TACKLING MIGRATION CHALLENGES:

THE EU TRUST FUND'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE KHARTOUM PROCESS
A THEMATIC NARRATIVE

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EUTF MONITORING AND LEARNING SYSTEM (MLS)

The EU Trust Fund (EUTF) Horn of Africa (HoA) Monitoring and Learning System (MLS) was initiated in July 2017 and is being implemented by Altai Consulting. The overall objective of the MLS is to strengthen the EUTF interventions in the HoA through the creation of a monitoring and learning system, which should provide an evidence-based approach for programming and implementing interventions.

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CONTENT

ABBREVIATIONS

AML	Anti-money laundering
AML-THB	'Disrupting criminal trafficking and smuggling through increased anti-money laundering and financial investigation capacity in the greater Horn of Africa' (project)
AML-CFT ESCAY	Anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism in eastern, southern, central Africa and Yemen (project)
BMM	Better Migration Management (programme/project)
COC	Continental Operational Centre for Combating Irregular Migration
CFT	Counter-financing of terrorism
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (EU)
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships (EU)
DG MENA	Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (EU)
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
EU-IOM JI HoA	EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa (programme/project), previously the Facility on Sustainable and Dignified Return and Reintegration in support of the Khartoum Process
EUTF	European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa
GIZ	*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*
HoA	Horn of Africa
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IFF	Illicit financial flows
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JVAP	Joint Valletta Action Plan
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MMD	Migration and mobility dialogue
MPRR-SSA	Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration programme in sub-Saharan Africa
MRRC	Migrant Resource and Response Centre
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (EU)
REC	Regional Economic Community
ROCK	Regional Operational Centre in support of the Khartoum Process and African Union-Horn of Africa Initiative
RRS	Refugees and Returnees Service (Ethiopia)
SecFin Africa	Securing a robust AML/CFT Framework Against Illicit Financial Flows in Sub-Saharan Africa (project)
SMP	Individual Measure for the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (programme/project)
SOM	Smuggling of migrants
SOP(s)	Standard operating procedure(s)
THB	Trafficking in human beings
TOC	Transnational organised crime
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa, hereafter referred to as the EUTF or Trust Fund) was created to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration and to contribute to better migration management. This study offers an analysis of the EUTF's approach to migration management programming in the Horn of Africa (HoA) region. More precisely, it aims to assess the EUTF's collective contribution to and effects on the objectives of the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, also known as the Khartoum Process, and its priority areas of cooperation.

The programmatic areas of focus of this study are legal migration and mobility, preventing and countering smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, and return, readmission and reintegration – corresponding to the second, fourth and fifth domains of the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP). The primary EUTF-funded programmes examined are the four explicitly designed to support the Khartoum Process: the Better Migration Management (BMM) programme (phases I and II), the Regional Operational Centre in Khartoum (ROCK), the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for the Horn of Africa (EU-IOM JI HoA), and the 'Disrupting criminal trafficking and smuggling through increased anti-money laundering and financial investigation capacity in the greater Horn of Africa' project referred to as AML-THB. In addition, the analysis includes 14 other programmes or projects with interventions relevant to at least one of the targeted JVAP domains.[1]

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study comprises (i) a desk review of secondary research and literature, (ii) the construction of an analytical framework for EUTF portfolio outcome analysis, (iii) collective outcome analysis based on the aforementioned framework, available project documents and selected key informant interviews, and (iv) the collection and analysis of relevant qualitative information (including successes, lessons learned and recommendations) from available project documents and 48 key informant interviews. Methodological challenges and limitations include the absence of an official theory of change for either the Khartoum Process or JVAP, the relative absence of robust project outcome data, and the limited availability of official documentation on the Khartoum Process (such as meeting minutes and action plans).

THE KHARTOUM PROCESS

The Khartoum Process, formally launched in November 2014, is a political platform aimed at strengthening cooperation between relevant African and European countries to address irregular migration and criminal networks along the migration route between the Horn of Africa and Europe. It is one of three Africa-EU Migration and Mobility Dialogues (MMDs), alongside the Rabat Process and the Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD). Following the 2015 Valletta Summit on Migration, the Khartoum Process mandate was expanded to cover all five domains of the JVAP, including development benefits of migration, legal migration, protection, irregular migration, and return.

The Process is governed by a steering committee of six African and six European states, with the African Union (AU) Commission, European Commission, and the European External Action Service (EEAS) as members. Chairmanship rotates annually between African and European countries. The

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[1] These projects are listed in the introduction to this report.

steering committee and senior officials meet regularly, while thematic meetings form the core of the dialogue. Since 2016, thematic discussions have broadened to reflect the Process' expanded mandate as explained above.

The EUTF has been the main funding instrument linked to the Khartoum Process, which mandated the European Commission to finance four programmes through the Fund. Of these, the BMM programme and the ROCK in particular are seen as flagship projects closely tied to the Process's objectives, although all four programmes have been continued with NDICI funding. However, the Process's heavy reliance on EUTF funding raises broader concerns about sustainability, as the Trust Fund winds down and alternative funding for migration programming in Africa remains limited despite the new NDICI-Global Europe funding instrument.

EUTF CONTRIBUTION TO THE KHARTOUM PROCESS: OUTCOME ANALYSIS

The analysis below relies on a theory of change for the JVAP that was reconstructed by the research team for its second, fourth and fifth domains, as the other two domains are either not directly relevant to migration management or are covered in-depth by other thematic narratives. The reconstructed theory of change is rooted in JVAP actions, on the basis of which corresponding outputs, outcomes, specific impacts and overall impacts have been recreated by the research team. The analysis below offers an indicative assessment, suggesting likely positive contributions of the EUTF to JVAP outcomes, though limited data availability means further investigation would be needed to fully validate these preliminary findings.

SECOND JVAP DOMAIN: LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Legal migration from the Horn of Africa to the EU significantly exceeds irregular migration, with an average of 48,000 first-time residence permits granted annually between 2020 and 2023, compared to 15,000 irregular border crossings. However, these legal flows are mostly tied to asylum and family reunification, not employment or education. Regionally, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) endorsement of the Protocol on Free Movement in 2020, which was supported by the EUTF, marked a step forward, though implementation remained constrained by weak identity documentation systems, labour market information gaps, and the lack of harmonised skills recognition. These challenges are now being addressed through ongoing NDICI-funded programming.

Under the JVAP, legal migration and mobility efforts are grouped under three specific impacts, with EUTF HoA projects contributing to two:

Specific impact 2.1: Comprehensive national and regional strategies on migration and mobility are elaborated and implemented

The Support to Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance in the IGAD region and BMM I and II projects contributed to strengthening institutional capacity for implementing migration and mobility frameworks with positive results, though limited outcome data prevents a full assessment.

Specific impact 2.2: Students, researchers and entrepreneurs benefit from improved mobility between Africa and Europe

The EUTF-funded component of Erasmus+ supported academic mobility for students and staff, showing somewhat to moderately positive effects based on broader Erasmus+ evaluations. However, very limited data specific to African participants or to the programme's EUTF-funded activities constrains the ability to draw firm conclusions about impact.

Smuggling and trafficking networks are deeply embedded in mixed migration flows to and from the Horn of Africa – particularly along high-risk sections of the Central Mediterranean Route, such as the corridors between Sudan and Libya. These operations are driven by transnational criminal groups and generate massive profits – up to €5.7 billion at the height of the migration crisis. Migrants using these routes face extreme risks, including detention, abuse, and extortion. The proliferation of such networks is largely enabled by weak governance, limited institutional capacity, and a lack of regional cooperation. Trust deficits between national agencies and the absence of coordination frameworks have further hindered joint action.

In response, the JVAP and Rome Declaration prioritise dismantling criminal networks and protecting vulnerable migrants, with actions grouped under three specific impacts: (i) strengthening institutional responses to THB and SOM, (ii) improving protection and assistance for victims, and (iii) reducing enabling conditions in countries of origin.

Overall, EUTF-funded projects – including BMM I and II, the ROCK, AML-THB, the EU-IOM JI HoA, *Solutions pérennes* IOM, Free Movement IGAD, FLASH IOM, and others – demonstrated positive contributions, particularly in strengthening institutional capacities and providing protection services. However, the robustness of outcome data varies considerably across projects.

Specific impact 4.1: Relevant local, national and regional actors are effectively and efficiently (i) investigating and prosecuting organised networks involved in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and (ii) cooperating with one another to do so

The EUTF has made a substantial contribution to building institutional capacities in the fight against trafficking and smuggling. Law enforcement capacities and joint investigations were effectively enhanced by BMM I and II and the ROCK, which achieved measurable successes in training, coordination, and high-profile arrests. Positive achievements were also observed around the capacities of judicial authorities and associated legal/institutional tools, with thanks to the AML-THB and BMM programmes, although these changes are less evidenced by monitoring data. Financial investigation capacity and border management staff capacity improvements are also likely but are even more difficult to evidence, with important contributions from AML-THB and BMM but limited coverage, scope, and outcome data.

Specific impact 4.2: Improved legal, financial, health and reintegration outcomes for vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking

EUTF programmes made a strong collective contribution to improving access to protection and support services, with BMM I and II, the EU-IOM JI HoA and *Solutions pérennes* IOM delivering direct assistance and strengthening institutional and civil society organisations' (CSO) capacities. The EU-IOM JI HoA in particular collected solid outcome data, including beneficiary satisfaction surveys and evidence of improved stakeholder coordination.

Specific impact 4.3: Conditions in countries of origin are less conducive to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings

EUTF-funded projects undertook wide-ranging awareness and border management activities, but results are mixed. The research team rated outcomes around awareness-raising on legal migration opportunities and the dangers of engaging in irregular migration as having insufficient evidence: despite 12 projects contributing, most did not measure impact beyond outputs, and available findings were inconclusive or mixed. Meanwhile, improvements in border management staff capacities to implement integrated border management and rights-based approaches received a moderately positive rating from the research team. Several projects, including BMM, Free Movement IGAD, and FLASH IOM, implemented relevant trainings and SOPs, with some positive perceptions reported – but without robust outcome data.

FIFTH JVAP DOMAIN: RETURN, READMISSION AND REINTEGRATION

During the height of the European migration crisis in 2014–2015, return rates to the Horn of Africa were notably low, with only around 18% of issued return decisions implemented – largely due to limited political will (in part driven by the much higher prevalence of migratory flows from the Horn of Africa to non-European regions) and weak reintegration capacities among African partner governments. Then as now, the vast majority of movements occur along the Eastern Route (from countries such as Ethiopia and Somalia through Yemen to Gulf countries) and within the region, with forced returns from the Gulf, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), playing a dominant role. Between 2017 and 2023, over 560,000 Ethiopians were returned from KSA alone. This high-risk route exposes migrants to serious dangers, including that of death and of becoming stranded mid-journey. These complex dynamics highlight the importance of coordinated, dignified return and reintegration efforts, especially given the HoA region's fragile context.

Specific impact 5.1: Returning irregular migrants (i) experience an appropriate and dignified returns process and (ii) receive robust, tailored support to reintegrate in communities of return

The EUTF, particularly through the EU-IOM JI HoA, made a strong contribution to delivering efficient and effective return and reintegration support. Thanks to the JI programme, over 15,000 returnees received assistance, with high satisfaction and positive reintegration outcomes confirmed by external evaluations. Other projects, including FLASH IOM, *Solutions pérennes* IOM, and Sustainable Reintegration RRS, also supported returnees, though they did not measure effectiveness at the outcome level.

The EU-IOM JI HoA also strengthened the capacities of relevant authorities and civil society organisations to manage returns and reintegration, introducing tools like SOPs and conducting targeted training. However, long-term sustainability remains uncertain due to limited national ownership and reduced funding following the EU-IOM JI HoA.

Specific impact 5.2: Vulnerable children on the move receive humane treatment and protection in transit and upon return to their country of origin

Four EUTF projects – BMM I and II, EU-IOM JI HoA, and *Solutions pérennes* IOM – delivered or supported child protection services for migrant children in countries of origin and transit. Activities included establishing shelters, supporting family reunification, training social workers, and developing cross-border referral mechanisms. Pilot initiatives, such as the Best Interest Determination Procedure in Ethiopia, were also scaled up and shared regionally.

These interventions likely improved access to and quality of child protection services, but their overall impact is difficult to verify due to the absence of outcome-level monitoring or evaluation. While evidence points to meaningful contributions, especially in filling urgent protection gaps, the lack of robust data prevents a clearer assessment of effectiveness or long-term change.

KEY FINDINGS

KHARTOUM PROCESS

Successes and achievements

The very existence of the Khartoum Process is widely regarded as a key achievement, offering a unique platform for relevant African and European partners to engage on migration-related issues. Its equal representation and rotating chairmanship foster a sense of joint ownership, despite being EU-funded. The process has facilitated valuable informal discussions, built trusted working relationships, and provided space to test new policy ideas, such as Germany's feminist foreign policy guidelines. Some member states also reportedly use it to align programming with partner country priorities.

Challenges and limitations

Initially focused on combatting THB and SOM, the Process has since broadened to include all JVAP domains. However, it continues to be perceived – especially by African partners – as overly focused on irregular migration and law enforcement, limiting engagement. Geopolitical factors, such as the UK's exit from the EU and Sudan's temporary suspension[2] due to the ongoing crisis, have also weakened momentum. Operationally, the Process lacks sufficient explicitly targeted funding mechanisms beyond the EUTF, which risks turning it into a 'talking shop'. Programming links are often unclear, and the JVAP database, while intended to track progress, remains underutilised and relatively inaccessible.[3] The absence of formal monitoring systems further hampers visibility and accountability, although recent initiatives – like the ICMPD-led Migration and Mobility Dialogue Grant Facility – offer opportunities to better link dialogue with action. As the EUTF winds down, enhancing the Process's impact and visibility will be crucial to ensuring its continued relevance and securing future funding.

EUTF PROGRAMMING

EUTF-funded programming has made a meaningful contribution to the objectives of the Khartoum Process, particularly by supporting national capacity building, improving coordination, and piloting innovative, needs-driven approaches. Projects like BMM II and the EU-IOM JI HoA stand out for their participatory planning processes, which successfully fostered government ownership and alignment with national priorities. These models – highlighted as best practices by stakeholders – helped strengthen national migration governance and enabled countries to take concrete steps in areas such as return and reintegration.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) frameworks improved over time, especially for BMM II and the EU-IOM JI HoA, which produced several targeted studies and evaluations on core components like capacity development and reintegration. However, broader outcome-level impact across all projects was often difficult to measure due to the lack of shared and robust indicators, baseline data, and limited resources devoted to MEL – challenges common in migration governance programming.

Regional coordination also saw important successes, particularly through the Free Movement IGAD project, which helped advance mobility protocols and fostered stronger cooperation between the EU and IGAD. While collaboration with IGAD and the African Union faced structural and political constraints, efforts under programmes like the EU-IOM JI HoA and the ROCK have laid foundations for more sustained engagement. Notably, the ongoing discussions on the transition of the ROCK to AU leadership demonstrates the potential for long-term African ownership, but also the challenges of expanding sub-regional approaches to continent-wide strategies.

Cross-project collaboration occurred regularly – albeit informally – helped by common partners and long implementation timelines. Still, coordination could have been strengthened to avoid duplication, particularly with regard to trainings. This is currently being addressed in follow-up programming through new funding arrangements and management modalities to incentivise coordination. Finally, while some projects, such as the ROCK, faced reputational challenges, the EUTF's broader support for regional mobility and legal pathways remains an under-leveraged success and a strong legacy to build upon.

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[2] Sudan resumed full membership in April 2025.

[3] The JVAP database underwent a reformulation process and was relaunched in the first half of 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

KHARTOUM PROCESS

Recommendation 1: Consider reforms to Khartoum Process format and structure

Reinvigorating the Khartoum Process could involve streamlining meeting formats, enhancing interactivity, and improving accessibility – including by offering simultaneous interpretation and ensuring more focused agendas. Strengthening synergies with other migration dialogues and improving the JVAP database[4] would increase efficiency, engagement, and visibility of results.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen participation of key stakeholders

Improving participation in the Process may require more consistent engagement from DG INTPA, greater inclusion of civil society, and considering a more active role for IGAD to enhance regional ownership while preserving member state leadership.

Recommendation 3: Co-develop formal theory of change and monitoring mechanisms to more effectively track JVAP progress

A co-developed theory of change and flexible monitoring tools for the JVAP – which in turn monitors implementation of the Khartoum Process – would enable clearer tracking of progress achieved under the Khartoum Process and more compelling communication of impact. This would enhance the Process's credibility and help justify continued investment and participation.

Recommendation 4: Improve links to funding opportunities and programming

More structured integration of programming and funding discussions into Process meetings could reinforce its operational relevance. Emphasising themes of shared interest, such as legal migration, would further incentivise engagement from African partners.

EUTF PROGRAMMING

Recommendation 1: Incentivise formal coordination mechanisms between relevant projects

Stronger coordination between similar EU-funded projects could be ensured through contractual obligations and shared monitoring frameworks. Supporting national institutions to improve their own tracking of support received would reduce duplication and strengthen local ownership.

Recommendation 2: Study and potentially replicate BMM and EU-IOM JI HoA approaches to engaging national authorities in other relevant projects

The BMM programme and the EU-IOM JI HoA were widely recognised for their highly consultative approaches to project planning and implementation. It may be well worth conducting a detailed assessment or evaluation of this aspect of the two programmes, with a view to potential replicability to other regional migration management programming.

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[4] A reformulated version of the JVAP was launched in the first half of 2025, but the impact of this should be carefully monitored.

Recommendation 3: Increase coordination efforts with regional bodies

Effective collaboration with IGAD, the AU, and the East African Community (EAC) is essential for sustainable impact. Where possible, future programmes should embed regional actors in design and implementation processes, track their involvement, and provide targeted support to encourage deeper engagement.

Recommendation 4: When possible, explicitly link governance and capacity development programming to operational interventions

To maximise the value of capacity building, EU-funded programmes should explicitly connect governance reforms with practical operational support (e.g. protection services or logistical assistance to relevant actors). Such linkages would reinforce the relevance of capacity development initiatives and may further motivate local stakeholders.

Recommendation 5: Develop targeted communication strategies, especially for potentially contentious projects

Clear, proactive communication – especially for sensitive projects like the ROCK – can prevent reputational damage and improve transparency. Meanwhile, successful initiatives like the Free Movement programme deserve more visibility, supported by better MEL to showcase results.

Recommendation 6: Prioritise (innovative) monitoring, evaluation and learning

Robust, flexible monitoring systems are essential for tracking complex migration programming. These systems should include relevant strategies for monitoring complex migration governance and capacity development outcomes, such as outcome harvesting or tracer surveys. Investing in MEL capacity, enforcing data sharing obligations, and extending monitoring beyond project lifecycles would significantly strengthen strategic learning and impact measurement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa, hereafter referred to as EUTF or the Trust Fund) was created to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration and to contribute to better migration management. This study offers an analysis of the EUTF's approach to migration management programming in the Horn of Africa region. More precisely, it aims to assess the EUTF's collective contribution to and effects on the objectives of the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, also known as the Khartoum Process, and its priority areas of cooperation. **The programmatic areas of focus of this study are legal migration and mobility, preventing and countering smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, and return, readmission and reintegration.**

1.1. KHARTOUM PROCESS AND JOINT VALLETTA ACTION PLAN

The Khartoum Process was established in 2014 to serve as an inter-regional dialogue and platform for consultation, coordination and political cooperation on issues related to trafficking in human beings (THB) and smuggling of migrants (SOM) among countries along the migration routes between the Horn of Africa (HoA) and Europe.

The scope and mandate of the Khartoum Process were later broadened to include all five domains of the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) following its launch in 2015. The JVAP was adopted at the Valletta Summit on Migration in 2015 as a comprehensive framework for cooperation between African and European partners. It was developed in response to the sharp increase in irregular migration flows toward Europe, particularly along the Central Mediterranean Route.

It outlines five priority domains:

- **Domain 1**: Development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement
- **Domain 2**: Legal migration and mobility
- **Domain 3**: Protection and asylum
- **Domain 4**: Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings
- **Domain 5**: Return, readmission and reintegration

The Rabat and Khartoum Processes were identified by stakeholders as 'suitable existing mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the JVAP.'[5] JVAP partners[6] regularly take stock of progress at meetings attended by Khartoum Process representatives, while the agendas of Khartoum Process meetings are typically shaped by the JVAP and its domains. The Khartoum Process and the JVAP are thus considered to be mutually reinforcing, with the JVAP providing an operational framework for cooperation among Khartoum Process stakeholders.

The Khartoum Process is currently ongoing through regular meetings and continues to provide a framework for dialogue and cooperation among participating states, although, as outlined later in this report, it faces ongoing challenges that have affected its momentum. Similarly, while the JVAP is still formally in place and backed by both the Rabat and Khartoum Processes, shifting priorities and limited

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[5] JVAP website. Accessed here on 14 October 2024.
[6] These include all EU member states, relevant EU institutions, African partner governments, regional African organisations, and relevant regional and international organisations that support implementation, such as IOM, UNHCR, UNODC and ILO.

tangible outcomes mean that it risks becoming a symbolic framework rather than a driving force in migration governance unless it is revitalised with clear commitments, mutual trust and practical results.

1.2. EUTF FOR AFRICA

At the same summit that introduced the JVAP in 2015, the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa, hereafter referred to as EUTF) was formally established, in part with the aim of allocating funding to programmes designed to improve migration management in countries of origin, transit and destination. The EUTF allocated a total of €145M across four regional programmes with the explicit aim[7] of supporting the Khartoum Process:

- The **Better Migration Management programme (BMM I, €46M[8], and BMM II, €35M[9])**, implemented by various partners led by GIZ, which emphasises a regional approach to improving migration management through capacity building of relevant authorities and support to institutional frameworks and policymaking. Two phases of the BMM programme (BMM I and BMM II) were funded by the EUTF; the second phase built on BMM I's capacity building and policymaking interventions while discontinuing the direct beneficiary component implemented in the first phase. By the end of BMM II in September 2022, a third phase (BMM III) had been contracted and launched with NDICI funding (€40M from DG INTPA and €6M from BMZ, for a total of €46M).

- The **Regional Operational Centre in support of the Khartoum Process and African Union-Horn of Africa Initiative (ROCK, €5M)**, implemented by CIVIPOL, which seeks to counter THB and SOM by enhancing the HoA region's institutional capacity to track and share information on irregular migration flows and associated criminal networks, to conduct joint investigations and to enhance the coherence of national and regional legal frameworks – mainly by establishing a physical centre that brings together liaison officers seconded from the criminal investigation departments of national police forces in each partner country. A second EU-funded phase (ROCK II) was contracted to continue the initiative after the end of the EUTF-funded ROCK project in September 2021. ROCK II started in 2022, with €5M in funding under NDICI.

- The initiative **'Disrupting criminal trafficking and smuggling through increased anti-money laundering and financial investigation capacity in the greater Horn of Africa' (AML-THB, €5M)**, implemented by CIVIPOL to disrupt cross-border criminal organisations profiting from irregular migration and trafficking in human beings by targeting their financial resources. After the AML-THB project, a 'bridging' project known as AML-CFT ESCAY was contracted in preparation for SecFin Africa, a large upcoming programme that will target illicit financial flows from all types of transnational organised crime as well as from terrorism.

- The **EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa (EU-IOM JI HoA, €65M)**, implemented by IOM to strengthen migration management through the development of rights-based and development-focused voluntary return and sustainable reintegration policies and processes. The EUTF-funded phase of the EU-IOM JI HoA ended in September 2022, but the NDICI-funded Individual Measure for the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (SMP) extended the programme until April 2023. In August 2022, the cross-regional Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration programme in Sub-Saharan Africa (MPRR-SSA) was launched with additional EU funding. However, the MPRR-SSA in the HoA is significantly smaller in scope than the EU-IOM JI HoA as it only covers migrants returning from Europe. This means that migrants travelling along the Eastern Route, who represented a majority of beneficiaries under the

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[7] According to the project names and/or Descriptions of Action.

[8] €40M of which was funded by the EUTF.

[9] €30M of which was funded by the EUTF.

EU-IOM JI HoA, as well as along the Southern Route, are no longer supported beyond immediate protection assistance and life-saving activities.

More detailed descriptions of these four key Khartoum Process-supporting projects can be found in annex to this report.

In addition, the EUTF funded a number of other projects that target relevant change pathways[10] under the second, fourth and fifth domains of the JVAP. These projects are also included in the outcome analysis presented in this study and are briefly listed below.

▪ The **Towards Free Movement and Transhumance in the IGAD Region** programme, composed of:

  - A **direct grant to IGAD (Free Movement IGAD)** to support the process of adoption of the IGAD Protocols on Free Movement of Persons and on Transhumance, along with complementary measures to implement them.

  - A Delegation Agreement with ILO entitled **'Improving Opportunities for Regular Labour Mobility' project (Free Movement ILO)**, the objective of which is to support IGAD and its member states in establishing a regime of free movement of persons and transhumance in the region and increasing regular labour migration and mobility opportunities within and outside the region through the development of models of intervention for regional integration and employment creation.

▪ The **Erasmus+ in West Africa and Horn of Africa** action **(Erasmus+)**, implemented directly by the EU's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture to increase student and staff exchanges between European universities and universities in the West Africa and Horn of Africa regions.

▪ The '*Solutions pérennes pour les populations hôtes, les réfugiés et les migrants les plus vulnérables sur le territoire djiboutien*' project implemented by IOM (*Solutions pérennes* **IOM)**, which sought to support migrants in transit in Djibouti through the reinforcement of Migrant Response Centres, protection interventions, including for children on the move, as well as health services for migrants and their communities, among other relevant activities.

▪ The '**Cross-border cooperation between Ethiopia and Kenya for conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Marsabit-Moyale cluster**' project **(Cross-Border UNDP Peace)**, which aimed to support the transformation of Marsabit County in Kenya and Borana/Dawa Zones in Ethiopia into 'a peaceful cross-border area with a resilient community' and, among other interventions, implemented border management activities relevant to Domain 4 of the JVAP.

▪ The **'Promoting Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa Region'** project **(Peace & Stability IGAD)**, which also implemented border management activities relevant to Domain 4 of the JVAP.

▪ Seven projects that contributed to Outcome 4.3.1 in the outcome analysis presented in this study by conducting activities to raise awareness of the risks of irregular migration as well as legal migration options. These include:

  - The **Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP)** programme in Ethiopia, notably:

    ▪ Regional Development and Protection Programme in Ethiopia – Shire Area (RDPP ET IRC)

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[10] As reconstructed by the research team (see *2. Methodology*).

- Regional Development and Protection Programme in Ethiopia – Dollo Ado Area (RDPP ET NRC)

- Regional Development and Protection Programme in Ethiopia – Jijiga Area (RDPP ET SC)

  - The **Resilience Building and Creation of Economic Opportunities in Ethiopia (RESET II)** programme, notably:

    - Increasing Resilience and Economic Opportunities in Drought Prone Areas of Bale Zone (RESET II DCA)

    - Resilient Economy and Livelihoods (RESET II REAL iDE)

  - The **Enhancing Somalia's responsiveness to the management and reintegration of mixed migration flows (REINTEG)** programme, notably:

    - Durable Solutions for IDPs and Returnees in Somalia (RE-INTEG CARE)

    - Supporting the development and implementation of policies for the return, reintegration and protection of IDPs and refugees (RE-INTEG IDLO)

- The **'Facilitating sustainable return through laying foundations for Somalia in the Horn of Africa' project (FLASH IOM)**, implemented by IOM, which supported the Federal Government of Somalia in providing protection and immediate arrival assistance to nearly 25,000 individuals who were forcibly returned from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

- The **'Sustainable Reintegration support to Ethiopian returnees from Europe and support to vulnerable displaced populations affected by COVID-19' action (Sustainable Reintegration RRS)**, which constituted a direct grant to the Government of Ethiopia's Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) to provide comprehensive reintegration support to Ethiopian returnees and to build relevant stakeholder capacities on return and reintegration processes.

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

Figure 1: JVAP domains and EUTF HoA projects included in this study

JVAP DOMAINS

1: Development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displacement

2: Legal migration and mobility

3: Protection and asylum

4: Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

5: Return, readmission and reintegration

EUTF PROJECTS

Erasmus+
Free Movement IGAD
Free Movement ILO

⭐ **AML-THB**
Cross-Border UNDP Peace
EU-IOM JI HoA
FLASH IOM
Free Movement IGAD
Peace & Stability IGAD
RDPP ET IRC
RDP ET NRC
RDPP ET SC
RE-INTEG CARE
RE-INTEG IDLO
RESET II DCA
RESET II REAL iDE
Solutions pérennes **IOM**
⭐ **ROCK**
Sustainable Reintegration RRS

⭐ **EU-IOM JI HoA**
FLASH IOM
Solutions pérennes **IOM**
Sustainable Reintegration RRS

– – – – – – – – CROSS-CUTTING / MIGRATION MANAGEMENT – – – – – – – –

⭐ **BMM I & II**

LEGEND

⭐ **Key project**

Not focus of study

This study aims to provide the reader with an understanding of how the EUTF has contributed to the objectives of the Khartoum Process. It begins with an overview of the Khartoum Process, including relevant governance structures, achievements, challenges and limitations. It then offers an analysis of the collective contribution of EUTF projects to relevant changes on the ground in the field of migration

management that support the objectives of the Khartoum Process. Given the absence of a formal theory of change for either the Khartoum Process or the JVAP, this assessment is based on an analytical framework constructed by the research team and validated by the EUTF management team. The study then seeks to identify the best practices and lessons learned from relevant EUTF projects that represent the most significant and actionable opportunities to accelerate progress towards the achievement of Khartoum Process objectives. Finally, the research team offers recommendations for future strategy and programming to further strengthen regional collaborative efforts to (i) strengthen legal migration and mobility (Domain 2), (ii) address and prevent THB and SOM (Domain 4) and (iii) support return, readmission and reintegration (Domain 5).

