

BUILDING THE
CAPACITY OF
PUBLIC SUPPORT
SERVICES FOR THE
INTEGRATION OF
MIGRANTS

CHALLENGES AND
STRATEGIES IN
COLLABORATIVE
WORK



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Title: Building the capacity of public support services for the integration of migrants: Challenges and strategies in collaborative work

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACM	High Commission for Migration
CICDR	Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination
CLAIM	Local Support Centre for the Integration of Migrants
CNAIM	National Support Centre for the Integration of Migrants
DG REFORM	Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support
INE	Statistics Portugal
LAM	Migrant Support Line
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RNAIM	National Support Network for the Integration of Migrants
SEF	Portuguese Immigration and Border Service
STT	Telephone Translation Service



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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

This publication aims to present the good practices and lessons learnt in the scope of the project “Portugal: Technical Support to the High Commission for Migration to Improve the Response of National Centres for Migrant Integration by Assessing and Evaluating their Services and Operations”. This document presents some of the main methodological options materialized over the project and aims to build technical skills and evaluation responses based on collaborative methodologies. Sharing this work experience with the public appears as an opportunity to discuss evaluation methodologies that support the implementation of structural reforms based on collaborative work between entities with different characteristics.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT PROJECT

The project “Portugal: Technical Support to the High Commission for Migration to Improve the Response of National Centres for Migrant Integration by Assessing and Evaluating their Services and Operations” was implemented, in the first stage, by the IOM between October 2019 and September 2021, in strict collaboration with the ACM and the European Commission. The Project was funded by the European Union via the Structural Reform Support Programme, included in a programme that aims to contribute to the implementation of institutional and administrative reforms, as well as reforms of the growth support structures in Member States.

The Project focused on the functioning of the National Support Network for the Integration of Migrants (RNAIM) and encompassed the following goals in three large areas of operation:

1. Keeping the relevance and efficiency of the support services for the integration of migrants based on the *one-stop-shop* model.
2. Adapting the intercultural mediation model in support services for the integration of migrants to the new context.
3. Improving the articulation between support services for the integration of migrants both locally and nationwide.

In addition to responding to the need for an external evaluation of the CNAIM and CLAIM, performed periodically since 2006, the project operationalization has also deepened some domains that are determining for the identity of the RNAIM, as intercultural mediation and the coordination between the CNAIMs and the CLAIM network.

KEY PROJECT PARTICIPANTS: ENTITIES AND SERVICES

IOM (International Organization for Migration)¹:

Intergovernmental organization in the field of Migration that works with its partners in the international community to: Help face the increasing operational challenges of migration management; Get a better understanding of migration issues; Encourage social and economic development via migration; Advocate for human dignity and migrant wellness.

DG REFORM (Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support)²:

European Commission Service that helps EU countries to design and implement structural reforms within their efforts to support employment creation and sustainable growth.

ACM (High Commission for Migration)³:

Portuguese Public Institute that intervenes in the definition, execution and evaluation of public policies in the scope of migration, integration of migrants and ethnic groups, particularly Roma communities, and management and valorisation of diversity between cultures, ethnicities, and religions.

RNAIM (National Support Network for the Integration of Migrants):

An ACM structure that is formed by the following services:

- **CNAIM**
National Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants

- **CLAIM Network**
Local Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants

- **LAM**
Migrant Support Line

- **STT**
Telephone Translation Service

The main goal of these structures is to assist migrants, providing them with clarifications and referrals regarding relevant matters such as family reunification, regularization, employment and entrepreneurship, access to housing, education, qualifications, health, among others. The strategic

importance of these services was clear from the moment of their creation, and they have been internationally recognized as an innovative response to the need for receiving and supporting migrants.

1 For more information on OIM: <https://www.iom.int> and about OIM Portugal: <https://portugal.iom.int>

2 For more information on DG REFORM: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/structural-reform-support>

3 For more information on ACM: <https://www.acm.gov.pt>

RNAIM NATIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK FOR THE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS

STRUCTURE OF THE HIGH COMMISSION FOR MIGRATION

ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS PROVISION OF CLARIFICATIONS AND REFERRALS

SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

- Access to housing
- Education
- Employment and entrepreneurship
- Qualification
- Family reunification
- Settlement
- Health
- Others...

LINGUISTIC APPROXIMATION

INTERCULTURAL MEDIATION

FREE ASSISTANCE

MULTICHANNEL ASSISTANCE

- In person assistance (CNAIMs and CLAIMs)
- Telephone
- E-mail
- Soon by videoconference

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Public Administration Services
- Municipalities
- Civil Society Organizations
- Higher Education Institutions

RNAIM SERVICES AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC¹

CNAIMs

NATIONAL SUPPORT CENTRES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS are sites that gather a number of services in one place that aim to provide support in different scopes that are directly related to immigration and integration of migrants. These Centres can include:

1. Services and offices that specialize in specific domains, such as social support and social inclusion, legal support, employment, education and qualification recognition, learning of Portuguese, support for business creation, support for victims of domestic violence and/or harmful traditional practices;
2. Assistance offices coordinated by external entities, namely the Institute for Social Security, Immigration and Border Service, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Tax and Customs Authority, Institute of Registries and Notary, Citizen Area/ Administrative Modernization Agency, etc.

CNAIM Norte

CNAIM Lisboa

CNAIM Beja

CNAIM Algarve

CLAIMs

LOCAL SUPPORT CENTRES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS are a decentralized network of information, welcoming, referral and support sites for migrants that privilege the local welcoming and integration of migrants.

143 CLAIMs with general assistance in 109 municipalities

12 CLAIMs with specialized assistance in 8 municipalities

LAM

The **MIGRANT SUPPORT LINE** is a telephone assistance service that offers general information about migration themes and forwards people to the specialized offices of the ACM or other relevant services.

More than 14 languages and dialects

STT

The **TELEPHONE TRANSLATION SERVICE** has the main goal of facilitating communication between foreign people who reside in Portugal and the services, especially public services, by means of immediate or scheduled translation/interpreting.

