

Strengthened and Informative Migration Systems (SIMS) Project
Final Evaluation Report



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Presented: March 2024

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express sincere gratitude to all the stakeholders who participated in the evaluation particularly the aspiring migrants, individuals who remain behind, and returned migrants in the field visits in Narsingdi, Cumilla and Chattogram. Their willingness to share their stories and inputs was invaluable for the evaluation. The input of other stakeholders including national and local government officials, local service providers, and other NGOs and UN agency representatives who work on migration was also very important for the evaluation.

I am also appreciative of the support of Nazia Haider of SDC, Abul Basar of Helvetas and all the Helvetas staff and the staff of the partner organisations, OKUP, PROTTYASHI, RMMRU, and BNWLA in arranging the field visits as well as their enthusiastic and active participation in the evaluation.

I'd also like to sincerely thank my colleague Asif Munier for the excellent support and insightful input he gave for the evaluation. His detailed knowledge of the migration sector and the valuable efforts he put into speaking with key stakeholders was critical for the smooth implementation of the evaluation.

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List of Acronyms

BMET:	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BNWLA:	Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association
CSO:	Civil Society Organisation
DEMO:	District Employment and Manpower Offices
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
FinLit:	Financial Literacy
GCM:	Global Compact on Migration
GMC:	Grievance Management Committee
ILO:	International Labour Organization
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
KII:	Key Informant Interview
LANGO:	Legal Aid Non-Governmental Organisation
LSP:	Local Service Provider
M&E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL:	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MNGO:	Migration Non-Governmental Organisation
MoEWOE:	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MTR:	Mid-term Review
OKUP:	Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program
PAC:	Project Advisory Committee
PDMO:	Pre-Decision Making Orientation
PDO:	Pre-Departure Orientation
PRODOC:	Project Document (proposal document)
RMMRU:	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
SDC:	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
SIMS:	Strengthened and Informative Migration Systems
TOR:	Terms of Reference
TTC:	Technical Training Centre
WEWB:	Wage Earners' Welfare Board

Executive Summary

This document reports on the findings of an independent final evaluation of the first phase of the “Strengthened and Informative Migration Systems” (SIMS) project. SIMS has been implemented since December 2019 and after a short no-cost extension from December 2023 is scheduled to complete its first phase in March 2024. SIMS is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation and four national partners, Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP), Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), PROTTYASHI, and the Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) at the national level and in the three high migration districts of Chattogram, Cumilla and Narsingdi in Bangladesh.

The overall impact goal of the project is ‘to improve the well-being of migrants, particularly marginalised men and women, through safer migration practices and strengthened service delivery from both public and private actors.’ To achieve this, the project is built around three main areas where change is required: 1) enhanced information and awareness of migrants and their families at home, 2) improved quality and enhanced outreach of service delivery to migrants and their families, and 3) greater resilience of migrants and family members through effective use of remittances.

Purpose, Scope and Users of the MTR

The final evaluation focused both on how well the project has performed against planned objectives and identifying lessons learned that could be utilised for the second phase of the project. The evaluation covered the whole implementation of the project from December 2019. The main users of the evaluation will be SDC, Helvetas, and the project partners.

Methodology

The evaluation used the OECD/DAC criteria, with a mixed methods approach combining qualitative data collected in key informant interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGD), and desk review of key project documents, with quantitative data collected by the project's monitoring system. The evaluation included 35 individual and group KII and 11 FGDs with 213 stakeholders (75 and 138 men).

Findings and Conclusions

Relevance

The project aligns with the policies and plans of the Government of Bangladesh including key elements of 8th Five Year Plan. The evaluation also found the project to be of significant relevance to the target community including potential migrants, women who have remained behind, and justice seekers who have grievance complaints. Local government officials and community leaders shared with the evaluation team that the project had addressed several gaps in knowledge and capacities and allowed them to better support aspiring and returning migrants. The project also responded effectively to Covid-19, both during and after the pandemic. The main challenge to relevance comes from the systemic weaknesses with local service provision that prevent service users of the project from being able to access services such as skills development that they are referred to by the project. The project has improved its gender responsiveness since the mid-term evaluation, but addressing gendered challenges of migration from a systemic approach should be considered.

Coherence

Strong working relationships between the project partners have been developed, and the partners ensure synergies with other projects they deliver in the target communities. There is less coordination with migration projects implemented by other stakeholders. The project has built on some previous initiatives such as utilising resources from other projects in the development of project materials. However, referrals of project service users to other projects appear sporadic and not systematic. The project aligns with international frameworks including key elements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG 10.c on reducing the cost of remittances, many of the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), and ILO conventions.

Effectiveness

The project has achieved most of the outcomes and outputs of the revised results framework, including overachieving in the percentage of households using remittances for productive uses and the number of individuals receiving information on safe migration. The main underachievement was on the referral of aspiring migrants to skills training, which is linked closely to structural challenges including distance to the training centres and a lack of relevant courses.

Key project strengths include the multi-faceted approach, strong local ownership of the project, high trust developed with the local community, the flexibility of the project, a good collaborative working relationship among the project partners, a strong monitoring system, having different entry points for access to justice cases, and highly relevant project modules. The flexibility of the project meant that the project addressed most, although not all, of the recommendations of the mid-term review. Challenges the project has faced include the capacities of local service providers, some gaps in communication about the future of the project with the local community, and the lack of a formal advocacy plan.

Efficiency

Overall, the project has achieved a significant level of outputs utilising the project budget effectively. The project results were achieved on a tight budget and the cross-fertilisation of ideas between project partners has contributed to efficiency. The project conducted an economic and financial analysis, and a light review of this by the evaluation team suggested the methodology and findings were reasonable. Although the overall finding is of strong efficiency, there were some areas of inefficiencies identified. These included the failure to effectively operationalise the case management system, the aforementioned gaps in communication on the future of the project, and some concerns the high targets of the project had reduced quality by limiting the follow up the project partners could do.

Impact

Impact was most notable among graduates of FINLIT training, where impacts extended beyond the better use of remittances and management of finances, to increased empowerment in setting up businesses and greater self-confidence. Impacts can also be identified for justice seekers, including financial benefit and the mental well-being of being listened to and having their experiences validated. There is some evidence of behaviour change among prospective migrants, but many are still making risky choices, even after receiving training, and more research on this is warranted. The project has also achieved impact with local government stakeholders, who identified greater coordination at the union level and changes in attitudes towards migrants as being initial impacts of the project.

Sustainability

The evaluation found both good examples of sustainability and areas where long-term sustainability remains a challenge. The ownership of the project in unions is strong and should support sustainability. Initiatives such as including migration as a standing agenda item in union meetings and devoting building space for migration corners demonstrate this ownership. The small and medium businesses set up by FINLIT graduates also showed good evidence of sustainability, and there were also examples of the learning and impacts from this area of the project diffusing to other women in the community.

The modality of approach for implementing the PDMO workshops and FINLIT training showed some challenges to sustainability. Identifying ways to empower local authorities and other community members to deliver this information in a sustainable manner remains an important challenge for the second half of the project. Similarly, the project will need to continue to advocate with the government to ensure sufficient resources are made available for the district authorities if the decentralisation of the grievance mechanism to the DEMOs is to be successful in the long-term.

Overall, the project has achieved considerable successes and piloted innovative approaches to addressing gaps in migration governance and knowledge in Bangladesh. Rooting the project in rural communities, where such services and information have not traditionally been available has been a key element of this. While there are lessons to be learned from this phase of the project, the work done by SIMS provides a strong foundation to build on in the second phase of the project.

1. Background and Project Description

1.1 Background

Migration is a key element of Bangladesh's economic development. The average total annual remittance that Bangladesh receives every year currently is around 17.5 billion USD, which rose to 21.61 billion USD in the fiscal year 2022-23¹. With a large, young population, new labour market entrants place a significant strain on the job market. Approximately 2 million individuals enter the labour market every year in Bangladesh². Bangladesh's 7th five-year plan (FYP) set a target of an average of 2.2 million domestic jobs created per year. In reality, an average of 1.2 million per year were created in the first four years of the plan (this removes the impact of Covid-19 from the average) and nearly 8 million workers went abroad at the end of the 7th FYP. The 7th five-year plan also set a target of 400,000 jobs overseas for Bangladesh job seekers, but over-achieved on this, with an average of 700,000³. The 8th FYP (2020-2025) set the target of 5 million new overseas workers with minimum 50% in the higher skilled categories.

As such, international migration provides an opportunity for Bangladeshi citizens to seek work they cannot find at home. Despite considerable success in reducing the numbers of its population who live in extreme poverty and improving its performance on human development indicators since 2020, Bangladesh still remains a low-income country. In 2019, it ranked 147 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index, with a score of 0.682, however, this falls to 0.478 when the value is discounted for inequality⁴. Although Bangladesh is on track to halving poverty in all its dimensions by 2030, around 40 million people still live in multidimensional poverty. It is also important to note that 95% of total employment in Bangladesh is in the informal sector, which means workers in Bangladesh lack proper legal protection and entitlements, and are left vulnerable to exploitation and abuse⁵.

Migration provides a route for Bangladeshis from economically active poor and marginalised communities to escape poverty and provide support through remittances for their families. Labour migration has many benefits including reducing unemployment pressure at home and providing a significant source of revenue for a country such as Bangladesh. It also offers migrants the opportunities to obtain better paying jobs, to develop new skills, and increases resilience and independence. However, migrants face considerable risks. Often faced with precarious immigration status, they are at risk of being subjected to poor working conditions, sexual and physical violence, exploitation, and discrimination. Services for migrants are often limited at every stage of the migration process from pre decision making to return and re-integration.

Women can face particular vulnerabilities, often working in specific industries such as domestic work, where they have limited protections and are at high risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Bangladesh women already experience a vast range of unequal socio-economic determinants and considerable discrimination in their communities including a lack of agency for decision making, discriminatory gender norms in the family and the community, and a lack of access to financial inclusion. These are

¹ 'Probashi', annual publication on the occasion of National Expatriates' Day, Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, 30 Dec 2023

² Key Facts and Figures, ILO Bangladesh; also - <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/woes-and-opportunities-in-bangladesh-labour-market-1544800825>

³ General Economics Department, Bangladesh Planning Commission (2020). '8th Five Year Plan- Promoting Prosperity and Fostering Inclusiveness'.

<https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/Eighth%20Five%20Year%20Plan%20%28EN%29.pdf>

⁴ UNDP. (2020). The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human Development Report-Bangladesh. <https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/BGD.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.undp.org/bangladesh/blog/new-directions-human-development-bangladesh>

often predators for unsafe migration. The intersectionality of gender and migrant discrimination heightens the risks for women, particularly those in low paid jobs. Migration governance systems are generally not gender-responsive and fail to recognise the different challenges faced as a result of a migrant's gender, which allows this discrimination and exploitation to flourish, and reduces the options for safe and regular migration for women.

Bangladesh Policy

The 8th FYP for 2020-2025 includes an overseas employment strategy. This lays out a ten-point agenda for achieving the vision of 'Having decent employment opportunities (both national and international) with dignity and protection of rights for every citizen, where overseas employment and migration contribute to national economic and social development'⁶. The agenda includes institutional reform and capacity development, skills development, access to services, access to finance, private sector and stakeholder engagement, and reintegration.

The Bangladesh governance of migration is based on Overseas Employment and Migration Act (2013) with an amendment in 2023, the Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy (2016), Wage Earners' Welfare Board Act (2018) and Post-Pandemic Strategic Road Map for the Labour Migration Sector. The National Reintegration Policy for Migrants (2022) and National Diaspora Policy (2023) are expected to be approved by the Cabinet in 2024.

International Frameworks

Bangladesh has signed onto two key frameworks which recognise the importance of gender responsive migration governance, namely the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM). Various SDG goals include targets related to safe and orderly migration, decent work, and gender equality. The GCM is designed to be gender responsive and provides a framework for governments to ensure national level policies and management are aligned with international normative standards.

Prior to the development of these newer frameworks, Bangladesh ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, (1990) in 2011. The Committee on Rights of Migrant Workers in its concluding observation on the initial report from Bangladesh included ensuring national laws and policies are gender and human rights responsive, improve awareness and pre departure trainings, proactive and systematic engagement with NGOs-CSOs, allocate additional resources for grievance redress and further inclusion of returned migrants in social security measures of the government⁷. Furthermore, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants visited Bangladesh in January 2023 and provided a set of recommendations in his visit report. This included noting the progress made in legislative and policy measures to regulate labour migration but also the need to ensure greater cooperation in countries of destination for migrant workers in distress, enhance data collection and strengthen support for returning migrants⁸.

Bangladesh is also a member of regional frameworks focused on migration. The Colombo Process was established in 2003 to provide a member state driven, non-binding platform for countries of origin in Asia to hold dialogue and enhance cooperation on the management of migration through the entire migration cycle. Currently, the Colombo Process has twelve Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. Bangladesh currently chairs the technical working group (TAWG) on Fostering Ethical Recruitment Practices. Bangladesh is also a member of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, which is a platform for cooperation between the Colombo Process Member States and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States.

⁶ Ibid. (p.253)

⁷ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1317872?ln=en>

⁸ <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/097/03/pdf/g2309703.pdf?token=3jXDV6tn13t1ctifRE&fe=true>

1.2 Programme Description

Project funding was initially granted from December 2019 until December 2023. A no-cost extension was granted in 2023 to extend the project until March 2024. The project is funded by the SDC through a mandate agreement with Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. This is phase one of the planned two-phase SIMS project.

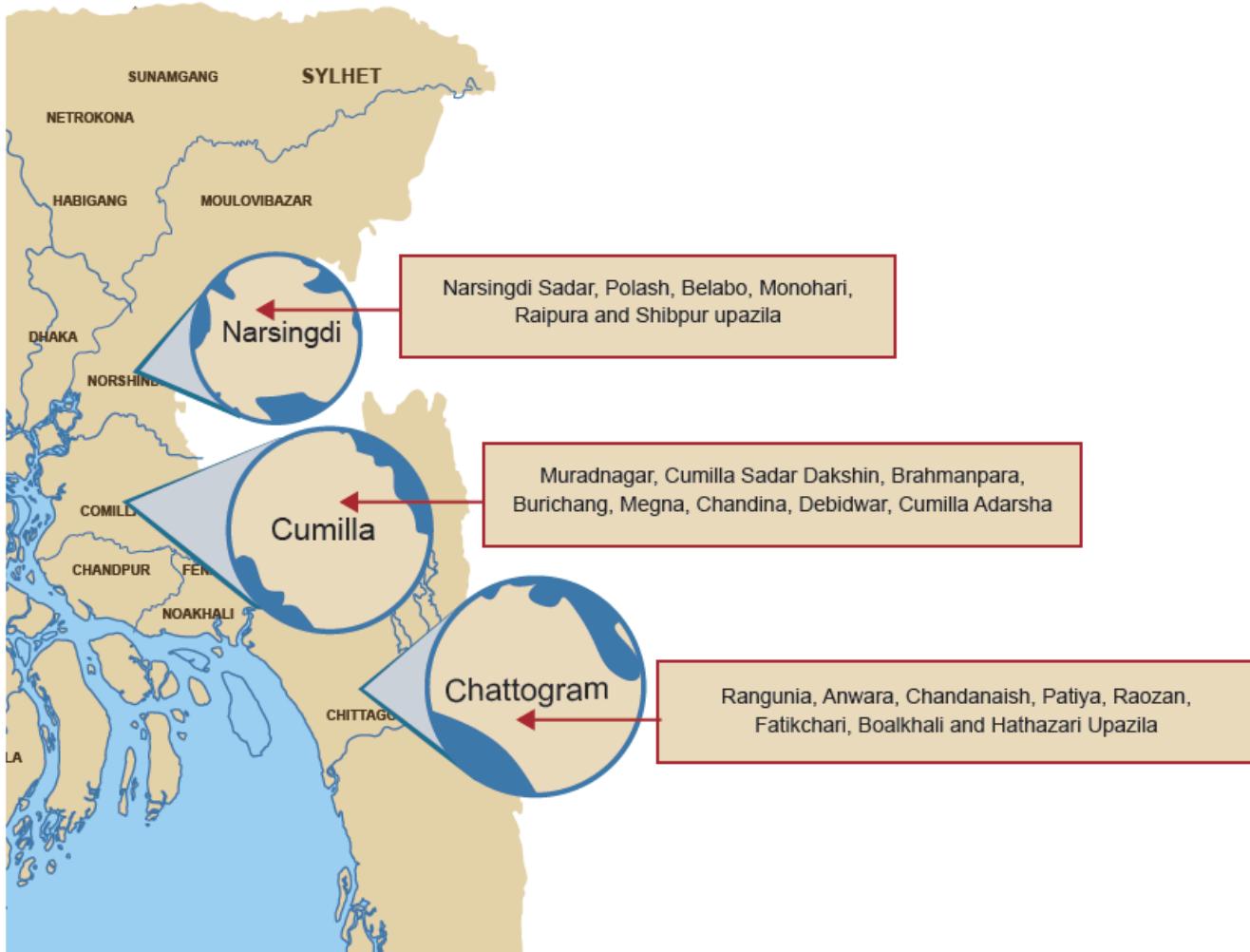
The overall impact goal of the project is 'to improve the well-being of migrants, particularly marginalised men and women, through safer migration practices and strengthened service delivery from both public and private actors.' The project has three main outcomes designed to contribute to the planned impact.

The outcomes of the project are:

- Outcome 1: Men and women migrant workers make an informed decision on migration with a view to choose pathways that maximise economic returns and minimise risks related to migration;
- Outcome 2: Public and private sector providers have improved capacity to provide necessary services for safe migration;
- Outcome 3: Migrants and their family members are able to reduce exposure to external shocks by using remittances more effectively.

Within each outcome, there are a series of outputs and activities designed to achieve the outcomes.

The project is implemented in three districts, Narsingdi, Chattogram, and Cumilla:



Additional work takes place in Dhaka through engagement of government duty bearers and other organisations who work on migration.

2. Evaluation Background

2.1 Purpose, Scope, and Users of the Evaluation

This was a final evaluation of the first phase of the project. The evaluation thus had accountability aspects, focusing on how well the project has performed against planned objectives and considering the context changes that have occurred. As a second phase of the project is planned, the evaluation also had formative lesson learning elements, identifying if the current approach is fit for purpose, what the key approaches to be carried forward in the next phase are, and what approaches should be adapted or dropped in the second phase. The evaluation provided evidence which can be translated into actionable recommendations for future programming.

