

## Spotlight Mid-term Assessment Report using ROM review

Type of ROM review

Projects and Programmes

Project title

Realising women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region

Project reference

EU Delegation in charge

Key information				
Domain (instrument)	Region			
DAC Sector	Human and Social Development: « Gender Equality »			
Zone Benefitting from the Action	Country			
Type of Project/Programme	Geographic			
Geographic Implementation	Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.			
Contracting Party	SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE			
EU contribution	USD 29,370,587			
Project Implementation Dates	Start Date	01.01.2018	End Date	31.12.2022
ROM expert(s) name(s)	Maria Roura			
Field phase	Start Date	29.09.2021	End Date	08.10.2021

Scoring overview: <span style="color: green;">●</span> green (good) <span style="color: orange;">●</span> orange (problems) <span style="color: red;">●</span> red (serious deficiencies) <span style="color: grey;">●</span> Grey (not applicable)						
	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<span style="color: grey;">●</span>		
Relevance	1 <span style="color: green;">●</span>	2 <span style="color: green;">●</span>	3 <span style="color: orange;">●</span>	4 <span style="color: green;">●</span>	5 <span style="color: grey;">●</span>	6 <span style="color: green;">●</span>
Effectiveness	7 <span style="color: green;">●</span>	8 <span style="color: green;">●</span>	9 <span style="color: orange;">●</span>			
Efficiency	10 <span style="color: green;">●</span>	11 <span style="color: orange;">●</span>	12 <span style="color: orange;">●</span>			
Sustainability	13 <span style="color: orange;">●</span>					

Persons interviewed and surveyed	Interviews/FGD	Survey
EU Delegation	N/A	N/A
Partner country government	N/A	N/A
UN agencies	2	N/A
CSO reference group	N/A	N/A
Implementing partners	N/A	N/A
Final Beneficiaries	N/A	N/A
Other (consultant involved in midterm evaluation)	2	N/A

Key documents <sup>1</sup>	Number
Essential documents	12
Other documents	1

<sup>1</sup> Please consult Annex 1 for details on essential documents and other documents.

## A. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### Purpose and objectives of the Mid-term Assessment (MTA)

The purpose of the MTA is to assess the programme at regional level, to take stock of where the Spotlight Initiative is and to assess the new ways of working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The specific objectives are to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the programme, based on the agreed MTA questions, and to formulate relevant recommendations to improve subsequent project implementation.

As per the Terms of Reference, the MTA uses the EU Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) methodology as an approach to ensure that the results are comparable (across countries) and easy to interpret. However, the questions to be answered for the MTA are different from standard ROM methodology questions and were agreed in advance by the EU and the Spotlight Secretariat. The 13 MTA questions are grouped by Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability, which form the main headings of the report. The ROM methodology uses the following criteria for grading the questions:

**Table 1. Grading reference table for criteria and monitoring questions**

Qualitative	Grading reference table for criteria and monitoring questions
<b>Good/very good</b>	The situation is considered satisfactory, but there may be room for improvement. Recommendations are useful, but not vital to the project or programme.
<b>Problems identified and small improvements needed</b>	There are issues which need to be addressed, otherwise the global performance of the project or programme may be negatively affected. Necessary improvements do not however require a major revision of the intervention logic and implementation arrangements.
<b>Serious problems identified and major adjustments needed</b>	There are deficiencies which are so serious that, if not addressed, they may lead to failure of the project or programme. Major adjustments and revision of the intervention logic and/or implementation arrangements are necessary.
<b>Does not apply</b>	Not graded because the SAF program was designed prior to the Spotlight Initiative.

The Safe and Fair (SAF) programme “Realising women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (2018-2022)” is part of the multi-year EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls. Because the SAF program was designed prior to the Spotlight Initiative, the programme does not follow fully the Spotlight Initiative structure. Therefore, it has been considered that some of the monitoring questions addressed in this review, do not apply to the SAF program in terms of grading. The programme is jointly implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It was designed to address the root causes and facilitating factors of violence against women migrant workers and envisages three main outcomes:

- 1) Women migrant workers are better protected by gender-sensitive labour migration governance frameworks,
- 2) Women migrant workers are less vulnerable to violence and trafficking and benefit from coordinated responsive quality services,
- 3) Data, knowledge and attitudes on the rights and contributions of women migrant workers are improved.

The programme is implemented in countries of origin of labour migrants (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam) and countries of destination (Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand). It also targets women migrant workers migrating to East Asia (China - Hong Kong and Taiwan, and the Republic of Korea), and the Gulf Cooperation Council States, although no programming was planned to take place in these countries. The programme was officially launched in November 2017 at an event co-organised by the EU, ILO and UN Women. After a 9-month inception phase (January-September 2018), implementation began in October 2018. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been no significant delays in programme implementation except for some of the training activities, which have been hampered by limited access to Information technologies (IT) by some beneficiaries. The programme has been implemented as envisaged in most countries, but political factors have constrained implementation in others (Names of specific countries not mentioned as requested by one of the interviewees).

### **Methodological approach used**

This review has consisted of secondary analysis of existing documentation including the final report of an external Midterm Evaluation (MTE) of the programme conducted by two independent international consultants (Katherine Garven, expert in evaluation and gender-based violence; and Fernando Garabito, expert on evaluation and migration). Support on the field to the MTE was provided by two local experts: Rachel Aquino in the Philippines, and Tanaporn Perapate in Thailand. For the purpose of this Midterm Assessment (MTA), the report and annexes resulting from the MTE were colour-coded to identify relevant information to answer the 13 ROM questions and identify gaps, which were subsequently covered through specifically tailored interviews with 4 Key Informants (KI) and review of additional documentation.

The MTE done by the two independent consultants adopted a mixed-methods approach with 60 Qualitative KI interviews, 22 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), an Online questionnaire, a document review, and development of a case study. A total of 141 stakeholders participated in the MTE (113 females – 80%, 28 males – 20%; 137 based in Asia – 97%, 4 based in Brussels and New York – 3%). A total of 27 organisational settings were involved, including government institutions, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), UN organisations including current/former SAF Staff (National & Regional), the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative Secretariat, EU Delegations, trade unions, employers' associations, academic institutions, and media representatives. Women Migrant workers from Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand were also interviewed, including both young and elder women, as well as women with disability and some who had experienced violence. In addition, a total of 12 stakeholders (9 females – 75%; 3 males – 25%) participated in an online questionnaire addressed at the SAF National Programme Coordinators (NPCs), with an 80% response rate (12 out of 15 NPCs responded). Because of COVID-19 restrictions, data collection of the MTE took place mostly remotely, with locally supported face-to-face FGDs in Thailand and the Philippines. Synergies and consistencies between the MTE and the MTA were ensured.

**We have explicitly aligned the results of this review to the conclusions and recommendations of the MTE. Because the ROM methodology systematically addresses a set of specific questions and sub questions, some findings are specific to this exercise.**

### **Limitations of the MTA and measures taken**

As a result of a 3-month extension of the inception phase, this MTA was conducted shortly after the MTE of the programme was completed (Q3 2021). The findings and recommendations from the MTE have fed into the present MTA and will subsequently inform a broader MTA of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative. Potential duplication of work between the MTA and the MTE was carefully avoided through early conversations to ensure alignment and complementarity of the two exercises. During one of the online

meetings conducted with the parties involved, the consultants involved in the MTE noted that because of data protection commitments with their informants, it would not be possible for them to share primary data (interview transcripts/recordings) with the MTA consultant. As a result of this, this review is mostly based on secondary data (Spotlight Initiative programme documents and MTE report as per Annex 1), although four carefully tailored interviews with KIs were subsequently conducted to ensure due coverage of all the ROM dimensions and comparability across the Spotlight Initiative. This assessment is limited by the difficulty of engaging and collecting data from most vulnerable migrants and particularly women who have experienced violence. This also explains the limited availability of data at the outcome level. While fully acknowledging that data availability is important to assess the extent of violence amongst migrant women and inform programming, the safety and wellbeing of participants has been prioritised under the “do not harm” approach adopted through the design, implementation, and evaluation of this programme. Given the political sensitivity of some of the issues addressed, we do not provide specific examples in certain sections. As in any other qualitative study examining sensitive topics, respondent bias is expected to occur. Some participants such as implementing stakeholders may have been concerned about the implications of the MTE/MTA findings and a degree of “complacency bias” (e.g., positively skewed responses) is likely to have occurred during discussion amongst colleagues and collaborating stakeholders. All these factors have been taken into consideration in the process of analysing and interpreting data for this MTA. For example, the fact that a well-known barrier to programme implementation was rarely raised by interviewees (e.g., fear of repression of dissenting voices in countries in which it is well known that freedom of speech is curtailed), can be interpreted as evidence that there is a degree of reluctance to speak openly about the poor adherence to democratic and participatory values in some of the countries where the SAF programme is implemented. Because SAF was designed before Spotlight Initiative, its outcomes are not organised along the 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars. Therefore, it is not possible to calculate the budget percentage assigned to each RUNO for each of the pillars.

<b>1.Does the action align to the principles of the Spotlight Initiative as listed in the Spotlight Initiative Fund TORs?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Good – Good
	<input type="checkbox"/> Problems
	<input type="checkbox"/> Serious deficiencies
<p>The SAF programme supports the integration of rights-based and survivor-centered approaches into laws, policies and practice on prevention and response to Violence Against Women (VAW) to end impunity and improve women's access to essential services, including justice, with a focus on women migrant workers.</p> <p>Because the SAF Programme was designed before the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the ProDoc was subsequently revised to maximise alignment with this broader Initiative. <b>The 16 Spotlight Initiative guiding principles are solidly built into the structure of SAF. A major strength of this programme is that it was clearly designed to go beyond a gender sensitive approach to also foster societal transformation by decisively tackling the structural determinants of migrant women’s safety and creating an “enabling environment” conducive to gender equality and ending impunity</b> (Principle 2). This entails a focus on legislative factors that reduce the vulnerability of women migrant workers, as well as an emphasis on women’s empowerment by fostering their participation in strengthened civil society structures such as trade unions and women organisations; as well as tackling gender stereotypes and norms of acceptance</p>	

of violence. More specifically, SAF provides technical inputs to legal and policy instruments to ensure that these are gender-responsive and survivor-centred (Principles 5, 11, 15, 16). These include labour migration regulations, action plans to end VAW, and legislation on domestic work for better access to decent work.

The programme has created structures at national (NPACs) and regional level (RPAC) to engage key government representatives in collaborative decision making ensuring that UN programming meets national needs and priorities (principles 10, 13) without substituting the core responsibilities of governments as duty bearers (principle 9). For example, because in the ASEAN region there are several large-scale anti-trafficking initiatives that focus on laws and policies, SAF took a complementary approach to specifically support migrant women and advocate for their access to services already available to nationals who are survivors of violence and/or trafficking, so that migrant women are not “left behind”.

The programme is committed to a participatory multi-stakeholder approach to address the diversity of factors that affect safe labour migration for women. Stakeholders involved include ASEAN Member States’ government authorities, ASEAN institutions, workers’ organisations, employers and recruitment agencies, CSOs, community-based organisations, families, communities, research institutions, academia, media networks, youth, and the general public (Principles 1, 7, 8, 10, 12).

The programme promotes an integrated approach linked to SDG 5 (Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reducing Inequality), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) (Principle 14). In addition, it includes a Case Study purposefully focused on the provision of safe and confidential services to help women migrant workers, using a “survivor centred” approach that is consistent with the principle of “leaving no one behind”, through Migrant Resource Centres and partners providing essential coordinated services (Principles 3, 4 and 6).

