EU-FRANK

Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee
Admission through New Knowledge

Migrationsverket

EU-FRANK
Final Projekt Repport

EUROPEAN UNION
Asylum, Migration
and Integration Fund

Foreword

All journeys must come to an end and the time has eventually come to end the journey of the EU-FRANK project. At the same time the end of one journey is often the beginning of another journey and it is with great pleasure we hand over the results of the project to EASO and all of you. I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all of you who have participated and entrusted the Swedish Migration Agency to run this project. I am most certain that the fruitful discussions and important work will continue to take place in the newly set-up EASO Resettlement and Humanitarian Admissions Network, as well as in other fora and hopefully also in the individual contacts built over the course of the project. To echo the final words of the EU-FRANK conference, "if you don't stretch, you don't know where the edge is". I believe we are about to enter a new period of stretching our known edges, and I hope we can do it together.

> *"If you don't stretch, you don't know where the edge is",*
> Sara Little Turnbull (1917–2015), inventor.

Maria Persson Tornberg,
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Content

Summary

The EU-FRANK project (*The European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge*) has during its implementation period brought states and organisations closer and became a platform for states to find inspiration amongst peers. It has created a structure to support exchange among states and a foundation that new resettlement states can rest on. One of the achievements of EU-FRANK has been making room for both new and experienced resettlement states to develop their work, get practical know-how and find support.

- The project has built its work on an evidence base, composed of studies of various themes in the resettlement process. This has filled a gap that clearly needed to be filled, considering that the first report alone had been downloaded more than 30,000 times as of March this year just from MPIE's website alone.
- Further, in relation to expanding this base of knowledge, a resettlement training programme has been incorporated into EASOs European Training Curriculum. There are also 15 joint materials available to use in resettlement operations.
- Last, but not least, the project has explored new approaches on how to work on resettlement with various outcomes. It has sometimes been a challenge to navigate in the resettlement landscape, priorities have changed over the course of the project and ideas that the project wanted to test were sometimes too complex to combine with the strict AMIF regulatory framework.

Introduction

The EU-FRANK (*The European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge*) journey started with a call from the European Commission to increase cooperation between EU Member States in different areas of migration. The Swedish Migration Agency applied for action number 2 on the topic of new approaches to access asylum procedures. The agency did so based on the already long-standing Swedish commitment and engagement in resettlement and the work that had already started with the chairmanship in Core Group Syria. After some time and deliberations the Swedish Migration Agency received a positive decision from the Commission and was able with funding, idea, and project partners to begin the journey to fill this massive project with content.

This final report for the EU-FRANK project aims at providing an overview of the project's journey, structure and activities, as well as its main processes and recommendations. It is mostly targeted at the Responsible Authority for EU Funds, partners and other stakeholders interested in a broad picture of the project, but even those engaged in other projects that may wish to obtain knowledge and inspiration from what was done in EU-FRANK can benefit from the report.

This report is divided as follows:

Part 2: About the project

Part 3: Project implementation and results

Part 4: Sustainability and durability

Part 5: Evaluation

Part 6: Reflections and recommendations

About the project

The EU-FRANK[1] project aimed to develop new approaches and to provide support to increase EU Member States' competence and operational capacity to resettle persons in need of international protection. The project worked to create the necessary prerequisites to facilitate increased resettlement to the EU, both in quantity and quality. The project period stretched from January 2016 to December 2020, after an extension of 6 months had been approved in February 2020. The EU-FRANK project has been funded by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for 90% of the project budget, with the final 10% coming from the lead project organisation and project partners.

Project objectives and expected results

The overall objective of the EU-FRANK project has been to increase capacity for resettlement to the European Union, in terms of numbers as well as quality. With the aim to support EU Member States' operational capacity for resettlement, by testing and developing new working methods to increase competence, improve coordination, cooperation and exchange experiences concerning resettlement on a European level.

The project has worked towards four sub-goals, correlating to the different components of the project:

1. Increased access to research on resettlement
2. Access to EU common working materials on resettlement
3. Availability of training on resettlement for EU Member States
4. Availability of fora and methods for cooperation around resettlement on the EU level.

The expected outcome at the start of the project was for resettlement to become easier to implement, and that the efficiency and quality of the resettlement process would improve through better coordinated work underpinned by knowledge.

This pyramid illustrates the logic behind the approaches taken in the planning and implementation of activities to reach the expected outcomes. At the base were exchanges and possibilities for states to see how others dealt with similar questions, as well as share good results from their practices. Based on these collected experiences and results, and having incorporated the research element it was possible to establish recommendations and lay out possible paths for action. Using those as a base, it was then possible to create joint materials (for example, resettlement tools) that are available for the broader resettlement community, lowering entrance barriers and supporting states.

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[1] Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge
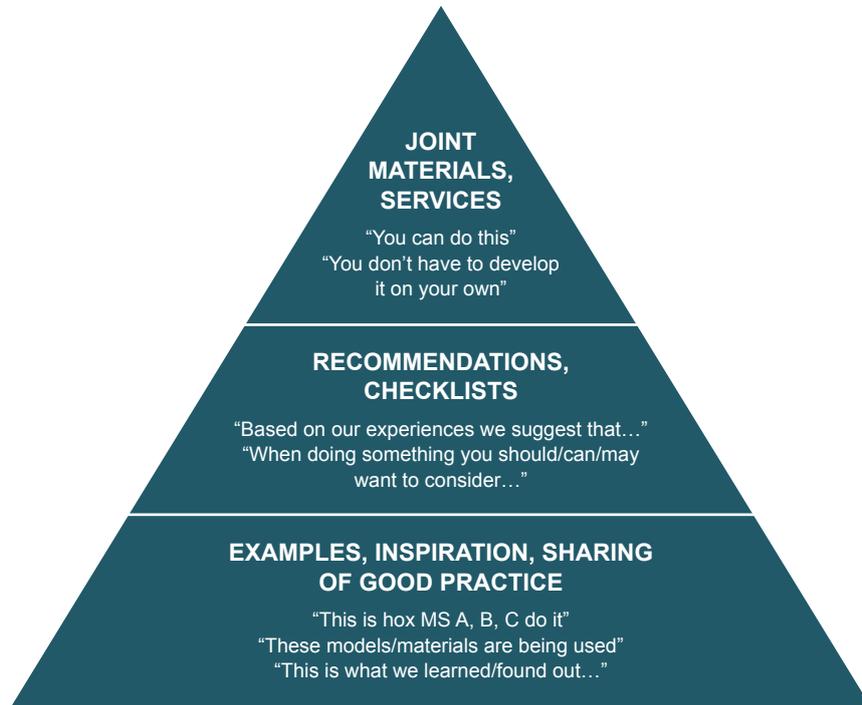
Project indicators

Indicators of how well the project succeeds with the above objectives included:

- Whether participating states and organisations consider that their operational prerequisites to deliver resettlement have improved
- The number of delivered research studies and reports
- The number of common resettlement information and working materials developed
- The number of resettlement practitioners who took part in training delivered or developed by the project
- The number of methods for coordination of EU Member States that were developed and tested
- The number of methods for structured and coordinated experience exchange and support between resettlement countries within the EU that were developed.

Target group

While the EU-FRANK project focused on peer learning primarily between state actors, to facilitate exchange of knowledge, networking and co-working between practitioners from different national administrations, the main target group are persons in need of international protection who are currently taking part in a resettlement process or can be subject to resettlement to an EU MS.