The evaluation covered the entire duration of the project. The evaluation covered the work of all the three Migrant Non-Governmental Organisations (MNGOs), and the Legal Assistance Non-Governmental Organisation (LANGO), and Helvetas.

The main users of the evaluation will be the SDC, Helvetas Bangladesh, the three partner MNGOs, and the LANGO, who will use the evaluation for reflection on the implementation the first phase and consider course corrections and amendments for the second phase of the project. The evaluation will also allow Helvetas and the SDC to consider the performance and approaches of the individual project partners.

2.2 Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation utilised the standard OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Broad questions were proposed in the TOR and sub-questions and lines of enquiry were developed by the evaluation team during the inception period. The evaluation matrix is at annex 2 which provides more detail on the lines of enquiry, indicators and means of verification, data sources, and methods utilised to answer question.

2.3 Methodology

The evaluation required an approach that supported both accountability through assessing the results achieved by the project in the first phase and also lesson learning to produce recommendations for the next phase of the project. The evaluation used a mixed methods approach combining qualitative data collected from KIIs and FGDs with quantitative monitoring data the project has collected. Stories of change were collected from stakeholders, particularly FIN LIT participants during the FGDs and KIIs. This supported a greater understanding of project impacts beyond the indicators included in the results framework.

Methods

The evaluation used the following qualitative methods:

- Desk Review and Initial Briefings

The inception period began with an inception briefing of the evaluation team with the Helvetas project team and the SDC. The project team presented the project's goals, progress and successes to date, and challenges that have been faced. Initial inputs were given from the SDC and Helvetas on issues they would like the evaluation to look at.

The project team shared key project documentation with the evaluation team before the inception briefing. This included the project document, annual and semi-annual reports, and key documentation and tools related to each outcome of the project. Additional documents such as government plans and policies and research documents were also reviewed to serve as reference points throughout the evaluation. The evaluation team utilised these documents throughout the data collection process to support the triangulation of key findings.

An inception report was developed during this phase of the evaluation to form a basis of understanding between the evaluation team, the project team, and SDC on the scope, purpose, and approach of the

evaluation. Evaluation tools such as interview and FGD guides to be used in the data collection process were developed at this time. The schedule and sampling for the evaluation was also agreed between the evaluation team, Helvetas, and the SDC during this period.

- Data collection period

Initial virtual calls with project managers and senior management of the project partners were conducted in the week prior to the data collection mission. These calls helped introduce the evaluation team to the project partners and understand their viewpoints on the project.

A data collection mission took place between February 14 and 22, 2024. The following methods were used during the mission:

- Key Informant Interviews

A series of semi-structured individual and group interviews were held with key stakeholders. The stakeholders included Helvetas staff, SDC staff, Government stakeholders, individual potential migrants or family members who have participated in different training or project activities, and local community leaders such as members of the Grievance Management Committees (GMC), the Union Parishad, and the Migrant/Migration Forums. Most interviews were conducted face to face; however, one interview was held via Zoom as the participant was travelling at the time. Two interviews could not be scheduled during the data collection mission and were rearranged during the following week and conducted by one of the evaluation team (one face to face and one via Zoom).

- Focus Group Discussions

FGDs were used to increase the number of stakeholders who could participate in the evaluation and to spark discussions between the recipients of project services on the quality of services they received, the change the project made to their lives, and any problems they encountered. The FGDs also provided the opportunity to collect stories of change from participants, which were mainly, but not exclusively collected during from FGDs with FIN LIT and entrepreneurial training graduates.

FGDs were held with individuals who participated in the PDMO training and the financial literacy and entrepreneurship training, as well as members of the GMC, Union Parishad, District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMO) staff, and trainers trained by the project.

Sampling for both the KIIs and FGDs was purposive, covering the main stakeholders who have been involved in the project. Helvetas and the project stakeholders were asked to ensure the attendees are representative of the demographics of the groups reached to date.

- Stories of Change

During FGDs and KIIs, participants were asked a series of questions about their experiences in the project including what changes they have either experienced themselves or witnessed as a result of the project including which of these changes were the most significant for them. The participants were asked to describe particular examples of these changes and the evaluators noted these down as descriptive stories and checked with the participants that they accurately reflected what has said.

- Group Discussion Meetings with Project Partners

Two days per district with one MNGO partner responsible in each of the districts were allocated for the data collection mission. At the end of the two days a meeting was held with the project staff of the MNGO. This meeting allowed the evaluation team to gather specific feedback from each partner and included conducting a review of what their staff consider the key achievements and the strengths and challenges of the project and discuss specific issues such as the case management system, how gender responsive the project was, and what adaptations had been made to respond to emerging issues as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Findings Discussion Workshop

A briefing workshop to present initial findings and allow discussion of key emerging points was held with Helvetas, SDC, and the project partners on the last day of the data collection mission. This allowed for the participatory analysis of the findings and discussion on the emerging recommendations.

Sampling

Sampling for both the KIIs and FGDs was purposive, covering the main stakeholders who have been involved in the project. The sampling covered different unions where the project is being implemented in all three districts. The evaluation team shared an overall framework of who should be included in the evaluation and a proposed schedule was developed by Helvetas and the partners. Small amendments were made to the schedule based on feedback from the evaluation team. Although the sample was purposive, project partners were asked to ensure a representative sample was identified. National level actors were also interviewed, including Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) officials, staff from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Organisation of Migration (IOM), and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), and the chairman of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC).

The following groups participated in the evaluation:

Service Users			
	Women	Men	Total
Fin Lit and Entrepreneur	25	0	25
PDMO Graduates	9	37	46
A2J Cases	1	6	7
Total	35	43	78
Number of Other Stakeholders			
Union Parishad/Migrant's Forum/GMC	14	39	53
Service Providers (TTC/DEMO/LSPs/Banks)	8	10	18
National Government/Policymaker	1	3	41
NGOs/UN Agencies	2	2	4
PAC Member	0	1	1
Partner Staff	13	35	48
Helvetas Staff	1	5	6
SDC	1	0	1
Total	40	95	135
Grand Total	75	138	213

2.4 Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

Some identified limitations of the evaluation included:

- Coverage of project participants and partners:

The evaluation covered a broad range of activities implemented by three migration partners plus a legal aid partner. The budget and time schedule for the evaluation was limited. This thus limited the level of representation of project participants involved in different activities. The evaluation team did though manage to visit all three districts and thus was exposed to certain differences in approaches of partners, cultural norms, and migration practices between the districts. The use of FGDs also helped to increase the number of participants involved in the evaluation and this helped mitigate this limitation to an extent.

- Gender dynamics:

The selected evaluation team consisted of two men, and thus was not gender diverse. Additionally, most of the Helvetas team are men. The project aims to provide a gender responsive approach to migration related issues. The lack of a women on the evaluation team may have had impact on the

willingness of women to share their stories. Women-only FGDs were organised to help reduce concerns over local power dynamics. Additionally, as much as possible the evaluation team were accompanied the FGDs with women staff of either Helvetas or the project partner.

- Participation of the Project Team During Data Collection:

The evaluation team was accompanied in most of the KIIs and FGDs by staff from Helvetas and the project partners. The inclusion of the project team does raise the possibility that participants were unwilling to give open feedback to the evaluation team in front of the project team. However, given there is going to be a second phase of the project, the participation of the project partners from a learning and ownership perspective was considered to be a net positive that outweighed any negative aspects of this approach. In some discussions with participants, the project team was requested to wait outside. This allowed for triangulation of the data collected with the project team present and that collected without them present, and review of the different modalities confirmed the accuracy of the overall data. Including project partners could be used in the mid-term evaluation of the second phase but should be avoided in the final evaluation as that will be a summative evaluation of the final results of the SIMS intervention.

- Language

The Team Leader does not speak Bangla and thus required interpretation for the KIIs and FGDs. The evaluation budget did not include interpretation and thus this was provided by Helvetas staff, who while being professional and qualified staff who speak good English, are not professional interpreters. There is the potential that some understanding and nuance was lost as a result. However, the Team Leader is experienced in conducting interviews in this manner and worked closely with the Helvetas team to ensure common understanding of the evaluation questions, asking for clarification where necessary of the responses. The national consultant was also able to clarify comments made by participants in the sessions that were conducted jointly.

3. Findings

3.1 Relevance

Alignment with national and international plans and frameworks

The mid-term review of the evaluation previously found that 'the project to be responsive to the needs of potential migrants, migrant workers, spouses left behind, and those seeking redress for rights violations, as well as duty bearers such as local and national government offices.' The final evaluation identified similar findings.

The Government of Bangladesh's policies and plans: The project remains relevant to the policies and plans of the Government of Bangladesh. The project aligns with the Government of Bangladesh's 8th FYP, most notably points 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 10 of the 10 Point Agenda for Overseas Employment and Well-being of Migrant Workers. The project has been able to provide leadership in advocating with the government to fulfil some of the key points of the FYP. This is particularly apparent in the success of the project in persuading the BMET to implement a pilot decentralisation of the management of grievance cases of returning migrants to the DEMOs in the three districts of implementation. The fact these districts were chosen for the pilot is a demonstration of the relevance the BMET sees in the project and the trust it has in Helvetas and its partners. This supports the FYP's focus on both decentralisation and strengthening access to justice.

The project also aligns with the 2013 Overseas Employment and Migration Act and the amendments of 2023. The PDMO sessions allows the project to contribute to the implementation of the Act through improving awareness of the employment contract, facilitating the enjoyment of right to information, and supporting migrants to follow safe migration steps across the migration cycle.

There were some areas where although the project supports the Government's stated policies, limited capacities of the service providers and lack accessibility of services for stakeholders impacted the relevance of the project. Point 3 of the FYP has a focus on skills development. The project included a skills

referral component. However, PDMO graduates shared with the evaluation team that it was often difficult to utilise these referrals because the training centres tend to be in the city, requiring considerable travel time and courses they deem relevant were not available for them. This problem was acknowledged by BMET officials to the evaluation team.

Relevance to the potential migrants, migrants, and their families:

The mid-term review identified the project to be of significant relevance to services users including PDMO attendees, FINLIT graduates and justice seekers. The project has remained relevant to these groups as it continues to address significant gaps in awareness and services not otherwise available to them.

The PDMO sessions have filled a significant need in the community. The current system requires migrants to attend a pre-departure orientation (PDO) session before migrating. These sessions are held post-decision, and departure is usually in the immediate days or weeks after the session. By this stage, the attendees have often already paid a considerable sum of money to a middleman to obtain a visa and job overseas, and often also have paid the middleman to facilitate obtaining a passport for them at a considerable higher cost than had they obtained it themselves. Participants who attended the PDMO training shared with the evaluation how this session, held prior to a final decision whether to migrate or not, had provided them with various messages on safe migration they had not previously known and without the project would have had no other route to obtaining this information.

Women who had graduated from the FINLIT and entrepreneurial training believed the training had been particularly relevant in supporting them to manage household finances more efficiently, and in many cases in setting up and running a business. Indeed, one participant shared her wish that the project had started earlier and expressed some regret over the fact what she perceived as savings she had lost in the past because she was unaware of the techniques shared during the workshops. As well as supporting the better management of household resources, there was clear evidence that women were keen to set up businesses and gain more independence through a source of income they were responsible for.

Justice seekers also believed the project was relevant in proving them with avenues for lodging grievances. The access to justice cases have provided individuals who have experienced fraud and exploitation, and in some cases violence, with the possibility of trying to reclaim some of their lost funds, but also with a feeling of closure and relief that their complaints had received some level of recognition and validation even if they did not receive the full level of reimbursement for their expenses. The project has utilised multiple avenues for grievance case filing, including the formal court system, the BMET and Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB), and local level dispute mechanisms.

Relevance to local government authorities

A critical element in the theory of change of the project is that improved migration governance is dependent upon, among other things, system actors at the local and district level playing a bigger role. This will contribute to strengthening the awareness of safe migration practices and the improvement in opportunities to seek redress for grievance complaints. The evaluation found this hypothesis to have held true during the implementation of the project. Local government stakeholders and community leaders at the union level shared how the project has significantly improved their awareness of safe migration and strengthened their capacities to support migrants and their families in their communities. The same appears true at the district level, particularly through the needs of the local DEMO offices to provide services for departing and returning migrants.

The multi-faceted nature of the project helped strengthen its relevance to the community. It addresses pre-departure needs, the needs of families left behind, and needs related to access to justice for returning migrants. This supports the relevance to aspiring migrants, migrants, and their families. It also allows the project to engage the local authorities on a more holistic basis. Instead of providing capacity building on one topic, a broader range of areas where the local government and other community structures can support migrants and their families can be addressed, particularly on pre-departure decision making and access to justice.

Gaps in relevance: The major challenge to relevance the evaluation identified was linked to the systemic weakness of the accessibility of services from the Government. Aspirant and returning migrants who had been referred to services, particularly skills training, reported a frustration in not being able to

access the services. For skills training this was linked both to the distance the training centres were located from the rural locations the project serves and also to the type of training offered by these centres. Many of the stakeholders and partner staff recommended the project gave a stipend to training participants to attend the training, however, this would only be a temporary solution for the project itself and not address the more critical structural challenges. Advocacy with the government to increase the training options at the upazila and union level and also to expand the provision of accommodation for women trainees beyond just those taking the domestic work courses, would more address longer-term solutions than a stipend would.

Referrals to the Department of Youth Welfare at the Upazila level is one approach the project has taken to increase skill referral uptake but officials from the Department indicated that the regulations of the central government requires demonstrating use of the training by the attendees and they were unable to do this with many of the SIMS referrals, making it difficult to continue the collaboration unless more stringent criteria are applied in referring the attendees for the training in the future.

Covid-19

The majority of the project has been implemented in the Covid-19 'era'. The pandemic began in the initial stages of the project and particularly affected operations during the first half of the project in 2020 and 2021. The mid-term review assessed how the project had been affected and responded to the pandemic, noting that the project had utilised the times when project staff could not conduct activities due to lockdowns effectively by developing the guidelines and manuals for the different outcomes. The project had also provided emergency relief to the local communities, and this had probably helped strengthen the trust the communities had in the SIMS project. At the same time, the targets, that even without Covid-19 were highly ambitious, were by the time of the mid-term review, almost impossible to achieve by the end of the project. As a result of the recommendation of the mid-term review, the SDC agreed to revise the targets to more realistic levels, considering the time remaining for the project.

Given the mid-term review addressed the impacts of the pandemic in its report, the final evaluation did not go back over the same questions. What the evaluation did investigate was to what level the project had adapted its tools and training to incorporate local, regional, and global changes as the world emerged from the pandemic. The project partners appear to have included two key areas of concern as a result of the pandemic. During the PDMO training, there is an emphasis placed on preparation for emergency events that impact migration. Participants are reminded that events that create a shock either in an individual country or more regionally and globally have the potential to impact their migration experience and particularly their jobs, and thus ability to send remittances. In the FIN LIT training, the conception of inflation has been introduced to ensure participants are aware of and plan for rises in prices for both their domestic and business spending.

Gender Responsiveness

The original project document for the first phase of the SIMS project acknowledges that 'migration is a highly gendered process and formulates strategies to address the specific needs and aspirations of men and women migrants and their family members, stipulating clear gender-specific targets' (p21). The PRODOC argues that the different challenges and aspirations of men and women migrants were considered during the design of the project. The mid-term review rated the project as gender targeted on the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES)⁹. The project was collecting disaggregated data and had conducted a gender and social equity analysis that had made a series of recommendations. However, the project had not put these recommendations into place by the time of the mid-term review. It also did not consider different needs of men and women in the PDMO training, offering one course for all, with attendees being both men and women in the same category.

The final evaluation found that the project has put into action some of the recommendations of the gender and social equity analysis and the mid-term review, and at the individual migrant level may be considered to be gender responsive on the GRES scale. However, there is still several additional actions that could be undertaken, and the project should consider difficulties with gender equality at a more systemic level.

⁹ [GRES_English.pdf \(undp.org\)](https://www.undp.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/GRES_English.pdf)

The project introduced women only PDMO sessions to respond to the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation. These were implemented in the OKUP and Prottayashi areas, but not the RMMRU areas, where the partner project team argued the limited numbers of women migrating made it difficult to both hold women only PDMOs and achieve the project's target indicators for PDMO. The women only PDMOs include information on the particular challenges that women may face during the migration cycle, particularly those linked to domestic work. The project also utilises courtyard sessions and other mass-awareness approaches to raise the issues related to gender and migration.

However, the evaluation found that greater analysis of the gendered challenges of migration from a systemic approach should be considered. Helvetas developed a short two-page document on how the project had incorporated the findings of the gender and social equity analysis into its programming. Review of the document shows this is very brief and does not offer particular specifics of how the findings are included, beyond a few examples, or include analysis on how SIMS could address more systemic issues in the next phase of the project. During the evaluation, the evaluation team asked government duty bearers at the national, district, and local levels about particular concerns that women face. The reflections on these by the duty bearers were quite limited. In particular, the team asked the district and national stakeholders about how it could be ensured that women who had experienced sexual violence and other abuse in the country of destination could be allowed to report and be questioned by trained women when raising a grievance to try to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation. This avenue is not available to women at the moment, and there seemed to be limited awareness of why this might be necessary. Given that one of the project's successes in the first phase has been advocating with the government to decentralise the complaints process, developing a strategy to present to the government on how this process can be gender sensitive would be advisable. The project could also reflect more on how the local structures it has strengthened or developed, particularly the GMCs, could be used to provide more support to women who have faced challenges during migration. Training gender focal points and developing systems where women on the GMC can manage the bulk of a cases, should be considered during the second phase of the project.

Marginalised Groups

The overall goal of the project is to 'improve the well-being of migrants, particularly *marginalised* men and women, through safer migration practices and strengthened service delivery from both public and private actors.' (emphasis added) The project document does not particularly detail how the SIMS project will address marginalisation, although it does include the SDC Bangladesh Poverty Concept as an annex, that identifies particular groups who are both poor and marginalised, thus fitting into the category of disadvantaged. These groups are, 'women, members of ethnic and religious minorities, scheduled castes, affected by climate change or natural disasters (coastal zones, haors, char-islands, drought-affected), people with special needs, HIV/AIDS and TB affected, and lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender/transsexuals.'

