



## Terms of Reference

### FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION

of the project “Addressing Emerging Threats Related to Trafficking in Persons in the Republic of Moldova” (IOM project code: PX.0418)

**Commissioned by:** IOM Moldova

**Managed by:** Diana DONOAGA-CERTAN, Protection Program Coordinator, IOM Moldova

#### 1. Evaluation context

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been operating in the Republic of Moldova since 2001, serving as the leading international agency supporting the Government of the Republic of Moldova, migrants in vulnerable situations, local communities, and the Moldovan diaspora. With a presence across the country, in alignment with the national priorities, IOM provides both humanitarian and long-term development assistance, from protection, health, and livelihoods to migration governance and climate adaptation<sup>1</sup>.

The IOM’s Protection Unit has been at the forefront of reducing protection risks and combatting trafficking in persons (TiP), helping align the national legislation with international and EU standards, strengthening institutions, and providing direct assistance for rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors of human trafficking.

Between 3 May 2023 – 31 December 2025, IOM Moldova is implementing a project “Addressing Emerging Threats Related to Trafficking in Persons in the Republic of Moldova” funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) of the U.S. Department of State, with a total budget of USD 1,000,000. The project aims to strengthen national capacities to prevent, investigate, and prosecute trafficking in persons crimes facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICT), and to improve protection mechanisms for child victims and witnesses of exploitation and abuse.

The project supports Moldova’s commitments under the National Strategy for Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Persons (2018-2023), the Ukraine Refugee Response Plan, and ongoing national justice reform priorities. It builds on IOM’s long-standing counter-trafficking work in Moldova and seeks to

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<sup>1</sup> [IOM Strategy for the Republic of Moldova 2025-2027](#)

address risks exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the displacement crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The project focuses on three outcomes:

1. **Enhanced TiP prevention, detection, and investigation capacities** among specialized law enforcement agencies, with a focus on ICT-enabled crimes.
2. **Strengthened institutional capacities** of prosecutors, judges, and investigators for victim-centered, trauma-informed TiP investigations, including asset recovery.
3. **Improved protection for child victims and witnesses of exploitation and abuse**, including awareness-raising, prevention of online child exploitation, and establishment of child-friendly interviewing facilities.

Key project beneficiaries include the Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Prosecutor's Office, National Institute of Justice, judiciary, state-guaranteed lawyers, and civil society partners, such as International Centre La-Strada.

## 2. Evaluation purpose and objective

The **purpose** of this final external evaluation (hereinafter referred to as "Evaluation") is to provide an independent, evidence-based assessment of the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

The **objectives** are to:

- Assess the extent to which the project has achieved its intended objectives, outcomes, and outputs.
- Identify key internal and external factors that facilitated or hindered implementation.
- Evaluate the project's contribution to strengthening Moldova's institutional response to ICT-facilitated TiP and protection of vulnerable groups.
- Document good practices, lessons learned, and challenges to inform IOM's future counter-trafficking programming in Moldova and the region.
- Provide actionable recommendations for stakeholders, including national authorities, partners, and donors.

**Primary users** of this evaluation results include IOM Moldova project, senior management and project support unit teams; Government counterparts; International Centre La Strada; donor; Project Steering Committee.

## 3. Evaluation scope

The evaluation will cover the full implementation period (3 March 2023 – 31 December 2025), all activities, outputs, and outcomes under the project. It will assess the project's theory of change/results matrix and contribution pathways at the central and local levels across capacity development, software/equipment provision, legislative support, cooperation/partnerships, awareness-raising, and child protection streams.

Stakeholders to be consulted include:

- Government authorities
- Civil society partners
- International partners (donor / U.S. Embassy in the Republic of Moldova)

Cross-cutting issues will be mainstreamed throughout the evaluation. In this context, the evaluation should assess the extent to which these issues have been mainstreamed throughout the action, in line with IOM's *relevant* guidelines. Consequently, during data collection, the evaluator shall ensure that persons being interviewed or surveyed are disaggregated by sex. Surveys, interview questions and other data collection instruments should include disaggregation data. Evaluation reports should firmly represent sex-disaggregated data and attention to project effects and impacts. Second, the evaluation should examine how child protection principles were integrated into the project design and implementation, particularly in relation to activities addressing online child exploitation and the establishment of child-friendly interviewing spaces. It should assess whether appropriate safeguarding standards were applied to protect children from harm, ensure safe participation in project activities, and promote a trauma-informed approach in line with international child protection standards. Third, the evaluation should assess the extent to which activities identified and addressed barriers that prevent persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups from participating in, or accessing, services and protection. This should be guided by the principles of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* and IOM's commitments. In terms of human rights, in line with the *IOM's Rights-Based Approach to Programming Manual*, the evaluation should assess the extent to which project interventions respected, protected, and promoted human rights. This includes examining how accountability, participation, and non-discrimination principles were embedded in project design and delivery, and how the project contributed to strengthening rights-based institutional responses.

