

UNDER EMBARGO until 17H00 CEST on WED 25 SEP 2024

Special report

## The EU trust fund for Africa

Despite new approaches, support remained unfocused



EUROPEAN  
COURT  
OF AUDITORS

# Contents

	Paragraph
<b>Executive summary</b>	I-X
<b>Introduction</b>	01-13
<b>Audit scope and approach</b>	14-21
<b>Observations</b>	22-80
<b>The EUTF strategy remained broad, and while support was flexible, funding choices were not sufficiently targeted</b>	22-40
EUTF objectives remained too broad and research reports had limited influence on the EUTF strategy	22-29
Faster mechanism for making financing decisions but too little account of lessons learned and in-depth needs assessments	30-40
<b>Despite an innovative approach to identifying human rights risks in a difficult environment, these risks were not comprehensively addressed</b>	41-60
The assessment of potential risks to human rights was not comprehensive	41-47
Human rights monitoring and reporting were not sufficiently robust, despite piloting third-party monitoring	48-60
<b>Elements of the monitoring and reporting system lack accuracy and do not yet demonstrate which approaches worked best</b>	61-80
The monitoring system aggregates output indicators from all projects but we found it lacks accuracy and overstates achievements	61-64
There is still insufficient data to demonstrate how sustainably the EUTF is addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacements	65-80
<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	81-90

## **Annexes**

**Annex I – Follow-up of our recommendations in special report 32/2018**

**Annex II – ECA sample and assessment of projects**

**Annex III – Follow-up sample on recommendation 2 in special report 32/2018**

**Annex IV – Sample of MLS output indicators**

## **Abbreviations**

## **Glossary**

## **Replies of the Commission**

## **Timeline**

## **Audit team**

## Executive summary

**I** In October 2015, the European Commission established the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced people in Africa.

**II** The EUTF focuses on the crisis situation in three African regions: the Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa, and the North of Africa. It promotes stability and the better management of migration flows, as well as addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration in 27 countries. As of the end of 2023, the EUTF had paid out €4 508 million of its €5 billion endowment.

**III** We first carried out a performance audit of the EUTF in 2018. As this was not long after it was set up, projects were still at an early stage. We concluded that, while the EUTF was a flexible tool, its design should have been more focused. For this report we followed up on our earlier recommendations and found that they were partially implemented.

**IV** We also examined whether the EUTF has focused support on achieving its aims while showing due concern for human rights. We found that support remained insufficiently focused by addressing a too wide range of development, humanitarian and security actions. In addition, there are weaknesses regarding the accuracy and sustainability of reported results, and human rights risks were not comprehensively addressed.

**V** The EUTF has developed new approaches for collecting information about the root causes of instability, irregular migration and displacements, identifying human rights risks in a volatile environment and reporting on the cumulative achievements of its actions. Overall, we conclude that EUTF projects have reported the delivery of many of the planned outputs and partially achieved their objectives.

**VI** All of the projects we examined responded to needs, but not always those that were most urgent. We found that the EUTF's governing bodies had not sufficiently analysed or taken account of beneficiaries' needs, the lessons learned from previous support or risks to human rights. In comparison to previous development aid, the EUTF aimed to focus its support on evidence-based information. For this purpose, the EUTF has financed the publication of research-based reports to collect knowledge on the drivers and dynamics of conflict, irregular migration and displacement. However, many of these reports have been published towards the end of the EUTF term and are

therefore more relevant for the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe set up in 2021.

**VII** The volatile environment in which the EUTF operates poses challenges to project monitoring. The Commission has taken the first steps in monitoring the impact of EUTF activities on human rights. Third-party monitoring reports are a new and potentially useful source of information on human rights risks, but follow-up of these was not demonstrated. Furthermore, the Commission has not yet defined either formal procedures for reporting and following up allegations of human rights violations, or practical guidance to clarify in which situations EU support may be suspended.

**VIII** In addition to its traditional monitoring of projects, the EUTF has set up a system to measure the collective achievements of its actions. This new monitoring system aggregates information from all EUTF projects, but it suffers from issues of data accuracy. In addition, there is still insufficient data to establish whether projects have helped to address the root causes of instability, irregular migration and displacements.

**IX** The EUTF runs until 2025, but the contracting of funds for operations ended in December 2021. The new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe partially targets migration and displacement related initiatives and has similar aims as the EUTF. Our conclusions and recommendations can contribute to this or any future development actions.

**X** Based on our audit, we make a number of recommendations. Given that migration is high on the EU's political agenda, these should be implemented as soon as possible. With a view to the ending of the EUTF and/or future development action, including through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, the Commission should:

- increase evidence-based targeting of geographical areas and beneficiaries;
- include EUTF documents in a central repository to inform future action and expand lessons learned for action documents;
- strengthen the identification of human rights risks and take mitigating action;
- improve the accuracy of reported achievements.

# Introduction

**01** In October 2015<sup>1</sup>, the European Commission established the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for stability, addressing root causes of instability, irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa, for an initial period of five years. The EUTF is one of four [trust funds](#) administered by the Commission. Their aim is to strengthen the role of the EU in emergency, post-emergency or issue-specific (“thematic”) action, in particular by producing advantages of scale when pooled with other resources<sup>2</sup>. The EUTF was created at the height of the 2015 migration crisis as an instrument for coordinating the response of EU member states with that of other contributors, African partner countries and international organisations.

**02** The overall objective and purpose of the EUTF is to address various crises in three regions of Africa, or geographic “windows” (see [Figure 1](#)): the Sahel and Lake Chad (SLC), the Horn of Africa (HoA), and the North of Africa (NoA). The EUTF aims to support all aspects of stability and contribute to better migration management as well as addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration – in particular by promoting resilience, economic and equal opportunities, security and development, and addressing human rights abuses<sup>3</sup>.

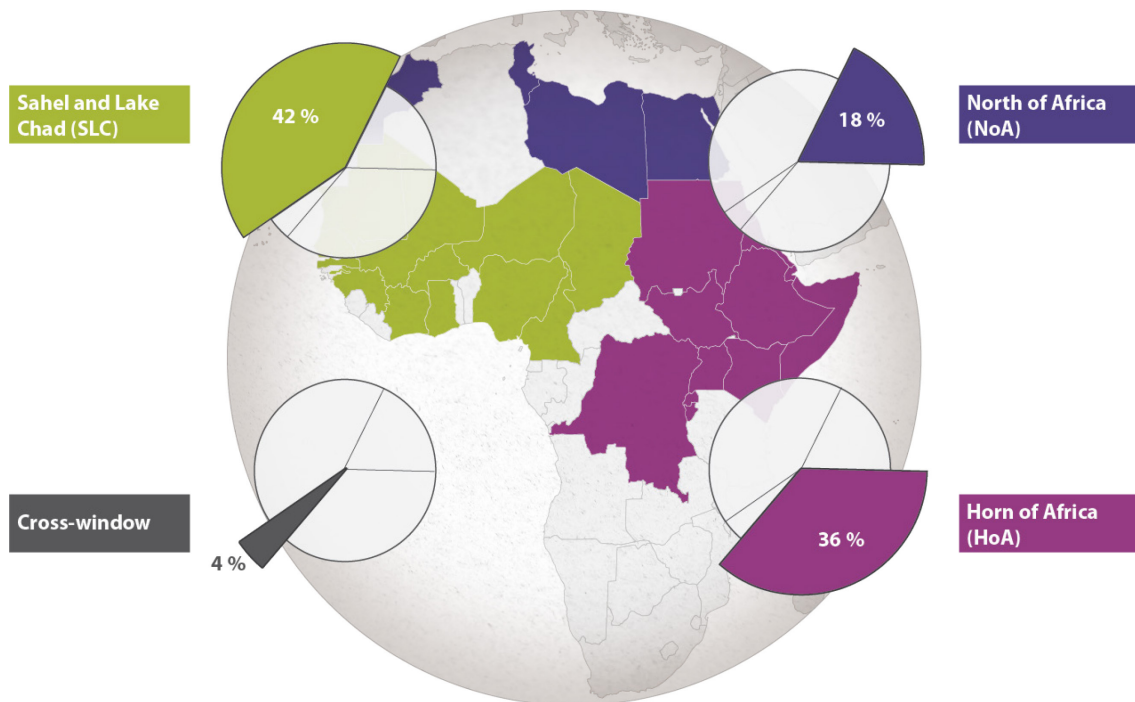
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<sup>1</sup> [Commission Decision \(C\(2015\) 7293\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> Recital 68 and Article 187 of [Regulation \(EU, EURATOM\) 966/2012](#) and Article 234 of [Regulation \(EU, Euratom\) 2018/1046](#).