The project has not specifically targeted these groups, beyond the aforementioned attention to women, although the project locations are the rural communities where poverty is often higher and access to information and services is lower. The areas targeted do include some Char areas. The project's monitoring system does track from a sample, the percentage of service recipients who would fall into the extreme poor and poor categories. One of the challenges the project faces though in reaching the extreme poor is that they are not the group that migrates in particular numbers. Migration often costs 400,000 to 500,000 taka, placing it out of reach as an option for the extreme poor. As a result, SIMS works with marginalised groups and the economically active poor who reside in the rural communities targeted by the intervention.

The project has not addressed disability inclusion in its programming, beyond some ad hoc support to migrants who returned with acquired disabilities. The mid-term review noted this and recommended the project 'Conduct a mapping of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities in the project areas and consider how the project can engage them more in various activities, particularly with a focus on the next phase.' The management response to this recommendation was that the plan would be to consider this in the second phase. However, the project document for the second phase does contain a single reference to disability. The discriminatory nature of the immigration laws, including the need for medical tests, often puts migration out of reach for persons with disabilities. However, this is not the case in all countries and certain disability-confident companies prioritise the recruitment of persons with disabilities. Working with organisations of persons with disabilities to understand what opportunities exist for

persons with disabilities to migrate could help the project to consider how to be more inclusive for this group. Additionally, understanding more the experiences of migrants who acquire disabilities during the migration process could also allow the project to support more holistically these migrants on their return. The project also has not included a focus on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) diverse identity.

3.2 Coherence

Synergies with other migration projects

Given the importance of migration to Bangladesh, there are several other projects that work on different aspects of the migration cycle. The SDC is a significant donor for migration projects in Bangladesh, funding a number of UN agencies and NGOs to fulfil the SDC's strategic goals on migration. The project aligns with both Outcome 1, Sustainable and more inclusive economic development and Outcome 2, Improved social well-being for all, of the Swiss Cooperation Programme Bangladesh, 2022-25. The project's focus on safer migration and improved management of remittances supports outcome 1, and the work on access to justice supports outcome 2.

The selection of the project partners has allowed the SIMS project to build on existing interventions and relationships. OKUP has been working on migration at the grassroot level for several years and has been able to build on initiatives such as the migrant forums which have been strengthened in SIMS and rolled out by the other partners. OKUP has also referred project participants to services offered through its other interventions that were not included in the PRODOC for this project. RMMRU has a strong reputation on research and advocacy and the project has been able to build on some of their previous initiatives, such as advocating for the greater attention by the government to the middlemen. Protyashi also has a significant grassroot presence in its areas of implementation, although had not worked on migration before, but has been able to utilise the strong trust it has built with the local communities in the past. BNLWA has a national network of lawyers who provide pro bono support for persons who need legal aid, and this network has been a valuable resource for the access to justice cases that go through the formal legal challenges.

The relationship among the project partners was highlighted by all the partners as being a significant strength of the project. The project has allowed the flexibility to utilise different approaches, within the broad overall framework, and has also encouraged the cross-fertilisation of ideas between partners. Regular formal project meetings are held, and individual staff informally coordinate with each other.

Coordination with other migration projects was less apparent. The SDC Project Director is on the PACs of the other SDC funded projects on migration, and directors from these organisations sit on the SIMS PAC. There are some examples of the projects working together or building off each other. For example, the ILO supported the BMET to develop a unified PDO in 2022 and utilised the knowledge that the SIMS project had gained from the local level to inform this process. There also appeared to have been limited engagement of the project team with the UN migration agency IOM, the Migration Technical Working Group or the UN migration agency IOM, despite there being some areas of common interest such as the IOM's work with the TTCs on the training curriculum for housekeeping training and needs assessment the IOM is doing on decentralising a service delivery mechanism for the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment. Engagement of the Parliamentary Caucus could be expanded much further. Although the project has engaged with the Parliamentary Caucus through organising an awareness visit to Cumilla and Narsingdi and partially through BNWLA, through their policy advocacy component under the project, it was not clear that there was significant awareness of the project or follow-up with the Caucus had been maximised. This is identified as an engagement strategy in the next phase of the project and thus the project can try to build on the initial steps that have been taken.

The PRODOC states that 'A referral network with other projects/agencies will assure that increasing number of beneficiaries have better access to high quality services.' However, this does not appear to have been done in a formal manner and this potentially misses an opportunity for synergies. As one example, one of the gaps identified in the project is the lack of psychosocial (PSS) support and counselling for survivors of traumatic experiences who are making grievance claims. BRAC is implementing a project that provides PSS support to returnees and works in some of the same areas of SIMS but reported their project had not received any requests for referrals from the project partners.

The PRODOC for the next phase of the project identifies the importance of PSS referrals and indicates this by coordinating with the Ashshash project implemented by Winrock. Project implementation areas though only overlap in Chattogram and Coxs Bazar districts, and thus identifying options for referrals in other locations is important.

The evaluation also identified potential to utilise the PAC more effectively. Having maintained a functioning PAC is an achievement of the project, but given the skills and expertise on the PAC, more value add could be gained from it. SIMS has organised an exposure visit for PAC members, but this was a general visit showcasing the positive work of the project rather focusing on a particular issue or challenge that a member of the PAC could provide support on.

Alignment with international frameworks

The mid-term review assessed the project to be aligned with key international frameworks and this finding remains true at this stage of the project. The project supports Bangladesh's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG target 10.7, 'Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies', as well as targets on decent work and gender equality and women's empowerment.

The project also contributes to various objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), particularly those focused on increased access to information, fair and ethical recruitment and strengthening awareness of remittance systems. The project also aligns with some of the thematic working groups of the Colombo Process including fair and ethical recruitment and remittance systems. The Government of Bangladesh announced in the Colombo Process Technical Working Group on Ethical Recruitment that they are recognising sub-agents. This has been an advocacy goal of RMMRU for several years and the project supported their continued engagement in this.

3.3 Effectiveness

Implementation status of the project:

The project's initial results framework was revised in 2022 following the mid-term review, when it was recognised by SDC, Helvetas, and the project partners that the targets were too high in light of initial contracting delays and limitations in activities caused by Covid-19. The revised framework reduced output targets in several categories. By the end of December 2023, the project had achieved most of the targets set by the results framework.

Outcome targets:

The impact targets in the results framework are yet to be measured. However, measurement of the outcome targets has been conducted. Review of the monitoring numbers produced up to December 2023 shows the project has achieved the vast majority of its targets and in many cases over-achieved. Of the under-achieved targets, some are only just underachieved by a percentage point or two such as OC2.2 and OC3.1. Slightly more significantly underachieved indicators are OC1.2 on the number of grievance cases handled (90% of the target) and OC1.4, for skill referrals (93%). One indicator, OC3.3 on the support of migrants returning as a result of Covid-19 was not recorded as evidence became clear to the SIMs project team that most of these migrants were interested in remigrating when the opportunity arose rather than economic reintegration in Bangladesh.

Overall, the achievement of the outcome indicators is impressive. Even the under-achieved indicators are all within 10% of the target. The challenges in skills referrals noted elsewhere, can explain the slight underachievement in OC1.4. Grievance case management was slightly slower to be scaled up in the project and at the time of the mid-term review the project was significantly behind on the indicator. Thus, getting within 10%, even of a revised indicator demonstrates good progress in the second half of the project.

Most output targets have also mainly been reached. The data presented to the evaluation team shows that 19 of the 25 output indicator targets have been reached. Of those that have not been achieved, the

ones which are more than 10% away from achievement are, OP1.2.2 Number of PEO graduates underwent PDO for overseas migration (76%), OP1.3.1 Number of aspirant migrant workers are referred to skill development training including RPL and tailor-made short courses (88%), OP1.4.2 No. of public interest litigation filed in high court (50%), 2.1.1: No. of TTC, DEMO, Airport Desk trained (33%), and OP 2.1.5: Revised PEO and PDO manuals validated by number of public, private and non-profit actors (0%). The project reports OP1.3.1 should be achieved as some of the migrants who have received training have yet to attend PDO training but will do so in the coming months as their departure nears. The skills training indicator has the same problem raised in the above detail on outcomes. The public interest litigation target was for two cases. One was filed on the death of a woman migrant in the country of destination, which led to a public interest litigation rule being issued by the Supreme Court. A second planned case had been on the decentralisation of arbitration, but this was not filed after the BMET agreed with SIMS advocacy and piloted decentralisation in three districts. For OP 2.1.5, the project distributed the PDMO manual at the national level but has not received an expression of interest from BMET in formalising the manual within the government system. This is discussed more in the sustainability section. For output 2.1.1, the project has moved the training of the trainer pool into the second phase as a result of some delays in obtaining approval for the process.

Indicator	Unit	Target	Total	Men	Women
IND-OC1.1 % of PEO receiver MW follow 3-5 aspects or requirements of safe migration	%	35	52	57	41
IND-OC1.2 Number of aggrieved MW and/or LBFM use the formal (court, DEMO, police) and non-formal (GMC) justice system to address their grievances	#	1,250	1210	1142	68
IND-OC1.3 No. of policy direction given by relevant GoB department in favour of Migration Workers' rights.	#	1	2		
IND-OC1.4 Number of aspirant MW referred for skilling prior to migration undergo skills training.	#	5,000	4,674	2537	2137
IND-OC2.1 Number of new and improved services received by MW from DEMO, and TTC	#	2 each	1		
IND-OC2.2 % of UP -representatives, UDC members, CTC members, and Tottho Apa disseminate safer migration information	%	40	38		
IND-OC2.3: % of MW's rights related resolved cases in formal and non-formal justice system go in favor of MW	%	50	58		
IND-OC2.4 Number of new and improved financial and remittance services received by MW and/or LBFM from financial sector actors.	#	2 each	3		
IND-OC3.1 % of migrant household manage remittances, savings and household expenditure as per plan	%	80	79		
IND-OC3.2 % of migrant household invested remittance in productive purpose (farming, business, enterprise, fixed deposit, bond, purchase of productive land, etc.)	%	65	85		
IND-OC3.3 % returnee migrants are reintegrated in economic activities	%	40	n/a		

Table 2: Outcome Targets vs Achievements¹⁰

¹⁰ Output targets vs achievements can be found at annex 8

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Project

Strengths: Key strengths of the project identified by the evaluation team include a multi-faceted approach to the needs of migrants, strong ownership of the project by local government officials and other community leaders, trust from the local community, a strong monitoring and evaluation system, good collaboration among the diverse range of project partners, the modules that have been developed, and the flexibility of the project to adjust to new opportunities and changing contexts.

- Multi-faceted approach**

As noted in the relevance section, the project's multi-faceted and migrant centred approach has been a key strength as it covers a broad range of the needs of migrants, including for aspiring migrants, families who stay behind, and for access to justice for aspiring and returning migrants. The fact the project covers several elements in the same unions also contributes to the two next strengths listed, local ownership of the project and the trust within the community. By offering a variety of services that are needed by the migrants, the credibility of the SIMS project is enhanced.

- Local ownership of the project**

Local ownership of the project by local level duty bearers was notable among members of the union parishads, GMCs, and migrant forums. Several unions have allocated budget to support awareness raising activities. Local government officials and community leaders shared with the evaluation that the project had been important in strengthening their knowledge of migration and the regulations surrounding it, allowing them to respond better to the needs of their community. Examples of this included not previously knowing about the WEWB death compensation fund for migrants, and several stakeholders mentioned that with the projects support they had been able to support family members obtain this compensation. This speaks to the fact that the project offers the local community leadership a previously unfulfilled need. This contributes to the ownership of the project within the community. A proxy indicator for this ownership is that union parishads and upazilas have allocated space for project activities, such as the migration corners and training areas to conduct PDMOs. Indeed, several local community leaders expressed concern that the project is ending in their area. Although this demonstrates some potential communication issues on the future of the project, which are raised elsewhere in challenges section below, it does also show the acceptance the project has gained during the three years of implementation.

- High level of trust developed with the community**

Strongly linked to the previous point is the high level of trust within the community that the project has been able to build among the local community. This did not develop from nothing. The links the project partners had to the community before the project have been instrumental in supporting this. The project though has been well received by the community, for the reasons listed in the relevance section of the report and there were clear signs the communities had developed trust in the SIMS project and its staff that helped the implementation of activities.

Community stakeholders involved in several activities informed the evaluation team they referred their family and friends to the project. This included persuading people who had been exploited by middlemen and recruiting agencies to contact the project partners about their cases, demonstrating a trust that support would be provided. Other examples included spreading knowledge they had gained in PDMO, courtyard and FINLIT sessions to their family and friends.

- Strong monitoring and evaluation system**

As described in more detail in the efficiency section, the M&E system of the project is strong, recording a significant amount of data. The project devotes an important share of resources to learning activities, including following up with service users and conducting research into behavioural choices of migrants and families who remain behind. This has allowed the project to utilise adaptive management and make amendments based on feedback from the field.

- **Collaboration and diversity among the project partners**

The mid-term review identified strong partnerships and teamwork as being a significant enabler of the successes of the project. These partnerships appear to have remained strong in the second half of the project. All of the project partners identified good collaboration between the partners when asked about the strengths of the project. The regular project meetings, along with other formal and informal cooperation between different staff working on the project has supported the project's achievements to date.

The diversity of the partners was also identified as a strength of the project. This allows the partners to utilise different approaches to implementation, such as the different set-up of the migrant forums, and share good practices among the partners. As the project continues to mature it will be important to ensure reflections on the long-term impact and sustainability of the different approaches are capitalised by Helvetas.

- **Developed modules and other project materials**

As described in the relevance section, the project utilised the period of lockdowns where travel to field sites was not possible effectively to finalise the development of the different project modules and awareness material. The materials have provided a solid resource for the project partners to utilise during implementation and helped maintain a consistent quality of delivery.

- **Flexibility of the project**

The flexibility of the SDC in allowing Helvetas and the project partners to adapt to changing circumstances and respond to feedback has been important in strengthening the implementation of the project. The reduction in targets and reallocation of budget to allow more field staff are two examples of this.

- **Including different entry points for access to justice cases**

Approximately 13% of the justice cases were launched through the BMET, 59% through the DEMOs and WEWB, 13% through the GMCs, and 13% through the courts. The use of different modalities ensured aspirant and returning migrants could try to access justice even where evidence and cases varied. For example, migrants who did not possess the necessary evidentiary documentation would be referred through local mediation channels such as the GMCs. Cases where individuals had the necessary documentation could go through the courts if necessary. Panel lawyers reported to the evaluation team that as a result of SIMS, the courts were more aware of laws related to migration, and that the courts would refer cases to the DEMOS and other local institutions for investigation. Perpetrators were also more willing to settle cases through mediation due to the recognition of the legal support the migrants had and thus preferring to avoid potentially expensive court cases.

Challenges:

- **Capacities of local service providers to provide services wanted by migrants**

The project's focus on safe migration is to provide aspiring migrants with the knowledge they need to make safe choices. It is beyond the remit of the project to provide the services migrants might need. This falls to the responsibility of government and local stakeholders. This includes services such as visa checking, skill referral, and access to banking. As identified in the relevance section of the report, the capacities and willingness of these service providers to provide such services remains a challenge, particularly for migrants from rural areas. One of the indicators the project is below target on is aspiring migrants undergoing skills training. PDMO graduates and local officials the evaluation team spoke highlighted there were several barriers for PDMO graduates being able to undertake training. This included the distance to the training requiring either lengthy travel each day or staying away from home, something particularly problematic for women in the culturally conservative communities, the availability of courses at the time the migrants wanted to take them, and the relevance of the subjects to the skills

needed when they migrate. As such, many migrants believed they were being asked to undertake something that was not possible for them to do. The same concern was identified for some of the other services they needed. PDMO graduates reported being aware of the need to check the validity of visas but again unable to access this service in their union.

- **Communication on the future of the project**

It was not clear to the evaluation team that a clear message on the continuation of the project had been given to local communities. Several evaluation participants referenced disappointment that the project was ending in their communities. This is not accurate, the project is reconfiguring how it works in the areas that have received attention to date, but it is not ending. This message could be more clearly conveyed to the local communities.

- **Lack of a formal advocacy plan**

One of the recommendations of the mid-term review was to develop a formal advocacy plan for the project. Although an advocacy officer was recruited for the second half of the project and training on advocacy conducted with the project partners, a formal advocacy strategy has not been developed. It was noted by some evaluation stakeholders that this potentially reduces the coherence of the SIMS project's advocacy as partners pursue advocacy areas of interest to them without it being necessarily part of a formal plan. This also means that requests for support from the government are not addressed through a systematic process by the project.

Does the project benefit/affect women and men differently?

The relevance section of this report notes that the project has made changes to its implementation since the mid-term review to address some of the imbalances in participation between men and women in the project. The outcome results of the project show that more men than women (57%-41%) are following 3-5 aspects of safe migration, although both numbers are above target for the project, a significantly higher percentage of the resolved justice cases have been men (94%-6%), and there is much closer parity in skills referrals, (54%-46%). The outcome figures for FINLIT are measured at household level and not disaggregated by gender, but the output figures showed that this training continued to almost exclusively be attended by women.

The results are partly reflective of the gendered differences in migration in Bangladesh. Migration data shows that men continue to migrate at significantly higher rates than women. Of the districts of operation, this is particularly the case in Cumilla and Chattogram, with more women migrating from Narsingdi. The project's overall figures for individuals who attended PDMO training is 69% men to 31% women. At the time of the mid-term reviews, this ratio was 83.5% to 16.5%. So, at the individual level, the project has made significant in-roads into reaching more women.

The number of justice seeking cases remains considerably skewed towards men. There are probably several cultural, and structural reasons for this. Culturally, migration itself and the abuses women are more likely to face such as sexual violence remains taboo for women, meaning many women feel shame in coming forward or pressure from their families to remain silent. Structurally, the system is patriarchal and dominated by men. For example, at least one of the DEMOs did not have women staff who could handle grievance cases and while leaders understood that women might face different challenges to men in migration, the recognition of needing a system to be gender-sensitive and compassionate to the women complainants was missing at all levels the evaluation spoke to, including the national departments, the districts, and the unions.

