



## Independent Mid-Term Evaluation of the Southern African Migration Management Project (SAMM)

### QUICK FACTS

**Countries:** Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

**Evaluation date:** 09 January 2024

**Evaluation type:** Joint

**Evaluation timing:** Mid-term

**Administrative Office:** DWT/Country Office Pretoria

**Technical Office:** DWT/Country Office Pretoria

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**DC Symbol:** RAF/18/05/EUR

**Donor(s) & budget:** €25.675.395

*Key Words:* Labour migration

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The overall objective of the project is to improve migration management in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region, guided by and contributing to the realisation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (particularly goals 8 and 10) and the implementation of the GCM as well as the UN Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The project has two main components, namely: Labour Migration which supports the implementation of the GCM, and a Mixed Migration component which supports the implementation of the GCR, as well as of the GCM.

### Strategic Objectives

The project ToC is based on two strategic objectives and three key results areas as described below (See the ToC Annex 5)

**SO1:** Progressive change in legislations and implementation of evidence-based policies at RECs and national level will stimulate/facilitate an enabling policy and legal environment for labour migrants/migrant workers to effectively exercise their rights and pursue economic and development opportunities.

**SO2:** The development and implementation of evidence-based policies on MM at RECs and national level, will gradually address the legal and socio-economic barriers that hamper the protection of migrants and persons of concern\* and enhanced management of mixed flows.

The MTE encompassed all SADC Member States (Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) covered by the SAMM project.

The evaluation was undertaken as a joint evaluation under the leadership of ILO and an Evaluation Management Group and Programme Management Group to support at various stages. The evaluation team leader reported to the Evaluation Management Committee (EMC) led by the ILO evaluation manager.

### Present situation of the project

The SAMM project is a complex €25.675.395 project that is being implemented over the period January 2020 to December 2023. This The project Implementation has passed mid-term, with a delayed start emanating from the emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown measures imposed by Member States on the world of work. Owing to the



	<p>delayed start-up in most of the countries, the project will unlikely complete all planned activities by the scheduled ending period of 30 December 2023.</p>
<p><b>Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation</b></p>	<p>The MTE had a primary formative focus and secondary summative one with the overall objective of reviewing the implementation of the project to identify strengths and weaknesses, lessons learnt and good practices, as well as provide practical recommendations for improvements. The MTE encompassed all the 16 SADC Member States and focused on the regional and country-level planned project outputs and outcomes, with particular attention to synergies between the components and contribution to the formulation and implementation of regional and national policies and programmes. The key SAMM project stakeholders are governments of the 16 supported countries, Regional Economic Community’ secretariats including The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC), as well as the national administrations of their Member States, and the PUNOs).</p>
<p><b>Methodology of evaluation</b></p>	<p>The MTE was conducted under a theory of change-based approach ToC, using mixed methods, and with a utilization-focus. The analysis of output and outcome indicators, integrated with the analysis of other planned results, were key to the operationalisation of the ToC approach. This was blended with a qualitative and quantitative analysis of external factors that could positively or negatively influence the project.</p> <p>The MTE focused on progress towards the achievement of the outputs and outcomes and the likelihood of their translation to impacts on the target beneficiary institutions (governments, organizations, RECs) and final beneficiaries including female and male migrants, as well as refugees and victims of trafficking in persons (TIPs). For the purposes of assessing effectiveness, the central question in this MTE was whether or not the output and outcome targets had been/were likely to be achieved, and whether they were contributing to the desired outcomes in the context EDF 11, UN reform, national development frameworks including UNSDCFs, and SDG 2030 Agenda.</p> <p>Overall, the MTE was based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, which include relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. It also evaluated the degree to which the SAMM project mainstreamed cross-cutting issues including gender equality in addressing the strategic needs of men and women, and non-discrimination (i.e., people with disabilities), rights-based approach, social dialogue and tripartism,</p>



climate change, as well as effectiveness of the SAMM project coordination and implementation mechanisms.

