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Local Authorities Network for Migration and Development

Final Evaluation Report

February 2022

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External Evaluation

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of acronyms

IOM	International Organization for Migration
MM	Migration Mainstreaming
LA	Local Authority
M&D	Migration and Development
CeSPI	Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale
CDI	Cooperation and Development Institute
PAL	Local Action Plan
DUP	Single Programming Document

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project:	**Local Authorities Network for Migration and Development (the Project)**
Countries:	Italy and Albania
Donor:	Italian Voluntary Contribution from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)
Leader:	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Partners:	Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), Italy; and the Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI), Albania
Beneficiaries	Bologna Municipality, Milan Municipality and Tirana Municipality
Evaluator:	Action Research for Co-Development (ARCO)

FOCUS:

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.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS:

This Final Evaluation contributes to the following objectives:

1. Evaluate the relevance of the project considering its design and structure;
2. Identify the main factors limiting or enhancing the success of the project;
3. Provide potential learning elements and recommendations for the further development of such initiatives.

The Evaluation adopts a participatory approach to actively involve project beneficiaries, partners and the IOM team, as well as other key local stakeholders.

The purpose of the Evaluation is to assess the performance of the project and capture achievements, as well as challenges, good practices, and lessons learned, related to the project's contribution to the efforts of local authorities to mainstream migration in their local development plans.

To investigate the degree of success of the project, the evaluators followed the OECD-DAC criteria (OECD, 2021), hence assessing:

- *Relevance:* Is the intervention doing the right things?
- *Coherence:* How well does the intervention fit?
- *Effectiveness:* Is the intervention achieving its objectives?
- *Efficiency:* How well are resources being used?
- *Impact:* What difference does the intervention make?
- *Sustainability:* Will the benefits last?

EVALUATION FINDINGS:

The triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative analysis of collected data throughout the evaluation along with the desk analysis of project documentation has allowed to assess the project according to the OECD DAC criteria (OECD, 2021). The table below showcases the main evaluation results.

RELEVANCE

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 of Bologna, Milan and Tirana. It achieved this through an iterative model designed to assist the municipalities to elaborate and implement effective roadmaps, adapted to their differing needs and according to local context, which produced a variety of responses. The evaluation also showed that IOM Italy and its technical partners understood and responded to these needs effectively, thus contributing to the early institutionalization of MM concepts within the municipalities involved.

COHERENCE

The Project is both internally and externally coherent. At the international level, the IOM has worked on MM initiatives for more than a decade, and the concept is included in the governance pillar stated in several IOM documents. The Project features in local level debates that are gaining in importance, and municipalities are beginning to adopt MM concepts in discussions on migration. Such debates highlight the importance of local actors and plans in implementing development cooperation. Furthermore, the Project (in particular the roadmaps elaborated) proved to be fully coherent with existing processes currently underway in the municipalities. Finally, the internal coherence of the Project is demonstrated by assessing that the implemented activities are coherent among themselves.

EFFECTIVENESS

The Project has indeed been effective in contributing to the general objectives of IOM M&D initiatives (funded by the IVC 2018) that aim to strengthen links between migration, social inclusion and development. The activities carried out within the Project's framework enable 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, which is necessary for furthering MM concepts in local policy planning. Notably, the Project also assisted municipalities to network and collaborate with each other. The involvement of municipalities at technical levels is considered fully satisfactory and led to the development of transversal municipal working groups that have facilitated broad discussion and dissemination of MM concepts. Unfortunately, the Project lacked high-level political endorsement during its implementation phases, in contrast to official endorsements received in earlier stages. Each municipality successfully engaged external stakeholders to contribute to specific activities related to roadmap elaboration and implementation. The external challenges that were met include local elections that impacted project activities undertaken in the municipalities, as well as restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented municipality staff and partners from carrying out field visits or meeting in-person. Overall, the municipalities are satisfied with the support they received from the IOM and its technical implementing partners, CeSPI and CDI.

EFFICIENCY

The Project proved itself to be efficient in various ways. The technical partners provided technical assistance and support to the municipalities. Internal coordination between the IOM, its technical partners and the municipalities was well-structured but challenging in the initial phase, due to timing that caused communication difficulties between the IOM and CeSPI. The Project is resource-intensive, and so financial resources were allocated to cover the human resources needed for primary project activities involving labour-intensive activities such as training, capacity-building and networking. 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 project implementation.

IMPACT

In terms of impact, the Project mainly aimed to spread MM concepts within the municipalities' development plans and policy planning processes and to create a local authorities network for MM. The Project strengthened the role and capacities of 'change promoter(s)' within the municipalities, who were able to internalize MM concepts through technical working groups and disseminate these among different sectors and departments. The Project successfully integrated MM concepts into local development plans (such as the Local Plan of the Municipality of Bologna (2018–2021) and the DUP on International Relations and Social Policies in Milan) and policy planning processes (Tirana Municipality). An informal network was successfully created to promote MM among the three local authorities, thanks to numerous online meetings and exchanges of practices that occurred predominantly in the early phases of the Project.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the Project was determined by assessing the following dimensions: staff capacity and institutionalization of the MM approach, long-lasting relationships established with other local level initiatives, and networking among municipalities. 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. Factors that negatively affect sustainability include municipal staff turnover due to local elections, especially the risk of turnover at managerial levels. 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. Limited engagement between the municipalities, the IOM and CeSPI during the roadmap elaboration and implementation phases, combined with a limited institutionalised final dissemination phase to enable the outputs produced to be valorised, are factors that may reduce the sustainability of the informal network created.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To maintain a flexible and bottom-up approach that offers the municipalities tailored pathways to make MM concepts operational through an iterative model that meets the needs of local authorities, notwithstanding the need to design a strong initial theory of change for the Project, both for M&E and modelling purposes.
- 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 (partner selection, analysis and assessment, set-up, capacity-building, roadmap elaboration and implementation, dissemination, closure and follow-up). This would allow project activities to be effectively implemented and ensure stronger results.
- To identify the most appropriate technical working group members, from different municipal departments/units/offices, to be involved in project activities. This should occur during the initial phases of political engagement and endorsement, while ensuring that periodic dialogue with political representatives is maintained in later phases, to enable sharing and monitoring of project advancements, results and impacts.
- 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 (political vision, power relations and societal values) that may affect the Project's implementation within local communities.
- To devise and ensure stronger direct involvement of IOM staff in all project activities and to increase the engagement, commitment and accountability of political representatives and technical officials in project implementation. They would, in turn, benefit from continuous interaction with a highly renowned and experienced international organization.
- To work on both policy and technical levels within the municipalities for the entire duration of the Project, and to increase the involvement of high-level actors in some selected activities, such as initial start-up and official municipal resolutions, appointment of municipal sectors and departments involved,

formal adoption of roadmaps and other relevant outputs, public presentation of project outputs, feedback for internal and external final evaluations and adherence to follow-up on municipality networks.

- To ensure participatory engagement of all project partners, technical officials, political representatives, local experts and stakeholders, both in the final phase of the Project and in defining a follow-up plan, to truly valorise and encourage uptake of project outputs and results at all levels.

- To devise mechanisms for maintaining network relations among municipalities and partners following Project completion, as well as to continue collaborating with them to broaden future networks of municipalities for MM, as their pilot experience can provide lessons learned, benchmarks and inspiration to peers in other regions.

- To devise organisational mechanisms within local authorities to ensure that the Project's approach to MM continues – in political and operational terms – and becomes fully embedded within local institutional apparatuses.

- To strengthen, whenever possible, the combination of in-person activities within and across municipalities with virtual tools that make interaction and exchange among technical officials, political representatives, experts and stakeholders easier and more frequent. This will create stronger relationships of trust and cohesion among partners and stakeholders.

- 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. The timely checking and monitoring of achievements and expected results indicators will enable partners to understand what has been achieved and what measures, if any, need to be taken.

1. INTRODUCTION

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.

Servizi Didattici e Scientifici per l'Università di Firenze (PIN S.c.r.l.), through the direct involvement of its research centre, ARCO, was selected by the IOM to provide it with an external evaluation aimed at assessing the performance of the Project. Furthermore, the evaluation aimed to capture achievements, as well as challenges, good practices and lessons learned, related to the Project's contribution to the efforts of local authorities to mainstream migration in their local development plans.

2. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

2.1. Evaluation context

The Project lasted a duration of 13 months (6 July 2020–31 July 2021) and is structured around two main components:

1. Improvement of the Municipalities' capacity to design and manage policies, with consideration of migration issues
2. Integration of migration concerns into the Municipalities' policy planning processes and/or development plans (that is, elaboration and implementation of roadmaps)

The Project involves 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 meetings and by elaborating and implementing roadmaps.

The IOM selected a technical implementing partner to ensure the realization of the initiatives promoted and implemented by the local authorities of Italy and Albania. The technical partner coordinated, facilitated and provided support during the various stages of elaboration and implementation of local development plans, and it guaranteed the quality of monitoring and project evaluation activities. The technical implementing partner for Bologna Municipality and Milan Municipality was Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), which selected as supporting technical partner for Tirana Municipality the Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI).

2.2. Evaluation purpose

The purpose of the final evaluation is to assess the performance of the Project and to capture achievements, as well as challenges, good practices and lessons learned, related to the Project's contribution to the efforts of local authorities to mainstream migration in their local development plans.

The final evaluation covers the whole period of the Project up to 31 July 2021. All evaluation activities were completed by 28 February 2022.

The final evaluation contributes to the following objectives:

1. Evaluate the relevance of the Project, considering its design and structure;
2. Identify the main factors that limit or enhance the success of the Project;
3. Provide potential learning elements and recommendations for the further development of such initiatives.

It adopts a participatory approach that actively involves project beneficiaries, partners and the IOM team, as well as other key local stakeholders. This approach allows the perceptions of the stakeholders involved in the project to be taken into consideration, by directly and actively including them in the evaluation activities, to promote a proactive attitude towards the evaluation.

2.3. Methodology

Evaluation criteria

The final evaluation assesses the performance of the Project and its compliance with the **OECD Development Assistant Committee (OECD DAC) criteria** (OECD, 2021), namely:

- **RELEVANCE**: to what extent the project design, structure and objectives respond to the needs of target beneficiaries and to the priorities of the local/global partners and institutions involved. This includes an analysis of how the project contributes to the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. It also takes into consideration the changing circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **COHERENCE**: to what extent the Project activities are consistent with one another and coherent with the priorities and policies identified by the IOM, which is achieved by assessing its log frame (internal coherence), and to what extent the Project is complementary to and coordinated with national policies that intertwine the impact pathway envisioned by the IOM (external coherence).

- **EFFECTIVENESS**: to what extent the Project achieves, or is likely to achieve, its outputs, results and objectives as defined in its log frame, which provides a structured and retrospective assessment of IOM internal procedures. This includes analysis of the main enabling factors and challenges encountered during implementation, as well as an evaluation of corrective measures taken.

- **EFFICIENCY**: to what extent the Project delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way, by making optimal use of the available financial and human resources.

- **SUSTAINABILITY**: to what extent the net benefits of the Project continue, or are likely to continue, in the long term after completion. This identifies the main factors that limit or enhance sustainable contribution by the Project.

- **IMPACT**: to what extent the Project generates, or is likely to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, medium to long-term effects on the target beneficiaries, in the context of intervention.

Each evaluation criterion is assessed according to relevant evaluation questions and sub-questions (see the Evaluation Matrix in annex).

Methodology used and stakeholder participation

Informed by the evaluation purpose, the final evaluation adopted a **mixed-methods evaluation** design that combines **quantitative and qualitative tools**, to collect reliable data from multiple sources and to produce robust indicators that measure and assess the changes achieved, as well as any other aspects of interest. ARCO **collected and systematized all available project documents and secondary data** provided by the IOM and its project partners, such as project proposals, log frame, work plans, project reports and any other data or information deemed relevant or potentially useful for understanding the project background. ARCO

also analysed the **main project outputs**, such as roadmaps and other policy documents that local authorities elaborated during the last year, that relate to migration.