Approximately 70 languages and dialects

¹ Situação no início de 2022

AN EVOLVING NETWORK

RNAIM growth and wider territorial scope of assistance sites

Continuous training of specialized professionals

Diversification of CNAIM competences:

- GAT (Office of Welcoming and Triage)
- GASI (Office of Social Affairs and Inclusion)
- GAJ (Office of Legal Support)
- GAIPESQ (Office of Support to Professional Insertion, High Education, and Qualification)
- GLPt (Office of Promotion of Learning of the Portuguese Language)
- GAV (Office of Victim Support), in partnership with the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality
- Assistance offices coordinated by partner entities

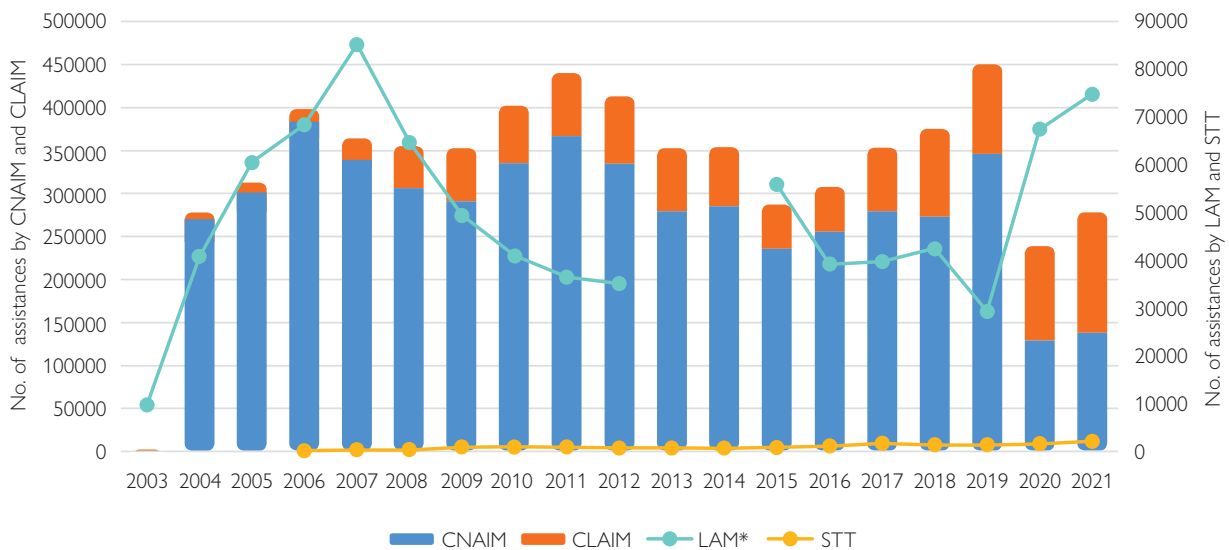
Diversification of assistance channels and service modernization and digitalization

Adaptation of services for diversified groups and groups with specific needs

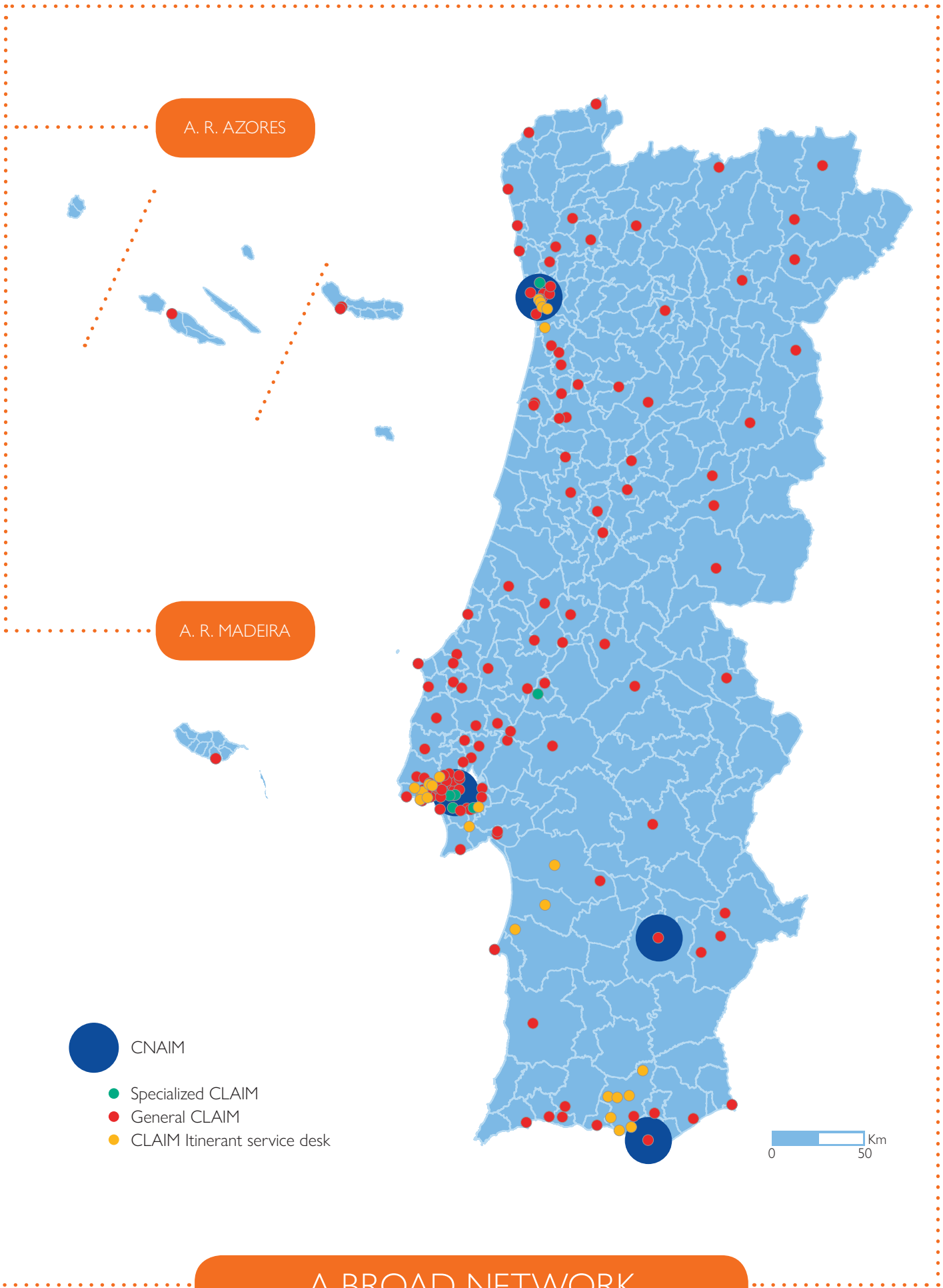
Valorization of field work and emergency teams

Continuous improvement of services, focus on evaluation and mobilization of community funding to operationalize transformations

A MULTICHANNEL NETWORK



*Unavailable data for 2013 and 2014



METHODOLOGY



The logical model for the evaluation and methodological approach of this project was designed under a formative perspective to contribute to the improvement of the performance of support services for the integration of migrants coordinated by the ACM. A contextualized and participative approach focused on the utility of results to the beneficiary entity was used to enhance institutional learning.