Data on violence against women migrant workers must be carefully collected through specific tools that safeguard the safety of the persons involved in the process. In line with “do no harm” principles, SAF advocates for and provides technical support to governments, workers organisations and civil society service providers on ethics, safety and confidentiality related to information and data collection. Similarly, although it would have been desirable to engage further the families and communities of origin, a cautious approach has been adopted in order to prevent any unintentional damage as a result of programme implementation (Principle 1).

A CSO Reference Group meets bi-annually (established in 2020) in line with the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative’s CSO Reference Group principles. It is important to take into consideration that **because the SAF programme was designed prior to the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative**, it did not follow the Spotlight Initiative’s guidelines on consulting with Resident Coordinators (RCs) during programme design. Although they were invited to take part in NPACs, the MTE found that some still felt they had not been included in the design process. However, it should be noted that their engagement was not foreseen and/or requested at that stage. Interviews conducted during the MTE suggest that the programme largely perceives CSOs as implementing partners as opposed to strategic partners which is now being addressed through the CSO Reference Group.

Specific efforts need to be directed towards further strengthening a meaningful engagement of women’s movement for a better alignment of the programme with principle 11 (Interventions strengthen, support and engage the women’s movement, as well as autonomous women’s organisations, and encourage them to access and develop long-term financing strategies). This could be done through

ongoing support to women's organisations and existing implementing agreements which include support to organisational capacity and resourcing.

**Key findings:**

- **The 16 guiding principles that inform the Spotlight Initiative were solidly built into the structure of SAF.** → Because Q1 is specific of the ROM methodology, this finding is specific to this MTA exercise.
- **A major strength of the SAF programme is that it is clearly designed to go beyond a gender sensitive approach to also foster societal transformation by decisively tackling the structural determinants of migrant women's safety and creating an "enabling environment" conducive to gender equality and ending impunity (gender transformative).**  
→ [Aligned with MTE Finding #1](#) "The programme's focus on addressing the root causes of violence, including cultural norms and institutional policies that facilitate violence, is well aligned with the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative's gender transformative approach (MTE, pg. 23).  
→ [Aligned with MTE Conclusion #1](#): "...in combination with the gender transformative nature of its programme" (MTE, pg. 55)

**Recommendations:**

- **Document in an explicit manner the adherence of the programme to the 16 Spotlight Initiative principles including specific examples, so adherence to these principles is positively acknowledged and further encouraged. This could be for example included in the final reports to donors. (ILO, UN Women).**  
→ Because Q1 is specific of the ROM methodology, this recommendation is specific to this MTA exercise.

<p><b>2A. Are the Initiative's deliverables aligned with the UN agencies' mandate, priorities and expertise? Are the right UN agencies involved?</b> <b>2B. Are programmes implemented in line with the UN System reform?</b></p>	<div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Good – Good</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Problems</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Serious deficiencies</div>
<p>The SAF Programme is mainly implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Of a total budget of \$30,000,000 (rounded up), ILO has the greatest budget allocation with \$16,648,833 followed by UN Women with an allocated \$13,351,167. ILO is the lead agency and has staff responsible for management, monitoring, evaluation reporting and communications. ILO is also expected to organise the NPAC and RPAC meetings and undertake the management lead role for which it has budget allocation. ILO also focuses on results related to labour migration (Objective 1 and components of Objective 3), while UN Women oversees results related to VAW migrant workers (Objective 2), as well as the components on VAW under Objective 3. UNODC focuses on capacity building and policy implementation related to prevention and response to trafficking. This organisation provides part time support from a Regional Coordinator on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (P4 -2 work months/year). This distribution of responsibilities is aligned with the agencies' respective expertise in labour migration, violence against women and human trafficking. Promoting safe and fair international labour migration and promoting gender equality are key</p>	

priorities across ILO. As for UN Women, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) is one of twelve priorities for action and a key thematic component of its corporate theory of change. Finally, UNODC is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls with a focus on addressing gender-based violence and the criminal justice system. ILO and UN Women have a history of working together to promote the rights of women migrant workers across the ASEAN region (e.g., joint project *Preventing the Exploitation of Women Migrant Workers in ASEAN*, June 2014-December 2017). In addition, UN Women and UNODC have previously worked together on justice related issues and the prevention of human trafficking. However, **no previous programme had the simultaneous and coordinated engagement of the three agencies, which is clearly appropriate to address from a holistic perspective the complex interesting needs of migrant women affected by violence.**

***Because the SAF program was designed before the Spotlight Initiative,*** its results are broadly – but not explicitly nor exactly – aligned with the pillars (outcomes) of the broader EU-UN Spotlight Initiative. Objectives 1 and 2 overlap with pillars 1 and 2 of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative (strengthening laws, policies, and institutions). Objective 3 responds to pillars 3 (prevention) and 5 (data). Work under project Results 1.3 and 2.3 address pillar 6 (strengthening women’s movement). Capacity building to strengthen service provision under project Results 1.4 and 2.4 contribute to the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative outputs under Pillar 4 (Services). The different components of the initiative (labour migration, violence against women migrant workers, trafficking) are closely interlinked, and the MTE found a degree of “overlaps” in the day-to-day work conducted by the different RUNOs. Because the SAF outcomes are not structured along the 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars and the RUNOs are jointly organising most of the interventions, disaggregating the budget by agency *and* pillar is complex. The ILO and UN Women are leading on all the activities and supported by other UN agencies, such as UNODC for other activities, such as capacity building for multisectoral service provision, including front service providers.

The programme collaborates closely with relevant UN programming across the region and engages in regular communication and cooperation with other UN agencies. In close collaboration with the European Union Delegation (EUD) in Thailand, SAF collaborated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to support delivery of services and empowerment activities with Myanmar Muslim women and trafficked persons in Thailand. It also participated in an information-session with the IOM X initiative to understand how it used communications for development (C4D) to empower migrant workers to engage in safe migration and to change social attitudes towards migrant workers. The SAF Programme, the **IOM/UN PROMISE** initiative, and the ILO TRIANGLE initiative holds regular coordination meetings. RPACs of the SAF programme are conducted in conjunction with the RPAC of the ILO’s TRIANGLE project (2019, 2020, 2021). Still, there are opportunities for further collaboration with the ILO TRIANGLE project (to use EVAW training materials more extensively), as well as the IOM/UN Women PROMISE INITIATIVE (to further strengthen the economic empowerment of returning women migrant workers at the community level).

The MTE found that *“the SAF Programme has not worked closely with IOM to facilitate access to (recruiters) network, which is a missed opportunity to sensitize recruiters on VAW. This is also the case with IOM’s CREST initiative that works directly with employers and employers’ associations across Asia, and which could provide opportunities to sensitize employers. In addition, as is explained in Finding 7, the programme’s Objective #3 is largely missing a C4D focus and has not fully capitalized on the experiences of and opensource resources produced by the IOM X initiative”*. Building on the global memorandum of understanding between ILO and IOM, it would be desirable to have a greater involvement of IOM as an organisation specifically focused on migration. This is particularly the case given the long term and sustained involvement of IOM in the provision of pre-departure services to potential migrant women. An

early pre-departure engagement is crucial to be able to provide subsequent support to women who may experience gender-based violence in the destination countries. Capitalising on IOM long-term structures and experience in this field could provide an avenue to maximise this. Lessons could also be drawn from the experience of IOM engaging communities of origin in the development of locally tailored interventions to address particularly sensitive issues. For example, IOM Armenia conducted formative research to inform an online HIV campaign carefully designed to reach migrants (and their partners) without further targeting or stigmatising of this population nor exacerbating family tensions. As the MTE found, IOM has an extensive network of recruiters as part of the IRIS Ethical Recruitment system and the SAF Programme could work more closely with IOM to facilitate access to this network to sensitise recruiters on VAW. Establishing links with IOM's CREST initiative—which works directly with employers and employers' associations across Asia—could also provide opportunities to sensitise employers. The programme could build further from IOM's X initiative focused on open-source resources.

The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is the first fund implemented that follows the principles of the UN Reform, which expects UN entities to engage in more joint programming to capitalise on their respective comparative strengths while maximising synergies. There are thus high expectations for the SAF Programme to align with UN Reform principles as it constitutes a “demonstration fund” for the principles of the “whole of UN System” initiative. Under the umbrella of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the SAF Programme is designed to align with such principles and is expected to contribute lessons learned to strengthen future joint programming across the UN. To facilitate joint planning, the RUNOs worked together to develop a joint results framework and annual work plans outlining the activities and contributions of each agency. In addition, to facilitate joint programme implementation, staff from the main RUNOs have collaborated closely on a day-to-day basis. ILO and UN Women have harmonised planning and financial reporting and produce joint reports. A Chief Technical Advisor contracted by ILO is responsible for the overall management of the programme and works closely with a UN Women specialist in ending VAWG. ILO also contracts the Research M&E and Regional Communications Officer. Along with CTA, these two staff are also expected to support initiatives of all 3 agencies in 10 countries and regional level.

There has been a high expectation regarding the degree of coordination and consultation with staff from both UN Women and ILO participating in most meetings. In countries where there are two National Coordinators with each one representing a separate RUNO (ILO, UN Women), there has been a rather time intensive process in which NPCs spend between 25-50% of their time coordinating with the other UN agency. As per the MTE questionnaire, this has helped to transfer knowledge and skills across the agencies and generated a sense of shared ownership, suggesting progress in the right direction. Still, the distribution of roles and responsibilities between ILO and UN Women needs to be revised to prevent staff burnout. The weight of responsibilities also needs to be revisited as the burden appears to be hard to manage in countries where there is as single NPC representing the two main RUNOs. Still, according to the MTE, there are benefits that offset the fixed cost associated to learning to work differently and transcend traditional silos.

Because the SAF Programme was designed prior to the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, it did not follow the Initiative's guidelines on consulting with RCs during programme design. The MTE interviews found that some RCs felt that they had not been sufficiently involved in the design process. Still, at country level, RCs are invited to take part in NPACs, and in some countries they play a central work catalysing joint work across different agencies. In the Philippines, for example, the UN RC's Office committed various agencies (ILO, IOM, UN Women and UNDP) to co-develop the UN-CIFAL programme. As a result, SAF has

successfully joined forces with IOM and ILO's FAIR project to deliver pilot training sessions as part of a "Professional Certificate Course on Global Migration".

### Key findings:

- **The engagement of ILO, UN WOMEN and UNODC is appropriate to address from a holistic perspective the complex intersecting needs of women migrant workers who are affected by violence. Existing cooperation with IOM could be further enhanced.**  
→ [Aligned with MTE Finding #4](#): "the programme's specific focus on ending violence against women migrant workers complements the labour migration programming of other UN entities and programmes in the region and fills an important programming gap. However, there remain areas where synergies between programming could be further strengthened. For instance, the Safe and Fair Programme's logical framework includes engagement with recruiters and employers. However, the programme has not extensively tapped into the wide networks of recruiters and employers that other programmes have developed. For instance, ILO projects like TRIANGLE have done extensive work with recruiters and their associations and have networks that could also be tapped into. In addition, the IOM has an extensive network of recruiters that it works with as part of the IRIS: Ethical Recruitment system. While ILO and IOM have recently concluded a global MOU, and there are other areas of collaboration within the project, the Safe and Fair Programme has not worked closely with IOM to facilitate access to this network, which is a missed opportunity to sensitize recruiters on VAW." (MTE, pg. 31)
- **The weight/distribution of roles and responsibilities amongst RUNOs has resulted in some overworked staff.**  
→ [Aligned with MTE Conclusion #2](#): "Some overlap in roles and responsibilities between ILO and UN Women staff as well as a high degree of consultation and coordination between both entities has resulted in some more time consuming and less efficient processes, which have led to heavy workloads for programming staff. Workloads are particularly high for NPCs in countries where one NPC is required to represent both joint entities. This risks potential burnout among staff members and could potentially negatively impact the quality of the programming and results achieved". (MTE, pgs. 55- 56).