<sup>3</sup> Article 2 of the EUTF [Constitutive Agreement](#).

**Figure 1 – EUTF’s geographical scope and funds committed, 2015-2023**



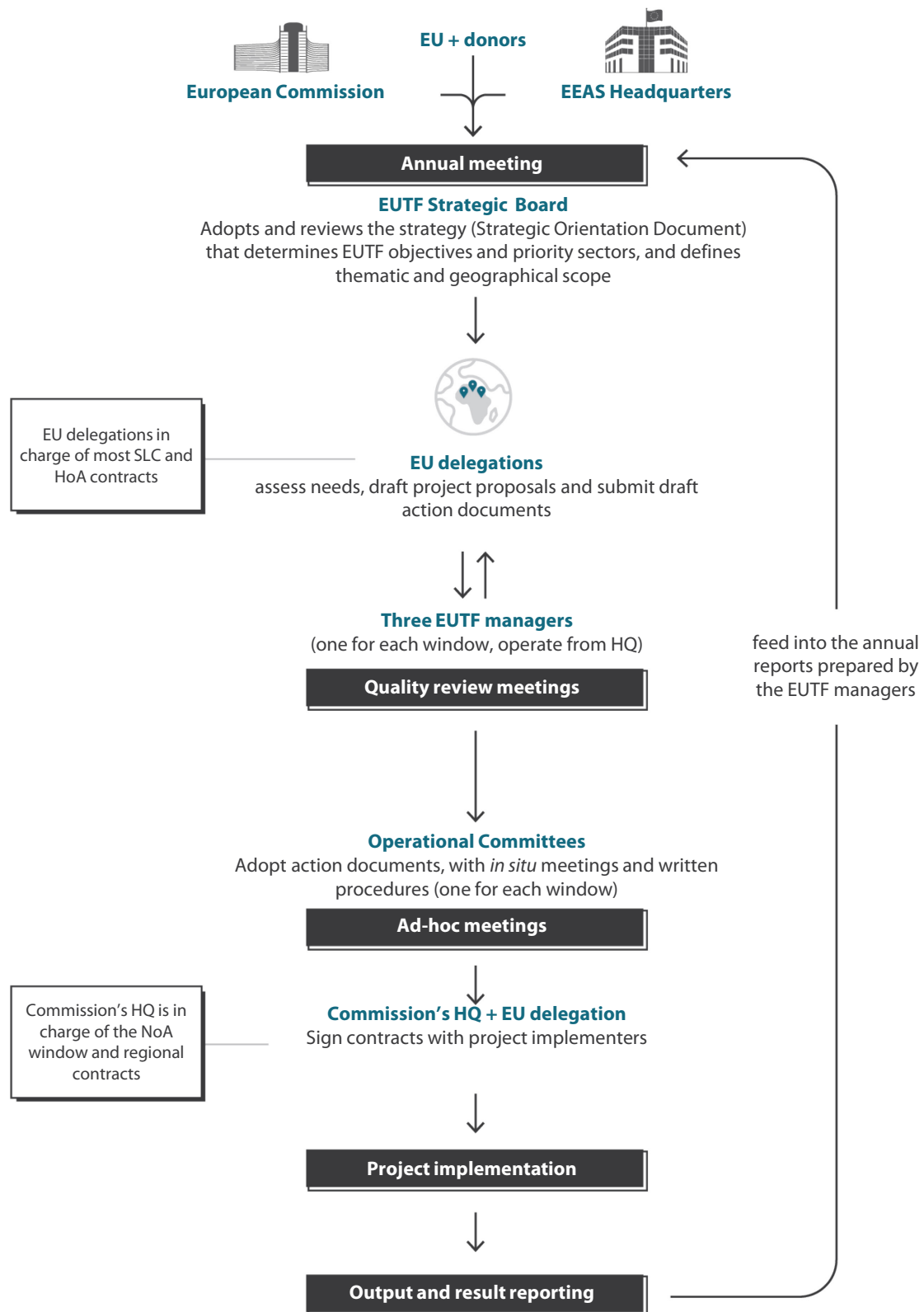
*Note:* The boundaries shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

*Source:* ECA, based on Commission financial data. The large majority of the funds are window specific, however 4 % are used across different windows (cross-window).

**03** The Constitutive Agreement of the EUTF established two governing bodies, both of them composed of representatives of the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU member states and other donors, with representatives of the African partner countries and regional organisations as observers.

- As its name suggests, the Strategic Board is responsible for setting the EUTF’s overarching objectives and priorities. It usually meets once a year.
- The operational committee meets in separate sessions for each of the three geographic windows to examine and approve EUTF-funded actions.
- The Commission (DG INTPA and DG NEAR) manages the EUTF and is thus responsible for implementing the agreed actions. *Figure 2* illustrates the process from strategic planning to reporting.

Figure 2 – EUTF, from strategy to reporting



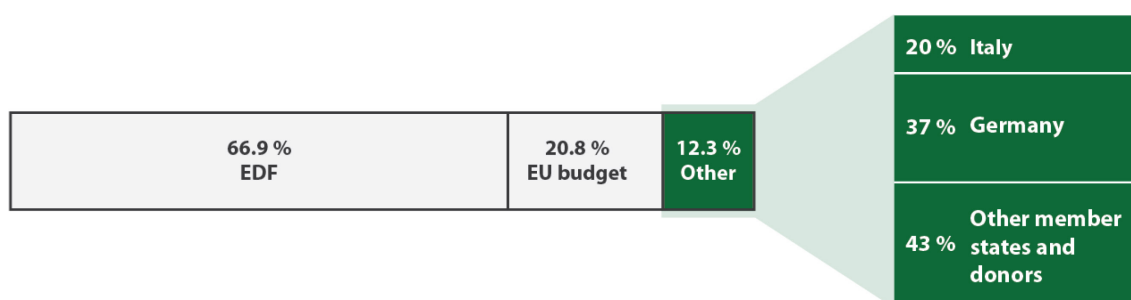
Source: ECA.

**04** In November 2015, the Board adopted a ‘Strategic Orientation Document’<sup>4</sup> that defines the following strategic objectives for actions to be supported by the EUTF:

- (a) greater economic and employment opportunities;
- (b) strengthening resilience of communities, and in particular the most vulnerable, as well as refugees and displaced people;
- (c) improved migration management in countries of origin, transit and destination; and
- (d) improved governance and conflict prevention and reduction of forced displacement and irregular migration.