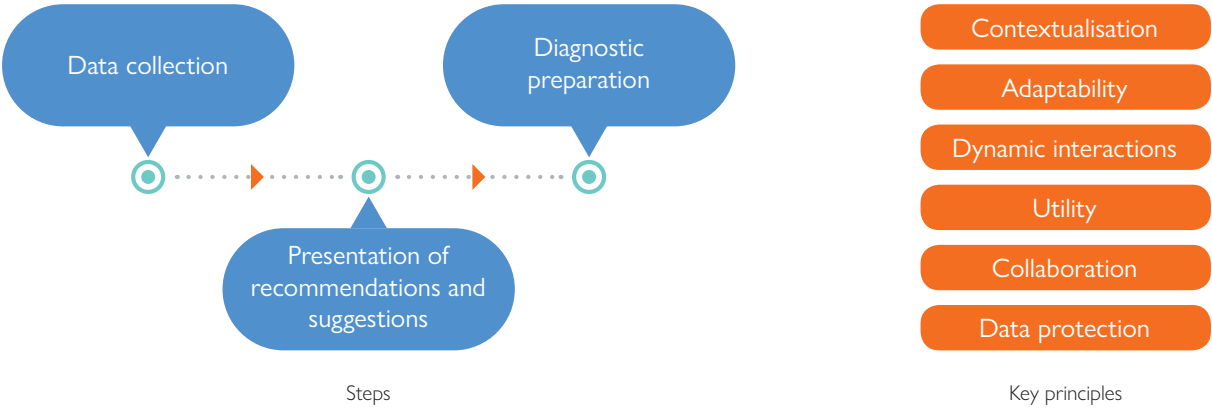
The strict collaboration between the IOM project team and the ACM teams (within their many hierarchic levels) in a continued way, through all project stages, was fundamental for evaluation progress. Such approach was possible and enhanced by a mutual, gradually developed collaboration understanding between the IOM and ACM focused on the improvement of RNAIM's performance within the present context in response to what was requested by the ACM in the application, in order to maintain and enhance the excellence of its services that was already recognised both nationally and internationally.

In this scope, the promoting entity (ACM) recognized the external evaluation process as an opportunity to learn and grow, to perfect its services and to train its employees, due to its continued involvement in reflective and evaluative activities. Such recognition gave rise to an open spirit and many episodes where the IOM team was welcomed (e.g., guided tours to facilities and introduction to teams, invitations to attend – public and internal – events as observers, etc.), as well as to the mobilization of the internal resources that were required⁴ to accomplish the general goals of the evaluation. As to the IOM project team, highlights go to the commitment to general evaluation rules and standards (UNEG, 2016)⁵, especially those concerning the guarantee of privacy, data protection and confidentiality, as well as the valorisation of the contribution of the parties involved, which the team sought to integrate carefully in the developed products. Gender equality was also a cross-cutting concern when designing the methodology. Data disaggregation by gender was included, when appropriate.

The IOM team has actively promoted a collaborative evaluation approach from the start, based on the logic of “evaluate with”, which implied the active involvement of many ACM employees from different teams with varied roles and hierarchic levels. A dynamic and collaborative ambience was promoted, transversally to the organized activities in different project stages, by using different methods. The project was developed in an organic, iterative way by privileging reflective and propositional moments that lead to a mutual influence process (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

PROJECT'S KEY STEPS AND PRINCIPLES



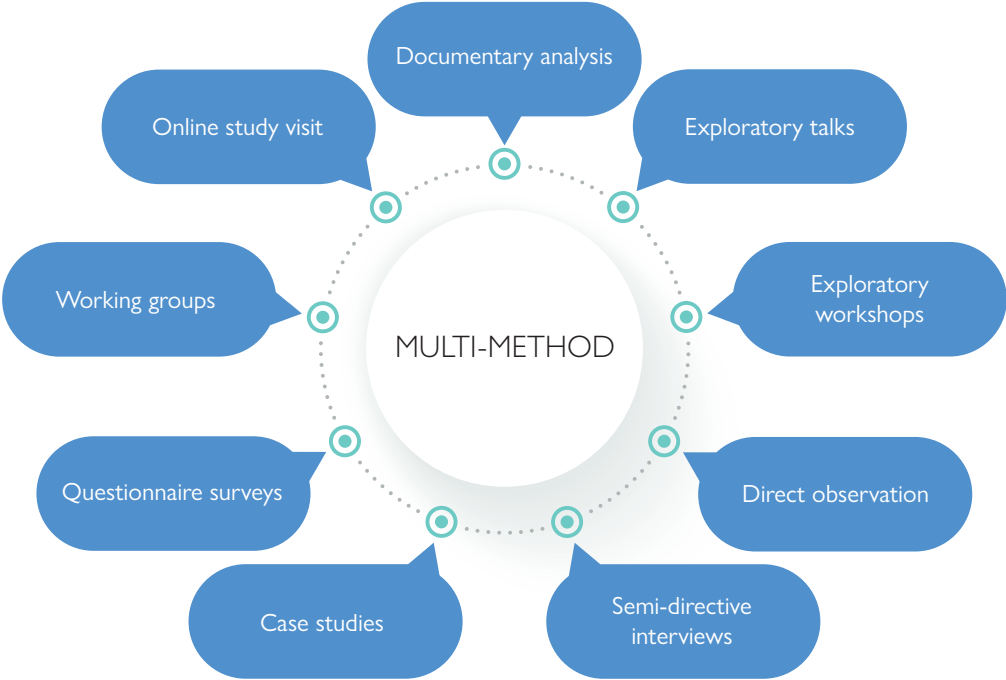
4 When the staff from CNAIMs, LAM and STT was asked to complete a questionnaire, 73% of the contacted staff gave a positive reply.
 5 United Nations Evaluation Group (2016). Norms and Standards for Evaluation. New York: UNEG.

This way, the knowledge was built by layers and sequential moments with contributions from the coordination between project promoters and project beneficiaries and contributions arising from the moments where stakeholders involved in supporting the integration of migrants have participated and were listened to.