The project's GSE analysis made several recommendations as to how to address some of the gender imbalances identified. The project has responded to some of these recommendations but as noted in the relevance section, greater attention to the systemic challenges would help the project become both gender responsive, and possibly even gender transformative. At the local level, ensuring women's representation on the GMCs is meaningful and women are not just included as a token of gender equality is important. Specific women sub-committees could be formed to handle sensitive cases for

example. The GSE also recommended the project considered setting up a hotline for women to report cases or reach out for information to the project, and that women migrant groups be set up as an off shoot of the migrant forum. Evaluation participants shared that women still faced pressure from their families for attending informational events, including some examples of family members coming to a PDMO and removing women from the training. The project has worked on other means of providing information on safe migration to women, such as courtyard events and puppet shows and should continue to consider additional approaches.

At the district level, more innovative strategies to improve the gender responsiveness of the services of the DEMOs and TTCs are needed. The suggestion by the Assistant Director of one of the DEMOs of the need to include more departments and services in the decentralisation process is perhaps one avenue the project can take to advocate for a more gender responsive service. The GSE analysis includes various recommendations on how the government can address gender inequalities in migration through changes in its services and bilateral labour agreements. This evaluation recommends the SIMS project formalises an advocacy strategy, and this should reflect on the recommendations in the GSE analysis to identify topics the project can prioritise in its advocacy to improve gender equality.

Implementing the Recommendations of the Mid-Term Review

The mid-term review produced 15 recommendations. Helvetas developed a management response that detailed their reflections on each recommendation, and where accepted, a plan for putting the recommendation into place.

Recommendation	Status
Review the results and revise framework and agree with SDC, Helvetas, and the partners the best balance of quality and quantity.	The results framework was amended with targets reduced to more realistic numbers.
Identify areas in Section 4 of the grant agreement where there will be underspend on activities and consider how to realign the budget to include more staffing.	A budget revision was conducted and more access to justice officers added.
Ensure the next phase of the project is designed in a participatory manner will all the project partners.	The next phase appears to have been developed in collaboration with the project partners.
Implement the recommendations of the Gender and Social Equity Analysis paying particular attention to how to increase numbers of women attending PDMO and men attending FINLIT. domestic workers.	Some of the recommendations have been put into place, and the project held women only PDMOs with specific information for women migrants, but deeper reflection on systemic change could be undertaken.
Formalise into an advocacy strategy, the discussions the project had will all partners on opportunities for advocacy and CSO engagement at both the national and local levels.	An Advocacy Officer was recruited by the project. There has not been a formal advocacy strategy developed for the project yet.
Integrate more emphasis on risk management in the FinLit and entrepreneurial training.	This was incorporated into the module.
Allow more leeway to the MNGOs to implement the different activities using different approaches.	There are examples of this, within the confines of the high target numbers, such as approaches to running migrant forums and different categories of mass awareness events.

Disseminate examples of good paperwork, invoices, and contracts, which migrants should be obtaining from middlemen and recruitment firms to community leaders.	Field staff indicated these had been shared but the example migration corner the evaluation team visited did not have copies.
Engage closely with the new Upazila TTCs where they overlap with the project area.	The project has worked on developing a trainer pool to be used at the TTCs. This process is yet to be operationalised.
Strengthened engagement with the Union Council including providing all council members and secretary to the council with safe migration messages.	This has been done and evidence in the evaluation suggested this had been successful.
Conduct a mapping of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities in the project areas, and consider how the project can engage them more in various activities.	The management response suggested this would be considered in the second phase of the project but has not been included in the PRODOC.
Review the definition of completion for training so it is more than 50% attendance (recommend 80%) and ensure it is monitored.	This was implemented.
Identify which groups will have a small sample size in the overall monitoring sample group and conduct qualitative research with them to understand more clearly the impacts of the project of them.	There is evidence the project utilises qualitative research in reports, such as the RANAS report and the report on Financial Literacy. The use of over sampling for particularly marginalised groups does not appear to have been done though.
Ensure the risk matrix and assumptions of the results framework are regularly updated. This could be done annually in the annual report and reviewed quarterly at the partners' meeting.	This has not been included in the annual and semi-annual report as suggested. A risk matrix was presented to in the proposal for the second phase, although there are very limited updates
Ensure period context analyses are undertaken to support project amendments where necessary	A feedback mechanism supported by regular quarterly partner meetings that includes a context analysis as part of the project management tools, addresses this recommendation.

Table 3: Mid-term review recommendations and actions taken to implement them

Overall, the project has addressed most of the recommendations. There are some recommendations where the planned actions suggested in the management response have not been implemented though. A more detailed response to the GSE analysis, considering the issue of disability inclusion, and more regular reviews of the risk matrix should be considered in the next phase of the project.

3.4 Efficiency

Overall, the project has achieved a significant level of outputs utilising the project budget effectively. Even with the revised results framework following the mid-term review, the reduced targets were still significant, and were largely achieved. While staffing for the project was a significant element of the budget, a review of the structure suggests that this staffing was needed to achieve the results, and there is not evidence of wastage in this area.

Some of the strengths of the project compliment the efficiency of the project. The collaborative teamwork allowed the cross-fertilisation of ideas, the sharing of challenges, and the brainstorming of

solutions. The effective use of the pause during activities during the lockdown to develop manuals also contributed to limiting the impact of Covid-19 as much as possible on the project.

Despite the general positive findings on efficiency, there were some challenges to efficiency that could be identified:

- Approach that is staff heavy

While the project has utilised the resources effectively, the approaches in the project have required significant staffing. This raises questions of sustainability and the ability to hand off the approaches to government and other duty bearers. Helvetas is attempting to address this in the second phase of the project by reducing direct approaches in the communities that have been receiving support so far and placing stronger emphasis on strengthening the capacities of the Union Parishads and other local governance structures to provide the services the community requires.

- Communication and feedback to the local communities

Although in general local communities were happy with the communication with the project, there were a couple of examples of gaps in communication. The feedback on the continuation of the project identified in the effectiveness section was one such gap.

Additionally, local stakeholders such as Local Service Providers (LSPs) and training institutions referenced they would like to receive feedback on the progress of project service users following their support. For example, when a project stakeholder attended training by a government provider, it was suggested feedback should be provided to training provider on how the migrant has used the training, so they can report back to their department on this. This might though go beyond the scope of what the M&E system is designed to do and create additional work and potential inefficiencies for the project itself. Currently the project only follows up with a sample of participants and does not follow the progress of every service user.

- Case management system

The project developed an integrated case management system for grievance cases. This was supposed to allow field staff to upload information on grievance cases when they received them, add to the cases as more details were received, and facilitate BNLWA making case decisions on how to address the case. The system was abandoned last year after it became apparent it was not fit for purpose. Discussions with field staff suggest the system was too complicated for what it needed to achieve. The uploading of information was difficult due to limited internet connections in rural locations, and documents needed to advance the case were often not available. Correcting mistakes was also challenging, often requiring significant revision of previously entered data.

The need for an online system and the challenges in filling in all the fields suggest design flaws that could have been considered early in development. While it is probable the system could be redesigned, there are several questions that suggest that at this point of the project, the cost and staff involvement to do it would not be cost-effective for the benefits it would produce. The system is reliant on an external database consultant company to manage it and thus requires ongoing costs. Additionally, there is not a clear plan as to whether the system could be handed over to the government or another agency at the end of the project. The Bangladesh Government in partnership with the ILO, been trying to develop an online database for the BMET for many years. This has proved very challenging. As such, the decision to move to an excel system of managing cases for the second phase of the project is probably the most efficient approach that could be utilised now.

- Quality vs quantity

One of the concerns raised by project partners in the mid-term review was the question of quality vs quantity. Partners in particular were concerned that the high targets of the project meant there was limited time for more in-depth support and follow-up to service users in the project. Although the targets have been reduced, some of these concerns remain. All of the MNGOs raised this as an issue at some point during the final evaluation. An example of the effect this had was in the RMMRU areas, the project

stopped women only PDMOs because it took longer to find enough participants to do the sessions or when they organised the sessions, they were getting 15 participants rather than 30. Not filling sessions impacted their ability to achieve the project targets and led to the women-only session being stopped.

The focus on strengthening the capacities of local service providers to provide the type of support currently given directly by the project should help alleviate this concern to an extent in the second half of the project. However, the expansion to new districts does bring a similar risk, especially considering that these districts will only receive one phase of intervention and thus the project will need to launch the project, ramp up activities, and scale down in a four-year period.

Economic and financial analysis

The evaluation team conducted a light review of the economic and financial analysis the SIMS project has developed to try to place monetary benefits for the project service users as a result of participating in the project. It was not possible for the evaluation team to cross-reference the data by replicating a sample of the findings as this was beyond the scope of the evaluation. However, the evaluation team was able to review the process for collecting the data and compare the finding and analysis with the qualitative data gathered during the field visits.

The calculations of the benefits appear to be robust. The strong M&E system of the project has supported the follow-up of a sample of service users in both the PDMO and the FINLIT workshops. The information obtained is detailed and credible. The analysis does have same issue of secondary information raised in the comments below on the M&E system as a whole. The data includes information such as the salary of the migrant in the country of destination, which was reported was often obtained from family members as so may not be fully accurate. The study also calculates an amount of salary gained as a result of skill training and referral to better paid jobs in the country of destination. This is quite speculative, making assumptions about what salary level the migrant would have been on without the training and referral. However, while these small issues can be identified, the overall attempt to calculate this is both admirable and probably as accurate as could be achieved without conducting more detailed, and costly, research.

The conclusions drawn from the economic and financial analysis in a summary document by the SIMS team also match the findings from the qualitative data collected by the evaluation team. Aspiring migrants reported to the evaluation team some of the savings they made by avoiding middlemen for various documents, and the stories of those who had not gone through PDMO training but were receiving support with their complaints, demonstrated the cost risks of the safe migration information gap. Women who had attended the FINLIT training were very clear about the economic benefits both in household budgeting and running a small business, and it was clear the participation in the project had support a greater level of empowerment and independence.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Ensuring reliable project information is dependent on a strong monitoring system. The evaluation team reviewed the monitoring system and found it to be extensive and sound. Changes had been made to the some of the definitions on how many sessions were needed to complete the FINLIT training following the mid-term review and this had made the indicator more solid.

The project conducts follow ups with a sample of the participants in the different project activities. This provides details on behavioural changes that the project is hoping to achieve. The sampling is robust and should provide accurate information on men and women migrants. The main potential concern the evaluation team noted was that some of the follow-up is done with relatives of the migrant rather than the migrant themselves, as the individual has already left Bangladesh, and thus the information on questions such as whether they followed the six steps of safe migration is second-hand, and thus has the potential to be less accurate.

The project is also going through a process of studying the reasons for whether or not the PDMO graduates put into practice the lessons they learn in the PDMO, and where migrants are still making risky decisions even after receiving information, how to revise the project's messaging to address this.

The findings of the risks, attitudes, norms, abilities, and self-regulation (RANAS) report will be discussed more in the impact section. From the point of view of monitoring though, the report is another example of the importance the project has placed in learning and reflection.

3.5 Impact

Identifying impact in a project at the immediate end of a phase can be challenging as many of the impacts will not be fully known for several years. The evaluation though is able to identify evidence of impact and change in certain areas that should be traceable further throughout the second phase of the project and beyond. The robust monitoring and evaluation system of SIMS supports the identification of change.

The clearest evidence of impact comes from the FINLIT training. Immediate and secondary impacts on the participants and their families can already be identified. Evidence of change that may have long-term impact can also be identified in government policy, local government attention to migration issues, and awareness of safe migration. For these areas, the change is more of an intermediate output at the current time, with potential for more lasting impact in the future.

FINLIT Impacts

Both the evaluation data and the quantitative data collected by the project team demonstrates the impacts of the training. Financial gains can be identified from both improved management of household finances, including the cutting back on unnecessary expenditure, and from additional income that is being earned from small businesses set up by the FINLIT graduates. These gains were narrated to the evaluation team and can be triangulated by the monitoring data the project has. The qualitative data gathered in the evaluation is able to go beyond the numerical benefits to demonstrate some of the less tangible gains. Women shared with the evaluation team that they had better self-esteem, less stress about relying just on remittances, and felt respected more in the community. As a result, many were empowered to speak up more in their family life and in the community, and believed they were listened to more by authority figures and family heads as a result. Many also shared their pride in being able to provide some level of employment to other women in the community, demonstrating there have been indirect gains as well as direct gains.

“I used to just have one sewing machine and work at home on odd jobs for my family. Following the FINLIT training I was inspired to start my business. I now have nine women working for me, own six sewing machines, and run my own shop in the market. I used to rely on the remittance my husband sent but now I save it all and am contributing to the family from my own earnings. I’m also able to contribute to her extended family for an emergency situation. My son is doing the grade 10 exam, and we want to send him abroad for education and I hope to fund him through savings. I feel more courage within myself and motivation. Overall, the most significant thing is that as a woman I can sell products in an industry dominated by men is very meaningful to me. I have a feeling of joy and satisfaction to contribute to other women and make a difference in their lives. I hope they will replicate this at some point.” (Story of change- Women Fin Lit Graduate)

“Before the training I just did household chores and would spend time with neighbours. I depended just on the remittance. After receiving the training, I realised that I could be more productive and start a business. I started a restaurant business with the investment of only 5,000 taka. Now I earn about 15,000 taka per month. If my husband’s remittance is late, I am ok and don’t rely on it coming through on time all the time. I received an entrepreneurial award from the union. The greatest achievement is I am now independent. I do not rely on others. I have employed about 5-6 people, and some of them have turned into entrepreneurs themselves.” (Story of change- Women Fin Lit Graduate)

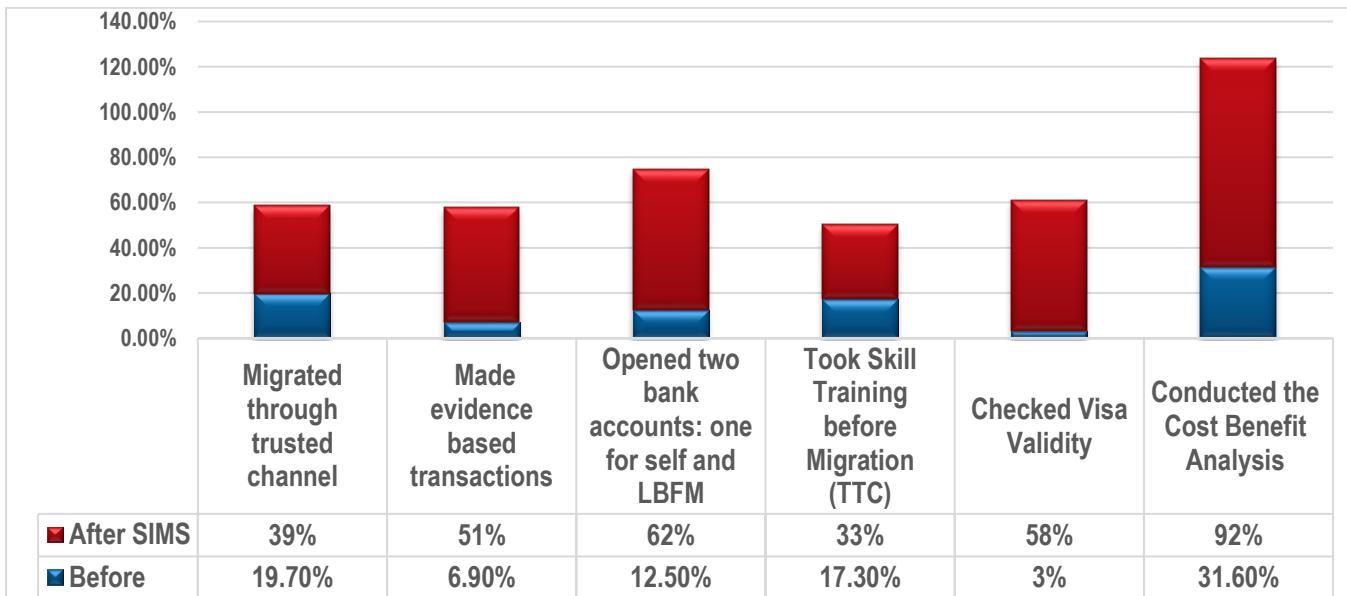
Behavioural Changes of Aspiring Migrants

While there does not seem to be any question the knowledge of safe migration has improved, the level of behavioural change is still unclear. This is borne out both by the project's own research and also by information shared with the evaluation team during FGDs. Graduates of the PDMO shared the increased knowledge they had gained and indicated the information was generally new to them. The cost-benefit analysis conducted during the PDMO training was considered a particularly useful tool for the aspiring migrants. PDMO graduates did share examples with the evaluation team of changing behaviour as a result of the workshops. This included examples of migrants changing their minds on whether to migrate or delaying their migration.

"The cost benefit analysis for migration made me realise that without any particular skill I would not get a suitable job that will pay me well. I would rather try to earn a living locally. After the PDMO, I contacted a TTC and got training as an electrician. As there was no guarantee yet for a good overseas opportunity, I saw my uncle running a poultry farm and thought I could try that even though I did not know much about it. So, I took a training at the Youth Development Centre in early 2023 on poultry farming and got a certificate. It has been a year now that I am running this poultry farm. My uncle, who also has a farm, did inspire me and gave me some initial guidance. I started the business from little over 100k that I already had managed for migration and used that as a capital. I have been able to save about BDT 70k in 1 year. Apart from the chicks, feed and medicine, there is no additional cost. I work on my own and only hire a day labourer when I go to the market for selling my chickens and getting new set of chicks and supplies. I ensure that they are vaccinated and did not have any loss of chicks. I have taken the space from an uncle with a rent of BDT 40k for 2 years. I want to continue this for a while and expand the farm with my homestead, until there is an opportunity to go abroad.

I had a turnaround in decision making and I am doing well economically with a venture of my own. I started with the initial migration money as capital and so far, there is no debt. I am independent and also able to contribute into family expenses when required. I am enjoying a social benefit as well because of changing my mind and starting a business venture of my own. I live with my parents, I get to spend time with friends, and enjoy my time in sports activity. My parents are also happy that I am doing some useful IGA." (Story of change-PDMO graduate)

The project's monitoring data suggests it has over-achieved on the target of both men and women following at least 3 safe migration behaviours. However, despite the knowledge of safe migration many still do not follow these practices and some evaluation participants indicated they may still undertake risky practices during their migration cycle. As the RANAS report detailed, the baseline conducted for the project identified that while most participants in PDMO training were aware of four key behaviours supportive of safe migration, a minority only intended to apply this knowledge. The RANAS report was designed to support messaging that would help address the knowledge-behaviour gap. The results reported by the project shows that there has been some impact in this area, but there is a significant number of migrants not following safe migration behaviours:



Graph 1: behaviours before and after SIMS (data from SIMS monitoring systems)

While the vast majority of PDMO graduates utilised the cost benefit analysis, and most opened two bank accounts, significant minorities still did not follow the other safe migration approaches¹¹. Findings from the evaluation suggest this disconnect is linked to three main reasons. One is the desire to migrate and belief in its benefits, outweighs the feeling of risks. Many of the migrants are young and may be more willing to take risks. Many migrants reported facing significant pressure from family members to migrate in order for the family to benefit from remittances. Many reported to the evaluation team that they could obtain loans for the cost of migrating from family members but would not be able to obtain a loan from them to set up a business in Bangladesh rather than migrating, as people believed the rate of return from migration was higher. The final reason shared with the evaluation team was the limited options to follow the safe migration messages. Migrants indicated they would ask for receipts from a middleman but if this could not be obtained, then they are likely to utilise the person anyway. The option for visa checking was not always available at the local level and the same applied to skills training.