**05** Through the EUTF, the EU has supported 27 countries with 933 contracts under 248 programmes. Though the initial endowment was €1.8 billion, to date the EUTF has received more than €5 billion in contributions. The greatest part (€4.4 billion, or 88 % of the total) has consisted of transfers from the European Development Fund (EDF) and the EU budget. A further €623 million (12 %) has come from EU member states, the United Kingdom, Norway and Switzerland (see [Figure 3](#)).

**Figure 3 – Sources of EUTF funding at December 2023**



Source: ECA, based on Commission financial data.

**06** Unless a donor specified otherwise, the Commission distributed all contributions in the following ratios, which were agreed with the contributors in advance:

- 40 % for the Sahel and Lake Chad window;
- 40 % for the Horn of Africa window;
- 20 % for the North of Africa window.

<sup>4</sup> EUTF Strategic Orientation Document.

**07** However, because EU funding has to respect the thematic and geographical scope of each funding instrument, and donors sometimes asked for their funds to be used for specific purposes (earmarking), the largest share of funding was allocated to the SLC window (see [Table 1](#)). By December 2023, a total of €4 508 million had been paid out by the EUTF. This amount includes 1.5 % in administrative costs. At the end of 2023, the allocation was almost completed, but funds were still available for audits, evaluations and monitoring.

**Table 1 – EUTF contributions, commitments and payments by window (in million euros) by December 2023**

	Not earmarked	Earmarked	Total contributions	Committed	Paid
Sahel and Lake Chad	54	2 228	2 281 (45 %)	2 070	1 952
Horn of Africa	54	1 805	1 860 (37 %)	1 774	1 555
North of Africa	27	894	921 (18 %)	867	808
Cross-window			n.a. <sup>1</sup>	198	193
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>4 926</b>	<b>5 062</b>	<b>4 909</b>	<b>4 508<sup>1</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> While the funds were allocated to each of the three windows, a small portion of total funds (4 %) was used for activities in all three windows (cross-window).

Source: ECA, based on the EUTF's annual reports.

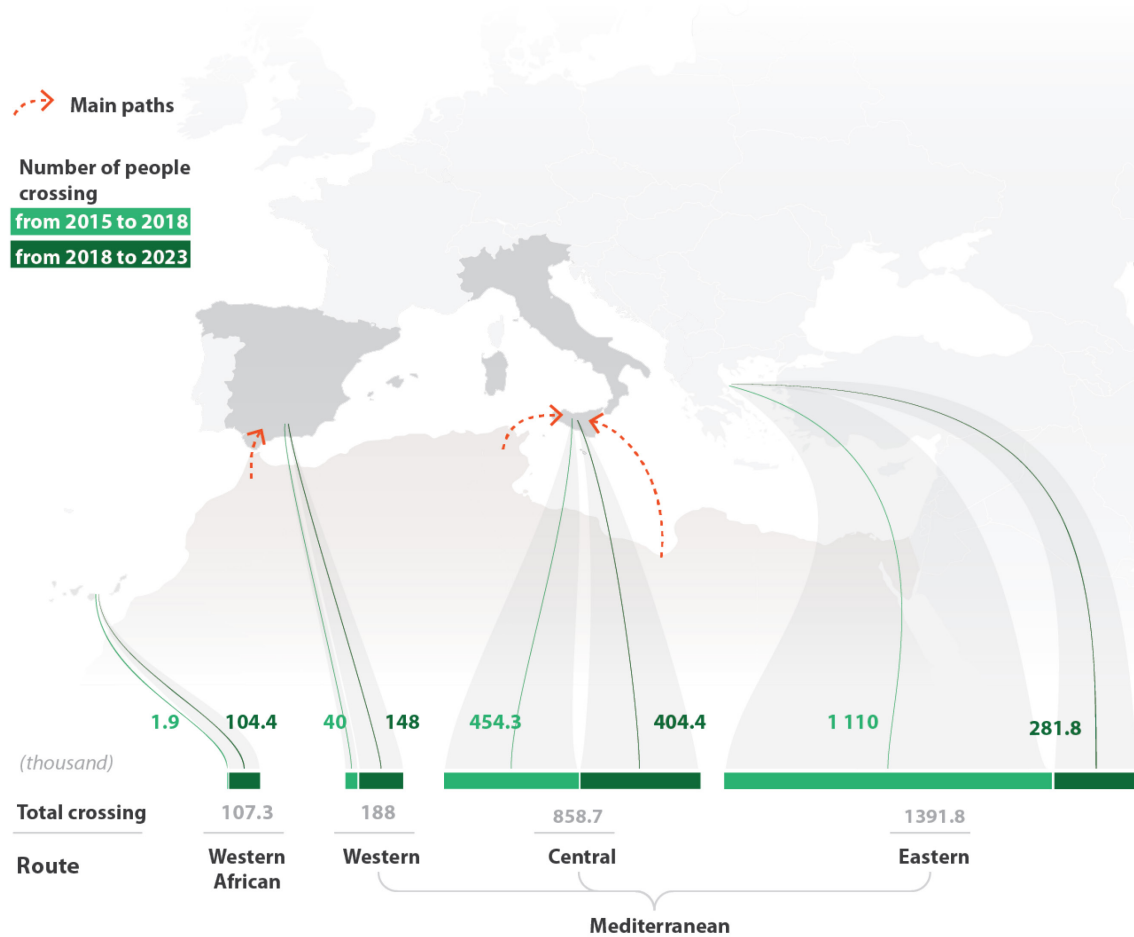
**08** In 2022, over a third of the world's entire refugee population lived in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>5</sup>. The majority of sub-Saharan countries have a negative migratory balance: more people emigrate than immigrate. While internal displacements are common, the Sahel is also one of the transit routes most frequently used by migrants travelling towards Europe.

**09** Migration flows from Africa to the EU have fluctuated over the years, with a peak in 2014-2016. Following a decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, the figures for irregular migration to Europe have steadily increased again. African migrants generally come to Europe via the western, central and eastern Mediterranean and western

<sup>5</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [Refugee Data Finder](#).

African routes. The central Mediterranean route through North Africa is the main path to Europe, followed by the western Mediterranean from Sahelian countries (see [Figure 4](#)).

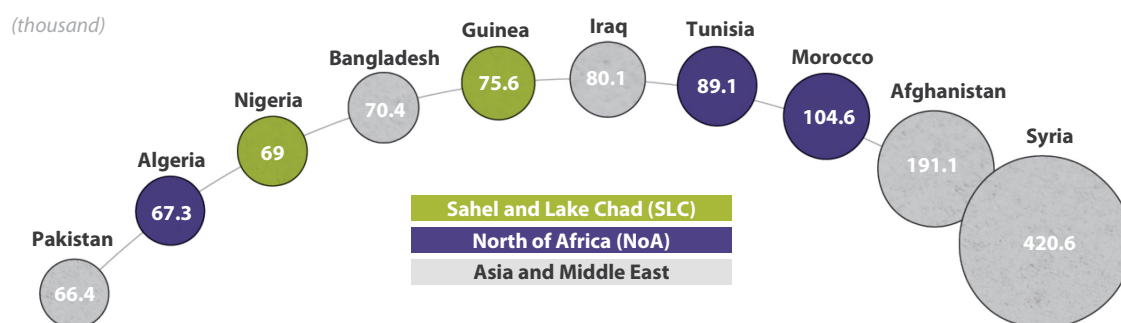
**Figure 4 – Migration routes and detected irregular crossings from Africa to Europe**



Source: ECA, based on statistics published by Frontex.