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods to collect primary and secondary data. Through desk reviews, the evaluation collected secondary data from project documents and international and regional instruments of labour and mixed migration. It used an output/outcome/impact indicator measurement tool to collect secondary data on the performance indicators, baselines, targets, and status of the indicators at the time of evaluation. A total of 128 key informants participated in the MTE through in-person Key Informant Interviews in six countries (South Africa, Lesotho, Eswatini, Botswana, Zambia, Mauritius), and virtual Key Informant Interviews in the remaining 10 SADC countries, institutional interviews with the RECs and UN country offices, and an electronic survey of the relevant UN Programme Officers. Seventeen programme Officers in 11 countries responded to the electronic survey. The inability to carry out in-person interviews in ten countries and to interview migrants and other people of concern were the major limitations for this MTE.

## MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

### Relevance

The relevance of the SAMM project was assured from its focus on relevant issues of labour and mixed migration governance that are of national, regional, and global importance and from its inclusive and participatory project design and inception processes. KIIs unanimously agreed that the SAMM project was highly relevant within the current operational environment and global context of human mobility. The project objectives, strategies and methodologies proved relevant to addressing the challenges identified by the governments of each country, particularly those regarding the promotion and response to the need around labour and mixed migration governance and management.

The project focused on improving migration governance as a key milestone along the ToC pathways that would result in improving the working and living conditions of migrants in labour and mixed migration flows. The project also contributed to regional commitments by Member States to addressing issues of labour and mixed migration under the various Conventions and Protocols which they had adopted and ratified. However, the evaluation found migrant workers continued to face challenges that increased their vulnerability to exploitation, hence reducing the development potential of migration for the migrant workers and their families.



### Coherence

The SAMM project derived internal (corporate) coherence from its alignment to the labour migration and mixed migration related mandates of the participating Partner United Nations Organisations (PUNOs). Externally, it was systemically aligned with the UNSDCFs of the participating countries and the related implementation work plans. Strategically, the SAMM project was externally aligned to the national development strategies and international development policy priorities and strategies. The SAMM project was building on the comparative advantages and relationships which the PUNOs had already established with the Member States.

### Effectiveness

**SO1: Improved policy environment for labour migration across the region and improved access to legal and efficient means of labour mobility for female and male (prospective) migrant workers.**

The SAMM project's support resulted in improvements in labour and mixed migration governance. These improvements manifested through a number of key results that included, among others: the adoption of the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan monitoring tool in 2022 by the Ministers of Labour and the revision of **the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Task Forces on the implementation of COMESA Protocols and Council Decisions on Free Movement of Persons' Strategy and Road Map**. The project also supported the formulation of Labour Migration Action and Implementation Plans for Malawi, Lesotho, Namibia, and Zimbabwe as well as the strengthening of the protection of women migrant domestic workers through the formulation of recommendations advocating for Decent Work for Migrant Domestic Workers in the SADC region.

**KRA1.1: Rights-based legal and efficient channels of labour migration and mobility (including appropriate protection measures for migrant workers) promoted and put in place in the Southern Africa / Indian Ocean region.**

The project supported the implementation of the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan (LMAP) (2020 – 2025) and the implementation of the SADC guidelines on the portability of social security benefits. In addition, the project also worked with private sector employers to create an understanding of their role and requirements on issues of labour migration. The project worked with private sector employers through workshops, trainings, and consultative meetings to create an understanding of their role and requirements on issues of labour migration.





**KRA1.2: A Southern African and Indian Ocean Labour Migration Observatory established and fully operational.**

The project has supported the establishment of the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Labour Market Observatory (LMO) which was not yet fully operational at MTE. An important positive and unintended result was agreement with the SADC Secretariat to modify the structure of the LMO not to establish a physical structure, but instead integrate the LMO into the existing platform within the Secretariat.