### Recommendations:

- **Explore avenues for further collaboration with IOM's extensive network of recruiters and experience providing pre-departure services to migrants (ILO, UN Women, UNODC, IOM).**  
→ [Aligned with MTE Recommendation #4](#): "Further collaborate with other UN labour migration programmes across the region to promote enhanced synergies around engaging recruiters and employers and providing financial training and business support to returning women migrant workers" (MTE, pg. 62).
- **Consider the organisation of a workshop with key staff working in the different SAF countries to reflect on the lessons learnt and identify future steps needed to work differently in a more efficient and sustainable manner. This should include an assessment of the burden of work required, and clarification of roles and responsibilities. Reorganising outputs under the corresponding Spotlight Initiative pillars could be useful to redefine the activities and distribution of tasks to avoid duplicities and burnouts (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC).**  
→ This recommendation is specific to this MTA exercise.

### 3. Does the action presently respond to the needs of the target groups / end beneficiaries? Are the necessary consultations taking place with key stakeholders?

→ Sub-questions to consider as per ROM approaches:

- How often and in what way were national and local government, UN organisations, EUD, CSO, women's organisations and other minority groups involved in
  - Design of the action
  - Implementation
  - Monitoring?
- How often and in what way is feedback collected and used for future decision-making or adjusting actions?
- Is feedback fed back to beneficiaries?

☐ Very Good – Good

☒ Problems

☐ Serious deficiencies

As per the MTE interviews and FGDs, *“the SAF Programme is filling important gaps with respect to protecting the rights of women migrant workers to a life free from violence”*.

In line with the broader Spotlight Initiative, the SAF programme is solidly underpinned by participatory principles as a prerequisite for ownership and subsequent sustainability of the action. During the inception phase and the MTE, there were extensive consultations with diverse stakeholders, including government partners and beneficiaries. To ensure due stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the programme, specific mechanisms have been created. These include the National Project Advisory Committees (NPACs) and Regional Project Advisory Committee (RPAC). These committees are generally co-chaired by government ministries and include CSOs, employers' associations, trade unions and recruitment agencies, other relevant UN agencies. EU delegates are also always part of NPACs, which has fostered the involvement of high-level government officials. These forums bring diverse stakeholders together to work collaboratively and facilitate the alignment of programmatic decisions with the needs of key stakeholders.

Overall, these structures have provided opportunities for stakeholders to break silos by working across government ministries and stakeholder groups and have given stakeholders a space to help shape decisions. NPACs have provided a platform for stakeholders within a country to meet, exchange ideas, express priorities, review SAF progress, advice implementation, workplan and share information. The MTE drew from Feminist Evaluation Principles to encourage stakeholders to reflect and deliberate about the issues raised throughout the process. Evaluators engaged with an Evaluation Reference Group, consisting of key programme stakeholders, and had direct discussions with women migrant workers, some of whom had experienced violence. There are indications that the process of engaging stakeholders is a meaningful one, that goes beyond mere tokenistic participation, with an early engagement of most government partners, and consultations with beneficiaries eventually feeding the decision-making process. For example, consultations were held with 42 women migrant workers in two training centres run by recruitment agencies. Women in the pilot trainings asked SAF to develop a safe migration curriculum for migration to Japan which SAF began to develop in 2019.

While a high level of ownership can be expected from highly collaborative processes, it is important to consider the broader political landscape in a region in which the principles underpinning the SAF initiative are not necessarily endorsed by all the key stakeholders. While not true for all countries across the region, in some countries there are clear imbalances between historically powerful Ministries of Labour and smaller newly created Ministries of Women. In other countries, the civil society space is being reduced, and freedoms of speech curtailed. This had led to repressive actions against critical media and CSOs, which should be considered when analysing the contributions of those CSOs that are allowed to operate within a particular country. SAF is aware of the challenges and is working to identify solutions to address these

and engage with CSOs within this context. For example, SAF has ensured that key stakeholders are represented and have a voice in governance mechanisms of the programme (including through a CSO reference group), has built capacity of stakeholders on advocacy skills, and has provided technical support to partners throughout the programme.

SAF has gathered CSOs from ASEAN countries for large regional meetings and National and Regional Programme Advisory Committee meetings, carefully maintaining a balanced engagement with partners across government and civil society in an effort to mitigate power imbalances. Although these measures are useful, establishing internal mechanisms would add value in monitoring the extent to which stakeholders' views are taken into consideration, especially with regards to these diverging views and power imbalances within and across stakeholder groups. This is particularly important in contexts where democratic principles and participatory values are not necessarily endorsed by all participating stakeholders (e.g., some may not see the value of participatory decision-making processes), or where it cannot be assumed that the leaders of the biggest CSOs will necessarily represent the needs and priorities of female migrant workers.

**The RUNOs are playing a major role at keeping a difficult balance between fostering social mobilisation while keeping government stakeholders on board. This is particularly challenging in countries that may take drastic measures against dissenting voices, including CSOs representatives and human rights activists. While broader socio-political contextual factors (e.g., power structures, lack of adherence to participatory values), are factors external to the project, the Spotlight Initiative Secretariat has clearly acknowledged these risks and drafted specific guidance on “Protecting and mitigating risks for women human rights defenders in their engagement with the Spotlight Initiative”. This is a major challenge shared by other programmes. Other organisations such as WHO have also elaborated practical guidance drawing on best practices and lessons learnt for a more meaningful social participation where disruptive power dynamics prevail. All these recently developed guidelines could inform the response to a major challenge that – despite external to the project – must be duly acknowledge and addressed. (See for example WHO guidelines: “Voice, agency, empowerment - handbook on social participation for universal health coverage”).**

As per the MTE, the RPAC brings stakeholders at the regional level together and has several mechanisms for cross country collaboration, but the programme's structure does not include formal working groups to promote cooperation between origin and destination countries, and there are no mechanisms to connect NPACs from different countries or to connect NPACs with the RPAC. The MTE also found that the engagement of families/communities of origin of female migrant workers has been constrained by the programme's limited direct interaction with this stakeholder group.

#### **Key findings:**

- **As per the MTE interviews and FGDs, “the Safe and Fair Programme is filling important gaps with respect to protecting the rights of women migrant workers to a life free from violence”.**  
→ [Aligned with MTE Conclusion #1](#) (MTE, pg. 54).
- **As per the MTE “There remains significant room to increase the added value of its regional work through further cross-country knowledge exchange and stakeholder networking”.**  
→ [Aligned with MTE Conclusion #3](#) (MTE, pg. 56).
- **The programme does not have a mechanism in place to monitor the extent to which stakeholders' views are taken into consideration, in particular when there are diverging views and power imbalances within and across stakeholder groups. This is particularly important in**

**contexts where democratic principles and participatory values are not necessarily endorsed by all participating stakeholders.**

→ Because the (sub)question(s) about meaningful stakeholder engagement are specific of the ROM review, this finding is specific to this MTA exercise.

**Recommendations:**

- **Consider documenting the main points of disagreement amongst stakeholders and how discrepancies are (or not) resolved (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC).**  
→ Because the (sub)question(s) about meaningful stakeholder engagement are specific of the ROM review, this recommendation is specific to this MTA exercise.
- **In alignment with “do no harm principles”, make sure to explicitly inform beneficiaries of both the potential positive and negative consequences of empowered action in contexts where democratic values are not necessarily endorsed. This should be systematically included in training materials and community mobilisation activities (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC).**  
→ Because the (sub)question(s) about meaningful stakeholder engagement are specific of the ROM review, this recommendation is specific to this MTA exercise.

**4. Do all key stakeholders still demonstrate effective commitment (ownership) and deliver accordingly?**

☒ Very Good – Good

☐ Problems

☐ Serious deficiencies

By providing opportunities for collaborative work across government ministries and stakeholder groups, the NPACs and RPACs have helped to unpack stakeholder needs and priorities, which is a prerequisite to building national ownership. Still, the degree of effective commitment has varied across and within stakeholder groups and countries.

Government manage programme funds and execute the programme. According to the MTE findings, have contributed with their time and energy demonstrating ownership by participating and co-chairing NPACs despite the challenges involved in inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder’s collaborations. The commitment to the initiative of some national governments is clearly reflected in the adoption of 24 legal and policy instruments during the first phase of the programme. In addition, some government actors have taken the lead on certain aspects of SAF. For example, the Government of Indonesia has developed its own standard operating procedures and continued with trainings initially offered by the programme. Other government actors have asked for additional support from the programme such as the Viet Nam Ministry of Foreign Affairs who asked for programme support to develop a protocol to handle cases of trafficking. In this country, SAF has provided technical and financial contributions to a Ministry of Justice-led study to assess the current status of enforcement of existing normative frameworks on sexual violence and harassment against women. The Department of Foreign Affairs for the Philippines requested a webinar series specific to the role of embassies in collecting and using data on violence. Financial support for the meeting was co-funded with the Cambodian, Lao and Myanmar governments. However, within a large initiative covering a broad range of countries, the involvement of national governments has – not surprisingly – been diverse. There have been bureaucratic and political challenges related to engaging

with one country which have been or are in process of being addressed. In other instances, political instability has impacted the level of government support to the initiative.

Given the Spotlight Initiative commitment to engage CSOs, SAF relies on CSOs to implement programming. However, SAF staff interviewed as part of the MTE have acknowledged that “the women’s movement across programming countries is quite scattered and in need of strengthening” (MTE Finding 3, page 30). Within this challenging context, CSOs have shown strong commitment to the programme. For instance, the Indonesian domestic workers organisation PERTIMIG in Malaysia organised an international talk show where 50 Indonesian domestic workers from across Indonesia, Singapore and Hong Kong (China) participated to encourage the government of Indonesia to implement a law to Protect Indonesian Migrants. The programme has also established a fruitful partnership with the International Domestic Workers’ Federation (IDWF) supporting the organisation of women migrant domestic workers in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. In 2020 a CSO Reference Group was established within the SAF programme.

The interviews conducted during the MTE indicate that UN staff involved in SAF perceive that the pooled financing mechanism has generated a strong sense of shared ownership, but the somewhat resource intensive management mechanism is placing a heavy burden on some staff members who may burn out and disengage in the mid to long term.

In several countries, members of EU Delegations have joined different events and Programme Advisory Committees. EU Ambassadors have been great allies in carrying forward messages to end violence against women migrant workers and in providing visibility to the Spotlight Initiative. EU delegates have played a major role networking with national government officials to strengthen national buy-in to the programme and encouraging participation of top-level officials in NPAC meetings.