Project implementation

The lead organisation behind the implementation of EU-FRANK was the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA). The lead organisation provided the project secretariat, consisting of a project leader, two project coordinators, a minimum of two administrative staff and one financial officer. The set-up of the secretariat changed over time.

The project worked in joint cooperation with several project partners and key stakeholders, these were:

- The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) and the Central Agency for Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), the Netherlands
- The Federal Agency for Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) and the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS), Belgium
- The Ministry of Interior, Italy
- The Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPIE)
- The State Secretariat for Migration, Switzerland
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- The International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)
- The European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

Unlike other partners, EASO was also indicated from the start as the main receiver of the project's results. For that reason, its role as consultation partner was slightly different than that of other partners. More on the hand-over process can be found later in this report (Part 4). In addition to the contracted project partners, several other states, organisations and other similar projects were involved and supported the project in various parts if its implementation.

The project secretariat reported to an internal steering group for international projects at SMA, as well as a transnational strategising committee consisting of project partners and associated organisations, referred to as the Strategising Committee (SC)[2]. The role of the SC was to provide support and guidance to the project management and sub group leaders within the project. The SC enabled partners to gain insight into the project and to impact on the progress by providing direction and feedback on ongoing work.

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[2] Reference is made to the Terms of Reference for the Strategising Committee

The project was set-up around four components and one final ongoing part.
These were:

1. Research
2. Tools
3. Training
4. New approaches

Multilateral exchange and expert support.

Some of the components consisted of working groups of experts from project
partner organisations, coordinated and led by appointed component leaders. EASO,
UNHCR, ICMC and IOM acted as reference partners and were consulted on a
needs basis. The research component was led and carried out by MPIE, and the
multilateral exchange was managed directly by the project secretariat, with support
from primarily from ICMC. All component leaders reported to, and were coordi-
nated and supported by the project secretariat.

The project's participants consisted mainly of resettlement practitioners within EU
Member States' administrations, primarily foreseen to be governmental authorities,
but also non-governmental organisations. Officials from non-EU states also partic-
ipated in project activities, and contributed to fruitful exchange of experiences and
to the projects results.

Project implementation and results

Component 1: Research

Until 2016, availability of research and evaluations of resettlement schemes and outcomes existed in a limited scope. In order to provide a solid research ground for development activities within the project or amongst other actors, the EU-FRANK project formed a partnership with the Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPIE). The aim of this component was to raise awareness of success factors and areas for improvement, which would lead to the development of resettlement in the EU. This was achieved through the development of the different studies and their synergies with other elements of the project.

Implementation

The lead organisation in the implementation of Component 1 was the Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPIE), with whom a partnership was formed at the start of the project. The secretariat and MPIE worked closely in the planning, setting up and delivery of studies over the course of the project. A team of researchers at MPIE worked on the studies. On several occasions, MPIE participated in project activities as well as external activities to provide information about and make the research carried out within the project visible.

The initial research undertaken within the project was a gap analysis, which would guide further studies and activities. During 2017–2020, a series of studies was undertaken. Such studies provide information on particular parts of the resettlement process (e.g. pre-departure orientation) or working methods (e.g. peer-to-peer exchange) in order to provide input to the development of activities and measures. The exact focus of each study was determined as the project progressed, in consultation between the project management and MPIE, and was assessed and decided on together with the project partners. By enabling flexibility rather than defining the entire research component at the start, the project ensured responsiveness to demands and needs that were changing throughout the project period.

As the project allowed scope for the direction and content of the studies to evolve over time, this allowed the project to be responsive in terms of changes caused by, for example, changes of priorities for project partners and stakeholders. One example is study 5, which was initially planned as a study to discuss and present an overview of decisions to be taken in the process of setting up a resettlement programme. With the changing needs of stakeholders, this study instead became an overview of resettlement programmes, something that several states had been asking for. Further, to build on the interest expressed by project partners and participants in the project's so-called pre-departure orientation network, it was decided in November 2019 to dedicate efforts to a study on managing reception of resettled refugees in small and rural communities, referring to study number 4 in the list below.

The focus of the study on monitoring (of the EU-FRANK project) was changed to concern monitoring and evaluation of resettlement programmes, responding to a growing interest amongst resettlement states as well as EASO to lay the ground-work for further work in this area and increase knowledge of state actors of how monitoring and evaluation programmes can be set up. To enhance knowledge and allow for exchange of experiences, the project facilitated a total of four workshops on the theme of monitoring and evaluation, including inviting experts in different forms of evaluation to the workshops.

Results: Planned and delivered research papers/studies

The list below of delivered studies reflects the overall work of the component, but it does not account for the fact that they were used across components and in the build-up of different initiatives.

1) Taking stock of refugee resettlement – Policy objectives, practical trade-offs, and the evidence base

   (Mentioned in SMA project plan as Study 1: "State of knowledge paper")

2) Scaling up refugee resettlement in Europe – The role of institutional peer support

   (Mentioned in SMA project plan as Study 2: "Models for support and Exchange of best practice between EU resettlement states")

3) A comparative study of different models for pre-departure orientation

   (Mentioned in SMA project plan as Study 3: "Comparative study of different models for Cultural Orientation programmes")

4) "Thriving through welcome? Rural communities engaging in resettlement and refugee reception"

   (Mentioned in SMA project plan as Study 4: "Resettlement models and experiences")

5) Resettlement Matrix: overview of resettlement programmes

   (Mentioned in SMA project plan as Study 5: "Decision tree")

6) Monitoring and evaluation of resettlement programs

   (Mentioned in SMA project plan as Study 7: "Monitoring the impact of resettlement programmes")

7) State of knowledge post EU-FRANK

   (Mentioned in SMA project plan as Study 6: "State of knowledge study post EU-FRANK")

All published studies are available at http://www.eu-frank.eu/resources/publi-cations.html. For recorded webinars launching some of the studies, please visit https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/mpi-europe.

Component 2: Tools

In times when several EU Member States were about to resettle for the first time, or increase or improve their resettlement programs, a need for supportive working materials and tools such as check lists, fact sheets or templates for coordination with implementing partners was foreseen. EU-FRANK explored where such needs existed as well as whether it was possible to produce joint documentation on an EU level, to support Member States' operational activities in different parts of the process. Similarly, the project was to define areas where joint materials were not preferred, and offer Member States an overview of documentation that needed to be provided nationally. This would enable Member States to focus their resources on where they are needed. The aim of this component was the creation of shared documentation and working materials that increase efficiency and harmonisation of resettlement procedures in the EU. This has been achieved through the 15 documents produced, tested and delivered to EASO for further use – an expanded package when compared to the indicator of five documents as per the original plan.

Implementation

The lead organisation in implementing the work carried out in Component 2 was the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (FEDASIL), in Belgium. Fedasil made available a so-called component leader, who was responsible for planning, setting up and implementing the work according to the work plan, in the component. A working group, consisting of experts from various Member States, was setup to together with the component leader work on the joint resettlement material.

The working group consisted of experts from:

- The Office of Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS), Belgium
- The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS), the Netherlands
- The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), the Netherlands
- The Ministry of Interior (MoI), Italy
- The Swedish Migration Agency (SMA), Sweden

With reference partners from:

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- The European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
- The International Organization for Migration (IOM)

At the time of setting up the work in Component 2, little was known about which materials already existed in the different Member States' organisations working on resettlement. Hence, work started with a mapping and collection of already existing material in order to provide grounds for comparison and analysis and a basis for

understanding where joint tools and support documents could be developed. The project collected around 80 documents used by five different countries that were analysed, clustered and synthesised. In the process, the working group identified similarities and looked for tools that would respond to the needs shared by most resettlement countries and then developed those documents that could be useful for a large number of states. Based on the analysis of available and lacking materials, the component experts decided upon topics for joint new materials and drafted them in consultation with the project secretariat with input and feedback provided by EASO, IOM and the UNHCR. All of the tools developed are usable in their current format, but can also be adapted to national circumstances. To ensure that the tools would be of relevance to a larger number of states, a peer-review process and workshops were organised: the joint materials were presented in a workshop on 14–15 June 2018, and were further adjusted after the input received.