With the goal of getting comprehensive, complementary data and views, project operationalization required resorting to multiple information sources and data collection methods. Multiple spaces and channels for the involvement of stakeholders were created to this matter (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

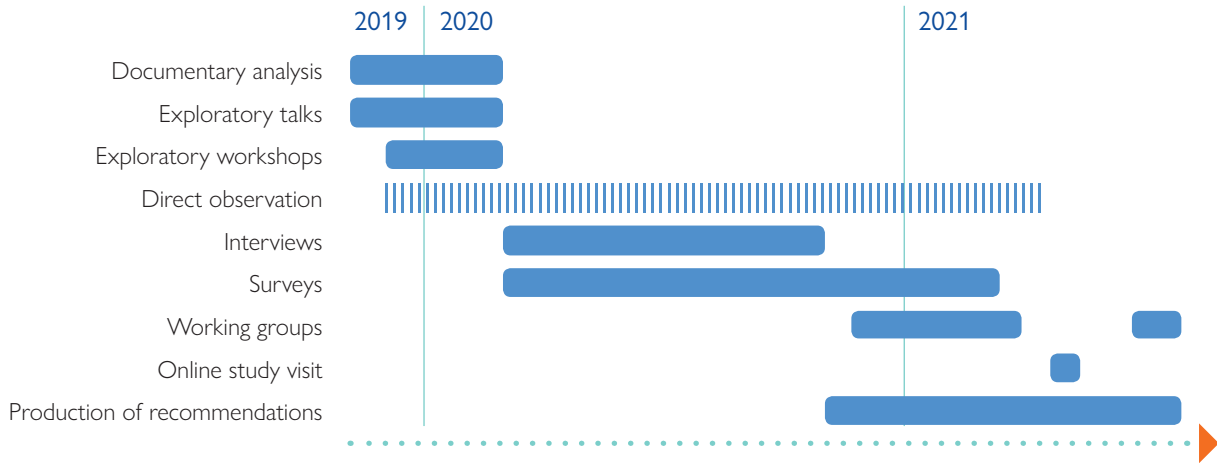
METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGY



The definition of data collection methods was consolidated over time, following the progress of the project and responding adequately to identified needs. Data collection methods were then developed organically and in an integrated way and sequentially over time. The preliminary analysis of data collected were considered when developing further data collection instruments, which allowed to progressively deepen the domains being analysed (e.g. the organization of working groups appeared as a way to collectively deepen some topics that were identified during interviews).

FIGURE
3

TIMELINE



It is worth mentioning that there were significant changes during the evaluation period, especially the impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on social life directly affected the support needs of migrants, as well as the functioning of support services and how people were assisted. Consequently, it directly affected project methodology and data collection method design, which had to be adapted continuously.

The analysis of each of these methods, the specific advantages of using them during this project, and their complementarity are a contribution to the preparation of similar studies. For each method used, there is a brief description that includes goals, context, key procedures, and knowledge gained from their use.



GOALS

- To deeply understand the framework of the services being analysed
- To identify and systematize available information
- To consolidate the work plan, namely by identifying key analysis domains

CONTEXT

Evaluating RNAIM services required the characterization and understanding of the historical evolution of these services and the contextualization of migration dynamics and migrant integration policies in Portugal. This was consolidated via the analysis of data from secondary sources, including:

- Data provided by the ACM concerning service functioning and management (e.g., activity reports; thematic reports);
- Quantitative data concerning the foreign population that resides in Portugal, provided by the Portuguese Immigration and Border Service (SEF) and Statistics Portugal (INE);
- Legislation and documents concerning public policies that are specific to the integration of migrants;
- Literature review (e.g., migration, gender, participation studies);
- Previous service evaluations.

Secondary data analysis was performed at an early stage of the project, where project team members were looking to consolidate basic essential knowledge to understand how the services worked.

Analysing previous service evaluations – some of them conducted by the IOM – was particularly relevant to understand, along with the ACM, which analysis domains should be privileged.

Information systematization made within the project was provided to the ACM, whenever possible, by means of working documents for internal use and subsequent updating by its services.

Limitations of available data for characterizing contextual evolution in the moment of the analysis was not problematic, and the secondary data, when needed, were complemented by primary data and literature review.

LESSONS LEARNT

Learning some internal data concerning the services under analysis at an early stage allowed for a debate about such services and future recommendations on how to collect and systematize data, which were useful to service management.

The thorough analysis of previous evaluations and discussing them together with the ACM was essential to:

- Identify and understand the strengths and weaknesses of previous evaluation processes;
- Identify, adapt, and/or replicate work bases and good practices in the evaluation process (e.g., identify data collection methods and indicators that were used before);
- Enable a solid, evolving perspective concerning the services under analysis.



GOALS

- To prepare and consolidate the work plan;
- To get contextualized, wide, varied, and evolutionary views of the services being analysed.

CONTEXT

At an early stage of the project, there were 20 in-person exploratory talks (which corresponded to approximately 50 hours) with different key actors, namely:

- ACM employees from the divisions and offices that were directly related to the evaluation scope, with different responsibility degrees, and particularly those with more years of experience.
- External stakeholders, namely the representatives of migrant associations and NGOs who work in the migrant integration sector.

Exploratory talks happened at an early stage of the project, where project team members were looking to consolidate basic essential knowledge to understand how the services worked.

Interaction moments followed an informal conversation format and not an interview format. For each talk, there was a semi-structured script organized by general subjects, but an informal, flexible atmosphere was guaranteed for the interlocutors to explore the subjects according to their sensitivity and interests. Given such flexibility, conversations were of long duration.

LESSONS LEARNT

At a preliminary stage, exploratory talks were essential to complement and deepen the information gathered via secondary data (namely, activity reports and previous evaluation reports). They especially allowed to:

- Gather a wide set of impressions and qualitative information, a wide variety of themes that were relevant to the project which were not available from other sources (e.g., evolutionary perspectives about service dynamics, institutional environment, identification of good practices and stress points, impressions about previous evaluations, etc.);
- Gather information that allowed a more sustainable, secure choice of the approach and data collection methods, which were determining to the work plan structure (e.g., key documents to check, key stakeholders to interview, key domains to consider, etc.);
- Create connections with key stakeholders, with whom some project components would be developed, therefore promoting proximity between the IOM team and ACM teams;
- Anticipate some challenges associated with conducting the interviews. Good practices to maintain were identified (e.g., constantly mentioning the relevance of data protection in the scope of the project and at every information collection moment).