#### Key findings:

- **As per the MTE interviews and FGDs “the women’s movement across programming countries is quite scattered and in need of strengthening”**  
→ [This finding is aligned with MTE Finding #3: “the women’s movement across programming countries is quite scattered and in need of strengthening” \(MTE, pg. 30\).](#)
- **The degree of effective commitment has varied across and within stakeholder groups and countries. In several countries government actors have taken the lead on certain aspects of SAF, have co-chaired NPACs, and adopted new legislation that protect the rights of migrant women. There have been bureaucratic/political challenges related to engaging with a few country Governments which have been or are in process of being addressed.**  
→ [Because the question about effective commitment is specific of the ROM review, this finding is made explicit in this MTA exercise.](#)
- **UN agencies and EU delegates play a major role networking with local stakeholders to strengthen national buy-in. This includes CSOs as well as top level officials.**  
→ [Because the question about effective commitment is specific of the ROM review, this finding is made explicit in this MTA exercise](#)

#### Recommendations:

- **Continue to direct efforts towards engaging the government of Brunei Darussalam and document barriers, facilitators and lessons learnt. (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC).**  
→ [Because the question about effective commitment is specific of the ROM review, this recommendation is made explicit in this MTA exercise.](#)

<p><b>5. Is the programme Theory of Change well developed? Are the indicators to measure results well defined and relevant to measure the achievement of the objectives in line with the ToC?</b></p>	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good – Good         </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Problems         </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Serious deficiencies         </div> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable         </div>
<p>The overall objective brings together the two main areas of work of the SAF programme (labour migration + VAW): “Labour migration is safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region”. The explicit mention of “all” women is aligned with the <i>leaving no one behind</i> principle. The Theory of Change (ToC) does not outline the programme’s actual change logic, and particularly how the outputs and outcomes attained will have an impact on a safe and fair migration for All women in the ASEAN region.</p> <p>The Logical Framework includes results/outputs that cover the 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars/outcomes as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Laws and Policies: Covered by Outputs 1.1, 2.1</li> <li>2. Institutions: Outputs 1.2, 2.2</li> <li>3. Prevention: Output 1.2, 1.3,1.4,2.1,2.2,2.3,3.3</li> <li>4. Services: Outputs 1.2, 1.4, 2.2, 2.4</li> <li>5. Data: Outputs 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3</li> <li>6. Women’s Movement: Outputs 1.3, 2.3</li> </ol> <p>However, the outcome/objective level is not articulated along these 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars. In fact, it is mostly articulated along thematic siloes with Specific Objective 1 mostly focused on labour aspects and Specific Objective 2 focused on VAW. Specific Objective 3 focuses on data and public attitudes about women migrant women. The articulation of outcomes/objectives along the 2 main themes (labour and VAW), facilitates “on the paper” allocation of specific tasks to the different RUNOs, with most activities assigned to ILO for Outcome 1 and UN WOMEN for Outcome 2. It appears as if the Specific Objectives have been pre-defined to fit a clear-cut allocation of thematic clusters of work across the main RUNOs in line with their respective expertise (specific Objective 1 mostly focused on labour aspects and Specific Objective 2 focused on VAW). In the context of a programme aiming at applying the UN reform principles, this is an important flaw as it reinforces the traditional siloed approach. A major strength of the 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars is that they provide a logical structure to think through implementation approaches that cut across thematic fields. However, because the SAF program was designed before the Spotlight Initiative, it was not designed along the 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars, and therefore scoring for this question is considered “not applicable”. While the co-creation of the Log Frame provides an opportunity to think carefully about how to unravel the allocation of different components of work (activities) across the RUNOs, the activity level is not covered in the Logical Framework. This is a missed opportunity to identify potential “duplications” at this level (e.g., attendance to meetings addressing legal reform for women migrant women) and eventually reframe these as necessary spaces to build synergies. Acknowledging the need for the two agencies to be involved in certain activities, would in turn inform a more realistic estimation of the time/resources needed and subsequent allocation of roles &amp; responsibilities. The results framework is comprehensive in terms of inclusion of baselines, targets, and progress indicators. While there are no specific targets at the overall objective level, this is understandable given limited data availability and the complexity related to safely collecting and using data from populations facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (e.g.,</p>	

irregular migrant + woman + from an ethnic minority + affected by VAW). The programme conducted baseline studies and an evaluability assessment during the inception phase. While the programme kept its original logical framework, each indicator was mapped against the indicators of the Spotlight Initiative to ensure alignment. During a Project Steering Committee with participation of the Spotlight Secretariat a “SAF Baseline and Target Setting Report” was endorsed. Reporting is timely and comprehensive.

#### Key findings:

- Because SAF was designed prior to the Spotlight Initiative, the ToC does not outline the programme’s actual change logic and is not articulated along the 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars. Therefore, scoring for this question is considered “not applicable”
- There have been proactive efforts to align the indicators used to the Spotlight Initiative.

→ Because the focus on the Spotlight Initiative pillars is specific of the ROM review, these findings are specific to this MTA exercise.

#### Recommendations

- Consider the articulation of future planning of activities and reporting along the 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars: 1. Laws and Policies, 2. Institutions, 3. Prevention, 4. Services, 5. Data, 6. Women’s Movement (ILO, UN Women)

→ Because the focus on the Spotlight Initiative pillars is specific of the ROM review, this suggestion is specific to this MTA exercise.

**6A. BEFORE COVID-19: Have all relevant circumstances and risks been taken into account to update the intervention logic? If there are delays, how important are they and what are the consequences? What are the reasons for these delays and to what extent have appropriate corrective measures been implemented? To what extent has the planning been revised accordingly?**

☒ Very Good – Good

☐ Problems

☐ Serious deficiencies

**6B. AFTER COVID-19: What are the consequences of COVID 19? To what extent have appropriate corrective measures been implemented? To what extent has the planning been revised accordingly?**

#### *Before COVID-19*

The project was specifically designed to contribute to regional goals established at the ASEAN level and the related country level commitments. It draws from a problem analysis that considers a local context of widespread migration of females employed in irregular sectors (domestic and care work) who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and major barriers to accessing services and justice. The project was designed to fill important gaps that were not addressed by existing programmes. Possible risks (and plan for risk mitigation) were addressed at the design phase through the inclusion of a risk assessment and risk mitigation matrix with contingency plans that were integrated into the project activities by design (e.g., focus on legislative level, training media). While this risk mitigation plan included in the action document is of a rather general nature it was further elaborated throughout the project implementation. The 2019 annual report includes a detailed matrix that analyses both contextual and institutional risks, risk levels, likelihood, impact, mitigation measures and responsible unit/person. While remaining at a rather general level (regional) this nuanced and comprehensive risk analysis was instrumental to address emerging priorities (e.g., initial bureaucratic delays in a few countries), and explicitly considers the importance of balancing women’s empowerment with the prevention of violence. Despite some

bureaucratic delays, the programme was able to successfully mitigate most of their effects by progressing preparatory work before the formal signature of country agreements. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, a number of ambitious objectives during the inception phase, such as an evaluability assessment and extensive baseline studies and stakeholder consultations, led to an initial 3-month delay (the inception phase took 9 months as opposed to the 6 months that had been initially planned). As a response to these internal factors, the workplan was duly adapted for a meaningful implementation of all activities. This included a delay of the MTE, which has conversely led to a tighter time frame for the implementation of the recommendations derived from it. Initial delays in reporting to the Spotlight Initiative were subsequently mitigated through greater clarity about reporting requirements and processes. Weaknesses in the theory of change have hampered the implementation of an evidence-based approach. Because the (hypothesised) links between the project outputs and subsequent outcomes is not outlined, it is not possible to assess the extent to which the programme is evidence-based.

### **After COVID-19.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly dramatic effect on migrant workers by exacerbating their vulnerabilities due to loss of employment, having to return to their home countries, being trapped at their place of employment, having reduced access to services in destination countries, and working in hazardous conditions without adequate personal protective equipment. In addition, migrant workers have faced an increase of overlapping stigmas amidst a severely racialised pandemic. The programme has developed a COVID-19 response plan focused on addressing the emerging protection needs of women migrant workers and has made additional efforts to duly respond to the COVID-19 crisis. These include:

- 1) Conducting several studies including surveys and mapping exercises to understand how the needs of women migrant workers have changed as a result of the pandemic (e.g., *COVID-19 and Women Migrant Workers in ASEAN*, *Experiences of ASEAN migrant workers during COVID-19: Rights at work, migration and quarantine during the pandemic*, and *re-migration plans*). These studies have been employed to identify gaps in service provision and tailor programming to the pandemic context.
- 2) Supporting front line service providers to shift from in-person to remote service provision. This has included support to CSOs in Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand to better use hotlines and remote service provision to connect with women migrant workers. The programme has also helped the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) to move a considerable amount of their events and communications online. However, remote support has inherent limitations as it can not necessarily access those women migrant workers who are not connected to the Internet due to geographic remoteness, lack of resources for online access, discomfort using online platforms, etc.
- 3) Ensuring the inclusion of women migrant workers in the national COVID-19 response plans, and advocating for the importance of maintaining or strengthening the availability of coordinated quality essential services for women migrant workers, including survivors of violence, through the provision of technical inputs on national and regional COVID-19 strategies and action plans (e.g. *Protocol for Handling Cases of Gender-based Violence and Human Trafficking of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, *the Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Protocols and Programming to Address the Gender-Differentiated Needs of Women including Women Migrant Workers during the COVID-19 and other pandemics* in the Philippines).
- 4) Providing direct service provision to women migrant workers through quarantine facilities and shelters in destination countries and provision of essential items such as food, lodging, and personal protective equipment. In Myanmar and Indonesia, the programme helped to build the capacity of

staff in quarantine centres on violence against women. In Indonesia and Viet Nam, it provided technical guidance to shelters for survivors of violence including women migrant workers.

- 5) Due to travel restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the international consultants involved in the MTE used remote data collection methods in combination with some face-to-face FGDs conducted by local consultants in Thailand and the Philippines.

Despite important achievements to adapt to the challenging epidemiological context, the COVID-19 crisis has had a negative impact on some of the programme components and in particular output 1.2.1: *number of governments; employer, worker, human rights institutions; and civil society representatives trained on implementation of gender-responsive policies and services for women migrant workers*. Although some activities were effectively “moved online”, many training sessions did not take place due to limited connectivity to the internet. This is an important matter that – albeit beyond the scope of the project – has affected achievement of project outputs and could be used as a tool to advocate against “technological poverty” so no one is *left behind*. This advocacy work is particularly important because CSOs have reported that the physical isolation required to respond to COVID-19 has made it much more challenging to reach and support women migrant workers in need and especially survivors of violence. Virtual techniques have been developed over the last months to meaningfully involve stakeholders in participatory online activities (e.g., use of Whiteboard function on MSTEams). Specific effort should be directed to experiment with new online approaches to bring stakeholders together. As it can’t be ruled out that further COVID-19 restrictions will be in place, epidemic preparedness should include measures to progress towards a more equitable access to information technologies and further use of online multi-stakeholder engagement techniques.

#### Key findings:

- Possible risks were assessed, and contingency plans integrated into project activities by design (e.g., focus on legislative level, training media). While remaining at a rather general level (regional), an increasingly detailed and nuanced risk analysis was instrumental to address emerging priorities such as initial bureaucratic delays.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly dramatic effect on migrant workers by exacerbating their vulnerabilities.
- The programme has made substantial additional efforts to adequately tailor programming to the pandemic context. Limited access to IT by stakeholders (e.g., connectivity to internet) has hampered effective adaptation of all programme activities to the COVID-19 era.

→ Because the ROM review specifically includes this section about changes related to COVID-19, these findings are specific to this exercise.

#### Recommendations:

- Continue to use the risk assessment matrix to reflect on the barriers to implementation and identify corrective actions (ILO, UN Women)
- Building on recent methodological advancements, experiment with new ways of bringing stakeholders together remotely. Use the challenges experienced during the COVID-19 restrictions (e.g., connectivity to the internet) as a tool to advocate against “technological poverty”. (ILO, ILO, UN Women, UNODC).

→ Because the ROM review specifically includes this section about changes related to COVID-19, these recommendations are specific to this exercise.