The evaluation aimed to involve all beneficiaries (local authority actors who participated in project activities) and other local stakeholders, through different tools developed for that purpose, albeit with differing degrees of intensity. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by ARCO with the IOM project staff, the technical implementing partners' staff and municipality contact persons, which allows an in-depth analysis of project assessment of the OECD DAC criteria. Focus group discussions were used for groups of four or more persons from the municipal working groups, where there is willingness to stimulate dialogue and discussion on specific issues. Semi-structured collective interviews were used where the minimum number of participants for focus groups is unmet, though this produces less dialogue among participants. An online open survey aimed at all municipality staff involved in even a single project activity aims to capture project-related responses from a wider audience, using less detailed questions than in interviews and focus groups.

The evaluation applies a **mixed online–in person data collection approach**, using the tools listed in the table below.

Table 1. Data collection tools

METHOD	TOOL	TARGET GROUP
Secondary data analysis	**DESK REVIEW** of project documentation, reports and other relevant M&E data	//
	DESK RESEARCH of relevant national and regional statistics and literature To provide better understanding of the project background and context.	//
Key informant interviews	**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS** (conducted online) To provide better understanding of the intervention context, ongoing changes occurring in the municipalities, project outcomes, main challenges faced, positive and negative dynamics, lessons learned and best practices.	- IOM staff involved in the Project - IOM evaluation focal point - CeSPI staff involved in the Project - CDI staff involved in the Project - Contact persons for the Municipalities of Bologna, Milan and Tirana - Persons informed of and involved in project activities in each municipality (for example, political figures such as councillors, or high-level technical figures such as managers)
Focus group discussions and collective interviews	**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS and COLLECTIVE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS** (conducted online) To gauge the opinion of persons and stakeholders directly involved in project activities, which provides better understanding of the intervention, including primary challenges, positive and negative dynamics, lessons learned and best practices.	- Municipal staff directly involved in the Project as part of its technical working group - Relevant stakeholders actively involved in project activities (including two diaspora associations in Bologna and three experts in Milan)
Open survey	**QUESTIONNAIRE** (self-)administered to public officials/employees of targeted local authorities. The web-based survey was disseminated through online tools developed specifically for this purpose.	Twelve municipal staff members who responded to the online survey (seven in Bologna, three in Milan and two in Tirana).

Limitations of the evaluation

The support of project partners, primarily the Municipalities, was necessary for evaluation activities to be properly conducted and for the desired results to be achieved on time. As the evaluation activities were conducted during a holiday period, most of the activities involving local authorities were carried out between 1 and 30 January 2022.

Due to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to carry out field missions initially planned for the Municipalities of Bologna, Milan and Tirana during this period. Both Milan Municipality and Tirana Municipality expressed at initial contact that, due to internal working policies, it would not be possible to conduct evaluation activities in person; and although Bologna Municipality initially indicated it would be available for in-person evaluation activities, it later opted for virtual evaluation processes to be conducted in January 2021, due to issues related to the pandemic. This made it necessary to extend the data collection period until 11 February 2021, in order to carry out all planned activities. Despite extending the duration of the data collection phase, it was not possible to perform all evaluation activities outlined in the technical proposal phase for Bologna Municipality.

Furthermore, due to staff turnover in Tirana Municipality, it was not possible to carry out focus group discussions with municipal technical working group members. In fact, only two persons, not including the contact person and the manager directly involved through interviews, were currently employed by the municipality, and neither of them was available at the time of the evaluation. For this reason, both were asked to complete the online questionnaire, as a replacement activity.

A limited number of people was reached by the survey, due to the difficulty of involving persons outside the technical working groups. The evaluator distributed the survey via email, repeatedly requested that it be completed and asked municipal contact persons and working group members to share it with colleagues involved in the Project. With regard to Tirana Municipality, it was specified from the outset that only two people had sufficient knowledge of the Project to complete the survey.

However, this did not prevent the majority of planned activities from being carried out. Neither did it prevent necessary data and information required for the conduct of the final evaluation from being collected.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1. Relevance

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

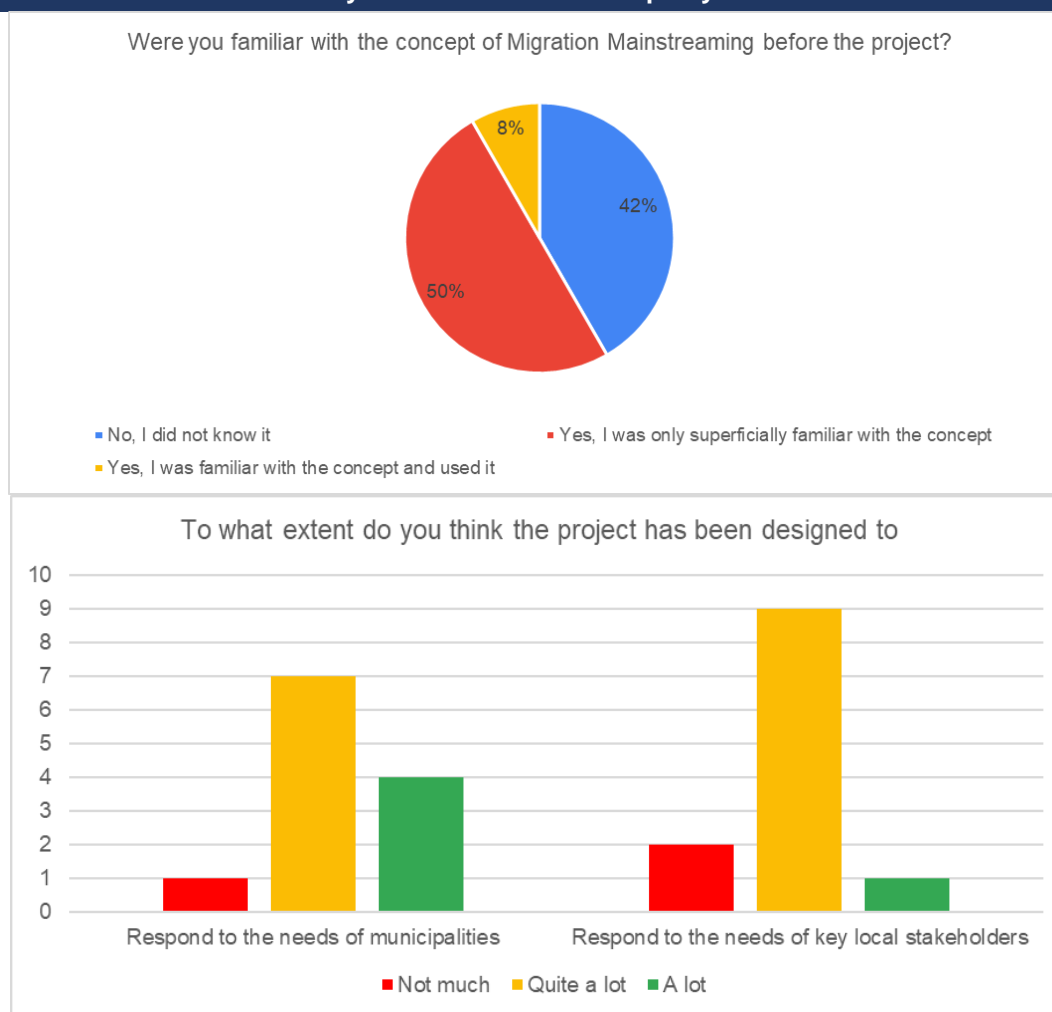*Is the intervention doing the right things?*

1. How does the application of migration mainstreaming help local authorities to structure more appropriate policies at the local level?
2. To what extent is the concept of mainstreaming migration into the policy framework currently diffused at local, national and international levels?
3. Was the Project able to adapt its design to the emerging needs of each context, in order to maintain its relevance over time?
4. To what extent does the Project respond to the needs of beneficiaries (municipalities)?
5. To what extent does the Project respond to the needs of other key stakeholders?

The concept of migration mainstreaming (MM) brings migration issues and concerns to the forefront in sectors that have not previously considered the topic beyond its extraneous effects, with the idea being to facilitate policy coherence. This is important because migration is a complex phenomenon wherein several dimensions converge: socially, politically, culturally and historically. The Project is relevant in that it seeks to **make policy planning more cohesive and coherent by acting across different sectors within municipalities**. MM addresses diversity in all sectors and considers migration not only as a phenomenon to be managed but as an integral facet of social structures, as well as a potentially valuable resource. As an aspect of migration and development (M&D), MM can help municipalities to progress from the welfare and dependency model with which many approach people with migrant backgrounds, thus limiting their value. The Project encourages municipalities to adopt an approach that provides structured and dedicated services that are not only migration specific but also **migration sensitive**, by trying to understand how established services can be extended to migrant demographics.

MM is a relevant issue for intergovernmental consultative bodies, such as the Global Forum for M&D, to the extent that several countries have developed concrete policies to finance initiatives in this field. Furthermore, several donors have incorporated MM in their development cooperation policies by factoring migration into cooperation planning. As stated by IOM staff, there is an awareness of the importance of MM in Italy, and many local authorities are inspired by the concept. However, this awareness is yet to be formalised or institutionalised. Several municipalities have created intersectoral tables for discussion on migration issues, involving migrant associations and consultative bodies made up of persons with migrant backgrounds, but this is not the norm. Municipalities, especially small ones, are often unaware of ongoing processes at the international level; as such, they often devise and implement policies that emerge from their specific needs and according to context. However, **MM is definitely not institutionalised in most municipalities.** This became evident during the initial phase of the Project, with most of the local authorities involved associating migration with social services and, more generally, with management concerns.

The Project stems from the idea that there is no fixed path to promote MM. Instead, processes emerge from the concrete daily needs and experiences within municipalities. Therefore, municipalities are encouraged to consider and choose the best and most appropriate means to progress towards MM, and to view themselves as the key players in the Project. A further aim is to promote debate and discussion within the Municipalities, to achieve policy coherence and **make migration governance more transversal**. Each municipality set different objectives for itself, in response to identified needs and requirements. The primary challenge has been to design **iterative models capable of meeting the needs of the Municipalities** and to assist each in devising a tailored roadmap that is relevant and contextually adaptive given the specificities of each.

Were you familiar with the concept of Migration Mainstreaming before the project?

- No, I did not know it
- Yes, I was only superficially familiar with the concept
- Yes, I was familiar with the concept and used it

To what extent do you think the project has been designed to

- Not much
- Quite a lot
- A lot

The significant differences in terms of perceived needs resulted in a **considerable variety of responses** according to municipality:

- The Municipalities of Bologna and Milan are familiar with MM, as both municipalities have long been affected by migration processes. This has led to the acquisition of relevant skills for addressing migration issues. However, Tirana Municipality is relatively inexperienced in migration management.
- In terms of organisational charting, Bologna Municipality reorganised its offices so as to incorporate transversal and intersectoral perspectives, according to objectives set by the municipal administration. Milan Municipality operates according to a classic organisational chart, so it was necessary to create a cross-sectoral technical working group to share experiences and competences and to facilitate interdepartmental interaction.
- The Project served to strengthen MM considerations within Bologna Municipality's Local Plan (2018–2021), which encourages non-discriminatory and human rights-based administrative action towards new citizens (PAL), as well as collaboration with local organizations (such as Centro Interculturale Zonarelli) and local stakeholders (such as migrant associations). In Tirana, how migration is perceived and addressed is changing: until now, migration processes were focused on diaspora and Albanians abroad and were centrally managed by national ministries and institutions. However, Tirana now considers itself a possible migratory destination and so is planning to restructure itself so that migration issues are managed from a multisectoral perspective.

The heterogeneity of responses received through the Project enabled it to be very relevant. However, this made the initial implementation phase challenging because, in order to grant ownership over processes to each municipality, sufficient time was required to communicate the aims and processes to the municipal contact persons. It is nevertheless **important to remain flexible so as to respond to real needs**. Lastly, the

Project provided opportunity for discussion within and between the Municipalities, both internally (intradepartmental) and externally (interdepartmentally and with other municipalities and stakeholders).