GOALS

- To map, validate and/or discuss domains to address in the service evaluation process

CONTEXT

Following the previous stages (documentary analysis and exploratory talks), the IOM project team outlined the key evaluation domains and sub-domains, which were divided into two complementary perspectives: the teams and services standpoint and the migrants' standpoint as users and non-users of the services.

At an early stage of the project, 3 exploratory workshops were promoted, each intended for different key players in the evaluation process:

- Coordinators of evaluated services (10 participants)
- Assistance teams of evaluated services (16 participants)
- Migrants and representatives of migrant associations and NGOs who work in the migrant integration sector (11 participants)

Workshops were on-site, took about 2 hours, and were designed and conducted based on participative approaches, privileging informal (individual and collective) brainstorm environments, sharing of experiences, and facilitated dialogue.

The first two workshops focused on discussing and validating the key evaluation domains that were previously prepared by the evaluation team. Workshops have also included a hierarchic prioritization of key domains, allowing the IOM team to identify concern points and expectations regarding the evaluation, which were considered during the project. Both workshops took place at the ACM's facilities. To ensure the expected number of participants, the place, time and duration of workshops were negotiated with team coordinators.

The third workshop focused on discussing the key domains from the perspective of migrant communities, considering users and non-users of support services for the integration of migrants. The framing of these services within the integration policy was also discussed in a broader way. This workshop took place at a neutral location that was rented for this purpose.

LESSONS LEARNT

Workshop organization, which involved a significant number of employees at an early stage, turned out to be favourable to the appropriation of the evaluation process by the institution and its teams. Organizing dedicated sessions to different groups of employees, according to their responsibility levels, was relevant to promote a more authentic participation. The selection of places with a size that was adequate to the conduction of these workshops and the timely definition of date and time were also relevant, because these events required some participants to travel long distances.

In addition to serving validation and discussion purposes, the workshops turned out to be particularly effective to promote contacts and sharing of experiences between colleagues of other teams and services based in different territories, who didn't yet know each other or had little interaction. It was observed that, after the workshops, teams shared experiences about their participation, which created a certain *momentum* around the project, which facilitated subsequent data collection moments, namely the conduction of interviews and surveys intended for the ACM teams, as well as the stimulation of work groups.

The involvement of migrants that do not use the services promoted by the ACM was relevant at this early stage, as it allowed to identify the problems and obstacles of access to the services and the alternative ways to integrate migrants in the Portuguese society.



GOAL

- To learn more about the daily reality of the services being evaluated

CONTEXT

During this project, several visits to the CNAIMs and CLAIMs took place, which were opportunities to gain a deeper knowledge of service operation, employee perceptions, and user satisfaction. Project team members have also participated as observers in multiple events intended for RNAIM employees (e.g., training initiatives, internal meetings).

Direct observations were used as a complement to information strategies that were developed more systematically (e.g., conduction of interviews, surveys).

A significant part of direct observation actions planned at an early stage were conditioned by the pandemic. Without the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, direct observation would have been quite diversified and facilitated by the frequent presence of the IOM team in the CNAIMs and CLAIMs, both during the period when migrants completed the surveys and when conducting interviews (initially planned to be in person). In a context where the physical proximity of people was strongly conditioned, visits to these Centres were still made, even if fewer in number, and whenever possible the IOM team attended online events intended for ACM teams (e.g., training sessions, webinars, workshops) were attended whenever possible.

LESSONS LEARNT

Direct observation of how the services functioned and participating in some key moments allowed the IOM team to observe *in loco* some of the aspects that were analysed. Direct observation allowed to verify and deepen, in a more critical and objective way, the subjective views captured when using other methods (e.g., exploratory conversations and workshops, interviews).

Direct observation has also allowed to capture some types of qualitative information that are not often directly mentioned whether due to fear of exposure or because it is information that is taken for granted (e.g., concerning certain ordinary work procedures, work environment, etc.). In this sense, direct observation allowed the IOM team to have an external, more objective perspective of the practices and routines, which facilitated the identification of good practices and practices to improve.

The regular physical presence of the members of the IOM team at the ACM's facilities, especially at the beginning of the project, favoured the creation of relationships of trust. In this scope, the fundamental points were:

- A set of initial welcoming actions by the ACM intended for the IOM team (e.g., guided tours to the facilities and introduction to teams, invitations to attend – public and internal – events as observers, etc.);
- The IOM team favoured an informal, receptive and non-judgemental stance during these moments, avoiding a certain “auditing” attitude that can usually impair the normal functioning of services.

As a result, the members of the IOM team were seen more and more as colleagues of an extended team that were there with the goal of contributing to and supporting the improvement of the performance of the RNAIM, and less as an external team. Developing this type of relationships of trust and involvement between teams allowed to have a more realistic view of the day-to-day of RNAIM teams and to generate informed recommendations that were supported by the knowledge of the everyday of services and their functioning.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS



GOAL

- To explore in detail the themes identified in previous stages (e.g., service functioning, professional challenges, expectations as to work procedures, intercultural mediation practices, etc.)

CONTEXT

About 80 semi-structured interviews were made to multiple key actors, namely:

- ACM teams that exercise their duties in several CNAIMs offices and in LAM, including employees in coordination and management roles and employees in assistance roles;
- ACM partners' teams performing assistance roles in the CNAIMs;
- CLAIMs teams (coordinators and assistance techniques);
- Scholars and thematic experts.

As a consequence of the pandemic, the interviews, which were initially planned to occur in person, were made, mostly, by videoconference.

Broad, varied contributions were sought when selecting the interviewees. In this sense, interviews were conducted with employees of CNAIMs's assistance offices, seeking to include the perspectives of employees with varied responsibility degrees (directors, coordinators, assistance technicians), multiple experience degrees, and considering gender and cultural diversity.

The invitation to optional participation was handled with care. Firstly, project and interview goals, as well as approximate interview duration, were disclosed. It was also guaranteed that data would be protected, and conversations would remain confidential. Interview scripts were prepared carefully, by using the knowledge gained with previously used methods. Interviews were conducted in a relaxed, informal way, following the script but in a flexible way, and prioritizing the subjects that were more relevant to the interviewee. Analysis of collected data prioritized the comparison between different perspectives, having in mind the subjective dimension of agents' speech.

LESSONS LEARNT

Semi-structured interviews were essential to capture diverse points of view and to complement and explore deeply data that were highlighted in questionnaires and quantitative analysis.

In general, the doubts about conducting interviews via videoconference had no reason to exist, because it was possible to establish empathic interactions at a distance. This type of format shows some advantages: when in telework, the interviewees were more comfortable to talk openly as if they were in their workplace.