SIMS will need to continue its research in the second phase of the project to understand this more and understand if there is more nuance that can be identified with the behavioural choices of migrants. For example, does understanding safe migration messages make them more careful when choosing a middleman even if they cannot obtain full documentation, do those who chose to postpone migration initially end up following the safe migration behaviours, or does awareness of potential challenges and avenues for support help migrants address protection concerns when overseas?

Impacts of Grievance Case Resolution

SIMS monitoring data shows that 478 out of 785 (61%) of resolved complaints were resolved in favour of the justice seekers. This does though mask the fact that while the resolution often ensures they recover some costs, they almost never get the full amount back. Examples shared with the evaluation team suggest that most resolutions of the cases involve a payment of about 100,000 to 150,000 Taka, while the migrant has often spent in excess of 400,000 originally. This problem is linked to the structural challenges of migration costs in Bangladesh. The government sets official rates for how much it should cost to migrate to particular countries, and if the case is resolved through formal channels, this rate is usually the maximum ceiling awarded to a migrant, despite the actual cost being considerably higher.

¹¹ The RANAS study looked at slightly different behaviours, Ask the sub-agent for a receipt for any financial transactions (specially also focused family related subagents or visa provider), 2. Attending skills training prior to migration 3. Retain copies of migration documents with family members, 4. Opening two bank accounts (one for transferring remittances to family, one for own savings) before migrating. However, the overall comparison and point remain valid.

The project thus has had impact in obtaining compensation for migrant, but not fully reimbursing them for what they have lost.

That said, the achievements of the project in supporting these resolutions are not insignificant. Without the project, most of the justice seekers would have received nothing. The justice seekers also shared other non-financial benefits they believed they had received. The mental health benefits of feeling they are being listened to was bought up by some justice seekers. Even if they did not receive full compensation, the fact they had their complaints listened to and received some was seen as validation by them. This had also contributed to greater acceptance in the community of the validity of the complaint and helped the migrants feel more comfortable in their communities again.

"I paid BDT 3.5 lakh with loan and also after selling wife's gold jewellery for migrating to Saudi Arabia... One of the female migrant forum members told me that we could seek justice through OKUP and that is how we turned up here... The sub-agent said he also had spent BDT 1.6 lakh for Sajib's migration. He is from a different union and runs a travel agency service from a shop in the marketplace. We claimed for BDT 1.2 lakh, BMET settled the amount to BDT 90k. We received BDT 85k from the agent but still were demanding for the rest of the amount (30k). BMET asked us to accept the amount but if they put pressure on the sub agent, we believe we could get at least BDT 1 lakh. We are grateful to DEMO for the support and follow up." (Justice Seeker)

As described in the section on strengths of the project, the SIMS project was also reported to have had impact in improving awareness among the judiciary and other legal actors of the relevant articles of the migration laws, as a result of the panel lawyers filing more cases, and a greater willingness of perpetrators to try to settle out of court to avoid lengthy and expensive court cases.

Local Government Awareness and Capacities

Awareness of migration issues and increased capacities to address community needs among local government and community stakeholders was another identified impact of the project. At the union level, there was evidence of greater capacities of the Union Parishads to understand the challenges migrants face and provide relevant information on safe migration. GMCs have provided an avenue for justice seekers to try to resolve their cases informally at the local level. Migrant forums have been empowered to provide support to migrants at different levels of the migration cycle, including pre-departure information on safe migration, and how to seek justice when they return. Improved coordination between stakeholders was also mentioned as a key change of the project:

"The coordination between us is the most significant. Previously it was more scattered. Now it is more organised. So, what ever migrants need we now provide in a more organised way. We are able to coordinate together to provide these services. The union and the local leaders are united in particular causes and needs of the community, and this is reflected in our migration sector work as well. We believe we are now 99% aware of the relevant migration issues and as a result we are capable of disseminating these to the community. Although we did this before, we are able to do it much more comprehensively and in an even more organised and systematic manner." (Story of Change- Union Parishad Chairman)

There are questions about the long-term sustainability of these inventions, particularly given the wide variety of mandates the Union Parishad has from the government. This is discussed more in the sustainability section.

At the district level, there were also some indications in improvements in capacities to address grievance cases, although this at the early stage of the decentralisation approach. Officials from DEMOs shared with the evaluation team that involvement in the project had helped improve the awareness of alternative dispute resolution among local officials and collaboration with other departments in resolving cases. As the process decentralisation pilot has only been in operation, it is too early to see much impact though.

Advocacy Impacts

One of the key aspects of the theory behind the SIMS project is that evidence gathered at the grassroot level can support advocacy for change at the national level. During the period of implementation, SIMS engaged with officials the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, at the BMET, and the Welfare Wage Earners Board, and with parliamentarians. Two prominent examples of successful advocacy can be seen to the decision to decentralise grievance management to the three pilot districts and the agreement to set up a resource pool of trainers to support the PDO training by DEMOs and the Technical Training Centres (TTCs). The fact the three districts chosen for the pilot were the ones the SIMS project works demonstrates the impact the project had on the decision.

Long-term impact has yet to be realised though as it is too early in the process. The decentralisation of the grievance management has only been operational for one year. While the DEMOs have successfully handled cases, questions about the long-term viability of the approach in more districts remain. The resource pool has yet to be operationalised, so impact of the advocacy is so far limited to the decision to allow it to go ahead.

Training on advocacy has been conducted with the partners, and advocacy approaches and goals are discussed at the regular project meetings. Particular initiatives have borne results such as formalising the BMET-RMMRU joint training of recruiting agencies, inclusion of migration issue in the election manifesto and regularising Sub-Agents in the OEMA 2013. The project was also successful in the public interest litigation case it brought that resulted in a public interest litigation rule published by the Supreme Court¹², and demonstrates the role public interest litigation can play to supplement the other advocacy efforts of the project. However, the project does not have an advocacy strategy. It would be helpful to develop an advocacy strategy for the second phase of the project, including identifying which organisation will be responsible for particular advocacy and for responding to requests from the government linked to advocacy.

3.6 Sustainability

As the project enters its second phase, it is important to identify what areas of the intervention have been institutionalised and have the potential to be continued in the long-term.

Local Governance

At the local level, there were good examples of ownership of the project's activities that may be sustainable in the long-term. 71 Union Parishads have allocated funds in their annual budget to support safe migration messages and 40 Union Parishads set up migration desks to allow the project to offer information to migrants. Other examples include allowing the project to utilise local venues for training. The project has also worked to institutionalise the GMCs and migration forums. How effective this will be in the long run remains questionable. While the members of both structures described plans to continue work after project support has ended, the broad numbers of committees at the union level does mean they may struggle for space to be heard once the project is no longer amplifying their voice. The project has rated the GMCs based on which is most likely to be able to continue operating and should ensure this process is documented to understand the key drivers. One good practice identified by the evaluation was Union Parishads that plan to keep updates from the GMCs on their standing agendas in monthly meetings. This demonstrated a possibility of long-term sustainability.

PDMO Training

Sustainability of the PDMO model is not yet assured. It is a resource intensive session that unlike the PDO training is not mandated by the government. The project has demonstrated that it fills a need and can be successfully implemented by a NGO, but identifying how the PDMO can be continued beyond

¹² Supreme Court of Bangladesh High Court Division, Writ Petition No.1838 of 2023

the project remains outstanding. The approach requires significant staffing levels to reach the significant demand there is for it within the community in the unions.

The next phase of the SIMS project will need to consider how the PDMO can be institutionalised within the local structures that exist. Several PDMO graduates did indicate to the evaluation team that they would be willing to pay for PDMO sessions. Given the amount they are spending on migration, the idea of paying a small fee of 100-200 taka to attend a session was considered reasonable. This may give opportunities for Helvetas the partners to explore ways to ensure the Migrant Forums are able to continue after the project, although it will also raise issues of governance and financial management that would need to be clearly addressed.

FINLIT graduates

At the individual level, the knowledge gained by the FINLIT graduates should prove sustainable. The testimony shared by the graduates with the evaluation team, suggested the businesses set up had been done with long-term viability in mind. Although some graduates had taken loans for their businesses, many had already repaid the loans and others had clear plans for doing so. This element of the project appeared to have empowered the women involved to claim more independence in managing their finances and running external businesses. Many were planning to expand the businesses and proud of offering jobs to other women in the community.

The LSP model also appeared to have been successful in many instances. The mid-term review raised concerns about if the LSP model would be of interest to the FINLIT graduates and provide a structure for the LSPs that they would consider was worth their time participating. The findings from the final evaluation suggest that in many cases the LSP model has proved effective. Several FINLIT graduates indicated they were aware of the LSPs and had used them for advice and support in many cases. The LSPs themselves believed that participation in the project had been a net benefit to them as they had been able to increase their client base. For example, one LSP who provides support on animal husbandry and artificial insemination, estimated the number of clients he has per day had risen from 2-3, to 4-5 as a result of the project. Similar estimates were shared by other LSPs.

While individual gains are sustainable, the length of the FINLIT training remains a challenge for the long-term operation of the training by any entity other than an NGO. It is unlikely the government would be able to take this model on without having the resources to appoint local level trainings at the union level. In the next phase of the project, the FINLIT training will be handed over to another operating in a separate project. To support the long-term sustainability of this approach, Helvetas, the SDC, and the new operator will need to work closely to ensure all the good practices and lessons learned from SIMS phase one are capitalised and shared.

Grievance systems

Successful advocacy for policy change is a key indicator of sustainability and in this sense, the project's success in persuading the BMET to decentralise the handling of grievance cases to the DEMOs on a pilot basis is a key success of the project. The long-term sustainability of this approach will depend on supporting the pilot DEMOs, demonstrating to the government the approach is possible country-wide, and identifying gaps and advocating for the necessary resources to address these gaps. While the DEMOs the evaluation team spoke to during the evaluation were supportive of the process, they also noted their resource limitations. Limited awareness of alternative dispute resolution skills, a lack of women staff to support women justice seekers, and a lack of IT skills and equipment were all identified as potential barriers. A turnover of leadership was another concern. Both Directors the evaluation team spoke to were new to the position, although they had worked within the BMET and DEMO for a number of years. Training conducted so far in the project had been limited to senior officials from the DEMOs and BMET, which is where personnel are most likely to rotate. Targeting a broader range of staff for capacity building in the future should be considered by SIMS as they look to support a roll out further of the pilot.

One of the Directors highlighted his belief that it is important to ensure the involvement of more district level actors than just the DEMOs.

"Alternative dispute resolution is needed at the district level, police level, and upazila level... There should be help desks in the other districts and additionally these desks could be part of the District apparatus. So yes, DEMO should be involved but also decentralise the other institutions, in particular the police. It is easier to deal with if the recruiting agency has been registered but if the abuse happens before that it is harder, and you need the police involved. ADR should also go down to upazila and the union." DEMO Official

Approaches in the next phase of the project

The next phase of the project is designed to both institutionalise the gains of this phase in the areas of implementation by working on ensuring a model of service delivery owned by local institutions, as well as introducing the project in two new districts. In the two new districts, the project faces the challenge of identifying implementing partners, scaling up, and then ensuring institutionalisation in a four-year period. It will be challenging to ensure sustainability in these areas in a limited timeframe and SDC and Helvetas will need to ensure the project targets are not so high as to not allow time for institutionalisation.

The project also proposes to develop digital tools for the PDMO element of the project. This would most likely be an app containing information on safe migration. The project does intend to develop a business case on the relevance and sustainability of the digital tools. The project does need to ensure it analyses the experiences of other digitalisation processes in Bangladesh to understand the potential pitfalls. Apps require long-term maintenance, and this will need to be ensured after the project is completed. The capacity of government departments to manage digitalisation processes is limited and there are many examples of apps failing to gain traction after a project. The government and the ILO have also been struggling for many years to digitalise the BMET case management system. A study to reflect on the lessons learned on these processes is important before developing any new digital tools.

4. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Lessons Learned

4.1 Conclusions

Overall, the SIMS project has obtained significant achievements in the first phase of the project and provides a strong base for institutionalising the gains of the project more deeply in the second phase. The project has been built on strong teamwork and good utilisation of the diverse expertise and backgrounds of the project partners.

The project's relevance to the needs of aspiring migrants, families who remain behind, and returning justice seekers is significant and demonstrates the need to ensure the project's services are institutionalised and adopted by local and national duty bearers as much as possible. The needs of government institutions at different levels remain considerable, and the project should continue to utilise the grassroot evidence gathered at the local level to advocate for change at the national level.

The project demonstrates good internal coherence through collaboration with the project partners but could strengthen the external collaboration through identifying and acting on more synergies with other migration related projects. Following through on referral systems proposed in the PRODOC would help support this. The project aligns well with international frameworks and should continue to do so in the second half of the project.

The achievement of most of the project outcomes and outputs demonstrates the importance of the revision of targets following the Covid-19 pandemic. The project has been able to still achieve significant outputs but with more achievable targets. The lessons from the high target level should be considered in the targets for the second phase of the project in the new locations, and reviewed early on to ensure they are achievable. The project has improved its gender responsiveness since the mid-

term review, but the findings of the evaluation demonstrate more work is needed to ensure the gender transformative approaches address structural challenges at the local, district, and national level.

The identified impacts show both the successes and the limitations of the project. Impacts on the FINLIT participants are the most easily identifiable at the individual level but continued research on the effects of PDMO training on decision making and risky behaviour is needed. The project operates within the limitations of the migration system and for some migrants the desire to migrate outweighs the risks when safe migration options are closed off to them. That said, there project does appear to have had significant success in raising awareness and in many cases changing behaviour on safe migration. The impacts on justice seekers face similar contradictions. The impact of recovering some of the money on the justice seeker, both financially and from a mental health perspective should not be underestimated, while at the same time, they still have lost considerable amounts of money as a result of a system that favours the recruitment agencies and middlemen. The project has also achieved advocacy successes in persuading the government to decentralise the grievance system and develop a pool of trainers for PDO workshops, but the impact of this cannot be fully assessed as it is too early into the process.

The level of long-term impact of the project will also be affected by how sustainable some of the interventions can be. Impacts at the union level depend on whether migration is institutionalised within the union structure and the GMCs and migrant forums continue after the project. While there is some evidence this may be possible, more work will be needed to achieve this. The same applies to the sustainability of the decentralisation system. This is an important initiative but more resources and greater capacities at the district level are needed to ensure its success.

Overall, the project has made significant achievements that all partners can be proud of. Addressing migration in a multi-faceted way and closely engaging the local communities and authorities has met an existing gap in Bangladesh's migration governance. The project needs to continue to build and capitalise on these successes in the second phase of the project.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendations	Priority and Timeframe	Resource Implications
1. Develop an advocacy strategy. This should identify the advocacy priorities, the process to be followed, and the responsibilities of the different partners. Procedures to respond to government requests during the advocacy work should be included in the strategy. The strategy should consider some of the points raised in the GSE.	High ASAP	Staff time
2. Strengthen the action plan for including the recommendations of the GSE in the project and consider how to address gender equality at a more systemic level. This should include working with the district authorities to provide a more holistic and gender responsive service for women justice seekers as part of the decentralisation process, advocating with the central authorities to ensure resources are in place to provide such services, and forming women migrant resource groups as off-shoots of the migrant forums.	High- ASAP	Staff time and additional project interventions
3. Utilise the PAC more strategically. This would focus on utilising the PAC to address specific project challenges. Particular individuals who may have expertise in a certain field could be utilised for 'deep-dive' field missions focusing on	Medium-Ongoing	Staff time and visit costs

<p>that particular challenge rather than more general visits showcasing the project's achievements.</p>		
<p>4. Conduct an analysis of the lessons learned from previous attempts to develop apps to understand the potential pitfalls and recognise if the digitalisation proposed in the new PRODOC is feasible. Other options that do not require long-term maintenance, such as the development of You-Tube videos should be considered.</p>	<p>High-Prior to launching digital tools in next phase</p>	<p>Consultant costs</p>
<p>5. Ensure gender sensitive PSS referrals are available for justice seekers. The PRODOC for the second phase identifies referrals in two districts but should consider how this can be expanded to the other districts. A parallel advocacy strategy with the WEWB to expand the definition of health support for returning migrants to include PSS support can also be considered.</p>	<p>High Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
<p>6. Strengthen coherence with other migration projects and agencies. Although information is shared between projects the collaboration between different migration projects appeared limited beyond a handful of examples. A more systematic referral system, as referenced in the PRODOC should be set up.</p> <p>The SDC could also consider using its convening power as the donor to push for more collaboration, perhaps arranging joint PAC meetings to specifically develop an action plan for concrete actions on collaboration.</p>	<p>Medium Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
<p>7. Train the GMC and Migrant Forum members to provide a more holistic response to migrants seeking support. Justice seekers need more support than just the resolution of their cases, including PSS support, health referrals, economic reintegration. Case management could include assessment of these needs and referrals to relevant services where feasible.</p>	<p>Medium-Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff time Training costs</p>
<p>8. Provide more training on ADR at different levels. ADR is a specific skill and the GMCs, UPs, and DEMOs are being asked to take on this responsibility without necessarily having the relevant skills. There are specific government guidelines on mediation and greater awareness of these are needed. Ensuring other agencies beyond the DEMOs such as other departments at the district level and police are trained in ADR would also complement this approach.</p>	<p>High-Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff time Training costs</p>
<p>9. Advocacy with the BMET and other relevant authorities to ensure there are sufficient resources available at the district level to enable the DEMOs and other district authorities to manage the grievance cases. This would include both human resources and also additional training.</p>	<p>High-Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff time Training costs</p>

10. Address the outstanding recommendations in the mid-term review, notably mapping opportunities to address disability inclusion and providing more regular updates on the risk analysis.	Medium-Ongoing	Possibly consultancy costs for disability inclusion. Staff time on the risk analysis.
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4.3 Lessons Learned and Good Practices

The following lessons learned were identified during the evaluation:

- Broad engagement of local leaders and the community is critical for building trust in the project. The SIMS project is highly regarded in the local community and supported by Union Parishads and other community leaders. This is a result of the active engagement by the SIMS project, as well as offering broad range of services to meet the communities' needs and having demonstratable results. The long connections the project partners have in the community that pre-date the project also support this.
- Advocacy for change also requires ensuring the service providers have the capacities to support the change. The decentralisation of the grievance mechanism to the DEMOs is a considerable success of the project. However, concerns remain about the capacity of the DEMOs and other service providers to respond. Advocacy for changing this type of process needs to be accompanied with ongoing support and continued representation to ensure the service provider tasked with new responsibility has the capacities to provide the services.
- Implementing a project with a diverse range of partners can contribute to the successful piloting of approaches. The partners in the project all have different profiles and experiences. The project ensured an effective coordination system was set up to allow for sharing of experiences and open discussion on solving challenges. The diverse backgrounds of the partners has contributed to vibrant discussion among the project.
- Project design that includes a referral system to local services needs to ensure the services are accessible and relevant for the project's target communities. One of the challenging areas of the project has been the skills referral process. The training options for aspiring many migrants are either inaccessible or not relevant to their needs.