The original plan was to further test the finalised material in resettlement operations during spring 2020; however, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19, which led to the temporary suspension of EU resettlement efforts, there were only few actual opportunities for testing. EASO started setting up capacity for testing at the Resettlement Support Facility in Turkey with a questionnaire to be used for Member States willing to test the tools. Nevertheless, EASO is working further with them taking into account the feedback from some states and plan to test the tools according to the original plan once resettlement operations resume.

To provide grounds for comparison and analysis, the project collected existing materials that were being used by different Member States. Around 80 documents from five countries were analysed, clustered and synthesised. In the process, the project identified similarities, and looked for documents that would respond to needs shared by most resettlement countries and then developed tools that could be used by a large number of states. Based on the analysis of available and lacking materials, the component experts have drafted joint new materials. To ensure that the tools would be of relevance to a larger number of states, a peer-review process and workshops were used. Any of the tools developed are usable in their current format, but can also be adapted to national circumstances.

Further, recommendations were made on which materials could be produced individually by Member Sates and which could be suitable for harmonisation. The tools were published on the project website www.eu-frank.eu for the duration of the project period, and will be available at EASO afterwards. The project strived to have EU Member States test and evaluate the tools within the project period. To ensure sustainability of results, the project aimed at handing over the joint materials to EASO.

Planned and delivered tools on selection
- Template for annual overview of submitted resettlement cases
- Practical guide for planning and implementing selection missions
- Checklist for the implementation of selection missions
- Practical guide for planning and conducting resettlement interviews
- Template for scheduling of interviews during a mission
- Guiding note with considerations relating to communication via interpreters
- Guiding note relating to preparatory briefings of refugees during missions
- Template for a post-mission report
- Practical guide on how to implement dossier examination

Planned and delivered tools on pre-departure/CO
- Template to document and share information on accommodation in the resettlement country with appointed individuals.
- Template for arrangement of pre-departure orientation activities and procedures in partnership with IOM
- Checklist for organisation of orientation sessions via video link
- Guiding note with topics that can be addressed in pre-departure orientation

Planned and delivered tools on transfer and reception
- Template to document and share information on refugees' background, needs, and competences with relevant authorities in the resettlement country
- Checklist on departure and transfer arrangements

Component 3: Training

The project has developed and delivered a training programme on resettlement to support practitioners within institutions and/or organisations in EU Member States. The aim was to increase participants' knowledge on how to successfully manage different phases of the resettlement process, which was achieved through making the full resettlement module available for practitioners. At the time of writing, over 60 people have been trained at EASO's and national training programmes.

Implementation

The lead organisation in implementing the work carried out in Component 3 was the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA), Sweden. SMA made a component leader available, who was responsible for planning, setting up and implementing the work according to the work plan, in the component. A working group, consisting of experts from various countries, was setup to together with the component leader work on the joint resettlement material.

The working group consisted of experts from:

- The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), the Netherlands
- The Swedish Migration Agency (SMA), Sweden
- The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Switzerland

With reference partners from:

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- The European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
- The International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

The training module was completed in spring 2019 and consequently EASO took over ownership. Since 2018, EASO has held two train-the-trainer sessions with a total of 40 participants from different Member States and national training has to date been held in the Netherlands, with another 22 participants trained.

A training module on resettlement was developed in close consultation with EASO over the course of 2017 and 2018 and incorporated into the EASO Training Curriculum, ETC. The module covers all the phases of the resettlement process and is developed according to EASO standard methodology, but in close consultation with the other components and participants of EU-FRANK. The training covers the phases Identification, Selection, Pre-departure and Transfer, and Reception, followed by a final submodule on Innovative approaches and complementary pathways.

EASO modules are based on a blended-learning methodology, enabling both theoretical and practical approaches to training by combining an elearning method and facetoface sessions. A group of experts has been drafting the training programme under the oversight of a component leader and in close cooperation with EASO, UNHCR and other stakeholders. EASO has been responsible for building the training module on the online platform, and for further implementation and ownership of the training module once finalised and delivered.

Results: Planned and delivered Training activities
- Drafting of submodule on Identification
- Drafting of submodule on Selection
- Drafting of submodule on Pre-departure and transfer
- Training seminar 1 (Workshop)
- Drafting of submodule Reception
- Drafting of submodule Introduction
- Training seminar 2 (Pilot F2F session)
- Circulation to reference groups
- Drafting of trainers manual

- Training seminar 3 (F2F session/launch)
- Building on online platform (by EASO)
- Implementation of submodules 1-4 into ETC
- Drafting of submodule Innovative approaches and complementary pathways (sub-module 5)
- Implementation of submodule 5 into ETC
- Full training module available for training

Component 4: New approaches

The project aimed to find new and possibly joint approaches to resettlement between states and implementing partners or organisations. Within Component 4, a working group of experts from partner countries and organisations was put together to propose pilots based on a mapping of needs and interest among stakeholders. This was done with the aim of testing and learning if a higher degree of coordination and cooperation between EU MS could provide positive effects in terms of efficiency, quality and/or reduced costs for MS resettlement programmes. The aim of this component was to document experiences and recommendations from the project and involved countries on the potential role and format(s) for increased transnational cooperation around resettlement activities. These recommendations would inform stakeholders such as the national administrations, or the European Commission, EASO, UNHCR and IOM when considering and developing (joint) resettlement activities or structures. The work was carried out in two phases and the resulting recommendations were documented in two reports and handed over to EASO.

Implementation

Over the course of the project, the method of and implementation in the project changed. In the first instance, a working group was composed of experts from:

- The Office of Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS), Belgium
- The Federal Agency for Reception of Asylum Seekers and the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, Belgium
- The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS), the Netherlands
- The Swedish Migration Agency (SMA), Sweden
- The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Switzerland

With reference partners from:

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- The European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
- The International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

After having carried out an initial mapping phase involving looking at the preconditions for which activities could be implemented to answer to the aim of improving coordination of resettlement activities in the field, a discussion on how to move on from the initial phase to an implementing phase took place in the project's strategising committee in March 2018. Consequently, the working group was dissolved in June 2018 and resources were re-directed into three pilot areas, based on the working group's assessment and recommendations. These were:

1. Mission coordination and support
2. Planning and scheduling
3. New approaches to cultural orientation

The rationale for this new set-up was to increase the focus on the three different assignments and dedicate more efforts into their implementation. Throughout 2019 and the first half of 2020, EU-FRANK subsequently piloted practical cooperation between EU+ Member States in the formats of setting up network structures for operational staff in the areas of selection and pre-departure and tools for overviews of resettlement selection missions. Below, the work process and main results are laid out.

Mission coordination and support

The pilot concerning how mission coordination and support could be further explored and enhanced focused on increased collaboration between EU Member States, both in terms of operational cooperation and exchange of knowledge, being a key element in strengthening the European Union's response to resettlement needs. Correspondingly, the Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPIE) identified learning opportunities between EU+ Member States to be key elements in strengthening the EU's capacity for increased resettlement. As part of this, the project assessed the prospects for increased collaboration and support between Member States' missions primarily in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The coordination and support mechanisms should however be possible to also apply to mission work in other locations.