Although the Khartoum Process encompasses coordination and action on all five domains of the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP), **this study will focus only on the second, fourth and fifth domains**. This is because the first domain of the JVAP (development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displacement) does not deal directly with migration management, while the third domain (protection and asylum) is treated in depth in a separate thematic narrative on the EUTF's contribution to the operationalisation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in the Horn of Africa region.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. OVERVIEW

The methodology for this study comprises (i) a desk review of secondary research and literature, (ii) the construction of an analytical framework for EUTF portfolio outcome analysis, (iii) collective outcome analysis based on the aforementioned framework, available project documents and key informant interviews, and (iv) the collection and analysis of relevant qualitative information (including successes, lessons learned and recommendations) from available project documents and key informant interviews.

The first phase of research for this study comprised a desk review of relevant secondary research and literature, including resources and information made available on the Khartoum Process website and the resource repositories of other relevant stakeholders (such as the African Union and ICMPD), research papers produced by IOM and other key actors, EUTF project documents, and academic journal articles.

The second phase involved the construction of an analytical framework to support a collective outcome analysis of the EUTF HoA portfolio. Because formal theory of change documentation does not exist for either the Khartoum Process or the JVAP, it was necessary for the research team to reconstruct a theory of change in order to assess possible outcomes to which EUTF projects have collectively contributed.

To do this, the research team first extracted all actions outlined in each relevant domain of the JVAP[11] and reconstructed outputs and outcomes for each. The team then grouped these actions, outputs and outcomes under specific impacts. When relevant text was available in the JVAP, these specific impacts were quoted or lightly paraphrased from the JVAP, but usually the team had to infer these higher-level objectives from the proposed actions. Finally, the team reconstructed an overall impact for the entire domain. The framework was then submitted to the EUTF management team for feedback and validation. This reconstructed theory of change can be found in its entirety in annex to this report.

In the third phase of research, the collective outcomes of targeted EUTF projects (as defined in the aforementioned analytical framework) were assessed on the basis of available project documentation as well as key informant interviews conducted as part of the fourth phase of the study. The relevant actions, outputs and outcomes that are relevant for the EUTF HoA portfolio and were therefore identified for further assessment are illustrated in corresponding sections of the outcome analysis presented in this report.[12]

Finally, 48 key informants were interviewed between March and November 2024, including:

- 16 relevant representatives from within the European Commission headquarters (including from DG HOME, DG NEAR and the Migration and Forced Displacement Unit at DG INTPA),
- 10 implementing partner staff of relevant projects,
- 5 ministerial staff from partner governments with direct involvement in relevant projects,
- 4 representatives of other institutional beneficiaries such as national police forces and human rights organisations,
- 4 focal points for Khartoum Process secretariat, partners and observers (including ICMPD, UNHCR and UNODC),
- 3 government focal points for Khartoum Process member states,
- 3 EU Delegation staff in Khartoum Process partner countries, and

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[11] The JVAP was chosen as the reference document as it is more detailed and thematically comprehensive than official Khartoum Process documentation.
[12] See *4 EUTF contribution to the Khartoum Process: Outcome analysis.*

-   3 representatives of regional institutional partners (African Union and IGAD).

2.2.   CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Several methodological limitations should be taken into account when considering the findings in this study. First, the absence of an official theory of change for either the Khartoum Process or JVAP means that the desired outcomes or impacts of these mechanisms have not been formally defined or agreed upon by relevant stakeholders. While the research team sought to compensate for this with a reconstructed theory of change, doing so required the team to make logical inferences based on limited information (i.e. the commitments and actions outlined in the JVAP). This compromise, while necessary, reduces the robustness of the analytical framework on which the outcome analysis is based.

Another challenge faced by the research team that represents a significant limitation for the outcome analysis is the relative absence of robust project outcome data, with notable exceptions for the BMM II and EU-IOM JI HoA projects. In most cases, the logframe indicators for the relevant EUTF projects focused primarily or entirely on activity outputs, even at the outcome and impact levels. When logframe indicators did initially seek to assess actual outcomes or impacts, these were often later changed to proxy outputs due to data collection and verification challenges. In part this can be attributed to the complex nature of the relevant programming, which often target capacity building-, coordination- and policy-oriented interventions that are intrinsically difficult to measure at the outcome and impact levels. However, in many cases the usability of the projects' logframe indicator data could also have been increased through more effective indicator design and measurement. As a result, the outcome analysis in *Section 4 EUTF contribution to the Khartoum Process: Outcome analysis* is necessarily limited. The research team has sought to triangulate these information gaps through qualitative data collection from a wide and diverse range of key informants as described above in *2.1 Methodology: Overview*.

The last challenge worth highlighting is the limited availability of official documentation on the Khartoum Process. By mutual agreement of participating member states, the Khartoum Process website's repository of policy and outcome documents contains very few records, including no meeting reports from after 2018.[13] By contrast, the website for the Rabat Process (the Khartoum Process' counterpart covering the Western Mediterranean Route) makes available meeting reports from what appear to be all relevant meetings, as well as detailed and up to date political declarations and action plans.[14]

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[13] However, short descriptions of all meetings can be found on the Khartoum Process website.

[14] As explained in *Section 3 The Khartoum Process*, the Khartoum Process has yet to produce any documentation outlining priority actions or commitments.

3. THE KHARTOUM PROCESS

3.1. OVERVIEW

The EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, more commonly referred to as the Khartoum Process, was formally established in November 2014 as a political platform aimed at 'developing cooperation at bilateral and regional level between countries of origin, transit and destination to tackle irregular migration and criminal networks' along the migration route between the Horn of Africa and Europe.[15]

The Khartoum Process is one of three Africa-EU Migration and Mobility Dialogues (MMDs), which aim to serve as mutually reinforcing platforms for consultation, coordination, and information exchange on migration and mobility between Africa and Europe. The other two are:

- The Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development, more commonly referred to as the Rabat Process, which was established in 2006 to support coordination of the response to migration flows along the West and Central African migration routes. It is worth highlighting that, as the full name of the dialogue suggests, the original mandate of the Rabat Process emphasised migration and mobility from a development perspective. This stands in contrast to the Khartoum Process and its initial focus on irregular migration, THB and SOM.

- The Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD), which is rooted in commitments made at the fifth AU-EU Summit in Abidjan in 2017 to deepen cooperation and dialogue on migration and mobility by developing a joint framework for a strengthened continental dialogue on migration and mobility. The C2CMMD seeks to build on the strategic partnership between the African and European Unions by adding value to, and complementing, the two regional dialogues through a continental lens.

At the Valletta Summit on Migration in November 2015, African and European heads of state adopted a political declaration and a set of operational measures laid out in the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP), thereby creating a regional framework for addressing migration policy issues and enhancing migration governance between Europe and Africa.

The JVAP covers five main areas of intervention (or 'domains'): 1) development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, 2) legal migration and mobility, 3) protection and asylum, 4) prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, and 5) return, readmission and reintegration.

The Khartoum and Rabat Processes were identified as appropriate existing tools for monitoring the implementation of the JVAP, and the Khartoum Process' mandate was therefore expanded beyond THB and SOM to include all five JVAP domains.

Current European Khartoum Process member states comprise all EU member states plus Norway and Switzerland, while African member states comprise Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia and Uganda.

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[15] Declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Khartoum Process (EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative), Rome, 28 November 2014.

Figure 2: Khartoum Process member states as of June 2025
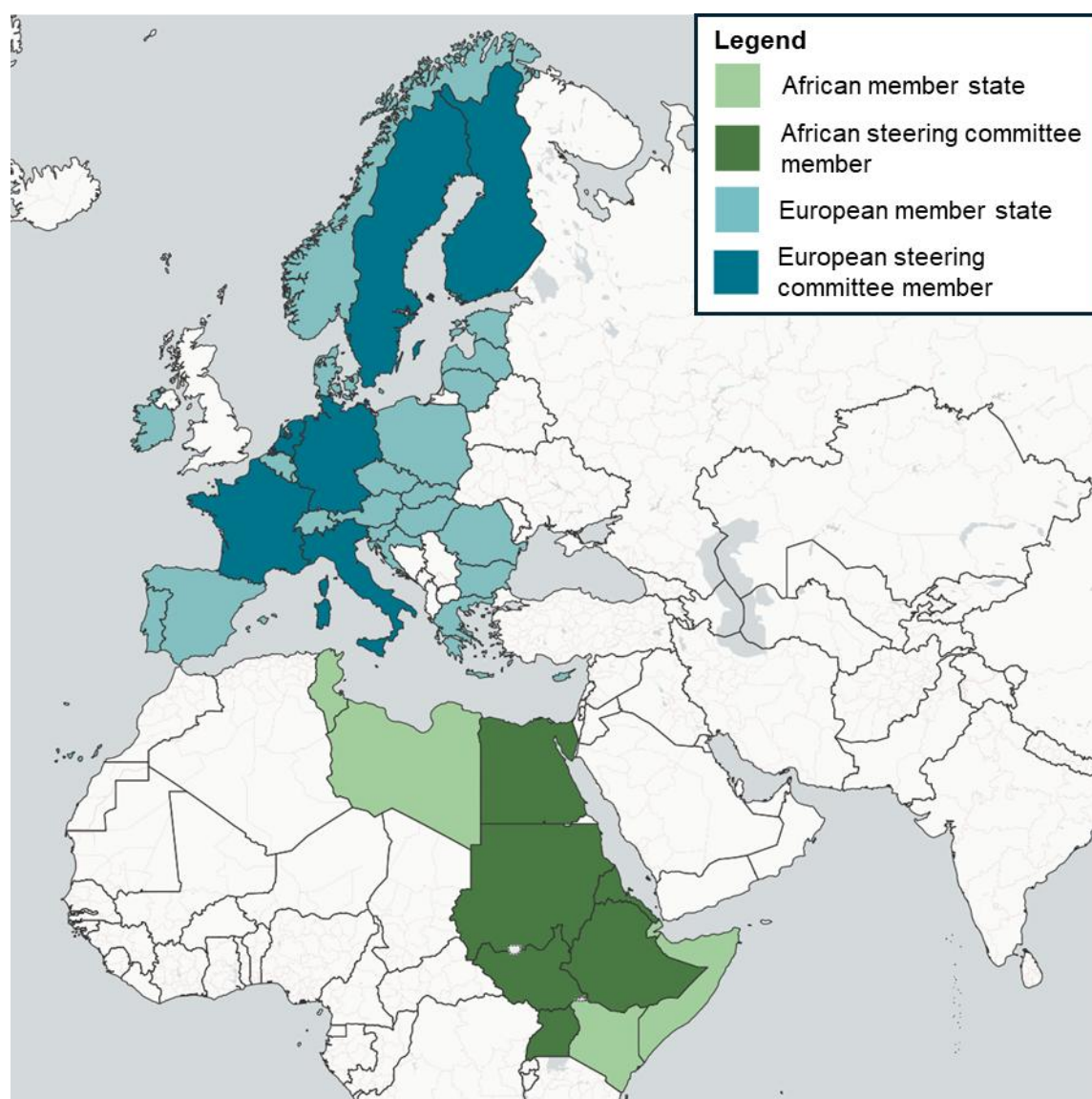
3.1. GOVERNANCE

The Khartoum Process is led by a steering committee comprising twelve Khartoum Process member states and a rotating chair. It is also supported by a secretariat that is jointly managed by the African Union and European Commission, with technical and logistical assistance and coordination support provided by ICMPD.

Figure 3: Khartoum Process governance structures as of June 2025

STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair (presides)

Egypt (2024-2025)

Members

Finland	Egypt	
France	Eritrea	African Union Commission
Germany	Ethiopia	European Commission
Italy	South Sudan	European External Action Service
The Netherlands	Sudan	
Sweden	Uganda	

SECRETARIAT

African Union Comission
European Commission

Technical and logistical
assistance from ICMPD

MEMBER STATES

Austria	Estonia	Latvia	Slovakia
Belgium	Ethiopia	Libya	Slovenia
Bulgaria	Finland	Lithuania	Somalia
Croatia	France	Luxembourg	South Sudan
Cyprus	Germany	Malta	Spain
Czechia	Greece	The Netherlands	Sudan
Denmark	Hungary	Norway	Sweden
Djibouti	Ireland	Poland	Switzerland
Egypt	Italy	Portugal	Tunisia
Eritrea	Kenya	Romania	Uganda

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

DG HOME
DG INTPA
DG MENA
EEAS
FRONTEX
IOM
UNHCR
UNODC
IGAD

The Khartoum Process is led by a steering committee comprised of six European countries (Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden) and six African countries (Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda[16]), as well as the European Commission, the European External Action Service and the African Union Commission. The role of the steering committee is to 'stimulate cooperation, coordination and to monitor the programme developed for the Khartoum Process at the Senior Officials Meeting level (and adopted at Ministerial Conference level).'[17]

Chairmanship of the steering committee rotates every year and alternates between European and African countries. The chair sets the agenda of the meetings over which they preside by presenting their priorities for the year ahead at the annual steering committee meeting. This role has 'become more institutionalised over time, offering partners new opportunities to shape the dialogue in terms of content and priorities.'[18] Key informants for this study have furthermore observed that the overall tone of the Khartoum Process and associated meetings is shaped to a significant degree by the motivation and commitment of the chair. For example, Egypt, the chairing state for April 2024 to March 2025, has reportedly reinvigorated engagement with the Khartoum Process through its ambitious agenda and advocacy to adopt a new ministerial declaration.[19]

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[16] Somalia was elected to temporarily replace Sudan on the steering committee while Sudan remains unable to fulfill its steering committee responsibilities during the ongoing crisis.
[17] ICMPD, 'Migration and Mobility Dialogue I: Final Donor Report', November 2024.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Key informant interview, EU key informant.

Table 1: Thematic priorities selected by Khartoum Process chairs for the past three years

Year	Chairing state	Thematic priorities
2024-2025	Egypt	- Establishing legal migration pathways - Integrating humanitarian, development, and peace initiatives into migration debates - Addressing climate change's impact on displacement - Combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling
2023-2024	Germany	- Human mobility in the context of climate change - Protection of internally displaced people - Gender (cross-cutting theme)
2022-2023	South Sudan	- Integrated border management to address THB and SOM - Protection and referral of vulnerable migrants and refugees - Climate change and mobility - Diaspora and remittances

3.2. MEETINGS

In its ten-year history, the Khartoum Process has held 29 steering committee meetings and senior officials meetings as well as 31 dialogue meetings (i.e. technical and thematic meetings). Steering committee meetings bring the steering committee members together to discuss the annual workplan and any governance-related matters, while senior officials meetings typically feature the official handover of chairmanship as well as a presentation and discussion of the priorities and workplan proposal of the new chair.

Thematic meetings comprise the substantive core of the Khartoum Process. Each one is dedicated to a specific topic and provide members with an invaluable platform to share experiences, innovations, and best practices, while also inviting practitioners and experts to contribute their knowledge and insights.

The inaugural thematic meeting, co-convened by Sudan and the UK in May 2016, centred on SOM and addressed key areas such as information sharing, investigations, border management, prosecutions and legislation.

At the first JVAP Senior Officials Meeting in February 2017, participants recommended that the Khartoum Process broaden its focus to include the four additional JVAP domains, highlighting that the expansion of its mandate had not yet been fully operationalised. Following this recommendation, the thematic scope of Khartoum Process meetings began to diversify. A significant milestone was reached under Eritrea's chairmanship in 2019, with the Process organising its first thematic meetings dedicated to the first and second JVAP domains.[20]

3.3. RELATIONSHIP TO THE EUTF

Key informants generally consider the EUTF to be the main funding instrument supporting actions under the Khartoum Process. The Process mandated the European Commission to fund four programmes[21] through the EUTF, which constitute the focus of this study – all of which later continued under NDICI funding. In ICMPD's donor reporting for the Migration and Mobility Dialogues, the third expected result

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[20] Development benefits of migration and legal migration and mobility, respectively.
[21] BMM, ROCK, AML-THB and EU-IOM JI HoA.

of the Khartoum Process, which sought to generate funding opportunities and mobilise resources to support concrete projects, is deemed 'no longer relevant' following the creation of the EUTF as a key source of funding for migration management programming for Khartoum Process member states.[22]

These projects are thus considered flagship programming for the Process, and updates on these projects (particularly BMM and the ROCK) are frequently presented at Khartoum Process Senior Officials Meetings. In some cases, the projects are directly linked to the Process in terms of their conceptualisation and design. For example, the idea for the BMM programme emerged from the first Khartoum Process meeting, when member states put forward proposals for funding and action to meet the Process' objectives. As an EU programme manager explained, 'all of the capacity building and technical assistance requests by African member states were packaged together in the BMM programme'.[23] This unusual conception explains the ambitious and diverse nature of the programme, positioning it as the EU's 'main tangible contribution to the Khartoum Process'.[24]

Similarly, the ROCK project traces its origins to proposals submitted by African and European member states during the inaugural Khartoum Process meeting.[25] Initially conceived as an Italian-led initiative for an operational centre in Egypt, the project was later adopted by France and relocated to Khartoum.[26]

However, the perceived reliance of the Khartoum Process on the EUTF for financing may present a challenge as the Fund comes to an end, especially as alternative funding mechanisms are less visible and more fragmented. This is explored further in Section 5.1.2 on challenges faced by the Khartoum Process.

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[22] ICMPD, 'Migration and Mobility Dialogue I: Final Donor Report', November 2024.
[23] Key informant interview, EU key informant.
[24] Altai Consulting, 'Better Migration Management mid-term review', January 2019.
[25] Altai Consulting, 'Regional Operational Centre in support of the Khartoum Process and AU-Horn of Africa Initiative (ROCK): Study on an EU-supported law enforcement cooperation project among the countries of the Khartoum Process', February 2021.
[26] Key informant interview, EU key informant.

4. EUTF CONTRIBUTION TO THE KHARTOUM PROCESS: OUTCOME ANALYSIS

This section aims to provide the reader with an understanding of how the EUTF HoA portfolio has collectively contributed to the objectives of the Khartoum Process at the outcome level. As described in *Section 2 Methodology*, the analysis below relies on a reconstructed JVAP theory of change which, as explained in *Section 1.3 Research objectives and scope*, was only reconstructed for the second, fourth and fifth domains.

The reconstructed theory of change is rooted in JVAP actions, on the basis of which corresponding outputs, outcomes, specific impacts and overall impacts have been recreated by the research team. Figure 4 below provides the legend for interpreting the reconstructed JVAP theory of change, relevant components of which are provided in each sub-section of this analysis. A summarised version of the reconstructed theory of change can be found on the next page. The complete version can be found in annex to this report.

Figure 4: Legend for reconstructed JVAP theory of change
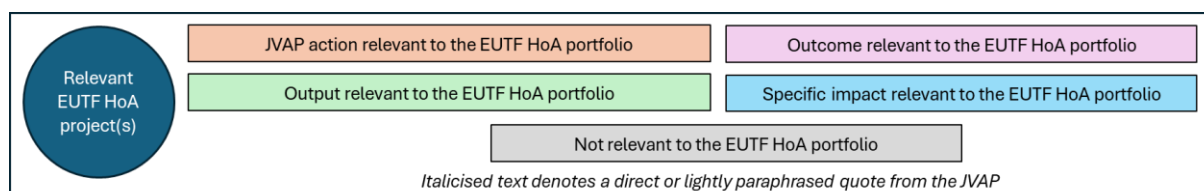
The EUTF's collective contribution to each relevant outcome has been assessed by the research team using data available at the time of writing, including project documentation and qualitative information from key informant interviews. This analysis is presented as described in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Legend for interpreting outcome analyses

Outcome rating
Positive: The research team considers that the strength of available evidence and the scope of contributing EUTF actions support a positive outcome rating.
Moderately positive: The research team considers that the EUTF has made a positive contribution to the outcome, but (i) the strength of available evidence is limited and/or (ii) the scope of contributing EUTF actions is limited with regard to the scope of the outcome.
Somewhat positive: The research team considers that the EUTF has made a positive contribution to the outcome, but (i) the strength of available evidence is very limited and/or (ii) the scope of contributing EUTF actions is very limited with regard to the scope of the outcome.
Insufficient evidence: The strength of available evidence is insufficient to justify an outcome rating.

Data sources			EUTF projects
Sufficient	Limited	Very limited	*Number and names of EUTF projects contributing to the outcome*

It is important to note that the analysis below is intended to serve as an indicative assessment. The research team is confident that the EUTF has likely made a positive contribution to the reconstructed JVAP outcomes targeted by EUTF HoA projects. However, while there are encouraging signs of impact, the current availability of supporting data is sometimes limited. A more in-depth investigation and additional data collection beyond the scope of this study would be necessary to fully validate the promising preliminary findings presented here.

Figure 6: Summarised version of reconstructed JVAP theory of change

	JVAP actions		Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
Domain 2: Legal migration and mobility	2 actions to support frameworks and legislation for mobility and migration, including to promote migrant integration (1/2 relevant to EUTF)	Free Movement IGAD & ILO, BMM I & II	4 corresponding outputs (1/4 relevant to EUTF)	2 corresponding outcomes (1/2 relevant to EUTF)	*Comprehensive national and regional strategies on migration and mobility are elaborated and implemented*	Legal migration and mobility is **effectively incentivised and managed**, boosting sustainable economic, social and environmental development and increasing the ability of migrants to fulfil their potential to live in dignity and equality
	7 actions to facilitate entry to the EU by academics and researchers, including through mutual recognition of qualifications, etc. (1/7 relevant to EUTF)	Erasmus+	7 corresponding outputs (1/7 relevant to EUTF)	7 corresponding outcomes (2/7 relevant to EUTF)	*Students, researchers and entrepreneurs benefit from improved mobility between Africa and Europe*	
	8 actions to strengthen cooperation on pre-departure measures, facilitating job placements, etc. (0/8 relevant to EUTF)		10 corresponding outputs (0/10 relevant to EUTF)	7 corresponding outcomes (0/7 relevant to EUTF)	*Regular channels for migration and mobility from and between European and African countries are strengthened*	
Domain 4: Prevention and fight against irregular migration, SOM and THB	7 actions to support relevant actors to tackle THB and SOM through (i) training and support, (ii) frameworks and legislation and (iii) cooperation and information exchange (6/7 relevant to EUTF)	AML-THB, BMM I & II, ROCK	6 corresponding outputs (6/6 relevant to EUTF)	7 corresponding outcomes (7/7 relevant to EUTF)	Relevant local, national and regional actors are effectively and efficiently (i) investigating and prosecuting organised criminal networks involved in SOM and THB, and (ii) cooperating with one another	Wellbeing of potential and vulnerable migrants is significantly improved through: (i) the **dismantling of criminal networks** engaged in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, (ii) expansions and improvements in the ng provision of **protection and assistance**, (iii) improved conditions in **areas of origin,** and (iv) more effective **border management**
	6 actions to support vulnerable migrants through direct assistance, capacity development of service providers, etc. (5/6 relevant to EUTF)	Free Movement IGAD & ILO, *Solutions pérennes* IOM, BMM I & II	7 corresponding outputs (5/7 relevant to EUTF)	7 corresponding outcomes (7/7 relevant to EUTF)	Improved legal, financial, health and reintegration outcomes for vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking	
	3 actions to fight corruption, improve border management systems, raise awareness of risks of irregular migration, etc. (2/3 relevant to EUTF)	BMM I & II, EU-IOM JI, + 13 more	4 corresponding outputs (2/4 relevant to EUTF)	6 corresponding outcomes (4/6 relevant to EUTF)	Conditions in countries of origin are less conducive to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings	
Domain 5: Return, readmission and reintegration	3 actions to promote and deliver AVRR and to strengthen capacities of authorities and CSOs to support returns and reintegration (3/3 relevant to EUTF)	EU-IOM JI, Solutions pérennes IOM, Sustain. Reinteg. RRS, FLASH	4 corresponding outputs (3/4 relevant to EUTF)	3 corresponding outcomes (3/3 relevant to EUTF)	Irregular migrants with return orders (i) experience an appropriate and dignified returns process and (ii) receive robust, tailored support to reintegrate in communities of return	Increased proportion of irregular migrants **effectively return** to their country of origin via a fair and dignified return process, accompanied by (i) satisfactory **protection** and **assistance** and (ii) improved **reintegration** prospects through tailored support
	1 action to support child protection systems in countries of origin and transit (1/1 relevant to EUTF)	BMM I & II, EU-IOM JI, Solutions pérennes IOM	1 corresponding output (1/1 relevant to EUTF)	1 corresponding outcome (1/1 relevant to EUTF)	Vulnerable migrants, and particularly children, receive humane treatment and protection in transit and upon return to their country of origin	
	2 actions to promote cooperation around returns and readmissions processes with countries of origin (0/2 relevant to EUTF)		3 corresponding outputs (0/3 relevant to EUTF)	2 corresponding outcomes (0/2 relevant to EUTF)	Irregular migrants with return orders are consistently identified and returned in a timely and dignified manner	

4.1. SECOND JVAP DOMAIN: LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Legal migration flows surpass irregular migration flows from Horn of Africa countries to the EU by a large margin. Between 2020 and 2023, an average of 48,000 first-time residence permits were granted to citizens of Horn of Africa countries[27] each year. By contrast, an average of 15,000 irregular border crossings per year by citizens from Horn of Africa countries were identified by EU countries over the same period.[28]

However, legal flows from the Horn of Africa region to Europe are usually associated with international protection or family reunification as opposed to employment and education. For example, while employment accounted for 34% of all first-time residence permits accorded by EU countries in 2023,[29] it only accounted for 9% of those accorded to citizens of Horn of Africa countries.[30]

Within the Horn of Africa, IGAD's Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons was endorsed in February 2020 with EUTF support, marking an important step towards the operationalisation of free movement in the region.[31] However, intraregional legal migration and mobility remains constrained by limited identity documentation coverage, difficulties in accessing work permits, inefficient or non-existent labour market information systems, and a lack of harmonised skills recognition frameworks.

In the political declaration for the Valletta Summit on Migration that accompanies the Joint Valletta Action Plan, stakeholders 'acknowledge that further efforts should be made to advance legal migration and mobility possibilities, including at bilateral level, by fostering well-managed mobility between and within the continents as well as encouraging policies that promote regular channels for migration, including labour migration and the mobility of entrepreneurs, students and researchers, including at regional level.'

To that end, the JVAP lays out seventeen priority actions that aim to promote legal migration and mobility. These can be grouped under three specific impacts, as outlined in Figure 6 above: (i) comprehensive national and regional strategies on migration and mobility are elaborated and implemented, (ii) students, researchers and entrepreneurs benefit from improved mobility between Africa and Europe, and (iii) regular channels for migration and mobility from and between European and African countries are strengthened. The Free Movement and BMM programmes both contribute to the first specific impact and the Erasmus+ programme targets the second. There are no EUTF HoA projects contributing to the third specific impact. Possible outcomes to which these projects have contributed are assessed below.

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[27] Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.
[28] Data obtained from Frontex database of irregular border crossings, covering all recognised migration routes. Accessed here on 8 November 2024.
[29] European Commission, 'Residence permits – statistics on first permits issued during the year', 2023. Accessed here on 7 November 2024.
[30] Data obtained from the Eurostat managed migration database. Accessed here on 7 November 2024.
[31] The EUTF continues to support the ratification and domestication process at the country level.

4.1.1. SPECIFIC IMPACT 2.1: COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES ON MIGRATION AND MOBILITY ARE ELABORATED AND IMPLEMENTED

Figure 7: Reconstructed theory of change for Specific impact 2.1
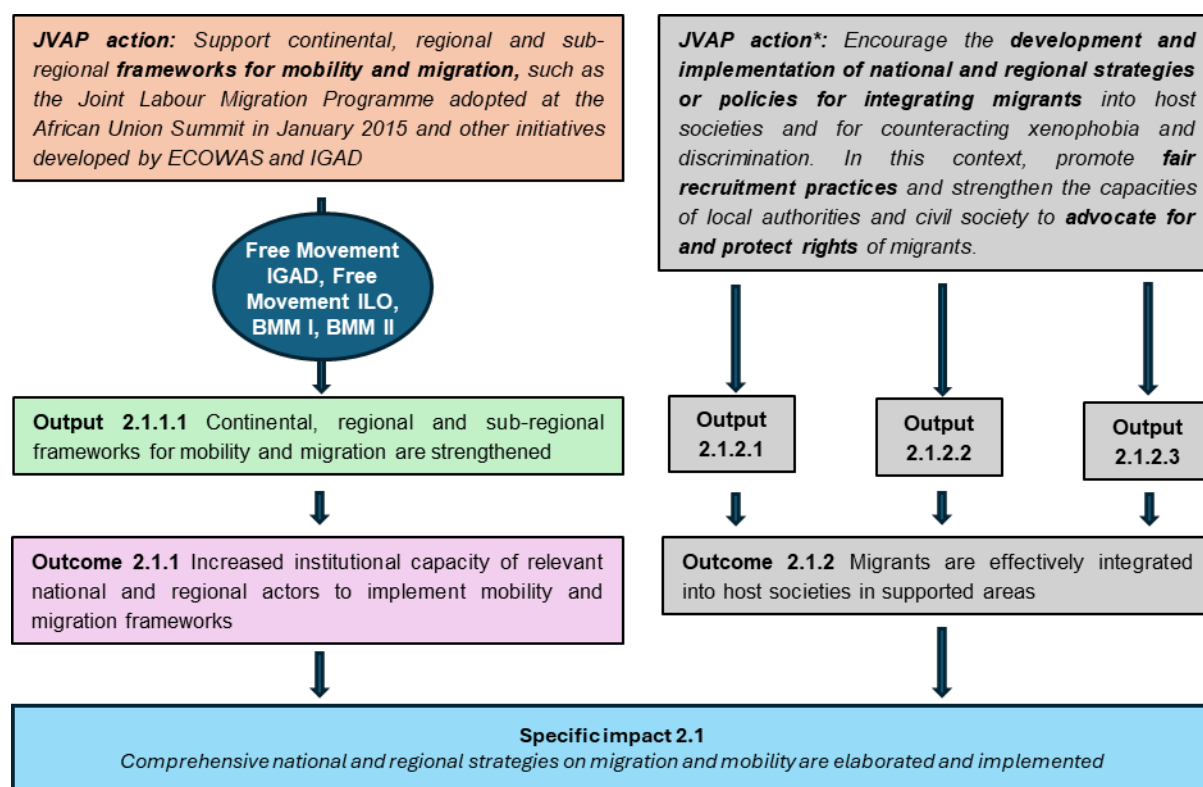
*Not targeted by any EUTF project

The reconstructed theory of change logic for this specific impact is as follows: if support to regional mobility and migration frameworks (*JVAP action*) strengthens the frameworks in question (*output*), this will increase the institutional capacity of relevant national and regional actors in the field of migration governance (*outcome*), which will in turn contribute to the effective operationalisation of comprehensive migration and mobility strategies (*specific impact*).

