

# EU-FRANK

Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee  
Admission through New Knowledge



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## Methodology and Recommendations for Monitoring and Evaluation in Refugee Resettlement

A summary by MPI Europe, October 2020



EUROPEAN UNION  
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## Background

Through the EU-FRANK project (*The European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge*), MPI Europe has played a key role in ushering Member States into the relatively uncharted waters of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) within refugee resettlement programmes in Europe. Our work has catalysed the development or expansion of resettlement M&E processes, helping empower Member States who were previously hesitant of taking the plunge, and supporting the development of a common European knowledge base. Within this portfolio of work, MPI Europe took a three stage approach, detailed below.

# Methodology

## Stage 1: M&E Pilot Project

In the first stage of the project, we offered direct assistance to three government institutions and their implementing partners in Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands in order to improve the design and implementation of their M&E frameworks for resettlement. Working hand in hand with the national resettlement authorities, our analysts conducted preliminary interviews with key resettlement stakeholders (as identified by the national authorities) and reviewed their existing monitoring tools. We then organised a workshop with all the key actors to discuss their objectives overall and at each phase of the resettlement process (such as during selection, travel, reception, and short and long term integration) and to agree on a monitoring framework (including a set of indicators) that reflects those objectives.

MPI Europe produced a long list of over 200 indicators, categorised by whether they were outcome, output, or input indicators. The list, shared with stakeholders in an excel spreadsheet, included a description of the indicator, how frequently it could be measured, whether data is already available, the main data sources and data owners, and the format. The national resettlement authorities and selected stakeholders then offered feedback on the long list and highlighted their priorities. This was then used to develop a short list of indicators, with next steps and longer term considerations. For example, one outcome indicator was the level of satisfaction of the resettled refugees with their life in the receiving country. This was defined as the average level of satisfaction of a sample of resettled refugees, based on a scale of 0-5, where 0 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied. In the case of Ireland, for example, this indicator could be measured using a monitoring questionnaire administered by the County Resettlement Support Worker or a dedicated team within the Irish Refugee Protection Programme.

This exercise laid the groundwork for the next phase of the project, in which MPI Europe developed a tailored ‘next steps’ document, with key questions and short and longer term actions to help Member States operationalise the agreed M&E framework. To conclude the pilot projects, our analysts organised virtual meetings with the national resettlement authorities a few months after the workshops to answer any questions and offer feedback on implementation plans and activities.

## Stage 2: Contributing to the International Conversation on Resettlement M&E

The second stage of our work channelled the interest in the pilot projects towards a more proactive and global discussion on M&E in resettlement. To this end MPI Europe participated in numerous informal conversations, and global discussions (such as during the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement) as well as responding to requests to brief Belgian, French, and German officials on the project

and to explore how our analysts could assist them in thinking through how to develop their own M&E systems. MPI Europe then published a research report that captured the best practices, lessons learned, key concerns, challenges and mitigation measures for implementing resettlement M&E, based on the experiences of the pilot countries and interviews with resettlement actors around the world.

### **Stage 3: M&E Workshop Series**

In the third stage of the project, MPI Europe supported EU-FRANK and EASO in convening national resettlement authorities alongside M&E experts through a series of four workshops to drill down into different kinds of M&E, such as formative evaluations and process evaluations, and to explore the key considerations on particular topics, such as pre-departure orientation and costs and resources. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first two workshops took place in person while the latter two were virtual. In all cases, these workshops aimed to bring together two types of participants: resettlement programme designers and those responsible for data gathering, analysis and management. These groups are not always in regular contact, so the workshop provided an opportunity for the resettlement experts to clarify the goals of the programme, while the more data focused colleagues could examine what data would allow them to assess whether those objectives were obtained, what data is already available, which stakeholders would need to be involved, and what kinds of analysis would need to be performed.

The organisation of the workshops can be broken down into a number of steps. After conceptualising the meeting and receiving the approval of the project partners, MPI Europe identified experts in M&E working in resettlement, international development, academia, and other fields. These experts were invited to participate in a plenary panel, chaired by MPI Europe, and also to participate in a speakers carousel with small groups of participants. This offered participants more opportunities to learn about how M&E has been used and to ask questions. For the virtual workshops, experts were also invited to pre-record interventions as part of the background meeting materials, giving participants a head start on digesting the material. All meetings were also supported by a short background paper. Rather than being a purely technical document, the background papers were aimed at both an expert and non-expert audience. They examined the rationale for using different types of M&E within refugee resettlement, and key considerations under each theme, before turning to the essential technical knowhow and illustrative practical examples (including some displayed graphically).