During 2017, the project explored the prevailing conditions and support structures for resettlement activities. Observations and dialogue with Member States, stakeholders and operational partners took place in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. Furthermore, there was an explorative mission to Lebanon with the objective of mapping and understanding the working conditions and structures in place for Member States' resettlement missions and operational partners there. The choice of geographical focus depended on the fact that Lebanon was the second most common location for resettlement activities outside of the EU (after Turkey) to that date. In addition, project partners' experiences from coordinating two missions in Uganda were explored. Continuous dialogue took place between the project and EASO to align with and draw from the experiences of ongoing and future coordination efforts in Turkey.

The following ideas and activities were explored within the pilot:

- Connecting missions from different states that are active in the same host country, by embedding staff from one state into another state's mission or by combining two states' missions in a way that enables them to benefit from logistical, financial or other aspects (by use of combined/the other state's interpreters, interview rooms or otherwise)

- Facilitating peer-support and learning between states bilaterally or multi-laterally.

- Piloting thematic meetings on an operational level. Both a format for a general annual meeting and resettlement from specific host countries on a needs basis. These meetings aimed to complement other meetings that were available for the resettlement community, such as the ATCR/WGR and Core Groups, and to support the development of a European resettlement network.

Based on the findings from the activities above and a continuous discussion with different Member States, it became clear that carrying out joint resettlement activities or pooling resources was not a possibility at this point. Several attempts were made in connecting Member States to, for example, join each other's selection missions with the aim of one state "tagging along" the other state, either to research the conditions on the ground to know the conditions for planned missions or to explore whether joint missions could be undertaken in the future. The concept of arranging peer learning opportunities and thematic meetings was more successful, which could be due to the fact that there was no common regulation in place at that point in time for how to implement resettlement in the EU.

The results of the pilot are: a tested method for exchange, in this case, between practitioners with a specific focus on selection, as well as a structure for how such exchanges can be carried out. The method and structure concern the use of a blend between multi- and bilateral facilitated exchanges between states, preferably taking into account the recommendations on the matching of states made in the report "Scaling up refugee resettlement in Europe: the role of institutional peer support"[3]. As well as facilitating thematic meetings with a focus on different geographic areas highlighting topics specific to the particular area/refugee population.

Planning and scheduling

The presumption at the start of the pilot, called "planning and scheduling", was that access to information about where and when states plan to deliver – or have delivered – resettlement missions or the like could enhance and facilitate state-to-state cooperation. In 2019, the project planned to test and evaluate the benefits of a visual planning tool that displays variations in occupancy and key operational partners' capacity to support resettlement missions in specific host countries over a calendar year. This was planned to be carried out with UNHCR as the main partner

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[3] See "Scaling up refugee resettlement in Europe: the role of institutional peer support" Beirens, Hanne and Ahad, Aliyyah (2018) available at [http://www.eu-frank.eu/resources/publications.html]

and in consultation with IOM and focus on the most common host countries for resettlement missions in 2017–2018, namely Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. The objective was to understand whether access to this type of information can enable states to act responsively to other states' plans in their national planning processes, and make informed decisions for instance by actively seeking to avoid 'rush hour' periods in specific host countries. After initial work had been done, efforts were redirected instead of looking at capacity to simply looking at where states would conduct selection (and potentially also PDO missions). It was found that if looking solely at capacity in the field, this information would be misleading and could lead to states hesitating to plan selection missions.

As the focus changed, the scope of the content in the pilot also expanded. Focus was redirected to asking states which locations they would resettle from in the coming period, with the aim of exploring whether such information would lead to more exchange between states. Ultimately, this would be carried out with the goal of increasing knowledge and making room for improvement of resettlement programmes. A calendar showing when and where states would carry out selection missions took shape with support of EASO, which is the agency that would also take over the further work and updates to the calendar. Gathering the information to the calendar was at times contentious. A number of states were, for example for security reasons, reluctant to share exact information in such an open format.

In addition to the calendar, the project initiated work on expanding information of states' resettlement programmes, information that would complement already existing information such as that provided by UNHCR in the country chapters and the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook[4]. This work was carried out in collaboration with MPIE and EASO and was to be included in the EASO Information and Documentation System (IDS) available to all EU Member States.

The result of the pilot is two-fold. First, there is a format and structure for possible enhanced exchange between states, in the form of the resettlement overview (or "the calendar"), where states can have greater information on each other's resettlement missions, thus facilitating that they in the future pool resources and undertake joint pre-missions and other joint activities. Second, there is a structure for information sharing, which similarly supports the aim of increased exchange and co-operation between states. Up-to-date information on what one state's resettlement programme contains can lead to the prospect of states with similar programmes teaming up and working more closely.

One important caveat to be noted is that the testing, due to COVID-19 and the travel restrictions in Europe, came to a halt in early 2020. This ultimately entails that further tests as to whether the project's presumption holds will be carried out by EASO after the transfer of results.

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[4] Available at: https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/4a2ccf4c6/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapters.html.

New approaches to cultural orientation

During 2019, EU-FRANK rolled out an Experience Exchange Programme on Pre-departure Orientation. The objective was to provide a platform for experience exchange and peer learning between resettlement practitioners and operational partners working with orientation and training for resettled refugees. The programme, which became known as the PDO Network, was planned to run for the entirety of 2019. However, as the work progressed throughout the year, it became clear that there would be no time to carry out all the activities planned for the Network, which also contributed to the extension of the project period until December 2020. This meant the Network was active until June 2020, allowing the project to observe and document some of the benefits of a longer lasting cooperation structure and how this pre-arranged scenario reacted to COVID-19-related restrictions.

The programme's aim was to provide an opportunity for resettlement practitioners to use inspiration and knowledge gained from interactions with colleagues from other countries and organisations to develop their respective countries' pre-departure orientation programmes. The programme strived to bring together roughly the same persons for a series of interactive events. By meeting several times, the participants would be able to build a network of professional relationships that could continue to be of use to them after the end of the project. Alongside national agencies that took part in this exchange, IOM and ICMC acted as key partners in this process.

The exchange programme aimed to offer its participants:

- Access to a network of colleagues from resettlement practitioners and operational partners
- Insight into different working models adopted by national authorities, international organisations and other practitioners
- Opportunities to participate in international development of PDO
- Support in developing national orientation activities
- A platform for discussion and interaction around relevant subjects.

In order to be able to tailor an exchange programme around the needs of the participants, EU-FRANK conducted an initial assessment of which areas were of specific interest to them as well as which activities or aspects they considered feasible. This assessment was based on the needs expressed by participants prior to and during the network meetings, and it also included questions on whether participants had any specific experiences and practices they would like to share or showcase. The participants were also encouraged to work with so-called Individual Participant forms, documenting their experiences, needs and lessons learned throughout the programme. Based on the areas of interest and the available offers, the programme coordinator was able to propose a list of possible activities for the participants to comment on, and indicate their interest in participating. Together with the project management, priorities were made based on an assessment of available resources.

To facilitate the exchanges, EU-FRANK arranged four full-group seminars and a number of practical learning opportunities in the format of study visits and expert meetings in smaller constellations. From the start, several parties signalled their interest to take part in the exchange. The first network meeting, held in Stockholm in February 2019, brought together 27 representatives from 11 countries and three international organisations. A similar line-up was noted for the second and third workshop, held in Bucharest (May 2019) and Dublin (November 2019). The large interest led the project to continue facilitating the network during the first six months of 2020, adding a fourth seminar (held as a webinar due to the COVID-19 situation in May 2020) and additional opportunities for study visits and exchanges.