The Free Movement programme[32] is a key EUTF contributor to this specific impact, as it sought to facilitate free movement of persons in the IGAD region in order to enhance regional economic integration and development. The BMM programme[33] also contributed through its multilevel approach to migration governance, including by supporting national and regional authorities and institutions to become aware of and act in accordance with global and regional migration governance frameworks and human rights standards.

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[32] Consisting of the Free Movement IGAD and Free Movement ILO projects.
[33] Consisting of the BMM I and II projects.

4.1.1.1. Outcome 2.1.1: Increased institutional capacity of relevant regional actors to implement mobility and migration frameworks

4.1.1.1.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Moderately positive: Through capacity building interventions, evidence generation and support to critical legislation, the EUTF has likely had a positive impact on the institutional capacity of key stakeholders to implement mobility and migration frameworks. However, given the absence of robust outcome data measuring actual increases in capacity, it is impossible to verify the scale of this contribution.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Limited Free Movement IGAD ROM report, BMM I final narrative report, BMM II final evaluation (limited outcome data)	_4_ Free Movement IGAD, Free Movement ILO, BMM I and BMM II

4.1.1.1.2. Evidence

Through a series of consultations with both technical experts and IGAD member states, the Free Movement IGAD project guided the finalisation and adoption by IGAD of the draft Protocols on Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance in 2020.[34] The former has since been signed by five IGAD member states as of mid-2024 (Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda). It can reasonably be argued that through these consultations and other forms of awareness raising on the value and benefits of free movement, the project created 'mass participation and robust political buy-in of the IGAD member states',[35] which has in turn increased the institutional capacity of both national governments and IGAD to operationalise free movement in the region.

In addition, the project undertook targeted capacity building interventions to support the operationalisation of the Protocols. For example, in March 2024 the IGAD secretariat collaborated with IOM to provide 32 frontline border immigration officers from IGAD member states on interagency and cross-border coordination, as well as on other relevant migration and border governance themes, to boost their capacity to implement a regional free movement regime. However, there is no available data that measures actual increases in capacity as a result of these trainings.

Meanwhile, the Free Movement ILO project sought to support the finalisation of the Protocols as well as the operationalisation of free movement in the region by identifying opportunities and increasing the evidence base for improved labour mobility. For example, the project delivered research and recommendations on labour migration and mobility governance in the form of a country-level report for each IGAD member state. The project also organised multiple trainings for IGAD member state government stakeholders on topics such as rights-based approaches to labour migration governance. However, while the evidence products were widely circulated to the member states and the trainings benefitted from high-level government participation, once again it is difficult to ascertain whether these activities led to any observable increases in institutional capacity without robust monitoring and evaluation data.[36] Achievements and lessons learned have been taken into consideration in formulating the second phase of assistance to IGAD on free movement of persons and transhumance under NDICI-Global Europe, with the aim of stepping up work at national and local levels but also of supporting IGAD's convening power and ability to steer dialogue at regional level.

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[34] The final versions of the Protocols can be accessed here.
[35] Free Movement IGAD ROM report, 2019.
[36] The research team was unable to obtain the Free Movement ILO final narrative report at the time of writing.

Finally, BMM I and II both sought to increase institutional capacities around migration governance frameworks and mechanisms, including by supporting the alignment of each target country's National Coordination Mechanism for migration with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. For example, the BMM I project organised four cross-border exchanges between the Amhara and Tigray regional governments in Ethiopia and Gedaref State authorities in Sudan, with the aim of improving the management of seasonal labour migration in the agricultural sector.[37]

Monitoring and evaluation data suggests that the programme contributed to positive outcomes in this area. For example, for the BMM II final report the programme team surveyed 97 representatives of national and sub-national authorities in seven out of eight BMM target countries, all of whom were supported by the project to strengthen the whole-of-government approach to migration governance through measures such as trainings or workshops. 94% of these respondents confirmed 'enhanced understanding of cooperation needs within and between national and sub-national migration management coordination mechanisms.' However, data based on objective criteria, such as pre- and post-intervention surveys to identify concrete actions or processes resulting from increased capacities, would have allowed for a more robust finding than data based on self-assessments.

It should also be noted that many of the BMM programme's capacity development activities targeted irregular migration (including THB and SOM), migrants' rights and protection issues, rather than legal migration and mobility. In the absence of specific monitoring and evaluation data on the project's legal migration and mobility interventions, it is difficult to isolate the effects of the programme on institutional capacities to implement legal mobility and migration frameworks from its effects on capacities related to other aspects of migration. Similarly, programme stakeholders interviewed for this study generally did not refer to the programme's work on legal migration and mobility.

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[37] BMM I final narrative report, 2019.

4.1.2. SPECIFIC IMPACT 2.2: STUDENTS, RESEARCHERS AND ENTREPRENEURS BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED MOBILITY BETWEEN AFRICA AND EUROPE

Figure 8: Reconstructed theory of change for Specific impact 2.2
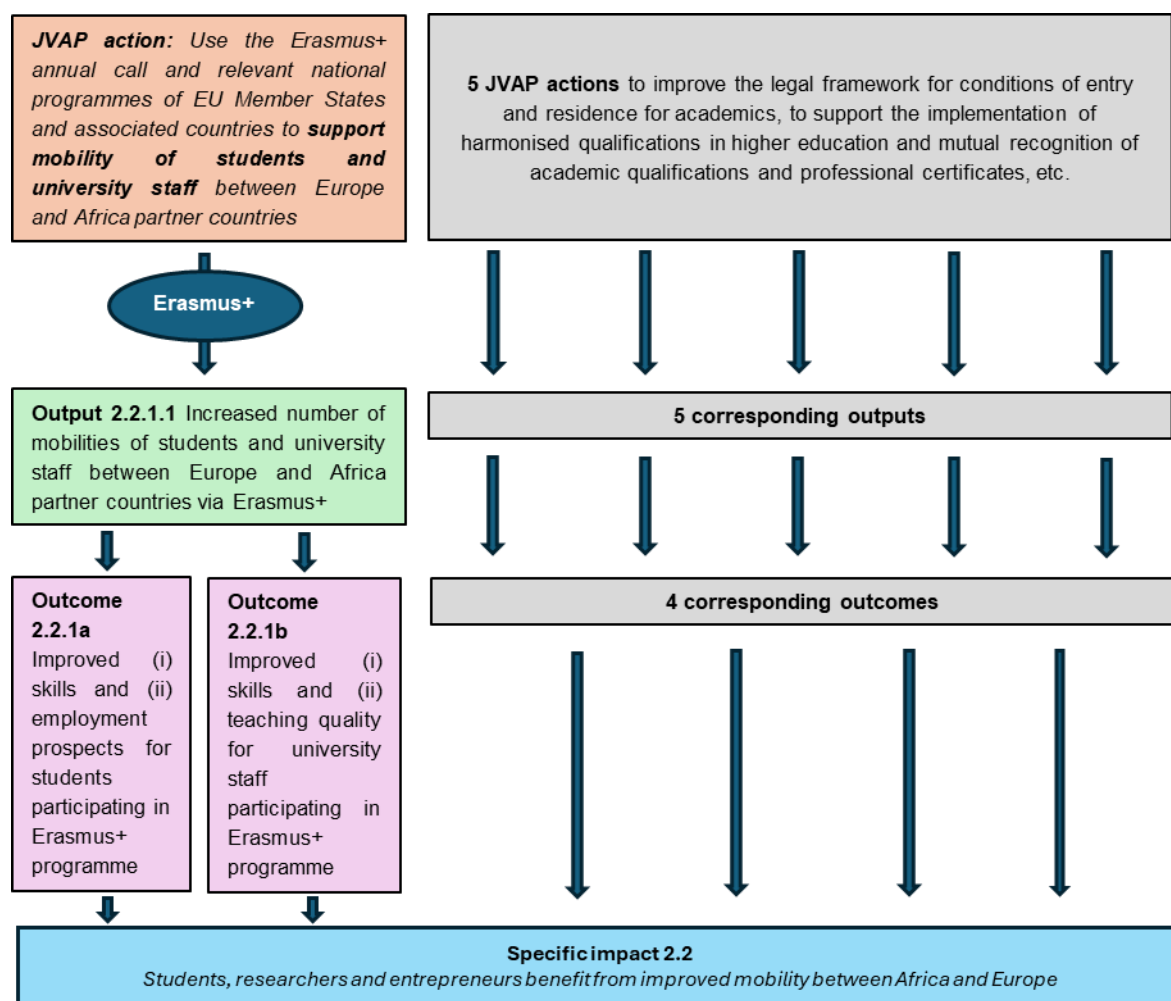
The second specific impact in the JVAP's 'legal migration and mobility' domain refers to improved mobility between Africa and Europe for students, researchers and entrepreneurs. The reconstructed theory of change logic for this specific impact is: if the mobility of students and teachers between European and African countries is actively supported through Erasmus+ (*JVAP action*), this will lead to an increased number of corresponding mobilities (*output*), which means that a) more students will benefit from improved skills and employment prospects and b) more university staff will benefit from improved skills and teaching quality (*outcomes*), which will in turn contribute to positive effects for those benefitting from improved mobility between Africa and Europe (*specific impact*).

Erasmus+ is the only EUTF programme that contributes to this specific impact. It is part of a broader EU programme (also called Erasmus+) that funds academic and youth mobility and cooperation between Europe and other regions in the world, including Africa. In 2018, the EUTF financed an injection of €4M into the 'International Credit Mobility' component of the programme to support short-term mobility for students and academic staff. The aim of this financial injection was to 'increase the availability of trained and qualified high-level professional manpower in […] the Horn of Africa.'[38] Thanks to this funding, 155 students and 270 academic staff from Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania

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[38] Erasmus+ project summary on EUTF website. Accessed here on 14 October 2024.

and Uganda undertook mobilities to higher education institutions in European countries for periods of between two and twelve months.

4.1.2.1. Outcome 2.2.1a: Improved (i) skills and (ii) employment prospects for students participating in Erasmus+ programme

4.1.2.1.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Moderately positive: The breadth of robust findings on the positive impact of the EU-wide Erasmus+ programme for student participants appears to justify a positive outcome rating for the EUTF's contribution to improved skills and employment prospects for supported student mobilities. However, there are no targeted studies that assess outcomes for sub-Saharan African participants in the International Credit Mobility action that specifically benefitted from EUTF funding, and the limited data that does exist suggest slightly less positive outcomes for African students compared to their European counterparts.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Very limited 3 Erasmus+ impact studies and 1 Erasmus+ impact survey (but none cover the EUTF-funded intervention specifically)	_1_ Erasmus+

4.1.2.1.2. Evidence

Both the 2014-2020 ex-post evaluation and the 2021-2027 mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme were ongoing at the time of writing. This means that there is no available outcome data that specifically targets sub-Saharan African participants of the International Credit Mobility action who benefitted from EUTF funding. However, studies of other components of the programme offer a positive indication of potential outcomes for EUTF HoA beneficiaries. For example, a 2014 impact study of the intra-European Erasmus programme (the predecessor to Erasmus+) found that employability skills[39] increased by 52% among Erasmus students.

However, it is important to consider that many of the most positive outcomes documented in assessments of the Erasmus programmes relate to European students and alumni. As such, the findings may be influenced by contextual, political and sociocultural factors that do not apply, or that apply in different ways, to sub-Saharan African students. Indeed, the limited data available suggests that employment outcomes may be slightly less positive for African participants. For example, in the most recent survey of Erasmus Mundus Joint Master[40] alumni, 66% of surveyed African alumni were currently employed, versus 85% of European alumni. The survey also found that African alumni had less success in securing a job six months after graduation (80%) than their European counterparts (88%), although the success rate among both groups was relatively high.[41]

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[39] These were assessed by the study research team using pre- and post-participation surveys designed to measure personality traits considered most closely related to employability: tolerance of ambiguity, curiosity, confidence, serenity, decisiveness and vigour.
[40] The Erasmus Mundus Joint Master is one of the four Erasmus+ actions, alongside the shorter-term International Credit Mobility action supported by the EUTF.
[41] Dau, J., Jühlke, R., and Unger, M., 'Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Graduate Impact Survey 2023', 2024.

4.1.2.2. Outcome 2.2.1b: Improved (i) skills and (ii) teaching quality for university staff participating in Erasmus+ programme

4.1.2.2.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Somewhat positive: Data on the impact of the Erasmus+ programme on participating academic staff suggest positive outcomes for skills and teaching quality, although the available evidence is considerably more limited than it is for students. Once again, there is no available data that is specific to either sub-Saharan African participants or to the short-term International Credit Mobility action supported by the EUTF.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Very limited 1 Erasmus+ impact study (that does not cover the EUTF-funded intervention specifically)	_1_ Erasmus+

4.1.2.2.2. Evidence

The abovementioned 2014 impact study of the intra-European Erasmus programme found numerous positive effects for mobile staff with regard to skills development, including improved ways of teaching and researching as well as improved interpersonal and communication skills. Moreover, 81% of academic staff participating in the programme reported a beneficial effect on the quality of their teaching. These findings are supported by the views of senior management at higher education institutions, more than 90% of whom consider staff mobility to be an effective means of promoting new pedagogical methods, of enriching course offerings, and of motivating further mobilities among staff and students alike.

4.1. FOURTH JVAP DOMAIN: PREVENTION OF AND FIGHT AGAINST IRREGULAR MIGRATION, MIGRANT SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

A large proportion[42] of mixed migration[43] movements in and out of the Horn of Africa region involve smuggling and trafficking networks in which sophisticated transnational criminal organisations play a significant role. Migrants who use these networks, particularly along specific parts of the Northern Route (such as the section between Sudan and Libya), face a high risk of dangers such as detention, assault, sexual violence and being sold to ransom collectors. At the same time, these networks are massively profitable, with each migrant paying hundreds or thousands of euros over the course of their journey. At the peak of the mid-2010s migration crisis, migrant smuggling networks facilitating movement to or within the EU reportedly generated as much as €5.7B in profit.[44]

The organisations that make up these networks in the Horn of Africa region are able to proliferate in large part due to weak governance and limited state capacities to successfully target organised criminal activities. Most countries in the region do not have sufficient institutional capacity to effectively identify,

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[42] For example, 61% of the nearly 15,000 East African migrants interviewed along key mixed migration routes by the Mixed Migration Centre between September 2019 and September 2024 reported using a smuggler for at least part of their journey. Source: Mixed Migration Centre 4Mi data. Accessed here on 21 November 2024.

[43] The European Commission defines mixed migration as 'complex migratory population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other types of migrants as opposed to migratory population movements that consist entirely of one category of migrants.'

[44] Europol website. Accessed at https://www.europol.europa.eu/socta/2017/people-as-a-commodity.html on 12 June 2024. It should be noted that the estimated profit from SOM-related activities in the EU has decreased since the mid-2010s along with the number of migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean.

investigate and take action against transnational organised crime. Moreover, much needed intraregional collaboration to combat THB and SOM has historically been limited by distrust between national intelligence agencies and a general absence of coordination architecture to facilitate joint investigations.

In the Rome Declaration, which underpins the Khartoum Process, signatories '[express] great concern at the harsh and blatant abuses suffered by victims, especially migrants in vulnerable situations, from organised groups of smugglers and traffickers. They moreover '[underscore] the importance of prosecuting smugglers and traffickers and dismantling their criminal networks as they represent a serious threat, […] including to the lives of migrants'. In the interest of protecting vulnerable migrants from abuses and dismantling criminal networks involved in THB and SOM, the Joint Valletta Action Plan commits to a wide range of actions that can be grouped under three specific impacts:

    (i)   Relevant actors are effectively and efficiently investigating, prosecuting and cooperating on THB and SOM (Specific impact 4.1),

    (ii)   Stranded and vulnerable migrants, refugees[45] and victims of trafficking have appropriate access to protection and assistance (Specific impact 4.2), and

    (iii)   Conditions in countries of origin are less conducive to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings (Specific impact 4.3).

Most of the actions identified by the JVAP to prevent and fight against irregular migration are targeted by at least one EUTF HoA project. These include all four EUTF programmes explicitly designed to support the Khartoum Process,[46] as well as the *Solutions pérennes* IOM project in Djibouti.

4.1.1. SPECIFIC IMPACT 4.1: RELEVANT LOCAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTORS ARE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY (I) INVESTIGATING AND PROSECUTING ORGANISED NETWORKS INVOLVED IN SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS AND TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, AND (II) COOPERATING WITH ONE ANOTHER TO DO SO

The first specific impact in the 'prevention and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings' domain of the JVAP concerns the effectiveness and efficiency with which key institutional actors (such as border management staff, judicial and financial authorities and law enforcement) are addressing SOM and THB issues within their respective areas of expertise.
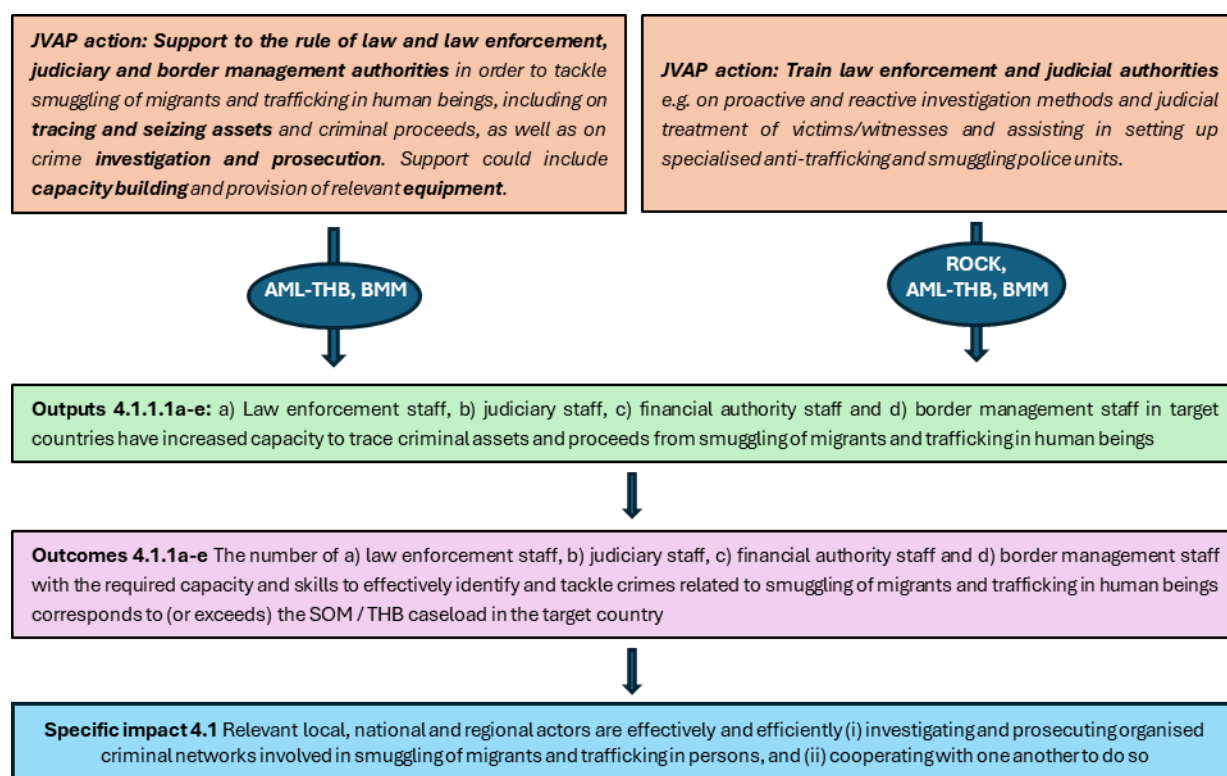
The research team identified seven JVAP actions that contribute to this specific impact, including support to operational police cooperation and exchange of information, training law enforcement and judicial authorities on proactive and reactive investigation methods, and boosting capacities to trace and seize assets and criminal proceeds. Six of these actions are targeted by EUTF HoA projects.

The research team then linked each of these actions to outputs and outcomes targeting specific areas of institutional capacity, all of which are expected to feed into the overall effectiveness and efficiency of relevant actors when tackling SOM and THB.

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[45] Refugees will not be treated in the corresponding analysis for reasons of scope, as explained in *1.3 Research objectives and scope.*
[46] Namely BMM, AML-THB, ROCK and the EU-IOM JI HoA.

Figure 9: Reconstructed theory of change for Outcome 4.1.1

JVAP action: Support to the rule of law and law enforcement, judiciary and border management authorities in order to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, including on **tracing and seizing assets** and criminal proceeds, as well as on crime **investigation and prosecution**. Support could include **capacity building** and provision of relevant **equipment**.

JVAP action: Train law enforcement and judicial authorities e.g. on proactive and reactive investigation methods and judicial treatment of victims/witnesses and assisting in setting up specialised anti-trafficking and smuggling police units.

AML-THB, BMM

ROCK, AML-THB, BMM

Outputs 4.1.1.1a-e: a) Law enforcement staff, b) judiciary staff, c) financial authority staff and d) border management staff in target countries have increased capacity to trace criminal assets and proceeds from smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings

Outcomes 4.1.1a-e The number of a) law enforcement staff, b) judiciary staff, c) financial authority staff and d) border management staff with the required capacity and skills to effectively identify and tackle crimes related to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings corresponds to (or exceeds) the SOM / THB caseload in the target country

Specific impact 4.1 Relevant local, national and regional actors are effectively and efficiently (i) investigating and prosecuting organised criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and (ii) cooperating with one another to do so

4.1.1.1. Outcome 4.1.1a: The number of law enforcement staff with the required capacity and skills to effectively investigate crimes related to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings corresponds to (or exceeds) the SOM / THB caseload in the target country

4.1.1.1.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Positive: The EUTF has almost certainly made a significant positive contribution to the increased capacity of law enforcement staff to effective tackle crimes related to SOM and THB, with four projects delivering relevant achievements in this area. The BMM II and AML-THB projects both benefitted from external evaluations of their capacity development interventions, in which the findings are largely positive. Meanwhile, although the ROCK lacks robust outcome data measuring actual increases in capacity, qualitative evidence suggests that the project contributed to encouraging progress around targeted capacities.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Sufficient 4 relevant KIIs for AML-THB, AML-THB ex-post evaluation, BMM II evaluation of capacity development measures, BMM II study on quality of THB and SOM cases prepared by investigators, ROCK final evaluation (no outcome data)	_4_ AML-THB, BMM I, BMM II and ROCK

4.1.1.1.1. Evidence

The BMM I, BMM II, ROCK and AML-THB projects all delivered capacity building interventions to law enforcement authorities to increase their capacity to investigate crimes related to THB and SOM. In the first phase of the BMM programme alone, the capacities of 1,648 government actors from judiciary and law enforcement to investigate and prosecute THB and SOM cases were enhanced through trainings in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and at the regional level.[47] Specific examples of targeted capacity development interventions implemented by the programme include:

- Supporting police training institutions in Ethiopia and Kenya to implement new curricula on THB and SOM that are aligned with gender and human and child rights principles,
- Providing equipment, such as phones, IT equipment and data storage devices, to the cyber team within the Government of Ethiopia's Specialist Investigations Unit, and
- Procuring specialist investigative equipment for the Somali Police Force.

Meanwhile, the overall objective of the ROCK is to facilitate information sharing and joint operations to counter THB and SOM by establishing a regional operational centre that brings together seconded national counterparts, which in itself is expected to improve the ability of national law enforcement authorities to tackle SOM and THB. The programme also organised trainings of liaison officers and other actors (such as prosecutors, judges and border officials) on national and regional frameworks related to THB and SOM, protection and human rights, and regional police cooperation.

Finally, the AML-THB project included police and other law enforcement authorities in its capacity building interventions targeting illicit financial flows generated by transnational criminal SOM and THB networks.

However, of the four projects, only the BMM II project sought to measure increases in capacity of law enforcement officials through a 2022 evaluation of the project's capacity development measures conducted by Oxford Policy Management. The findings from this evaluation are largely positive. For example, more than 80% of the evaluation's respondents in Kenya and Ethiopia responded correctly to individual knowledge questions on handling THB and SOM cases.[48, 49] UNODC also conducted an internal study on the quality of THB and SOM cases prepared by investigators, which highlighted multiple positive findings. For instance, in Ethiopia, the average score ascribed to the quality of THB and SOM case files prepared by investigators for indictment increased from 2020 to 2022, although it is not clear by how much.[50] The improvements were attributed by survey respondents to the UNODC's trainings for investigators under the project. Meanwhile, more than half of respondents surveyed at a Nairobi court confirmed an improvement in evidence collected and presented in THB and SOM cases between 2020 and 2022, which had led to a rise in the court's conviction rate.[51]

Meanwhile, ROCK's investigative successes could point to increased capacities among targeted law enforcement officials. These successes include as many as 20 traffickers arrested and more than 100 victims of trafficking rescued under the first phase of the ROCK, as well as 'the release and identification of 2,633 victims, the dismantling of 10 trafficking networks and the arrest of 74 traffickers, 23 of whom were prosecuted for the offences for which they were charged' under ROCK II. High-profile examples

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[47] BMM I final narrative report.

[48] These results were not disaggregated by actor type but include justice officials, police, immigration officials and other ministry and government officials.

[49] Alonso, H., Seyfert, K., Yamin, A., and Zimmermann, J., Oxford Policy Management, 'Better Migration Management Programme Phase 2 – Evaluation of capacity development measures', 2022.

[50] The average score for 2020 was 3 out of 5, but the average score for 2022 was not provided.

[51] Benecker-Thiel, A., 'Regional baseline study on the quality of TiP and SoM cases prepared by investigators: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda', 2022.

include the widely reported arrest and prosecution[52] of 'one of the most notorious and cruel human smugglers in the world',[53] Kidane Zekarias Habtemariam. However, given the limited dissemination of reporting on these investigations due to the sensitive nature of ROCK's activities, the precise contribution of the ROCK to these achievements is often difficult to assess. Moreover, the absence of project monitoring and evaluation data measuring investigative capacities means that it is impossible to assess the project's contribution to this outcome with confidence.

Finally, there is no quantitative monitoring and evaluation data measuring the outcomes of the AML-THB project's interventions. However, preliminary findings from an ex-post evaluation (which was still ongoing at the time of writing) suggest that the project successfully contributed to strengthening the institutional capabilities of key stakeholders, with the activities implemented in Kenya highlighted as being especially effective and well-aligned with the capacities of the involved actors. Moreover, as described in the evidence analysis under Outcome 4.1.1c, qualitative information collected by the research team suggests that the project trainings were perceived by key stakeholders as very effective.

4.1.1.2. Outcome 4.1.1b: The number of judiciary staff with the required capacity and skills to effectively prosecute crimes related to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings corresponds to (or exceeds) the SOM / THB caseload in the target country

4.1.1.2.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Moderately positive: The EUTF has likely contributed positively to the capacity of judicial authorities in the HoA region to effectively prosecute crimes related to THB and SOM. However, as none of the three relevant projects primarily targeted judicial authorities, the significance of the change has been categorised as 'moderate'.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Limited 4 relevant KIIs for AML-THB, BMM II evaluation of capacity development measures	*3* BMM I, BMM II and AML-THB

4.1.1.2.2. Evidence

The BMM I, BMM II and AML-THB projects all delivered capacity building interventions to judicial authorities to increase their capacity to prosecute crimes related to THB and SOM. For example, the AML-THB project, in collaboration with the Kenyan Judiciary Academy, trained Kenyan judges on counterterrorism and the prevention of terrorism financing. Beyond trainings, the BMM programme also implemented other types of interventions aimed at improving relevant judicial capacities, such as developing standard operating procedures for police-prosecutor cooperation.

While the outcomes of these interventions were not measured under BMM I,[54] BMM II monitoring and evaluation data suggests that the programme contributed to positive outcomes in this area. For

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[52] Kidane, as he is widely known, was arrested in Ethiopia in 2020 but escaped the Ethiopian authorities the following year. He was recaptured in Sudan in 2022 and extradited to the United Arab Emirates to stand trial for alleged financial crimes. The Dutch authorities have filed a request for him to be extradited once again to the Netherlands to face more serious trafficking-related charges.

[53] Dutch Ministry of Defence website. Accessed here on 24 June 2024.

