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INDEPENDENT JOINT FINAL EVALUATION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SAMM)

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Southern African Region, targeting 16 countries: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe

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Evaluation manager: Adam Adrien Kirby, Lead Evaluation Manager (ILO) Rachael Tembo (IOM), Mukandi Herzel and Malene Nielsen (UNHCR), Katherine Aston and Moritz Schuberth (UNODC)

Evaluation consultant(s): GDSI Evaluation Team: Dr. Landis MacKellar (Team Leader), Anna Ohannessian-Charpin (Evaluator), Padil Salimo (Evaluator)

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BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Southern Africa Migration Management (SAMM) project (full name “Strengthening institutional mechanisms for migration management in the Southern Africa Region), aimed to improve migration governance and management in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region, covered 16 Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) member countries and ran from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2024.

The project concentrated on the two principal components of migration, labour migration and mixed migration. The first of these consists of movement across borders in search of employment and higher income. The second, more complex, covers a wide range of flows including but not limited to undocumented migrants, children separated from their parents or otherwise in an irregular situation, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, victims of human trafficking, smuggled migrants (who are at elevated risk of being trafficked), and other migrants in vulnerable situations. Both are related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), most directly SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities. Labour migration falls under the UN Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), and mixed migration falls under both the GCM and the UN Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). Labour migration is primarily the concern of the SAMM project’s Strategic Objective 1 (SO1), while mixed migration is primarily the concern of Specific Objective 2 (SO2).

The Project was distinguished by its One-UN implementation modality. Under a Multi-Partners Contribution Agreement, four UN agencies with sectoral expertise were the Implementing Partners. These were the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as lead agency and responsible for SO 1; the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with a role under both SOs 1 and 2, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with responsibilities falling under SO2, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), also with responsibilities falling under SO2.

The SAMM project was funded by the European Commission under the European Union Regional Indicative Programme (11th European

	Development Fund) for Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, and the Indian Ocean (2014–2020). The focus of the project was on migration management and governance. The beneficiaries were essentially relevant government departments and, in the case of labour migration, the social partners (workers’ and employers’ organisations). The project was not designed to provide direct assistance to vulnerable groups, but rather to contribute to policies whose implementation would allow public authorities (and social partners) to better address the needs of migrants, especially vulnerable groups.
Present situation of the project	The project ended in December 2024. There will be no follow-on phase. An exit strategy meeting of the PUNOs and stakeholders was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in October 2024.
Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	<p>The overall objective of this independent evaluation assignment was to review the implementation of the SAMM project, to identify strengths and weaknesses, lessons, and good practices which can be applied in similar or related initiatives, and to provide actionable recommendations for the Participating United Nations Organisations (PUNOs) and other stakeholders as they pursue work on migration in southern Africa. These agencies and stakeholders are expected to use the evaluation findings to inform decision-making, improve future programming, and ensure accountability.</p> <p>The primary clients of the evaluation are the Participating United Nations Organisations (PUNOs), namely the ILO, UNHCR, UNODC, and IOM. The secondary clients include national and regional stakeholders, the donor (EU), and other relevant actors engaged in or affected by the project.</p>
Methodology of evaluation	The design of the evaluation was guided by the ILO Evaluation Policy and aligned with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, UNEG Guidelines for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, and UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. The evaluation was Theory-of-Change based, meaning that project activities, outputs, outcomes, and likely impacts were evaluated applying six key OECD-

DAC evaluation criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. The evaluation also incorporated cross-cutting dimensions, including gender equality, disability inclusion, human rights, protection, and climate change, by examining how these were represented in activities and project governance. The Evaluation Team engaged with a wide and diverse group of stakeholders, cross-checking and triangulating the data and information collected.

The evaluation has followed the conventional sequence of

- an Inception Phase during which the Evaluation Team and Evaluation Management Committee arrived at a shared understanding of objectives and approach;
- a Data Collection Phase, including field visits to six countries (Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa and Zambia), following which preliminary findings were discussed at a stakeholder virtual workshop (with ~40 participants), and
- a Synthesis Phase during which draft and final evaluation reports were developed.