Annex 1: Evaluation TOR



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Terms of Reference for Midterm Review

Strengthened and Informative Migration Systems (SIMS) project

Background

The Strengthened and Informative Migration Systems (SIMS) is a four year project, which works to promote safe and informed migration from the grassroots level. The project is being implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation in three high migration districts of Chattogram, Cumilla and Narsingdi in Bangladesh. The impact of the SIMS project is to improve the well-being of migrants, particularly marginalised men and women, through safer migration practices and strengthened service delivery from both public and private actors. In order to contribute to this impact, three main areas of change are required: 1) enhanced information and awareness of migrants and their families at home, 2) improved quality and enhanced outreach of service delivery to migrants and their families, and 3) greater resilience of migrants and family members through effective use of remittances. The project will reach out to 1'000'000 potential migrant workers or their family members with awareness campaign highlighting the importance and process of safe migration. Within this group, 100'000 potential migrant workers and their family members will be guided in taking an informed decision whether migration is the right choice for their particular situation, for instance by making a cost benefit analysis of their intended migration as part of pre-employment migrants. About 12'000 interested migrant workers will be encouraged and referred to undertake skills training through recognised training service providers. Finally, a minimum of 2'000 cases will be identified within this group or outside and provided with access to effective grievance redressal mechanism.

The SIMS project is built on the impact hypothesis that access to greater level of information and better quality of services on safe migration will support migrant workers and their families in making informed choices about migration as well as having a productive migration experience.

Switzerland supports the Phase I of the SIMS Project through a mandate agreement with Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. The objective of the externally commissioned midterm review is to assess how the project is progressing, considering the context and reaffirming whether the current approach is fit for purpose or requires modifications to achieve the desired goal. The midterm review will cover the project progress from January 2020 to June 2022.

Methodology

A team of two consultants (one international and one national consultant) will carry out the midterm review. The international consultant will lead the assignment and have the overall responsibility for ensuring a thorough analysis of the data, quality of the report and submitting all deliverables. The national consultant will assist the international consultant with the data collection from the field, through interviews and document reviews, gathering all the country-specific contextual information and with the overall analysis and preparing of the deliverables.

Both consultants will be contracted by the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh and will report to the Embassy directly. All reports and documents prepared, during the assignment, will be treated as the property of the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh. The reports and/or documents or any part,

therefore, cannot be sold, used /shared and reproduced in any manner without prior approval of the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh.

The assignment will be conducted through document reviews, virtual and in-person consultations and field visits. The national consultant will arrange the field visits, under the supervision of the international consultant and undertake all necessary precautions that are necessary under the COVID-19 pandemic context. The team of consultants will use qualitative and quantitative methods to gather relevant information to address the scope of work. Helvetas and local partners of SIMS project will assist the consultants to organise the in-person and virtual meetings for consultations, field visits and provide all relevant documents.

The midterm review should be guided by the OECD/DAC Criteria¹ for evaluations:

- **Relevance:** Identify the relevance of the SIMS project, in the current context of labour migration in Bangladesh, Swiss Cooperation Programme for Bangladesh 2022 – 25 and the 8th Five Year Plan of the Government of Bangladesh.
- **Coherence:** Assess the extent to which the intervention is compatible with interventions of other actors, projects in the country in the area of labour migration (complementarity and synergies) as well as with other Swiss funded projects
- **Effectiveness:** Assess to what extent the objectives of SIMS have been achieved or are likely to be achieved
- **Efficiency:** Critically review the project (i) structures and resources (management, monitoring, steering, coordination); (ii) systems and policies and (iii) monitoring system; and (iv) conduct an economic and financial analysis of the project, according to SDC's guidelines.
- **Impact:** What are the intended and unintended effects of SIMS interventions, including the effects on the beneficiaries and others?
- **Sustainability:** Assess to what extent the positive results will be continued beyond the end of the funding support

Scope of Work

The review will assess how the project is tracking against the defined outcomes in the current context, identify the key bottlenecks and challenges, provide recommendations for overcoming these challenges and document the key lessons learned that may be used to adjust and improve the implementation approach in the coming years. The review will provide concrete, actionable and operational recommendations for the remaining duration of the project. The scope of work includes, but is not limited to:

- A desk review of all project information to date, including the key documents such as the project document, all operational and financial progress reports, internal and external audit reports, and any analyses, guidelines, and studies
- Interviews with the SIMS team to collect information on project management and implementation aspects
- Interview with partner NGOs who are implementing the project at the grassroots levels including OKUP, RMMRU, Protyashi, BNWLA and WARBE
- Interview relevant personnel from the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, Chairperson of Project Advisory Committee, District Administration officials from the working districts of the project and Parliamentary Caucus on Migration and Development

¹ OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation: [Better Criteria for Better Evaluation. Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use \(2019\)](#)

- Interviews with the key stakeholders and other relevant actors to assess the degree to which the project has had the intended impact; and what could have been done differently or better, so that the lessons learned can be documented/actioned
- Interview of partners from Civil Society Organisations/Non-Government Organisations, UN agencies, who are implementing relevant interventions either directly or indirectly in collaboration with SIMS
- Interview of beneficiaries (potential migrants, families, returnees) supported for by the project
- Critically review the organisational strength and capacity of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation to implement such a project, including recommendations on organisational rearrangement (and building on the Partner Risk Assessment done by SDC) if required
- Review the Gender Assessment done by the SIMS project and assess whether the recommendations made are relevant and appropriate for achieving the objectives of the project.
- Assess the current relationships with Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment and analyse the coordination/relation with other projects implemented by other development partners (such as EU, IOM, ILO, UN Women, and other NGOs).
- Assess how the project operated during the pandemic (i.e. from January 2020 to Dec 2021) and if appropriate strategies were adopted to balance health concerns and project deliverables.
- Analyse how the project has coordinated with other projects in Bangladesh (included Swiss funded projects) in labour migration and identify areas to strengthen collaboration, especially for efficiency gains

Timeline

The assignment will be for a total of up to 39 days (22 days for the international and 17 days for the national consultant), within the timeframe of July 2022 to August 2022:

Tasks	Number of Input Days Allocated	
	International	National
Kick-off meeting (virtual) with the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh	0.5 days	0.5 days
Preparatory tasks, development of the workplan and document review	3 days	2 days
Consultations and field visit	10 days	10 days
Debriefing with the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh and project team (in-person)	0.5 days	0.5 days
Analysis and drafting the report	5 days	3 days
Revisions and submission of the final report	3 days	1 days
Total	22 days	17 days

Deliverables

- A virtual kick-off meeting with the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh to discuss expectations and present the planned approach of the assignment;
- A detailed work plan including the key deliverables, joint work plan, including the methodology and processes to be undertaken;
- Tools and defined techniques to be used for primary information and data collection;
- Submission of the final report as specified in the scope of work, including up to at least two feedback loops

with revisions. The report should be a maximum of 20 pages (A4, Normal margin, Arial 11, single space) with an executive summary of a maximum of three pages, which reads as a standalone document. All other information should be annexed;

- The Assessment Grid of the DAC Criteria (Annex 1) must be completed and attached to the final report;
- List of persons interviewed, minutes of meetings, summary of the discussions in the focus group discussions, case studies, etc., must be annexed to the final report;
- Analysis of the LogFrame: extent to which objectives have been achieved, must be annexed to the final report;
- Presentation of the final report to the Embassy team that highlights key preliminary findings and recommendations. The MS PowerPoint slides must be annexed to the final report;
- Recommend additional and/or supporting analyses and follow up actions, if required; and
- Capturing of lessons learnt from the experiences of the project.

Profiles of the Team of Consultant(s)

International Consultant

- Minimum 8 years of relevant professional work experience on labour migration with a specific focus on community based interventions, referrals and access to justice;
- Demonstrate professional experience and skills in robust evaluation methodologies and in evaluating labour migration projects;
- Strong analytical skills, sound judgement, the capacity to think strategically, including the ability to produce high quality and strategic reports for development implementation;
- Good understanding of bilateral donor projects and management procedures relating to project cycle management;
- Demonstrate understanding of partnership modalities, institutional strengthening, multi sectoral partnership;
- Competency with gender, social inclusion and ‘Leave no one behind (LNOB)’ issues;
- Excellent analytical, research and writing skills;
- Knowledge of Switzerland’s working principles and methods is highly desirable; and
- Knowledge of South Asia and/or Bangladesh development issues is highly desirable.

National Consultant

- Minimum 05 years of relevant professional work experience on labour migration and financial literacy in Bangladesh;
- Demonstrated professional experience and skills in evaluation methodologies;
- Understanding of partnership modalities and institutional strengthening;
- Understanding of the Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training and local administration;
- Excellent computer literacy in MS Office programmes and organizing and facilitating virtual, in- person and hybrid meetings;
- Knowledge of the donor landscape on labour migration in Bangladesh; and
- Social competence including intercultural sensitivity and ability to work with varied stakeholders.

Application Procedure

Individual consultants are requested to apply with the following:

- Resume/CV
- An expression of interest, not more than three pages, confirming availability in July and August 2022 to undertake the review and daily consultancy fees in US dollars. This statement should include the relevant expertise and how the scope of work will be addressed
- A sample of project evaluation report conducted individually or in a team (with the agreement of the client).

The documents may be emailed to Nazia Haider, Programme Manager, Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh (nazia.haider@eda.admin.ch) by **Saturday, 30 April 2022**.

The Embassy's norms and criteria will apply for consultant's fees, and fees are reimbursable upon completion of the assignment. For local travel, the national and international consultants are expected to arrange and settle their own transportation costs, and these may be reimbursed upon presentation of the original bills only. Details of the budget will be part of the contract, based on final agreements between the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh and the consultants.

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Question / Sub-Question	Secondary Lines of Enquiry	Indicators	Data Sources	Method
Relevance: Identify the relevance of the SIMS project, in the current context of labour migration in Bangladesh, Swiss Cooperation Programme for Bangladesh 2022 – 25 and the 8th Five Year Plan of the Government of Bangladesh.				
Did the project address the key needs of Bangladesh in alignment with Government priorities and plans?	Did the project align with emerging needs and existing policies of Bangladesh? Does it support SDC's approach to migration?	Evidence of alignment with GoB policies, including 8 th 5-year plan, overseas employment and migration act, wage earners' welfare board act, skill development policy. Examples of alignment with the SDGs, Colombo Process, and the GCM, Committee Concluding Observations of the UN on Rights of Migrant Workers	Project documentation Government Officials Community leaders Project partners SDC and Helvetas staff	Document review KIs
How has the project reacted to context changes include the Covid-19 pandemic and changes in government policy and migratory patterns during the project.	How much has the context changed since the design of the project and has the project utilised adaptive management to response to these changes? As well as the response during Covid-19, did the project adapt to opportunities as the country emerged from the pandemic?	Examples of project amendments to emerging situations Examples of the project utilising new opportunities that arose as the project progressed.	Project documentation Government Officials Target communities and project service users Helvetas staff Community leaders Project partners	Document review KIs FGDs
Did the project meet the needs and priorities of different groups of stakeholders, particularly	How did the project adapt to recommendations in the MTR on gender equality and improving	Examples of adaptions to increase demand from	Target communities and project service users	FGDs Stories of change

women migrants, and the most vulnerable and marginalised?	demand from women for safe migration education?	women for project services. Evidence target groups valued and utilised the interventions	Families left behind Community leaders	
Coherence: Assess the extent to which the intervention is compatible with interventions of other actors, projects in the country in the area of labour migration (complementarity and synergies) as well as with other Swiss funded projects				
How effectively has the project identified and contributed to synergies with other migration interventions in Bangladesh?	Has the project adapted and supported other initiatives when opportunities have arisen?	Examples of coordination with other projects	Project documentation Staff of UN agencies and NGOs implementing migration projects SDC staff Helvetas staff	Document review KIs
How well aligned has the project been with key international frameworks and processes?	Did the project identify opportunities to align with the GCM? What advocacy was undertaken on this? How did the project partner with UN agencies such as the ILO working on labour migration?	Examples of advocacy plan aligning with opportunities from key frameworks	Project documentation Government Officials Helvetas staff SDC staff	Document review KIs
Effectiveness: Assess to what extent the objectives of SIMS have been achieved or are likely to be achieved				
Has the project achieved its planned outcomes and outputs?	Have different partners had different levels of results? Has the project been able to ensure quality as well as quantity in its results?	Evidence of project achievements Comparison of achievements by different partners	Project monitoring system Helvetas staff Partner staff	Document review KIs
What have been the strengths and weaknesses of SIMS?	What approaches did the project use to mitigate any weaknesses? Did the project effectively	Refer to data collected for other questions	Other evaluation data SWOT analyses	Document review KIs FGDs

	<p>maximise the strengths of the project?</p> <p>Did the project utilise the comparative advantage of the respective partners effectively?</p>			
Do project outputs and outcomes to-date benefit/affect women and men differently?	<p>Has the project addressed gender differences effectively?</p> <p>Does the gender analysis present an accurate assessment of the current situation and what learning can be utilised in the next phase of the project?</p>	Evidence of disaggregated data being collected and assessed and project adaptations made	<p>Project documentation</p> <p>Target communities and project service users</p> <p>Community leaders</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>KIIs</p> <p>FGDs</p> <p>Stories of change</p>
What changes are proposed for the theory of change and results framework for the next phase of the project?	Were key elements of the project included in the current theory of change? Are there areas that need adding in?	n/a	<p>Project documentation</p> <p>Helvetas Staff</p> <p>Partner Staff</p> <p>SDC Staff</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>KIIs</p> <p>Final day workshop</p>
Have the recommendations of the mid-term review been addressed?	<p>Has Helvetas recorded progress and for those not implemented, documented why?</p> <p>(to be completed by the National Consultant to avoid conflict of interest of International Consultant who conducted the MTR)</p>	Action plans and management response documents detailing how the project has responded to the MTR	<p>Project documentation</p> <p>Helvetas Staff</p> <p>Partner Staff</p> <p>SDC Staff</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>KIIs</p>
Efficiency: Critically review the project (i) structures and resources (management, monitoring, steering, coordination); (ii) systems and policies and (iii) monitoring system; and (iv) review and validate the economic and financial analysis of the project, according to SDC's guidelines.				
Were the project management structures suitable for managing the project and adapting to context changes?	<p>Were the structures clearly understood by each partner?</p> <p>Is the context being sufficiently monitored?</p>	Evidence of updated management plans, monitoring and oversight	<p>Project documentation</p> <p>Meeting reports/minutes</p> <p>Helvetas Staff</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>KIIs</p>

			Partner Staff	
Has the project maintained a monitoring system with accurate and up to date information on the project's progress?	Is the M&E system adequate for measuring quality? Does the M&E system capture feedback of target community of the project and support the necessary amendments?	Evidence of change being measured Examples of analysis of community feedback leading to changes in project implementation and direction	Project documentation Helvetas Staff Partner Staff	Document review KIIs
Do the findings of the evaluation align with the economic and financial analysis conducted by the SDC?	How were the estimates calculated? Were they reasonable?	Evidence of system and approach for calculating different estimates.	Helvetas staff Project guidelines	KIIs Document review
Impact: What are the intended and unintended effects of SIMS interventions, including the effects on the beneficiaries and others?				
What evidence of impact/change can be seen for the targeted families and communities?	How has increased knowledge translated into behavioural change? Are there gendered differences in the changes? If so, why? Are there any negative impacts?	Examples of changes in attitudes and knowledge Examples of these being put into practice	Target communities and project service users Community leaders	KIIs FGDs Stories of Change
Are there impacts on government duty bearers which can be identified?	Is there evidence of changes in the implementation of policy or guidelines	Examples of UP and District staff utilising project resources, messages and training Examples of policy change	Government Officials	KIIs
What changes has the advocacy element of the project had on policies and their implementation?	What are key areas that can be targeted in the next phase of the project?	Examples of change linked to advocacy Evidence of areas where there is potential for	Government Officials UN Officials SDC Staff Helvetas Staff	KIIs

		advocacy to produce change in the next phase.		
Sustainability: To what extent will the positive results be continued beyond the end of the funding support?				
How effective have the decentralisation pilot projects and the investment in the Union Parishad desks been in building ownership among the key duty bearers in the districts?	What have been the successes of the approach? Have the key messages on migration been institutionalised in the local structures? Are the UPs able to continue to support the desks without project support? What lessons can be learned for other districts?	Evidence of long-term plans or funding made by the UP and Districts	Government Officials Partner Staff Helvetas Staff	KIIs
What are the lessons learned from the implementation of the Case Management Documentation System (CMDS)?	Why was the system not continued with? Are there learnings from this that can be applied in the next phase of the project?	Evidence of attempts to address challenges by Helvetas and project partners	Partner Staff Helvetas Staff	KIIs
What are the lessons learned from the challenges of the skills referral component of the project?	Why was there not uptake of skills referrals? How can this be made more effective for future activities?	Evidence of attempts to address challenges by Helvetas and project partners.	Government Officials Partner Staff Helvetas Staff Individuals who were referred for skills training UP members	KIIs FGDs

Annex 3: Assessment Grid for project/programme evaluations of the SDC interventions

Note: this assessment grid is used for evaluations of SDC financed projects and programmes (hereinafter jointly referred to as an 'intervention'). It is based on the OECD Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria. In mid-term evaluations, the assessment requires analysing the likelihood of achieving impact and sustainability. All applicable sub-criteria should be scored and a short explanation should be provided.