[54] While the project logframe includes an indicator that tracks the number of prosecutions opened for transnational human trafficking or migrant smuggling according to national, regional and international legal frameworks, the baseline value was not assessed and at endline only the number of investigators and prosecutors trained by the project in each country was provided to validate the indicator. The BMM I final report attributed this to 'the absence of a case management system and thus, no possibility to report directly on the result.'

example, the Oxford Policy Management study described under Outcome 4.1.1a found that the project's interventions had led to improved cooperation between police and prosecutors in Kenya and Ethiopia when investigating cases of THB and SOM, although this was still at a very early stage and needed additional buy-in from key actors.[55]

Finally, and as previously stated, while there is no quantitative monitoring and evaluation data measuring the outcomes of the AML-THB project's interventions, preliminary findings from an ongoing ex-post evaluation as well as qualitative evidence collected by the research team for this study all indicate that the project effectively strengthened the institutional capacities of key stakeholders, including judicial authorities.

4.1.1.3. Outcome 4.1.1c: The number of financial authority staff with the required capacity and skills to effectively trace criminal assets and proceeds from smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings corresponds to (or exceeds) the SOM / THB caseload in the target country

4.1.1.3.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Somewhat positive: The EUTF has likely contributed positively to the capacity of financial authorities in the HoA region to effectively trace criminal assets and proceeds from activities related to THB and SOM. However, as just one project (AML-THB) contributed to this outcome, with a comparatively small budget for its wide geographical scope, the significance of the change is likely to be limited. There is also no outcome data available for this project.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Limited 4 relevant KIIs for AML-THB, presentation of preliminary findings from AML-THB ex-post evaluation	*1* AML-THB

4.1.1.3.2. Evidence

The AML-THB project sought to strengthen efforts to combat THB and SOM by improving national response capacities and intraregional cooperation to target illicit financial flows generated by transnational criminal THB and SOM networks. It did this in part by delivering capacity building interventions to relevant institutions, including regulatory agencies, financial institutions, financial intelligence and investigation units, customs, revenue services and anti-corruption agencies.

There is no quantitative monitoring and evaluation data measuring the outcomes of these interventions because the project was not evaluated in real time.[56] A presentation of preliminary findings from an ex-post evaluation of the project conducted at the end of 2024 found that while 'pre- and post-training evaluations effectively measured knowledge transfer' in the short term, 'the absence of an overall monitoring and evaluation system reduced the programme's ability to track progress comprehensively or make real-time adjustments.'

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[55] Alonso, H., Seyfert, K., Yamin, A., and Zimmermann, J., Oxford Policy Management, 'Better Migration Management Programme Phase 2 – Evaluation of capacity development measures', 2022.
[56] An ex-post evaluation of the project was conducted in early 2025.

However, EU programme managers, project team members and institutional partners interviewed for this study all emphasised the high quality and positive impact of the trainings provided by the project. The trainings were described by key informants as 'innovative', 'fundamental' and 'very practical'. One of the project's institutional partners observed that by simulating real cases they helped participants to understand the importance of collaborating with other relevant stakeholders as well as to identify their own strengths and gaps. An EU key informant also affirmed the positive feedback they had received from beneficiary partners on the trainings and the strong reputation of the project team.

4.1.1.4. Outcome 4.1.1d: The number of border management staff with the required capacity and skills to effectively identify and tackle crimes related to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings corresponds to (or exceeds) the SOM / THB caseload in the target country
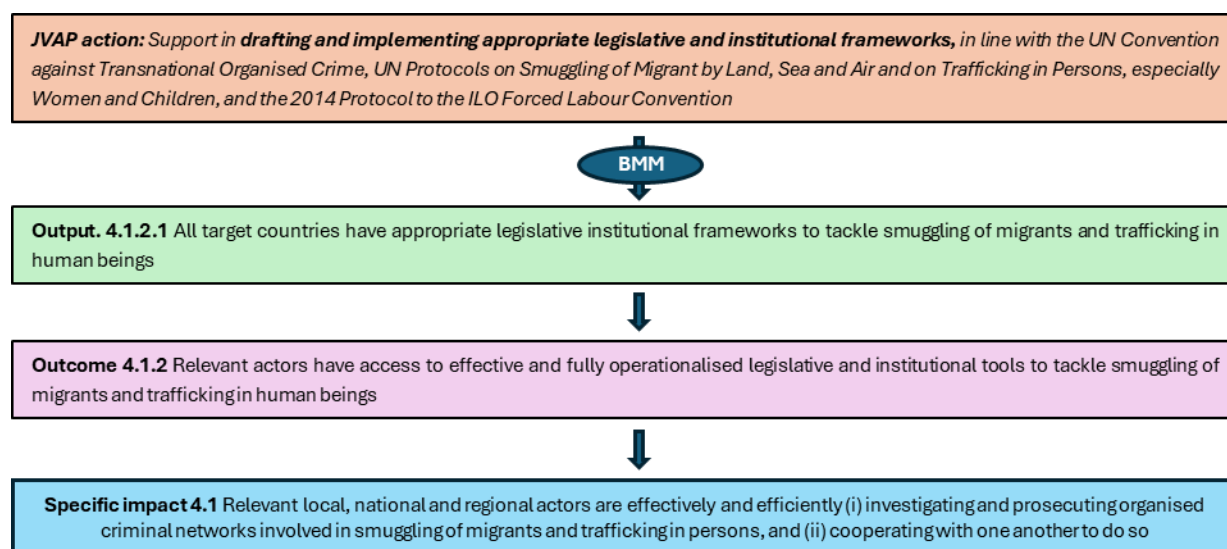
4.1.1.4.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Somewhat positive: The EUTF has likely contributed positively to the capacity of border authorities in the HoA region to effectively address issues related to THB and SOM. However, given the scale of action required to achieve this outcome versus the scope of relevant EUTF actions, the significance of the change is likely to be limited. Only the BMM programme implemented relevant activities under this outcome, and while both BMM projects made key contributions in this area, developing the capacities of border officials is just one of many aspects of migration management that they seek to address.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Very limited BMM II final narrative report, BMM II evaluation of capacity development measures	_2_ BMM I and BMM II

4.1.1.4.2. Evidence

As part of its multilevel approach to migration governance and migration management, the BMM programme sought to improve the capacity of border authorities to effectively address THB and SOM issues. For instance, under BMM II, IOM organised trainings for frontline border officials from across the HoA region on the effective and efficient operation of one-stop border posts, which are designed to optimise coordination, information sharing, resource mobilisation and investigation processes. The project also sought to improve border authorities' capacities to assist vulnerable migrants through the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for national referral mechanisms that connect vulnerable migrants to protection services, on which border management staff were trained. However, there is no monitoring and evaluation data measuring actual increases in the capacities or effectiveness of border authorities following these trainings. The previously mentioned Oxford Policy Management evaluation of BMM II's capacity development measures, for example, does not include specific findings on border management actors.

Figure 10: Reconstructed theory of change for Outcome 4.1.2

JVAP action: Support in **drafting and implementing appropriate legislative and institutional frameworks,** in line with the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, UN Protocols on Smuggling of Migrant by Land, Sea and Air and on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and the 2014 Protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention

BMM

Output. 4.1.2.1 All target countries have appropriate legislative institutional frameworks to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings

Outcome 4.1.2 Relevant actors have access to effective and fully operationalised legislative and institutional tools to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings

Specific impact 4.1 Relevant local, national and regional actors are effectively and efficiently (i) investigating and prosecuting organised criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and (ii) cooperating with one another to do so

4.1.1.5. Outcome 4.1.2: Relevant actors have access to effective and fully operationalised legislative and institutional tools to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings

4.1.1.5.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Moderately positive: The EUTF has likely had a positive effect on the accessibility of effective legislative and institutional tools to tackle THB and SOM. Both BMM projects supported the drafting or revision of numerous national frameworks and national and subsidiary laws targeting THB in particular. Given the scale of the BMM programme's actions in this area, the significance of the EUTF contribution is likely considerable. However, this finding is moderated by the absence of robust data on the effectiveness and operationalisation of the supported frameworks and tools.

| Data sources	EUTF projects
Limited BMM I final narrative report, BMM II final evaluation	_2_ BMM I and BMM II

4.1.1.5.1. Evidence

Examples of legislative and institutional tools to tackle THB and SOM that have been developed with the support of the BMM programme include:

- Parliamentary approval of the revised Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Proclamation in Ethiopia,
- The drafting of a counter-trafficking bill in Kenya,
- Parliamentary approval of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Bill in Somalia,
- The drafting of accession instruments for the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) protocols in South Sudan, and

- The alignment of national THB legislation with the UNTOC protocols in Uganda.

The BMM II final evaluation concludes that these achievements 'plausibly contributed to the module objective that national authorities and institutions in the area of migration governance were aware and acted in accordance [with] global and regional migration governance frameworks.'[57] However, the effectiveness and operationalisation of the supported frameworks and tools have not been assessed at the outcome level.

Figure 11: Reconstructed theory of change for Outcome 4.1.3
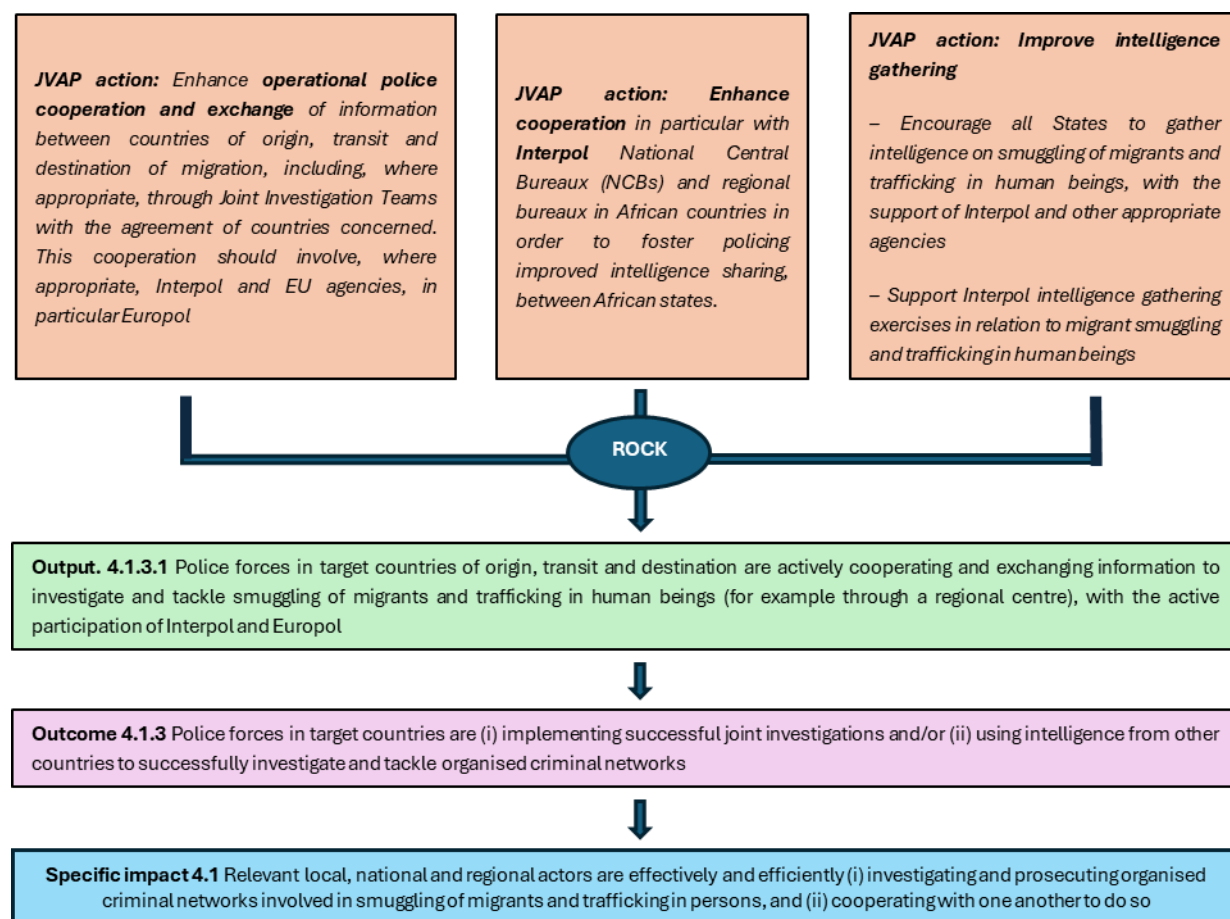
4.1.1.6. Outcome 4.1.3: Police forces in target countries are (i) implementing successful joint investigations and/or (ii) using intelligence from other countries to successfully investigate and tackle organised criminal networks

4.1.1.6.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Positive: Through the establishment of a regional operational centre for information exchange via the ROCK project, the EUTF has effectively increased the exchange of relevant intelligence between police forces in target countries and has therefore contributed positively to the implementation of successful investigations at both the national and cross-country level. Given the unprecedented nature of the ROCK in the region, the significant extent to which it addresses the scope of the

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[57] Abel-Massih-Thiemann, J., Thiel, S., et al., 'Central project evaluation: Better Migration Management II, Horn of Africa', 2023.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Sufficient 5 relevant KIIs for ROCK, ROCK final evaluation	1 ROCK

outcome, as well as its reported investigative successes as outlined in Outcome 4.1.1a, the significance of the EUTF contribution is likely to be high.

4.1.1.6.2. Evidence

The overall objective of the ROCK is to facilitate information sharing and joint operations to counter THB and SOM by establishing a regional centre that physically brings together liaison officers seconded from the criminal investigation departments of national police forces in each partner country.[58] The first phase of the project established an information sharing platform and secured commitments from (at the time) ten African countries to exchange intelligence and investigate crimes together. The importance of this achievement should not be understated. By way of comparison, one key informant noted that such a platform had been difficult to achieve with the establishment of EUROPOL under the much more politically integrated EU.

Information gathered from key informants for this study confirm the critical role that cross-country collaboration has played in the ROCK's investigative success stories to date.[59] For example, the most high-profile of these successes involves the aforementioned notorious trafficker described in the analysis for Outcome 4.1.1a, whose successful arrest followed an intelligence report produced by the ROCK as a result of cooperation between countries through which he frequently travelled, including Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, the United Arab Emirates and the Netherlands.[60] Given that prior to the ROCK, 'exchange and cooperation between countries [was] rare and not often happening',[61] the positive results of these collaborative efforts speak to the ROCK's critical contribution to joint investigative capacities.

4.1.2. SPECIFIC IMPACT 4.2: IMPROVED LEGAL, FINANCIAL, HEALTH AND REINTEGRATION OUTCOMES FOR VULNERABLE MIGRANTS AND VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

The second specific impact in the fourth domain of the JVAP relates to the accessibility and effectiveness of protection and assistance for stranded and vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking.

The research team identified six JVAP actions that contribute to this specific impact, of which four are targeted by EUTF projects. These include the direct provision of protection and assistance to stranded or vulnerable migrants as well as support to relevant authorities and civil society organisations to provide these services. Other examples include supporting the establishment of standard operating procedures for the referral of victims of trafficking and supporting the provision of systematic and predictable consular assistance to stranded migrants.

The research team then linked these actions to corresponding outputs and an overarching outcome measuring the reliability, effectiveness and efficiency of protection and other services provided to vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking.
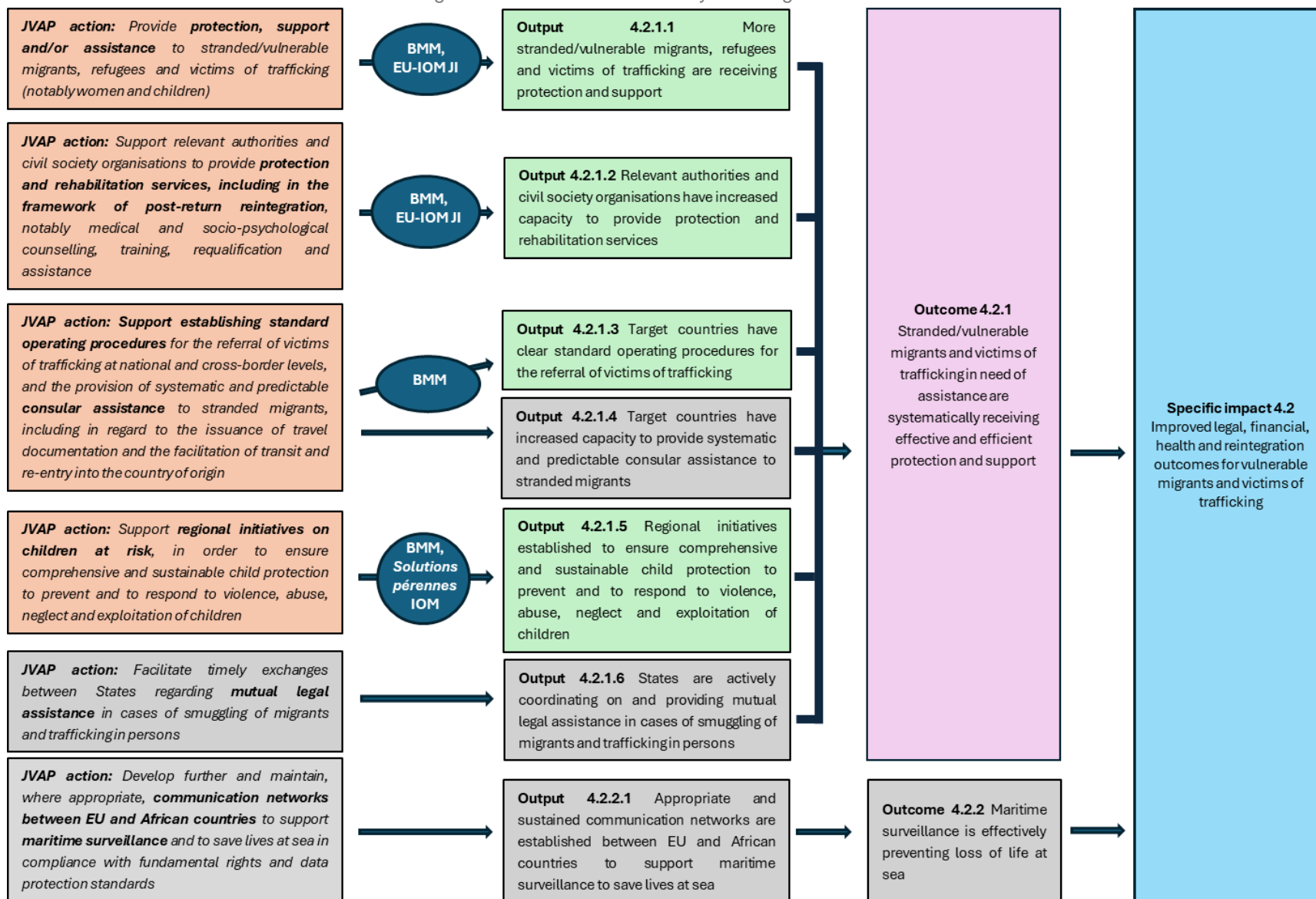
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[58] Current partner countries comprise Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, the DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and Yemen.
[59] The success stories that have been publicly disseminated are summarised in Outcome 4.1.1a.
[60] Key informant interview with EU implementing partner.
[61] Conflict Management Consulting, 'Final evaluation of the ROCK project', 2022.

Figure 12: Reconstructed theory of change for Outcome 4.2.1

JVAP action: *Provide* **protection, support and/or assistance** *to stranded/vulnerable migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking (notably women and children)*

BMM, EU-IOM JI

Output 4.2.1.1 More stranded/vulnerable migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking are receiving protection and support

JVAP action: *Support relevant authorities and civil society organisations to provide* **protection and rehabilitation services, including in the framework of post-return reintegration,** *notably medical and socio-psychological counselling, training, requalification and assistance*

BMM, EU-IOM JI

Output 4.2.1.2 Relevant authorities and civil society organisations have increased capacity to provide protection and rehabilitation services

JVAP action: Support establishing standard operating procedures *for the referral of victims of trafficking at national and cross-border levels, and the provision of systematic and predictable* **consular assistance** *to stranded migrants, including in regard to the issuance of travel documentation and the facilitation of transit and re-entry into the country of origin*

BMM

Output 4.2.1.3 Target countries have clear standard operating procedures for the referral of victims of trafficking

Output 4.2.1.4 Target countries have increased capacity to provide systematic and predictable consular assistance to stranded migrants

JVAP action: *Support* **regional initiatives on children at risk,** *in order to ensure comprehensive and sustainable child protection to prevent and to respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children*

BMM, Solutions pérennes IOM

Output 4.2.1.5 Regional initiatives established to ensure comprehensive and sustainable child protection to prevent and to respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children

JVAP action: *Facilitate timely exchanges between States regarding* **mutual legal assistance** *in cases of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons*

Output 4.2.1.6 States are actively coordinating on and providing mutual legal assistance in cases of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons

Outcome 4.2.1 Stranded/vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking in need of assistance are systematically receiving effective and efficient protection and support

Specific impact 4.2 Improved legal, financial, health and reintegration outcomes for vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking

JVAP action: *Develop further and maintain, where appropriate,* **communication networks between EU and African countries** *to support* **maritime surveillance** *and to save lives at sea in compliance with fundamental rights and data protection standards*

Output 4.2.2.1 Appropriate and sustained communication networks are established between EU and African countries to support maritime surveillance to save lives at sea

Outcome 4.2.2 Maritime surveillance is effectively preventing loss of life at sea

4.1.2.1. Outcome 4.2.1: Stranded/vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking are reliably receiving effective and efficient protection and support

4.1.2.1.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Positive: Collectively, EUTF HoA projects contributed to four JVAP actions that feed into the desired outcome of effective and efficient protection and support being reliably available to vulnerable migrants and victim of trafficking. Project outcome data is limited for some relevant interventions, which means that it is difficult to assess these contributions beyond the output level. However, the research team considers that sufficient outcome-level data is available to support a positive outcome rating.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Sufficient	_4_
BMM I final narrative report, BMM II final narrative report, EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation	BMM I, BMM II, EU-IOM JI HoA and _Solutions pérennes_ IOM

4.1.2.1.2. Evidence

Collectively, EUTF HoA projects contributed to four JVAP actions that feed into the desired outcome of effective and efficient protection and support being reliably available to vulnerable migrants and victim of trafficking. These include (i) direct provision of protection and support to vulnerable migrants, (ii) support to relevant authorities and civil society organisations to provide services to vulnerable migrants, including through support to the establishment of standard operating procedures for the referral of victims of trafficking, and (iii) support to regional child protection initiatives. The EUTF's contributions to each of these actions is described in further detail below.

Direct support to vulnerable migrants

The BMM I project provided multiple forms of direct support to vulnerable migrants, including the identification of, and provision of protection services to, 18,229 vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. The project also established two new shelters for the protection of victims of trafficking and supported an additional five existing ones in Ethiopia, as well as supporting an existing shelter in Kenya. Moreover, the project supported an increased range of services provided to vulnerable migrants in existing IOM-supported Migration Response Centres, including screening, legal assistance, psychosocial counselling and medical assistance. These services reached a total of 13,888 migrants in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. However, none of these results were measured by the project beyond the direct output level.[62]

Meanwhile, the EU-IOM JI HoA provided protection and direct assistance to 8,960 stranded and vulnerable migrants, largely by supporting the construction, rehabilitation and operation of 15 Migrant Resource and/or Response Centres (MRRCs) to provide pre-departure assistance for assisted voluntary return (AVR), such as registration, medical assistance, counselling, non-food items, travel documents, health insurance, temporary shelter and food provisions. Unlike BMM I, the results of the assistance provided by the EU-IOM JI HoA were measured at the outcome level. For example, a survey of migrants supported by the project in MRRCs found that 68% were satisfied with the MRRC services.

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[62] As described in the next sub-section, the second phase of the programme built on the capacity development activities implemented during the first phase, but did not fund the actual delivery of protection services as it did under BMM I.

Overall, the EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation concluded via desk research and interviews with migrants and other stakeholders that the programme 'responded to the most pressing needs of migrants'.[63]

Increased capacities of relevant authorities and civil society organisations, including through standard operating procedures and mechanisms for referrals

The BMM I, BMM II and EU-IOM JI HoA projects all sought to improve the capacities of local stakeholders to deliver effective protection and support to vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking through training, institutional strengthening and partnership building.

For example, through 118 trainings and workshops, BMM I supported 3,214 social workers, CSO staff and national and local government actors to provide improved referral and protection services to vulnerable migrants in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. The project also supported the establishment of mechanisms for the referral of vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking to assistance services in three countries and two regions or states of operation. Moreover, the project developed standard operating procedures for activities such as medical referrals and referrals of child migrants. As a result, 70% of surveyed respondents in Kenya and Ethiopia (the two countries in which this result was measured) confirmed an improvement in inter-institutional cooperation around the identification and protection of vulnerable migrants, with 30 of the 34 organisations participating in the survey study reporting that they were cooperating with three or more organisations in this area.[64] Unfortunately, another robust targeted outcome of these interventions that the project sought to measure (a 70% increase in referrals of cases) could not be assessed due to the absence of effective case management systems.

BMM II focused on building the capacities of service providers to support the extension of protection services and the expansion of pilot measures implemented under BMM I, including through the elaboration of standard operating procedures for the aforementioned referral mechanisms, the development of directories for protection and other services, and sensitisation and training on protection for service providers. As a result, 84% of surveyed stakeholders reported increased knowledge of standard operating procedures and referrals.[65] However, as previously mentioned, self-reported assessments are not the most reliable or robust way to capture observable increases in capacity.

Meanwhile, according to the EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation, the project's capacity development and partnership building interventions delivered positive results at the outcome level. For example, the project developed standard operating procedures for return and reintegration in each country of operation that reportedly made a significant contribution to improved coordination and action among relevant stakeholders. These SOPs included guidance to 'focus efforts and resources where they are most needed […] and where they can have the most impact,' such that 'all vulnerable migrants receive individual tailored assistance.'[66]

The EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation found that these SOPs and other capacity development interventions directly augmented the number of local IPs and stakeholders (such as state organisations) engaged in supporting reintegration, through which 'reintegration assistance services increased and reached many people even during challenging situations.' For instance, the project was able to reach around 700 more migrants at the peak of the operationally challenging COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020-March 2021) than it did in 2019.

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[63] PPMI, 'Final evaluation of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for migrant protection and reintegration in the Horn of Africa', 2023.
[64] BMM I final narrative report, March 2020.
[65] BMM II final narrative report, March 2023.
[66] IOM, EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, Biannual Reintegration Report, Report #1, March 2019. (Covers the EU-IOM JI in the Sahel and Lake Chad region).

Child protection services for migrant children

For the evidence analysis regarding child protection services, please refer to Section 4.2.2.1, which covers the same scope of interventions under a targeted child protection outcome.

4.1.3. SPECIFIC IMPACT 4.3: CONDITIONS IN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN ARE LESS CONDUCIVE TO SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS AND TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The third specific impact in the fourth domain of the JVAP concerns the conditions in countries of origin that facilitate the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, as addressing these conditions is critical for mitigating the risks and prevalence of THB and SOM.

The research team identified two JVAP actions contributing to distinct outcomes under this specific impact. The first action focuses on improving access to credible information about legal migration pathways and the dangers of engaging in irregular migration to ensure that potential migrants are well-informed. The research team linked this action to a corresponding output and then to an outcome measuring whether potential migrants are well-informed about legal migration opportunities and the dangers of irregular migration. Notably, this outcome features the largest number of contributing EUTF projects among all relevant outcomes, with twelve projects implementing sensitisation and awareness-raising interventions on these topics.

The second action relates to strengthening border management systems through capacity building and financing investments. The research team linked this action to a corresponding output and then to two outcomes based on the JVAP text. These include (i) increased capacities among border management staff to implement integrated border management and rights-based approaches and (ii) increased interceptions of irregular border crossings and disruptions to criminal cross-border activities. Only the first expected outcome of this action (Outcome 4.3.2a) was identified as relevant for EUTF interventions.

Figure 13: Reconstructed theory for change of Outcome 4.3.1
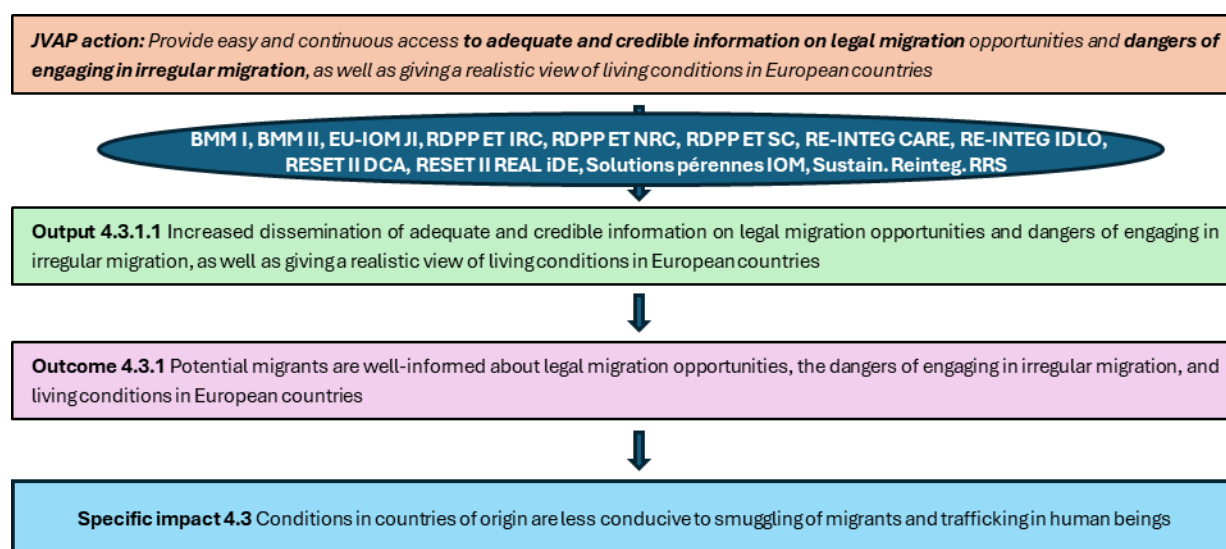
4.1.3.1. Outcome 4.3.1: Potential migrants are well-informed about legal migration opportunities, the dangers of engaging in irregular migration, and living conditions in European countries

4.1.3.1.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Insufficient evidence: Twelve projects implemented relevant awareness raising actions contributing to this outcome, which is the largest number of contributing projects for any of the relevant outcomes in this analysis. However, the vast majority did not seek to measure the results of these actions at the outcome level. Moreover, the limited evidence that does exist is highly inconclusive.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Limited EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation, RDPP ET IRC final evaluation, RDPP ET SC final evaluation, RESET II REAL iDE final evaluation	_12_ BMM I, BMM II, EU-IOM JI, RDPP ET IRC, RDPP ET NRC, RDPP ET SC, RE-INTEG CARE, RE-INTEG IDLO, RESET II DCA, RESET II REAL iDE, Solutions pérennes IOM, Sustainable Reintegration RRS

4.1.3.1.2. Evidence

Hundreds of thousands of potential migrants have been sensitised on the dangers of irregular migration, and to a lesser extent on options for regular migration, by EUTF projects.[67] However, in the vast majority of cases, these activities were not measured beyond the output level. Moreover, the limited evidence that does exist suggests that caution should be exercised when assigning a rating to the likely collective outcome of these interventions. For example, key informants for the EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation described 'the programme's outreach and awareness component [as] the least effective among the five pillars of the JI-HoA, as it implemented on more of an ad hoc basis rather than through a harmonised approach.'[68] In addition, the evaluation found that the objectives of the project's awareness raising activities were not clearly defined, were not associated with any targeted indicators, and were never specifically evaluated.