Acknowledging the network as a rich source of information on practices and approaches to PDO, it was also used to compile the experiences in a consolidated document. By documenting the experiences, advice, challenges and lessons shared throughout the various exchanges between the participants, this knowledge becomes available to a wide group of practitioners also after the end of the EU-FRANK project.

Similar to the "mission coordination and support" pilot, the results of the pilot are: a tested method for exchange, in this case, between practitioners with a specific focus on PDO as well as a structure for how such exchanges can be carried out. In addition, it could be argued that the result is also one of a softer kind, having laid the foundation for a continued exchange between the practitioners who were active in the programme. One of the added benefits of these more spontaneous exchanges is their potential multiplier effect, where states continue creating opportunities to support one another thanks to the network developed during the programme.

Another positive result stemming from the work with PDO was the support provided to the Swedish Migration Agency in the development of its new PDO programme. After a few years without a PDO programme, the Swedish Migration Agency set to rebuild its PDO programme in 2020 and tasked MPI Europe, under the framework of EU-FRANK, to provide evidence-based recommendations to support the development of the programme. In order to do this, MPIE used a collection of methods, from literature review to focus group discussions, among others. The findings of the literature review and interviews with municipalities were shared at a national stakeholders' meeting, and the feedback from that meeting became part of the final recommendations by MPIE. These recommendations covered six key areas critical to the design, implementation and effectiveness of the programme, from establishing goals to monitoring and evaluating results. The re-building of the programme then moved forward in partnership with IOM, having a solid background with the support of the project.

Expert exchange

In addition to the above, during its entire implementation phase, the project facilitated multilateral support and exchange of practices between EU Member States and other stakeholders/partners by enabling experts from resettlement states with

different resettlement experiences to visit and learn from each other. Experts from different resettlement states were able to join colleagues in other EU Member States or in field locations, to observe and learn from resettlement activities in practice. The aims of these activities were to support and inspire in order to facilitate increased resettlement in emerging resettlement states, but also to have a positive impact on the development of already existing resettlement programmes.

Officials from state administrations, as well as practitioners from organisations working with resettlement had the opportunity to take part in study visits within the EU or locations outside the EU, to observe activities in the field. Matching of more and less experienced resettlement states, or states with similar models or methods, was done based upon expressed interest, and in consultation with EASO, UNHCR or other actors that could provide an overview of which models/methods and needs existed. A mapping of needs and areas of interest was carried out with a number of EU MS with limited experience of resettlement and the outcome of this mapping was used to influence choices of topics or areas for study visits and similar exchange events.

The illustration below indicates the areas in which study visits were carried out, but it is also explanatory as to the part of the resettlement process in which the project was active.
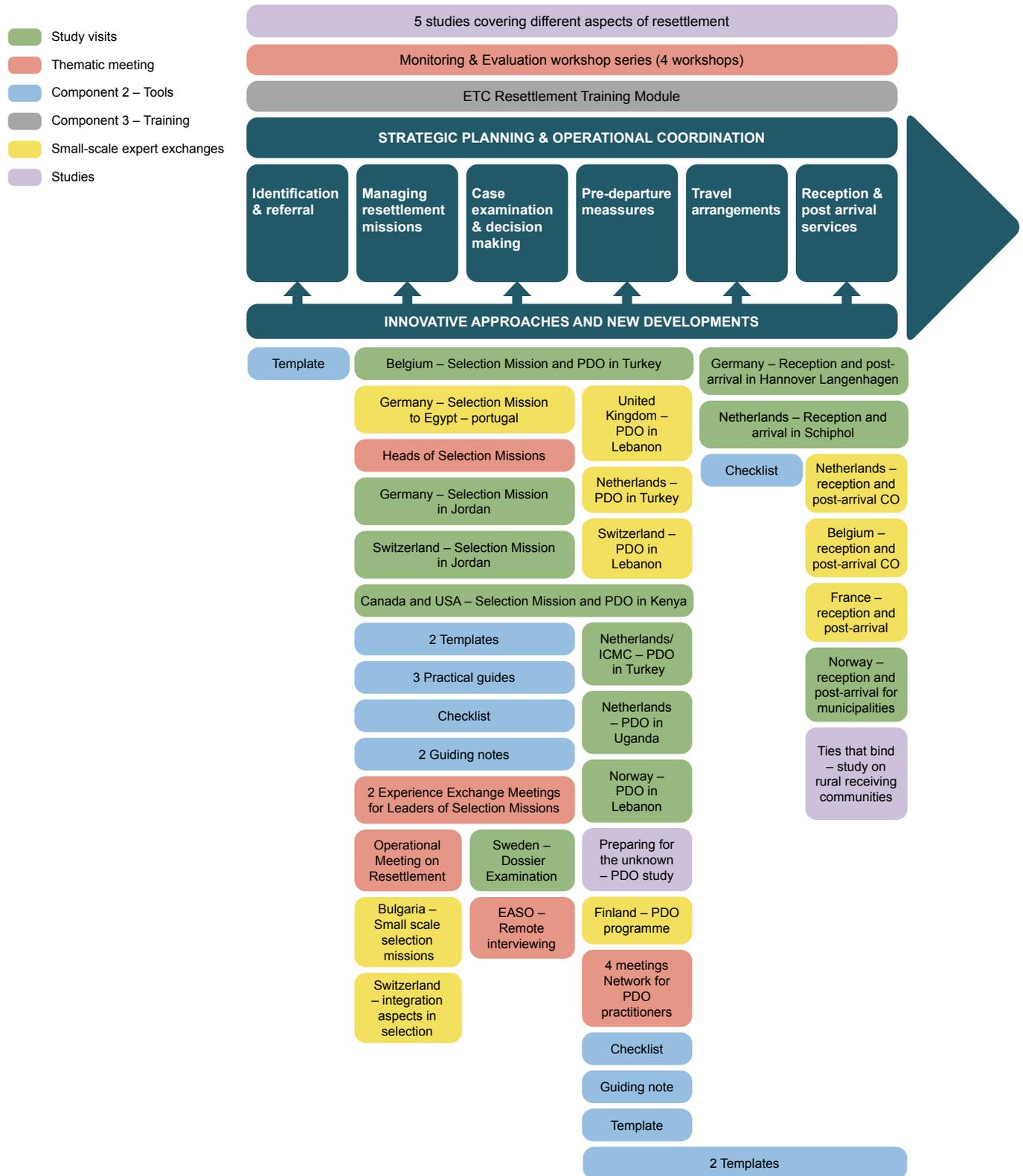
Figure 1: Overview of activities and studies distributed across the different resettlement phases.

Sustainability and durability

Early in the project's inception phase, discussions with EASO took place to explore possibilities for the office to use and implement some of the project's results in the work of EASO. At the time of the inception phase, only initial discussions within EASO on how to work on resettlement had taken place. At a resettlement and third-country cooperation network meeting during that period, participants in the meeting voiced their interest in other suggested priority areas.

In the period that followed, the so-called migration crisis occurred and with it§ the launch of the European Agenda on Migration (EAM) in May 2015. After the launch of the EAM, a majority of Member States pledged to resettle refugees and resettlement subsequently became high on the agenda within EASO as well. Over the course of 2015, SMA and EASO engaged in a number of meetings to discuss EASO's involvement in the project, as well as to discuss and agree on a process of hand-over of project results to the office. The hand-over will ensure the sustainability of the project results. This follows the logic of the benefit realisation analysis, facilitating a project steering towards benefits and making sure there is a designated receiver responsible for the sustainability of project results.