INSIGHTS	
BOLOGNA	Bologna Municipality has an **established tradition of collaboration with external associations**, both migrant and non-migrant, with collaborative projects on mainstreaming already in effect. The municipality's technical working group was eager to discuss **mainstreaming equality**, not only in terms of dealing with migration but also to encourage a universalistic approach to the access and delivery of services. The Project presented the first widespread opportunity to address MM, which it did by involving various sectors and broaching the concept wherever it was less known, namely in sectors related to culture, active citizenship and participatory processes. The Project has allowed for **cross-sectoral work** within the municipality; this important factor has led to the systemization of practices and knowledge and increased interdepartmental integration. Municipal employees showed **significant willingness to undertake training**, and they described the learning, listening and exchange opportunities provided by the Project as highly relevant. The Project also presented an opportunity for theoretical reflection, which improves participant knowledge and awareness. In fact, this makes it possible for the perspectives of front office employees (those in direct contact with citizens) to be actively involved and to be connected with intercultural associations and municipal offices.
MILAN	Milan Municipality has historically addressed migration by applying a classic social services approach, rather than by viewing migration as a potentially positive contribution to the city. Despite an evolving political approach to migration in recent years, and the implementation of various relevant initiatives, internal departmental segmentation makes it difficult to elaborate shared policies on the issue. The Project presents itself at a most appropriate time for Milan Municipality, as there is synergy between it and longstanding processes that the municipal administration has undertaken. Thus it presents an **opportunity to accelerate these processes**, comprised of different initiatives that the Project took advantage of, such as initiative action on language and narrative. This is highly relevant for a large municipality like Milan, which aims to be open and inclusive. The Project was a pretext for engaging in processes of **integrative and transversal policy development**, with the aim to create more accessible and inclusive welfare services and networks. The Project allowed colleagues the novel opportunity to identify shared issues, to exchange skills and experiences and to **devise joint solutions**. The Municipalities need trained and collaborative staff, and the Project contributed to a solution by providing networking opportunities that increase MM awareness. The **one-stop-shop service centre approach for persons with migrant backgrounds**, already established by Milan Municipality independently of the Project, was one of the main focus of the roadmap developed by Milan. The one-stop-shop service centre is devised as a means to develop competences and to share knowledge on migration, opening communication channels and receiving input from persons with migrant backgrounds. The Project improved the relationship between external stakeholders and the municipality by creating opportunities for thematic experts and sectors of the municipal administration to meet and dialogue. Notably, by increasing participation and visibility, the Project made it possible for the needs of persons with migrant backgrounds and second-generation Italians to be acknowledged and met by municipal administrators.
TIRANA	The move towards decentralised management of migration in Albania is a current concern. Municipalities have yet to move in this direction, despite Article 29 of Law No. 38/2019 ('the functions of the municipalities in the field of Diaspora and Migration') coming into effect. The Project fits into this **moment of transition**, being highly relevant for municipalities in Albania – of which Tirana is the largest and most influential – and for other actors (primarily ministries). Tirana Municipality is growing as a result of internal migration more than migration from abroad, but this trend could change in the near future, and the city must prepare **new frameworks to address migration**. Thanks to the Project, Tirana Municipality is now considering establishing a dedicated office and devising policies to help manage migration. The technical working group of Tirana Municipality participated in the first phase of the Project, which provided necessary training and competences related to MM. In the second phase of the Project, a roadmap was developed according to the requirements of Tirana Municipality, which gained an awareness of the contribution of local authorities to migration management, which it shared with relevant ministries. Significant **collaboration with ministerial bodies** followed, and so the benefits of participating in the Project have extended to the national level. The role of the municipalities in Albania is currently being re-evaluated so that their needs are understood and met.

3.2. Coherence

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

How well does the intervention fit?

1. Is the intervention compatible with other IOM interventions? How well does the Project align with IOM strategies?
2. Is the intervention consistent with national institutions on migration issues?
3. Did the Project's internal management coordinate different actors appropriately?
4. Is the intervention consistent and complementary to initiatives implemented by other actors?
5. What was the Project theory? Did it change during implementation?

The Project was funded by the **Italian Voluntary Contribution** (IVC) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The IOM developed a results matrix for all M&D initiatives funded by IVC in 2018, including the Project. IVC funding allowed the IOM to structure the Project in a flexible and open-ended way.
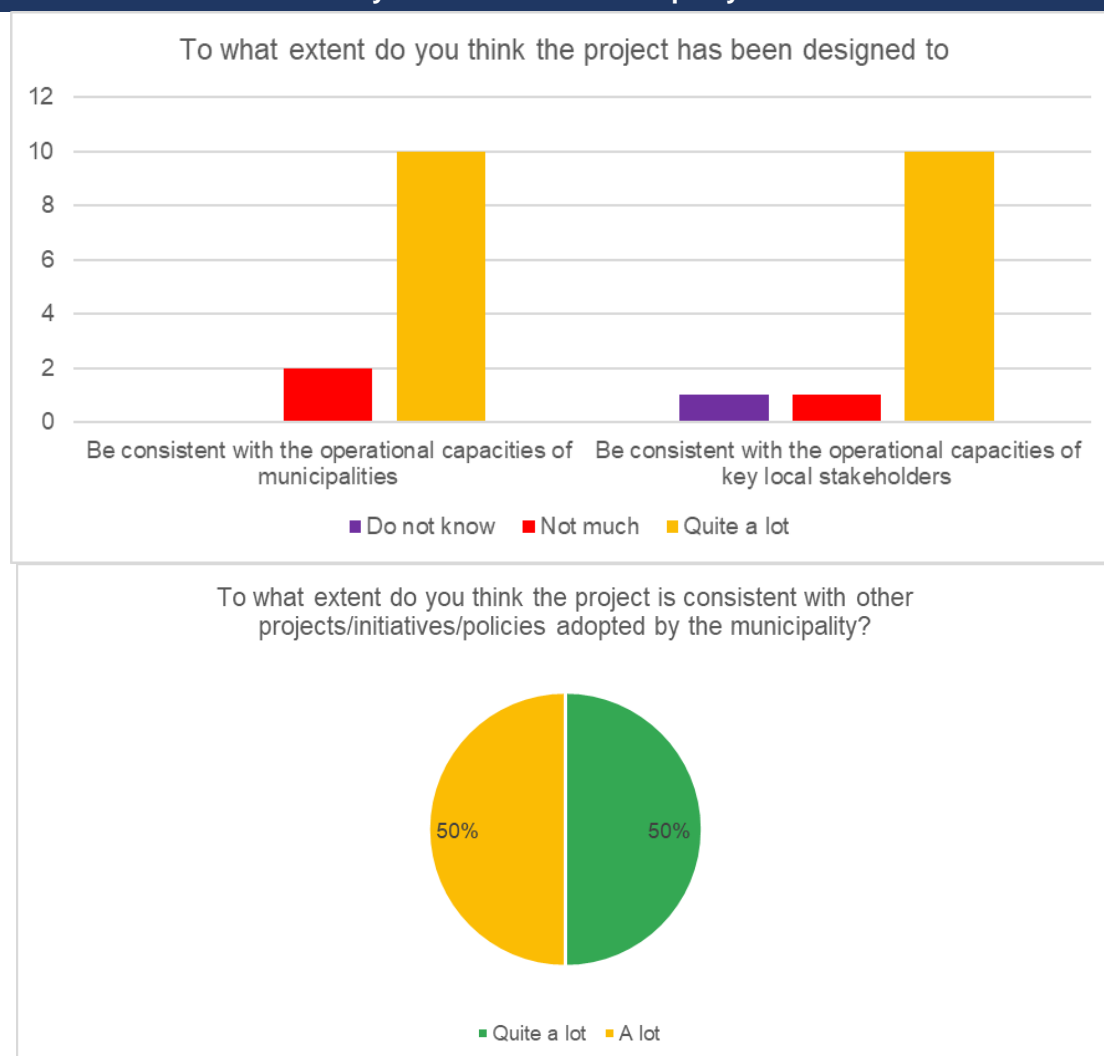
At the international level, the IOM has worked on MM initiatives for more than a decade. MM is part of the governance pillar outlined in several IOM documents, including the IOM Migration Governance Framework, IOM Global Strategic Vision and IOM EEA Regional strategy 2020–2024, IOM Migration, the IOM institutional strategy on migration and sustainable development. The EU-funded Mainstreaming Migration into International Cooperation and Development project (MMICD), which focuses on international cooperation and development policies, is implemented by IOM Regional Office in Brussels. This initiative originated from the experience of the UN's Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI) and the elaboration of the White Paper: Mainstreaming Migration into Local Development Planning, which apply a learning-by-doing approach according to the contextual specificities and will of local authorities. The Project follow-up will be launched in 2022, and some of the Mediterranean municipalities involved will be those of countries with prior experience of MM at central governance level (such as Morocco or Tunisia).

In Italy, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) addressed migration issues by developing M&D guidelines (in cooperation with the IOM) that focus on MM. However, the guidelines have not yet been officially approved due to a lack of will at the political level. The Project features in **local-level debates** that are gaining in importance, with municipalities themselves beginning to use MM concepts and language when discussing migration. This debate highlights the importance of local action, actors and plans in the implementation of development cooperation. Local authority action is also gaining in importance, as was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. For several years, IOM Italy carried out the Admin4all project, which involved numerous Italian and European municipalities; its focus was to improve the operation of social services departments that service mostly refugees and asylum seekers, by providing capacity-building through trainings, exchange visits and the development of guidelines. The Project follows up on the IOM's capacity-building approach, extending its scope by not only focusing on social services but also by encouraging municipalities to consider migrants as persons who can contribute to society rather than merely as persons with needs.

The Project proved to be **fully coherent with the processes currently underway in the municipalities**:

- in Bologna, it made the MM approach more transversal by involving culture and participation municipal sectors;
- in Milan, it allowed reflection on the one-stop-shop service centre as the sole access point for persons with migrant backgrounds, integrating these services with various ongoing or recently ended projects;
- in Tirana, it occurred during a transitional moment in which municipalities prepare to assume greater responsibility for migration issues, which will be transferred from the central ministerial level to local authorities.

To what extent do you think the project has been designed to

To what extent do you think the project is consistent with other projects/initiatives/policies adopted by the municipality?

The Project's **internal coherence** was assessed by analysing the extent to which activities are coherent among themselves:

- Phase 1 – **Selection, analysis and assessment of target municipalities**: face-to-face meetings were organised with municipalities in the Mediterranean, mainly with regional capital cities, to gauge interest and verify operational capacity for participation in the Project. The most suitable interlocutor was determined for each municipality by identifying entry points, in terms of sectors, departments and people. In Milan Municipality the Project initially collaborated with the International Cooperation and Solidarity Office; in Bologna Municipality with the New Citizenships and Neighbourhoods Area of the Rights, Cooperation and New Citizenships Office; in Tirana Municipality with the Economic Development Office. Most interactions were with technical officials, but endorsement was also sought at the political level to improve collaboration. In the selection phase, questionnaires were administered, and city profiles were developed.

- Phase 2 – **Selection of technical partners**: implementing partners were identified to support the Municipalities involved and to manage organisational processes, especially in regard to the development of roadmaps. The IOM launched a call to select an appropriate implementing partner. CeSPI, as the leading applicant in partnership with CDI in Albania, was selected and appointed for the task. CeSPI was selected as the most appropriate implementing partner because of its technical expertise as well as for its previous experiences and existing relationships with the municipalities, which proved useful to create an enabling and trusted environment for the project.

- Phase 3 – **Capacity-building**: following the selection of technical partners, a transitional phase was necessary to remodulate activities according to the characteristics and needs of the individual

municipalities. A kick-off event was organized with the Municipalities, followed by IOM training on MM concepts.

- Phase 4 – **Roadmap elaboration and implementation**: a bottom-up peer-to-peer exchange was promoted to elaborate roadmaps for each municipality. The duration of the first phase of roadmap elaboration was extended (from July 2020 to February/March 2021) because the municipalities worked pro bono on the Project and wished to broaden involvement as much as possible by creating cross-sectoral technical working groups, in keeping with a bottom-up approach. CeSPI coordinated meetings between municipalities that were aimed at identifying challenges and best practices and to create a matrix to cross-fertilize issues and solutions between the municipalities. CeSPI and CDI supported the roadmap elaboration phase, while the roadmap implementation phase occurred between May and July 2021, with the involvement of a significant number of stakeholders.