Please add the corresponding number (0-4) representing your rating of the sub-criteria in the column 'score':

0 = not assessed

1 = highly satisfactory

2 = satisfactory

3 = unsatisfactory

4 = highly unsatisfactory

Key aspects based on DAC Criteria	Score (put only integers: 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4)	Justification (please provide a short explanation for your score or why a criterion was not assessed)
Relevance		
Did the project address the key needs of Bangladesh in alignment with Government priorities and plans?	1	The evaluation found the project addressed key needs of local, district, and national governance on migration and supported, and in some cases shaped, the Government's priorities and plans.

How has the project reacted to context changes include the Covid-19 pandemic and changes in government policy and migratory patterns during the project?	1	The project both adapted effectively to the Covid pandemic and adapted its tools and guidelines to account for new learning and priorities in the post-pandemic era.
Did the project meet the needs and priorities of different groups of stakeholders, particularly women migrants, and the most vulnerable and marginalised?	1	The project has meet the needs of different groups of stakeholders including potential migrants, family members who remain behind, and justice seekers. The multi-faceted approach means several different groups are supported through the project.
Coherence		
How effectively has the project identified and contributed to synergies with other migration interventions in Bangladesh?	2	Relationships between the project partners are good and the partners have utilised other interventions they undertake. However, synergies with external partners, particularly those implementing SDC funded projects could be improved.
How well aligned has the project been with key international frameworks and processes?	1	The project strongly aligns with key frameworks including the SDGs, the GCM, and key ILO conventions.
Effectiveness		
Has the project achieved its planned outcomes and outputs?	1	The vast majority of outcomes and outputs have been achieved.
What have been the strengths and weaknesses of SIMS?	0	Not a question that can be scored
Do project outputs and outcomes to-date benefit/affect women and men differently?	2	The project has improved its gender responsive approach in the second half of the first phase of the project but should work to address systemic challenges in the support provided by duty bearers at the local, district, and national level.
What changes are proposed for the theory of change and results framework for the next phase of the project?	0	Not a question that can be scored
Have the recommendations of the mid-term review been addressed?	1	Most, although not all, of the mid-term review recommendations have been addressed. Changes such as revising the project targets and adding key staff at the grassroot level were significant for ensuring the success of the project.

Efficiency		
Were the project management structures suitable for managing the project and adapting to context changes?	1	Adaptive management was utilised that allowed the project to adapt to context changes, particularly those emerging as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The flexibility of the SDC was instrumental in supporting this.
Has the project maintained a monitoring system with accurate and up to date information on the project's progress?	1	The project has an impressive monitoring system that has allowed SIMS to monitor outcomes and change, as well as outputs.
Do the findings of the evaluation align with the economic and financial analysis conducted by the SDC?	1	The evaluation team assessed the EFA and adjudged the calculations and findings to be reasonable and based on solid evidence.
Impact		
What evidence of impact/change can be seen for the targeted families and communities?	1	Impact is evident in many areas of the project and can particularly be seen in the FINLIT graduates. Impacts on justice seekers are both financial and well-being related. Changes in knowledge and some behaviour is seen among potential migrants although more investigation of the changes in behaviour after acquiring knowledge on safe migration is needed.
Are there impacts on government duty bearers which can be identified?	2	Good impact can be identified at the union level through increases in knowledge and changes in attitudes and behaviour towards supporting migrants. There have been successes in advocating with district and national level government duty bearers but limited resources and the early stage of the decentralisation process means impacts are still more potential than realised yet.
What changes has the advocacy element of the project had on policies and their implementation?	2	The project's advocacy was successful in persuading the BMET to decentralise the grievance mechanism on a pilot phase to the DEMOS in the three districts of the project's implementation. Developing an advocacy strategy to coordinate other advocacy efforts more clearly is recommended for the second phase of the project.
Sustainability		

How effective have the decentralisation pilot projects and the investment in the Union Parishad desks been in building ownership among the key duty bearers in the districts?	2	Initial engagement by the DEMOs is promising but as acknowledged by DEMO staff, capacities remain limited and there is a need to ensure other district level stakeholders are capacitated to engage in the system as well. Many unions show strong evidence of ownership and will take forward elements of the project. Continued support to further institutionalise this is advisable for the second phase of the project.
What are the lessons learned from the implementation of the Case Management Documentation System (CMDS)?	0	Not a question that can be scored
What are the lessons learned from the challenges of the skills referral component of the project?	0	Not a question that can be scored

Title of the intervention: Strengthened and Informative Migration Systems (SIMS) Project

Assessor(s): Chris Morris

Date: 18/03/2023

Signature:

Annex 4: Evaluation Schedule

SIMS Final Evaluation – facilitation plan

24 January -22 February 2024

Consultants: Chris Morris and Asif Munier

Date	Where	Time	What	Accompaniment Helvetas	Remarks
Prior to mis- sion 24 th Jan	Online	9-11:00	Call with SIMS PIU team		Invitation sent out by HELVETAS
Prior to mis- sion: 6 th , 7 th and 8 th Feb	Online	06 Feb 2024 06 Feb 2024 07 Feb 2024	Calls with Senior Management (sepa- rate) of RMMRU Protyashi BNWLA OKUP	N/A	- Invitation sent out by Chris Morris - Meeting with RMMRU, BNWLA & Protyashi

		08 Feb 2024			
Tuesday 13 th Feb	Dhaka Hotel		Chris travels and staying overnight in Dhaka		
Wednesday 14 th Feb Narsingdi OKUP	Dhaka to Narsingdi	7.00– 09.00	Travelling and Breakfast on the way	Kabir and Basar	
	Jinardi Union, Palash	09:30 – 10:45	FGD with Financial Literacy graduates		25/30 minutes travel time from Narsingdi to Jinardi
	Jinardi Union, Palash	09:30 – 10:15	Interview with FinLit ¹³ graduate(s) en- gaged in economic activities (Name: Jorina Begum)		Parallel session to FGD
	Jinardi Union, Palash	10:15 – 11.00	Interview with indirect beneficiaries of FinLit activities. (Name: Sahida Begum)		Parallel session to FGD
	Jinardi Union, Palash	11:15 – 12:45	Meeting with Union Parishad including Members of GMC	Basar	Parallel session Consultant-1
			Group discussion with LSP ¹⁴ s (2-3) Name: Shohel, Jhorna, Laily	Kabir	Parallel session Consultant-1

¹³ FinLit- Financial Literacy

¹⁴ LSP- Local Service Provider

	Narsing town Orbit/ Radhuni restaurant	01:30 – 02:00	Lunch		Palash to Narsingdi 30 mins
	Joshor Union, Shibpur	02:40 – 03:40	FGD with PDMO ¹⁵ Graduates (8 Female only group)	Atashi Gosh & Sumaiya (Female Col- leagues of OKUP)	Travel time 40 mins
	Itakhola, Shibpur	02:40 – 03:40	Interview PDMO graduate received skill training and started own busi- ness/ planned for migration (Name: Nobel Mia)		Parallel to the FGD at 02:40-03:40 On the way back to Hotel X
	Hotel X		Overnight staying at Narsingdi		
Thursday 15th Feb Narsingdi OKUP	OKUP Office, Narsingdi	09:30- 10:30	Interview with 2 justice Seekers. (BMET/ DEMO and GMC>Court)		These can be parallel to maintain privacy
	Narsingdi DEMO office	10:45 – 11:45	Discussion with Additional Director, DEMO (Narsingdi)		
	Itakhola, Narsingdi	12:00 – 01:00	Meeting with TTC ¹⁶ (Principal and In- structor)		Parallel session Consultant-1
	OKUP Office	12:00 – 01:00	FGD with Migrants Forum Members		Parallel session Consultant-1

¹⁵ PDMO- Pre-Decision Making Orientation

¹⁶ TTC- Technical Training Centre

	OKUP Office/ Restaurant	01:00 – 01:30	Lunch break		
	OKUP office	01.30 – 03.00	Meet the project team at the office (OKUP – mix of staff incl. PM, DC, PO, UZC/S-2, SM-1)		In any form PO FinLit could join
	Cumilla BLC	03:00	Travel to Cumilla and staying overnight at BRAC Learning Centre		
Friday 16 th Feb RMMRU, Cumilla	RMMRU Office	10:00 – 11:00	Meeting with BNWLA Panel Lawyer		
	RMMRU Office	11:00 – 12:30	Discussion with justice seekers-2 cases (GMC & DEMO Case)		
	Lunch and prayer (12:30-2:30)				
	Madhaiya, Chandina	3:10 – 04:10	FGD with peer group migrants not member of Forum (4-5 Peer) ¹⁷	Zarrin	Travel time from RMMRU office 40 minutes
	Cumilla BLC	04:15– 04:55	Travel back to Cumilla BLC		
Saturday 17 th Feb	Online meeting	09:00 – 10.00	Meeting with DEMO (Only Additional Director will join)	Basar/Zarrin	

¹⁷ Peer informants provide Safe migration information, Remittance related information etc during PDMOs and at the community level

RMMRU	Amratoli Union, Adarsha Sadar	10:00 – 11:00	Discussion with FinLit graduate(s) applied learnings to grow economic activities and see indirect beneficiary of FinLit. - Ms. Tania's Cloth Shop -Trainee of Ms. Tania who started business taking materials from Ms. Tania)		Travel time 20 Minutes from BLC
	Bijoypur Union Sadar South	11:30 – 12:30	FGD with LGI ¹⁸ (including GMC, migration desk)		Travel time 30 minutes from Amratoli
			FGD with PDMO Graduates (Lalmoti PDMO Batch 8 Graduates)		Parallel to FGD with LGI
	RMMRU Office	01:30 – 02:00	Lunch Break		Travel time 40 Mins
	RMMRU Office	02:00 – 03:40	Meet the project team at the office (RMMRU – mix of staff incl. PM, DC, PO, UZC/S-2, SM-1)		Although not in service PO FinLit joined
	Chattogram/Avenue	03.45pm	Travel to Chattogram and overnight staying		
Sunday 18th Feb Prottyashi Chattogram	Chattogram	08:30 – 09:30	Travel form Chattogram to Rangunia		Breakfast before starting
	Pomra Union, Rangunia	09:30 – 10:15	Meeting with justice seekers (2 cases) (DEMO & WEWB)		These can be parallel to maintain privacy

¹⁸ LGI- Local Government Institution

	Upazila Conference Room, Rangunia Upzaila	10:30 – 11:30	PDMO 2 nd day session – Observe the session and interaction with aspirant migrants		
	Upazila Youth Development Office, Rangunia Upzaila	11:30 – 12:30	Visit skills provider (other than TTC)- i.e., Youth Development Department		Parallel session Consultant-1
	Rangunia Upzaila		Visit a Bank SIMS is working with (Agrani Bank)		Parallel session Consultant-1
	Restaurant Rangunia Upzaila	12:30 – 01:30	Lunch		
	Noajespur Union, Raozan	02:30 – 04:00	FGD with Union Parishad-LGI ¹⁹ (including GMC, MF)		60 Mins travel from Rangunia
	Noajespur Union, Raozan	04:00 – 04:30	Visit Migration Corner at Union Parishad		
	Chattogram, Hotel Avenue	04:30	Overnight staying at Chattogram		
Monday 19th Feb	Chattogram	09:00 – 10:00	Visit Women TTC, meet principal/instructor		Start from Hotel at 08:15
	Boalkhali Office	11:00 – 12:00	Meeting with LSP (2-3 LSP)		60 Mins travel form TTC Parallel session

¹⁹ LGI- Local Government Institution

Protyashi Chattogram					Consultant-1
			FGD with FinLit Graduates		Parallel session Consultant-1
	Protyashi Head Office	01:00 – 01:30	Lunch		
	Protyashi Head Of- fice	01:30 – 03:30	Meet the project team at the office (Protyashi – mix of staff incl. PM, DC, PO, UC-2, SM-1)		
			Fly back to Dhaka		
20th of Feb- ruary 2024	ILO Office in Minis- try	09:00 – 10:00	Meeting with ILO		
	BMET Office	10.30 – 11.30	Meeting with BMET		
	Helvetas Office	12.30 – 01:30	Meeting with PAC Chair Office		
	Helvetas Office	01:30 – 02:30	Lunch		
	Helvetas Office	03.00 – 04.00	Meeting with BRAC		
	Helvetas Office	04.00 – 05.00	Helvetas Country Director		

Wednesday 21st Feb	Helvetas Office	No engagement considered			International Mother Language Day
Thursday 22nd	Helvetas Office	09:00 – 11:00	Follow up with SIMS/Helvetas team		
Thursday 22nd	Helvetas Office	11:00 – 01:00	Debriefing (incl. lunch) Presentation of the key findings and feedback and discussion of implications for the next phase.		SDC representatives, Helvetas Management, PNGO senior management, SIMS PM from partners, SIMS PIM members attended the meeting
Friday 23rd	Online	09.00	MP Caucus Chair/Standing Committee Chair (Former)/		
Wednesday 27	IOM Office	17.00	IOM representative		

Annex 5: KII and FGD Numbers

Date	Participant	Method	District	Women	Men
06/02	RRMMU management	Group Interview	Online	1	2
06/02	Protyashi management	Group Interview	Online	0	3
07/02	BNWLA management	Group Interview	Online	1	2
08/02	OKUP management	Group Interview	Online	0	3
14/02	FIN LIT graduates	FGD	Narsingdi	8	0
14/02	FIN LIT graduate	KII	Narsingdi	1	0
14/02	Indirect recipient of FIN LIT	KII	Narsingdi	1	0
14/02	FGD with LSPs	Group Interview	Narsingdi	2	1
14/02	FGD with GMC	FGD	Narsingdi	6	6
14/02	PDMO Graduates (women only sessions)	FGD	Narsingdi	0	8
14/02	PDMO Graduate referred for skills training	FGD	Narsingdi	0	1
15/02	Justice seeker	KII	Narsingdi	0	1
15/02	Justice seeker	KII	Narsingdi	1	
15/02	Justice seeker	KII	Narsingdi	0	1
15/02	DEMO AG	KII	Narsingdi	0	1
15/02	TTC Principal	KII	Narsingdi	1	0
15/02	Migrant Forum members	FGD	Narsingdi	2	7
15/02	Project team meeting-OKUP	Meeting	Narsingdi	5	8
16/02	Panel Lawyers	Group Interview	Cumilla	1	1
16/02	Justice seekers	KII	Cumilla	0	1
16/02	Justice seekers	KII	Cumilla	0	1
16/02	Peer group migrants	FGD	Cumilla	0	8
17/02	FINLIT graduate and her staff	Group Interview	Cumilla	6	0

17/02	LGI	FGD	Cumilla	1	6
17/02	PDMO Graduates	FGD	Cumilla	1	6
17/02	Project team meeting-RRMMU	Meeting	Cumilla	2	7
17/02	DEMO AG	Online KII	Cumilla	0	1
18/02	Justice seekers	KII	Chattogram	0	1
18/02	Justice seekers	KII	Chattogram	0	1
18/02	PDMO Trainees	Observation and questions	Chattogram	0	30
18/02	Financial service provider	KII	Chattogram	0	1
18/02	Youth Development Department	KII	Chattogram	0	1
18/02	Union Parishad, GMC, and Migration Forum members	FGD	Chattogram	5	12
19/02	TTC Principal and Trainers	Group Interview	Chattogram	1	3
19/02	FIN LIT graduates	FGD	Chattogram	9	0
19/02	LSPs	Group Interview	Chattogram	3	1
19/02	Project team meeting- Protyashi	Meeting	Chattogram	4	9
20/02	ILO	Group Interview	Dhaka	1	1
20/02	BMET DG	KII	Dhaka	0	1
20/02	BMET	KII	Dhaka	1	0
20/02	BMET	KII	Dhaka	0	1
20/02	PAC Chairman	KII	Dhaka	0	1
20/02	BRAC	KII	Dhaka	0	1
20/02	Helvetas CD	KII	Dhaka	0	1
23/02	Former MP and Former Chair of Parliamentary Caucus	KII	Dhaka	0	1
27/02	IOM	KII	Dhaka	1	0

Annex 6: List of documents consulted

In addition to the documents and webpages referred to in the footnotes, the following documents were consulted for the development of the inception report:

- Project Document
- Results Chain diagram
- Logical Framework
- Semi-Annual reports 2020-2023
- Annual reports 2020-2022
- MTR report and recommendations
- MTR recommendations action plan
- Budget revision spreadsheet
- SIMS Gender and Social Analysis and Macro-Level Analysis
- Various project documents on activities and training undertaken under Access to Justice, Safe Migration, and Financial Literacy outcomes of the project
- Reports on Parliamentarian Caucus visits to project sites
- SIMS Factsheet
- SIMS Powerpoint project presentation
- Economic and Financial Analysis spreadsheet and narrative
- Documents on how SIMS has incorporated gender analysis into the project.
- RANAS report
- Progress monitoring of indicators

Annex 7: Example Interview Guides

FGD Guide for Financial Literacy Training Recipients

Number of Participants

Women	Men

Informed consent:

My name is _____. We're here today because Helvetas and (insert name of relevant implementing partner) conducting an evaluation of its SIMS project to understand how effective the project is in helping individuals and families in Bangladesh considering migration options. We are also speaking with people who received services through the project in various other communities in Bangladesh as well as other stakeholders who have participated in the project.

Nothing you say will be attributed personally to you, we'll anonymize the findings. Your answers will only be identifiable by the evaluators and your identity and privacy will be protected. Your name will not appear in any reports. If you say something and then later decide you don't want that recorded, then please speak to me after the meeting and I will ensure it is crossed out from the notes. Nothing you say will impact on any future services you may receive from the project or any of the implementing partners.

Are you happy to continue?