In the course of the project, several discussions on the hand-over of results and other potential receivers of project results were discussed, mainly at the project's strategising committee meetings in which project partners participated. As it was not established whether this multi-faceted hand-over approach would be feasible and as EASO holds a large mandate in asylum matters in the EU, it was decided that results would be handed over to EASO. This process was compiled in a Road Map, laying out the steps necessary for a successful hand-over. The objective of this hand-over was to ensure that project results such as tools and training modules would continue to be updated and shared with Member States, something that EASO is better positioned to do. In addition, broader recommendations from the project in other areas were also handed over to EASO and have already influenced the establishment of the EASO Resettlement and Humanitarian Admissions Network and will be taken further to continue supporting states in areas such as cooperation and monitoring and evaluation. In practice, this means that the project's results are not restricted to application during the project period, but can have a much longer and more sustainable impact.

Evaluation

During the entire implementation period, the project intended to follow up the activities by having a systematic evaluation of activities and follow-up with components. These evaluations helped the project keep track of the evolution of the activities and use the participants' feedback as a compass. A mid-term evaluation was also conducted in the beginning of 2019 with the purpose of putting forward recommendations for the project during the remaining implementation period, and a final evaluation was conducted in 2020 after the conclusion of the operational part of the project (expected to be finalised in November 2020).

Evaluating the activities

The project secretariat had a specific form to evaluate its activities. The form contained questions on the planning, the organisation, the course of the actual activity, the reasons behind participation, and specific questions on what participants took home from the activity, what they missed in the activity and any other specific feedback. These evaluations were used by the secretariat during the project implementation not only to be able to know if the project was able to offer the right activities to the right group of experts and according to state's needs, but also to follow-up on the execution of activities. As the project evolved, and with feedback from the partial evaluation (see more on that below), the secretariat managed to fine-tune the evaluations and establish better connections between the activities and the project goals. Unfortunately, due to factors such as lack of statistical support and capacity, a systematic compilation of the evaluations was not carried out. This meant that, although serial activities and network activities had a thorough follow-up process, systematic summaries and analyses for a broader range of activities were conducted based on ad-hoc needs.

The partial evaluation

In addition to the continuous evaluation of activities, the EU-FRANK project completed a partial evaluation with the assistance of an external consultant. The evaluation was carried out in 2019 to account for the delay in the launching of some of the project activities. This evaluation was based on interviews with partners, participants and other actors in the project. It resulted in an analytical report that underlined the purpose, goals and expected results of the project, as well as insight on how the project was organised, the different roles and responsibilities within the secretariat, the communication and collaborations within the project. This was a broad exercise and the aftermath provided information on changes and adjustments carried out by the project secretariat for the remaining time of the project.

Purpose, objectives and expected results

The evaluation looked into objectives and expected results of the project and found that the project, through the components and activities, encouraged multilateral

exchanges between new and experienced resettlement stakeholders around Europe. Formats for these exchanges varied, including peer-to-peer encounters, study visits, working groups and expert meetings. Moreover, the evaluation confirmed that project had identified innovative approaches and practices and assessed the possibility for increased coordination of, and support to, resettlement missions. It was concluded that the project was highly appreciated thanks to its practical approach including hands-on support and useful working tools. Finally yet importantly, in terms of results, it was noted that, at the time of the evaluation, Component 4 had not delivered as expected. Focus should have been on delivering concrete results, something which the project has worked to adjust and correct.

However, according to some of the interviewees, the objectives and expected results were not clear enough in the beginning of the project, which may have been due to a lack of information sharing. The secretariat followed-up by allocating assignments leaders and a project expert for Q1-Q2 2020 to work on the pilots that were decided upon and updated the Work Plan including concrete expected outputs; the secretariat also specified the objectives for each expert exchange.

Organisation, roles, and responsibilities

The partial review also looked into the organisation of EU-FRANK, the roles and responsibilities within the project. It found that the project had a suitable structure with involvement of partners within and outside the EU and expertise from relevant international organisations. Nonetheless, it could have been of benefit if the project had more manpower and more experienced experts involved. This was resolved by counting on partners' and other states' willingness to assist in facilitating activities, which increased the networking factor of the project. As for the partners, it took a long time to get all of them on board in the early stages, which was slightly disturbing for the first partners as they had to go through the same discussions every time a new partner came on board. It was also noted that new resettlement countries were not represented among the partners. This was a fact that the secretariat was aware of however could not undo at that stage of the project. Among participating states, however, new resettlement states were very actively involved in the projects activities, e.g. PDO network and other ongoing experience exchanges.

Furthermore, the evaluation recommended the project to work on a plan to assure the quality control of the content and products and follow up of results and analyses of achievements, and also to better clarify the division of roles, responsibilities and tasks within the secretariat. The roles, tasks, responsibilities and mandates should be better defined and documented for each employee as well as for component and mission leaders. The secretariat addressed those findings by systematically providing partners with information via email on the list of deliverables for them to be involved in quality assurance. EASO methodology was followed for training component development and for all other parts, partners and references provided input, written consultations as well as during workshops. Decision processes were further clarified in the project work plan and regarding the internal team, responsibilities and mandates were revisited and clarified including descriptions of roles and tasks.

Project approach and implementation

The report considered the approach and implementation of the EU-FRANK project and found it effective. Based on interviews and project documentation, it was clear that the project enabled EU+ MS to establish or improve national resettlement programmes in order to increase their capacity to resettle. As mentioned earlier, the project was appreciated for its hands-on support, but also because it had good timing since it was run at a period when states were in need of support regarding resettlement. The expected results appeared to have been achieved at that point. Moreover, it was mentioned that the structure of the project was functioning well, despite its complexity, and the thematic approach was judged to be good and the activities in general well organised.

In regards to activities, the report confirmed that for EU-FRANK to offer activities that could be of specific interest to MS, the project was continuously assessing and following up on areas where further developments could be needed, where MS lacked experience or indicated that they would like to learn more. Matching of more and less experienced resettlement states was done based on expressed interests, similarity of systems, challenges and practices. In this, the project liaised closely with stakeholders, such as ICMC, EASO, UNHCR and IOM to build on their experiences and insight. The project also liaised closely with MPIE and drew on their study of the potential benefits and use of peer-support to boost resettlement capacity.

Another aspect highlighted through interviews was that the project focused mainly on the operational level, but that it might have the potential to influence policy. However, there is no strategy for the project on political issues. Although the purpose of the project was not to change policy, it might still have been the case indirectly.

Communication and collaboration

The majority of project partners, experts and participants seemed to be satisfied with the communication and cooperation within the project. The ability to communicate and collaborate with all actors involved was of importance thus the project secretariat was very responsive and willing to take on new ideas or solve problems that could occur.

In this context, however, the evaluation pointed out the lack of an established horizontal communication set-up between the components. Better communication between components could have benefitted their overall work and contributed to finding synergies that could strengthen the different results. This issue showed improvement throughout the implementation of the project, thanks to different initiatives such as embedded work meetings and joint component-leader meetings. Communication was also further improved by the launching of the EU-FRANK website, which became an important communication channel. The website was a platform for sharing materials and other results of the project, and at the requests of the respondents, the project has ensured that the website will remain active beyond the project period until June 2021.

The above could have been better if the EU-FRANK project was assigned a communicator at SMA. The project did not have a defined plan for internal and external communication. However, the secretariat had prepared a communication plan that focused on how, and to whom, the results and lessons learned from the project should be communicated.