This was a “mixed methods” evaluation, meaning that the Evaluation Team utilised a blend of primary and secondary sources, quantitative and qualitative evidence. The evaluation team collected data through four main channels: desk review of project documents, secondary data review, key informant interviews (in-person and remote), and an E-survey focusing on participants in capacity-building and training activities. The evaluation used a mix of data analysis methods, including synthesis of programme documents, including the project final Annual Narrative Report, Progress Reports, analysis of actual versus intended results and influencing factors and analysis of performance against the OECD/DAC criteria.

Limitations encountered were not exceptional for an evaluation of this scale and scope. Limitations encountered included:

- Sampling for field missions strategically covered a diversity of contexts, including major migration hubs, Regional

Economic Communities (RECs), and Island States with unique migration dynamics. The evaluation engaged national and regional officials, UN staff, representatives of social partners and civil society, as well as ultimate beneficiaries of training and policy support, the government institutions' representatives. However, due to resource constraints, only six countries were visited in the field, for five workdays apiece in the first wave of countries visited and four apiece (due to the Good Friday holiday) apiece in the second wave.

- The unexpectedly long Inception Phase significantly compressed the Data Collection and Synthesis Phases.
- The E-survey response rate, ~30%, was low, but this was as anticipated in the Inception Report. Cited with caution, the survey results are still suggestive. Geographic coverage demonstrated strong regional engagement, spanning 15 countries. This diverse representation strengthens the validity of regional insights while highlighting areas of concentrated program impact.
- Positive E-survey responses to some questions – e.g., project adaptation to COVID conditions, relevance of training to line duties – were so overwhelmingly positive that respondent bias (“telling them what they want to hear”) must be suspected. The usual mitigation strategy of follow-up probing, often through interviews, was not feasible.
- Positive responses to requests for remote interviews in countries not visited in the field were lower than hoped for. Overall, however, the target of 78 interviews (virtual and in person) has been met, as has the need for language balance.

The need for originally envisaged Focus Group discussions was reconsidered as it became apparent that the project actions overwhelmingly targeted agencies and organisations involved in migration governance and management, not migrants themselves. Logistical challenges - short time in the field, travel distance to refugee centres, ethical considerations, scheduling difficulties in some cases, were also identified.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Relevance:

SAMM's design was highly relevant to the evolving migration landscape of Southern Africa, responding to needs for technically sound, rights-based migration policy and capacity development. Its dual focus on labour migration and mixed migration was essential, given the region's complexity: most countries are simultaneously origin, transit and destination for migrants of varying statuses. Despite the difficulties posed for implementation (particularly the need to coordinate four implementing UN agencies), dealing with both dimensions at the same time was critical to relevance. The project's interventions were aligned with SADC and COMESA priorities and broadly compatible with national development frameworks and UN-supported cooperation strategies. Despite these strengths, assessment found that pre-implementation needs assessment was at times insufficient, resulting in generic solutions or gaps in responding fully to national heterogeneity, particularly for the Island States.

Coherence:

The project demonstrated substantial coherence in aligning with international obligations (GCM, GCR), SADC and REC strategies, and the priorities of the participating UN agencies. In the area of labour migration, the project was fully coherent with SADC strategies and international ILO conventions and priorities. While coherent with IOM, UNHCR, and UNODC strategies, alignment with national strategies was more difficult simply because many participating countries did not yet have policies applicable to the wide range of mixed migrants. Nonetheless, by working through these agencies, the project ensured that countries were supported to move towards strategies and policies consistent with international standards, conventions, and good practice.

Gender equality was pursued by balancing participation in project activities; in addition to this, the project had an explicit gender strategy. In all activities involving the development of policies,

action plans, etc., the gender aspect was taken into account. Few activities or strategies specific to persons with disabilities were found. Climate change was not a major theme in any activities reviewed. The cross-cutting theme of human rights was integrated in all activities across the project; the rights of migrant workers in the labour migration component and human rights more generally in the mixed migration component.

There were occasional issues of overlap and failure to achieve complementarity between the PUNOs. While the collaboration between the PUNOs brought together diverse expertise, the implementation revealed coordination difficulties that affected project delivery. Efforts to link with the work of UN country teams, regional bodies and civil society varied by country, and meaningful, formalised cooperation beyond the PUNOs was documented only sporadically. These coordination issues affected the pace and overall consistency of project implementation.

