

EVALUATION BRIEF

March 2022



FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT “LOCAL AUTHORITIES NETWORK FOR MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT”

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator(s) for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

Evaluation type: External final evaluation

Evaluator(s): Action Research for CO-development (ARCO) c/o PIN S.c.r.l. – Prato, Italy

Evaluation period: December 2021—March 2022

Final report date: February 2022

Commissioned by: IOM Coordination Office for the Mediterranean, Mission to Italy, Malta and the Holy See – Migration and Development Unit

Project partners: Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), Italy; and the Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI), Albania

Beneficiaries: Bologna Municipality, Milan Municipality and Tirana Municipality

Evaluation purpose: To evaluate the relevance of the project considering its design and structure; to identify the main factors limiting or enhancing the success of the project; to provide potential learning elements and recommendations for the further development of such initiatives

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability

Evaluation methodology: Document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and online survey

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Local Authorities Network for Migration and Development project is part of the Migration and Development initiative implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and funded by the Italian Voluntary Contribution 2018 of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI).

The initiative aims to promote transnational collaboration between municipalities in the Mediterranean, to enhance migration as a development tool and to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Project was conceived as a pilot to lay the foundations for future initiatives aimed at creating a network of municipalities actively engaged on the topic of mainstreaming migration.

The Project is structured around two main components. First, the improvement of the Municipalities' capacity to design and manage policies, with consideration of migration issues. Second, the integration of migration concerns into the Municipalities' policy planning processes and/or development plans (that is, elaboration and implementation of roadmaps).

The Project involved the Municipalities of Bologna and Milan in Italy and Tirana Municipality in Albania. The Municipalities were asked to contribute to the Project in a helpful manner, by actively participating in planned

Project information:

Geographical coverage: Italy, Albania

Project type: Migration and Development

Project code: MD.0003

Project period: 6 July 2020 to 31 July 2021

Donor: Italian Voluntary Contribution 2018

Budget: € 324,551.00

meetings and by elaborating and implementing roadmaps.

IOM identified implementing technical institutions to provide municipalities with direct technical assistance and constant support throughout the project. The technical partners coordinated, facilitated and provided support during the various stages of elaboration and implementation of local development plans, and guaranteed the quality of monitoring and project evaluation activities. The leading implementing partner was Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), which supported the municipalities of Bologna and Milan. CeSPI was selected in partnership with the Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI) which provided technical support to the municipality of Tirana.

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The Project made policy planning more cohesive and coherent by acting transversally across different municipal sectors and departments. This is highly relevant because it enabled the Project to respond to the concrete needs of the municipalities. The Project responded to these needs effectively, thus contributing to the early institutionalization of mainstreaming migration concepts within the municipalities involved.

The Project was both internally and externally coherent. At the international level, IOM has worked on mainstreaming migration initiatives for more than a decade. The Project features in local level debates that are gaining in importance, and municipalities are beginning to adopt mainstreaming migration concepts. Furthermore, the Project proved to be fully coherent with existing processes currently underway in the municipalities.

The Project has been effective in contributing to strengthening links between migration, social inclusion and development. The activities carried out enabled the achievement of stated outputs and outcomes, and the iterative model and bottom-up approach employed have proved effective. The Project has achieved numerous positive results, including strengthening the skills and competences of municipal technical working groups. Notably, the Project also assisted municipalities to network and collaborate with each other. The involvement of municipalities at technical levels is considered fully satisfactory, but the high-level political endorsement was limited to official endorsements received in earlier stages.

The Project proved itself to be efficient in various ways. The technical partners provided technical assistance and support to the municipalities. A detailed budget analysis did not reveal any significant discrepancies between anticipated and actual costs, and fixed costs related to the engagement of a third-party organization were compensated by increased efficiency.

In terms of impact, the Project strengthened the role and capacities of selected staff within the municipalities, who were able to internalize mainstreaming migration concepts through technical working groups and disseminate these among different sectors and departments. The Project successfully integrated mainstreaming migration concepts into local development plans (such as the Local Plan of the Municipality of Bologna and the DUP on International Relations and Social Policies in Milan) and policy planning processes (Tirana Municipality). An informal network was successfully created among the three local authorities.

The Project was an opportunity to create and/or deepen collaborations between different actors within the municipalities and to offer training and capacity-building for all personnel involved. The sustainability of the roadmaps depends on the ability to build relationships with other local level initiatives and to be fully coherent with processes already underway. Concerning the network of municipalities, both the creation of new formal networks and participation in existing networks was considered too challenging and time-consuming. However, the lack of a formal network may affect the sustainability of these relationships, especially given the absence of strong high-level political ownership.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To maintain a flexible and bottom-up approach that offers the local authorities tailored pathways to make mainstreaming migration concepts operational through an iterative model that meets their needs.
2. To design a flexible and structured project timeline and workplan that ensures continuous and timely project implementation within a defined period, by assigning appropriate duration to each phase.
3. To identify the most appropriate technical working group members to be involved during the initial phases of political engagement and endorsement. To ensure that periodic dialogue with political representatives is maintained in later phases.
4. To dedicate appropriate activities and time to an initial contextual analysis and feasibility assessment for each target municipality, the aim being to obtain a clear and complete picture of soft factors.
5. To devise and ensure stronger direct involvement of IOM staff and to increase the engagement, commitment and accountability of high-level political representatives and technical officials in project implementation.
6. To ensure participatory engagement of all project partners, municipalities' members and stakeholders in the final phase of the Project and in defining a follow-up plan. To devise mechanisms for maintaining network relations among municipalities and partners following Project completion.
7. To develop a robust monitoring system to be updated on a regular basis, to measure the achievement of expected results and output indicators and to collect feedback from municipalities and other partners.