The evaluation should also assess the availability and quality of monitoring data and systems and include in the analysis and recommendations any measures that may be taken to improve those within the scope and resources of this and future interventions.

#### 4. Evaluation criteria

The evaluation shall be guided by the OECD-DAC (2019)<sup>2</sup> evaluation criteria — Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability — tailored to this C-TiP context.

#### 5. Evaluation questions

##### Relevance

- To what extent did the project address Moldova's national priorities on TiP and protection from ICT-enabled crimes?
- Were activities aligned with beneficiaries' needs and expectations, particularly law enforcement, prosecutors and vulnerable populations?
- How appropriate was the project design (ToC/logframe, targeting, risk analysis, assumptions)?
- Were the project activities and outputs consistent with the intended outcomes and objective?
- Was the project aligned with and supportive of IOM national, regional, and/or global strategies?

##### Coherence

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<sup>2</sup> The OECD/DAC adapted definitions and principles for use, along with an explanatory brochure, can be found at [OECD, n.d.](#) as well as summarized in the [IOM M&E Guidelines](#) (pp. 220-226).

- How well did the project align with and complement national strategies, other C-TiP initiatives, and IOM efforts?
- To what extent is the intervention consistent with other actors' interventions in the same context?
- Were synergies with international cooperation (e.g. study visits, regional task forces) effectively leveraged?
- To what extent does the intervention add value/avoid duplication in the given context?

#### Effectiveness

- To what did the project achieved or is likely to achieve the project outputs, immediate and intermediate outcomes?
- To what extent did the project adapt to changing external conditions to ensure project outcomes are achieved?
- What were or are the major external factors influencing the implementation of the project activities and achievement of the intended results?
- Did training and capacity-building efforts improve knowledge and skills sustainably?
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- What changes, intended or unintended, can be attributed to the project at the institutional and beneficiary levels?
- What early/intended effects can be observed on investigative/prosecutorial practices, inter agency cooperation, and child protection outcomes?

#### Efficiency

- Were monitoring and reporting mechanisms adequate for tracking progress?
- To what extent were resources adequate to implement the activities and achieve the outputs?

#### Sustainability

- To what extent are the results likely to be sustained beyond project completion?
- Were ownership and institutionalization of practices and tools achieved?
- How far was the project embedded in local/national/regional institutional structures?

What is the exit strategy of the project?

#### Cross-cutting issues:

- To what extent did the project strengthen rights-based, trauma-informed, and child-sensitive approaches in investigations, prosecutions, and protection services?

## 6. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation will be conducted in line with IOM policies and guidance on M&E, as outlined in the [IOM M&E Guidelines](#).

The evaluator(s) will propose a detailed methodology in the inception report, to be validated by IOM Moldova.

Given the context and purpose of this evaluation, a mixed method approach is to be used. Suggested appropriate methods include:

- Desk review of project documents, interim narrative reports, minutes of project meetings, training materials, available monitoring data
- Desk review of strategic documents, policies, programs and interventions of the Government of Moldova related to the project.
- Key informant interviews (KIIs) with project stakeholders, implementing partners, beneficiaries, IOM staff, et al.
- Focus group discussions (FGDs) with trained officers, prosecutors, judges, and civil society actors.
- Direct observation/site visits to training, equipment, and facilities (e.g. refurbished child interview room).

The methodology shall integrate rights-based approaches, ensure confidentiality, and comply with IOM's Data Protection Principles and UNEG ethical guidelines.

## 7. Ethics, norms and standards for evaluation

IOM abides by the [norms and standards](#) of UNEG and expects all evaluation stakeholders to be familiar with the [ethical conduct guidelines](#) of UNEG and the consultant(s) with the [UNEG codes of conduct](#) as well. The evaluator must also follow the IOM Data Protection Principles.

## 8. Evaluation deliverables

The following deliverables are to be provided by the evaluator throughout the evaluation process, upon a pre-agreed schedule confirmed in the inception phase (see below a section on the schedule):

1. An evaluation inception report that clearly outlines the evaluation methodology, refined and/or additional evaluation questions, data collection, detailed work plan, evaluation matrix (questions and sub questions, indicators, data sources and methods).<sup>3</sup>
2. An initial presentation of findings immediately after the data collection phase
3. Draft Evaluation Report structured to the IOM template.
4. A final evaluation report, incorporating IOM's comments if applicable, including all the elements as indicated in the IOM template<sup>4</sup>
5. A 2-page evaluation brief following the IOM template.<sup>5</sup>
6. A final online presentation on the findings of the evaluation for IOM and other relevant stakeholders as needed.
7. A draft management response matrix following the IOM template.<sup>6</sup>

## 9. Specifications of roles

The evaluation will be conducted by an External Evaluator / Evaluation team. The respective roles and

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<sup>3</sup> See for reference the IOM [inception report template](#) and IOM [sample example evaluation matrices](#), as well as the IOM [Guidance on Quality Management of Evaluations](#) including [Quality Control Tool](#) for inception reports

<sup>4</sup> IOM [Guidance on Quality Management of Evaluations](#), including [Quality Control Tool](#) for final evaluation reports.