**10** The majority of irregular migrants arriving in the EU come from Asia and the Middle East (see [Figure 5](#)). These migrants mainly use the eastern route through the Balkans, but many transit through Africa using the central Mediterranean route.

**Figure 5 – Top ten countries of origin of migrants making irregular crossings to the EU, 2016-2023**



Source: ECA, based on statistics published by Frontex. The data refers to detections of irregular border-crossings rather than total numbers of migrants, as the same person may cross the external border several times.

**11** However, most of those crossing the sea via the western African or western and central Mediterranean routes come from African countries. In decreasing order, the top ten countries of origin of irregular migrants arriving in the EU from Africa from 2016 to 2023 were: Morocco, Tunisia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Algeria, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, unspecified sub-Saharan countries, and Mali.

**12** The final date of implementation of the EUTF Africa has been set to the end of 2025, but the EUTF stopped contracting funds for operations at the end of December 2021. However, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI – Global Europe) established in 2021 aims to dedicate 10 % of its spending to migration and displacement related initiatives with similar aims to that of the EUTF.

**13** The OECD defines official development assistance (ODA) as aid whose main objective is to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. One of the guiding principles of ODA is that development cooperation should not be used to push the donor's domestic migration agenda. Furthermore, financing of military services or equipment is generally excluded from ODA reporting. EUTF contributions must comply with the applicable EU regulations, including rules on ODA.

## Audit scope and approach

**14** In this performance audit we examined whether the EUTF had focused its support on achieving its aims of addressing the root causes of instability, irregular migration and forced displacements in Africa, with due concern for human rights.

**15** As migration has remained high on the EU's political agenda, and our previous audit<sup>6</sup> was carried out not long after the EUTF was set up, when projects were still at an early stage of implementation, we decided to follow up the recommendations we made at the time (see [Annex I](#)) and to check the results of completed or well advanced projects. In the 2018 audit of the EUTF, we concluded that while it was a flexible tool, its design should have been more focused. The new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe partially targets migration and displacement related initiatives and has similar aims as the EUTF. Our conclusions and recommendations can contribute to this or any future development actions.

**16** In this audit, we assessed whether:

- the Commission had implemented the four recommendations we made in our [special report 32/2018](#), and in particular whether the Commission proposed that the Board revise the EUTF strategy and whether the funding decisions were well targeted;
- the Commission took due account of human rights when providing support; and
- EUTF results were monitored effectively, reported accurately, and sustainable.

**17** Our work included a desk review of documentary evidence, such as programming documents, progress, monitoring and project evaluation reports, studies and research reports, project documentation, delegation and headquarters mission reports, correspondence, and the minutes of meetings. The audit covered the period from the EUTF's establishment in late 2015 until December 2023.

**18** We chose at least one country in each regional window (Ethiopia for HoA, The Gambia and Mauritania for SLC, Libya and Tunisia for NoA) for on-the-spot visits. Our selection criteria were based on the materiality of each country and its security situation, as well as logistical and resource imperatives. We sampled 16 projects, corresponding to a minimum of five projects per window, and we included at least one

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<sup>6</sup> [Special report 32/2018](#).

regional project per window. To select the projects, we took into account the materiality and number of outputs reported by the EUTF monitoring and learning system (see [Annex II](#)). To follow up our previous recommendation on selection procedures, we sampled 11 action documents adopted in or after December 2018: one from each country we visited and two from each window (see [Annex III](#)).

**19** We interviewed staff from the EEAS, the Commission (DG INTPA, DG NEAR, DG ECHO, DG HOME, Frontex, the Joint Research Centre) and the European Parliament, but also beneficiaries, project implementers, civil society organisations, the OECD and seven EUTF contributors.

**20** The EU delegations in the countries we visited made every effort to comply with our requests. However, we were unable to visit all the beneficiaries and projects we selected for our sample, either because the project implementers, the EU delegation or the beneficiary could not reach the sampled beneficiaries, did not grant us the authorisations to visit the premises or because of time and security constraints. Five project implementers did not provide all the information we requested (missing elements included invoices, attendance lists and beneficiary names). These problems impacted half of the projects in the sample. As a result, we were able to check neither the accuracy nor the sustainability of the reported outputs for parts of our sample.

**21** We also gathered evidence through a confidential survey sent to 176 staff working in EU delegations implementing the EUTF. The purpose of this confidential survey was to obtain complementary information on the design, implementation and follow-up of the projects activities as well as on the number of reported potential human rights allegations in all countries implementing the EUTF projects. The response rate was 52 % (91 replies, including 84 from EUTF programme officers). This survey did not include headquarters staff responsible for regional and NoA projects, as our aim was to obtain feedback from the delegations and gather information about the implementation of EUTF projects in the field.

# Observations

## The EUTF strategy remained broad, and while support was flexible, funding choices were not sufficiently targeted

### EUTF objectives remained too broad and research reports had limited influence on the EUTF strategy

**22** For this section of the report, we examined whether, in response to one of our previously accepted recommendations<sup>7</sup>, the Commission used the outputs of the Research and Evidence Facility (see [Box 1](#)) and lessons learned to propose to the Board a revision of the EUTF's objectives and priorities. We then checked whether those revised objectives and priorities are more specific and achievable. The status of implementation of all our recommendations for the EUTF is shown in [Annex I](#).

#### Box 1

##### The EUTF Research and Evidence Facility is a new toolkit for needs assessment, problems definition and context analysis

The Constitutive Agreement states that the EUTF strategy needs to be underpinned by a clear evidence-based approach. The Strategic Orientation Document committed the EUTF to funding research and analysis into the context of migration in particular to inform policy and operations within the use of EUTF funds. The Research and Evidence Facility (REF) was set up as a new tool for putting this commitment into practice.

In December 2015, a first action document to make use of the REF was approved by the HoA Operational Committee. Its overall objective was “to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the root causes of instability, insecurity, irregular migration and forced displacement along the main migration routes, drivers and underlying factors, as well as to analyse and disseminate the most effective policies and approaches to address and reduce them and improve migration management”.

The REF aims to equip the EUTF with better evidence to help it identify and implement appropriate activities and projects. It ensures that money can be spent on assessing project needs before action documents are approved.

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<sup>7</sup> [Special report 32/2018](#), recommendation 1.

**23** We found that, ever since the EUTF was established, the Board has never updated either the Constitutive Agreement (apart from extending the operational period by one year until 31 December 2021<sup>8</sup>) or the Strategic Orientation Document.

**24** Recognising the scarcity of EUTF resources, the Board approved priority criteria for the three windows in April 2018<sup>9</sup>. However, the Commission did not respond by refocusing the EUTF's overall objectives and priorities, which are still as defined in the Strategic Orientation Document (see paragraph 04). The Commission accepted the Board's 2018 priority criteria (see [Figure 6](#)) as an additional layer of guidance reflecting evolving needs and emerging challenges.

**Figure 6 – Board priority criteria**

Priorities for Sahel and Lake Chad and Horn of Africa	Priorities for North of Africa
Return and reintegration	Integrated border management
Refugee management (comprehensive refugee response framework)	Protection of vulnerable migrants
Securisation of documents and civil registry	Labour migration
Anti-trafficking measures	Voluntary return and sustainable reintegration
Essential stabilisation efforts in Somalia, Sudan and South-Sudan and, subject to resources, the Sahel	Community stabilisation (including through support to municipalities along migration routes)
Migration dialogues (The Gambia, Ethiopia)	

Source: Minutes of the [fourth EUTF Board meeting](#).