INSIGHTS	
BOLOGNA	The Project is coherent with the **Local Plan of the Municipality of Bologna (2018–2021) and its non-discriminatory and human rights-based administrative action towards new citizens**. The involvement of Centro Interculturale Zonarelli – a service of Bologna Municipality that promotes the participation of new citizens in local public life and supports migrant and intercultural associations – is notable, as the centre is part of the Rights, Cooperation and New Citizenships Office of the New Citizenships and Neighbourhoods Area.
MILAN	Milan Municipality has addressed migration in recent years and developed a policy to attract foreigners (**Benvenuti a Milano**), which is promoted by the mayor himself, despite migration being a politically sensitive issue. Migration has mainly been dealt with by the International Relations and Development Cooperation office, which collaborated with JMDI in the drafting of the White Paper: Mainstreaming Migration into Local Development Planning, bringing the experience of **Milan for co-development** (diaspora associations as protagonists of development cooperation initiatives with training, scouting and calls for proposals). Furthermore, Milan Municipality participates in the Eurocities migration group. This initiative supports other projects, such as the Wish Me project of the urban innovative action call (2019), which promotes a cross-sectoral approach related to minors, including those with migrant backgrounds; the We Me project, with Cariplo Foundation, which supports Milan Municipality in adopting a broader vision on migration; and the Admin4all project, with the IOM, which produced a theoretical and practical in-depth study that led to the foundation of a one-stop-shop service centre for persons with migrant backgrounds. The aforementioned initiatives allowed Milan Municipality to approach the Project with an informed awareness of MM.
TIRANA	The legislative framework related to MM in Albania has changed in recent years, so the involvement of Tirana Municipality was timely. A **law approved in 2019** transferred the majority of responsibility for migration issues to local authorities, where previously migration was centrally managed by Albanian ministerial departments.

3.3. Effectiveness

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

1. Is the Project able to involve municipalities at different levels (technical, political) as hoped?
2. Are the target municipalities satisfied with the support and services provided under the Project, in terms of knowledge acquisition, good practice exchange, and roadmap development and implementation?
3. Does the Project involve other key local stakeholders in its activities? Are the stakeholders satisfied with the Project?
4. What major internal and external factors influence the achievement of expected outcomes?
5. To what extent does the Project adapt, or is able to adapt, to changing external conditions in order to ensure project outcomes, including in relation to the impact of COVID-19?
6. If aims are not reached, would a different set of activities produce results?
7. Do the project activities positively or negatively affect the achievement of the desired outcomes of other initiatives?

Table 2. Results matrix of the Project, M&D Initiatives (IVC 2018)

	Indicators	*Baseline*	*Target*	*Progress achieved*
Objective: To strengthen the links between migration, social inclusion and development, as inherent to the achievement of Agenda 2030	Italy's capacity to strengthen the Migration-Integration-Developmentnexus is enhanced	Italy hosted an international high-level conference on M&D (2014); shaped international migration policy (GCM) and migration research at global level (WMR) and has supported the dissemination of best practices (M&D publication)	Italy's key role as agent and sponsor of the links between migration-integration-development is fostered and recognizedat national, regional and global level	
Outcome 1: Migrants, diasporic actors and their partners are empowered to engage in transnational processes that promote the welfare of the societies they bridge	• % of progress achieved in the implementation of decentralized cooperation roadmaps defined by local authorities within the project lifetime	• N/A	• 90%	• 100%
Output 1.2: Local authorities' and migrants' contributions to the achievement of Agenda 2030 are harnessed at the local level.	• % of implementation of local development roadmaps within the project lifetime • % of participants to the training workshop on MM who claim to have improved understanding of the subject	• 0% • 0%	• 90% • 80%	• 100% • 75%/92%

Activities that lead to Output 1.2

1.2.1   Implement local authorities' roadmaps through the formalization of partnerships and the allocation of funding for each roadmap.
1.2.2   Carry out three monitoring visits to each local authority engaged in the roadmaps' implementation and write a report with lessons learned for future policy development.
1.2.3   Organize a final event to promote exchange between participating local authorities and their partners.
1.2.4   Organize a regional training workshop on mainstreaming migration into local policy planning, bringing together local authorities engaged in the implementation of the roadmaps and their migrant associations partners, as well as additional local authorities and migrant associations.

The Project is effective in contributing to the general **objectives** of the IOM M&D initiative (funded by the IVC 2018), by strengthening links between migration, social inclusion and development. The overall objective was accomplished through several **outcomes and outputs**. The Project (part of Output 2.1) empowers migrants, diaspora actors and their partners (local authorities) to engage in transnational processes that promote the welfare of the communities they bridge. The activities carried out within the project framework enabled outputs and outcomes to be achieved. However, the final event aimed at promoting exchange between local authorities and their partners was actioned without external stakeholder involvement or any real dissemination of achievements; as such, it provided only a minor opportunity for discussion and exchange. The finalization of this final evaluation could provide the opportunity to share the results to a broader audience.
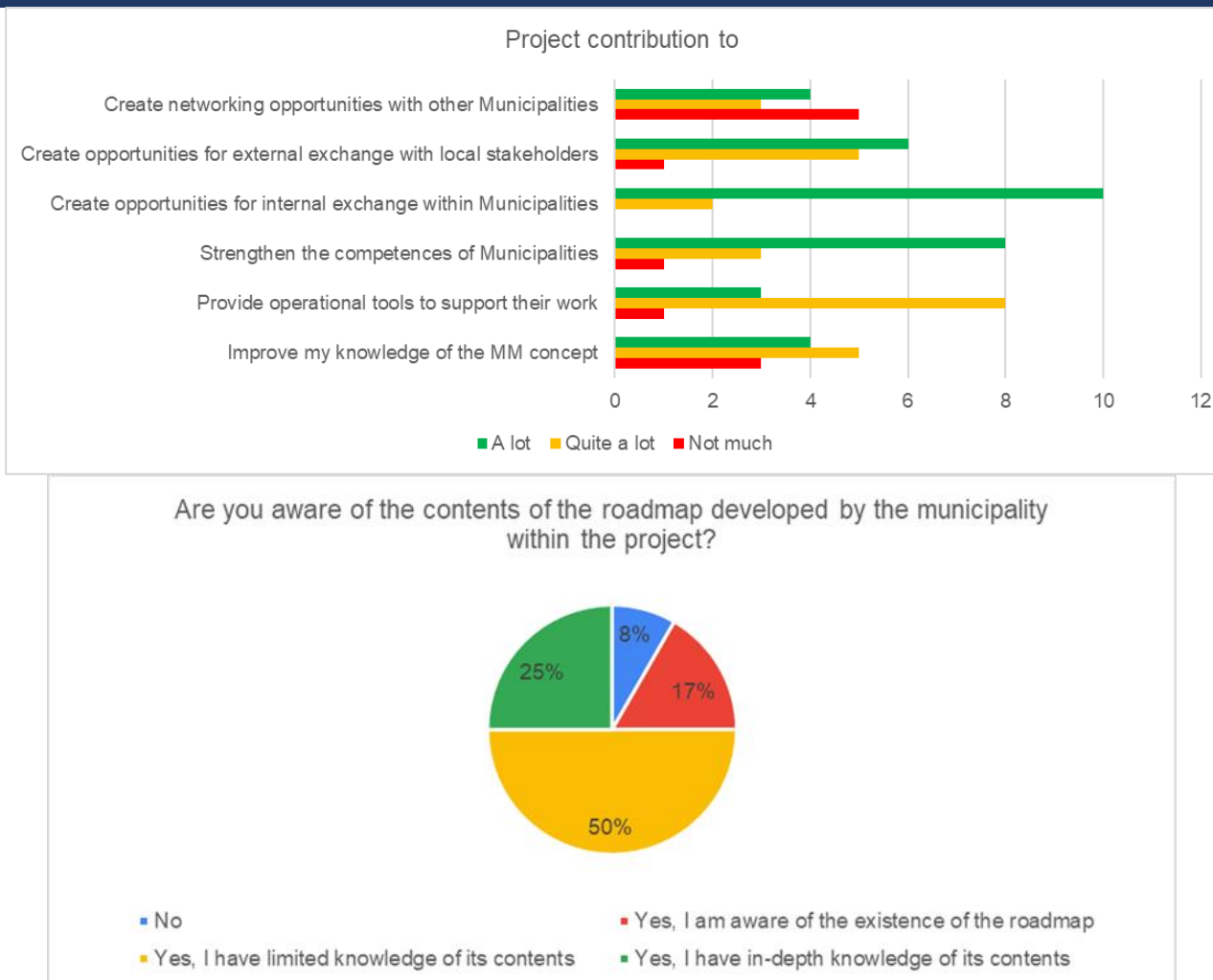
Regarding output indicators, local development roadmaps were elaborated and implemented by the Municipalities, in cooperation with the IOM and technical partners, during the Project's duration. Of the 12 municipal staff members who responded to the online survey, nine (75%) claim to have improved their knowledge of MM, and 11 (92%) claim to have received operational tools to support their work.

Since the beginning of the Project, the IOM wanted to ensure that, in addition to the willingness of municipality technical staff, there was also **political commitment** to participate, since the municipalities were required to make a significant contribution in terms of human resources. In the initial phase, Milan Municipality joined through a resolution, thus providing political endorsement; Bologna Municipality involved the councillor in charge of European policies and international relations, international cooperation, NGOs, and several municipal managers; and in Tirana, the mayor himself publicly endorsed the Project. Overall, there was demonstrated interest at the political level during the initial phase, with the municipalities committing to IOM intervention; however, this interest was only partially confirmed in subsequent phases. The technical working groups of the Municipalities of Bologna and Milan deemed the involvement of political actors to be insufficient. However, involvement at the municipal technical level was considered fully satisfactory: members of the main municipal sectors and departments involved in the Project, along with several other sectors and departments, were actively involved in working groups. This enabled the development of **transversal municipal working groups** that fostered broad discussion and dissemination of MM concepts.

The Project supported the municipalities in structuring diversified and relevant action through a **bottom-up approach** that began by addressing specific needs rather than imposing intervention lines. As already mentioned in regard to the relevance criteria, there are considerable differences in how the Municipalities of Bologna, Milan and Tirana approach MM. This proved both interesting and stimulating, as partners sought from the outset to engage each municipality to determine individual requirements and the most suitable course of action according to the roadmaps devised. The process demanded that major efforts be made by all involved in the Project: IOM, CESPI, CDI and local authorities, who identified appropriate courses of action and intervention by means of extended internal and external discussion with all partners.

This allowed existing processes and initiatives in Bologna and Milan to be integrated, as well as the initiation of new processes in Tirana. Overall, the municipalities were satisfied with the support they received from the IOM and implementing partners during the various project phases. The adoption of an iterative model and bottom-up approach also made possible the establishment of relationships between the different municipalities, which was greatly appreciated and satisfactory to all working groups.

Project contribution to

Create networking opportunities with other Municipalities
Create opportunities for external exchange with local stakeholders
Create opportunities for internal exchange within Municipalities
Strengthen the competences of Municipalities
Provide operational tools to support their work
Improve my knowledge of the MM concept

0   2   4   6   8   10   12

■ A lot   ■ Quite a lot   ■ Not much

Are you aware of the contents of the roadmap developed by the municipality within the project?

8%
25%
17%
50%

■ No   ■ Yes, I am aware of the existence of the roadmap
■ Yes, I have limited knowledge of its contents   ■ Yes, I have in-depth knowledge of its contents

During the Project implementation, each municipality involved **external stakeholders** to contribute to specific activities related to the elaboration and implementation of roadmaps. The external stakeholders were chosen by the municipalities, according to the roadmaps they had elaborated: migrant associations and diaspora associations in Bologna, local experts with migration expertise in Milan, and ministerial members and local NGOs in Tirana. Again, it proved an effective decision to encourage a bottom-up process of stakeholder involvement, with the lead role played by municipal working group members. Migrant associations in Bologna expressed complete satisfaction with the method of involvement and results achieved. However, this was less so in Milan due to a lack of transparency on their role in the initial phase and a lack of communication on the output developed thanks to their collaboration, *Towards the Vademecum*.

Box: Involvement of external stakeholders in the roadmap implementation phase

Bologna Municipality	Associazione Interculturale Universo Aps
	Sonrisas andinas, associazione interculturale e co-sviluppo internazionale

Online workshop on advocacy: exchange of best practices and sharing of digital toolkit for organising advocacy actions

The Project addressed sensitive and contentious issues that require a stance to be taken by all actors, particularly local authorities. It bridges the gap between a politics of fear and the needs of the community by providing answers to local officials and managers who want to understand the existing situation and processes as well as actions required. The Project served as a link between the needs of public administrators and migrant associations, and it presented an opportunity to forge new relations and partnerships through training, exchange of best practices and comparison opportunities that proved useful for associations. Significant enthusiasm and positivity was generated as a result of actors feeling heard, included and acknowledged by their municipality.