**SO2: Strengthened and informed decision-making as well as management of mixed migration flows, including improved protection of vulnerable migrants in the Southern African and Indian Ocean region.**

The project partners collaborated and facilitated the organization of country-level tripartite dialogues on mixed migration in Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The project also assisted two refugee led organisations in South Africa to secure funding from the Refugee Innovation Funding as well as support the convening of a pre-planning meeting led by INTERPOL Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, on intelligence driven operations targeting Gender Based Violence syndicates within the ambit of human trafficking in the SADC region.

**KRA2: Evidence-based management strategies and policies to address mixed migration challenges, including assurance of appropriate protection frameworks for vulnerable migrants, are formulated, and implemented**

The SAMM project supported the development of policy frameworks to strengthen mixed migration governance at the SADC level and the capacities of Member States to develop and implement mixed migration policies and strategies. For example, the project supported Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to develop national migration policies. It also provided technical support to the SADC Secretariat to finalize the regional migration policy frameworks.

The MTE observed that the project had no accountability mechanisms such as M&E report sharing among the PUNOs. The accountability issues noted above were further complicated by the fact that the project management was centralised at the regional level, coordinated by the regional offices of the PUNOs. Interviewees in the PUNO country offices felt that the project staffing



adequate and with the right professional mix to steer the project. The technical capacity of staff at Member States implementing ministries was inadequate resulting in weak implementation and leadership, in some countries, thus compromise the efficiency and effectiveness of PUNO officers in supporting project activities. The SAMM project made deliberate efforts to efficiently invest and allocate human and financial resources towards strategically addressing United Nations cross-cutting themes, albeit the evaluation was unable to establish the quantum of the resources.

#### **Orientation to impact**

The orientation towards impact was strong, given the uptake and internalisation of the project's tools in the management and governance of labour migration and mixed migration by Member States. Evidence demonstrates that the project was improving legal policy reform for the effective management of labour migration and mixed migration, empowering migrant workers, tackling labour exploitation, elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, and promoting ethical recruitment. The project provides a model for partnership with donors, civil society, and all UN partners, to deliver on the SDGs (number eight and ten) as One UN, leveraging on the PUNOs' comparative advantages.

#### **Sustainability**

The sustainability of the project results was anchored by the ownership, internalisation and institutionalisation of labour migration and mixed migration by Member States. Signs of sustainability vary by country, with countries where the policy frameworks have been developed and regulatory systems on mixed migration and labour migration adopted having the potential to sustain results beyond the project.

#### **Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues**

The project comprehensively mainstreamed crosscutting issues, especially gender, human rights, tripartism, and dialogue. However, the SAMM project did not develop project-specific guidelines for mainstreaming crosscutting issues.

**Gender mainstreaming:** Gender was infused in all aspects of labour and mixed migration covered under the project. The evaluation found that all PUNOs worked in mainstreaming gender equality and children and youth rights in their strategic policies, legal and programme instruments. The project



made efforts to enhance the gender responsiveness of all of its activities by producing a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan for the SAMM project.

**Human rights:** The project upheld the right to participation by ensuring an inclusive approach in its activities. For example, all the capacity-building activities ensured the participation of women, men, and people with disabilities, as well as victims of TIPs and stateless persons. As much as 87% of the surveyed programme officers (i.e. those who agreed and strongly agreed) vouched that human rights were mainstreamed in project. The project also contributed to the relevant SDG Targets 5.2, 8.7, 10.7 and 16.2 as well as SDG 17.

**Disability:** The project upheld the participation and protection of the rights of people with disabilities. Among other things, the project collaborated with the Disabled Migrants' Rights Networking Organization to initiate a cash-transfer programme at the early stages of the pandemic. In Mauritius a country-level dialogue on mixed migration supported by the project in 2021 led the identification of key priorities on migration data to be implemented in Mauritius which include supporting relevant Government services to capture and manage harmonised cross-border and disaggregated data on mixed migration flows and vulnerable groups of migrants (trafficked, smuggled, disabled, children and youth).