Effectiveness:

The SAMM Project advanced substantially towards its objectives of institutional capacity strengthening, improved migration governance frameworks, and the promotion of policy dialogue. Prominent achievements included the development and adoption of labour migration action plans, data systems (notably regional migration observatories), and the institutionalisation of task forces and national strategies across multiple SADC countries. The project was credited with progress on regional policy harmonisation, the establishment of new dialogue fora for labour migration, the implementation of targeted training (including on trafficking in persons and data management), and fostering SADC-wide engagement on diaspora policy. All of this contributed to progress towards the two main Strategic Objectives.

However, this was largely a training and capacity-building, institution-strengthening project. After the development of policies, the process of their adoption and implementation requires time. The translation of policy and institutional frameworks into concrete, lived improvements for migrants and refugees proved more elusive. While training and capacity building increased knowledge and

technical capacity among front-line agencies, these did not always lead to tangible service improvements or policy implementation at scale. Resource constraints, government staff turnover, and delays in legislative adoption contributed to this lag. The evaluation did not find substantive evidence of widespread, direct effects on individual migrants' experiences, underscoring the "funnel effect" where regional and national reforms yield diminishing returns closer to the level of ultimate beneficiaries. With scattered exceptions (e.g., making funds available to shelter migrants stranded by the COVID crisis), the evaluation team has little evidence that the project had a concrete effect on the migrant experience.

The project has not had major unintended consequences, either negative or positive. Whatever forces hostile to labour (im)migration and mixed migrants exist at the national level in SADC countries – and these are formidable – were not worsened by the project and its activities; i.e., by dealing with migration as a development, regional integration, and human rights issue, the project did not generate backlash. The project brought countries together, creating opportunities for sharing experiences and sometimes developing agreements.

The ILO project management team was faced with a difficult task due to the complexity of the project. The project team reacted by adopting a programming, coordination and reporting strategy of "decentralisation" – making PUNOs largely independent, including in their interactions with national partners. National-level participants, whether PUNOs or beneficiaries, had only limited contact with Pretoria project staff. Coordination between regional and country-level offices was sometimes problematic. However, despite the fact that the project was mostly implemented at the country level, a decentralised approach, with coordination carried out at the regional level by the project coordinators of the 4 PUNOs, was appropriate.

Efficiency:

At the highest thematic level, the project's allocation of resources to capacity building, technical support, and institutional development was sound. Some country-level interviewees expressed the view

that budget control in Pretoria caused delays in decision-making and fund disbursement for local partners, but these problems were related to donor requests. Some national country partners faced ongoing staff shortages that compromised both project implementation and long-term sustainability. While the project provided funding for activities, it did not include resources for additional staff positions necessary to ensure lasting impact. Others objected that financial allocations disproportionately favoured regional over local implementation, creating procedural bottlenecks that impeded country-specific interventions. Regional approaches delivered promise and challenges. While regional bodies like COMESA and SADC were successfully engaged, harmonising implementation across countries with widely different capacities and policy priorities was uneven.

The macro-distribution of resources, i.e., between the UN agencies, was uneven. The large issue was the advantage of ILO (labour migration) and IOM (aspects of both labour migration and mixed migration) relative to UNODC (TIP, SOM) and UNHCR (protection). This led, when combined with the strength of the ILO's tripartite system, to a project largely perceived to be a labour migration project with a mixed migration add-on. The One-UN joint approach of partnering the four agencies was well-conceived, but in implementation, became one of four agencies pursuing programmes that were more often several than joint. The evaluation team did not emerge with a strong sense of inter-agency partnership.

Impact orientation:

There was substantial progress at the policy level, but less on actual practices, that is, implementation. Government officials interviewed expressed some degree of frustration with the slow pace of progress from an idea to a policy, from an action plan to actual adoption and implementation. This frustration arose from a combination of project-level challenges and broader political dynamics. From the project perspective, key limitations included insufficient budget allocations to meet government expectations, as well as coordination and communication difficulties. Engagement with government institutions proved essential yet challenging

across all project countries. In some countries, the development of migration-related legislation faced delays due to competing government priorities and lengthy approval processes. At the same time, a number of country' labour migration policies and action plans were developed with project support.

SAMM's principal impact lies in durable improvements in migration policy frameworks, capacity expansion, and the nascent development of regional coordination mechanisms. The project contributed to the knowledge base via studies, databases, and the establishment of technical bodies, particularly in areas such as labour migration information systems and diaspora engagement. These advances provide a foundation for future interventions, though the absence of reliable mechanisms for tracking downstream impacts and the limited systematic collection of outcome data confined project assessments largely to output and immediate outcome levels.