Bologna Municipality is highly active. Its Office for New Citizenship and Rights and the Peacebuilding Agency fosters strong partnership on interculturalism and social dialogue. It is recommended that activities such as those proposed by the Project be periodically scheduled, to improve networking and collaboration between associations, to encourage active citizenship and to communicate to public administrators that confronting migration issues at local governance level is both possible and necessary. The willingness of migrant associations to participate increased due to the possibility of online attendance. In terms of sustainability, it might also be useful to create a database of training activities made accessible to associations external to the Project.

Milan Municipality	Experts

Reflection on migration-related language and elaboration of the document, *Towards the Vademecum*

Milan Municipality' desire to reflect on and raise awareness of the use of correct language relating to migration is apparent, as is the willingness to actively involve persons with migrant backgrounds. Milan Municipality has previously engaged experts in other initiatives, such as *Milano Città Mondo*.

The aim of the municipality was to elaborate the *Towards the Vademecum* document during the roadmap implementation phase. However, a lack of transparency and communication as to the intended use and beneficiaries of the final output made the process challenging. The municipality intended to collate the professional opinions of different experts but did not have the requisite time, resources or guidance, and this carried the risk of fragmented output. Further dissatisfaction on the part of the external experts occurred as a result of not knowing whether the process led to a definitive official output.

The document, *Towards the Vademecum*, is the first step in the initial stage of a process. However, to ensure sustainability, this must be accompanied by training of management and municipal front office staff. To be able to further raise awareness among municipal employees on the use of correct language relating to migration, the document's dissemination should be combined with training, workshop activities and, eventually, coaching and mentorship.

As stated by municipality contact persons, it takes a long time to identify objectives, build trust and create working groups, especially in large municipalities. Due to the Project's structural characteristics, specifically its deliberate bottom-up approach, **a long initial engagement phase** is necessary. The first phase of identifying specific objectives and capacity building proved time consuming, which meant that the final phases of roadmap implementation and closure had to be executed quickly. The Project was originally intended to finish in May 2021, but it was necessary to request a two-month extension (until July 2021). Despite this time extension, the municipalities involved were not able to complete the processes.

Municipality participants stated that voluntary participation combined with a **lack of high-level political endorsement** (besides the initial municipal resolutions) made it difficult for working group members to be consistently engaged in the Project. As with other interventions, it was necessary to rely on the commitment and willingness of the individuals involved to offer their time and expertise. **Local elections** in Bologna and Milan further impacted the Project activities undertaken in those municipalities, despite the postponement of the elections from April 2021 to October 2021. Simultaneously, the **COVID-19 pandemic** eliminated any possibility of in-person visits and travel between municipalities to meet with members of collaborating organisations; this limited the creation of a relational network between municipality members. Since the best practices presented by the municipalities often referred to facilities and services or cultural initiatives, it would have been advantageous to visit them, even with the mobility restrictions caused by the pandemic. On a positive note, the possibility to carry out **online activities** eased logistical and budgetary concerns and provided greater flexibility and improved participation; however, it also led to a proliferation of meetings that ought to be more formalised.

BOLOGNA

In Bologna, willingness to have the New Citizenship and Directness office manager as a focal point proved to be advantageous in involving other sectors and offices. The municipality members involved stated that the Project encountered difficulties in reaching higher political levels, but it managed to successfully involve management levels. Inability to raise awareness of the Project at higher political levels meant that the Project achieved only a **limited institutionalisation of MM concepts**. At the technical level, involvement was positive and highly transversal: **migrant associations** participating in the Centro Interculturale Zonarelli were actively involved as protagonists in developing toolkits and workshops on advocacy, which then led to the opening of an anti-discrimination desk. Additionally, the Project strengthened a working group that brought together municipality members and external stakeholders, but this group was unable to carry on its activities after project conclusion, partly due to internal dynamics in the municipality following local elections.

Bologna Municipality is satisfied with the support of the IOM and CeSPI (as implementing partner), although it communicated that it greater presence on the part of the IOM would have been beneficial in increasing the municipality's political commitment to MM.

MILAN

Milan Municipality's engagement in the Project was mainly technical, and municipal employees showed willingness for interdepartmental dialogue. There was **excellent transversal involvement** of technical members, and the working group established through the Project contributed showed participation and commitment. The higher technical level was reached mainly due to collaboration between the Departments of International Relations and Social Policy, but many other departments (such as culture, civil registry, sport and education) were also involved, albeit to a lesser extent. To increase awareness of MM, capacity-building ought to be expanded throughout the municipality, because although management is aware of the Project, a lack of human resources remains an issue. To rectify this and to increase the staff involvement in project activities, it is necessary to have an higher political commitment.

Milan Municipality has previously encountered difficulties in promoting transversal policies, and it has managed to do so now only after lengthy processes to promote gender equality and ecological transition. However, there was a **lack of vertical engagement** with political decision-makers, such as the city council or commissions, throughout the Project's duration. Following the results of local elections, municipal management changed, although the mayorship was unaffected, and this required relationship-building processes to begin anew. It would take more than one project year to produce a decisive impact at municipal level for an issue such as MM; however, MM elements were included in the Single Programming Document (DUP) for International Relations and Social Services, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Project's intervention and the possibility of raising MM issues at municipality directorial meetings.

The IOM's contribution was consistent, and CeSPI remained a key player in terms of organisation and coordination, overseeing project output and comparison between municipalities, but mostly by involving external stakeholders and experts.

TIRANA

Tirana Municipality engaged its Department of Economics in the Project, as the municipality does not have an internal body that deals directly with migration-related issues. It created a small **working group** for the task, which would involve other departments and colleagues within the municipality whenever necessary. There was transversal involvement, albeit in a schematic way, as well as political involvement, in the sense that the mayor was also aware of the Project. However, the municipality was uncertain of the themes, objectives and duration of the Project, perhaps due to a lack of previous experience. The municipality contact person communicated that it would be important to invest in preparatory work from the outset. A sufficient number of municipality actors from various departments were engaged, especially given the project duration, budget and extraneous factors such as the pandemic and local elections; however, the CDI indicated that more resources and time would have improved coordination, participation and collaboration within the municipality.

Thanks to collaborative efforts between CDI, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Diaspora, and the Agency and Fund for Diaspora, external stakeholders were engaged in the roadmap implementation phase with positive results. Local NGOs were also involved in spot activities (workshops). Due to the limited timeframe of the Project, it was not possible to involve other institutions that may have offered different perspectives and competences on migration issues, such as the Ministry of Economy and Finance and Ministry of Employment. Finally, both CDI and Tirana Municipality staff communicated that they would have appreciated more in-depth consultation with IOM Albania, to provide localized advice on project activities.

3.4. Efficiency

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

How well were project resources used?

1. Were Project activities implemented in the most efficient way, compared with alternative means of implementation? Was the Project cost-effective? How could cost-effectiveness be improved?
2. How well were resources (funds, expertise, time, etc.) converted into results? Did the budget allow for appropriate staffing? Were the activities implemented by project partners completed on time? What were the reasons for any delays?

In the initial planning phase, the IOM identified **implementing technical institutions** to provide municipalities with direct technical assistance and constant support throughout the project. Involving an implementing partner also proved useful to facilitate administrative tasks such as the transfer of funds to municipalities. The IOM selected CeSPI as implementing partner to support the municipalities in Italy. CeSPI, as leading institution, was selected in partnership with CDI as its technical partner in Albania, to support Tirana Municipality. The technical partners proved effective and efficient in achieving their objectives; they assisted the Project by assessing municipalities' needs and by identifying potential challenges and obstacles. It is crucial to select a technical partner that understands the local context, especially if that partner has specific knowledge of governance and migration issues and previous experience in supporting municipalities, as this makes it easier to build relationships with local authorities. By collaborating with technical implementing partners, the IOM was ensured daily dialogue with the municipalities for the purpose of organising project activities. In turn, municipality actors positively evaluated the contribution and support of CeSPI and CDI, rendering the Project suitable for local authorities, especially during a time marked by pandemic and local elections.

Internal coordination between the IOM, its technical partners and the municipalities was generally well structured. However, communication between the IOM and CeSPI could have been better, with issues arising during some phases that adversely impacted internal coordination for the following reasons: numerous meetings were organised at short notice, which created pressure and strain on staff; the volume and degree of informal communication with the municipalities made it difficult for IOM staff to follow daily activities. The involvement of CDI, selected by CeSPI to help devise and implement the roadmap for Tirana Municipality, somehow complicated the fluidity of communication and created a double-up in updates on the status of project activities. It is recommended that future initiatives find less demanding and time-consuming means of dialoguing with municipalities; for example, meetings could be streamlined and scheduled less frequently, and shared communication channels could be established between all parties.

Greater involvement on the part of the IOM would likely have advantaged project implementation. An option in future would be for the IOM to deal directly with municipalities, without involving implementing partners. A possible disadvantage of this would be that the IOM, as an international organisation, might find engagement difficult given the organisational dynamics of large local authorities such as Bologna, Milan and Tirana. Although the implementing partners were undeniably useful in providing organisational and technical support to the municipalities, the organisational model employed by the Project could have negatively affected the relationship between the IOM and the municipalities, thus potentially impeding the possibility of increased political commitment on the part of the municipalities. While satisfied with the support received, the municipalities communicated that they would have appreciated more involvement and input on the part of the IOM. The relationship of trust that CeSPI and CDI developed with the municipalities made the participatory, bottom-up approach possible in all phases, further enabling active and proactive involvement on the part of the working groups.

An assessment of the Project's efficiency is obtained through thorough analysis of the **allocation of financial resources**, as outlined in project budget documents. As shown in Figure 1, the Project's budget is managed by two primary partners: the IOM (45.52%) and its implementing partner, CeSPI (54.48%). Considering the overall project architecture, the allocated budget was adequate to cover the **human resources** required for the main project activities, which are primarily labour-intense activities related to training, capacity-building and networking. While the IOM's budget exclusively covers human resources required for project implementation, the majority of CeSPI's budget was used for roadmap elaboration and implementation.

Figure 1. Budget allocation*
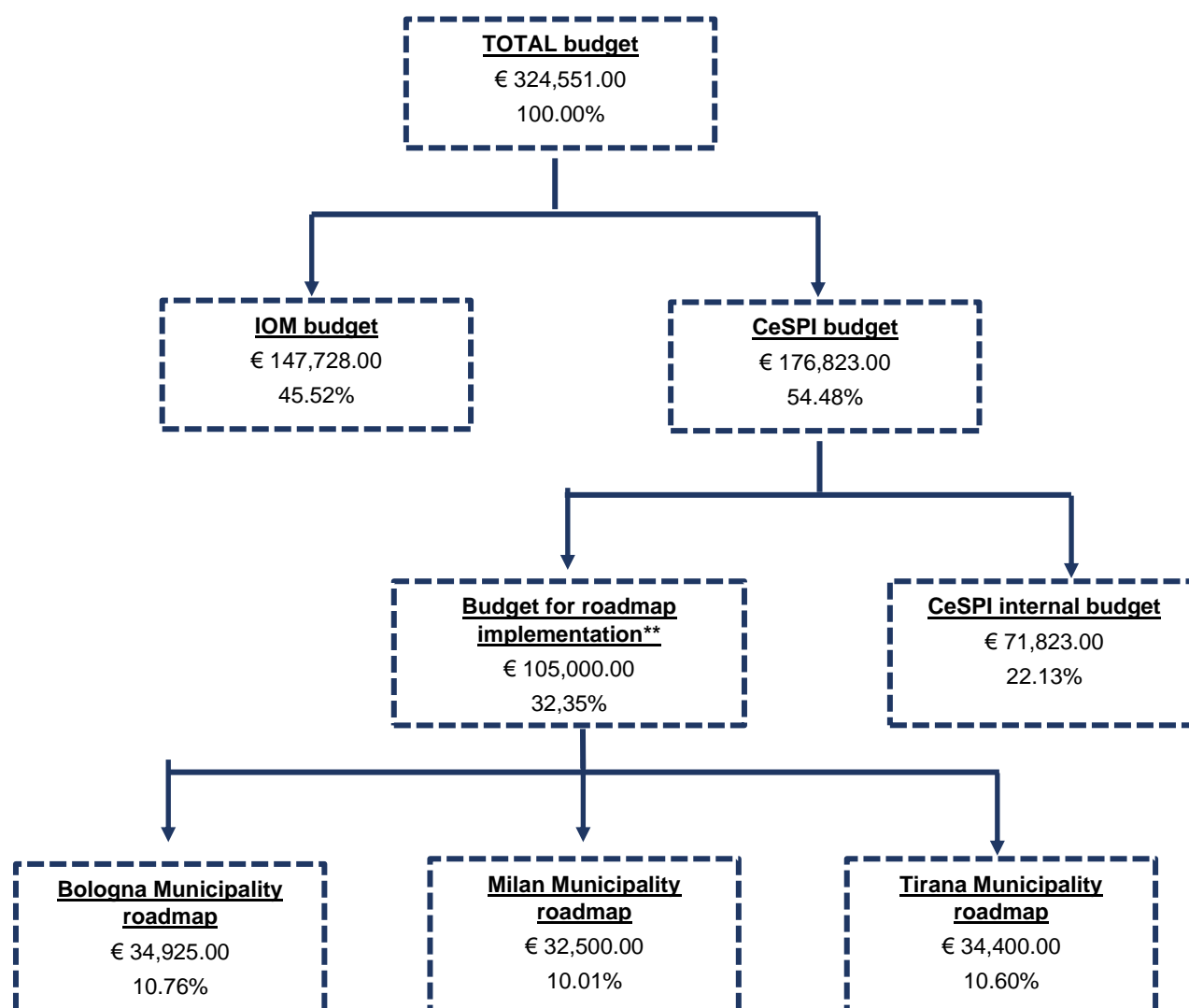
Source: authors' elaboration on data provided by the IOM

* The data refer to budget allocation; actual expenditure differed slightly.