Only RDPP ET SC collected MEL data corresponding to the outcome in question: that is, whether potential migrants are well-informed about legal migration opportunities and the risks of irregular migration. The project's endline evaluation found that 75% of surveyed respondents reported improved knowledge of risks related to irregular migration, and the same proportion of participants in gender-friendly information sessions on access to justice and rule of law indicated increased knowledge of gender-related risks associated with irregular migration. These findings were also validated by focus group discussions. It is worth noting, however, that the evaluation also found that it was the increased access to education and livelihood opportunities supported by the project that appears to have actually reduced the intention of targeted youths to migrate irregularly.

The two projects that sought to quantitatively measure these higher-level changes, such as propensity to migrate irregularly following relevant interventions, came to mixed conclusions. The RESET II REAL iDE evaluation found that the proportion of the targeted population in Wolayita Zone in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region of Ethiopia that had recently travelled elsewhere in search

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[67] Based on outputs reported to the MLS by EUTF projects and mapped to EUTF common output indicator 3.3. Excludes outputs not relevant to legal migration opportunities or irregular migration, such as Free Movement IGAD's communication campaigns on transhumance rights. Precise figure not cited because EU-IOM JI HoA, which sensitised the largest number of people (590,113), did not provide disaggregated figures on the number of people sensitised specifically on the risks of irregular migration (as opposed to other topics such as assisted voluntary return options).

[68] PPMI, 'Final evaluation of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for migrant protection and reintegration in the Horn of Africa', 2023.

of a job had decreased by more than ten percentage points between baseline and endline (from 42.5% to 31%). By contrast, the RDPP ET IRC endline evaluation found that the vast majority (81%) of surveyed refugee participants in the Shire area of Tigray Region in Ethiopia intended to engage in secondary irregular migration, despite the project's sensitisation interventions as well as other activities aimed at improving conditions in the camps.[69] The evaluation highlighted that 'the evaluation result may reflect insufficient time and project scope to realize the potential of the interventions towards higher level indicators of change/impact regarding intention of the displaced and displacement affected communities to engage in risky secondary migration.'[70] In both cases, however, it is impossible to isolate the outcomes from the projects' awareness raising interventions from changes resulting from the projects' efforts to improve conditions in areas of origin or settlement through increased employment opportunities and improved access to basic services.

Figure 14: Reconstructed theory of change for Outcome 4.3.2
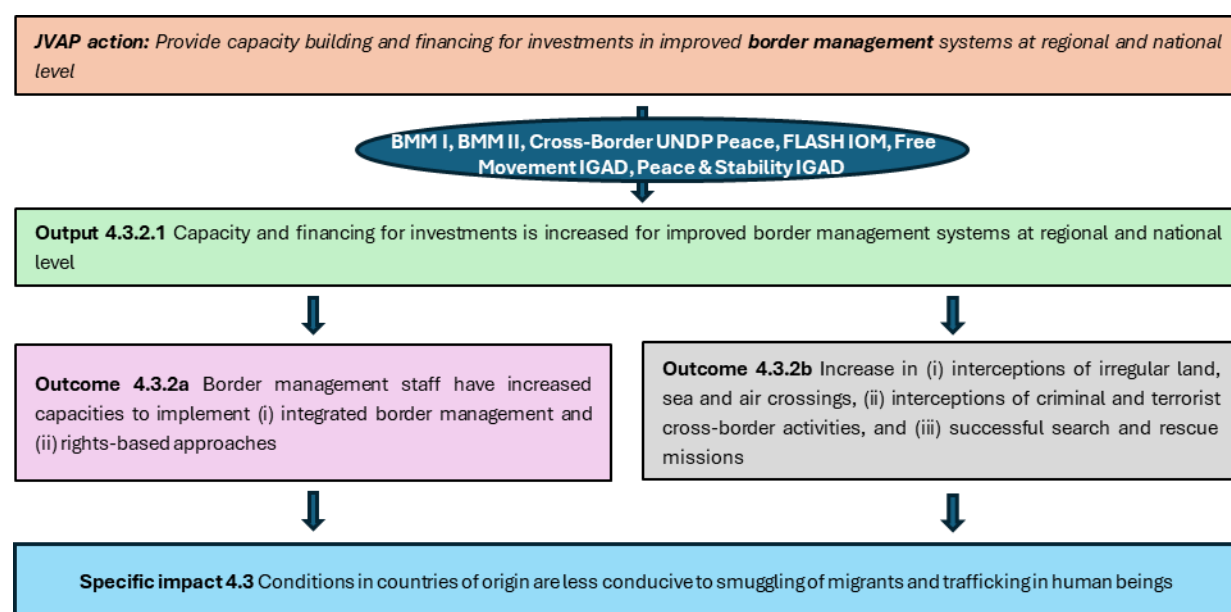
4.1.3.2. Outcome 4.3.2a: Border management staff have increased capacities to implement (i) integrated border management and (ii) rights-based approaches

4.1.3.2.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Moderately positive: Five EUTF HoA projects contributed to this action with interventions aimed at supporting and developing the capacities of border management staff, which the research team expects have collectively contributed to increased capacities in the relevant areas. However, this finding is moderated by the absence of robust outcome data.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Limited BMM I final report, BMM II final evaluation, BMM II evaluation of capacity development measures,	_6_

Peace & Stability IGAD mid-term review, EUTF MLS output data, FLASH IOM MEL tracker	BMM I, BMM II, Cross-Border UNDP Peace, FLASH IOM, Free Movement IGAD, Peace & Stability IGAD

4.1.3.2.2. Evidence

Five projects implemented relevant interventions aimed at increasing the capacities of border management staff to implement integrated and/or rights-based approaches to border management. For example:

- BMM I supported joint trainings for Djibouti and Somaliland authorities to facilitate the development of a joint action plan for identifying and referring victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants.
- BMM II developed and validated an integrated border management manual to facilitate the capacity development of border and immigration officials in Djibouti, Somalia and Kenya to promote orderly migration and improved cross-border cooperation, and conducted associated trainings. BMM II also capacitated the Inter-Agency Working Group on Integrated Border Management at the regional level.
- Cross-Border UNDP Peace trained 50 border management committee and government liaison officers on effective border management with an emphasis on human rights.
- FLASH IOM equipped border points with immigration registration mobile units and trained frontline immigration officers on their use.
- Free Movement IGAD trained 132 border management officials from IGAD member states on integrated border management.
- Peace & Stability IGAD trained frontline border officers and other law enforcement officials on various topics related to border management with the aim of improving coordination and collaboration.

Unfortunately, none of these projects measured actual increases in capacities around integrated border management or rights-based approaches. It is therefore difficult to assess the scale of this outcome with confidence.

However, the limited evidence that does exist points conservatively to positive outcomes. Notably, two projects measured the perceived utility of relevant trainings according to training participants. This includes BMM II, which, as previously mentioned, contracted an external evaluation of the project's capacity development interventions. The evaluation's assessment of interventions specifically aimed at border management officials drew positive conclusions, with 95% of respondents in Kenya and 98% of respondents in South Sudan (the two countries targeted in this component of the evaluation) categorising the capacity development activities as 'very useful'. Moreover, an assessment in the same evaluation of the project's development of THB and SOM curricula for national police and law enforcement in Kenya and Ethiopia found that the activities were well aligned with human rights principles.

Meanwhile, the Peace & Stability IGAD mid-term review found that most training participants rated the utility of the project's trainings between 'good' and 'very good', with some reporting concrete improvements in collaboration between relevant border officials (customs, immigration, aviation security, etc.) as a tangible result.

4.2. FIFTH JVAP DOMAIN: RETURN, READMISSION AND REINTEGRATION

During and immediately preceding the peak of the European 'migration crisis' and launch of the EUTF in 2014 and 2015, EU member states issued approximately 18,000 return decisions affecting individuals

from the Horn of Africa region per year.[71] However, only around 3,300 of these decisions (or 18%) were carried out,[72] which is significantly lower than the overall effective return rate (taking all countries of origin into account) of 36% in 2014 and 38% in 2015.[73] This is largely explained by limited political will among African partner governments to cooperate with EU countries on returning their citizens at that time, given the fragile situation and pressing needs in most countries in the region, as well as limited capacities to support the reintegration of returning migrants.

In any case, returns to the Horn of Africa from along the Northern route to Europe currently represent only a small proportion of the overall returns landscape in the region. In fact, most of the migratory movements observed in the Horn of Africa region flow along the Eastern Route towards Yemen (48%) or into neighbouring countries within the region (41%), followed distantly by the Southern route to South Africa (10%). In fact, the Northern Route accounted for just 1% of the 817,000 movements observed by IOM's regional Displacement Tracking Matrix in 2023, with the UK, Germany and Sweden representing the top intended destinations.[74]

The Eastern route has long been associated with particularly urgent needs, with large numbers of stranded migrants and migrants at risk. For instance, migrant deaths off Djibouti's coast are common while transiting from Ethiopia and Somalia to Yemen, as smugglers often operate boats in unsafe conditions. In 2024 alone, four boats capsized shortly after departing from Djibouti to cross the Gulf of Aden, collectively leaving well over 100 people dead.[75] It is also common for migrants to find themselves stranded in Djibouti when financial difficulties, changes in border policy enforcement or other challenges prevent them from continuing their journey. In October 2024, the most recent month for which data was available at the time of writing, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix recorded 1,198 stranded migrants in Djibouti and 1,567 spontaneous or forced returns from Yemen.[76]

Forced returns from Gulf Council Cooperation countries, particularly of Ethiopian nationals, also figure prominently in returns dynamics in the Horn of Africa region. Between May 2017 and December 2023, more than 560,000 migrants were returned to Ethiopia from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. At the start of 2024, Ethiopia's government announced the resumption of this process, targeting the repatriation of 70,000 of the estimated 450,000 undocumented Ethiopians still living in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

4.2.1. SPECIFIC IMPACT 5.1: RETURNING IRREGULAR MIGRANTS (I) EXPERIENCE AN APPROPRIATE AND DIGNIFIED RETURNS PROCESS AND (II) RECEIVE ROBUST, TAILORED SUPPORT TO REINTEGRATE IN COMMUNITIES OF RETURN

The first specific impact in the fifth domain of the JVAP focuses on two critical aspects for returning irregular migrants: (i) experiencing an appropriate and dignified returns process that respects their rights and needs, and (ii) receiving robust and tailored support to reintegrate successfully into their communities of return.

The research team identified three JVAP actions contributing to distinct outcomes under this specific impact. All three are targeted by relevant EUTF HoA projects. The first action focuses on promoting programmes on assisted voluntary return and reintegration, the immediate output of which would be the establishment of such programmes, according to the theory of change reconstructed by the

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[71] EU-IOM JI Description of Action.
[72] Ibid.
[73] European Parliament, 'Briefing: data on returns of irregular migrants', 2023.
[74] IOM DTM, 'Displacement tracking matrix – East and Horn of Africa Regional Snapshot: January-December 2023', 11 June 2024.
[75] Reuters, 'UN says 38 dead, including children, as migrant boat sinks off Djibouti', 9 Apr 2024;
Reuters, 'Twenty-one dead, 23 missing after boat capsizes off Djibouti coast, UN agency official says', 23 April 2024;
Al Jazeera, 'At least 13 killed, 14 missing after boat sinks off Yemen: UN agency', 25 August 2024;
Al Jazeera, 'At least 45 dead, dozens missing as boats sink off coast of Djibouti', 2 October 2024.
[76] IOM DTM, 'Flow monitoring – Djibouti', October 2024.

research team. The team then linked this to the expected outcome that an increased number of returning migrants would benefit from efficient and effective assisted voluntary return and reintegration assistance.

The second action relates to strengthening the capacities of relevant authorities and civil society organisations in countries of origin and transit to manage voluntary returns and support reintegration. The research team linked this to the expected output that such actions would lead to increased capacities and then to the expected outcome that relevant authorities and civil society actors would have sufficient capacity to manage return and reintegration processes.

Finally, the third action involves EU support to partner countries to facilitate the individual reintegration of their own nationals via tailor-made support packages. The research team linked this to the expected output that such action would increase the capacity of partner countries to effectively support the individual reintegration of their nationals and then to the expected outcome that an increased number of returning migrants would benefit from tailored package support provided by partner country authorities to facilitate reintegration.

Figure 15: Reconstructed theory of change for Outcome 5.1.1
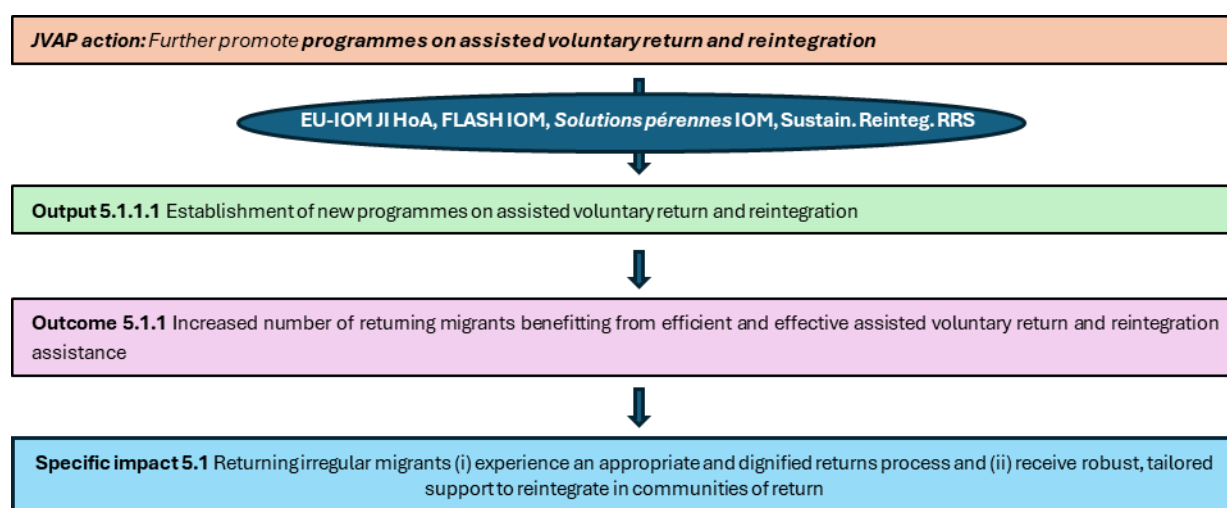
4.2.1.1. Outcome 5.1.1: Increased number of returning migrants benefitting from efficient and effective assisted voluntary return and reintegration assistance

4.2.1.1.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Positive: Despite limited outcome data for most relevant projects, the robustness of the evidence available for the EU-IOM JI HoA, which represents a significant proportion of the support delivered to returnees, appears to justify an unqualified positive outcome rating for the EUTF's collective contribution to the delivery of efficient and effective assisted voluntary return and reintegration assistance.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Sufficient EU-IOM JI HoA impact evaluation, EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation, EUTF MLS output data	_4_ EU-IOM JI HoA, FLASH IOM, _Solutions pérennes_ IOM, Sustainable Reintegration RRS

4.2.1.1.2.   Evidence

The EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation assessed the programme's interventions on the basis of the six OECD evaluation criteria, two of which – efficiency and effectiveness – correspond to the criteria described in the reconstructed JVAP outcome. The final evaluation rated the programme 4.3 out of 5 for efficiency and 3.8 out of 5 for effectiveness. For efficiency, the evaluation concluded that resources were 'mostly sufficient' and resource management was largely cost-effective. However, the limited functionality of national referral systems for return and reintegration assistance across the HoA region impeded optimal efficiency. Regarding effectiveness, the analysis in the evaluation report suggests that the reduced score is largely attributable to programme objectives beyond the scope of direct assistance (such as the use of data in policymaking and empowering key state and non-state partners to ensure safer, more humane and more dignified return processes, irrespective of support from IOM). Indeed, it appears that the support provided to the more than 15,000 returnees targeted by the programme was highly effective, with over 90% of beneficiaries reporting satisfactory levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability, and psychosocial well-being in their communities of return – well above the 70% target. In addition, 95% of the more than 9,000 migrants assisted with voluntary return expressed satisfaction with their travel arrangements.

Meanwhile, the impact evaluation of reintegration assistance provided under the EU-IOM JI HoA also highlighted the overall effectiveness of reintegration support delivered to returning migrants. While the evaluation identified areas for improvement – such as better utilisation of programme data for real-time adaptation, the need for extended psychosocial assistance, and leveraging community-based interventions to reduce social stigma and enhance service access for returnees and host communities – overall the evaluation's findings 'demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention, indicating the need for further funding to stranded migrants that would otherwise be left in desperate conditions in transit countries – and without the support to return.'[77]
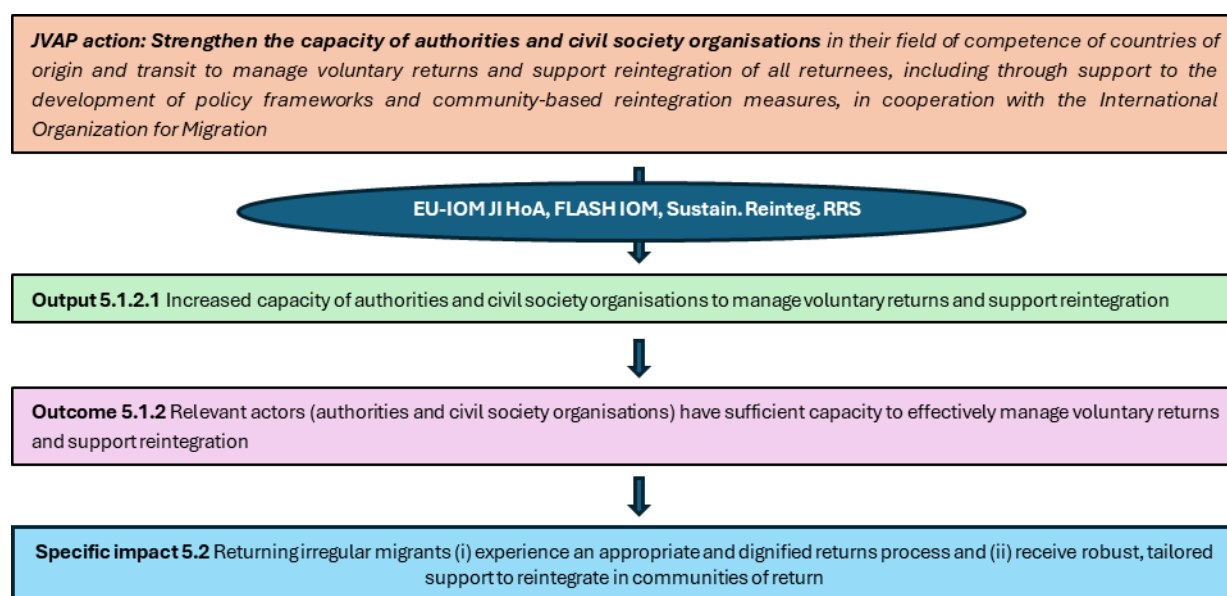
Other projects also implemented relevant returns and reintegration programming. For example, FLASH IOM provided immediate reception assistance to nearly 37,000 Somali migrants forcibly returned from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, some of whom also received temporary shelter, onward transportation and additional services. The *Solutions pérennes* IOM project also supported nearly 2,000 Ethiopian migrants with return transportation from Djibouti, while Sustainable Reintegration RRS assisted 239 Ethiopian returnees from Europe with economic reintegration. The Free Movement ILO programme also facilitated the return and reintegration of migrant workers in Ethiopia and Kenya during the pandemic. In Ethiopia, the project collaborated with another ILO project on labour migration to facilitate access to finance, which directly benefitted 100 returnees (63 female and 37 male). In the framework of this cooperation, ILO was also able to provide skills training and cash transfer for 1,000 and 806 returnees respectively in Amhara Region. In Kenya, the project organised a three-day jobs fair that was attended by 725 returnees, potential migrants and job seekers, mainly from coastal areas of the country. However, these projects did not measure the efficiency or effectiveness of their support at the outcome level. [78]

Nevertheless, given that the EU-IOM JI HoA represents a significant portion of the EUTF HoA's collective contribution to returns and reintegration efforts, and its support has been positively and rigorously evaluated, the research team considers an unqualified positive outcome rating to be justified.

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[77] EU-IOM JI HoA impact evaluation.

[78] At the time of writing, final project documentation for *Solutions pérennes* IOM was not provided to the research team and Sustainable Reintegration RRS is still ongoing.

Figure 16: Reconstructed theory of change for Outcome 5.1.2

JVAP action: Strengthen the capacity of authorities and civil society organisations in their field of competence of countries of origin and transit to manage voluntary returns and support reintegration of all returnees, including through support to the development of policy frameworks and community-based reintegration measures, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration

EU-IOM JI HoA, FLASH IOM, Sustain. Reinteg. RRS

Output 5.1.2.1 Increased capacity of authorities and civil society organisations to manage voluntary returns and support reintegration

Outcome 5.1.2 Relevant actors (authorities and civil society organisations) have sufficient capacity to effectively manage voluntary returns and support reintegration

Specific impact 5.2 Returning irregular migrants (i) experience an appropriate and dignified returns process and (ii) receive robust, tailored support to reintegrate in communities of return

4.2.1.1. Outcome 5.1.2: Relevant actors (authorities and civil society organisations) have sufficient capacity to effectively manage voluntary returns and support reintegration

4.2.1.1.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Positive: The research team considers that given the absence of relevant tools and frameworks among relevant actors to manage return and reintegration processes prior to the EU-IOM JI HoA, and the scope and effectiveness of the programme's interventions to address these gaps, an unqualified positive rating is justified for this outcome.

| Data sources	EUTF projects
Limited EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation, EUTF MLS output data	_3_ EU-IOM JI HoA, FLASH IOM, Sustainable Reintegration RRS

4.2.1.1.2. Evidence

Before the EU-IOM JI HoA, most countries in the Horn of Africa region lacked frameworks, tools and capacity building strategies for dealing with return and reintegration, thereby limiting the ability of partner governments to effectively support returnees. According to the EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation, the programme effectively addressed gaps in stakeholders' capacities to manage return and reintegration processes by implementing capacity building activities, developing standard operating procedures (SOPs), and providing tools and training. The SOPs were particularly highlighted for providing clear guidelines on migration management, serving as a foundation for future policies and coordination mechanisms.

While these achievements are notable, stakeholder capacity to sustain return and reintegration efforts independently remains limited due to insufficient financial resources and competing political priorities. While stakeholders acknowledged increased knowledge and skills, the lack of additional institutional budget and a heavy reliance on IOM's support raise concerns about the sustainability of these gains. Without further investment and ownership by national governments, long-term improvements in return

and reintegration management remain uncertain. As observed in the evaluation report, 'without the involvement of the IOM, stakeholders' capacity to work on return and reintegration remains low.'[79]

Meanwhile, one of the objectives of the Sustainable Reintegration RRS project was to 'increase the capacities of [the Government of Ethiopia's Refugees and Returnees Service] and relevant stakeholders to implement their mandate on reintegration' through trainings, including capacity development to TVET and other institutions to strengthen economic reintegration and address the specific needs of returnees, and the development of SOPs for reintegration support provided within the scope of the project.[80] Finally, FLASH IOM trained Migrant Resource Centre staff to deliver services to returning migrants and other relevant population groups, and also trained local authorities on registration, profiling and referrals of returning migrants. However, neither of these projects measured potential outcomes from these interventions.[81]

Figure 17: Reconstructed theory of change for Outcome 5.1.3
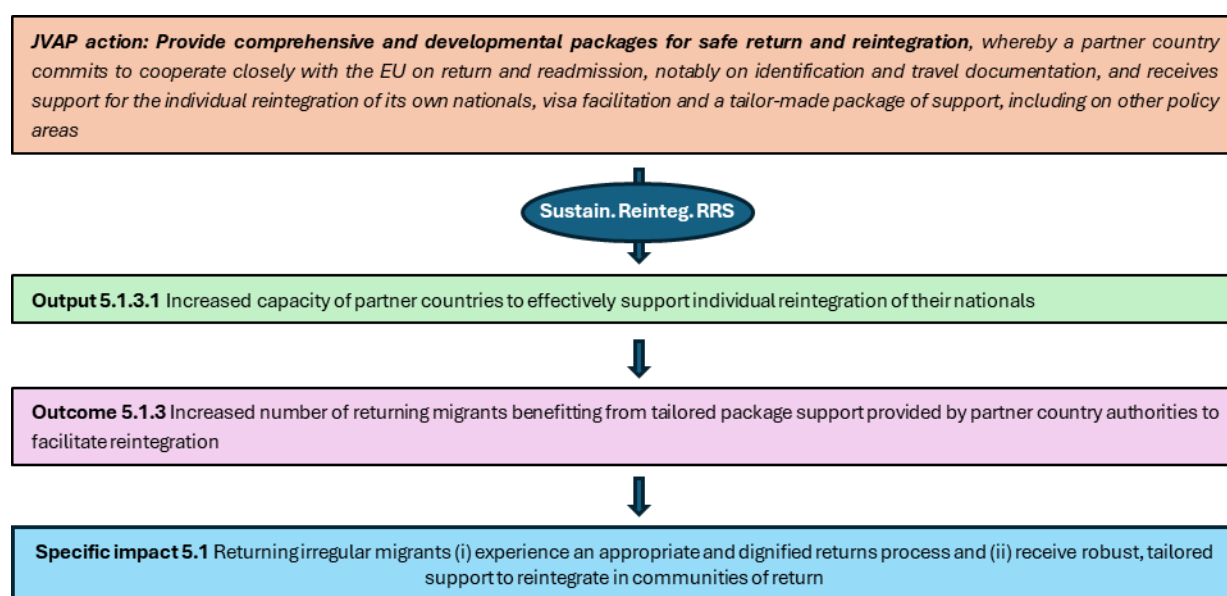
4.2.1.2. Outcome 5.1.3: Increased number of returning migrants benefitting from tailored package support provided by partner country authorities to facilitate reintegration

4.2.1.2.1. Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Insufficient evidence: Only one relevant EUTF HoA project contributed to this outcome, which has experienced notable setbacks and generated minimal monitoring and evaluation data. The research team therefore considers the available evidence to be insufficient to assign an outcome rating.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Very limited	_1_ Sustainable Reintegration RRS

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[79] PPMI, 'Final evaluation of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for migrant protection and reintegration in the Horn of Africa', 2023.
[80] Sustainable Reintegration RRS logframe.
[81] Sustainable Reintegration RRS is an ongoing project at the time of writing.

| Sustainable Reintegration RRS annual narrative report (covering December 2022 to March 2024), 1 KII	

4.2.1.2.2. Evidence

Several EUTF HoA projects sought either to provide direct assistance to returning migrants or to build the capacities of relevant state and non-state actors to do the same. However, only Sustainable Reintegration RRS provided partner country authorities with direct budget support to deliver reintegration assistance to their nationals, in this case specifically to support the reintegration of Ethiopian returnees from Europe. However, political setbacks and contextual challenges (including the high volume of forced returns of Ethiopian nationals from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia since 2017 and the reallocation of project resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic) have led to a low caseload of supported returnees (239 as of December 2024). Given these challenges and the limited monitoring and evaluation data available for this project, the research team considers that there is insufficient evidence to substantiate a rating for this outcome.

4.2.2. Specific impact 5.2: Vulnerable children on the move receive humane treatment and protection in transit and upon return to their country of origin

The second specific impact in the fifth domain of the JVAP deals with the treatment and protection of vulnerable children on the move. It is linked to the JVAP action on support to child protection systems in countries of origin and transit with the aim of offering a safe environment for vulnerable children, including unaccompanied minors, upon their return. Four EUTF HoA projects implemented relevant interventions in this area.

The research team reconstructed a corresponding output of an increased number of well-functioning child protection systems established and maintained in countries of origin and transit, and then to the expected outcome of an increased number of vulnerable children benefitting from robust child protection services in the same contexts.