**25** The NoA window continued to prioritise the strategic objective of “improved migration management” (see paragraph 04), while the SLC and HoA windows did not set specific priorities. Even after April 2018, the Operational Committees continued to adopt [action documents](#) that were aligned with the four overarching strategic objectives, but not those set by the Board.

<sup>8</sup> [Commission Decision C\(2020\) 8701](#) of 10 December 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the [fourth EUTF Board meeting](#).

**26** Thus, the Board’s revision of the priority criteria had little impact on the design of action documents approved after April 2018. We found that 32 out of 105 action documents approved since that date did not fully correspond to the 2018 priority criteria (see example in [Box 2](#)).

## Box 2

### Example of action documents that did not fully correspond to the 2018 priority criteria

One SLC action document aimed to set up a radio station in the Sahel to promote youth expression. In practice the new station mainly broadcasts music. The document was approved as responding to the strategic objective ‘improved governance and conflict prevention’ (see paragraph [04](#)). However, it is difficult to establish a link with the priority criteria as revised by the Board in 2018, which are:

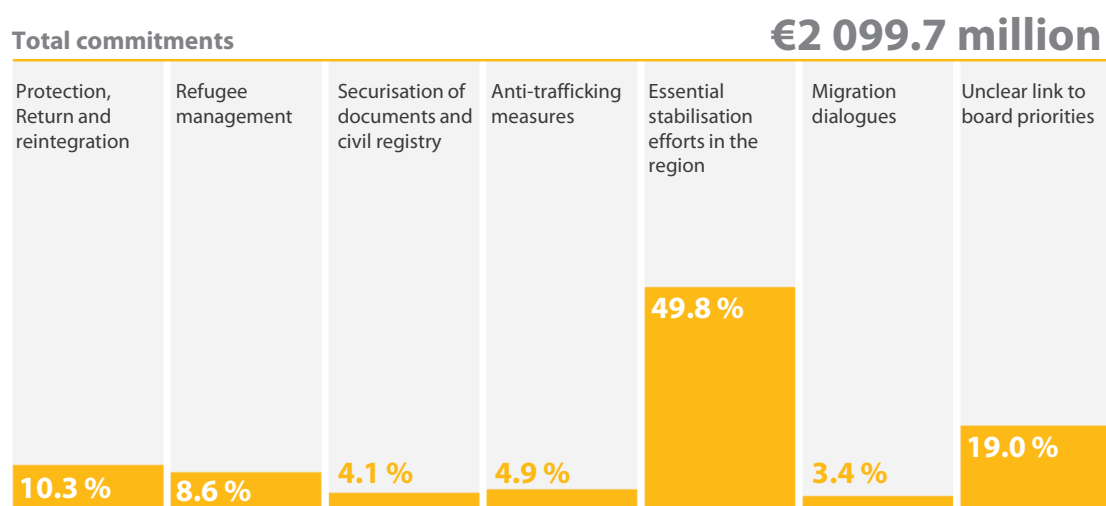
1. return and reintegration;
2. refugee management (comprehensive refugee response framework);
3. securisation of documents and civil registry;
4. essential stabilisation efforts in Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and, subject to resources, the Sahel; and
5. migration dialogue (The Gambia, Ethiopia).

**27** We also found, as described in our [special report 32/2018](#), that EUTF objectives and priorities were kept as broad as possible, so that most types of actions could be considered eligible. The Commission considers that EUTF support is balanced, and refers to the four strategic objectives (17 % of funding was allocated to greater economic and employment opportunities, 28 % to strengthening resilience of communities, 31 % to improved migration management and 22 % to improved governance and conflict prevention)<sup>10</sup>. However, there is no equivalent balance among the priorities defined by the Board (see [Figure 7](#) and [Figure 8](#)). And no guidance exists regarding which of these priorities should be given pre-eminence. As a result, funding has continued to be allocated disproportionately to a wide range of development, humanitarian and security actions under the SLC/HoA priority ‘essential stabilisation efforts in the region’ and the NoA priority ‘protection of vulnerable migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and community stabilisation’. Stabilisation is essential, can be

<sup>10</sup> [EUTF 2023 annual report](#), p. 19.

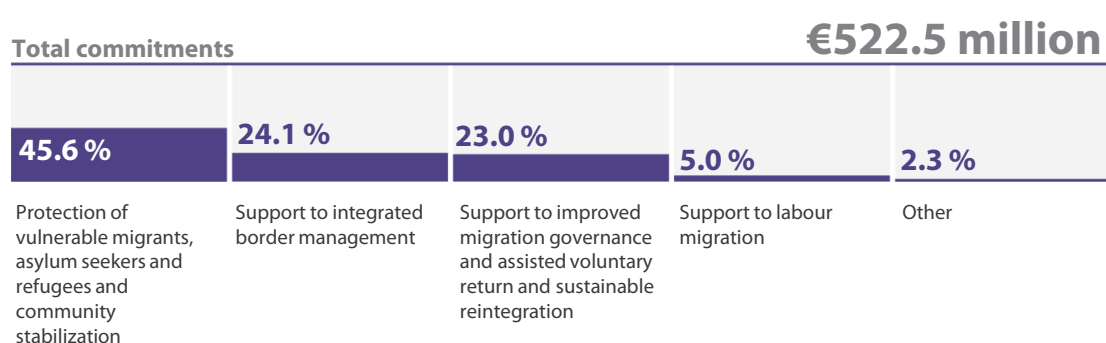
addressed in multiple sectors (education, employment, security, peacebuilding activities, governance, nutrition, etc.) and funded through other EU instruments, it is not a specific EUTF priority.

**Figure 7 – Estimated assignment of SLC and HoA commitments to EUTF priority criteria as revised by the Board**



Source: ECA, based on EUTF action documents approved since April 2018.

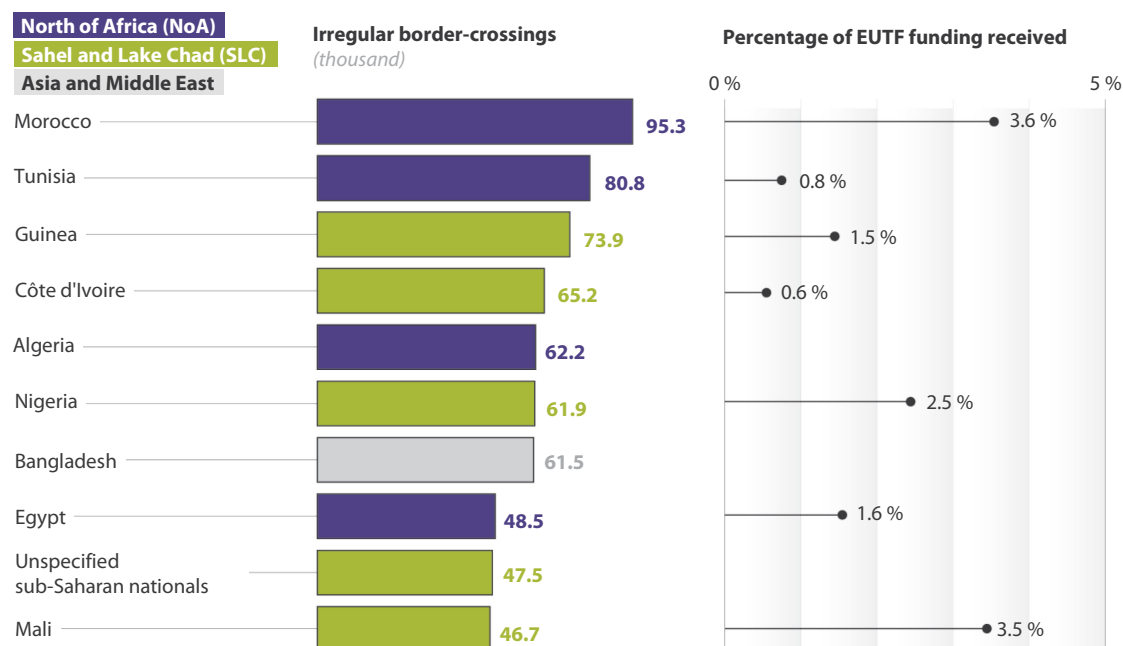
**Figure 8 – Estimated assignment of NoA commitments to EUTF priority criteria as revised by the Board**