** A difference of € 3,175 was identified between the total allocated to roadmaps and the sum of the amounts for each single roadmap produced.

Our analysis of the budget allocated to CeSPI did not identify any noteworthy discrepancies. Costs related to human resources are in line with prevailing market prices, given the experience and position of the individuals hired. Unsurprisingly, the bulk of the overall budget was used for human resources (€ 67,181 of the allocated € 71,823[1]). Project implementation did not entail any major infrastructure requirements, and the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically reduced costs for events and field missions. Anticipated human resources were used correctly and achieved the desired results: CeSPI dedicated two staff members (one for each municipality in Italy) to manage different strategic and operational activities during the roadmap elaboration phase.

According to the IOM, CeSPI and CDI, a larger budget is required for human resources. CeSPI also highlighted the need to provide stronger human resource support to the municipalities. CeSPI was not supposed to be involved in the roadmap implementation phase but was required to support some actions, particularly in Milan and to a lesser degree in Bologna. In Tirana, CDI communicated that the resources allocated to the Project were correctly managed, but a larger budget would have provided more dedicated human resources and

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[1] This is the result of funding allocated under 1. Human resources, 4.1 Experts in Italy, 7.2 Expert in capitalisation, 7.1 Desk analysis and report drafting and 8. Expert in monitoring and evaluation

allowed for in-depth collaboration with the different departments of Tirana Municipality, as well as the involvement of more external stakeholders. Also, interview respondents indicated that greater mobilisation of human resources would have been useful; they stated that this would have broadened the transversal nature of project activities in the targeted municipal areas and departments and improved external stakeholder relations[2].

Theoretically, to increase CeSPI's and CDI's budget allocation for human resources would be possible only by reducing either the budget allocated to IOM operations and/or the budget allocated for roadmap elaboration and implementation. One third of the total budget (32.35%) is allocated to roadmap processes. The first strategy is not fully realisable, as the IOM determined that it needed a larger staff to better monitor project activities, especially as the municipalities expressed a desire for greater involvement and input by IOM staff. The second strategy requiring a reduction in the budget allocated to roadmaps is also unfeasible, as that funding is used to involve external organisations and to hire experts and trainers (including CeSPI experts), particularly in Bologna and Milan.

Table 3. Detailed allocation of budget for roadmap elaboration and implementation

Municipality	Total Budget	Budget for human resources	Share of human resources (%)	Budget for CeSPI experts (%)	Share of CeSPI experts (%)	Budget for other organizations	Share for other organizations (%)
Milan	€ 32,500	€ 28,000	86.15%	€ 11,500	35.38%	€ 0	0.00%
Bologna	€ 34,925	€ 33,925	97.14%	€ 3,700	10.59%	€ 30,225	86.54%
Tirana	€ 34,400	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	€ 34,400	100.00%

Source: authors' elaboration on data provided by the IOM

In light of the results of the mixed-methods data collection performed during the evaluation, two main comments about the budget seem plausible:

1. Due to the impossibility of carrying out planned in-person activities and visits intended to create opportunities of exchange between municipalities, the project budget was in surplus (compared with the anticipated budget). The IOM requested that CeSPI use those surplus funds to elaborate a final project output, *Learning by Doing: Lessons learned on the mainstreaming migration process at the local level*, to serve as a tool for future modelling of the Project. Given that municipality interviewees expressed the opinion that the Project lacked closure and did not effectively capitalise on results, these surplus funds could have been used more effectively.
2. Interviews with IOM and CeSPI staff indicated weak circulation of information. More could have been achieved in this respect, especially given (a) the allocation of resources for internal monitoring and evaluation[3] and (b) the allocation of financial resources for CeSPI experts to assist in the elaboration and implementation of roadmaps for the Municipalities of Bologna and Milan[4].

A final general remark concerns the structure of the project partnerships. The inclusion of implementing technical partners inevitably increases fixed costs in the form of third-party coordination and structural costs. The expectation is that these costs will be compensated by an increase in the efficiency of project implementation, resulting from the expertise of implementing partners. It will be interesting to compare the effectiveness and efficiency of this pilot project with any future projects, given that the next generation of projects on MM for local authorities will employ a different governance structure – one that does not employ implementing partners and which involves the IOM directly in project management.

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[2] These additional human resources would not be covered by the Project.
[3] € 10,350 for 28.75 days' work by experts
[4] € 11,500 for Milan Municipality and € 3,700 for Bologna Municipality

3.5. Impact

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

What impact does the intervention make?

1. To what extent does the Project improve local authorities' capacity to integrate MM into their development plans and policy planning processes? To what extent do the roadmaps enhance MM in local development plans?
2. To what extent does the Project foster a local authorities network to address MM?
3. Do the changes come from project activities, external factors or both?
4. Did the Project take timely measures to mitigate any unplanned negative impacts that were observed or perceived as likely to occur (for example, impacts related to changes in municipal administration, priorities of partners and beneficiary institutions or others)?

In terms of impact, the Project mainly aimed to introduce MM into municipal development plans and policy planning processes and by creating a local authorities network for MM.

The Project adopts a flexible approach that favours effective and long-term ownership of the processes required to fully implement MM. **Strengthening the role and capacities** of one or more internal 'change promoter(s)' is usually an effective way to lift barriers to change. As such, attention to MM was internalised within the municipality working groups, with focal persons engaged in advocacy with other municipal departments.

The Project aimed either to initiate or to contribute to **processes already established**. It integrated MM concepts in local development plans (Bologna Municipality's PAL, Milan Municipality's DUP) and elaborated a working paper that analysed the current situation and outlined the main operational recommendations to be adopted for Tirana Municipality. There is general satisfaction with roadmap outputs, on the part of both the municipalities and implementing partners, which makes it possible to support ongoing efforts within an institutional framework.

A **network to promote MM among the three local authorities** was informally created through numerous online meetings and exchanges of practices, primarily in the early phases of the Project. Relationships were not only created between working groups but also between departments. In this pilot project, no formal network of municipalities was created, as the IOM and the municipalities showed little interest in creating a formalised network or in joining existing networks, as this is both time consuming and difficult to maintain in the long term. The IOM and the municipalities preferred to relate through a more limited operational group of partners, rather than deal with a structured network.

It is a priority of the Project to address the concrete needs of each municipality. The possibility to create new networks or to join an existing network, so as to stimulate communication between the members of the local authorities involved, will be re-evaluated in a follow-up project expected to commence in 2022. Unfortunately, networking was limited by the fact that no in-person activities or study visits were ever organised during the implementation, due to health and security risks and mobility restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, there was increasingly less discussion between the municipalities following the roadmap elaboration phase, and especially during the roadmap implementation phase. Each municipality was focused on implementing its own roadmap, as the deadline was set for the summer period in which this phase occurred. However, the municipalities indicated that it would have been useful to exchange expertise and experience during this phase also. As such, it would be advantageous to further extend the project duration, to allow for engagement among local authorities during both the roadmap implementation phase and final phase of the Project. This would enhance the positive impact of the informal network created through the Project. The municipalities confirmed their willingness to be involved in the follow-up phase, which would enable them to conduct a detailed review of what worked and what did not work during the roadmap implementation phase and in the months following the culmination of the Project.

In order to involve more municipality staff, it is necessary to garner **political commitment at higher levels** and to provide opportunity for periodic meetings with political representatives, though to organise these meetings may require a longer time, and thus may be incompatible with the project timetable. Notably, none

of the working group participants were devoted full-time to project activities. Additionally, local elections represent a risk in that they result in a potential change of interlocutors at managerial level and cause political power vacuums that make it difficult to ensure continuous participation, even at the technical level. Moreover, technical officials have no decision-making power, so it is useful to have the higher political levels continuously engaged, to emphasise the relevance of project activities and to ensure the commitment of all municipality departments, units and offices.

INSIGHTS

BOLOGNA

Bologna Municipality has linked the roadmap it elaborated through the Project with its **Local Plan of the Municipality of Bologna (2018–2021) (PAL)** for a non-discriminatory and human rights-based administrative action towards new citizens. The roadmap was thus integrated within an already existing process. In October 2021, the city council approved a final report on PAL activities, which included MM-related activities. So, even though the MM concept is not yet institutionalised, an important step forward has been taken. The promotion of MM ideas within Bologna Municipality occurred also thanks to Centro Interculturale Zonarelli, a municipal space where migrant associations meet and offer training activities to strengthen several actors.

Many initiatives were included in the roadmap, including the implementation of activities that the municipality had already invested in and for which the right opportunity to experiment was pending. The roadmap proved to be an effective tool in the implementation of these activities and, as stated by the members involved, **the municipality will benefit from the pathways and processes created through it**, which allow (among other opportunities) the formation of a network of 30 library and museum operators. It proved more difficult to collaborate with the Urban Innovation Foundation or to involve persons with migrant backgrounds in participatory processes. *Trajectories of glances* - one of the activities implemented within the roadmap – despite the impossibility to involve many people because of COVID-19, brought out many solicitations and opportunities regarding inclusive narratives.

MILAN

The Project resulted in Milan Municipality including the first elements of MM in its **Single Programming Document (DUP) for the departments of International Relations and Social Policies**. The inclusion of MM in the DUP is a key step, as this document is linked to municipal budgetary instruments and must be approved by the city council. It is also relevant that MM was dealt with in the municipality's CODIR (coordination of department managers). The municipality's roadmap features the outcome of an internal debate on the **interdepartmental one-stop-shop service**, which was created to provide services to persons with migrant backgrounds. This debate involved various departments presiding over culture, education and international relations, as well as the mayor's office. The roadmap contains recommendations and represents a fundamental step for the municipality, but it will take time for activities to be implemented. Part of the espoused mainstreaming action was linked to a desire for municipal administration to employ a shared vocabulary on migration topics. This reflection on language occurred as a result of processes that led to the drafting of the document *Towards the Vademecum*.

Both the roadmap and *Towards the Vademecum* could have had greater effect had the municipal working group been able to discuss and strengthen elaborated outputs prior to the culmination of the Project. Unfortunately, outputs **were not officially approved** by the municipality, despite being valid, because there was not enough time to execute the necessary steps with administrative and political decision-makers. To increase impact and to adopt an MM approach at municipal level, it is necessary to raise awareness at managerial and political levels.

TIRANA

Following recently introduced legislation that decentralises migration management, Tirana Municipality developed a discussion process with ministries and other stakeholders to elaborate an **operational plan**. The municipality must now adapt to changes in national legislation; so, with the support of CDI, it elaborated a working paper that devised a local strategy plan to manage migration at the municipal level. The working paper elaborated a framework of important data to understand local context and the current situation, followed by legislative and institutional analysis and recommendations for both the municipality and central government actors dealing with migration issues. The document recommends creating a dedicated office within the municipality to handle migration issues and to collaborate with other departments in a transversal and multisectoral manner. This has been put to the municipal council for approval; if approved, it **will have to be integrated with the Municipal Strategic Plan**, which is due to be adopted by Tirana Municipality in 2022. These steps are crucial to ensure the relevant long-term impact of the Project on Tirana Municipality.