Figure 18: Reconstructed theory of change for Outcome 5.2.1
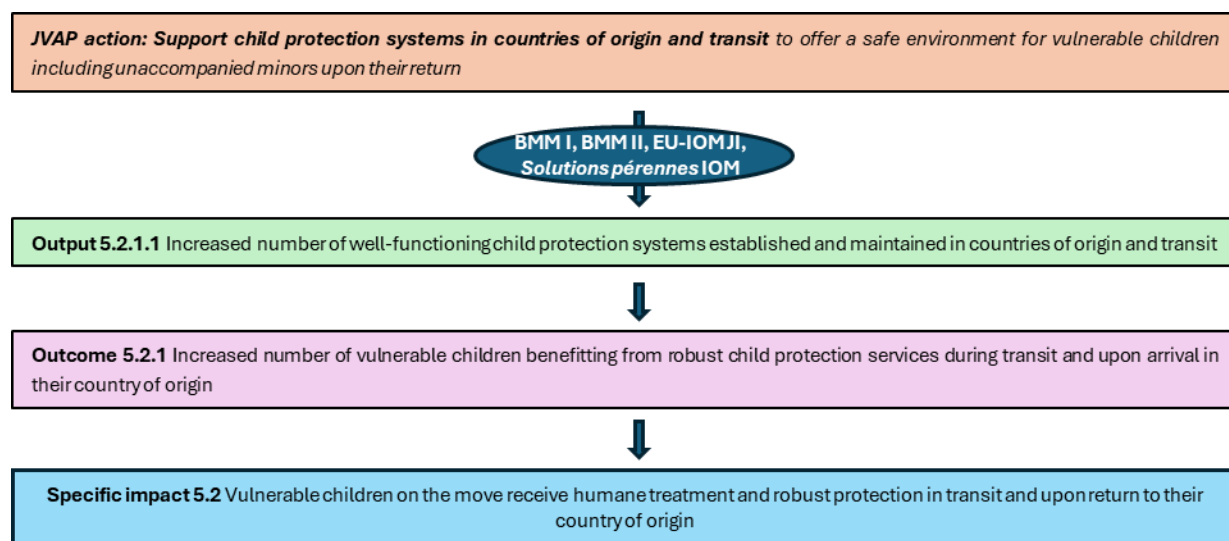
#### 4.2.2.1.	Outcome 5.2.1: Increased number of vulnerable children benefitting from robust child protection services during transit and upon arrival in their country of origin

##### 4.2.2.1.1.	Outcome analysis

Outcome rating
Moderately positive: Four EUTF HoA projects contributed to this action with the direct delivery of, or support to, child protection. The research team considers that these actions have likely collectively increased access to, and improved the quality of, child protection services in countries of origin and transit. However, this finding is moderated by the absence of robust outcome data.

Data sources	EUTF projects
Limited BMM I final narrative report, BMM II final narrative report, BMM II best practice report on supporting unaccompanied child migrants, EU-IOM JI HoA final evaluation	_4_ BMM I, BMM II, EU-IOM JI, _Solutions pérennes_ IOM

##### 4.2.2.1.2.	Evidence

All four projects contributing to this outcome supported the delivery or improvement of child protection services for migrant children.[82] For example, through a partnership with a local CSO, BMM I supported two child protection facilities in Ethiopia to assist 1,405 children and youth on the move with food, clothes, psychosocial support and family reunification.[83] In El Gedaref State in Sudan, the project also rehabilitated a building that was used by the state authorities' Family and Child Protection Unit to host migrant children. Moreover, across Djibouti, Ethiopia and Sudan, the project conducted 21 trainings for nearly 1,000 government staff, CSO staff, social workers, transport workers and community members on topics such as the protection and referral of trafficked children, case management, and how to provide psychosocial support to children and adolescents.

BMM II built on the child protection interventions conducted during the first phase, for example by supporting exchanges between Ethiopia and Djibouti to improve the cross-border referral of Ethiopian child migrants, and by training federal prosecutors, judges and investigators in Ethiopia on child-friendly approaches to investigating and prosecuting cases of THB and SOM. Moreover, a pilot initiative to implement a Best Interest Determination Procedure under BMM I in West Gondar, Ethiopia, was considered highly successful and identified for scaleup to another region of Ethiopia under BMM II. Learnings from the pilot were also shared in other countries of intervention. The pilot included setting up a Best Interest Committee comprising representatives from all relevant actors to determine the best option for each referred unaccompanied child, signing a memorandum of understanding among relevant actors, establishing standard operating procedures for dealing with these cases, and supporting relevant staff with workshops and training courses.[84]

Meanwhile, the mid-term review of the EU-IOM JI HoA highlighted the efforts undertaken by the project to understand and adapt to the particular needs of unaccompanied migrant children, including through targeted studies. For example, the project supported a study on street children living in vulnerable situations in the city of Djibouti that reportedly led directly to the establishment of a night shelter for street migrants and local children. The project also supported UNICEF to maintain a child protection

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[82] In the case of _Solutions pérennes_ IOM, the project's final report could not be obtained in time for this analysis.

[83] In some cases, vulnerable youths were also provided with financial assistance and business skills training to support economic integration.

[84] GIZ, Ethiopia: Supporting unaccompanied children in their best interest, July 2022.

desk in Djibouti to assist migrant children with basic services and protection. At the regional level, the EU-IOM JI HoA supported IGAD to build the capacity of relevant government institutions, expand partnerships with child protection actors and mainstream child protection and child-centred approaches within IGAD's regional programming, all with the objective of strengthening the protection of children on the move.

Lastly, the *Solutions pérennes* IOM project in Djibouti supported the passing of a decree to establish norms and standards for child protection centres, built an emergency shelter for street children, trained social workers from various public institutions on child protection and developed a mechanism to support the identification and referral of street children (with a focus on migrant children). Government and non-government service providers also provided direct services to vulnerable migrant children and supported family reunification.

However, none of the abovementioned interventions appear to have been specifically assessed at the outcome level.

5. KEY FINDINGS

This section outlines key findings emerging from the desk review, outcome analysis and key informant interviews undertaken for this study with regard to (i) the Khartoum Process as a platform for political dialogue and action and (ii) the contribution of relevant EUTF programming to Khartoum Process objectives.

5.1. KHARTOUM PROCESS

5.1.1. SUCCESSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Virtually all relevant key informants highlighted the existence of the Khartoum Process in itself as a significant achievement. The Khartoum Process serves as a platform that brings relevant actors together to discuss migration-related challenges and relevant trends in the region, and as such, it fills a pressing gap in the coordination of migration management among countries along the Northern Route. Importantly, the equal composition of steering committee member states from Africa and Europe and the annual rotation of chairmanship between African and European countries bolsters a sense of equal ownership, although all technical and logistical support for the Process is EU-funded.

Key informants emphasised that the Khartoum Process has successfully recruited the 'right' people to participate in the meetings (mainly officials from respective countries' Ministries of Foreign Affairs tasked with handling migration-related matters), which creates space and opportunity not only for effective engagement among stakeholders, but also for fruitful informal bilateral discussions that take place during breaks between the formal sessions. In fact, these 'coffee break conversations' were frequently described as the most valuable and actionable component of Khartoum Process meetings. A European member state representative highlighted that the main advantage of the Khartoum Process is that it has established communication channels characterised by openness and continuity, which 'facilitates building relationships on a working level between different partners' – something that had previously been difficult to achieve given the geopolitical complexities of the HoA region. An African member state representative noted that thanks to the platform provided by Khartoum Process discussions on return, readmission and reintegration, the African member state in question was able to conduct formal discussions with two European member states and receive concrete reintegration support.

The Khartoum Process also serves as a unique forum in which new ideas for policies and funding can be tested among key stakeholders. For example, since announcing its new feminist foreign policy guidelines last year, the German government has sought to trial new approaches to gender issues in its foreign policy and international development interventions. To that end, it has used the Khartoum Process as a platform to test perceptions of – and collect feedback on – its new guidelines among African member states. One member state representative also emphasised the value of the Khartoum Process for European member state development agencies, as the meetings offer them a clearer view of how their programmes are perceived by Khartoum Process member states, and how they may wish to adjust future programming accordingly.

5.1.2. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

5.1.2.1. Initial focus on THB and SOM

External perceptions of the Khartoum Process have largely been shaped by the Process' initial focus on irregular migration, as well as by its connections to the Valletta Summit on Migration, the EUTF, and law enforcement-oriented programmes such as the ROCK. Observers have described the Process as

an effort by European member states to extract commitments from African governments to combat THB and SOM in return for development funding. For example:

- In a 2021 issue of the University of Oxford's *Forced Migration Review*, researchers argued that the Khartoum Process 'ties development money to migration control, making funding contingent on African states' capacity to influence flows of "illegal" migrants'.[85]

- A 2017 report by researchers from the International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) concludes that the Khartoum Process is 'based on the assumption that cooperation of states […] provides the solution to [THB and SOM]', leading to the treatment of these phenomena as 'an issue of law enforcement rather than as a symptom of deep-seated governance problems'.[86]

- In a 2016 policy brief from the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the author asks whether the EU's 'political capital is best used to ask states for increased border control to restrict cross-border movement, which is anyway largely beyond their capacity, rather than advocating for better governance [and] adherence to human rights.'[87]

While these arguments often reflect an incomplete view of the Process and of the EUTF projects associated with it, some of the concerns highlighted were echoed by key informants interviewed for this study. One EU key informant described the EU's approach to migration as 'transactional' and considered that the nature of the relevant EUTF projects reinforced this impression among external observers, civil society and African government partners. Another described the early days of the Khartoum Process in terms of a fundamental misalignment of agendas between European member states, who were seeking primarily to combat THB and SOM, and African member states, who were more interested in discussing the expansion of legal migration pathways and other development-related topics. The EUTF was described by several key informants as a valuable mechanism that served to achieve a degree of compromise between these two agendas, by providing funding to improve migration management while also addressing root causes of migration and displacement.

As previously mentioned, the initial focus of the Khartoum Process on combatting THB and SOM was quickly expanded to include all domains of the JVAP. Key informants generally consider the more comprehensive coverage of the Process to be an extremely positive development. However, many also emphasised that the Khartoum Process continues to be shaped by its original THB/SOM mandate and that 'the agenda is [still] not fully balanced', which reportedly continues to negatively affect engagement with the Process by some African member states. In the words of one member state representative: 'finding the right balance between long-term mobility issues (root causes) and more operational issues such as returns and the fight against THB and SOM' remains a challenge within the Khartoum Process. 'Both are important and need to be discussed, and we [still] need to find a balance between them.' These observations are supported by a recent stocktaking exercise conducted by ICMPD, which found that that 36% of all Khartoum Process thematic and technical meetings have addressed the fourth JVAP domain on addressing THB and SOM, while each of the other domains accounts for less than 10%.[88]

5.1.2.2. Geopolitics

Some of the challenges faced by the Khartoum Process are rooted in geopolitical dynamics, which are best illustrated by the fundamental differences between the origin story of the Khartoum Process and that of its sister dialogue, the Rabat Process. The Rabat Process, which brings together countries along

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[85] A. Lumley-Spanski, K. Schwarz and A. Valverde-Cano, 'The Khartoum Process and human trafficking', *Forced Migration Review*, issue 68, 2021.

[86] L. Hovil and L. Oette, 'Tackling the root causes of human trafficking and smuggling from Eritrea: the need for an empirically grounded EU policy on mixed migration in the Horn of Africa', November 2017.

[87] T. Reitano, 'The Khartoum Process: a sustainable response to human smuggling and trafficking?', *ISS Policy Brief*, no. 93, November 2016.

[88] ICMPD, 'Khartoum Process Stocktaking Exercise: Draft Report', October 2024. The percentages provided do not add up to 100% because some of the thematic meetings addressed cross-cutting issues or topics not related to any of the domains.

the Central and Western Mediterranean Routes, was launched on the back of a 2006 ministerial conference on migration and development. This early emphasis on the development benefits of migration set the tone for a more positive approach to migration-related topics, more engagement with civil society actors, and a more positive reception from external observers. By contrast, the Khartoum Process was launched in the context of the mid-2010s migration crisis in Europe, and its initial focus therefore reflected increasing concerns among European countries about migration at that time.

The different natures of the Rabat and Khartoum Processes also reflect Europe's diverging geopolitical priorities for the two African regions, particularly among key EU countries such as France, whose economic and political interests are more closely tied to francophone countries in West Africa, and Spain, which receives large numbers of migrants from Rabat Process member states and comparatively few from countries in the Khartoum Process. This finding is supported by the aforementioned stocktaking exercise conducted by ICMPD, whose conclusions '[point] to slightly inconsistent participation from European states, which were considered [by study participants] as often selecting thematic and technical meetings based on the relevance of the topic to their national case.'[89] While this tendency is understandable from a political standpoint, it appears to have contributed to an impression among key stakeholders that the Khartoum Process remains overly focused on irregular migration.

Historically, interest in the Khartoum Process was mainly driven by the UK and its historical ties to countries such as Kenya and Uganda. Several key informants, including an African member state representative, described the departure of the UK from the EU as having a significant negative impact on European engagement with the Khartoum Process. However, some European countries, such as Germany and Sweden, continue to actively engage with the Process.

5.1.2.3. Funding and programming

According to key informants interviewed for this study, programming is rarely discussed in Khartoum Process meetings,[90] which may be why many stakeholders perceive the operationalisation of the Process to be lacking in financial support. As previously mentioned, key informants generally consider the EUTF to be the main funding instrument supporting the Khartoum Process, and many expressed concerns about the future of EU migration management programming in the region when the EUTF comes to an end. In the words of one Khartoum Process observer, 'without the leverage and incentives provided by the EUTF, the Khartoum Process runs the risk of becoming a talking shop.' This perceived lack of new funding is particularly significant with regard to engaging African member states. One African member state representative reported that 'there is a frustration [among some African countries]: is this a platform of just talking and nothing happening on the ground?' The ICMPD stocktaking exercise similarly found 'a disconnect between discussions and concrete action, exacerbated by the lack of tangible programming and funding connections.'[91]

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[89] Ibid.

[90] As previously indicated, EUTF flagship programmes such as BMM and the ROCK were cited as exceptions to this norm, as updates on these programmes are often presented at Khartoum Process meetings.

[91] ICMPD, 'Khartoum Process Stocktaking Exercise: Draft Report', October 2024.

In fact, none of the Khartoum Process stakeholders interviewed for this study were able to cite concrete actions undertaken within the Process other than the four relevant EUTF projects and the initiatives that will soon take place under the below-described MMD Grant Facility. This is particularly noteworthy given the existence of the JVAP database,[92] which is the official tool for tracking projects, programmes, policies and legislation that support the Khartoum Process and its objectives. Summarised updates on the contents of the database are often presented at Khartoum Process meetings, but the database itself is not widely accessible or user friendly, making it difficult for

'How do we make the projects more tangible and visible for the countries? If you want to generate more appetite for engagement and dialogue, you need to incentivise that by showing that there are projects developing from the dialogue.'

(Khartoum Process observer)

stakeholders to identify and assess relevant actions, or to obtain an overview of relevant funding. One Khartoum Process observer also noted that because the JVAP database is a voluntary reporting tool and the reporting process is cumbersome, many actors do not report their activities to it, limiting the utility of the analysis presented. In the first half of 2025, the JVAP database underwent a reformulation process in response to feedback from contributing stakeholders. Monitoring the impact of this revision will be essential to enhancing the visibility of tangible results from the Process – a point emphasised by multiple key informants as critical to maintaining the relevance of the Khartoum Process moving forward. This moment in time was highlighted as a critical juncture for visibility and taking the Khartoum Process forward, as the Process reaches ten years of age and the EUTF comes to an end.

It is worth highlighting two recent European initiatives that represent positive developments in this regard. One is the recent introduction of a grant component to the Migration and Mobility Dialogue Support programme (through which the EU supports the Khartoum Process via ICMPD), which aims to 'translate commitments into tangible actions' by funding migration-related initiatives led by African and European civil society actors, diaspora organisations and local authorities.[93] However, the budget allocation for the first call for proposals is relatively small (€9M for countries covered by all three Africa-EU Migration and Mobility Dialogues). Meanwhile, the Team Europe Initiative on the Central Mediterranean migratory route could also represent a valuable opportunity to leverage EU funding to support Khartoum Process outcomes in a similar fashion to the EUTF.

More broadly, NDICI–Global Europe, the EU's primary funding tool for external action from 2021 to 2027, includes a political commitment to allocate at least 10% of its overall budget to actions related to migration and forced displacement. While this target is not binding and is spread across multiple instruments and regions, it represents a key framework for future migration-related programming in the Horn of Africa. NDICI also marks a strategic shift from short-term crisis response instruments like the EUTF to a more planned, structural approach that treats migration as a long-term policy priority. This is reflected in programming documents for 2021–2027, which promote the integration of migration into broader development cooperation efforts. NDICI's emphasis on dialogue and partnership with third countries further creates opportunities to define migration as a clearer priority in bilateral and regional cooperation frameworks. Nevertheless, few Khartoum Process stakeholders interviewed for this study spoke to how NDICI might concretely support the Process – highlighting the need for greater visibility, clarity and alignment between political dialogue and programming tools.

5.1.2.4. Lack of formal monitoring and follow-up

Finally, the absence of a shared theory of change and formal monitoring mechanisms for the JVAP – which is the primary tool for monitoring the Process – means that it is virtually impossible to assess the concrete results and outcomes of the Khartoum Process. For example, the Process reportedly

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[92] A high-level overview of the JVAP database can be found here.
[93] https://www.linkedin.com/company/mmd-grant-facility/

produced 136 policy recommendations in the first five years of its existence,[94] but there is no established mechanism to ensure their implementation or track progress.[95] Moreover, these recommendations are not publicly shared.

Some stakeholders interviewed for this study argued that introducing such mechanisms might undermine the Process' value, which lies in its informality and flexibility as a platform for political dialogue. They caution that imposing formal monitoring structures and specific expected outcomes could lead to unrealistic expectations about what the Process can achieve. Conversely, other key informants suggested that the lack of tangible evidence and measurable outcomes contributes to the Process' relatively low political visibility, as well as to the perception that the Khartoum Process lacks the financial and operational support necessary to maximise its impact. While applying rigid monitoring structures to the Process itself may be counterproductive, the JVAP, which lays out specific actions to support the objectives of the Khartoum Process, would almost certainly have benefitted from a more explicitly articulated logic (theory of change) and flexible monitoring framework. The shared development of such tools could have allowed all stakeholders to more easily identify contributing actions and understand the overall progress being made, which currently represents a notable gap according to key informants interviewed for this study.

5.2. EUTF PROGRAMMING

5.2.1. PROJECT-LEVEL MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Without robust project monitoring and evaluation data at the outcome and impact level, it is difficult to assess the scale of the EUTF's contribution to the Khartoum Process objectives with confidence. Many of the contributing projects' highest-level indicators were ultimately never measured, usually due to the unavailability of corresponding data, suggesting that different indicators should have been designed from the outset. Most of the relevant projects also did not collect baseline data at the outcome and impact level, making it difficult to assess possible changes at endline.

It should be noted that migration management programming is intrinsically challenging to assess, given the intangibility of what it often aims to improve (i.e. capacities and cooperation), the absence of robust data systems in partner countries on which many relevant indicators would likely rely, and the acute influence of complex geopolitical dynamics. In some cases, contributing projects faced additional methodological challenges, such as centralising and making sense of internal MEL conducted by multiple partners with varying MEL capacities. However, most relevant projects also faced MEL limitations and gaps that could likely have been avoided or mitigated, particularly with the allocation of sufficient resources and increased consideration of innovative and qualitative techniques.

BMM II and EU-IOM JI HoA benefitted from comparatively strong MEL processes, and it is worth highlighting the significant efforts made by the former project to improve MEL following the first phase. As a result, both projects were the subject of numerous MEL studies targeting specific programming components, such as capacity development measures implemented by BMM II and reintegration assistance provided by EU-IOM JI HoA. However, outcomes related to key Khartoum Process objectives, such as building capacities and enhancing inter-institutional cooperation, often relied on limited methodologies such as self-reporting. Meanwhile, the ROCK and AML-THB projects both suffered from the lack of an operational MEL system until well after the projects had begun implementing. Likely for that reason, the final evaluation of the EUTF-funded phase of the ROCK was entirely qualitative in its methodology, while the EUTF-funded phase of the AML-THB was not evaluated in real time (although an ex-post evaluation is ongoing).

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[94] ICMPD, 'Migration and Mobility Dialogue I: Final Donor Report', November 2024.

[95] ICMPD, 'Khartoum Process Stocktaking Exercise: Draft Report', October 2024.

5.2.2. ENGAGING NATIONAL PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Effectively engaging partner governments is critical to achieving programmatic progress under the Khartoum Process objectives. While the BMM and EU-IOM JI HoA appear to have done so very successfully, particularly through the use of consultative and participatory planning processes, the exclusively THB and SOM-focused projects (ROCK and AML-THB) faced significant challenges in this regard.

5.2.2.1. Effectiveness of participatory planning processes

The BMM programme is generally considered to have been the most effective of the four relevant programmes in securing government ownership and buy-in. Initially this proved to be challenging, as the programme was drawn up quickly as an amalgamation of proposals developed by different EU member states, requiring a long inception phase to define more clearly the scope of the programme and allocation of roles. Moreover, the African partner government stakeholders who would be engaging directly with the programme were not the same as those involved in strategic discussions about the programme at Khartoum Process meetings, and communication between these two groups was limited among most countries. This meant that most direct stakeholders of the programme had to be introduced to and familiarised with this complex and ambitious programme from scratch. While this effort, in the form of research and scoping missions to each partner country, allowed the programme team to build strategic relationships with key stakeholders and better understand their needs and priorities, the focus on securing a basic level of familiarity and buy-in meant that little effort was invested in involving these stakeholders in programming strategy and design. This led to a perception among relevant actors of a top-down approach and a consequent misalignment between the objectives of the programme and those of partner governments.

This concern was flagged in the mid-term review of BMM I, and the programme team quickly and effectively addressed the feedback by establishing an annual consultative planning process whereby one- to two-day planning sessions are conducted in each country with the participation of key national stakeholders (including CSO partners). During these sessions, a stakeholder mapping is conducted, participants identify their priorities for the upcoming year, and corresponding activities are jointly designed. This process gives more weight to needs expressed by partner governments and other relevant actors, facilitates the joint identification of programme objectives, and encourages partner government ownership of the programme. By the end of the second phase of the programme, the BMM II final evaluation had found that the programme had built an effective programming model 'by integrating a highly participatory and stakeholder-oriented approach (ownership), by aligning the project to regional strategies and frameworks the partners were complying with and by anchoring processes in partners' structures.'[96] This participatory planning process was highlighted by all institutional partners interviewed for this study as a positive model that sets the BMM programme apart. In the words of one African partner government representative, 'the approach that BMM employs is to focus on specific needs and not just on programme priorities, which is something that really needs to be disseminated to other development partners.'[97] It is also worth highlighting that the BMM programme is now in its third phase of implementation, reflecting the importance of longer timeframes in building and capitalising on buy-in for complex institution- and governance-building projects.

The EU-IOM JI HoA experienced a similar process of significant improvement around partner government engagement following a difficult start. While stakeholder engagement in the design of the programme was limited (attributed to the late project start and consequent lack of an inception phase), resulting in a perception of exclusion among partner governments, adjustments were undertaken after the mid-term review to support a collaborative planning process and to ensure alignment between programme and government objectives. These measures include the establishment of a programme

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[96] Madiba Consult GmbH, 'Central project evaluation: Better Migration Management II', November 2023.
[97] Key informant interview, African partner government representative.

steering committee in each partner country that included representatives from relevant government ministries, as well as annual stakeholder feedback surveys and consultative discussions and workshops.

Thanks in part to these adjustments, the EU-IOM JI HoA effectively supported partner countries to identify and address key gaps in their migration governance frameworks and mechanisms (such as developing standard operating procedures for national referral mechanisms for vulnerable migrants, although these mechanisms are generally not yet fully functioning), which reportedly improved both their capacity and motivation to address migration management issues. As a result, most partner governments have developed new policies around return and reintegration, with concrete steps taken towards operationalisation in some cases. Overall, government partners of the EU-IOM JI HoA were assessed in the project's final evaluation to be 'highly interested in the JI-HoA and committed to its objectives', despite the fact that returns are generally not considered an urgent political priority among governments in the HoA given the regional economic and security context.[98] This can likely be attributed to the programme's effectiveness in engaging relevant national stakeholders.

5.2.2.2.   Challenges engaging partner governments on THB and SOM

By contrast, the ROCK has faced numerous difficulties in eliciting consistent engagement and commitment from its national partner institutions. For instance, each partner country has assigned a senior point of contact from within their national police force who is supposed to act as a high-level representative linking the ROCK to relevant institutional actors in the point of contact's country of representation. According to the ROCK II interim report, 'the involvement of the POCs [points of contact] remains a major stumbling block as they do not have much free time to devote to these activities', and the report makes repeated references to requests for key inputs from the points of contact to which they have not received any response.

Meanwhile, the positive feedback the AML-THB project received from beneficiary partners on the high quality of the projects' trainings and the strong reputation of the project team have reportedly supported the development of strategic relationships with key national partners in the region, including the financial intelligence units in most partner countries (and particularly in Kenya, where the project is based). However, the project faced multiple challenges in the engagement of partner governments more broadly. Partner countries reportedly perceived the focus of the project on THB and SOM, as opposed to other criminal activities that also generate illicit financial flows, as indicative of a political agenda on the part of the EU. Several months of dedicated engagement and communication with the various financial intelligence units was reportedly required to overcome the initial distrust that this caused. This ambivalence was exacerbated by the fact that THB and SOM are not political priorities for most countries in the region, and engagement from some partner governments was particularly low, with notable examples including Eritrea, South Sudan (despite dedicated material support and technical assistance provided to South Sudan by the project) and Tanzania, as well as most of the six countries included partway through the project, such as Seychelles and Comoros. These challenges were aggravated by the lack of resources to address targeted (country-specific) capacity building and technical assistance requests by some partner countries, given the regional approach of this project. Uneven political commitment to addressing THB, SOM and illicit financial flows among countries across the region has also meant that few joint investigations and operations have been conducted as a result of improved links and information sharing between national counterparts.

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[98] PPMI Group, Final evaluation of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for migrant protection and reintegration in the Horn of Africa, 17 March 2023.

5.2.3. ENGAGING REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Implementing a truly regional approach to migration management, as promoted by the Khartoum Process, requires close collaboration with relevant regional bodies. When done effectively, this can provide member states with a much-needed galvanising regional perspective and offer critical possibilities for continuity and sustaining achievements following the end of the programme. However, such collaboration proved to be among the most significant strategic challenges faced by the contributing EUTF projects.

5.2.3.1. IGAD

The most relevant regional body for many of the relevant EUTF projects, given its migration mandate, is the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). However, coordination with IGAD can be challenging, depending on the sector of cooperation, due to the large number of actors engaging with the institution, its limited coordination capacity, and negative perceptions within IGAD about outsourcing core areas of IGAD's mandate to external implementing partners. This last factor has negatively impacted several of the key EUTF projects, including the BMM programme, for which this challenge is further exacerbated by the programme's complex, multi-country and multi-disciplinary structure, as well as the number of actors already involved in the intervention. Nevertheless, IGAD's involvement, including in the BMM steering committee, was emphasised as an important area of improvement by key informants.

IGAD – with its security sector programme, institutional capacity building mandate and a dedicated pillar for combating transnational organised crime – could also be a valuable ally in stimulating support for the objectives of the AML-THB project among African member states. However, coordination on this front has proved challenging: while a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with IGAD was actively sought, discussions quickly stalled and the MoU was ultimately replaced with an informal letter of technical support and exchange that has not had much practical impact to date. This is almost certainly attributable at least in part to a reported perception within IGAD that contracting initiatives such as the AML-THB project to European IPs such as CIVIPOL represents an encroachment on IGAD's mandate, and that such funding decisions exacerbate 'competition for resources' to IGAD's detriment.[99] While IGAD reportedly acknowledges CIVIPOL's positive contributions to security in the region as well as the value of working more closely together to scale up efforts, it appears that conflicting visions of leadership and ownership of EU-funded actions mean that implementing joint activities has thus far proved impossible.

More positively, collaboration with IGAD appears to have been more successful under the EU-IOM JI HoA, with the project supporting the development of IGAD's regional children's rights policy, IGAD co-hosting return and reintegration workshops with IOM, and close collaboration between IGAD and IOM's Regional Data Hub to harmonise migration statistics across countries. However, key informants highlighted that more could have been done to empower IGAD to lead relevant regional processes and bilateral or multilateral consultations between countries on emerging concerns (such as the detention of Ethiopian migrants in Tanzania), although it is widely recognised that the comparatively limited capacity of IGAD to actively engage on these issues renders such efforts particularly challenging.

Meanwhile, collaboration with IGAD has reportedly been very successful under the Free Movement IGAD project, which – together with the complementary programme implemented by ILO – laid the foundation for continued support to free movement and transhumance in the IGAD region under NDICI-Global. An extension of the programme played a key role in bridging the gap between the two funding instruments, enabling regional activities such as border management trainings in March 2024, lessons-learned sessions, the signing of the Free Movement Protocol by Uganda in May 2024, and the first

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[99] Key informant interview, Regional institutional partner.

REC[100]-to-REC IGAD-ECOWAS learning visit on free movement, organised by the EUD and relevant ECOWAS partners in Abuja, also in May 2024. Building on the relevance and outcomes of earlier phases, the two contracts – initially operating in parallel and largely independently under the EUTF – now function within a trilateral EU/IGAD/ILO framework under NDICI, strengthening coordination, accountability, and engagement with EU services.