<b>7. To what extent has progress towards output targets been achieved? Is the quality of the outputs satisfactory?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Good – Good
	<input type="checkbox"/> Problems
	<input type="checkbox"/> Serious deficiencies

Despite the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme is on track to achieving nearly all outputs as per Table 2. The only target that is unlikely to be reached relates to output 1.2.1: *number of governments; employer, worker, human rights institutions; and civil society representatives trained on implementation of gender-responsive policies and services for women migrant workers*. Although some activities were effectively “moved online”, many training sessions did not take place due to limited connectivity to the internet which is a challenge that goes beyond the scope of the project. Up and until April 2021, the programme has supported the strengthening of only two (against a target of 12) information systems for women migrant workers to access support services (psychosocial, health, welfare, police, justice) for survivors of violence and trafficking, and has supported one (against a target of nine) referral mechanisms for follow-up services for women migrants by front-line service providers.

**Table 2. Progress towards achieving outputs**

Progress	Achieved	In progress	Not achieved	No data	Not applicable	Total number of outputs
<b>Output 1.1</b> Gender-equitable and rights-based policies and legislation that strengthen safe and fair labour migration for women, and preventive counter-trafficking efforts are formulated, in line with international standards and guidelines	X					24 legal and policy instruments
<b>Output 1.2</b> Capacity of regional, national and local government, social partners, human rights institutions, skills training institutions and civil society to implement gender-responsive policies and services for women migrant workers is increased	X		X			2,310 trained participants 10 institutions providing skills training to migrant women in 2 countries
<b>Output 1.3</b> Opportunities for women migrant workers to organise at the regional, national and local level, to enhance safe and fair migration and address labour exploitation and gender-based discrimination are increased	X					3,210 migrant women networked /joining trade unions 4 trade unions/migrant association conducting cross border activities
<b>Output 1.4</b>	X					18,988 migrant workers reached

Access to authoritative information and integrated support services on fair labour migration, and risks of trafficking, exploitation and abuse is improved for women and members of their families, including through the use of innovative technology						
<b>Output 2.1</b> Rights-based and survivor-centered approaches are integrated into laws, policies and practice on prevention and response to VAW to end impunity and improve women's access to essential services, including justice, with a focus on women migrant workers	X					2 laws/policies adopted/amended 2 countries with dedicated strategies/action plans to eliminate violence against migrant women
<b>Output 2.2</b> Capacity of regional, national and local government, social partners and civil society to implement policy for coordinated multi-sectoral service provision that responds to the needs of migrant women workers is strengthened Result 6			X			2 information systems strengthened, and 1 referral mechanism established
<b>Output 2.3</b> Networks of women's groups, community-based organisations, labour unions and local government agencies are established and mobilized to provide access to information and services and prevent violence and trafficking of women throughout the migration cycle, including through the use of innovative technology	X					16,657 users on community-based women's organisations 63,761 migrant women provided with information by networks
<b>Output 2.4</b> Capacity of frontline service providers (health, social and criminal justice) to provide quality, coordinated services and collect and use data ethically to respond to the needs of women migrants experiencing violence and trafficking is enhanced	X					1,828 migrant women received assistance 2,077 service providers trained 4 task forces created
<b>Output 3.1</b> Research, data and good practices on safe and fair labour migration for women, and violence that migrant women experience, are developed, shared and used to inform policy and programme development	X					5 blogs 45 media references 80 research studies and research materials
<b>Output 3.2</b> Capacity of relevant ministries and national statistic offices to produce and apply policy-relevant official data and analysis on	X		X			54% sex disaggregated data sets 0 countries collecting data

women's labour migration and violence against women migrant workers is improved						on violence against migrant women
<b>Output 3.3</b>						
Public campaigns to change attitudes and behaviours towards women migrant workers are implemented, particularly targeting employers, recruiters, duty bearers and youth groups, including to address VAW, trafficking, and gender-based discrimination of women migrant workers	X					+ 6,000,000 stakeholders reached

### Is the quality of outputs satisfactory?

The quality of the technical advice and capacity building provided to government partners and other stakeholders is backed by the wide experience and high level of technical expertise of the RUNOs involved. The many examples of meaningfully engaging government and CSO stakeholders in often challenging contexts point to a high level of quality in the processes of bringing together stakeholders from different sectors (Government, CSOs, Private Sector) and thematic areas (Labour, Migration, VAW, Trafficking). As per CSOs, mechanisms in place to ensure quality standards include narrative and financial reporting processes. Some of the smaller organisations (e.g., emerging ones, rural areas) experience challenges completing the reporting process and it is sometimes challenging to assess the quality of the outputs produced. In these instances, the principle of “leaving no one behind” has been balanced with the need to monitor and ensure satisfactory performance. Mechanisms need to be put in place to further support reporting processes for smaller/less experienced CSOs so further areas of support for optimal implementation are identified/addressed. Public campaigns to change attitudes and behaviours towards women migrant workers should be more focused, and specific attention paid to ensure ethical collection and use of data related to migrant women. While there is a general understanding that the collection of data related to migrant women experiencing violence is important to assess and monitor the situation, it is difficult in practice and the risks of unintended disclosure/breaks of data anonymity need to be considered.

### Key findings:

- **The programme is on track to achieving most outputs. By the time this review was conducted, it had supported the development of 24 legal and policy instruments ranging from labour migration regulations to national ending VAW action plans and protocols and facilitated inclusive consultations with civil society to inform policy. Although some activities were effectively “moved online”, many training sessions did not take place due to limited connectivity to the internet. This is a challenge that goes beyond the scope of the programme.**
- → Because Table 2 is specific of the ROM methodology, these findings are specific to this exercise. While there is a general understanding that the collection of data related to migrant women experiencing violence is important to assess and monitor the situation, it is difficult in practice and the risks of unintended disclosure/breaks of data anonymity need to be carefully considered.
- → This is related with MTE Finding # 14: “Perhaps the most prominent challenge in collecting data on violence against women migrant workers has been the ethical and safety concerns for women migrant workers when reporting on violence.” (MTE, pg.48).

### Recommendations:

- **Continue providing technical support to partners, including how to safely collect and use data relating to migrant women (UN Women)**  
→ [This is related with MTE Recommendation # 5](#): “The output indicators for Output 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 should also be adjusted to reflect the programme’s shift in focus towards capacitating stakeholders to use existing data on violence against women migrant workers due to the programming context and the challenges relating to collecting new data on violence against women migrant workers” (MTE, pg. 64).
- **Mechanisms need to be put in place to further support processes for the smaller/less experienced CSOs so areas of support needed for optimal implementation are identified and addressed.**  
→ [This is related with MTE Recommendation #5](#): “Direct programming to build the institutional capacity of CSOs and strengthen the women’s movement requires a dedicated budget line” (MTE, pg. 64).

<b>8. Are the outputs still likely to lead to the expected outcomes? To what extent has progress towards the outcome targets been achieved?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Good – Good
	<input type="checkbox"/> Problems
	<input type="checkbox"/> Serious deficiencies

The project seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

- Specific objective 1: Women migrant workers are better protected by gender-sensitive labour migration governance frameworks
- Specific objective 2: Women migrant workers are less vulnerable to violence and trafficking and benefit from coordinated responsive quality services
- Specific objective 3: Data, knowledge and attitudes on the rights and contributions of women migrant workers are improved

The limited availability of outcome level indicators does not allow for a quantitative assessment of the extent to which the programme is achieving its specific objectives. However, qualitative data collected during the MTE suggests that the project is making a positive progress towards the achievement of results with substantial contributions towards strengthening legislation and governance frameworks to protect the rights of women migrant workers (outcome 1), better access to responsive quality services (outcome 2), and improved knowledge (Outcome 3). Specific obstacles to be addressed have been clearly identified and are in process of being addressed as per Table 3.

**Table 3. Key achievements and obstacles per Pillar**

Pillars	Key achievements	Issues arising / obstacles to address
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<p><b>Outcome 1, Women migrant workers are better protected by gender -sensitive labour migration governance frameworks.</b></p>	<p>SAF has effectively contributed towards strengthening legislation and governance frameworks to protect the rights of women migrant workers. A total of 1981 complaints for women migrant workers have been resolved.</p>	<p>Lack of engagement on policy work/ administrative delays from some governments. Misalignment between laws and legislation on labour migration across ASEAN states due to lack of political will and different migration contexts made it difficult to support aligned and holistic policy support at the regional level.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2. Women migrant workers are less vulnerable to violence and trafficking and benefit from coordinated responsive quality services</b></p>	<p>SAF has strengthened the capacity of service providers to respond to the needs of women migrant workers, including the right to live a life free from violence, and has increased access to essential services across their migration journey.</p>	<p>Physical isolation required to respond to COVID-19 has made it much more challenging to reach and support women migrant workers in need and especially survivors of violence. It is important to establish contact with women at an early stage in the migration process (e.g., through embassies). The MTE found that women migrant workers often turn towards their immediate support network (husbands and other family members) when they encounter difficulties such as experiencing violence during their migration journey. Husbands and other family members need to be sensitised about the migration experience, capacitated to provide support and help women migrant workers access essential services. Husbands and other family members are often also the source of violence against women and need to be targeted to encourage behaviour change. The strengthening of women migrant workers' first line of support (i.e., the family) is an area of work that currently falls outside of the programme's results framework but requires further attention, especially the engagement of men at the community level.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3. Data, knowledge and attitudes on the rights and contributions of women migrant workers are improved</b></p>	<p>The programme has increased knowledge among women migrant workers of where they can go to access services across their migration journey. Training and information sharing on safe migration (including trafficking in-persons prevention) prior to departure has been crucial for transferring information to women migrant workers on safe migration practices, including how to access services, and for preventing trafficking. A total of 206 CSOs and government organisation providing services to migrant women have been supported by the programme.</p>	<p>Due to the wide scope of the programme's communications work and the very high-level indicator that looks at overall public attitudes towards women migrant workers in countries of destination, it will not be possible to attribute programme results to changes in public attitudes. Increased nationalism and xenophobia against migrant workers as a result of fears emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic will likely be a hindering factor that will contribute towards an increase in negative social attitudes towards women migrant workers by the end of the programme.</p>

### Key findings:

- **The limited availability of outcome level indicators does not allow for a quantitative assessment of the extent to which the programme is achieving its specific objectives.**  
→ Because the output-to-outcome question is specific of the ROM methodology, these findings are specific to this exercise.
- **Qualitative data collected during the MTE suggests that the project is making positive progress towards the achievement of results and the specific challenges to be addressed have been clearly identified.**  
→ [This is aligned with MTE Finding #5: “SAF has effectively contributed towards strengthening legislation and governance frameworks to protect the rights of women migrant workers by mainstreaming EAW principles throughout policy work”. \(MTE, Pg 32\)](#)
- **Interviews and FGD during the MTE found that is important to establish contact with women at an early stage in the migration process . The MTE also found that women migrant workers often turn towards their immediate support network (husbands and other family members) when they encounter difficulties such as experiencing violence during their migration journey.**  
→ [This is aligned with MTE Finding #6: “the strengthening of women migrant workers’ first line of support \(i.e., the family\) is an area of work that currently falls outside of the programme’s ProDoc or results framework and yet requires further attention, especially the engagement of men at the community level”; “women migrant workers often tend to turn to their embassies for immediate support when working abroad, including after experiencing violence”. \(MTE, Pg 34-35\)](#)

### Recommendations:

- **Increase programming efforts, such as for example through the conduct of formative qualitative research to explore avenues to further engage men at the community level (ILO, UN Women).**  
→ [This is aligned with MTE Recommendation # 2: “Increase programming efforts to strengthen the immediate support network \(i.e. husbands and other family members\) of women migrant workers”. \(MTE, pg.61\)](#)
- **Continue to strengthen capacities of foreign service officials to strengthen front line service provision. (ILO, UN Women)**  
→ [This is related with MTE Finding # 6: “Working with foreign service officials has proven to be an effective strategy to strengthen front-line service providers since women migrant workers often tend to turn to their embassies for immediate support when working abroad, including after experiencing violence” \(MTE, pg. 35\).](#)

<p><b>9A. Do the government, implementing partners or RUNOs have sufficient capacity (financial, human resources, institutional) to ensure that implementation is going according to plan?</b></p> <p><b>9B. Are there any obstacles/bottlenecks/outstanding issues on the partners' or government side that are limiting the successful implementation and results achievement of the Initiative?</b></p>	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good – Good         </div> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problems         </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Serious deficiencies         </div>
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For this question, the MTA analysis is based on factors that have an impact on the programme, even those beyond the scope of the programme. As SAF covers multiple countries, it also should be noted that some issues are specific to certain countries in the region (certain political situations, shrinking of democratic space etc).

