develop TOR and engage consultant
- ✓ Undertake documentation process

5. Strengthen engagement and inclusion of all stakeholders (government, CSOs, and other IOM missions) at programme design and revision stages. This process could start with engaging these stakeholders in elucidating the programme theory of change and revision of indicators.

Priority: High








Responsibility: Managing mission - IOM Ukraine

Timeline: Next phase

Operational actions:

- ✓ Engage all stakeholder from government and other IOM implementing missions from the initial planning phase to the implementation phases to promote development of feasible work plans, greater participation and understanding of the project design and logic and ownership.

8. Annexes

8.1	<i>Evaluation terms of reference</i>	 Regional Programme_PHASE II
8.2	<i>Evaluation matrix</i>	 TIP EE evaluation matrix_28 Aug 19.DO
	<i>Inception report</i>	 Inception report_CT_EE evaluati
8.3	<i>List of documents reviewed</i>	 Annex 8.3 List of documents reviewed.c
8.4	<i>List of persons interviewed/ consulted</i>	 Agenda_eveluation UA 23-27.09.docx
		 Agenda_CT_1122_ev aluation_MD.docx
		 List of participants Belarus.docx
8.5	<i>Data collection instruments</i>	