Administration

The overall administrative structure of the project generally worked well. Yet, the respondents talked about the difficulties regarding the financial requirements towards partners and experts, and the project's possibility of being more flexible, such as reallocating funding between different budget lines. It took a long time and much work to apply for reallocations since the project had to run it through the Responsible Authority for EU Funds. This was frustrating for both partners and experts, as well as for the project management and the secretariat. At times, it affected the workflow of some components' activities that were delayed when a specific expert was not available at a certain time. It would have been more efficient to follow the plan with a replacement for this expert, which was not possible given the time-consuming process required by the funder to make such changes.

According to the review, the conditions put forward within EU-FRANK were not the same required by other EU projects. The reason could lay in the fact that a project of the scale of EU-FRANK needed closer follow-up of the financial means nevertheless the Responsible Authority for EU Funds should look into it for future projects.

A respondent said in this regard, *"It has been a challenging project from administrative perspective. The project secretariat requires the same standards from all partners that SMA (or the funder) use itself in Sweden. In other EU projects, the normal requirement is that every participating organisation in a consortium complies with the standards that are set in the organisation's national regulations. No one understands why Swedish standards should overrule the national standards in all other countries. Normally, it is not possible for an organisation not to comply with the national standards with the argument that non-compliance is required by a partner in another country"*.

Quotes from the participants

Throughout the evaluations of the project, participants have not only provided feedback on activities and exchanges, but also commented on the usefulness and potential of what was learned. Below is a selection of comments highlighting the relevance and results of the project, from the participant's perspectives:

*"Exchanging experiences and working together with col-
leagues from more experienced Member States has greatly
supported my resettlement work, inspiring innovative ad-
justments in each phase of our young National Resettlement
Programme. For example, during the pilots of the selection
mission, it was important to receive a few interview formats
from more experienced Member States that helped to elabo-
rate our own interview format."*

*"Matching MS/participants is most important for peer sup-
port and experience exchange. I think it was organised prop-
erly, I could meet colleagues in this field who have different
experiences, some of them more, some less, but we could
exchange our knowledge and this is the most important."*

*"In my opinion the best way how to learn is on the spot. The
practical experience which we can get during the study visit
and then practical discussion with experienced colleagues is
the best way of exchange of experience."*

*"Yes, in a way a new resettlement community has been cre-
ated. This is the only network of practitioners or operational
staff. All other groups are on a policy and/or management
level."*

*"We now understand that the MS are very different in terms
of experience and capacity and that most MS need much
more training and capacity building."*

*"The project has provided one sustainable umbrella for
Member States' cooperation on resettlement and a good in-
terlocutor for EASO, which was particularly useful to make
sure to harvest synergies and avoid replications and dupli-
cations in the EU context."*

Reflections and recommendations

After almost five years of activities and operations, EU-FRANK closes with a baggage full of lessons learned that could support other projects and recommendations that serve to take these lessons forward. This section presents a summary of the recommendations handed over to EASO for continued work and a few general reflections stemming from the work with the project. The project also produced specific reports on its main areas of activities where one can find more specific inspiration and recommendations for EU+ Member States.

Recommendations to EASO

EU-FRANK produced a set of specific recommendations directed and delivered to EASO as part of the hand-over plan. A summary of these recommendations is shared below. The recommendations covered eight main topics of relevance to the project, with one or more specific possible courses of action.

1. Connecting Member States on an operational level

The main recommendation is shaping future networks in a way that enables practical dialogue on an operational level. This can be done by creating sub-groups for operational staff, or by arranging thematic meetings and practical learning opportunities around issues connected to different phases of the resettlement process.

2. Facilitating multilateral experience exchange and promoting continuity

The project recommends:

- Creating structured experience exchange opportunities of a multilateral character.
- Creating opportunities for continued exchange in relevant areas for practitioners – as practitioners have continued opportunities of exchange, they have better conditions to assess and express their needs for support and can play an active role in forming these exchanges.
- As observed in the interim evaluation, focus on establishing clear objectives and concrete outcomes, as well as ensuring commitment of participants. Therefore, EASO is also recommended to ensure that network activities have clear and defined goals and outcomes.

3. Selection and PDO – two fields that could constitute sub-groups

The project observed what seems to be a natural division between the areas of selection and orientation (PDO/CO). For that reason, EU-FRANK recommends:

- That an operational resettlement network for EU MS could provide opportunities to meet in sub-groups dedicated to at least these two areas (PDO and selection);

- Noting the large interest in networking around PDO issues, the project would recommend exploring the possibilities to create a network or sub-network for PDO experts. Continued dialogue is suggested to be held with IOM and other actors that have been active within the EU-FRANK PDO network on how this group of practitioners can continue to be supported.

In the area of PDO specifically, the project has additional recommendations in four areas[5]:

1. Strengthening cooperation: enhancing peer-to-peer learning
   - Create opportunities for exchanges in the field combining theoretical and practical learning.
     – Regional peer learning: Regional as well as cross-regional cooperation, eventually creating communities of practice (CoP).
   - Keeping engagement with non-state actors (such as IOM, ICMC, EURITA, etc.) as experts in their area of activity[6].

2. Innovation: innovative solutions and possibilities to increase capacity within PDO
   - Look into successful ways to do remote PDO and how to support states in that process.
   - Encourage the use of new technology and multimedia, preferably by providing support and/or platforms for states to develop their own multimedia tools or use pre-developed ones.
   - Development of common materials and films for both pre-departure and post-arrival phases on topics such as travel and fundamental rights, as well as general information on refugees' countries of origin.

3. Supporting practitioners: tools, mechanisms and initiatives specifically targeted at operational staff
   - Tool box: continued update and production of documents to support practitioners' operational work.
   - Developing PDO materials for children and youth and other specific subgroups – for all types of training situations (remote PDO, face-to-face sessions and workbook for self-study).
   - EASO Training Curriculum module on resettlement: may be regularly updated to fit training needs of states
   - More possibilities to share experiences both on what as well as how training is delivered.

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[5] Please refer to the specific report on PDO practices produced by EU-FRANK for detailed background on the recommendations

[6] For discussions on efforts linking pre-departure and post arrival services this is essential, since many states have non-state actors, such as civil society organisations responsible for a range of post arrival services.

4. Developing, monitoring and evaluating PDO programmes

- The main recommendation is to focus on supporting states in developing M&E systems. There are two main sides to this recommendation: increasing knowledge and providing practical support.

- In terms of programme development, promoting opportunities to discuss and compare how states tackle sensitive issues in PDO, in both strategic and practical terms, as well as how to build content for specific groups (and which groups are relevant).

In the area of selection missions, specific additional recommendations are:

- To continue with thematic operational experience exchanges for operational selection mission state officials. Issues that have been identified by several project participants to explore further are: age assessments for unaccompanied minors in the field, how to interview children (and from which age), remote interviewing/processing, biometrics: routines and logistics and security assessments;

- In addition to the above, to organise regular/annual meetings for operational resettlement selection staff/heads of selection missions in order for them to exchange concrete operational experiences and knowledge and build a structure for support between the practitioners.

4. Tailored versus 'ready-made' activities

EU-FRANK recommends considering the possibilities of arranging thematic meetings and exchange opportunities that states can take part in without having to be the ones to initiate them. By actively promoting new opportunities and offering different activities, EASO can push Member States to consider new aspects or receive information that they may not have been exposed to otherwise, and that can broaden their professional network.