### **Budget execution**

According to the budget provided for this review, as the programme approaches the last of its 5 years, a 74.22% of the budget has been spent. Of a total approved budget of \$29,370,587, the total amount transferred by 08/10/2020 accounted to \$ 19,775,666, of which a total \$12,485,428 has been spent. The greatest share of the budget is allocated to contractual services (\$ 13,488,543) and staff/personnel (\$ 10,075,170). While the level of expenses of the two RUNOs has been similar (around \$ 6 million). Funds are disbursed once a year, except for the current Year 4 in which funds were partially disbursed in early 2021 and 80% of the first tranche has been spent. There is a need for a no-cost extension due to under expenditure related to COVID-19 restrictions and its impact on delivery of training activities.

### **Absorption capacity and other obstacles limiting successful implementation of programme**

#### **Government (at all levels)**

There is a great deal of heterogeneity in terms of the willingness and capacities of the different governments to implement the programme. In some instances, there has been a great engagement with proactive identification of priorities that have been subsequently addressed jointly. Political factors sometimes added a layer of complexity to the implementation of the programme. In some contexts, it has not even been possible to advertise calls to engage CSOs, as these could pose the persons involved at risk, and in one country capacity building activities with journalists have been cancelled to safeguard their security. In other instances, access to information technologies is insufficient (e.g., computers) and/or there is a high level of staff turnover and no systematic mechanisms for capacity development. Some Ministries of Labour continue to neglect the relevance of addressing issues related to VAWG and the role they should play in it, and/or favour policies that restrict women's freedom to decide (e.g., migration bans for women so they are less exposed to violence). In some countries, ministries of women are relatively new institutions that need strengthening (e.g., permanent staff), and engage further in labour migration issues.

#### **Civil society and implementing partners**

The CSOs landscape in the region is heterogeneous. Some of the umbrella CSOs collaborating with SAF are well experienced and equipped for an adequate implementation and reporting of programme activities. However, small CSOs often lack the experience as well as financial and language skills to successfully apply for funds/adhere to the reporting requirements of SAF. Even CSOs who have received training are struggling with the reporting process. Some stakeholders have no incentives/motivation to engage in the programme. For example, employers and recruitment agencies are private companies that often prioritise financial gain, are not sensitive to gender equality matters and have no motivation to engage in VAW actions.

#### **RUNOs**

The adoption of a new way of working as per the UN reform principles is proving challenging and demanding in terms of workload. There is a diversity of views regarding the degree of "buy in" of the new way of working. While there seems to be widespread endorsement of the approach and its underlying principles ("sense making"), there are important implementation challenges that need to be addressed, in particular in relation to work loads and the perception identified during the MTE that having staff from different agencies in the same meeting is a "duplication" (as opposed to a necessary step. There is also a

degree of resistance to change (“buy in” - e.g., use of joint SAF logo). Lessons learnt and best practices are documented but have not been analysed in a systematic manner using existing theories that can be useful to inform organisational innovation processes and ensure that new ways of working become embedded in the organisational culture and become ultimately “normalised” (e.g., implementation theories such as the Normalisation Process Theory)

### Key findings:

- **Despite broad endorsement of UN reform principles within RUNOs, the adoption of a new way of working is proving challenging and demanding in terms of workload.**
  - [This is aligned with MTE Conclusion #2](#): “The Safe and Fair Programme reflects strong joint programming and UN Reform principles that facilitate achieving results that are greater than the sum of its parts. Even so, there remains room to improve the efficiency of the joint working arrangements as well as the monitoring and reporting of joint results”. (MTE, pg. 55).
- **The engagement of the private sector (employer, recruiters) proves challenging as they may not see why they should engage in VAW matters.**
  - [This is related with MTE Conclusion #5](#): “The programme has not particularly focused its communications work towards reaching those actors who come most into contact with women migrant workers and whose changes in attitudes could have the greatest impact on the lives of women migrant workers, such as employers, recruiters, husbands and other family members, and community members in countries of origin.” (MTE, pg.59).
- **The smallest CSOs are disadvantaged. They need capacity building for the preparation of bids and support in the reporting process.**
  - This is related to the interviews conducted as part of this MTA.

### Recommendations:

- **Acknowledge the additional complexity, time and effort that work across silos entails: siloed work is easier and less time consuming (that is why it is pervasive). Adjust expectations to available budgets and establish mechanisms to support staff wellbeing (e.g. acknowledge the time-consuming nature of transversal work, adjust weights and distribution of tasks and responsibilities, job security, emotional supports).**
  - [This is related with MTE Recommendation # 5](#): “improve the efficiency of joint programming arrangements”. (MTE, pg. 63).
- **Consider building on examples from other joint programmes, particularly from the Spotlight Initiative to draw specific, actionable recommendations for an efficient and sustainable adoption of UN reform principles.**
  - [This is related with MTE Recommendation #5](#): “improve the efficiency of joint programming arrangements”. (MTE, pg. 63).
- **Work with IOM and other relevant partners to sensitise the private sector about gender equality issues as a preliminary step for their subsequent engagement in VAW matters. (ILO, UN WOMEN)**
  - [This is related with MTE Conclusion #5](#): “The programme has not particularly focused its communications work towards reaching those actors who come most into contact with women migrant workers and whose changes in attitudes could have the greatest impact on the lives of

women migrant workers, such as employers, recruiters, husbands and other family members, and community members in countries of origin.” (MTE, pg.59).

- **There is a clear need for a no cost extension because of under expenditure related to COVID-19 restrictions and its impact on the delivery of training activities.**

→ [This is related to the interviews conducted as part of this review](#) as the ROM interview guideline includes an item about budget execution.

## B. EFFICIENCY

**10. Are the chosen implementation mechanisms (incl. choice of implementation modalities, entities and contractual arrangements) adequate for achieving the expected results?**

☒ Very Good – Good

☐ Problems

☐ Serious deficiencies

The SAF programme is part of and reports to the global EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls (2017-2022). The modality for delivery of the Spotlight Initiative is through a UN multi-stakeholder trust fund, administered by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF) with the support of relevant UN agencies. The initiative is overseen by the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General (EOSG).

SAF is implemented in indirect management with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 as trustee of the MPTF to implement the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative. The SAF programme is led by the ILO and draws on staff from both ILO and UN Women at the regional and country level to support national governments as well as employers' organisations, workers organisations and CSOs. With an overall budget of \$30,000,000 (rounded up), a total of \$16,648,832.77 is allocated to ILO and \$13,351,167.23 to UN Women. ILO and UN Women each contribute \$314,707.

A Chief Technical Adviser (P5) based at ILO-ROAP is responsible for the overall management of the project with assistance from two Technical Officers based at UN Women -ROAP (P4, one of them on a 50% full time equivalent basis) and one at ILO-ROAP (P3). There is also one Technical Officer (P3) and one National Communications Officer who respectively cover M&E and communications across agencies and who are based at ILO-ROAP. UNODC provides part time support from a Regional Coordinator on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (P4 -2 work months/year).

National Project Coordinators (NPCs) oversee programme implementation at country level. In Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand there are two NPC: one focussed on Objective 1 (ILO-led), and another focused on Objective 2 (UN Women-led). In Malaysia and Lao PDR (ILO) and, Cambodia and Vietnam (UN Women), there is one single NPC.

There are indications that joint implementation by ILO and UN Women is effectively fostering knowledge exchange and a sense of joint ownership. As per the interviews and FGDs conducted for the MTE, ILO staff are now more sensitive towards ending violence against women and also UN Women staff are better equipped to engage in labour migration programming.

There is a clear division of responsibilities on paper with technical officers at UNW focusing on Objectives 2 and parts of objective 3, and the technical officer at ILO focusing on Objectives 1 and the remaining components of objective 3. However, the MTE found that, in the real world of day-to-day practices, there is a considerable degree of "duplications", with 70% of NPCs surveyed claiming that there is some overlap between the roles and responsibilities of ILO and UN Women staff. High expectations regarding the degree of coordination and consultation across agencies have equally led to a time intensive coordination process amongst RUNOs, with a number of members of staff reporting to be overworked during the MTE exercise. Breaking traditional siloed approaches entails an additional cost that should be acknowledged and addressed.

The implementation approach is adequate with different modalities in place. This includes direct technical support and capacity building provided to national governments and other stakeholders, as well as direct engagement in organisational arrangements to mobilise and bring together stakeholders. Indirect implementation modalities include support for governments to hire specialised staff, and disbursement of funds to CSO. The latter are generally allocated through advertised competitive procurement processes but where this is not possible for political reasons, allocation of resources is based on local knowledge about CSO performance. In some instances, direct proposals are made to specific NGOs to prevent exposing them to any political risk. In others, the allocation of funds to well performing CSOs is increased. Partnership agreements are established with CSOs who are awarded yearly or multi-year contracts. Quarterly financial disbursements are subject to narrative and financial reporting.

#### Key findings:

- **Joint implementation by ILO and UN Women is fostering knowledge exchange and a sense of joint ownership but efficiency could be strengthened. These initial inefficiencies are expected and acceptable as long as lessons learnt are documented and effectively incorporated for a better management of joint programming initiatives.**  
→ [This is related with MTE Conclusion # 2: “The Safe and Fair Programme reflects strong joint programming and UN Reform principles that facilitate achieving results that are greater than the sum of its parts. Even so, there remains room to improve the efficiency of the joint working arrangements as well as the monitoring and reporting of joint results.” \(MTE, pg.54\).](#)

#### Recommendations:

- **Consider organising a retreat or extended meeting to engage key staff in the identification of levers and barriers to joint programming and co-develop an action plan to achieve results in a more efficient manner. (ILO, UN WOMEN).**  
→ [This is related with MTE Recommendation # 5: “Organise a staff retreat or extended meeting exercise to reflect on the clarity of roles and responsibilities between ILO and UN Women staff to produce key insights and knowledge on how to further clarify these roles to avoid duplication. The exercise should also include a discussion around the degree of consultation and coordination that is truly necessary between ILO and UN Women staff to see if any adjustments in expectations could be made to further streamline the joint elements of the work. This should help to slightly relieve the workload of programming staff” \(MTE, pgs. 62-63\).](#)

**11A. How effectively is the Initiative managed?**

**11B. How effectively is the Programme managed? Are the governance and management mechanisms for the Initiative at national level adequate and functioning as planned? Do partner government and other partners (please consider CSO and EU Delegation) in the country effectively participate in these mechanisms?**

☒ Very Good – Good

☐ Problems

☐ Serious deficiencies

ILO and UN Women are the Recipient UN Organisations (RUNOs). As the lead agency ILO is responsible to ensure cooperation with co-implementing entities and EU Delegations (EUDs). A solid governance framework provides strategic and technical governance to the programme at regional and national levels and ensures that the European Commission, EUDs and relevant ASEAN bodies are involved at appropriate levels.