It was considered essential for the methodology that interviews were conducted by project team members – and not by external consultants –, to capitalize on their aggregated knowledge arising from previous information gathering stages (secondary data analysis, exploratory conversations, workshops).

Interview conduction moment also favoured the deepening of the relationships of trust between the project team and services teams.



GOAL

- To analyse in detail a heterogeneous Network via the selection of a case sample

CONTEXT

The analysis of the CLAIM Network focused on the coordination mechanisms between this network and the rest of RNAIM services, namely the CNAIMs.

In the beginning of the project, the CLAIM Network was formed by approximately 100 members (having increased, in the meantime, to 140 members at the end of 2021), from which 11 case studies were selected as a sample. Case study selection was defined after the Network was characterized, according to available data, based on a set of criteria validated by the ACM with the goal of capturing the heterogeneity and diversity of the Network. These criteria included:

- Territorial distribution
- Promoter's institutional nature
- Team profiles
- User profiles
- Volume of contacts
- CLAIMs' historical background

CLAIMs' teams were involved in multiple stages of the project by means of distinct methods:

- Auto-filling of questionnaires to CLAIM representatives with different responsibility degrees (coordination and assistance to the public);
- Interviews to CLAIM representatives with different responsibility degrees (coordination and assistance to the public) by videoconference;
- Inclusion of CLAIM representatives in thematic groups formed in an advanced stage of the project, which allowed to complement diagnosis that had already been made and validate recommendations.

LESSONS LEARNT

The application of surveys via questionnaires followed by semi-structured interviews to the same participant allowed to optimize contact time: surveys allowed to capture core impressions, which were subsequently deepened via interviews.

Data collected through time was analysed and considered in the diagnosis and suggestions that were addressed in meetings with the ACM team. In these moments, the need for intervention was confirmed, and the implementation of multiple changes was enabled.

TELEPHONE SURVEYS TO MIGRANTS⁶



GOAL

- To gather opinions of migrant communities about the support services for the integration of migrants in Portugal.

CONTEXT

Three surveys were designed and applied to three distinct groups:

- 500 surveys targeting migrants who use the CNAIMs to gather general information about the functioning of CNAIMs and their level of satisfaction with the service;
- 140 surveys targeting migrants who use the CLAIMs to capture the relevance of the CLAIMs in the scope of RNAIM;
- 100 surveys targeting migrants who had not used RNAIM services to understand support strategies to the integration of migrants other than those offered by RNAIM.

Surveys were mostly composed of close-ended questions, with an open space for final observations by both participants and interviewers. Although the expected duration for the application of each survey was approximately 20 minutes, these numbers ended up being merely indicative, having fluctuated significantly, also because the number of questions to apply to each interviewee was different and dependent on their experience with the services. Surveys were conducted by telephone by 20 interviewers hired and trained by the IOM. Surveys were applied using a specific software for the creation and management of online surveys (Qualtrics platform).

Restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the surveys to be applied in person in the CNAIMs and CLAIMs, as initially planned. Applying auto-filling surveys to migrants was also considered, but this hypothesis was excluded because of the extension of surveys, the likelihood of bias, the difficulty in controlling the interviewee sample and the probable exclusion of vulnerable migrants. This way, it was agreed that surveys would be conducted by telephone. Such methodological option involved many challenges, such as how to reach the public, suitability to specific interviewee features, and data protection guarantee.

To adapt surveys to the specific features of interviewees (language, cultural diversity, etc.), the following strategies were considered:

- Using simple questions and language, i.e., short sentences, the use of words and sentence constructions that could not be understood ambiguously – which is particularly relevant, considering that the survey would be translated and conducted in several languages, and sometimes in a language that was not the interviewee's mother tongue;
- Translating and conducting surveys in multiple languages, namely those which were spoken the most by the target-audience (Portuguese, English, Spanish, Russian, Nepali, Arab);
- Prioritizing experience working with migrant groups, as well as knowledge of multiple languages when recruiting interviewers for survey application; many interviewers were migrants themselves, which facilitated their interaction with the target-audience;

6 In addition to telephone surveys to migrants, surveys were prepared via an online platform (MsForms) for auto-filling by professionals who exercise many roles in the multiple services of RNAIM. In this publication, highlights go to the type of survey that was more challenging: telephone surveys to migrants.

- Training, by the IOM, of the interviewers who were hired, with the goal of raising awareness for intercultural issues, stance and attitudes to make the survey process more empathic. In this scope, an Interviewer Manual was designed and provided, which gathered information for survey preparation; guidance about responsibilities, duties and prohibitions; useful information for potential clarifications asked by the interviewees about the project; and specific information on the approach to be used for each question (e.g. directions on when interviewers should give previously defined answer options, because many questions were supposed to be asked without giving any answer option, so that interviewees were not influenced, with the interviewer's role being the inclusion of the answers into the categories that were most adequate);
- Conducting surveys using the interview approach and techniques to overcome the existing distance in phone calls and to promote a greater spontaneity and authenticity in responses;
- Conducting pilot interviews: surveys were tested with the target-audience to detect flaws and problems with answer sequences, and to redefine the construction of some questions that were deemed ambiguous by the interviewees.

For an approximation to a sample that was representative of the target-audience (service users), interviewee quotas corresponding to user profiles for each service, namely nationality and sex were established. Usually, in-person surveys make this screening task easier because it's made by the interviewers in direct contact with the potential interviewee, leading to survey application at the moment of contact. Telephone surveys required that a strategy to reach the target-audience was prepared via:

1. The creation of an online form to gather migrants' contact data (RNAIM services users and non-users) who agreed to participate by consenting to be contacted by the IOM by telephone.
2. The dissemination of the online form in multiple ways. The main dissemination form was a dissemination request with the RNAIM assistance services. Employees have actively disseminated the form with users when they were assisting them or via their e-mail signature. As a complementary strategy, many migrant associations were asked to disseminate the initiative.

The application of telephone surveys required additional efforts to guarantee personal data protection, according to IOM's Data Protection Principles⁷. IOM's project team and IOM's legal and IT department assessed the impact of data protection to establish how to carefully reach potential interviewees, as well as the most adequate way to collect data. Crucial procedures in this scope included:

- Only collecting personal data that were strictly necessary for contact;
- Reading the consent form carefully;
- Explaining to the interviewees that their participation in the survey would be volunteer and anonymous and that it would not affect their future access to services in any way;
- Guaranteeing that collected data would not be shared with any third parties and that they would be used exclusively in the scope of the project;
- Making sure that personal data would be deleted after being used (and that interviewees could request that their data were deleted at any moment).