Sustainability:

The project's interventions have put in place the foundations for improved migration management and governance and have contributed to developing skills for implementation. Some of these are to be continued under other interventions with other funds. The integration of project components into some national action plans and government structures represented important steps toward sustainability.

Among other outcomes requiring continued attention and sustained support are the labour migration strategies, in general, approved in the last period of the project. Further efforts are needed to implement diaspora engagement policies. Enhanced regional coordination is critical for addressing cross-border issues like trafficking and smuggling, necessitating greater collaboration with neighbouring countries.

Finally, securing reliable financial support will be vital for sustaining these outcomes; therefore, a solid and clear phasing-out plan was needed to manage and ensure ongoing access to knowledge and tools developed during the project. However, sustainability planning

was an overlooked aspect of project implementation. Training and workshop plans often had no follow-up component. While an exit strategy was prepared in the final months of the project, there is no evidence that it was actually implemented.

The need for continued capacity building and technical support was a consistent theme among stakeholders, who called for a shift from once-off training to comprehensive institutional strengthening. Tellingly, the final stages of the project were marked by confusion among partners regarding project closure and the sustainability of results, highlighting gaps in communication and transition planning. Plans for the transfer of knowledge, responsibility, and ongoing funding to national institutions were often insufficiently operationalised or communicated.

These findings have been synthesised into four basic Conclusions:

- **Conclusion 1:** The project was highly relevant to the needs shared by countries in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region, although more oriented towards the continent than the Island States. *[Based on Findings related to Relevance and Coherence.]*
- **Conclusion 2:** Despite the fact that all four PUNOs contributed and there were scattered examples of joint or complementary actions, the project was largely perceived as a labour migration project. *[Based on Findings related to Coherence, Effectiveness and Efficiency.]*
- **Conclusion 3:** While the project has strengthened the foundation for improved migration management and governance, prospects for sustainability are mixed despite generally adequate political will. *[Based on Findings on Effectiveness, Impact Orientation, and Sustainability.]*
- **Conclusion 4:** Actual implementation of policies and frameworks developed has been limited, but especially in the area of labour migration, it has established valuable dialogue fora. The evaluation has not found a concrete impact on individual migrants' lives. *[Based on Findings related to Effectiveness and Impact Orientation.]*

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main recommendations

As the SAMM project is at an end with no future activities foreseen, and as this is its final evaluation, the evaluation team is not in a position to make project-level recommendations as it would, say, in a mid-term evaluation. Moreover, it is a project-as-a-whole evaluation, not a bundle of four PUNOs evaluations. However, it is in a position to recommend to UN agencies and stakeholders directions that should be taken in future actions related to migration in the SADC region. These are divided into two groups: overall strategic recommendations and operational ones that are more closely tied to individual PUNOs and what we have termed the “project exit and consolidation” phase. As a result, these may be more suited to PUNOs’ management response.

Overall strategic recommendations

Recommendation 1: Future migration initiatives should invest significant time in conducting thorough baseline assessments and developing detailed project documents with clearly articulated goals, activities, and expected outcomes to ensure all partners share a common understanding. Prior to project implementation and beyond the Country Dialogues, this requires clear needs and capacities assessments at country and regional levels, identifying needed support and analysing implementation methods. In other words, a project of this scale and scope needs a short identification/formulation phase.

Recommendation 2: To avoid coordination challenges and to enhance collaboration and complementarities among PUNOs, it is recommended that future multi-agency initiatives have clear Terms of Reference that take into account the differences of mandates, intervention methods and processes for each implementing UN agency. This, within a clear general work plan, should articulate complementary competences and activities in order to avoid duplications and confusion, and should propose coordination processes to guide implementation. More structured mechanisms for joint planning, resource allocation, and activity implementation would enhance coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen coordination among UN country and regional offices to better support agencies and enhance inter-agency collaboration. Similarly, plan for more involvement of UN country offices (e.g., the role of the Resident Coordinator) in supporting the agencies and coordination among PUNOs in the countries. Establishing clear leadership roles while maintaining collaborative decision-making processes would significantly improve project efficiency. Balance resource allocation between regional and local implementation to avoid procedural bottlenecks and ensure effective country-specific interventions.