A Project Steering Committee was put in place at the inception phase to facilitate coordinated implementation across RUNOs and ensure an adequate communication with EUDs facilitated through the EUD in Thailand. The committee meets biannually and is co-chaired by the EU, ILO and UN Women, with participation of UNODC and the Spotlight Secretariat. At country level, a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) endorses annual working plans and guides implementation in close coordination with the EUDs.

The Regional Project Advisory Committee (RPAC) brings together key regional-level stakeholders, provides guidance and endorses regional annual work plans. It is also co-chaired by the EU, ILO and UN Women and brings together representatives of relevant EUDs and the EC Headquarters as well as representatives from ASEAN institutions and ASEAN-level partner organisations (e.g., employers, trade unions and civil society). The RPAC provides guidance on the implementation of the programme and endorses a proposed regional annual work plan.

At country level, NPACs facilitate programme alignment with stakeholder needs and priorities, contributing to build national ownership. Multi-stakeholder NPACs are periodically convened in close coordination with the EUDs and provide technical and strategic guidance, as well as governance to the programme at the national level.

The SAF program was developed before the Spotlight Initiative, but Spotlight Initiative Secretariat members joined early meetings such as the focal points meeting of SAF personnel in November 2018. While efforts were directed towards aligning the SAF programme design and results framework to the broader Spotlight Initiative, the SAF programme is not structured along the 6 transversal Spotlight Initiative pillars: 1. Laws and Policies, 2. Institutions, 3. Prevention, 4. Services, 5. Data, 6. Women's Movement. Instead, the SAF specific objectives are mostly defined along thematic areas (SO1 focuses on labour migration while SO2 focuses mainly on gender violence). There are no technical working groups organised along the 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars which would be an opportunity to work across silos in a more efficient way. Similarly, while the programme reporting is comprehensive, it is difficult to track progress by Spotlight Initiative pillar and country.

The Spotlight Initiative secretariat provides technical support such as detailed guidance on Knowledge Management and nuanced recommendations on how to meaningfully engage a diversity of stakeholders. The guidance note on "Achieving meaningful engagement and partnership with the Civil Society Reference Groups" provides important guidance to facilitate a meaningful engagement with CSOs. Firmly endorsing CSO engagement principles, the Spotlight Initiative has established Civil Society National, Regional and Global Reference Groups as an institutional mechanism to facilitate systematic civil society engagement throughout the Spotlight Initiative Programme cycle. In response to this, the SAF programme established a CSO Reference Group in 2020. This is a core group of relevant regional, national and local organisations addressing violence, abuse and exploitation in the ASEAN region and it aims at providing a space for transparency and knowledge sharing. Collaboration on developing country-level work plans has been strong and well-integrated across agencies. There is a perception that the mechanism's management is somewhat resource intensive at the Secretariat level as time consuming approval processes are in place.

#### **Key findings:**

- **A solid governance framework provides strategic and technical governance to the programme at regional and national levels and ensures that the European Commission, EU Delegations and relevant ASEAN bodies are involved at appropriate levels.**

→ Because the question on “governance” is included in ROM approach, this finding is made explicitly in this MTA exercise.

**Recommendations:**

- Consider the inclusion of an annex summarising achievements and challenges for each country and Spotlight Initiative pillar in the annual reports (ILO, UN Women)

→ [This is related with MTE Recommendation #1: “Strengthen the regional dimensions of the programme”](#) (MTE, pg. 59).

<p><b>12. Are the chosen implementation and coordination mechanisms (a “new way of working”, in line with UN Reform) contributing to efficiency?</b></p>	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good – Good         </div> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problems         </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Serious deficiencies         </div>
<p>While the SAF programme was developed before the Spotlight Initiative, efforts were subsequently directed towards aligning the SAF to the 16 Spotlight Initiative principles, which are in turn consistent with the key elements flagged in the UN Reform. These include strong joint programming, harmonised financial management, sharing of resources across agencies, and greater engagement of national stakeholders in programme planning and implementation.</p> <p>Early discussions during the inception phase addressed how SAF would be implemented in the context of the UN Reform. As a result of these efforts, the SAF programme is well aligned with the principles of UN Reform.</p> <p>At the implementation level, the programme has succeeded at bringing together discussions, policies and stakeholders working on labour migration, ending violence against women and preventing trafficking to common platforms.</p> <p>Although the two main implementing agencies have different managerial procedures, there has been an effective process of joint planning, implementation, and reporting. The organisations came together to create a holistic shared results framework and annual work plans outlining the activities of each agency. In 2018 a multi-year partnership agreement was finalised to capitalise on UNODC’s expertise in the fields of crime, trafficking and law enforcement. This has facilitated the building of inter-linkages across thematic areas and stakeholder groups and has allowed the programme to effectively target violence against women in the context of labour migration. For instance, under objective 1, the programme successfully brought together the technical expertise of UN Women on ending VAWG and ILO on labour migration to support the integration of ending VAW priorities into national labour policies and frameworks across ASEAN states. Under objective 2, the programme leveraged ILO’s expertise and network of labour migration stakeholders and UN Women’s expertise on ending VAWG to build the capacity of service providers and first responders to support women migrant workers who have experienced violence. UNODC in turn is contributing to the development of tools and referral mechanisms across frontline service providers and policy makers working in the justice and law enforcement sectors. There are also numerous examples of successful linkages with CSOs, for example creating opportunities for women migrant workers to influence Law revision processes.</p>	

The MTE found that the SAF Programme relies heavily on CSOs, in addition to governments, employers and trade unions, to implement programming but the women's movement in the region needs to be strengthened.

Programme staff from both organisations has worked closely together daily to facilitate joint programme implementation. There are several staff members operating in shared roles between ILO and UN Women who are funded by one agency but working to implement the activities of another agency. This has required a careful clarification of workflow, as well as legal and representational role of "shared" staff members. As a result, the programme has produced guidance documents on workflow processes that can inform future joint programming efforts in the context of the UN reform.

The six Spotlight Initiative pillars (1. Laws and Policies, 2. Institutions, 3. Prevention, 4. Services, 5. Data, 6. Women's Movement) cut across traditional thematic areas and can facilitate an efficient implementation of the UN reform "Delivering as One" principle. However, the specific objectives of the SAF programme are mostly defined along thematic areas that fall under the traditional areas of expertise of the implementing agencies, as the SAF programme was designed before the Spotlight Initiative. This hampers the programme capacity to work across siloed thematic work in a more efficient manner, even if collaboration on developing country-level work plans is well-integrated across agencies.

#### Key findings:

- **There has been an effective process of joint planning and implementation that has leveraged the comparative strengths of the UN agencies involved by bringing together their respective technical expertise and stakeholder networks. Collaboration on developing country-level work plans has been strong and well-integrated across agencies.**
  - [This is related with MTE Finding #3: "The Safe and Fair Programme is effectively drawing on the comparative strengths of both UN Women and ILO and is jointly planning, implementing and reporting on shared results to support holistic programming" \(MTE, pg.28\).](#)
- **The articulation of Specific Objectives along thematic areas that fall under the traditional areas of expertise of the implementing agencies has hampered the programme capacity to work across siloed thematic work in a more efficient manner.**
  - [This finding is specific of this MTA exercise.](#)

#### Recommendations:

- Document/disseminate lessons learnt for more effective joint programming so SAF can effectively serve as a demonstration fund (ILO, UN WOMEN).
  - [This finding is related to MTE Recommendation #5: "Further strengthen the Safe and Fair Programme's alignment with RBM good practices and improve the efficiency of joint programming arrangements". \(MTE, pg.62\).](#)

## C. SUSTAINABILITY

**13. Is sufficient capacity being built so that local actors, such as government as well as CSOs, the women’s movement and groups representing women and girls that face intersecting forms of discrimination, will be able to manage the process by the end of the Initiative without continued dependence on international expertise?**

☐ Very Good – Good

☒ Problems

☐ Serious deficiencies

The robust alignment of the SAF programme to the 16 Spotlight Initiative principles sets a strong basis for its sustainability beyond the life course of the action. Specifically designed and implemented to foster sustainability, the SAF programme incorporates activities to facilitate the continuity of the process since its outset. This includes a focus on legislation and policy to decisively tackle the structural determinants of migrant women’s safety by creating an “enabling environment” conducive to gender equality.

The structures created by the programme at national (NPACs) and regional (RPAC) levels, have effectively engaged key government representatives and local stakeholders in collaborative decision making since the early stages of the programme. The SAF Programme’s work has been aligned to the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) Work Plan and supports strategic activities in ACMW workplan. The involvement of Government partners in NPACs has catalysed inter-ministerial relationships likely to facilitate future cooperation across ministries. By facilitating the engagement of relevant stakeholders, the programme fosters national ownership which enhances the likelihood of continuation of programme activities.

Still, to achieve its ambitious aim, the programme is likely to continue to require international funding and expertise beyond its relatively short 5-year span. The MTE found that interactions between sending and receiving countries should be further enhanced during the life span of the programme. It also found that the extent to which advancements at the legislative and policy level may translate into sustained direct benefits for migrant women may be hampered by limited engagement of family members, and in particular men and boys in the communities of origin.

Although CSOs play a major role in the SAF programme and efforts have been directed towards building the capacity of service providers and to enhancing networks and coordination mechanisms among women’s organisations, there is still a need for further strengthening CSOs across the region, and specially the newer and smaller ones, who are in need of support to successfully bid for the allocation of funds and adequately complete narrative and financial reports. From a sustainability point of view, it will be important to support the development of long-term financing strategies that blend public and private grants and social investment funds.

The programme does not have a sustainability plan and it is unclear whether the Spotlight Initiative will grant a no-cost extension that would allow to reallocate some of the funds that have remained unspent as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. The SAF programme should engage with government partners to examine future avenues for funding (e.g. taxes and revenue mobilised in country) to ensure that the support for migrant women vulnerable to violence continues to be prioritised. The Spotlight Initiative places sustainability at its center and all country programmes are required to submit a financial sustainability plan co-developed with national policymakers and backed at the highest political level. Guidance from the broader Spotlight Initiative has been sought to identify financing tools, good practices, and methodologies that can be scaled up and replicated so an exit strategy that includes political roadmaps with specific milestones can be developed for each country.

The sensitive nature of the programme, with a focus on empowering a highly vulnerable population within often unsupportive cultural and political environments (e.g., patriarchal social norms, autocratic

governments) call for a reflection on the potential unintended consequences of halting the support to create/sustain safe environments where empowered women have already started to “speak out”.

Finally, the relevance and complexity of human trafficking interventions call for greater allocation of resources to this matter in future programmes, so women and girls who are victims of trafficking are not left behind.