The involvement of various municipal departments is a great success for the promotion of MM within Tirana Municipality. More time is needed to engage all departments, but the working group managed to meet and debate with relevant stakeholders at national level, with the support of CDI.

3.6. Sustainability

The sustainability of the Project was assessed in the following key areas: staff capacity, institutionalisation of the MM approach, strength of relationships with other local-level initiatives, and networking among municipalities.

The Project presented an opportunity to **create and/or deepen collaborations** between different municipality actors, especially those actively involved in the working groups. The Project was also a training and **capacity-building** opportunity for all personnel involved. In terms of long-term sustainability, it is important to provide periodic training and workshops for municipal employees, to ensure that knowledge gained is disseminated. Municipal ownership of project activities at the technical level was high, especially transversally between the units and departments. The flexible structure of the project allowed to incorporate and draft specific actions that reflected the priorities of the working groups themselves. More could have been achieved to improve political engagement at higher levels, especially in Bologna and Milan, and this is fundamental to long-term success, as stressed by the municipality members involved in evaluation activities. Another factor that negatively affects sustainability is staff turnover within municipalities offices. For instance, only two persons were active in the Tirana Municipality working group, besides the manager and the project contact person, and local elections posed further risk of turnover at managerial level. Staff turnover, particularly at management level, represents an obstacle to the sustainability of initiatives that deal with challenging topics such as migration. Additionally, time and effort is required at the technical level to transfer relevant knowledge and perspectives to new staff.

The IOM and implementing partners chose to **explicitly target municipal departments that already engage MM concepts in their work.** In Bologna and Milan, these departments served as entry points by providing strategic support, tools and opportunities to interface with other municipal departments. This appears to bolster sustainable achievement by building upon an existing foundation of skills, awareness and motivation.

The sustainability of project achievements is guaranteed through a capacity to **build relationships with other local-level initiatives,** to match project activities with the needs of municipalities and **to be fully coherent with processes already underway** in different municipalities. Bologna Municipality linked its roadmap to its PAL, which is significant in terms of ensuring resources. Milan Municipality linked its roadmap to the creation of a one-stop-shop service point for persons with migrant backgrounds. The inclusion of MM elements in municipal planning documents (such as Bologna Municipality's PAL and Milan Municipality's DUP), as well as the elaboration of Tirana Municipality's policy paper, is an important step in terms of sustainability, but this must be followed up with political will on the part of municipalities.

Did you share the know-how you acquired thanks to the project with other colleagues in the municipality?

50% No   50% Yes

■ Yes ■ No
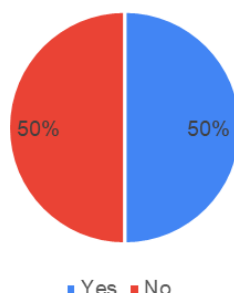
To what extent do you think the contents of the roadmap have had / may have in the future a concrete application?

17% Do not know   58% Quite a lot   25% A lot

■ Do not know ■ Quite a lot ■ A lot
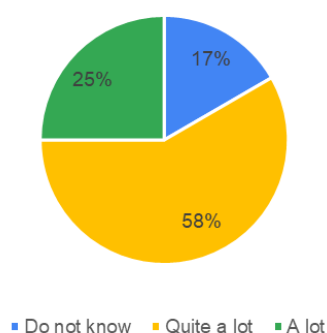
As stated previously in the section on impact criteria, the IOM and the municipalities chose not to create a formal network of municipalities or to participate in any existing networks. Instead, a flexible and informal relationship was preferred, at least for this pilot project. According to both IOM and municipality staff, the **creation of or participation in formal networks** is challenging and time-consuming because those networks must then be maintained, and this requires resources, energy and strong political commitment. However, the lack of any formal network may affect the sustainability of relationships, especially given the absence of strong high-level political ownership. Indeed, the technical staff members who comprise the working groups may not have the requisite time to devote to the exchange of practices and the functioning of informal networks. The follow-up project anticipated to commence in 2022 will involve local authorities in the Mediterranean region. In terms of network sustainability, it is important that the municipalities be given the opportunity to identify any potential members of the new network. It will be important for the follow-up project – together with the municipalities involved in both the pilot and other initiatives – to find the best way to make MM networks sustainable, even without the external support provided by the IOM and its technical implementing partners.

The Project was established and defined in consideration of different needs and local contexts. As such, it would be useful to devote more time to preparatory phases, so that conceptual frameworks can be defined in collaboration with municipalities, as well as to the final phase. **Limited engagement** between the municipalities, the IOM and CeSPI during the roadmap elaboration phase, and above all in the subsequent implementation phase, limits the sustainability of the informal network created through this pilot project. The continuation of this network would be bolstered by taking such steps, in addition to facilitating discussion between the municipal working groups on their respective roadmaps. No activities were promoted in the months following the culmination of the Project, and this represents a risk to sustainability. Without sufficient political support or a project framework to guide them, technical working groups are forced to abandon processes undertaken during the Project.

The final phase of the project consisted in an internal meeting with municipalities and partners, however a **larger dissemination of project results** to stakeholders involved in the roadmap elaboration and implementation phases, as well as to the key local and national stakeholders, could be included in the next phase. To increase the sustainability of future projects, it would be useful to implement an official concluding

phase for this pilot project, once the anticipated follow-up project is launched, to present the achievements of the Municipalities of Bologna, Milan and Tirana. Additional value is represented by the **valorisation of all documents produced** during the Project, including reports, roadmaps and specific outputs that ought to be systematised, to avoid diminishing the long-term impact and sustainability of the Project. This will make it possible to resume contact with the municipalities and other stakeholders involved and to provide them with indication of how their efforts are valorised, disseminated and incorporated within the broader framework of migration.

INSIGHTS	
BOLOGNA	The project members of Bologna Municipality stated that it is necessary to **promote regular training sessions and workshops** so that the documents developed are presented and disseminated. This will ensure that knowledge gained and promoted through the Project is passed on and becomes the heritage of the entire municipality. Those members actively involved in the Project are aware that they have assimilated knowledge on MM; however, it is necessary to create opportunities for sharing this knowledge with colleagues, if MM concepts are to be further disseminated.
	As far as the network and the relationship between the municipalities is concerned, there was a lack of discussion during the roadmap elaboration and implementation phases. Allowing more time to organise meetings between municipalities would **further consolidate the informal network** and improve its sustainability, whereas presently, there is no real awareness of the outputs developed by the other municipalities. Bologna Municipality achieved a good level of **project ownership** by involving various departments and offices; however, political engagement was lacking. A more consistent involvement on the part of the IOM might have encouraged greater political commitment within the municipality. As a result of insufficient political engagement, few of the proposed items were included in the PAL; however, that the municipality managed to include some MM-relevant actions in its PAL certainly contributes to sustainability.
MILAN	The project members of Milan Municipality recognised the high level of **ownership** of the working group, with the Project being perceived as coherent with processes ongoing at municipal level. The Project presented opportunities for dialogue between municipal offices, which served to facilitate exchange of knowledge, practices and experiences, initiated **transversal collaborations** on MM and other issues, and promoted a working approach incorporating **multisectoral working groups**. Some project outputs, namely the document *Towards the Vademecum*, were intended to be disseminated among municipal staff. This was done in a limited way until recently, as project activities were interrupted by local elections, which prevented the document from being officially approved. It is necessary to share the document and other project training materials through the municipality intranet, to inform colleagues about processes and output. In this way, some of the knowledge acquired by the municipal working group will be shared, even though passive uptake is rarely enough. It would be useful to disseminate documents while also providing periodic training and workshops promoted by the administration, but there must be strong political will to do so.
	As stated by municipality members, high-level political endorsement is key to long-term sustainability. This was the case in Milan for issues related to gender and food, but achieving this requires time, human resources and international networks. Projects such as these offer opportunity for reflection and exchange of experiences, but this requires **follow-up**. As far as the project network is concerned, Milan Municipality continues to cooperate with the Municipalities of Bologna and Tirana on issues other than MM. It will be fundamental for the follow-up project to consolidate the roadmaps and all project outputs and to put those forward for official political approval.
TIRANA	Tirana Municipality underwent change in municipal managerial administration, as well as **turnover** of technical staff, which impacted project sustainability and skills transfer. Only two technical staff members (of the original six) remain engaged in the working group, and the municipality contact person confirmed that although they have seen the final output, the municipality staff who now assume responsibility have no prior knowledge of processes established by the Project, nor were they not given a project handover or skills transfer.
	Municipality members are satisfied that the Project has achieved what was necessary and outlined suitable paths to follow. However, to be sustainable, these must be approved by the municipality and financed by central-level government and state ministries, particularly the Interior Ministry. Following September 2021 elections, the State Minister for Diaspora was dissolved, which could undermine the sustainability of processes undertaken by Tirana Municipality. To ensure sustainability, it is important to promote actions for which the municipality feels a strong sense of **ownership** at both political and technical levels. It is important to consolidate the methodology and further review the recommendations and lessons learned, as defined in policy papers, before extending project activities to other municipalities in Albania. The continued support of the IOM is essential for Tirana Municipality to ensure the sustainability of processes incorporating MM at local levels.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. SWOT analysis

The **SWOT analysis** summarises internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats for the Project.

Strengths

- Employment of a flexible and open-ended iterative model that can be adjusted to the needs of municipalities

- Willingness and availability of all parties (the IOM, technical implementing partners, municipalities and external stakeholders) to undertake such a demanding process

- Bottom-up approach that serves to identify the concrete needs of municipalities and helps to elaborate and implement appropriate roadmaps

- Capacity of the roadmaps to address relevant issues, allowing them to be embedded in ongoing planning and policy processes within the respective municipalities

- Creation of transversal and cross-sectoral municipal working groups within each municipality to allow sharing and consolidating competences across various departments

- Willingness of working groups to devote time and resources to project activities

- Opportunities for valuable capacity-building for municipality members

- Involvement of various external stakeholders (including diaspora associations and ministerial bodies) during roadmap elaboration and implementation phases

- Strong ownership and active involvement of municipalities at the technical level

- Creation of an informal network between municipalities to allow exchange of good practices and experiences

- Inclusion of MM concepts in local planning documents by the Municipalities of Bologna and Milan

- Elaboration of an action plan for Tirana Municipality that, if approved at the political level and with the support of ministerial bodies, will allow the operation of transversal structures to promote MM concepts among other local authorities in Albania

Weaknesses

- More human resources needed to ensure the successful functioning of a bottom-up and flexible approach

- Significant organisational effort required to facilitated engagement with municipalities and their working groups

- Difficulty securing strong commitment and endorsement at high political and decision-making levels; insufficient political endorsement and/or structured frameworks pose a risk that (a) working groups will be unable to continue MM-related activities and (b) the informal network between municipalities will erode

- Lack of overall institutionalisation of MM concepts within municipalities because these concepts have not been fully disseminated among municipal departments

- Short project timeframe does not allow sufficient political interaction with large local authorities like Bologna, Milan and Tirana

- Lack of systematisation and dissemination of the main project outputs within municipalities or to external stakeholders

- Insufficient exchange and engagement between municipalities and with external stakeholders in the roadmap implementation and concluding phases

- Greater involvement of IOM staff is required to encourage political engagement, commitment and ownership

Opportunities

- Involvement of more municipalities (in the follow-up project) to build on processes implemented in the Municipalities of Bologna, Milan and Tirana, to fully embed project results in local policy

- Expansion of the informal network of local authorities engaged in MM (in the follow-up project)

- Potential to link the informal network of local authorities (created though the Project) with other active international networks

- Potential to enhance the role of local authorities – generally and in relation to MM – due to increased awareness of their relevance following the COVID-19 pandemic

Threats

- Turnover of technical and management-level municipal staff

- Local elections held during or immediately after the Project's duration adversely affect the commitment of human resources

- Changes in political representation and societal perception may suddenly affect MM-related issues, which are politically sensitive and potentially contentious

4.2. Conclusions

The evaluation confirms that the Project is relevant, coherent, effective, efficient, impactful and sustainable.