Recommendation 4: Move beyond policy development to ensure practical implementation of initiatives, with clear pathways from concept to execution. For projects of this magnitude, covering 16 countries and 3 RECs that do not always share the same challenges, it is necessary to have two levels of implementation: the first an overall regional and general level ensured by workshops and trainings; the second a sub-regional and topic-specific one to bring together countries facing similar challenges in order to exchange and share experiences, especially on concrete progress. Future projects should balance individual skill development with institutional strengthening, ensuring that knowledge is embedded within organisational structures and processes rather than residing solely with trained individuals who may leave their positions or have little opportunity to apply developed skills. They should prioritise developing user-friendly data systems, training statisticians and planners in data analysis, and establishing clear protocols for data sharing among government departments and regional bodies to enhance the quality and utility of migration-related information.

Recommendation 5: The implementing UN agencies should work more closely with local/national partners to ensure continuity and sustainability. Successful engagement requires identifying and working with high-level officials, particularly Permanent Secretaries, who could facilitate decision-making. Future projects should allocate more time for government processes and develop strategies to secure early buy-in from key decision-makers to accelerate implementation. Future initiatives should strengthen

regional mechanisms while respecting national contexts, perhaps through differentiated implementation timelines based on country readiness. Future migration initiatives should incorporate sustainability planning from the outset, including strategies for transferring responsibilities to national institutions, securing ongoing funding, and maintaining momentum on policy implementation after external support ends.

Overall operational recommendations

Recommendation 6: Capture and Communicate Unresolved Gaps and Challenges. It is recommended that all PUNOs in the SAMM project provide a consolidated report highlighting unresolved issues and gaps, particularly in areas of mixed migration, protection, and national government ownership. This report should be formally submitted to the donor and regional stakeholders to register the dissatisfaction with shortfalls in protection outcomes, policy implementation, and coordination, ensuring a transparent record for institutional learning and advocacy.

Recommendation 7: Institutionalise Lessons Learned and Shortcomings in Inter-Agency Approaches. Participating agencies should conduct an internal debrief and produce a management note that clearly details lessons learned, but also explicitly documents shortcomings in inter-agency coordination, division of responsibilities, and mandates. This is not for future project design, but to formally acknowledge the limitations experienced and to inform organisational reform across UN agencies.

Recommendation 8: Submit Recommendations for Regional and National Follow-up. With the project concluded, and recognising gaps in implementation and sustainability, it is practical for all agencies to submit targeted recommendations to the SADC Secretariat, RECs, and relevant national governments calling for continued attention and resources to unresolved priorities (such as vulnerable migrant protections and continued cross-border coordination). This serves as both an advocacy tool and a closure activity, demonstrating due diligence in ensuring that outstanding needs are not left unaddressed.

	<p>Recommendation 9: Establishment of a Standing Multi-Agency Learning Exchange. Although SAMM will not be continued, PUNOs can propose, as a closure outcome, the establishment of a periodic regional multi-agency learning exchange on migration management. This low-cost, practical mechanism would ensure continued discussion of migration challenges, revisit outstanding issues raised by the project, and provide a channel for ongoing advocacy. Management responses can use this recommendation both to acknowledge unresolved dissatisfaction and signal a constructive way forward for institutional voice and learning.</p>
<p>Main lessons learned and good practices</p>	<p>Lessons learned from the SAMM project experience include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased complexity in multi-agency, multi-country, and multi-thematic projects. A basic lesson learned from the SAMM project is that complexity matters. Four agencies (ILO, IOM, UNODC, UNHCR), three RECs (SADC, COMESA, IOC), two themes (labour migration and mixed migration, the latter covering multiple vulnerable populations with different specific needs), and sixteen countries covered, raised challenges to administration and management. Adding, IOM-UNODC-UNHCR relations are largely agency-to-Government (without neglecting civil society and agency-to-ultimate beneficiary); whereas the ILO's institutional structure is strongly articulated by its tripartite structure. The four PUNOs have not only distinct institutional structures but, more importantly, distinct institutional styles and different stakeholders. 2. The value and cost of coordination in complex regional initiatives. That the project was able to contribute to regional progress on migration management and governance, with tangible benefits for all stakeholders (moreover, in the face of COVID-19) is a tribute to the strength of project management. Nonetheless, as illustrated by examples of overlap and duplication at the activity level, coordination was not always successful. As important, coordination is not costless. A lesson is that the costs of necessary coordination need to be taken into account at the project formulation stage.