7 <https://www.iom.int/data-protection>

LESSONS LEARNT:

The application of surveys to migrants by telephone had some methodological limitations and some benefits. First, it is worth mentioning that this option has guaranteed the safety of both interviewers and interviewees while on a serious public health situation.

Operation-wise, the application of surveys by telephone has streamlined work distribution among the group of interviewers, allowing each interviewer to establish work practices autonomously while following IOM's guidelines. It has also allowed to schedule surveys to times that were more convenient to interviewees (namely, after work), which would have been difficult if the surveys had been done in person in the services, due to constraints related to operating hours. On the other hand, the number of unsuccessful contacts and refusals to answer were significant, which extended the survey period beyond what was initially planned, resulting in some unmotivated interviewers and even dropouts.

Interviewee sample was limited to contacted people who agreed to give their contact details via form. This way of capturing interviewees was less efficient and adequate than in-person contact, particularly when it comes to reaching individuals in vulnerable situations, people who are digitally excluded or those who are more insecure in regard to communication processes.

The more complex procedures concerning personal data protection, due to the need to adapt the methodology to constraints resulting from the pandemic, required that the project team put on more time than initially planned.

The Qualtrics platform was adequate for survey application: it complies with data protection rules and offers technical advantages (e.g., it's easy to use; allows to save answers when they are not yet completed; and works both in computers and smartphones). The autonomy of the project team in the access and management of the Qualtrics platform used to conduct surveys and store the results, is an advantage because it streamlines this task and reduces time consumption.



GOAL

- To present and discuss diagnosis and preliminary recommendations

CONTEXT

Two working groups were created, composed by 6 to 8 service staff. Eight work sessions were promoted by videoconference. Each session took an average of two and a half hours and was about a pre-defined subject (e.g. Intercultural mediation model, initial training for new employees, work conditions and wellness of employees, coordination between services, etc.).

The promotion of each meeting was carefully prepared by the IOM team. Before each meeting, the IOM shared short preparation documents with the group that contained partial diagnosis and preliminary recommendations that were then discussed and validated in sessions.

LESSONS LEARNT

These meetings allowed the IOM team to better understand daily and operational challenges felt by the employees who assist migrants. Contributions were gathered that were essential to a more detailed production of diagnosis and recommendations.

Information systematization and its preliminary sharing with working group members made the sessions even more productive, as it avoided dispersion and facilitated the debate of the work that had already been made, allowing to be improved and deepened.

The possibility of colleagues who attended the sessions to share experiences and information about procedures with each other became a usual practice for some participants, even outside the debate moments promoted by the IOM. By getting in touch regularly, in a participative and collaborative way, colleagues from distinct services whose roles would not allow them to be face to face used work groups as a momentary forum to share their experiences, procedures and professional practices, which was consensually deemed as something that enriched their daily practices.

Testing platforms that were used before and guarantee access conditions to participants was essential.

ONLINE STUDY VISIT ON INTERCULTURAL MEDIATION TRAINING



GOAL

- To disseminate and debate experiences and good practices in the domain of intercultural mediation training in the European context in order to contribute to the revision and improvement of the training plan of teams that work in the support services for the integration of migrants.

CONTEXT

The Study Visit was originally thought to be a physical visit made by IOM team members and ACM team members to a country with good intercultural mediation practices. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the visit was adapted to an online format dedicated to the theme “Intercultural Mediation Training”.

The event consisted in two sessions of 1h30 in two consecutive days. Five international experts were invited who shared good practices in this domain:

- Dr. Antonio Chiarenza (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia in Italy);
- Dr. Borbala Fellegi (Executive Director of the Foresee Research Group, Hungary);
- Prof. Carlos Giménez Romero (Director of the University Institute of Human Rights, Democracy and Culture of Peace and Non-Violence, Spain);
- Dilyana Dilkova (Member of the National Network of Health Mediators in Bulgaria);
- Dr. Hans Verrept (Head of the Intercultural Mediation and Policy Support Unit in Belgium).

The Study Visit allowed to expand the discussion about relevant and current themes in the scope of intercultural mediation training:

- Key aspects and specific concepts of intercultural mediation;
- Multiple techniques used to diversify practical training;
- Methods and approaches for initial distance training;
- Challenges of training people that do not have the mediator profile;
- Post-training evaluation and supervision;
- Remote intercultural mediation services;
- The role of translation/interpreting;

Sessions were carefully planned by the IOM team in collaboration with guest speakers and were conducted in a round-table format, where experts answered the questions asked by the IOM team – which facilitated the event – and the participants.

About 30 people attended the event in each session, including representatives of the Regional Office of the IOM (Brussels), the European Commission (DG REFORM), the High Authority for Immigration of Cabo Verde, the ACM, and the Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination (CICDR). Highlights go to the diversity of participants when it came to their experience and approach to intercultural mediation, namely the presence of experts in mediator training, scholars, and coordinators of programmes and groups that use intercultural mediation. The event was hosted via the MsTeams platform and was interpreted simultaneously from English into Portuguese.

LESSONS LEARNT

Previous contact between the IOM team and guest experts was essential for event preparation, as this allowed to jointly identify the most relevant subjects and good practices to emphasize during the sessions, considering their suitability to the specific needs of services promoted by the ACM. In this sense, such previous work allowed to select and emphasize essential, contextualized information and avoid redundancies among presentations.

Adapting the Study Visit to the online format has allowed to concentrate all contributions by experts of multiple European countries in a short period and to expand the audience who could watch the sessions. On the other side, it has limited operational and procedural learning, which would have been gained more easily by direct, in-person observation of services.

In the scope of the intercultural mediation theme, highlights go to the publication *“Frameworks and good practices of intercultural mediation for migrant integration in Europe”*⁸ organized by the project team and an external consultant. This publication includes the identification and comparison of innovative good intercultural mediation practices in four European Union countries: Germany, Bulgaria, Spain, and Italy.

This process of producing recommendations, led by the IOM team, also benefited from a close articulation with the ACM team. The recommendations produced were developed, presented, and preliminarily validated. In this context, in addition to the relevance of the Working Groups (highlighted above), the defined work strategy was particularly relevant - throughout the entire project, and particularly in the final period - favoring the promotion of:

- Periodic meetings with the management teams and representatives of the ACM Board of Directors to the definition of strategic options;
- Regular meetings (weekly at given moments) with RNAIM managers for status update and discussion of procedural options;
- Presentation and sharing of preliminary documents with RNAIM managers to be commented and validated in a phased manner.