#### **Key findings:**

- **The SAF programme is specifically designed and implemented to foster sustainability beyond the life course of the project. It supports the integration of gender equality and ending VAW principles into national policies and frameworks, while engaging local stakeholders and developing national capacities throughout the process.**  
→ [This is related with MTE Finding #13: “Programming elements of the Safe and Fair Programme largely promote sustainability” \(MTE, pg.44\).](#)
- **By facilitating the engagement of relevant stakeholders, the programme fosters national ownership which enhances the likelihood of continuation of programme activities. Still, to achieve its ambitious aim, the programme is likely to continue to require international funding and expertise beyond its relatively short 5-year span.**  
→ [This is related with MTE Finding #13: “Programming elements of the Safe and Fair Programme largely promote sustainability. However, the future of the initiative is uncertain.” \(MTE, pg.44\).](#)

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Develop an exit strategy and financial sustainability plan with government and relevant stakeholders with guidance from the broader Spotlight Initiative (ILO, UN Women, National Stakeholders, Spotlight Initiative Secretariat).**  
→ [This is related with MTE Recommendation 5: “Develop an exit strategy or a sustainability plan to guide the future of the programme and the sustainability of its results.” \(MTE, pg.63\).](#)
- **The relevance and complexity of human trafficking interventions call for greater allocation of resources to this specific challenge, so victims of trafficking are not left behind.**  
→ [This recommendation is specific to this MTA.](#)

## D. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. PROGRAMME DESIGN:

#### Main findings:

1. The 16 guiding principles that inform the Spotlight Initiative are solidly built into the structure of SAF.
2. A major strength of the SAF programme is that it is clearly designed to go beyond a gender sensitive approach to also foster societal transformation by decisively tackling the structural determinants of migrant women's safety and creating an "enabling environment" conducive to gender equality and ending impunity.
3. There are indications that the process of engaging stakeholders is a meaningful one, going beyond mere tokenistic participation with early engagements and consultations eventually feeding the decision-making process.
4. The principles underpinning the SAF initiative are not necessarily endorsed by all the key stakeholders: in some countries the civil society space is being reduced, and freedoms of speech curtailed, including severe measures against dissenting voices.
5. The programme does not have a mechanism in place to monitor the extent to which stakeholders' views are taken into consideration, in particular when there are diverging views and power imbalances within and across stakeholder groups. This is particularly important in contexts where democratic principles and participatory values are not necessarily endorsed by all participating stakeholders.
6. The ToC does not outline the programme's actual change logic and is not articulated along the 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars.
7. There have been proactive efforts to align the indicators used to the Spotlight Initiative.
8. Possible risks were assessed, and contingency plans integrated into project activities by design (e.g., focus on legislative level, training media). While remaining at a rather general level (regional), a detailed and nuanced risk analysis was instrumental to address emerging priorities such as initial delays in Vietnam and Cambodia.
9. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly dramatic effect on migrant workers by exacerbating their vulnerabilities.
10. The programme has made substantial additional efforts to adequately tailor programming to the pandemic context. Limited access to IT by stakeholders (e.g., connectivity to internet) has hampered effective adaptation of all programme activities to the COVID-19 era.

#### Recommendations:

- a) Document in an explicit manner the adherence of the Programme to the 16 Spotlight Initiative principles including specific examples, so adherence to these principles is positively acknowledged and further encouraged (ILO, UN WOMEN) – Findings 1 and 2.
- b) Document main points of disagreement amongst stakeholders and how discrepancies are (or not) resolved (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC) – Finding 5.

- c) In alignment with “do no harm principles”, make sure to explicitly inform beneficiaries of both the potential positive and negative consequences of empowered action in contexts where democratic values are not necessarily endorsed. This should be systematically included in training materials and community mobilisation activities (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC) – Finding 4.
- d) Consider the articulation of future planning of activities and reporting along the 6 Spotlight Initiative pillars (ILO, UN WOMEN) – Finding 6
- e) Continue to use the risk assessment matrix to reflect on the barriers to implementation and identify corrective actions (ILO, UN WOMEN) – Finding 8
- f) Building on recent methodological advancements, experiment with new ways of bringing stakeholders together remotely. Use the challenges experienced during the COVID-19 restrictions (e.g., connectivity to internet) as a tool to advocate against “technological poverty”. (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC) – Finding 9 and 10

## 2. GOVERNANCE:

### Main findings:

1. The degree of effective commitment has varied across and within stakeholder groups and countries. In several countries government actors have taken the lead on certain aspects of SAF, have co-chaired NPACs, and adopted new legislations that protect the rights of migrant women.
2. There have been bureaucratic and political challenges related to engaging with a few country Governments which have been or are in process of being addressed.
3. UN agencies and EU delegates play a major role networking with local stakeholders to strengthen national buy-in. This includes CSOs as well as top level officials.
4. A solid governance framework provides strategic and technical governance to the programme at regional and national levels and ensures that the European Commission, EU Delegations and relevant ASEAN bodies are involved at appropriate levels.
5. Because the SAF programme was developed before the Spotlight Initiative, it is not organised across the 6 traversal pillars of the Spotlight Initiative (1. Laws and Policies, 2. Institutions, 3. Prevention, 4. Services, 5. Data, 6. Women’s Movement). This hampers the programme capacity to monitor progress and cut across siloed thematic work in an efficient manner.

### Recommendations:

- a) Continue to direct efforts towards engaging the government of Brunei Darussalam and document barriers, facilitators and lessons learnt. This should inform future programming in Arab states, which are of relevance given the high number of migrant women from the ASEAN region working in these countries. (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC) – Finding 2.
- b) Consider the inclusion of an annex summarising achievements and challenges for each country and Spotlight Initiative pillar in the annual reports (ILO, UN WOMEN) – Finding 5

### 3. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT:

#### Main findings:

1. The engagement of ILO, UNMOMEN and UNODC is appropriate to address from a holistic perspective the complex intersecting needs of migrant women who are affected by violence. Existing cooperation with IOM could be further enhanced.
2. The weight/distribution of roles and responsibilities amongst RUNOs has resulted in some overworked staff.
3. There are indications of important potential benefits that could offset the fixed cost associated to learning to work differently and transcend traditionally siloed approaches. It is important to draw and apply lessons learnt timely in order to avoid staff burnouts.
4. Joint implementation by ILO and UN WOMEN is fostering knowledge exchange and a sense of joint ownership but not in an efficient manner. These initial inefficiencies are expected and acceptable as long as lessons learnt are carefully documented and effectively incorporated for a better management of joint programming initiatives.
5. The small role of UNDOC limit the implementation of activities focused specifically on human trafficking.
6. There has been an effective process of joint planning and implementation that has leveraged the comparative strengths of the UN agencies involved by bringing together their respective technical expertise and stakeholder networks. Collaboration on developing country-level work plans has been strong and well-integrated across agencies.
7. The articulation of specific objectives along thematic areas that fall under the traditional areas of expertise of the implementing agencies has hampered the programme capacity to work across siloed thematic work in a more efficient manner.

#### Recommendations:

- a) Explore avenues for further collaboration with IOM's extensive network of recruiters and experience providing pre-departure services to migrants (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC, IOM) – Finding 1.
- b) Consider the organisation of a workshop with key staff working in the different SAF countries to reflect on the lessons learnt and identify future steps needed to work differently in a more efficient and sustainable manner. This should include an assessment of the burden of work required, and clarification of roles and responsibilities (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC) – Findings 2,3,4.
- c) Consider conducting a retreat or extended meeting to identify levers and barriers to joint programming and co-develop an action plan to achieve results in a more efficient manner. (ILO, UN WOMEN) – Findings 2,3,4.
- d) Document lessons learnt for more effective joint programming so SAF can effectively serve as a demonstration fund (ILO, UN WOMEN) – Finding 6 and 7

#### 4. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS:

##### Main findings:

1. The programme is on track to achieving most outputs. It has supported the development of 24 legal and policy instruments ranging from labour migration regulations to national ending VAW action plans and protocols, and facilitated inclusive consultations with civil society to inform policy.
2. Some of the smaller organisations (e.g., emerging ones, those operating in rural areas) experience challenges completing the reporting process and it is thus difficult to assess the quality of the outputs produced.
3. Although some activities were effectively “moved online”, many training sessions did not take place due to limited connectivity to the internet which is a challenge that goes beyond the scope of the project.
4. While there is a general understanding that the collection of data related to migrant women experiencing violence is important to assess and monitor the situation, it is proving difficult in practice and the risks of unintended disclosure / breaks of data anonymity need to be carefully considered.
5. The limited availability of outcome level indicators in the results matrix does not allow for a quantitative assessment of the extent to which the programme is achieving its specific objectives.
6. Qualitative data collected during the MTE suggests that the project is making positive progress towards the achievement of results and the specific challenges to be addressed have been clearly identified.
7. Despite broad endorsement of UN reform principles within RUNOs, the adoption of a new way of working is proving challenging and demanding in terms of workload, impacting the wellbeing of some staff.
8. The engagement of the private sector (employer, recruiters) proves challenging as they may see no reason to engage in VAW matters.
9. The smallest CSOs are disadvantaged. They need capacity building for the preparation of bids and support in the reporting process.
10. In specific countries, broad political contextual factors severely hamper the possibility to implement activities aligned with the Spotlight Initiative principles, and in particular the *leaving no one behind principle*. In these instances, *do not harm* principles have prevailed.
11. As the programme approaches the last of its 5 years, a 74.22% of the budget has been spent.
12. There is a clear need for a no cost extension because of under expenditure related to COVID-19 restrictions and its impact on the delivery of training activities.
13. The SAF programme is specifically designed and implemented to foster sustainability beyond the life course of the project. It supports the integration of gender equality and EVAW principles into national policies and frameworks, while engaging local stakeholders and developing national capacities throughout the process.
14. By facilitating the engagement of relevant stakeholders, the programme fosters national ownership which enhances the likelihood of continuation of programme activities. Still, to achieve its

ambitious aim, the programme is likely to continue to require international funding and expertise beyond its relatively short 5-year span.

**Recommendations:**

- a) Provide further technical support to partners, including how to safely collect and use data relating to migrant women (ILO, UN WOMEN)– Finding 4
- b) Mechanisms need to be put in place to further support reporting processes for the smaller/less experienced CSOs so areas of support needed for optimal implementation are identified and addressed – Finding 9
- c) Continue to strengthen capacities of foreign service officials to strengthen front line service provision (ILO, UN WOMEN) Finding 10
- d) Develop an exit strategy and financial sustainability plan with government and relevant stakeholders with guidance from the broader Spotlight Initiative (ILO, UN WOMEN, National Stakeholders, Spotlight Initiative Secretariat) – Findings 13, 14
- e) The relevance and complexity of human trafficking interventions call for greater allocation of resources so victims of trafficking are not left behind (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNODC, National Stakeholders, Spotlight Initiative Secretariat)
- f) Acknowledge the additional complexity, time and effort that work across silos entails: siloed work is easier, less time consuming and cheaper and that is why it is pervasive. Adjusts expectations to available budgets and establish mechanisms to support staff wellbeing (e.g. acknowledge the time-consuming nature of transversal work, adjust weights and distribution of tasks and responsibilities, job security, emotional support).
- g) Build on academic advancements at theoretical (Implementation research - Normalisation Process theory) and methodological level (Participatory Learning and Action) to draw specific, actionable recommendations for an efficient and sustainable adoption of UN reform principles.
- h) Work with IOM to sensitise the private sector about gender equality issues as a preliminary step for their subsequent engagement in VAW matters.

## E. ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Spotlight programme documents (essential documents)	Availability
Country Programming document as approved by OSC	x
Country Budget as approved by the OSC (may also include revised budget)	x
Spotlight Country Programme Snapshot	x
Inception report	x
Annual report/s	x
Annex A Country Report (included in the Annual Report)	x
Ad hoc (2nd Tranche) report (may also include provisional narrative report – 2 pager)	x
Spotlight Initiative financial information on the <a href="#">MPTF Gateway</a>	x
Knowledge management workplan	x
National CSO Reference Group workplan	x
CSO Reference Group Bios	
Communication workplan	
Stories directly from the <a href="#">Calendar</a>	
<b>Other documents</b>	
Midterm Evaluation of the ILO-UN Women Safe and Fair Program: <i>Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (2018-2022)</i> -Final Report	

## ANNEX 2: LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Stakeholder group	Institution / organisation	Name (only if consent was provided)	Position
RUNO	ILO	Deepa Bharathi	Chief Technical Advisor
RUNO	UN WOMEN	Valentina Volpe	EVAW specialist
Evaluator	Independent consultant	Fernando Garabito Campos	Independent consultant
Evaluator	Independent consultant	Katherine Garven	Independent consultant