3. **Need for early harmonisation and tailored approaches in multi-stakeholder projects.** A closely related lesson is that, as the number of stakeholders multiplies, heterogeneity increases. One conclusion of this evaluation is that more effort needed to be put, for example, into tailoring country-level actions to country-level needs and priorities; perhaps in a first, pre-Description of Action, project formulation phase document. The same could be said for the division of resources between major areas of action (labour and mixed migration) and between the implementing agencies according to their remits and technical competences.
4. **Bridging the gap between policy reform and tangible impact on beneficiaries.** A fourth lesson is that the time lag between policy and framework development, institution-strengthening (essentially capacity-strengthening), and ground-level impact on ultimate beneficiaries is long. The tangible contributions of this project have been credibly documented in this evaluation, yet the evaluation team was unable to find much evidence of actual change in migrants' lives as lived. It could be argued that a more ambitious evaluation design could have discovered this. But the metaphor of a funnel is useful: Much reform at the policy level, leading to smaller reforms at the implementation level, leading to yet-smaller impacts at the individual level. Some institutional and resource constraints (e.g., bureaucracy, budget, staff retention) are canonical and can be criticised with impunity by external observers, such as evaluators. But others are inherent in democratic deliberative processes. All, the good and the bad, narrow the funnel at every point.
5. **Importance of high-level government engagement to enhance project effectiveness.** The SAMM project could have done better at overcoming delays and reducing confusion if it had more aggressively engaged with senior government officials at the Permanent Secretary and deputy levels. These are the government counterparts who can break down institutional barriers and overcome institutional inertia. However, an overall assessment is that the SAMM project contributed to progress in migration management and governance in a region where migration is a driving force.

6. **Future preparedness requires a stronger justification of agency value and coordination.** Lessons learned beg the question of what lessons will need to be learned in the future. Good (and bad) practices past also impose the question “What about in the future?” It is no secret that the donor funding available for both agency core and project development support is shrinking. Several agencies involved in SAMM are experiencing deep budget cuts; some due to bilateral donor targeted withdrawal, and some due to a geopolitical context of pressing security and defence spending concerns. Agencies will increasingly compete for still-available funding, with the effect that demonstrating coordination, complementarity, efficiency, and value added (roughly speaking, “What can this agency accomplish that we could not accomplish on our own bilaterally?”) will take on greater urgency.
7. **A lack of early exit strategies placed long-term success at risk.** It is vital to have the project's sustainability and exit strategies prepared at the onset of the project, with action plans ensuring that both strategies are owned and understood by all stakeholders and communicated to stakeholders throughout project implementation.

The SAMM project also pointed to a number of good practices relevant to future work:

- **Adopting a broad regional and thematic scope to reflect the realities of migration.** One good practice, despite the difficulties it imposed, was the design of the project as one of broad scale and scope. As to scale, especially geographic scale, the fact that migration is an inherently cross-border phenomenon strongly calls for the regional approach, as did the regional integration programme of the RECs. All evidence is that dealing with migration as a whole, instead of bit by bit, contributed to the overall strength and potential impact of the project. There was no dilution effect.
- **Establishing intensive coordination mechanisms to navigate complexity and crisis.** With scale and scope came coordination issues, and a good practice was the project's team coming to

grips with this under difficult circumstances. The intense (weekly) coordination mechanism introduced by the project team in the early days of the project, which was darkened by the COVID emergency, contributed significantly to keeping the project on track, even with drastically altered modalities and timelines. The decision by the donor to grant a one-year no-cost extension was entirely justified.

- **Decentralised programming and reporting as a practical response to institutional complexity.** In view of what has been here referred to as the dimensionality, the decentralisation approach of the project team to both programming and reporting was a justifiable good practice; far from perfect, but good. It led, admittedly, to instances of duplication and overlap, but to some degree, that was because of factors internal to the PUNOs, some having country offices, some not, with differing institutional relations between regional and country levels. It is a given that One-UN must take agency institutional mandates, structures, and cultures as found. Coordination, time-intensive as it is, is the only feasible response.