8 You can access the document via the link: <https://eea.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1666/files/documents/Frameworks%20and%20good%20practices%20of%20intercultural%20mediation.pdf>

FINAL REMARKS



The evaluation work developed in the scope of the project was based on the multiple consultancy and collaboration moments described, involving the key stakeholders identified. This process allowed to collect a significant amount of information, which supported the subsequent recommendation production process.

Such recommendation production process, led by the IOM team, also benefited from a strict coordination with the ACM team. Recommendations produced were developed, presented and validated progressively. In this scope, in addition to the relevance of the Working Groups, highlights go to the relevance – over the entire project, and particularly at the end – of the work strategy that was defined and that prioritized the promotion of:

- Periodic meetings with management teams and representatives of the Board of the ACM to define strategic options;
- Regular meetings (in certain weekly moments) with RNAIM managers for updates and discussion of procedural options;
- Presentation to and sharing of preliminary documents with RNAIM management to be commented and validated in a phased way.

With this strategy, recommendations were produced in a collaborative and phased way, privileging the definition of general and operational recommendations suited to the reality of the services and defining priorities according to relevance, urgency or operationalization capacity.

The fact that the ACM was available to participate actively in evaluation processes conducted by an external entity, like it was the case in this project, shows the capacity of debating work practices and approaches with the goal of constantly developing, adapting and improving its services.

An external consultancy to a public entity requires a high degree of commitment and responsibility of the teams involved. The beneficiary entity will have to provide relevant, sensitive, and often confidential information about its internal operation, revealing openness and capacity to understand other points of view. On the other hand, the external entity must ensure that the evaluation process is based on competence, responsibility, ethics, rigour, impartiality, and collaboration to assure the quality and usefulness of the technical evaluation. The closeness posture should be accompanied by a collaborative and constructive attitude when it comes to solving problems.

In this process, highlights go to four relevant ideas for evaluation and technical consultancy processes:

1. **Understanding the evaluation as an instrument to improve services and empower the people involved.** Identifying strengths and points to improve in an organization and its services aims to give tools that help service management and intervention. The impact of evaluation moments can be enhanced as follows:

- Adaptation of content and analysis to the needs felt and expressed by the beneficiary entity. For example, directing the evaluation to urgent matters might make sense. This strategy does not intend to reduce the scope of action, but to reveal capacity to adapt by prioritizing answers;
- Involvement of service teams in multiple stages of the process: project presentation, data collection, analysis debate, result delivery. This way, diagnosis will benefit from several contributions and perspectives and will motivate the people involved to pursue project results;
- Dissemination of results as a regular practice and not an exceptional moment that happens only at the end of project cycle. Service management implies an increasing number of monitoring tasks (e.g. aimed at employee performance, client satisfaction, work procedures, etc.) and involves many resources. Evaluation moments in articulation with external entities are one of the many strategies that aim to make service functioning more intelligible and support decision making.

2. Designing a **training evaluation methodology that privileges a contextualized, participative approach focused on the usefulness of results for the beneficiary entity**. This approach showed some advantages when it came to pursuing project goals because it:

- Favours a sense of belonging among employees, which is relevant to the Institute's organizational culture;
- Promotes the creation of a reflection environment among employees by stimulating the sharing of experiences and views about specific domains, which favours (individual and collective) knowledge generation;
- Allows the validation and adaptation of the work plan, project methodology and used methods in real time and gradually;
- Facilitates work plan adaptation and reprogramming, at an early project stage, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In that context, relationships of trust that were already created facilitated the validation of changes to the work plan and allowed to carry out planned activities without any setbacks, even amidst the unpredictability generated by the pandemic (e.g. adapting interviews to ACM employees to a videocall format was accepted easily due to the relationships that had already been created between teams);
- Allows the validation and gradual acceptance of formulated recommendations concerning identified challenges;
- Increases motivation and commitment degree to implement and incorporate formulated recommendations. Recommendations presented by the project team were adapted and adopted by the ACM as a working instrument used to guide service improvement, with the technical support project being expected to continue to support operationalization of some of the formulated recommendations.

The contextualized, participatory evaluation approach implied the investment of a significant amount of time by the project team and beneficiary entity in a preparatory stage of the work plan. This initial investment reinforced and facilitated the following stages of data collection and recommendation production.

3. **Valuing knowledge sharing and listening to key stakeholders**. Evaluation moments can originate strategies that make participation a core value of the institutional culture, generating an active involvement of employees and bringing them closer to decision-makers. Such attitude is promoted when:

- Key stakeholders are given tools so they can contribute to the project, namely by presenting project evaluation goals and preparing multiple participation moments. The multitude of listening formats and methods intended for the several key players (e.g., beneficiaries of services being analysed, staff, partner entities) boosts participation. These moments, in a format that suits the expectations of the multiple participants, may contribute to the introduction of new themes to the project, to clarify questions, validate diagnosis and suggestions, among others;
- Participation moments have a positive impact on motivation and valorisation of professionals within the entity. Consultancy moments should affect the following methodological stages and should be described in produced reports, ensuring that the presented diagnosis expresses the opinion of the people involved in the process.

4. **Focusing on continued work and strategic vision**. Evaluation and technical consultancy processes, even if focused on a specific moment in time, should be broad, therefore anticipating a gradual update of diagnosis and production of recommendations. With this in mind, highlights go to the following strategies:

- Understanding suggestions and recommendations as indications, subject to internal evaluation by the beneficiary entity, contextualized by operational constraints and strategic planning. In this sense, external entities might benefit from the definition of interim validation and recommendation debate moments before their final deliveries to capture to the maximum the challenges felt by the beneficiary of the evaluation;

- The external team must see its intervention as an occasional step in a continuous, dynamic development process to be developed by the entity being evaluated. Collaboration between entities should not disrupt the productivity of services being evaluated. Evaluation is not an end but a means to develop, improve, and innovate.

The evaluation work carried out within the scope of the project was based on the different consultative and collaborative processes, involving the identified key actors. This allowed the collection of a remarkable volume of information, which underpinned the subsequent process of producing recommendations.

With this strategy, recommendations were produced in a collaborative and phased way, favoring the definition of general and operational recommendations, appropriate to the reality of the services, and defining priorities according to the relevance, urgency, or operational capacity.



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