To ensure the workshops were both a learning and a ‘doing’ exercise, we encouraged participation from a team of people from each country to give them an opportunity to start creating a roadmap on how to apply the knowledge from the workshop to their own resettlement M&E. Teams of resettlement experts and their data focused colleagues were divided into facilitated breakout groups where they could work on these roadmaps using templates developed by MPI Europe. At the end of the workshops, participants reconvened in a closing plenary to share key takeaways from the breakout groups and ideas on next steps.

## Recommendations

Many of the lessons that arose from the EU-FRANK M&E work are captured in the report, *Using Evidence to Improve Refugee Resettlement: A Monitoring and Evaluation Road Map*, which also includes a detailed six-step road map for countries interested in starting or expanding their resettlement M&E. These include:

- **Find an M&E ‘champion’.** Rather than developing organically, M&E frameworks usually require trusted and authoritative leadership to drive the process. These leaders are able to build bridges between important stakeholders and generate interest in M&E. Progress in one country may have a positive ripple effect elsewhere as champions become inspired by M&E activities in other resettlement states, such as during EU and international meetings (e.g., UNHCR’s Annual Tripartite Consultation on Migration) or in workshops and trainings for resettlement officials.
- **Agree on clear objectives for the resettlement programme, at both the strategic and operational levels.** Resettlement programmes—whether they are new or well established—should have clearly defined strategic objectives, as well as a set of goals for every phase of the operational process. Bringing the stakeholders involved in this process together to examine and prioritise between objectives is a valuable exercise in thinking through a programme’s logic and a key part of determining what is most important to monitor and assess. This process can also help promote good will among actors as they reaffirm their shared objectives and discuss those that differ.
- **Set clear objectives for the M&E framework.** From the early stages of the monitoring exercise, it is crucial to consider who the audiences are for the information and analyses it will produce. This will help ensure that the data being collected is fit for purpose. For example, if an objective of the M&E framework is to identify which types of pre-departure orientation training best prepared refugees for the post-arrival period it will be essential to define how long after arrival data should be collected and how this information will be fed back to orientation trainers and course designers.
- **Start where you are, but with an eye on opportunities to grow.** Even the most effective M&E system is unlikely to capture all of the potential data points that interested beneficiaries, community members, and implementing bodies may wish for. Resettlement actors must prioritise particular dimensions (and related indicators) based on their relevance to programme and M&E objectives, and institutional capacity to collect data on them. By thinking through which indicators would be useful to monitor under both ideal and realistic conditions, resettlement actors can prepare themselves to scale up their M&E frameworks should more resources become available either internally or through partnerships with external actors, such as universities and research institutes.

As countries set out to collect data on their chosen indicators, it is important to note that resettlement authorities and their partners already have significant amounts of information on programme performance and impact. It often sits in paper files or in the minds of staff, but a bit of creativity and smart use of technology can enable an M&E team to tap into this existing data, maximize its value, and systematically feed it into decision-making processes.

- **Develop economies of scale.** Resettlement states, in collaboration with international organisations such as UNHCR and EASO, as well as research institutes and experts, can work together to lower the entry barriers for states that want to set up an M&E framework. In addition, 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. International organisations 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. Universities have also produced considerable research about resettled refugees, and strengthening the linkages between them and national resettlement units would encourage the integration of their findings into policy-making.

With the momentum for M&E growing in both resettlement and other protection pathways, such as refugee sponsorship, the time is ripe to build on the foundation laid through the EU-FRANK project. There is genuine enthusiasm and interest among Member States and non-government stakeholders in making more evidence-based decisions—and importantly, in soliciting feedback from refugees themselves as part of the decision-making process.

## Conclusion

As EU-FRANK reaches its conclusion, there is a key opportunity to institutionalise and build on this progress, such as through the work-plans of EASO, UNHCR, and the European Resettlement Network. It will be essential to act quickly to seize the current momentum and make sure all relevant partners (e.g. EU/national/local governments, NGOs and IGOs) jump on that train. This could be done by convening a diverse group of experts to brainstorm on the now most pertinent themes and relevant actions, such as a continuation of the workshop series, development of joint tools, or peer-learning exercises. One of the key barriers to resettlement M&E is that many of the ministries responsible lack a monitoring culture, and M&E is perceived as a technical and niche area rather than as an integral part of effective policymaking. MPI Europe's work through the EU-FRANK project has focused on delivering a strong policy-oriented case for resettlement M&E, generating enthusiasm among policymakers for what M&E can achieve, and making the M&E methodology accessible to a non-technical audience. Future efforts should build on this tradition to secure necessary buy-in and ensure the sustainability of resettlement M&E. As resettlement efforts gradually restart in Europe, after being paused due to the coronavirus, there is a unique window of opportunity to put M&E at the centre of those efforts—it should not be missed.