Source: ECA, based on EUTF action documents approved since April 2018.

**28** Neither the Constitutive Agreement, the Strategic Orientation Document nor the operational framework specify how funding should be allocated by window, country or priority. Despite the fact that the HoA operational committee agreed to move away from country allocations and focus on key indicators with a migration-related dimension, the EUTF allocation of funding was not based on migration-specific indicators such as the number of irregular migrants arriving in the EU (see [Figure 9](#)), the number of internally displaced persons or the size of the hosted migrant population.

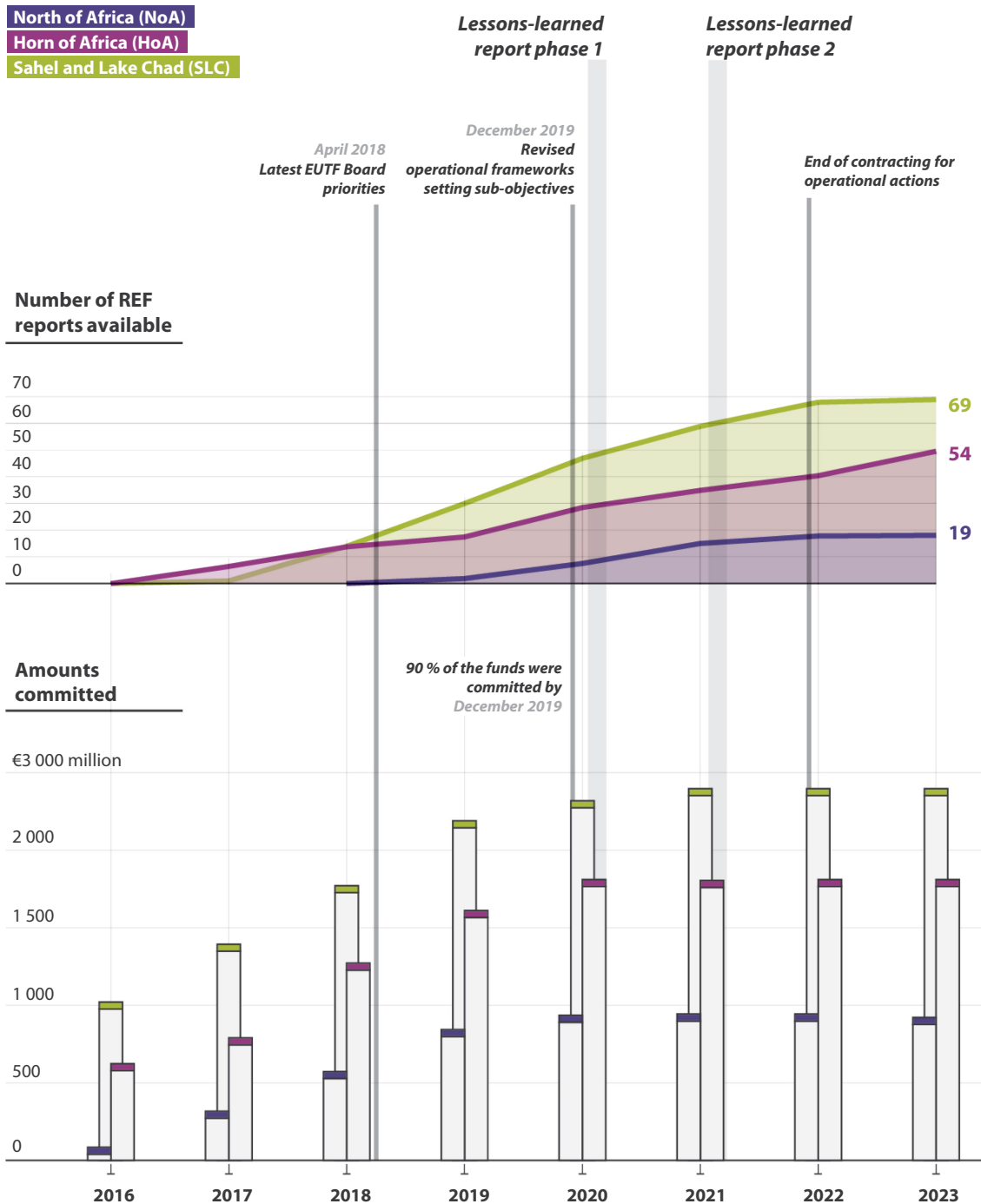
**Figure 9 – Top ten countries of origin of irregular migrants arriving in the EU via the western African and western and central Mediterranean routes, 2016-2023, and percentage of EUTF funding received**



*Source:* ECA, based on Frontex and EUTF payments. The data refers to detections of irregular border-crossings rather than total numbers of migrants, as the same person may cross the external border several times.

**29** In comparison to previous development aid, the EUTF aimed to focus its support on evidence-based information. The EUTF developed the REFs for collecting information on the drivers and dynamics of conflict, irregular migration and displacement, but we found no evidence that REF and lessons-learned reports fed directly into the EUTF strategy. Like the mid-term evaluation of the EUTF, the vast majority of these reports did not become available until almost all funding had already been committed (€4.4 billion by December 2019), so they could have no more than a limited impact on EUTF projects (see [Figure 10](#)).

**Figure 10 – Availability of REF reports and approval of the most recent EUTF priorities and sub-objectives**



Source: ECA, based on Commission financial data, EUTF Board and Operational Committee minutes, REF reports and lessons-learned reports.

## Faster mechanism for making financing decisions but too little account of lessons learned and in-depth needs assessments

**30** The Strategic Orientation Document establishes that EUTF interventions should be based on an in-depth understanding of local contexts<sup>11</sup>. The aim is to allow greater precision in the adoption of decisions about where to make investments (e.g. regions affected by conflict or at increasing risk of conflict, forced displacement, trafficking or smuggling; areas lacking social services and opportunities; regions of origin of irregular migrants), who should benefit from them (e.g. at-risk youth), and with which project implementers (local, national, regional or international) the objectives can best be advanced in the particular context. As well as looking at these criteria, we checked whether EUTF interventions were implemented promptly to respond to the crisis and justified the use of an emergency instrument.

### The EUTF rules allowed financing decisions to be taken quickly; contracting was slower but still reasonable

**31** More than half of the EUTF programme officers in our survey agreed or strongly agreed that EUTF-supported actions could be funded through other EU instruments. They referred to actions that could also have qualified for EDF bilateral or regional funding, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, the Development Cooperation Instrument or support from DG ECHO.