5.2.3.2. African Union

Findings from key informant interviews on coordination between EUTF projects and the African Union suggest that more intentional and concerted engagement from the outset of programming, accompanied by regular monitoring of progress made, may help to improve engagement under future interventions.

Coordination with the African Union was most critical to the success of the ROCK initiative, as it was envisioned that the African Union would play an active role in the planned integration of the ROCK into an African Union-led continental operational centre (COC).[101] As such, African Union ownership and leadership is considered key to the sustainability of the intervention, although it remains to be seen how this plan can accommodate the ROCK's limited geographical scope and focus on a shared issue, which has been pivotal to its success. Moreover, the ROCK embraces an operations-forward approach, which may present a challenge for the more politically oriented African Union. At least one key informant expressed scepticism about the long-term feasibility of an African Union-led continental project, suggesting that intelligence agencies are unlikely to be willing to share sensitive information with a body that does not have an intelligence mandate.[102]

These concerns are exacerbated by the fact that collaboration between the EU and the African Union on this topic has been slow from the outset. A 2021 case study conducted by Altai Consulting on the ROCK found that 'the African Union seems interested in taking over the project to make it part of their continental centre' but 'there seems to be a perception on the African Union side that the EU did not engage with the African Union enough in the design and discussions around ROCK, and that the centre is too European in nature.' Perhaps as a result of this perception, the African Union did not participate in steering committee meetings in the first few years of the ROCK despite being invited to do so. Now, however, the situation has improved: under the ongoing third phase of the ROCK and through a dedicated Joint Working Group, the EU, the African Union, the ROCK and INTERPOL will continue to discuss the potential transition of the ROCK to the Continental Operational Centre based in Addis Ababa, provided that an agreement is reached by the parties and the ROCK modus operandi is preserved.

Meanwhile, efforts by the EU-IOM JI HoA to engage with the African Union include the integration of a new component partway through the programme to second relevant experts to the African Union to work on return and reintegration issues by supporting the development of draft migration policies, analyses and project proposals. However, this initiative reportedly bore little fruit. One key informant observed that this intervention 'felt like a checklist item being ticked off', and that what was really needed was a continuous effort to secure buy-in from the African Union in collaboration with the involvement of all relevant parties, with regular and dedicated monitoring of this process throughout the project lifetime.[103] In the absence of this type of concerted initiative, committed engagement from the African Union was reportedly lacking.

Finally, under BMM, coordination with the African Union was less critical to the success of the programme than coordination with IGAD and, perhaps as a result, it also appears to have been less

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[100] Regional Economic Community.
[101] The relevant AU assembly decision and draft statute of the COC can be found here.
[102] Key informant interview, EU key informant.
[103] Key informant interview, EUTF implementing partner.

challenging. Positive working relationships were established by the programme with key African Union representatives, and most 'hiccups' were attributed not to tensions but to the different processes and timelines with which the African Union operates, and particularly the need to secure consensus from member states before taking action.

5.2.4. SUPPORTING REGIONAL COORDINATION

One of the overarching objectives of the Khartoum Process is to enhance coordination on migration management issues at the regional level. Of the four key EUTF projects,[104] the ROCK is perhaps the clearest showcase for the concrete benefits of regional collaboration. One key informant observed that by establishing a physical centre that brings partner countries together to generate concrete results such as investigations, arrests and prosecutions of traffickers, 'the ROCK responded to the desire to have something more than […] a "talk show"..'[105] Similarly, the truly 'regional' approach of the AML-THB projects, characterised by an emphasis on regional trainings and events to facilitate links between national counterparts, was described by stakeholders as critical to the project's positive achievements. One EU key informant noted that 'even with limited means, [the regional approach] provided an opportunity for actors working on similar topics but who do not always have an opportunity to meet, discover common challenges and brainstorm on ways to better work together.'[106] This is considered a key lesson learned that has been taken forward in the post-EUTF phases of programming.

The BMM programme and the EU-IOM JI HoA were considered less regional in their approaches. In the case of the BMM programme, this is largely considered to be a consequence of geopolitical dynamics in the region as well as the logical progression of the programme, with the first phase focused on building country-level capacities. Both the first and second phases of the programme were also lauded by stakeholders for facilitating bilateral (though not 'regional') engagement between countries on topics they had never formally discussed before. One partner country representative described the BMM programme as a 'bridge' to authorities in a neighbouring country, bringing the right counterparts into contact with one another and thus allowing the two countries to work more effectively together.[107]

Moreover, regional perspectives and approaches have been increasingly prioritised with each phase of the programme. For example, under BMM III, there is a planned expansion of bilateral collaboration between Kenya and Uganda on assistance to victims of trafficking to encompass coordination across national referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants in four countries (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda).

Finally, as the thematic areas of return and particularly reintegration do not lend themselves as neatly to regional collaboration as THB and SOM, the EU-IOM JI HoA was also not as 'regional' in its approach. However, there were a few noteworthy regional components that contributed to the success of the programme. For example, IOM co-developed country-specific standard operating procedures on return and reintegration in close collaboration with each partner country on the basis of shared foundational guidelines, which meant that they could engage with partner governments and align the standard operating procedures with the local context while employing a common framework that would allow all partner countries to 'speak to each other in the same language' on return and reintegration issues.[108] Efforts by the programme team to promote government ownership of IOM's reintegration handbook (then a new product piloted for the first time under the EU-IOM JI HoA) has reportedly also led to increased regional exchange and knowledge sharing.

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[104] BMM, ROCK, AML-THB and EU-IOM JI HoA.
[105] Key informant interview, EU key informant.
[106] Key informant interview, EU key informant.
[107] Key informant interview, African partner government representative.
[108] Key informant interview, EUTF implementing partner.

Among the other relevant projects contributing to the objectives of the Khartoum Process, the Free Movement IGAD project stands out as one of the EUTF's most significant efforts to enhance regional coordination. Notably, the project supports the adoption and implementation of the Free Movement Protocols to facilitate legal migration and mobility within the IGAD region. However, the research team was unable to access the final project reports or conduct interviews with the implementing partner, which has limited their ability to identify relevant best practices and lessons learned from the project.

5.2.5. CROSS-PROJECT COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

Optimising the EU's contribution to the Khartoum Process objectives requires that contributing projects coordinate effectively with one another to maximise impact and minimise gaps and redundancies. All four of the EUTF's key regional migration management projects[109] have interacted with one another from the outset to improve efficiencies and minimise duplication of efforts, although generally on an *ad hoc* basis rather than through formal coordination mechanisms. This is particularly the case for BMM, ROCK and AML-THB, which all have capacity building components targeting THB and SOM. Coordination was notably facilitated by the overlap of implementing partners across projects (such as IOM in BMM and EU-IOM JI HoA, and CIVIPOL in BMM, the ROCK and AML-THB), as well as by the relatively long duration of relevant programming thanks to extensions and follow-up projects.

Examples of collaboration and coordination include:

- Joint trainings conducted by the ROCK, BMM and AML-THB projects for relevant national and local actors across the region, often taking advantage of a training provided by one project team to offer complementary capacity building sessions on topics for which another project team has specific expertise (such as financial investigation techniques in the case of AML-THB),

- Inputs provided by the ROCK and AML-THB projects on training curricula designed by the BMM programme for police academies and other relevant actors, and

- Training of ROCK liaison officers by the AML-THB project team on key anti-money laundering concepts.

Perceptions of the extent and effectiveness of this coordination vary widely across different stakeholders, although coordination appears to have improved significantly over time. Overall, coordination reportedly could have been more integrated, productive and connected with other (non-EU/EUTF) projects delivering similar interventions. Trainings were highlighted as a notable area of inefficiency, with many institutional partners likely trained multiple times on similar topics by different (EU and non-EU/EUTF) projects. While some efforts have reportedly been made by programme teams to establish a database to track trainings across projects, these do not appear to have borne much fruit thus far.

Cross-project coordination was also highlighted as an issue for other relevant EUTF projects, including:

- *Solutions pérennes* IOM, which reportedly operated independently of its complementary interventions, *Solutions pérennes* WFP and a UNHCR-led Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)-supporting project in Djibouti.

- Free Movement IGAD and Free Movement ILO, where coordination between the two projects was similarly lacking.

To address these issues, new funding arrangements have been introduced in the follow-up programming to enhance coordination among implementing partners. For the *Solutions pérennes* programme, the follow-up phase is being executed with the same partners (IOM, WFP, and UNHCR)

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[109] BMM, ROCK, AML-THB and EU-IOM JI HoA.

under a direct management modality, with IOM designated as the lead implementing partner. For the Free Movement projects, the follow-up programme adopts a trilateral partnership model involving IGAD, ILO, and the EU. A joint inception phase has been introduced to facilitate better coordination and collaboration among the partners.

5.2.6. PERCEPTION, VISIBILITY AND IMAGE

Like the Khartoum Process itself, the four projects designed to support its original mandate were perceived by some observers as evidence of a 'transactional' approach to irregular migration from Africa adopted by the EU in response to the mid-2010s migration crisis. As such, all struggled with reputational challenges to some degree. These include criticisms by external observers that the relevant programmes represent an 'asymmetrical' partnership between African and European countries and an 'externalisation' of EU border control.[110]

The ROCK appears to have experienced the most significant 'image problem' of the four projects. Some criticism was likely inevitable, given the focus of the ROCK on law enforcement as well as its reliance on sensitive intelligence, which meant that limited information about the centre and its operations was released to the public. Nevertheless, key informants agreed that the negative reputational impact could have been minimised or mitigated much more effectively by CIVIPOL and the EU. One EU stakeholder noted that 'all the secrecy around implementation [led to] a lot of miscommunication that didn't help the bad press and didn't help the project',[111] while another stated that 'we [the EU] didn't manage the bad publicity well, because we don't do that well in general'.[112]

Perceptions of the ROCK among African stakeholders reportedly also tend to be conflicted or subdued, leading to uneven engagement with the initiative from African partners. One EU key informant reported that the conception of the ROCK in the early days of the Khartoum Process was essentially EU-driven, and that it was 'not necessarily something the HoA countries felt was particularly needed'.[113] This appears to have been exacerbated by the focus of the ROCK on trafficking routes to Europe, influenced in part by French interests as the main driver of the project as well as by the active involvement of EUROPOL and European national police authorities in ROCK-supported operations. One high-level African institutional stakeholder described the main limitation of the ROCK as follows: '[the EU] is looking at the problem in an un-holistic manner. I've always maintained that EU programming should look at all routes and not just the Northern Route. You are plugging one hole but leaving two others [the Eastern and Southern Routes] open.'[114] This statement echoes those of other African key informants interviewed for this study.

Conversely, greater efforts could have been undertaken to enhance the visibility of the EUTF's legal migration and mobility programming. Notably, the EUTF's support for regional integration through the Free Movement IGAD project represents a significant achievement that could be positioned as a key component of its legacy. This is especially relevant given the limited attention regional free movement receives from other donors and the EU's leading role in promoting this agenda across the continent – not only in the IGAD region, but also through its work with other Regional Economic Communities such as ECOWAS. However, this project has reportedly not been adequately promoted or leveraged to date.[115]

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[110] See for example: Clingendael (Netherlands Institute of International Relations), 'Multilateral Damage: The impact of EU migration policies on central Saharan routes', January 2018;
122nd Session of the Human Rights Committee, Sudan's compliance with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Anti human trafficking initiatives, the rights of refugees and the human rights of migrants, January 2018; Middle East Research and Information Project, 'At Any Cost—The War in Sudan and Europe's Flawed Migration Policies', July 2023.
[111] Key informant interview, EU key informant.
[112] Key informant interview, EU key informant.
[113] Key informant interview, EU key informant.
[114] Key informant interview, Regional institutional partner.
[115] Key informant interview, EU key informant.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section proposes strategic recommendations to (i) support and enhance the Khartoum Process through reforms to its structure and format, and (ii) optimise the role of future EU-funded programming in achieving the objectives of the Process by improving regional approaches, coordination and capacities related to migration management issues in the Horn of Africa region, such as legal migration and mobility, THB, SOM and return and reintegration.

6.1. KHARTOUM PROCESS

Recommendation 1: Consider reforms to Khartoum Process format and structure.

Key informants proposed various actions that could be taken to improve the format and structure of the Khartoum Process and thereby revitalise momentum and maximise effectiveness moving forward. With the ten-year anniversary of the establishment of the Khartoum Process having taken place in November 2024, this may be a particularly opportune moment to consider such reforms.

For example, linkages with the other Africa-EU Migration and Mobility Dialogues could be enhanced. According to ICMPD's recent stocktaking of the Khartoum Process, Khartoum Process member states highlighted 'the large number of migration-focused forums, dialogues and initiatives that have increased over the last decade, which places additional demand on their time and resources.'[116] It should be noted that some progress has been made in this area, such as through joint Khartoum Process-Rabat Process events, which stakeholders have reportedly found valuable. However, further efforts to enhance complementarities could help maximise efficiency and optimise engagement across these initiatives. At the same time, it will be important to recognise and preserve the relevance of regional dynamics when appropriate.

In addition, the dynamism of meetings could be increased by:

- Reducing the number of items discussed,

- Focusing on specific case studies rather than broad themes (such as 'climate change'),

- Making presentations available beforehand so that meetings can prioritise interactive discussion framed around prepared key questions,

- Offering simultaneous interpretation for representatives of non-English-speaking African countries such as Djibouti,

- Creating structured opportunities for countries to share perspectives and approaches through designated presentation roles or thematic working groups, and/or

- Limiting the number of priorities selected by the chair to one per domain.

Finally, stakeholders recommended enhancing the utility of the JVAP database by linking reporting requirements to the disbursement of grants and loans. To ensure the feasibility of this approach, it will be essential to support implementing partners by streamlining and simplifying the JVAP reporting procedures, and to provide an increased 'return on investment' for participating stakeholders in the form

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[116] ICMPD, 'Khartoum Process Stocktaking Exercise: Draft Report', October 2024.

of actionable and accessible data and analysis from the JVAP. Monitoring the results of the recent JVAP restructuring process would be key in this regard.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen participation of key stakeholders.

Key informants recommended several ways of improving stakeholder engagement with the Process. For example, while DG HOME leads the Khartoum Process on behalf of the EU, DG INTPA 'holds the funding' but is not always represented or present. This disconnect undermines the perception of the Process as not only a political platform but also an operational one backed by funding and programming, which is key for partner engagement. While DG INTPA interviewees stressed that the capacity of the relevant unit to ensure representation at all Khartoum Process events is limited, a more structured and consistent role for DG INTPA, coordinated with DG HOME's leadership, could be considered.

In addition, civil society is reportedly underrepresented in Process meetings. Creating more opportunities for their participation would provide a platform for a broader range of perspectives and experiences, enriching discussions and enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of the Process.

Finally, some stakeholders suggested that IGAD should adopt a more active role in the Process, moving beyond its current observer status. Others emphasised that the Process is designed as a platform for bilateral dialogue between member states, and a more prominent role for IGAD could potentially disrupt this dynamic – although this argument is perhaps undercut by the significant presence of the EU in the Process. Nevertheless, the research team aligns with the view that it is critical to preserve the steering role of member states in the Process, while exploring options to enhance IGAD's involvement in a way that respects this core principle.

Recommendation 3: Co-develop formal theory of change and monitoring mechanisms to more effectively track JVAP progress.

The absence of a shared theory of change and formal monitoring mechanisms makes it virtually impossible to assess the concrete results and outcomes of the JVAP – and, by extension, the Khartoum Process, which it monitors. This, in turn, hinders efforts to raise the profile of the Process by leveraging tangible results. Developing a theory of change and monitoring mechanisms would address this challenge by providing a clear framework to measure progress and demonstrate impact and for communicating results beyond participants in Khartoum Process meetings. Such tools would not only enable better tracking of achievements but also facilitate more targeted communication of successes, thereby enhancing the Process's visibility and credibility among stakeholders and partners.

To mitigate concerns raised by some stakeholders about overly rigid follow-up mechanisms creating unrealistic expectations for what the Process can achieve, the monitoring framework could incorporate flexibility. For example, an outcome map or a 'menu' of potential target indicators could be developed to accommodate emerging developments and shifting priorities.

Recommendation 4: Improve links to funding opportunities and programming

Increasing the visibility of tangible results from the Process was emphasised by multiple key informants as key to ensuring the relevance of the Khartoum Process going forward. It is therefore recommended to incorporate structured opportunities to discuss programming and funding opportunities that are relevant to the Khartoum Process, particularly at high-level Process events. It is particularly important that such discussions span the five domains of the JVAP, with specific attention paid to themes aligned with African partner government interests, such as legal migration and mobility. It could also be worthwhile to identify ways in which the Team Europe Initiative on the Central Mediterranean migratory route could be used to link Khartoum Process discussions with EU and EU member state financing. This could be achieved through structured consultations ahead of the next multiannual financial framework to ensure that these discussions are meaningfully reflected in future programming

The NDICI–Global Europe instrument marks a notable shift in the EU's approach to migration and forced displacement that could be leveraged in this regard. Whereas previous mechanisms such as the EUTF were designed to respond rapidly to emerging crises, NDICI treats migration as a structural and long-term policy area that can be strategically planned and addressed through sustained investment. This change is evident in NDICI programming documents for 2021–2027, which reflect a move towards integrating migration into broader development cooperation frameworks. NDICI's emphasis on fostering dialogue with partner countries also creates opportunities to define migration more clearly as a priority in bilateral and regional cooperation – opening the door to deeper, more structured collaboration aligned with Khartoum Process objectives.

6.2. PROGRAMMING

Recommendation 1: Incentivise and support formal cooperation mechanisms between relevant projects.

While coordination between the four key regional migration management projects[117] was generally adequate, most key informants agreed that this was largely attributable to overlapping implementing partners coordinating between their respective components of each project. The EU might consider implementing two mutually reinforcing measures to improve coordination and mitigate redundancies in the future. The first is to include a contractual obligation for implementing partners to establish formal coordination mechanisms to collaborate and share information across similar EU-funded programmes, including a joint inception phase as modelled by the follow-up programming to the IGAD Free Movement project, as well as to establish a monitoring framework to track the implementation of these mechanisms and recommend adjustments accordingly. The second is to build the capacities of partner governments and other relevant institutional beneficiaries to improve their internal knowledge management systems and more effectively track interventions themselves, which would help to reduce duplication across all projects, not just those that are EU-funded or that EU implementing partners are aware of.

Recommendation 2: Study and potentially replicate BMM and EU-IOM JI HoA approaches to engaging national authorities in other relevant projects.

The BMM programme was widely praised across all stakeholder categories for its highly consultative approach to project planning and implementation – an approach that emerged in response to the programme's evolving, complex and ambitious nature as well as to initial ambivalent feedback from partner government stakeholders regarding their role and involvement in the programme design. Similarly, the EU-IOM JI HoA successfully engaged government stakeholders through country-level steering committees, stakeholder feedback surveys and consultative discussions and workshops. It may be well worth conducting a detailed assessment or evaluation of this aspect of the two programmes, with a view to potential replicability to other regional migration management programming.

Recommendation 3: Increase coordination efforts with regional bodies.

Coordination with pertinent regional bodies proved challenging across all relevant projects. However, engaging regional actors with relevant mandates – particularly IGAD and the African Union and when appropriate the EAC – is key to aligning partner governments under a common framework and to sustaining achievements beyond the end of programming. This means that efforts to collaborate more closely with these regional authorities should continue in earnest, including by identifying opportunities

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[117] BMM, ROCK, AML-THB and EU-IOM JI HoA.

to capitalise on existing areas of interest, such as IGAD and the EAC's expressed interest in developing a regional return and reintegration policy framework.

The EU could also seek to leverage its influence by:

- Including coordination with regional authorities as an integral component of contracted programming related to THB, SOM and return and reintegration. This could involve including relevant regional actors in programme steering committees, consulting them in the design phase of the programme to take into account thematic areas that are of particular interest to them, ensuring that they are consistently invited to important programme events (such as trainings and seminars), and establishing a designated focal point and formal feedback loop.

- Incentivising the establishment of robust monitoring processes to regularly track progress on engagement – including the number of times relevant regional actors participate in meetings, benefit from programme support, or implement new policies influenced by the programme – and make strategic adjustments as needed.

- Supporting implementing partners with strategic input and diplomatic engagement on behalf of the project when appropriate. In cases where political or institutional hurdles impede progress, the EU could support implementing partners by using its own convening power or diplomatic channels to facilitate coordination, resolve bottlenecks or advocate for regional stakeholder buy-in.

Recommendation 4: When possible, explicitly link governance and capacity development programming to operational interventions, including protection assistance.

Virtually all African institutional partners interviewed for this study highlighted the need for stronger support in operationalising the EU's policymaking and capacity development initiatives. Examples offered by key informants include facilitating the local operationalisation of draft legislation supported by the BMM programme, establishing a dedicated fund to facilitate logistical operations for ROCK liaison officers (such as travel to border points to be able to engage more effectively with remote border units and conduct needs assessments), providing material support (such as laptops) to relevant actors such as investigators and child protection officers, and protection assistance for victims of trafficking.

Key informants emphasised that such support would allow them to make the best possible use of the increased capacities they have acquired through ROCK, BMM and AML-THB trainings. Given that some of these operational needs were in fact addressed by EUTF programming, it may be beneficial to consider how these types of activities can be more explicitly connected to EU-funded governance interventions, as these do not always involve the same actors. Such linkages could strengthen the motivation and engagement of partner stakeholders by clearly showcasing how EU initiatives directly support government partners' operational priorities. These synergies could also be fostered by enhancing complementarity between strategic regional programming and operational national-level initiatives funded by the EU.

Recommendation 5: Develop targeted communication strategies, especially for potentially contentious projects.

Many EU stakeholders emphasised the need to proactively develop and implement targeted communication strategies for development projects dealing with migration management, and particularly those with a law enforcement focus. As one EU key informant explained, 'we were all afraid to communicate about the ROCK, so we never invited civil society to come visit, we remained secretive and denied requests for information, which created a bad image and made people [suspicious].' Leveraging internal EU communications expertise to craft a proactive (rather than defensive)

communication strategy during the design phase of future projects could help to mitigate these types of reputational risks.

On the other hand, EU programme managers of the Free Movement, BMM and EU-IOM JI HoA programmes all criticised low EU visibility for these flagship interventions. Addressing this should include integrating communication as a core project component, with clear objectives, dedicated resources, and explicit links to MEL systems. For example, the EUTF's support to IGAD's Free Movement programme marks a major contribution to regional integration and could be more effectively showcased as a signature EU success. Given the EU's unique role in advancing free movement across multiple African regions, including IGAD and ECOWAS, more strategic communication could significantly bolster its leadership profile in this area. This is especially important in light of recurring criticism that EU programming prioritises curbing irregular migration over supporting legal pathways.

Recommendation 6: Prioritise (innovative) monitoring, evaluation and learning.

While many of the monitoring and evaluation challenges faced by the relevant projects are understandable given the nature of the interventions involved (particularly those focused on capacity development, which is notoriously difficult to measure at the outcome and impact level), without reliable monitoring and evaluation, it is in many cases impossible to quantitatively assess whether relevant programming is achieving its desired outcomes and impacts. Moreover, some projects were unwilling to share relevant project data with the EU. These limitations seriously impede the ability of the EU and its implementing partners to confidently adjust future programming and strategy on the basis of robust analysis. While these kinds of projects require more complex (and therefore more resource-intensive) MEL, the research team considers that such efforts are both feasible and well worth the investment, particularly with an emphasis on more innovative and/or qualitative techniques.

It would therefore be highly beneficial to negotiate and contractually enforce data sharing obligations (particularly for programming implemented by GIZ and IOM), as well as investing more resources, effort and expertise in designing robust indicators and planning evaluations. This could include requiring the recruitment of a MEL expert to the project team prior to the inception phase, as well as time-sensitive baseline, mid-term and endline evaluations, as contractual obligations that are taken into account in budget allocations. Particular attention should be paid to capacity development outcomes and how these can realistically be measured, which could include tracer surveys for trainees that monitor and assess how trainings are concretely applied by participants. Additionally, the EU could make more systematic use of the Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) tool to externally review project MEL systems and ensure timely corrective action.

The EU could actively encourage project teams to study and adapt innovative methodologies and systems for tracking complex projects, notably in relation to (i) institution and capacity building and (ii) awareness raising of the risks of irregular migration and legal migration opportunities, both of which were inadequately evaluated at the outcome and impact level by EUTF HoA projects. Examples of possible methodologies include outcome harvesting and outcome mapping, both of which allow for flexible monitoring and evaluation when (i) project outcomes are particularly challenging to anticipate due to the complex nature of the intervention and/or (ii) it is not possible to collect accurate baseline data, as was the case for most key EUTF regional migration management projects. However, such methodologies require strong MEL expertise, as recommended above.

In addition, allocating resources to continue monitoring beyond the end of the project (in accordance with the longer timeframe typically required for capacity development to yield results) could also be considered.

Finally, beyond project-level monitoring and evaluation, there is also a need to strengthen knowledge management and cross-regional learning at the DG INTPA level. Opportunities for cross-learning and programme adaptation were often missed. For instance, there was limited exchange between the Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa (FMM) project in the Sahel and Lake Chad region

and the BMM programme in the HoA. The EU could consider establishing mechanisms for regular cross-regional exchange, shared learning platforms and joint technical reviews to ensure that lessons, innovations and evidence from one context are systematically made available to others. This would help promote adaptive learning and scale successful approaches more efficiently across regions.

7. ANNEXES

7.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Category	Preliminary research questions

Overall approach	• To what extent do key stakeholders consider that the EUTF contributed positively to the Khartoum Process?
	
	• How effectively has the EUTF as an instrument:
	    o Helped to foster a common understanding of – and approach to – (i) addressing THB and SOM and (ii) facilitating returns, readmission and reintegration?
	    o Contributed to regional collaboration and partnerships among countries along the main migration routes within the framework of the Khartoum Process?
	    o Supported regional capacity building among African Khartoum Process member states to strengthen migration management?
	    o Ensured the protection of migrants and the promotion of a right-based approach and compliance with the principle of do-no-harm within the framework of the Khartoum Process?

Specific approaches and projects	• What have been the most significant achievements of relevant EUTF-funded projects with respect to the Khartoum Process? • Which components of the EUTF strategy or portfolio brought the most value in terms of supporting the Khartoum Process? Is there anything that could have been done better in this regard? • What have been the main challenges faced by EUTF-funded projects contributing to the Khartoum Process, and how have these challenges been addressed?
Opportunities and recommendations	• What are the most significant lessons learnt and recommendations that can be drawn from the EUTF's overall approach and/or specific EUTF-funded projects in terms of supporting the Khartoum Process going forward? • What are the key opportunities and risks for future regional programming that aims to (i) address THB and SOM and/or (ii) support returns, readmission and reintegration? • Are there any sensitivities to be aware of or examples of practices to be avoided for the future?

7.2. LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

Type of stakeholder	Organisation	# of people
EU	DG HOME	1
EU	DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	1

EU	DG INTPA	10
EU	DG NEAR	2
EU	EEAS	2
EU	EU Delegations in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Sudan	3
Government representative (Africa)	Relevant ministries (e.g. Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice) within Governments of Djibouti, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Somalia	7
Government representative (Europe)	Foreign Office	1
Implementing partner	GIZ, IOM, CIVIPOL, ILO	10
Institutional beneficiary[118]	National police forces, justice departments, human rights organisations	4
International organisation	ICMPD, UNODC, UNHCR	4
Regional institution	African Union, IGAD	3
Total		**48**

7.2   LIST OF FIGURES

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[118] Excluding ministerial staff and regional authorities.