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 of Bologna, Milan and Tirana. It achieved this through an iterative model designed to assist the municipalities to elaborate and implement effective roadmaps, adapted to their differing needs and according to local context, which produced a variety of responses. The evaluation also showed that IOM Italy and its technical partners understood and responded to these needs effectively, thus contributing to the early institutionalization of MM concepts within the municipalities involved.

The Project is both internally and externally **coherent**. At the international level, the IOM has worked on MM initiatives for more than a decade, and the concept is included in the governance pillar stated in several IOM documents. The Project features in local level debates that are gaining in importance, and municipalities are beginning to adopt MM concepts in discussions on migration. Such debates highlight the importance of local actors and plans in implementing development cooperation. Furthermore, the Project (in particular the roadmaps elaborated) proved to be fully coherent with existing processes currently underway in the municipalities. Finally, the internal coherence of the Project is demonstrated by assessing that the implemented activities are coherent among themselves.

The Project has indeed been **effective** in contributing to the general objectives of IOM M&D initiatives (funded by the IVC 2018) that aim to strengthen links between migration, social inclusion and development. The

activities carried out within the Project's framework enable 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, which is necessary for furthering MM concepts in local policy planning. Notably, the Project also assisted municipalities to network and collaborate with each other. The involvement of municipalities at technical levels is considered fully satisfactory and led to the development of transversal municipal working groups that have facilitated broad discussion and dissemination of MM concepts. Unfortunately, the Project lacked high-level political endorsement during its implementation phases, in contrast to official endorsements received in earlier stages. Each municipality successfully engaged external stakeholders to contribute to specific activities related to roadmap elaboration and implementation. The external challenges that were met include local elections that impacted project activities undertaken in the municipalities, as well as restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented municipality staff and partners from carrying out field visits or meeting in-person. Overall, the municipalities are satisfied with the support they received from the IOM and its technical implementing partners, CeSPI and CDI.

The Project proved itself to be **efficient** in various ways. The technical partners provided technical assistance and support to the municipalities. Internal coordination between the IOM, its technical partners and the municipalities was well-structured but challenging in the initial phase, due to timing that caused difficulties between the IOM and CeSPI. The Project is resource-intensive, and so financial resources were allocated to cover the human resources needed for primary project activities involving labour-intensive activities such as training, capacity-building and networking. 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 project implementation.

In terms of **impact,** the Project mainly aimed to spread MM concepts within the municipalities' development plans and policy planning processes and to create a local authorities network for MM. The Project strengthened the role and capacities of 'change promoter(s)' within the municipalities, who were able to internalize MM concepts through technical working groups and disseminate these among different sectors and departments. The Project successfully integrated MM concepts into local development plans (such as the Local Plan of the Municipality of Bologna (2018–2021) and the DUP on International Relations and Social Policies in Milan) and policy planning processes (Tirana Municipality). An informal network was successfully created to promote MM among the three local authorities, thanks to numerous online meetings and exchanges of practices that occurred predominantly in the early phases of the Project.

The **sustainability** of the Project was determined by assessing the following dimensions: staff capacity and institutionalization of the MM approach, long-lasting relationships established with other local level initiatives, and networking among municipalities. 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. Factors that negatively affect sustainability include municipal staff turnover due to local elections, especially the risk of turnover at managerial levels. 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. Limited engagement between the municipalities, the IOM and CeSPI during the roadmap elaboration and implementation phases, combined with a limited institutionalized final dissemination phase to enable the outputs produced to be valorised, are factors that may reduce the sustainability of the informal network created.

4.3. Lessons learned and recommendations

The evaluation process highlighted several aspects that are potentially relevant to the evaluation in itself, for the future replication and/or scale-up of the Project and, more ambitiously, to modelling of the proposed approach to MM. Each lesson learned is followed by a related recommendation for project follow-up and/or

replication, grounded on both the good practices that emerged through this pilot project, as well as noted weaknesses.

The relevance and effectiveness of the **flexible and bottom-up approach** of the Project, which considers the local needs and contexts, represents a key feature with strong added value that should be maintained in project modelling. Indeed, the Project was devised to adapt to the concrete needs of the municipalities, allowing them to **tailor their processes to make MM concepts operational and to promote an iterative model that meets the needs of local authorities**. This was clearly achieved, considering the profiles of the municipalities involved in this pilot project, which can be grouped in two categories.

The Municipalities of Bologna and Milan were remarkable in their elaboration and implementation of migration policies at the local level. Milan Municipality considers migration to be a fundamental component of the internationalisation process that lies at the core of its development strategy, while Bologna Municipality is one of the leading municipalities in Italy in local social protection policies. In recent years, both municipalities have devised and implemented sectorial migration policies and started developing the means to overcome sectorial barriers and move towards MM. **Tirana Municipality** is in a radically different situation: as with many other municipalities in the Mediterranean, Tirana is transitioning from being a point of departure to being a destination/transit hub for migratory flow. As such, local migration policies remain poorly developed, and Tirana Municipality is less likely to successfully devise sectorial policies and overcome issues through MM.

These **two different scenarios can be conceived of as 'incremental innovation' (Bologna and Milan) and 'skip-the-step' (Tirana)**. Both scenarios require **an adaptation of the intervention model tested in this project** – as they provide different resources and pose different challenges. For example, in the incremental innovation scenario, the level of pre-existing capacities in public institutions and civil society organisations is likely to be higher. Simultaneously, innovation tends to be met with weaker resistance in 'skip-the-step' scenarios, because pre-existing procedures are less structured. Overall, further efforts to tailor different adaptation strategies to different scenarios are needed for the scaleup and replication of the Project. **Peer learning and mutual exchange dynamics** could help to foster rapid upward convergence of the resources and capacities available to municipalities. This component could be further strengthened in future editions of the Project, in addition to leveraging mobility and meeting opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION:

- To maintain a flexible and bottom-up approach that offers the municipalities tailored pathways to make MM concepts operational through an iterative model that meets the needs of local authorities, notwithstanding the need to design a strong initial theory of change for the Project, both for M&E and modelling purposes.

Considering the relevance of both the innovation processes and steps proposed by the Project (that is, to (re)shape local migration policies according to MM approaches), **determining appropriate project duration appears fundamental.** A longer timespan would have allowed the results of this pilot project to be strengthened, triggering effective uptake of the MM approach at technical, political and societal levels across all municipalities. This is particularly so in Tirana, where the previously weak structure of immigration policies and services would have benefited from having more time to achieve substantial transformation. Moreover, allowing more time would allowed municipalities to dialogue on roadmap implementation and during the final stages of the Project (considering also external factors, such as local elections). This creates stronger engagement with external stakeholders, as well as uptake by political administrators within municipalities.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 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 (partner selection, analysis and assessment, set-up, capacity-building, roadmap elaboration and implementation, dissemination, closure and follow-up). This would allow project activities to be effectively implemented and ensure stronger results.

Lesson learned 3

The project timeline may not always be aligned with that of public administrations. The political and administrative mechanisms of the municipalities operate at a pace that is not easy to negotiate. Nevertheless, this potential inconsistency can be mitigated through better planning: for example, the municipalities suggested that it would be easier to determine, at a much earlier stage, which officials (and departments/units/offices) should be involved. In this way, appointed officials would be better able to plan their involvement in the Project, to allocate appropriate time/working hours for project implementation, and to better organise intersectoral exchange for MM within the Municipality, while adhering to the Project's timeline.

RECOMMENDATION:

- To identify the most appropriate technical working group members, from different municipal departments/units/offices, to be involved in project activities. This should occur during the initial phases of political engagement and endorsement, while ensuring that periodic dialogue with political representatives is maintained in later phases, to enable sharing and monitoring of project advancements, results and impacts.

Lesson learned #4

It should be noted that the approach proposed by the Project is neither politically neutral nor value-free. This kind of approach is rooted in the idea that the presence and socioeconomic integration of migrants within host communities present an opportunity and that, as a consequence, all policies should contribute to fostering the full and effective participation of migrants within the social, cultural and economic life of host communities. This vision of integration and co-development is not universally shared. As is the case in Italy, a non-negligible portion of the population of host communities perceives migratory flow as a potential threat to their safety, identity and wellbeing. This does not mean that this kind of approach can be applied only in communities characterised by an enabling political climate. Nonetheless, **an analysis of different political contexts should be part of the feasibility assessment prior to project implementation**. Additional uncertainty surrounding election results is an obstacle to projecting project results over a longer period of time and confirms the importance of the political dimension for both the success of the Project and the sustainability of results achieved. The forthcoming implementation of a similar project in Latina (Italy), which represents a less favourable and mature context compared to Bologna and Milan, will provide valuable insights on this point.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 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 (political vision, power relations and societal values) that may affect the Project's implementation within local communities.

Lesson learned #5

The early **engagement of political representatives** in all municipalities (achieved by the IOM during the project start-up phase) was fundamental for project implementation. Nevertheless, the technical working groups of the municipalities expressed that increased involvement on the part of the IOM – as a highly renowned and experienced international agency – is crucial to encourage political ownership and to maintain a high degree of local level political commitment for the entire duration of the Project, beyond initial political endorsements. This may also represent a relevant factor impacting the long-lasting sustainability of project results.

RECOMMENDATION:

- To devise and ensure stronger direct involvement of IOM staff in all project activities and to increase the engagement, commitment and accountability of political representatives and technical officials in project implementation. They would, in turn, benefit from continuous interaction with a highly renowned and experienced international organization.
- To work on both political and technical levels within the municipalities for the entire duration of the Project, and to increase the involvement of high-level actors in some selected activities, such as initial start-up and official municipal resolutions, appointment of municipal sectors and departments involved, formal adoption of roadmaps and other relevant outputs, public presentation of project outputs,

feedback for internal and external final evaluations and adherence to follow-up on municipality networks.

Lesson learned #6

It would have been useful to **better design the final phase of the Project**, to foster exchange and capitalise on results, especially in regard to the participation of the municipalities and other stakeholders involved in roadmap implementation. Several interviewees pointed out that the weakness of the final phase was a partial obstacle to the sustainability of results, since the final phase of the project usually offers an opportunity not only for validation and uptake of final outputs and results, but also for reflection and planning future steps. Moreover, it could have been useful **to define, share and agree on a follow-up plan** to preserve the contacts and networks created and to promote the sustainability of project results. This relates also to the need for a **more robust systematization of the many documents** (reports, roadmaps and other outputs) produced and approved by the municipalities and project partners, which paves the way for stronger uptake within local communities, and to achieve maximum impact of these outputs.

RECOMMENDATION:

- To ensure participatory engagement of all project partners, technical officials, political representatives, local experts and stakeholders, both in the final phase of the Project and in defining a follow-up plan, to truly valorise and encourage uptake of project outputs and results at all levels.
- To devise mechanisms for maintaining network relations among municipalities and partners following Project completion, as well as to continue collaborating with them to broaden future networks of municipalities for MM, as their pilot experience can provide lessons learned, benchmarks and inspiration to peers in other regions.
- To devise organisational mechanisms within local authorities to ensure that the Project's approach to MM continues – in political and operational terms – and becomes fully embedded within local institutional apparatuses.

Lesson learned #7

The **COVID-19 pandemic was clearly a major stressor** affecting project implementation (including the evaluation phase). Despite travel restrictions that affected the establishment of relationships of trust among all partners, the **various participants coped with the unusual circumstances** and cooperated through various tools (such as the use of local experts, use of remote work methods, videoconferences, online team building, etc.), somehow managing to benefit from **easier communication and exchange channels**. Many of these operational solutions will still be useful in future, even when it again becomes possible to carry out fieldtrips and missions.

RECOMMENDATION:

- To strengthen, whenever possible, the combination of in-person activities within and across municipalities with virtual tools that make interaction and exchange among technical officials, political representatives, experts and stakeholders easier and more frequent. This will create stronger relationships of trust and cohesion among partners and stakeholders.

Lesson learned #8

Pilot projects strongly benefit from having a structured and well-designed **M&E system** in place from the outset. This allows all activities, results and feedback from stakeholders to be monitored, so that corrective actions can be identified and lessons learned for follow-up projects.

RECOMMENDATION

- 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. The timely checking and monitoring of achievements and expected results indicators will enable partners to understand what has been achieved and what measures, if any, need to be taken.

5. ANNEXES

5.1. Evaluation Terms of Reference

5.2. Evaluation matrix

5.3. Inception report

5.4. List of documents reviewed

5.5. List of persons interviewed or consulted

5.6. Data collection instruments

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