<sup>5</sup> An [IOM template](#) for the brief will be provided by IOM developed on Microsoft Publisher. The brief should provide a short (two pages) overview of the evaluation including key project information, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

<sup>6</sup> According to the [IOM Guidance](#) on Use of Evaluations and Follow-up of Evaluation Recommendations, and the [IOM template](#) for Management Response and Action Plan Matrix.

responsibilities are outlined below:

External Evaluator / Evaluation Team:

- Prepare for and carry out data collection and analysis and deliver the products outlined above.
- Arrange the logistics to conduct the data collection.
- Providing periodic feedback to the Evaluation Manager on progress and any challenges faced.
- Providing a debrief at the end of the field visit (in country or online a few days after the field visit) to present on the initial findings and tentative conclusions. This will allow for any obvious oversights, misinterpretations, or information gaps to be identified and addressed before the evaluator begins drafting the full report.

Evaluation Manager:

- Support the logistics to implement data collection (including scheduling meetings of the stakeholders needed for data collection,).
- Sharing all relevant project documentation and information with the team as required
- Manage evaluation process, including feedback and quality control to the inception phase, debrief, and provide comments to the draft evaluation report.
- Assist in addressing issues or challenges flagged by the evaluator/evaluation team.

A quality assurance process shall be integrated into the evaluation, as follows:

- a) Final terms of reference (ToR) shall be agreed between evaluation manager and evaluator/evaluation team.
- b) The inception report shall be reviewed by the evaluation manager and project team, revised by the evaluator/evaluation team, and finalized only upon the evaluation manager's acceptance.
- c) The evaluator/evaluation team will timely raise any emergent challenges or barriers with the evaluation manager, who will support with finding appropriate solutions to facilitate the evaluation process.
- d) The final report and brief shall be reviewed by the evaluation manager and project team, revised by the evaluator, and finalized only upon evaluation manager's acceptance.

## 10. Time schedule

Below is the proposed schedule. It should be realistically assessed by the Applicant with details to be relayed in the inception report. **The expected number of the Evaluation team's working days is 24 (twenty four).**

Activity	Responsible party	Location	Number of days	Timing
Initial desk review of project documents and available data	Evaluation Team	Home based	4	01 November – 4 November 2025

Prepare a draft inception report	Evaluation Team	Home based	3	5 – 10 November 2025
Provide comments and review the draft inception report	Manager	Online	2	11 – 13 November 2025
Finalize inception report	Evaluation Team	Home based	1	14 – 15 November 2025
Scheduling and confirmation of meetings with KIIs	Manager	Republic of Moldova		27 October – 21 November 2025
Field visit to Moldova for Key informant interviews (KIIs), direct observation/site visits as needed	Evaluation Team	Republic of Moldova	3	24 – 28 November 2025
Drafting the report	Evaluation Team	Home based	4	1 – 10 December 2025
Provide comments and review the draft report	Manager	Republic of Moldova	3	11 – 15 December 2025
Finalize the report, brief and management response matrix	Evaluation Team	Home based	3	16 – 18 December 2025
Final online presentation on the findings of the evaluation for IOM and other relevant stakeholders as needed.	Evaluation Team	Home based	1	19 December 2025

## 11. Evaluation requirements

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent external evaluator/evaluation team, which is / brings:

- Registered legally as a company (in case of service providers) with a minimum of 3 years of demonstrated professional experience delivering M&E services.
- Strong demonstrated professional experience in conducting evaluations for international organizations, especially UN agencies and NGOs.

- Knowledge of ICT-enabled crime, child protection, and victim-centered justice approaches preferred.
- Expertise in evaluation methodologies.
- Familiarity with Moldovan/CEE regional context desirable.
- Strong analytical, writing, and communication skills.

## 12. Submission of application

The Evaluator/Evaluation Team service provider candidates are requested to submit the following as part of the application:

- The profile of the service provider (for evaluation teams) entity along with detailed CV(s) of a team member(s) who will be potentially involved in one or more assignments throughout this agreement, or the CV of the individual evaluator.
- For evaluation teams, proof of company registration and tax residence.
- A technical proposal demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of this ToR, and outlining proposed methodologies for the evaluation and timeline and a(max. 7 pages).
- A budget proposal, establishing the detailed cost structure to conduct the evaluation. The budget proposal should also include all logistical arrangements (including travels, accommodation, DSA, and translation services if needed). The evaluation will take place in Chisinau.
- Examples of previous relevant evaluations.