7.3 RECONSTRUCTED JVAP THEORY OF CHANGE (COMPLETE VERSION)

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 2 – Legal migration and mobility

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
*Strengthen **partnerships and 'brain circulation**', building on the model of the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership grants and the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area initiative*	Increased number of research partnerships between European and African countries established	(i) Increased and (ii) improved research output from European and African research institutions attributed to Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions	***Specific impact 2.2** Students, researchers and entrepreneurs benefit from improved mobility between Africa and Europe*	Legal migration and mobility is effectively incentivised and managed, boosting sustainable economic, social and environmental development and increasing the ability of migrants to fulfil their potential to live in dignity and equality
*Use the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions calls to foster both the **mobility of researchers** between Europe and Africa as well as to encourage joint research projects*	Increased number of (i) mobilities of researchers between Europe and Africa and (ii) joint European-African research projects through Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions			

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 2 – Legal migration and mobility

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
Strengthen cooperation on pre-departure measures (e.g. foreign language and vocational training) as well as rights awareness.	Increased number of African and EU countries actively cooperating to provide pre-departure preparation services and rights awareness sensitisation to regular migrants	Increased number of migrants from African countries are adequately prepared for arrival in their country of destination via pre-departure measures (e.g. foreign language and vocational training) and sensitisation on their rights	*Regular channels for migration and mobility from and between European and African countries are strengthened*	Legal migration and mobility is effectively incentivised and managed, boosting sustainable economic, social and environmental development and increasing the ability of migrants to fulfil their potential to live in dignity and equality
*Reinforce cooperation and create networks between relevant agencies and institutions in the field of **job/employment creation** and development with a view to facilitating **placements and job opportunities***	Increased number of African and European agencies and stitutions in the field of job/employment creation and development actively cooperating with a view to facilitating placements and job opportunities	Increased number of jobs facilitated by relevant agencies, institutions and/or frameworks		
*Step up efforts to promote **legal migration and mobility within bilateral cooperation frameworks** such as Mobility Partnerships and Common Agendas on Migration and Mobility*	Increased number of bilateral cooperation frameworks established, such as Mobility Partnerships and Common Agendas on Migration and Mobility			
*Identify, as a pilot, one or more professions where participating States commit to make progress on facilitating **recognition of skills and qualifications** (including for migrants who decide to return to their country of origin – circular migration schemes)*	A pilot initiative is implemented to facilitate recognition of skills and qualifications among participating States	Increased number of African skilled workers securing a job in a European country thanks to skills and qualifications recognition		

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 2 – Legal migration and mobility

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
*Treat the **portability of social rights** of lawfully residing migrants in conformity with international conventions, bilateral conventions and national laws applicable in this area*	*Target countries treat the portability of social rights of lawfully residing migrants conforms with international conventions, bilateral conventions and national laws applicable in this area*	Increased number of jobs facilitated by relevant agencies, institutions and/or frameworks	*Regular channels for migration and mobility from and between European and African countries are strengthened*	Legal migration and mobility is effectively incentivised and managed, boosting sustainable economic, social and environmental development and increasing the ability of migrants to fulfil their potential to live in dignity and equality
*Conclude ongoing negotiations of **agreements on visa facilitation and readmission** and, where appropriate, open new such negotiations*	Increased number of agreements on visa facilitation and readmission successfully concluded\			
*Within existing legal frameworks, **facilitate the process of issuing visas** as well as procedures related to legal migration:* • *Simplify **entry proceedings** (including by maximising the possibility of issuing multiple-entry short-term visas and the abolition of administrative fees for certain categories of persons)* • *Facilitate the **short stay visa** issuing processes for certain types of visitors, such as students, researchers, business people, artists and holders of diplomatic passports* • ***Facilitate the procedures** related to applications for legal migration, including family reunification*	Increased number of EU countries offer fully operational multiple-entry short-term visas	EU visa issuance processes are faster and simpler for applicants		
	Increased number of EU countries effectively facilitate short stay visa issuing processes for certain types of visitors (such as students, researchers, etc.)			
	Increased number of EU countries effectively facilitate procedures related to applications for legal migration, including family reunification			

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 2 – Legal migration and mobility

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
*Enhance **civil status registration** (communication, practical frameworks, modernisation, exchange of information, network, training sessions) and support the creation of coherent and robust civil registry systems, as well as the issuance of secure identity cards*	Increased number of countries with (i) robust civil registry systems and (ii) secure identity card procedures supported by the EU	Increased civil registry capacity in countries supported by the EU Increased number of people successfully crossing borders with secure identity cards	*Regular channels for migration and mobility from and between European and African countries are strengthened*	Legal migration and mobility is effectively incentivised and managed, boosting sustainable economic, social and environmental development and increasing the ability of migrants to fulfil their potential to live in dignity and equality
*Encourage the **development and implementation of national and regional strategies or policies for integrating migrants** into host societies and for counteracting xenophobia and discrimination. In this context, promote **fair recruitment practices** and strengthen the capacities of local authorities and civil society to **advocate for and protect rights** of migrants.*	(i) National and (ii) regional strategies or policies are developed to integrate migrants into host societies and counteract xenophobia and discrimination Increased number of businesses adopting fair recruitment practices (i) Local authority officials and (ii) civil society actors have increased capacity to advocate for and protect rights of migrants	Migrants are effectively integrated into host societies in supported areas	***Specific impact 2.1*** *Comprehensive national and regional strategies on migration and mobility are elaborated and implemented*	
*Improve the legal framework for **conditions of entry and residence** in the EU applicable to third country nationals for the purpose of research, studies, pupil exchange, training, voluntary service and au pairing*	Conditions of entry and residence in the EU applicable to third country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, training, voluntary services and au pairing are improved	Increased number of students securing a place in a foreign higher education institution thanks to harmonised qualifications system	***Specific impact 2.2*** *Students, researchers and entrepreneurs benefit from improved mobility between Africa and Europe*	

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 2 – Legal migration and mobility

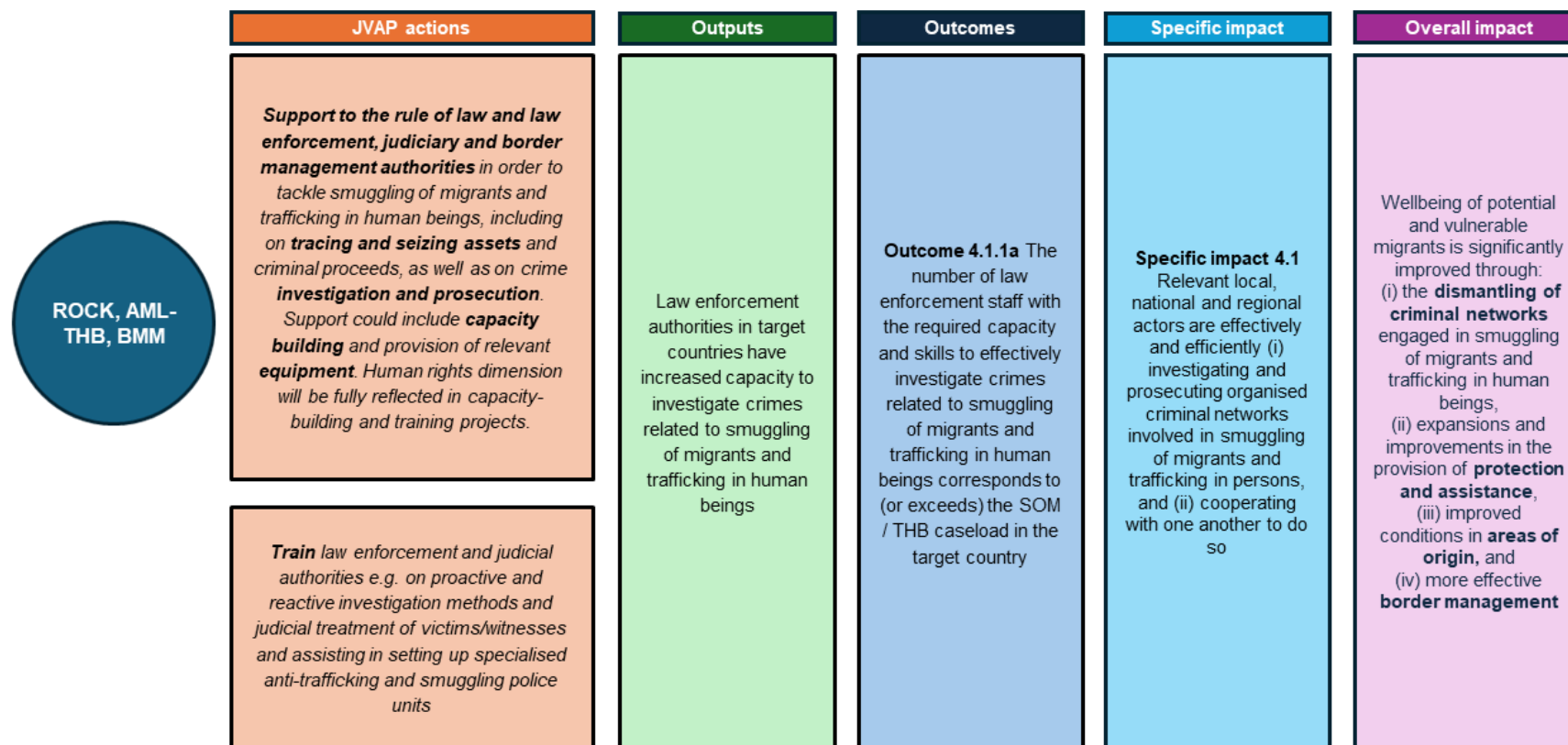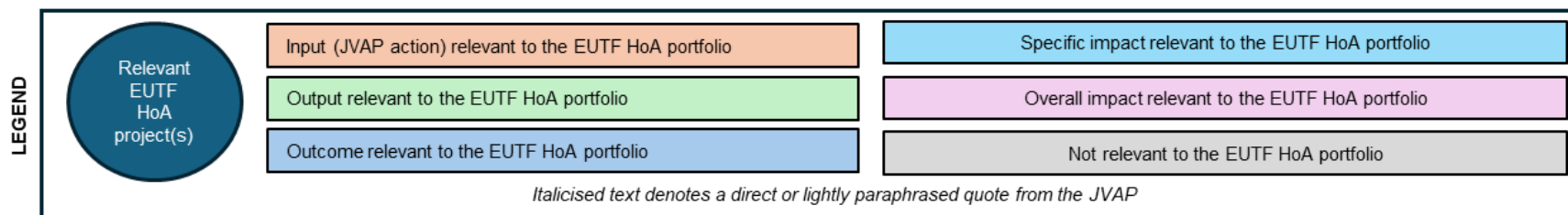| JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
Support the implementation of **harmonised qualifications in higher education** *through the Africa-EU Harmonisation Tuning, Quality and Accreditation initiatives*	Qualifications in higher education are fully harmonised across Africa through the Africa-EU Harmonisation Tuning, Quality and Accreditation initiatives	Increased number of students securing a place in a foreign higher education institution thanks to harmonised qualifications system		
Work towards **mutual recognition of academic qualifications and professional certificates** *through the conclusion of bilateral agreements or by other means*	(i) Bilateral agreements and/or (i) other mechanisms established to support the mutual recognition of academic qualifications and professional certificates	Increased number of (i) post-secondary students and (ii) skilled workers from African countries obtaining university or job placements through bilateral agreements or other mechanisms supporting the mutual recognition of academic qualifications and professional certificates	**Specific impact 2.2** *Students, researchers and entrepreneurs benefit from improved mobility between Africa and Europe*	Legal migration and mobility is effectively incentivised and managed, boosting sustainable economic, social and environmental development and increasing the ability of migrants to fulfil their potential to live in dignity and equality
Promote **migration schemes in small and medium enterprises (SMEs)** *including training programmes for African entrepreneurs in European countries, including through circular migration*	Migration schemes for small and medium enterprises established to promote African mobility to Europe and/or circular migration	Increased number of entrepreneurs benefitting from migration schemes for small and medium enterprises promoting African mobility to Europe and/or circular migration		

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 2 – Legal migration and mobility

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
*Strengthen **partnerships and 'brain circulation'**, building on the model of the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership grants and the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area initiative*	Increased number of research partnerships between European and African countries established	(i) Increased and (ii) improved research output from European and African research institutions attributed to Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions	**Specific impact 2.2** *Students, researchers and entrepreneurs benefit from improved mobility between Africa and Europe*	Legal migration and mobility is effectively incentivised and managed, boosting sustainable economic, social and environmental development and increasing the ability of migrants to fulfil their potential to live in dignity and equality
*Use the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions calls to foster both the **mobility of researchers** between Europe and Africa as well as to encourage joint research projects*	Increased number of (i) mobilities of researchers between Europe and Africa and (ii) joint European-African research projects through Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions			

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 4 – Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
ROCK, AML-THB, BMM *Support to the rule of law and law enforcement, judiciary and border management authorities in order to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, including on tracing and seizing assets and criminal proceeds, as well as on crime investigation and prosecution. Support could include capacity building and provision of relevant equipment. Human rights dimension will be fully reflected in capacity-building and training projects.*	Law enforcement authorities in target countries have increased capacity to investigate crimes related to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings	**Outcome 4.1.1a** The number of law enforcement staff with the required capacity and skills to effectively investigate crimes related to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings corresponds to (or exceeds) the SOM / THB caseload in the target country	**Specific impact 4.1** Relevant local, national and regional actors are effectively and efficiently (i) investigating and prosecuting organised criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and (ii) cooperating with one another to do so	Wellbeing of potential and vulnerable migrants is significantly improved through: (i) the **dismantling of criminal networks** engaged in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, (ii) expansions and improvements in the provision of **protection and assistance**, (iii) improved conditions in **areas of origin,** and (iv) more effective **border management**
Train law enforcement and judicial authorities e.g. on proactive and reactive investigation methods and judicial treatment of victims/witnesses and assisting in setting up specialised anti-trafficking and smuggling police units				

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 4 – Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
BMM, AML-THB AML-THB BMM **Support to the rule of law and law enforcement, judiciary and border management authorities** in order to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, including on **tracing and seizing assets** and criminal proceeds, as well as on crime **investigation and prosecution**. Support could include **capacity building** and provision of relevant **equipment**. Human rights dimension will be fully reflected in capacity-building and training projects.	Judiciary authorities in target countries have increased capacity to prosecute crimes related to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings	**Outcome 4.1.1b** The number of judiciary staff with the required capacity and skills to effectively prosecute crimes related to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings corresponds to (or exceeds) the SOM / THB caseload in the target country	**Specific impact 4.1** Relevant local, national and regional actors are effectively and efficiently (i) investigating and prosecuting organised criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and (ii) cooperating with one another to do so	Wellbeing of potential and vulnerable migrants is significantly improved through: (i) the **dismantling of criminal networks** engaged in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, (ii) expansions and improvements in the provision of **protection and assistance**, (iii) improved conditions in **areas of origin**, and (iv) more effective **border management**
	Financial authorities in target countries have increased capacity to trace criminal assets and proceeds from smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings	**Outcome 4.1.1c** The number of financial authority staff with the required capacity and skills to effectively trace criminal assets and proceeds from smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings corresponds to (or exceeds) the SOM / THB caseload in the target country		
	Border management authorities in target countries have increased capacity to tackle crimes related to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings	**Outcome 4.1.1d** The number of border management staff with the required capacity and skills to effectively identify and tackle crimes related to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings corresponds to (or exceeds) the SOM / THB caseload in the target country		

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 4 – Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
Support in **drafting and implementing appropriate legislative and institutional frameworks,** in line with the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, UN Protocols on Smuggling of Migrant by Land, Sea and Air and on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and the 2014 Protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention	All target countries have appropriate legislative institutional frameworks to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings	**Outcome 4.1.2** Relevant actors have access to effective and fully operationalised legislative and institutional tools to tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings	**Specific impact 4.1** Relevant local, national and regional actors are effectively and efficiently (i) investigating and prosecuting organised criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and (ii) cooperating with one another to do so	Wellbeing of potential and vulnerable migrants is significantly improved through: (i) the **dismantling of criminal networks** engaged in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, (ii) expansions and improvements in the provision of **protection and assistance,** (iii) improved conditions in **areas of origin,** and (iv) more effective **border management**

BMM

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 4 – Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings
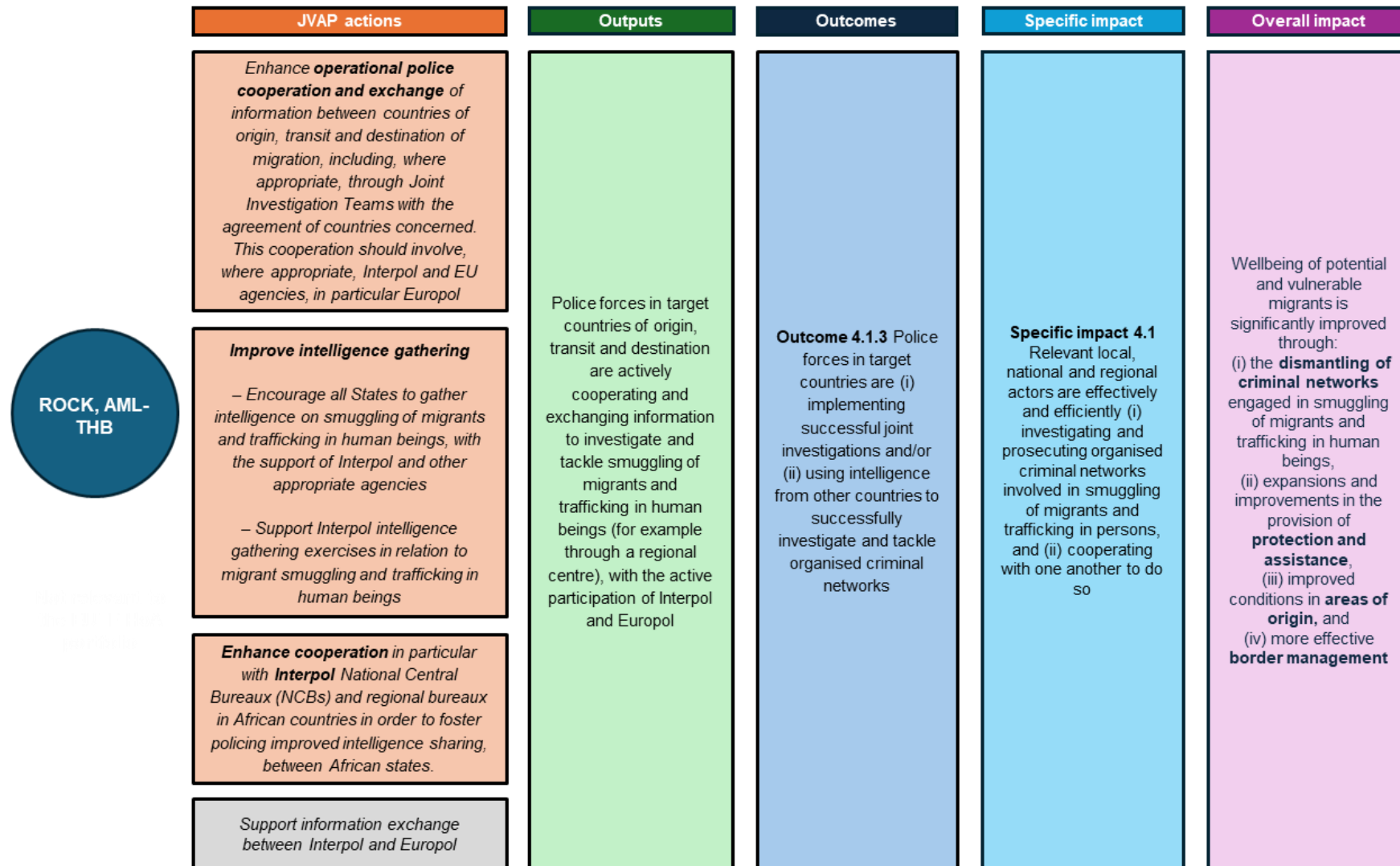
ROCK, AML-THB

JVAP actions

*Enhance **operational police cooperation and exchange** of information between countries of origin, transit and destination of migration, including, where appropriate, through Joint Investigation Teams with the agreement of countries concerned. This cooperation should involve, where appropriate, Interpol and EU agencies, in particular Europol*

Improve intelligence gathering

– Encourage all States to gather intelligence on smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, with the support of Interpol and other appropriate agencies

– Support Interpol intelligence gathering exercises in relation to migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

***Enhance cooperation** in particular with **Interpol** National Central Bureaux (NCBs) and regional bureaux in African countries in order to foster policing improved intelligence sharing, between African states.*

Support information exchange between Interpol and Europol

Outputs

Police forces in target countries of origin, transit and destination are actively cooperating and exchanging information to investigate and tackle smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings (for example through a regional centre), with the active participation of Interpol and Europol

Outcomes

Outcome 4.1.3 Police forces in target countries are (i) implementing successful joint investigations and/or (ii) using intelligence from other countries to successfully investigate and tackle organised criminal networks

Specific impact

Specific impact 4.1 Relevant local, national and regional actors are effectively and efficiently (i) investigating and prosecuting organised criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and (ii) cooperating with one another to do so

Overall impact

Wellbeing of potential and vulnerable migrants is significantly improved through:
(i) the **dismantling of criminal networks** engaged in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings,
(ii) expansions and improvements in the provision of **protection and assistance**,
(iii) improved conditions in **areas of origin,** and
(iv) more effective **border management**

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 4 – Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
BMM, EU-IOM JI — *Provide **protection, support and/or assistance** to stranded/vulnerable migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking (notably women and children)*	More stranded/vulnerable migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking are receiving protection and support			
BMM, EU-IOM JI — *Support relevant authorities and civil society organisations to provide **protection and rehabilitation services, including in the framework of post-return reintegration**, notably medical and socio-psychological counselling, training, requalification and assistance*	Relevant authorities and civil society organisations have increased capacity to provide protection and rehabilitation services	**Outcome 4.2.1** Stranded/vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking in need of assistance are systematically receiving effective and efficient protection and support	**Specific impact 4.2** Improved legal, financial, health and reintegration outcomes for vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking	Wellbeing of potential and vulnerable migrants is significantly improved through: (i) the **dismantling of criminal networks** engaged in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, (ii) expansions and improvements in the provision of **protection and assistance**, (iii) improved conditions in **areas of origin,** and (iv) more effective **border management**
BMM — ***Support establishing standard operating procedures** for the referral of victims of trafficking at national and cross-border levels, and the provision of systematic and predictable **consular assistance** to stranded migrants, including in regard to the issuance of travel documentation and the facilitation of transit and re-entry into the country of origin*	Target countries have clear standard operating procedures for the referral of victims of trafficking			
	Target countries have increased capacity to provide systematic and predictable consular assistance to stranded migrants			

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 4 – Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact

BMM, Solutions Pérennes IOM

*Support **regional initiatives on children at risk**, in order to ensure comprehensive and sustainable child protection to prevent and to respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children*

Regional initiatives established to ensure comprehensive and sustainable child protection to prevent and to respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children

Outcome 4.2.1
Stranded/vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking in need of assistance are systematically receiving effective and efficient protection and support

Specific impact 4.2
Improved legal, financial, health and reintegration outcomes for vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking

Wellbeing of potential and vulnerable migrants is significantly improved through:
(i) the **dismantling of criminal networks** engaged in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings,
(ii) expansions and improvements in the provision of **protection and assistance**,
(iii) improved conditions in **areas of origin,** and
(iv) more effective **border management**

ROCK

*Facilitate timely exchanges between States regarding **mutual legal assistance** in cases of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons*

States are actively coordinating on and providing mutual legal assistance in cases of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 4 – Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

12 EUTF projects*

BMM

JVAP actions

*Provide easy and continuous access **to adequate and credible information on legal migration** opportunities and **dangers** of engaging in irregular migration, as well as giving a realistic view of living conditions in European countries*

*Provide capacity building and financing for investments in improved **border management** systems at regional and national level*

Outputs

Increased dissemination of adequate and credible information on legal migration opportunities and dangers of engaging in irregular migration, as well as giving a realistic view of living conditions in European countries

Capacity and financing for investments is increased for improved border management systems at regional and national level

Outcomes

Outcome 4.3.1 Potential migrants are well-informed about legal migration opportunities, the dangers of engaging in irregular migration, and living conditions in European countries

Outcome 4.3.2a Border management staff are implementing rights-based approaches to border management

Increase in a) interceptions of irregular land, sea and air crossings, b) interceptions of criminal and terrorist cross-border activities, and c) successful search and rescue missions

Specific impact

Specific impact 4.3 Conditions in countries of origin are less conducive to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings

Overall impact

Wellbeing of potential and vulnerable migrants is significantly improved through:
(i) the **dismantling of criminal networks** engaged in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings,
(ii) expansions and improvements in the provision of **protection and assistance**,
(iii) improved conditions in **areas of origin,** and
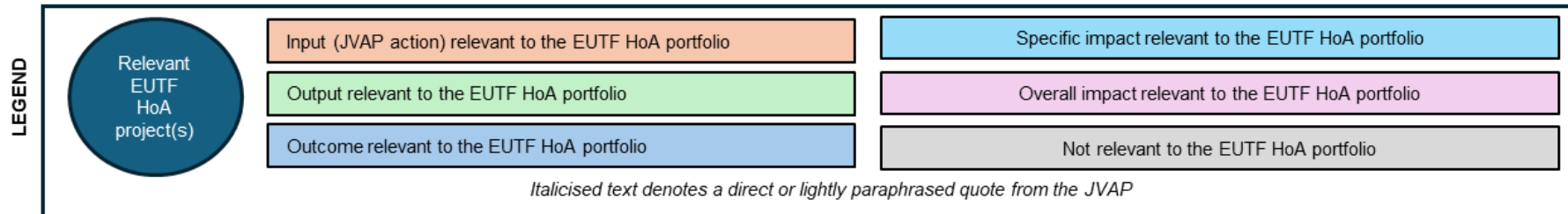(iv) more effective **border management**

*BMM, EU-IOM JI, RDPP ET IRC, RDPP ET NRC, RDPP ET SC, RE-INTEG CARE, RE-INTEG IDLO, RESET II DCA, RESET II REAL iDE, *Solutions pérennes* IOM and Sustainable Reintegration RRS.

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 4 – Prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
*Develop further and maintain, where appropriate, **communication networks between EU and African countries** to support **maritime surveillance** and to save lives at sea in compliance with fundamental rights and data protection standards*	Appropriate and sustained communication networks are established between EU and African countries to support maritime surveillance to save lives at sea	Maritime surveillance is effectively preventing loss of life at sea	**Specific impact 4.2** Improved legal, financial, health and reintegration outcomes for vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking	Wellbeing of potential and vulnerable migrants is significantly improved through: (i) the **dismantling of criminal networks** engaged in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, (ii) expansions and improvements in the provision of **protection and assistance**, (iii) improved conditions in **areas of origin**, and (iv) more effective **border management**
***Fight corruption** and develop **alternative income generation opportunities** in countries where migrant smuggling and services for migrants are important economic factors*	Effective measures taken to reduce corruption within institutions with border management mandates	Decreased corruption within institutions with border management mandates	**Specific impact 4.3** Conditions in countries of origin are less conducive to smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings	
	Sustainable income generation opportunities created in countries where migrant smuggling and services for migrants are important economic factors	Increased income generation from alternative sources in areas where migrant smuggling and services for migrants are important economic factors		

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 5 – Return, readmission and reintegration

LEGEND

Relevant EUTF HoA project(s)

Input (JVAP action) relevant to the EUTF HoA portfolio

Output relevant to the EUTF HoA portfolio

Outcome relevant to the EUTF HoA portfolio

Specific impact relevant to the EUTF HoA portfolio

Overall impact relevant to the EUTF HoA portfolio

Not relevant to the EUTF HoA portfolio

Italicised text denotes a direct or lightly paraphrased quote from the JVAP

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
EU-IOM JI, FLASH, Sustain. Reinteg. RRS, Solutions Pérennes — *Further promote **programmes on assisted voluntary return and reintegration***	Establishment of new programmes on assisted voluntary return and reintegration	**Outcome 5.1.1** Increased number of returning migrants benefitting from efficient and effective assisted voluntary return and reintegration assistance	**Specific impact 5.1** Returning irregular migrants (i) experience an appropriate and dignified returns process and (ii) receive robust, tailored support to reintegrate in communities of return	Increased proportion of irregular migrants effectively return to their country of origin via a fair and dignified return process, accompanied by (i) satisfactory protection and assistance and (ii) improved reintegration prospects through tailored support
EU-IOM JI, FLASH, Sustain. Reinteg. RRS — ***Strengthen the capacity of authorities and civil society organisations** in their field of competence of countries of origin and transit to manage voluntary returns and support reintegration of all returnees, including through support to the development of policy frameworks and community-based reintegration measures, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration*	Increased capacity of authorities and civil society organisations to manage voluntary returns and support reintegration	**Outcome 5.1.2** Relevant actors (authorities and civil society organisations) have sufficient capacity to effectively manage voluntary returns and support reintegration		

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 5 – Return, readmission and reintegration

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
Sustain. Reinteg. RRS — *Provide comprehensive and developmental packages for safe return and reintegration, whereby a partner country commits to cooperate closely with the EU on return and readmission, notably on identification and travel documentation, and receives support for the individual reintegration of its own nationals, visa facilitation and a tailor-made package of support, including on other policy areas*	Increased number of partner countries effectively supporting individual reintegration of its nationals	**Outcome 5.1.3** Increased number of returning migrants benefitting from tailored package support provided by partner country authorities to facilitate reintegration	**Specific impact 5.1** Returning irregular migrants (i) experience an appropriate and dignified returns process and (ii) receive robust, tailored support to reintegrate in communities of return	Increased proportion of irregular migrants effectively return to their country of origin via a fair and dignified return process, accompanied by (i) satisfactory protection and assistance and (ii) improved reintegration prospects through tailored support
	Increased number of partner countries have formally committed to cooperating closely with the EU on return and readmission, notably on identification and travel documentation	Increased number of migrants with return orders successfully identified and issued with travel documentation	Irregular migrants with return orders are consistently identified, issued with travel documentation and returned to their country of origin in a timely and dignified manner	
BMM, EU-IOM JI, Solutions Pérennes IOM — *Support child protection systems in countries of origin and transit to offer a safe environment for vulnerable children including unaccompanied minors upon their return*	Increased number of well-functioning child protection systems established and maintained in countries of origin and transit	**Outcome 5.2.1** Increased number of vulnerable children benefitting from robust child protection services during transit and upon arrival in their country of origin	**Specific impact 5.2** Vulnerable children on the move receive humane treatment and protection in transit and upon return to their country of origin	

Joint Valletta Action Plan: Domain 5 – Return, readmission and reintegration

JVAP actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Specific impact	Overall impact
Develop practical cooperation agreements and bilateral dialogues *on implementation of returns processes with regard, in particular, to identification and issuance of travel documents*	Increased number of cooperation agreements between European and African countries on returns developed and implemented	Increased number of migrants with return orders successfully identified and issued with travel documentation	Irregular migrants with return orders are consistently identified, issued with travel documentation and returned to their country of origin in a timely and dignified manner	Legal migration and mobility is effectively incentivised and managed, boosting sustainable economic, social and environmental development and increasing the ability of migrants to fulfil their potential to live in dignity and equality
Cooperate with countries of origin on addressing the absence of identification documents *– and the absence of civil registry which is often the cause of it – as one of the main difficulties in the application of return and readmission policies* **Strengthen the capacity of authorities of countries of origin to respond in a timely manner to readmission applications**, *including through support to modernise civil registry systems and fingerprints digitalisation*	Increased number of countries of origin that have successfully implemented robust solutions to address the absence of identification documents Increased number of countries of origin with a modern civil registry system	Decrease in average time to process readmission applications by authorities in countries of origin		