**32** However, we found that the EUTF is more [flexible](#) and adaptable to emergency situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission has also used the EUTF in a limited number of countries where EDF funding was impossible due to the lack of a political agreement.

**33** In our 2018 report, we found that the EUTF brings the additional possibility of a faster response, since it has reduced the time needed to identify and formulate actions and then award contracts<sup>12</sup>. However, we found that five of the projects in our sample were contracted very quickly (i.e. no more than two months after Operational Committee approval) however contracting took much longer in four other cases (on average 14 months). The other seven projects were contracted within a reasonable timeframe of approximately six months. We also found that 11 action documents approved after the revision of the priority criteria in 2018 subsequently had to be cancelled because the foreseen actions could not be implemented.

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<sup>11</sup> EUTF Strategic Orientation Document. Section 2. Principles of Intervention (p. 10).

<sup>12</sup> [Special report 32/2018](#), Figure 3.

## Lessons learned previously were not used sufficiently in designing EUTF actions

**34** The action documents are supposed to contain a general description of the lessons learned from previous projects, as well as the general context and a statement of specific needs. All but one action document in our sample had a specific section on lessons learned, but they did not refer to challenges, pitfalls, recommendations or exemplary best practices. The sections were short (within the requested maximum of half a page) and generic. Lessons learned for similar actions in different countries were not highlighted. In addition, the lessons learned were not systematically taken up in a project's design (see [Box 3](#)).

### Box 3

#### Example of lessons learned that were insufficiently followed up

One SLC action document highlighted that “one of the lessons learnt in the work with youth, young adults and former migrants is that substantial increases in revenue may not automatically lead to greater resilience towards irregular migration but may even trigger a risk of realizing ‘dormant’ plans of irregular migration – due to the high costs involved and due to the strength of the perception of migration as ‘the’ key to success and a better future, in spite of the awareness of the risks and dangers of irregular migration. Similar effects apply to improved professional skills.”

Although the action document drew attention to this as a lesson learned, little was done to mitigate the acknowledged risk. One of the projects in our sample included monitoring of selected groups of grant beneficiaries (farmers) to track progress in production and marketing, assess how they were responding to challenges and provide technical advice. The monitoring reports showed that several beneficiaries were absent from their business or even unreachable and some required more coaching. We came across the same issue during our on-the-spot visits.

Monitoring of this issue was limited to a sample of beneficiaries in just two projects, and was not repeated in five others.

Two projects, however, used specific selection criteria, such as the willingness to invest personal capital, as a means for preventing “dormant plans for irregular migration”.

**35** Results-oriented monitoring (ROM) is a review carried out by external contractors, designed to look at programmes and projects performance. Since 2020, ROM reports have included a question on lessons learned and good practice. Although these reports indicated that 85 % of interventions took account of past experience and

lessons learned, they also showed that only 10 % of projects had highlighted lessons learned or provided examples of good practice that could usefully be shared beyond the immediate project context.

### **The EUTF activities proposed did not sufficiently address urgent needs**

**36** According to the EUTF management, EU delegations, headquarters and project implementers held “fluid and informal” exchanges during the programming and designing of action documents, in the course of which they took note of urgent needs identified in the REF reports. However, although approximately 40 % of REF reports were finalised by December 2019, the remaining 60 % were published when the funds available for contracting were almost exhausted (see [Figure 10](#) and paragraph [29](#)). Only five of the 31 officers in EU delegations who replied to our survey and were involved in drawing up EUTF action documents found the reports to be helpful in the drafting process. However, the reports were referred to more frequently for the drafting of action documents for NDICI – Global Europe (see paragraph [12](#)). Only one in our sample of 16 EUTF projects referred explicitly to a REF report.

**37** Most REF reports are publicly available, but they are not all centralised on a single platform. Some reports are classified by window on the EUTF website<sup>13</sup>, but not by objective, theme or activity. For the HoA, the REF contractor manages a website<sup>14</sup> where these classifications are available. Shared open access to all reports and other evidence-based information such as field studies (e.g. hydrological, topographical, or environmental studies) would increase the project success rate. One project in our sample drew on an existing advanced hydrological study from another EUTF project to drill successfully for water in Ethiopia (see [Picture 1](#)). The same project funded similar work in Kenya using conventional and less reliable methods. Consequently, two boreholes drilled in Kenya were unsuccessful.

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<sup>13</sup> [EUTF website](#).

<sup>14</sup> [Research and Evidence Facility website](#) for Horn of Africa reports.

**Picture 1 – Successful solar-powered borehole in Dassenech, Ethiopia**



Source: ECA.

**38** The action documents we checked addressed specific needs. They were drafted as required by the guidelines, but we found that the proposed activities were not always fully coherent with:

- the urgency of the situation,
- the implementers' capacity,
- the realistic number of beneficiaries that could be supported,
- local contexts (e.g. youth interest, sectors offering job opportunities, existing structures, previous support),
- the powers, responsibilities, commitment and capacity of the targeted national authorities, and

- the partner countries' priorities (see [Box 4](#)).

#### Box 4

##### **The objectives of the project did not take account of priorities of partner country**

The HoA Operational Committee was informed that a project in Ethiopia would support the sustainable reintegration of Ethiopian citizens returning from Europe and ultimately contribute to the development of a national reintegration operational management system. Migration flows showed that the preferred destination of Ethiopian migrants was Saudi Arabia (79 %), followed by Kuwait (20 %) and Dubai (1 %).

The Ethiopian authorities' priority was to repatriate these migrant groups, not to bring irregular migrants back from Europe. Nevertheless, the Operational Committee validated an action document focusing only on returnees from Europe. As a result, a few months before the end of the project, fewer than 10 % of the initially intended number of returnees from Europe had received reintegration support. An addendum to the contract later reduced the target number of returnees from Europe, and allowed support to be given to returnees from the Gulf states.

**39** As a result, we found activities that were no longer sustainable, difficult to implement (see paragraph [79](#)) or with no direct connection to the most urgent aspects of the migration crisis. Some examples included:

- the rehabilitation of the Al Shabbi sea-front corniche in Benghazi;
- the restoration of the Roman theatre at Sabratha in Libya;
- sports and kitchen equipment for schools with urgent basic infrastructure needs (see [Picture 2](#)).

**Picture 2 – A school with no access to electricity received a blender to complement training in food preparation and conservation**



Source: ECA.

**40** We checked the EUTF's requirement to comply with ODA rules. The Commission has reported EUTF contributions as 100 % ODA-eligible to the OECD (see paragraph 13). Unlike for other development instruments (e.g. NDICI), the ODA contributions were not directly reported at project level. Nevertheless, the Commission prepared internal lists of individual EUTF projects with their corresponding ODA eligibility. We noted that these lists included one non-ODA eligible project in the NoA window. We also found non-ODA eligible activities in three projects covering two windows in our sample, all of which had been considered fully eligible by the Commission. These three projects support border management/control activities that are at least partly in the donor's interest, or have delivered ineligible outputs. This results in reporting EUTF funding as 100 % ODA eligible, when in fact it is not. The Commission did not take a precautionary approach regarding ODA reporting in cases of doubt.

## Despite an innovative approach to identifying human rights risks in a difficult environment, these risks were not comprehensively addressed

### The assessment of potential risks to human rights was not comprehensive

**41** One of the eight principles of the EUTF strategy<sup>15</sup>, and a priority emphasised by Strategic Board members, is the need to respect the “do-no-harm” principle (see [Box 5](#)). The Commission has undertaken to uphold this principle and the UN’s human-rights based approach throughout the EUTF project cycle. We therefore examined whether the EUTF actions we sampled highlighted the potential risks to human rights and included suitable mitigation measures.