Rules:

There are a few ground rules we should follow:

- Please respect everyone else's confidentiality. For example if 'Sharmin' says something, please don't tell people outside of the room what 'Sharmin' said.
- Please put phones on silent and if you need to take a call, go outside the room.
- Please respect everyone's contribution. There is no wrong answer to a question. We want to hear the different experiences of everyone.
- Please don't interrupt someone when they are speaking. Let them finish and then speak.
- (For FGDs being interpreted into English)- Please remember the interpreter has to interpret what you say so try to speak 2-3 sentences, let them translate it, and then carry on. This will ensure that they can accurately reflect to me what you have said.

(similar context introductions are included with every guide, but for the purposes of space in the inception report, are not included in the other guides)

Questions

1. Can you all briefly introduce yourselves- who you are, who is in your family, how many children you have etc? Who in your family has migrated (or is planning to)?
2. What sessions have you attended?
3. What are the key messages you have learned from the training?
4. What did you hope to achieve by attending the sessions?
5. Where you satisfied with the training? Why?
6. What were the key challenges you face with financial management?
7. Have the sessions helped address these challenges?
8. Thinking about how you manage your financial planning and financial situation now and how you managed it prior to the training, can you give examples of the changes you have implemented as a result?
9. Have you shared the information with any of your friends and community? Did they make changes in their financial planning as a result?
10. Were there other changes that occurred as well?

11. Of these changes, what is the most significant change you think you have experienced? Do any of you have stories to illustrate this (the story should include what the situation was before and what it is now to show the change that has occurred).
12. Are there any recommendations you have for the future for the trainers for these sessions?

FGD Guide for PDMO Graduates

Questions

1. Can you all briefly introduce yourselves- who you are, who is in your family, how many children you have etc? Who in your family has migrated or is planning to?
2. Why did you attend the training?
3. What are the reasons you have for considering migration?
4. What are the key challenges in getting information about migration?
5. What are the key messages you have learned from the training?
6. Had you heard this information before? Was there any new information you heard?
7. How satisfied with the information you received?
8. What was the most informative session/module? Were there session/modules that were not needed or were not useful?
9. Did the PDMO lead to you changing your decision about anything (decision to migrate, timing of migration, using a sub-agent, obtaining new skills etc)?
10. If the PDMO did lead to decision changes, which session influenced them to change their mind?
11. What would make women more likely to attend the PDMO sessions? Would a women only group be helpful in ensuring more women come?
12. Are there any recommendations you have for the future for the trainers for these sessions?

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Union Parishad

Questions

1. Can you all briefly introduce yourselves?
2. Can you explain the role of the UP and what responsibilities you have connected to migration?
3. What are the main challenges which migrant workers face in your community?
4. Do men and women face different challenges during migration? If so what are the differences?
5. What involvement in the SIMS project have you had? (What training, other support etc?)
6. What did you learn from the training? How much of the training covered information you already were aware of? What messages were new? What part of the training was the most useful to you?
7. Can you give practical examples of anyway in which you have been able to utilise the training in your work?
8. What is the role of the UP in the GMC (if not raised already by them)?
9. What types of grievance cases are handled here? What is the process and usual outcomes of the cases?
10. About a year ago, the project changed its methodology from training a small number of UP members to offering training to all UP members. What difference has that made for you? Which approach did you think was better?
11. Are you going to be able to continue to provide support on migration to your community once the project ends? What type of support? Have you included this in your annual budget?
12. What changes in the community have you witnessed as a result of the project?
13. Of those changes, which is the most significant to you?

14. Do any of you have a particular example or story that illustrates this?
15. Do you have any recommendations for Helvetas, (add in name of MNGO depending on location)

Interview/Focus Group Discussion Guide for DEMO

1. Can you all briefly introduce yourselves?
2. Can you explain the purpose and remit of DEMO?
3. How have you been involved in the project to date? What training have you been part of, what activities have you been involved in?
4. What are the key needs of migrants in your area? How does DEMO respond to these needs?
5. Do men and women face different challenges during migration? If so what are the differences?

Access to Justice (for office that is part of the pilot):

6. Since the decentralisation of the grievance system, how many cases has this office handled?
7. How long do these cases take from the point of submission until adjudication?
8. What training did officials here receive to enable them to work on these cases and who conducted the training?
9. How do you review and mediate the cases?
10. Does your office have the resources to receive these cases? Do you plan to continue to adjudicate these cases in the future?
11. Are you happy with the interaction with Helvetas and the local partner (insert name)? Are there any improvements you would like to see?
12. In general, do you have any recommendations for Helvetas and the local partner (insert name)?

Questions for BMET

1. Could you explain what the BMET's role is in supporting migrants? (probe the different sections of the migration cycle if necessary)
2. What are the main challenges facing migrants from Bangladesh today? How have these changed since 2019?
3. Are there specific challenges which women face?
4. What are the key developments or plans within the BMET for the current 5 year plan?
5. What interaction with the SIMS project have you had?
6. Can you explain the decentralisation process for grievance complaints please? Why was this introduced? What has been done so far in implementing it?
7. What are the main challenges linked to rolling this process out?
8. What are the key lessons learned that can be applied in other districts?
9. What recommendations do you have for Helvetas and the SDC for future programming?

Questions for Trainers (either individual or group interview)

1. Please introduce yourself (including former migrant, CSO representative, what their current job is)
2. Please explain your role as a trainer. What are your responsibilities?
3. What training have you received to be able to do this role as a trainer?
4. Who do you give workshops/training to?
5. What are the key messages that you are giving at the workshops/training?
6. Do you give different messages to men and women?

7. How successful do you think the workshops/training have been? What changes have you seen in the behaviour and approaches of the trainees?
8. What have been the main challenges you have encountered?
9. Are you happy with the support of Helvetas and their partner (depending on location)? How could they improve their support?
10. What plans have you made to continue providing workshops/training in the future?
11. Do you have any recommendations for Helvetas/partner?
12. What recommendations do you have for Helvetas and the SDC for future programming?

FGD Guide for Partner Project Teams

Purpose of the Workshop:

- Understand impressions of the partner staff on the key success and gaps/opportunities of the SIMS project.
- Identify initial thoughts as to the changes in individuals and communities which the SIMS project is contributing too.
- Understand how the implementation of the particular partner works

Questions:

Question	Method	Purpose
1. What have been the key successes?	Full group discussion	Initial understanding of partners staff opinion of the project
2. What are the gaps that remain?	Full group discussion	Understand where what opportunities may exist for future activities?
Effectiveness		
3. Which parts of the project were the most straight-forward to implement? Which were the hardest?	Full group discussion	Understand what work the partner felt most able to implement and understand some of the challenges they have faced
4. What has been the different level of participation of men and women?	Full group discussion	Gain insight into what efforts each partner made on addressing gender disparities in the project.
5. Did you make efforts to increase participation of women?		
Changes and Impacts		
6. What impacts has the work had on the community? What changes can you see as a result?	Initial group brainstorm on the most likely changes (prompt beyond the three themes is necessary-eg does the obtaining of documents have additional impacts and what are these)?	Get an understanding of what partner staff consider to be the significant impacts of the project.
7. Are there any significant changes in government officials and institutions attributable to the project in since it began?	For each of the following questions, break into groups to get discussion and then have the groups present.	
8. Have there been any negative changes as a result of the project?	Groups could be per location. If there are significant differences then have the overall group vote on the most significant	

9. How is the work structured? Who does what, who monitors progress, who interacts with the government etc?	Group discussion	Understand different approaches from different partners.
10.What impact did COVID-19 have on the project? How did you respond to this? Have there been other context changes that you have had to adapt the project for?	Group discussion	Understand how the individual partners have reacted to changes.

Annex 8: Project Output Achievements

IND-OP1.1.1 Number of individuals reached with basic safe migration information.	#	800,000	939,700	543,525	396,185
IND-OP1.1.2 Number of individuals in the target community explain at least 3 aspect of safe migration and risks associated with irregular migration.	#	500,000	648,171	366,879	281,291
IND-OP1.1.3 Number of Local Community Leader capacitated to provide safe migration information including rights of MW.	#	575	900	696	204
IND-OP1.2.1 Number of aspirants migrants completed PEO orientation	#	80,000	83,274	57,675	25,599
IND-OP1.2.2 Number of PEO graduates underwent PDO for overseas migration	#	24,000	18,124	13,900	4,224
IND-OP1.3.1 Number of aspirant migrant workers are referred to skill development training including RPL and tailor-made short courses	#	12,500	11,057	5,648	5,409
IND-OP1.3.2 Number of training institutions/projects are under referral mechanism through working linkage/ formal MoU for skill training support to aspirant migrant workers.	#	15 formal & total 115	28		
IND-OP1.4.1 number of cases received and referred by partner organizations	#	1,500	1784	1689	95
IND-OP1.4.2 No. of public interest litigation filed in high court	#	2	1		
IND-OP 2.1.1: No. of TTC, DEMO, Airport Desk trained	#	75	25	21	4
IND-OP 2.1.2: % of trained DEMO officials, TTC instructors and airport desk officers obtained 70% post evaluation scores at the end training	%	75	77		

IND-OP 2.1.3: No. of trained UP representatives, UDC members, CTC members, and Tottho Apa trained	#	460	1,502	1,190	312
IND-OP 2.1.4: % of trained UP representatives, UDC members, CTC members, and Tottho Apa obtained 60% post evaluation scores on safe migration information and specific information for women at the end of training	%	65	70		
IND-OP 2.1.5: Revised PEO and PDO manuals validated by number of public, private and non-profit actors	#	5	0		
IND-OP 2.2.1: Number of BMET and other relevant GoB officials and private entities trained on arbitration and access to justice for MW.	#	820	924	769	155
IND-OP 2.2.2: % of trained BMET and other GoB officials obtained 70% post evaluation scores on arbitration and migration legal aid issues at the end of training	%	75	76		
IND-OP2.2.3 Number of GMC established and/or provided with capacity building support on MWs issues and referral mechanism	#	115 GMC/CTC/ 805 participants	115 GMC and 1276 mem- bers	853	423
IND-OP2.2.4 Case referral system established and functional at number of districts		3	3		
IND-OP2.2.5 Online case documentation system established		1	1		
IND-OP2.3.1 Number of participants from the MFI, Bank, agent banking and mobile financial services agent in the sensitization workshops	#	120	713	670	43
IND-OP2.3.2 Number of institutions/agency at targeted upazilas agreed to provide migration sensitive services to MW, returnee migrants and families	#	69	127		
IND-OP3.1.1 Number of migrant workers, returnees and/or their representative family members receive financial literacy training	#	3,500	3541	216	3325
IND-OP3.1.2 % of trained MW, returnees and/or their LBFM aware of at least 3 key elements of financial literacy	%	60	83		
IND-OP3.2.1 Number of migrant workers, returnees and/or their representative family members	#	3,500	3506	316	3190
IND-OP3.2.2 % of trained migrant workers, returnees and/or their representative family members obtained 60% post evaluation scores on entrepreneurship and productive use of remittances at the end to training	%	70	68		

Annex 8: Overview of Recommendations and Management Response



1.	Develop an advocacy strategy. This should identify the advocacy priorities, the process to be followed, and the responsibilities of the different partners. Procedures to respond to government requests during the advocacy work should be included in the strategy. The strategy should consider some of the points raised in the GSE.	
2.	Strengthen the action plan for including the recommendations of the GSE in the project and consider how to address gender equality at a more systemic level. This should include working with the district authorities to provide a more holistic and gender responsive service for women justice seekers as part of the decentralisation process, advocating with the central authorities to ensure resources are in place to provide such services, and forming women migrant resource groups as off-shoots of the migrant forums.	
3.	Utilise the PAC more strategically. This would focus on utilising the PAC to address specific project challenges. Particular individuals who may have expertise in a certain field could be utilised for 'deep-dive' field missions focusing on that particular challenge rather than more general visits showcasing the project's achievements.	
4.	Conduct an analysis of the lessons learned from previous attempts to develop apps to understand the potential pitfalls and recognise if the digitalisation proposed in the new PRODOC is feasible. Other options that do not require long-term maintenance, such as the development of You-Tube videos should be considered.	
5.	Ensure gender sensitive PSS referrals are available for justice seekers. The PRODOC for the second phase identifies referrals in two districts but should consider how this can be expanded to the other districts. A parallel advocacy strategy with the WEWB to expand the definition of health support for returning migrants to include PSS support can also be considered.	
6.	Strengthen coherence with other migration projects and agencies. Although information is shared between projects the collaboration between different migration projects appeared limited beyond a handful of examples. A more systematic referral system, as referenced in the PRODOC should be set up. The SDC could also consider using its convening power as the donor to push for more collaboration, perhaps arranging joint PAC meetings to specifically develop an action plan for concrete actions on collaboration.	
7.	Train the GMC and Migrant Forum members to provide a more holistic response to migrants seeking support. Justice seekers need more support than just the resolution of their cases, including PSS support, health referrals, economic reintegration. Case management could include assessment of these needs and referrals to relevant services where feasible.	
8.	Provide more training on ADR at different levels. ADR is a specific skill and the GMCs, UPs, and DEMOs are being asked to take on this responsibility without necessarily having the relevant skills. There are specific government guidelines on mediation and greater awareness of these are needed. Ensuring other agencies beyond the DEMOs such as other departments at the district level and police are trained in ADR would also complement this approach.	
9.	Advocacy with the BMET and other relevant authorities to ensure there are suffi-	

<p>cient resources available at the district level to enable the DEMOs and other district authorities to manage the grievance cases. This would include both human resources and also additional training.</p>		
10. Address the outstanding recommendations in the mid-term review, notably mapping opportunities to address disability inclusion and providing more regular updates on the risk analysis.		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree

Overview of recommendations, management response and measures

Recommendation 1			
Develop an advocacy strategy. This should identify the advocacy priorities, the process to be followed, and the responsibilities of the different partners. Procedures to respond to government requests during the advocacy work should be included in the strategy. The strategy should consider some of the points raised in the GSE.			
Management response			
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree	
[Explain why and to what extent you agree with the recommendation of the evaluator(s)]			
Measures	Responsibility	Timing	
a) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented in line with the recommendation made]	[<u>position</u> <u>responsible for measure</u>]	[<u>when</u> <u>measure should be implemented</u>]	
b) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented in line with the recommendation made]	[<u>position</u> <u>responsible for measure</u>]	[<u>when</u> <u>measure should be implemented</u>]	
c) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented in line with the recommendation made]	[<u>position</u> <u>responsible for measure</u>]	[<u>when</u> <u>measure should be implemented</u>]	

Recommendation 2			
Strengthen the action plan for including the recommendations of the GSE in the project and consider how to address gender equality at a more systemic level. This should include working with the district authorities to provide a more holistic and gender responsive service for women justice seekers as part of the decentralisation process, advocating with the central authorities to ensure resources are in place to provide such services, and forming women migrant resource groups as off-shoots of the migrant forums.			



Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
[Explain why and to what extent you agree with the recommendation of the evaluator(s)]		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented in line with the recommendation made]	[position responsible for measure]	[when measure should be implemented]

Recommendation 3		
Utilise the PAC more strategically. This would focus on utilising the PAC to address specific project challenges. Particular individuals who may have expertise in a certain field could be utilised for 'deep-dive' field missions focusing on that particular challenge rather than more general visits showcasing the project's achievements.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
[Explain why and to what extent you do not agree with the recommendation of the evaluator(s)]		

Recommendation 4		
Conduct an analysis of the lessons learned from previous attempts to develop apps to understand the potential pitfalls and recognise if the digitalisation proposed in the new PRODOC is feasible. Other options that do not require long-term maintenance, such as the development of You-Tube videos should be considered.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
[Explain why and to what extent you agree with the recommendation of the evaluator(s)]		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented concluding the recommendation made]	[position responsible for measure]	[when measure should be implemented]

Recommendation 5		
Ensure gender sensitive PSS referrals are available for justice seekers. The PRODOC for the second phase identifies referrals in two districts but should consider how this can be expanded to the other districts. A parallel advocacy strategy with the WEWB to expand the definition of health support for returning migrants to include PSS support can also be considered.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
[Explain why and to what extent you agree with the recommendation of the evaluator(s)]		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented in line with the recommendation made]	[position responsible for measure]	[when measure should be implemented]

Recommendation 6		
Strengthen coherence with other migration projects and agencies. Although information is shared between projects the collaboration between different migration projects appeared limited beyond a handful of examples. A more systematic referral system, as referenced in the PRODOC should be set up.		
The SDC could also consider using its convening power as the donor to push for more collaboration, perhaps arranging joint PAC meetings to specifically develop an action plan for concrete actions on collaboration.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
[Explain why and to what extent you do not agree with the recommendation of the evaluator/s]		
Measures		
a) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented in line with the recommendation made]	[position responsible for measure]	[when measure should be implemented]
Recommendation 7		
Train the GMC and Migrant Forum members to provide a more holistic response to migrants seeking support. Justice seekers need more support than just the resolution of their cases, including PSS support, health referrals, economic reintegration. Case management could include assessment of these needs and referrals to relevant services where feasible.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
[Explain why and to what extent you do not agree with the recommendation of the evaluator/s]		
Measures		
a) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented in line with the recommendation made]	[position responsible for measure]	[when measure should be implemented]
Recommendation 8		
Provide more training on ADR at different levels. ADR is a specific skill and the GMCs, UPs, and DEMOs are being asked to take on this responsibility without necessarily having the relevant skills. There are specific government guidelines on mediation and greater awareness of these are needed. Ensuring other agencies beyond the DEMOs such as other departments at the district level and police are trained in ADR would also complement this approach.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
[Explain why and to what extent you do not agree with the recommendation of the evaluator/s]		
Measures		
a) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented in line with the recommendation made]	[position responsible for measure]	[when measure should be implemented]
Recommendation 9		
Advocacy with the BMET and other relevant authorities to ensure there are sufficient resources available at the district level to enable the DEMOs and other district authorities to manage the grievance cases. This would include both human resources and also additional training.		
Management response		

Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
[Explain why and to what extent you do not agree with the recommendation of the evaluator/s]		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented in line with the recommendation made]	[position responsible for measure]	[when measure should be implemented]

Recommendation 10		
Address the outstanding recommendations in the mid-term review, notably mapping opportunities to address disability inclusion and providing more regular updates on the risk analysis.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
[Explain why and to what extent you do not agree with the recommendation of the evaluator/s]		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) [Present concrete measure that will be implemented in line with the recommendation made]	[position responsible for measure]	[when measure should be implemented]



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