**Tripartism and social dialogue:** The MTE established that tripartism and social dialogue have been a key feature of the SAMM project's implementation in 2022. The SAMM project has mainstreamed the cross-cutting policy drivers of international labour standards (ILS), and tripartism and social dialogue. Reports show that ILS have been effectively promoted at country level by government, labour, and business.

**Climate Change:** The project contributed to the development of the report on the root causes, consequences and solutions of climate change. It also supported participation in and follow-ups on the Global Refugee Forum climate change-related issues. The project partners supported an Internal Displacement Study to determinate the root causes of, and solutions to the displacements resulting from climate change in Lesotho and collaborated with the University of Pretoria and Centre for Human Rights to jointly organize a





webinar in July 2022 on the protection of persons displaced as a result of climate change and disasters.

### Conclusion

The SAMM project made positive progress in the face of the global pandemic: The project significantly contributed to propelling the region and its member countries towards an enabling policy environment for improved migration management in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region. The project also created the momentum and desire by the individual countries to work towards an enabling policy environment. However, countries were at different levels of establishing and implementing policy frameworks for the various aspects of migration management. Therefore, country-specific approaches to realise the desired results were employed. Overall, the project is on course to achieving its strategic objectives. However, the evaluation observed that although the strategic objectives are achievable, the project timeframe was negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected the programme efficiency, with the majority of services being halted due to lockdown measures. Despite the derailment of the project implementation by COVID-19, the ToC remains relevant for the remaining duration of project implementation. Most of the shortfalls in the project performance are not attributed to theory failure, but to project timeframe-related implementation failures. There still remain a number of key activities for completion. There are a number of key activities that will not be implemented within the current project timeframe. An extension of the project timeline is required in order to complete planned activities. Project coordination is being negatively affected by the absence or invisibility of the Technical Implementation Committee (TIC) functions at the national level. The absence of this function at the national level is negatively affecting participative decision-making in the project implementation processes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

### Recommendations

1. The evaluation team recommends a “No Cost Extension (NCE)” of the project. Effort during the NCE will be targeted at countries that are lagging behind on the policy and legislative reform front and countries that are in the final stage of ratification of the legal instruments.

2. The existing ToC should be revised to provide a fuller understanding of assumptions and change logic.
3. The Partnering United Nations Organisations (PUNOs) should develop theories of Change for their organisations as they relate to the SAMM project, which will allow the individual PUNOs to identify a wide range of causal link assumptions that need to occur for each project result area.
4. The programme should enhance synergies with other PUNO projects by ensuring layering efforts across individual partner projects, where possible.
5. There is a need for the project to develop a strategic action plan to engage the private sector experts for meetings and training.
6. The project should consider developing an inclusion strategy and a plan to ensure that cross-cutting issues are included in all project activities.
7. In the remaining phase of the project PUNOs should clearly build information dissemination strategies to ensure that the migrants, refugees, smuggled migrants, and victims of trafficking) are well-informed of their rights and available services.

**Main lessons learned and good practices**

**Lessons Learnt**

**Lesson 1:** A complex multi-region, multi-country, and multi-stakeholder project such as SAMM demands a wider implementation timeframe and project life cycle (i.e., beyond three years) to ensure adequate time for full engagement and buy-in of all relevant stakeholders and multiple constituencies, bearing in mind that the expected outcomes can only be achieved through negotiable and consultative processes.

**Good Practices**

**Good practice 1:** Leveraging United Nations entities' country experience and working partnerships with government entities is an enabling factor for advocating and mainstreaming knowledge and expertise sharing with the Member States.

**Good practice 2:** The establishment of a Project Steering Committee to coordinate the project at the regional level, complemented at the national level



by Migration Management Technical Boards / Migration Management Committees is a good practice, like what was done in Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi. The committees, which are mainly government-led, draw their members from government ministries, civil society, labour movements/ trade unions and UN agencies. The committees have the overall responsibilities of coordinating migration policy implementation and technically contributing in shaping the migration management environment in the country.