5. Active management and coordination

As previously noted, EU-FRANK had an active role in managing and coordinating activities with different actors. In light of this, EU-FRANK would like to recommend that appropriate human and financial resources be devoted to maintaining and supporting a dynamic resettlement network that can adapt to the needs and preferences of Member States and can facilitate as well as initiate exchange opportunities between them.

6. Considering contributions of non-EU and non-governmental actors

Considering the broad range of actors involved in resettlement activities, EU-FRANK would like to recommend that non-EU and non-governmental actors should continuously be brought in to contribute (continuously or ad hoc) to an EU MS resettlement network. In addition, it is also important to consider how the EU resettlement network can complement, and interact with, global resettlement meeting structures such as the ATCR/WGR and the Core Groups.

7. Tools and information made available online

Access to information has also been a key factor in building cooperation. In light of this, EU-FRANK recommends:

- Investigating the possibility of creating a digital space or platform where general information, and possibly also opportunities for interaction, can be made available to network participants;
- Continuing with the mapping and sharing of planned resettlement activities for EU+ Member States in order to enable continued visibility;
- Connecting a sort of coordinator/liaison officer to the mapping of planned activities in order to be able to match states who are flagging a need for support in certain areas, as well as identify opportunities for formal and informal experience exchanges and cooperation between states;
- Continuing with the development of the resettlement programme overview that has been initiated in cooperation with MPI Europe.

8. Supporting states in monitoring and evaluating resettlement programmes

Many of the lessons that arose from the EU-FRANK monitoring & evaluation (M&E) work are captured in the report, *Using Evidence to Improve Refugee Resettlement: A Monitoring and Evaluation Road Map[7]*, which also includes a detailed six-step road map for countries interested in starting or expanding their resettlement M&E. Recommendations in this area are of course distinct for states and organisations, but its importance for both groups is not to be missed, but rather seen as a key step towards ensuring quality resettlement programmes and thus highlighted by the European Commission in its recommendations on legal pathways to protection in the EU[8]. To a transnational body such as EASO, key recommendations are:

- ***Promoting occasions for multilateral exchanges within M&E:*** providing opportunities for states to meet at workshops and exchanges enables national M&E "champions", i.e. key drivers of M&E in the national contexts, to meet and inspire each other, driving the work forward. It is important to note in this context that meeting other key actors is also relevant, including international organisations and other international and local non-state actors, both those involved in M&E work but also those who are part of resettlement implementation. A variation of this would be supporting meetings including other actors such as local stakeholders and universities doing research on refugees, strengthening the linkages between them and national resettlement units. This could become a relevant sub-group to invest in within the Resettlement and Humanitarian Admissions Network, in addition to PDO and selection (see topic #3).

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[7] Report produced by MPI Europe under the framework of EU-FRANK, can be accessed here: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/refugee-resettlement-monitoring-evaluation-road-map.

[8] See p.9 at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/commission_recommendation_on_legal_pathways_to_protection_in_the_eu_promoting_resettlement_humanitarian_admission_and_other_complementary_pathways.pdf

- ***Including M&E in systematic support pilot*** (information overview and planning overview) **to states early on:** as EASO develops different tools and formats to support states in building resettlement programmes, it is important to include M&E as part of the conversation from the start. Making sure to include it as part of support materials and check-lists is key.

- ***Creating possibilities for M&E mentoring "programme":*** as states kick-off their M&E efforts, it is possible they need specific support with questions that often cannot wait for workshops or meetings in the not-so-near future. Having an established M&E programme where state participants can get quick mentoring advice and support would provide opportunities for speedy developments. This programme could run ad-hoc as states' needs vary over time and shift in intensity.

- ***Develop economies of scale:*** EASO, as a transnational actor, can work together with other international bodies, research institutes and experts to lower the entry barriers for states that want to set up an M&E framework. It may be possible and beneficial to share lists of indicators in order to make programmes more comparable and, ultimately, identify best practices that could be replicated across states. EASO could also act as a clearing house for data collection tools, for instance providing sample surveys that countries could use to gather data from resettled refugees and implementing partners.

Reflections and recommendations to future projects

Make room for evaluation early on

Evaluation of processes and activities is key to keeping a project running on its tracks. From time to time, EU-FRANK had to go through time-consuming exercises of summary and analysis of evaluations because of a poor choice of evaluation tools, when there were alternatives available. Including detailed monitoring early on is crucial to being able to understand a project's journey and obtain relevant statistics when needed. At the same time, it is important to remain flexible and aware that, especially with longer projects, reporting and evaluation needs might change and evolve. Whatever the case, the importance of carrying out an assessment early on and having a solid base for evaluations cannot be overstated.

Cooperation requires coordination

One important reflection from the project, later considered in different aspects of the recommendations, is that cooperation among states requires coordination. Having an actor pulling the strings and playing an active enabler role is fundamental to establishing contacts, identifying synergies and creating opportunities for exchange and networking.

Communication is the backbone of cooperation

As per the findings of the partial evaluation, EU-FRANK had to deal with specific challenges in the area of communication – both internally within components and pilot leaders, but also when reaching out and communicating externally. An impor-

tant lesson is that having a structure for communication that is adapted to the set-up of the project is key. This is however no simple task, as working structures can shift at different stages of the process. Ensuring room for participation and involvement is key, as well as clear horizontal and vertical communication channels and communication around decision-making. On that note, it can be important to consider private updates for newly arrived partners and experts so that they are able to follow what is happening at larger gatherings. This is important to ensure the newcomer is informed and that the existing experts/partners avoid having the feeling that the information is being repeated exhaustively. It should also be noted that the assessment of communication needs has to be based on how the different parts of the project are expected to cooperate, where they are located, if communication is live or remote and who gets to be involved in which forum.

Structures are important tools for success and development

In addition to coordination, another important success factor demonstrated by the work of the networks and exchanges over the years is that having a structure is also important in fomenting success and development. By creating a fixed structure to promote for example exchanges within PDO, the project has enriched the area and promoted a positive spiral of exchange opportunities and content development. The work with the different components has also been dependent on there being a structured plan for cooperation and for how the parties would work together from a distance. Once the structures are in place, it is easier for new opportunities for cooperation, exchange and development to flourish. As a final example, two states took the opportunity of the structure in place during the project to make significant changes to their resettlement programmes. Sweden asked specifically for help in restructuring its PDO programme, and received the project's and MPI Europe's support for that. Italy took the opportunity to collaborate closely with MPI Europe in launching a monitoring and evaluation system. In both cases, the existing structure benefitted states in the long term and provided the project with insight and a window to national practices that enriched the project's results.

Partnership is a game of multiplication

Throughout the EU-FRANK journey, it also became clear that having the right partners is fundamental to achieving goals as broad as those set by the project. Bringing the right partners on board and keeping close contact with them through the strategising committee has not only given the project direction, but also multiplied the possibilities for cooperation in broadening the perspectives from different angles. Learning to work together with a variety of actors is of course challenging, but a key skill in the world of resettlement.

Final words

After five years of activities, partnerships, challenges and accomplishments, leaving behind a list of participants in the hundreds and with about the same number of pages reporting the work done, there cannot be much that is unsaid at this point. EU-FRANK was a timely product of the needs and efforts of a community of countries that would not have been possible without the existing structures for cooperation on the European level and the decades of praxis in this area. In balancing the results and the challenges, it is clear how long we have come and how long there is still to go. As we once again face new challenges for the resettlement community, the migration world and the future of European cooperation, the hope is that the lessons from these years can resonate across our partners and participants and find their echo in new initiatives.