#### Box 5

##### Do-no-harm principle

The [New European Consensus on Development](#): “Our World, our Dignity, Our Future” specifically commits the EU and its member states to implementing “a rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights”. The rights-based approach covers a broader category of rights than human rights. It aims to uphold two principles: “do no harm” and “do maximum good”<sup>16</sup>.

The do-no-harm principle states that development cooperation should not cause unacceptable harm or human rights violations<sup>17</sup>.

**42** Action documents go through an internal quality review at the Commission before they are submitted to the Operational Committees. The Commission shared with us its notes on the quality review of eight action documents, relating to eight of the 16 projects in our sample. For the other eight there was no evidence of checks being carried out. This absence of checks concerned at least one project in all three windows. The comments made during the review process were not systematically taken on board. When action documents are approved or modified, associated risks are not known and therefore not necessarily mitigated through specific activities. Once an individual action has been approved by the Operational Committee, it must be

<sup>15</sup> Strategic Orientation Document, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> [Rights-based approach toolbox](#), SWD(2014) 152, pp. 5-7 and 15.

<sup>17</sup> [Rights-based approach toolbox](#), p. 15.

implemented in conformity with the action document. The EUTF manager shall only inform the Operational Committee in cases of significant changes (e.g. budget increase by more than 20 % or significant changes in the nature and objectives of the action). However, changes below 20 % of the budget or related to human rights safeguards are not considered to be significant changes (see [Box 6](#)).

## Box 6

### Example of changes during the implementation of the project not considered to be significant

One regional project in Morocco and Tunisia, for which we checked activities on the Tunisian side, aimed to strengthen the authorities' capacity in the areas of maritime surveillance and migration management. The action document provided the NoA Operational Committee with a list of possible modules and outputs for funding. The Commission's initial contract with the project implementer in August 2018 focused on support for six priority maritime surveillance areas.

In 2020, despite delays in implementation (15 % of the Tunisian component had been awarded by September 2020, but not all had been paid), the Commission decided to increase the Tunisian part of the project budget by €10 million. The additional funds had been requested for a surveillance system covering the entire coastline. The project implementer later realised that this component would not be contracted or completed before the expiry of the EUTF. The tender launched in 2022 was therefore cancelled in 2023, and the remaining funds (€5 million) were made available to buy other equipment.



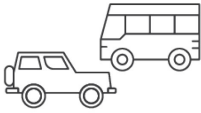

We noted that the initial action document for this project was amended to take on board member states' comments on the human rights dimension. The amended action document removed the references to the need to foster a right-based approach to migration management. In particular, the need to support coordination between border agencies and national human rights and victim protection authorities; increase the capacity of border authorities to identify and prevent potential rights violations, such as cases of trafficking in human beings, at border crossing points; and, strengthen the referral pathways to assistance for victims of human rights violations identified at borders. Consequently, this information was not shared with the Operational Committee.

**43** The risk sections in action documents are generally of a standard format and length, regardless of the very widely varying implications for human rights. For example, there is no essential difference between risk assessments for employment creation and security actions. Action documents for three of our sample of 16 projects did not categorise the level of risk (low/medium/high) or make any link to mitigating measures.

**44** While five of the action documents related to our sample raised at least one human rights risk, the others did not. Three of these five mentioned the risk of creating tensions between returnees/refugees and host communities. However, this risk was just as applicable to other projects in our sample.

**45** The risks are naturally higher where actions are implemented in extremely volatile areas and entail border management or security activities. Five action documents in our sample involved this degree of higher risk. However, two of these did not include any potential risk to human rights and the other three had raised a limited number of risks. Furthermore, the cross-cutting risks generated by implementing multiple activities in the same country, shown in the second column of [Figure 11](#), were not part of the analysis.

**Figure 11 – Potential human rights risks associated with multiple EUTF activities in Libya**

EU intentions	EUTF support provided	ECA assessment of potential risks not highlighted in the design documentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance maritime surveillance</li> <li>Reduce deaths at sea</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Equipment, boats and training courses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment could be used by actors other than the intended beneficiaries</li> <li>Trained staff may not be committed to the do-no-harm principle</li> <li>Beneficiaries may not accept third-party monitoring</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve conditions in detention centres with lifesaving interventions and human rights situation for migrants</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Works/equipment at disembarkation points (DPs)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Libyan Coast Guard (LCG)/General Administration for Coastal Security (GACS) may lose control over DPs and access to donors may be limited</li> <li>DPs may be used by other 'unofficial' actors and for unintended purposes</li> <li>Scrutiny lacking: ECA unable to visit one of the funded DPs as ownership had changed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up basic facilities to better organise search and rescue operations, border surveillance and control operations</li> <li>Enhance land border surveillance</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Cars and buses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EUTF support may have facilitated the transfer of migrants to DCs, exacerbating overcrowding</li> <li>Cars/buses may not be used by the intended beneficiaries or for the intended purposes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve conditions in detention centres with lifesaving interventions and human rights situation for migrants</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Works/equipment at detention centres (DCs)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported DCs may not regularly be accessible to humanitarian / development actors</li> <li>DCs closed by the Department for Combatting Illegal Immigration (DCIM) may be controlled by other 'unofficial' actors involved in smuggling activities</li> <li>Equipment may not be used for the intended purposes or could have been sold</li> <li>Sub-procurement may have potentially benefitted criminal organisations</li> </ul>

Source: ECA.

**46** At the level of implementation, we found that activities insufficiently addressed risks to the do-no-harm principle:

- Nine action documents (10 of the 16 sampled projects) did not include specific measures to avoid do-no-harm risks. However, six of the 10 projects did run activities upholding the principle (consultation with chiefs of tribes, mapping of natural resources with local communities, targeting more women than men, similar support for local people and returnees, training on human rights, etc.). One project minimised the risk of tension between host communities and returnees benefiting from economic support by organising community dialogue sessions and reintegration activities.
- Five action documents (the six other projects) included measures to address do-no-harm risks that did not systematically translate into specific activities or indicators at project level that would confirm they were being properly implemented (see example in [Box 7](#)).

### **Box 7**

#### **Examples of proposed mitigating measures for which we have limited evidence that they were implemented during the project**

The action document for the first phase of a border management project in Libya stated that Italian law enforcement officers would monitor the proper use of sea and land-based equipment, and that strict criteria would be put in place for selecting and vetting Libyan officials to benefit from the project. We saw insufficient evidence that these mitigating measures had been implemented at any time since the start of the project in 2018.

The action document for the second phase of the project referred to special training on the United Nations Human Rights Office's recommended principles and guidelines on human rights at international borders. The beneficiaries we interviewed said they had been given human rights training by other stakeholders, but not by the project implementer.

The project implementer's training programme for 2022-2024 included modules on international maritime and human rights law and international search and rescue conventions. However, we saw no formal evidence on the scope and content of these courses (e.g. course outline, Powerpoint slides, hours taught, attendance list) as most of them consisted of practical training to be delivered at sea. We were sent one 30-minute presentation on the drafting of standard operational search-and-rescue procedures with legal implications for human rights. This was organised in Rome in March 2023 for six high-level Libyan officials. Training on international standards, including human rights, in connection with land border management activities did not begin until 2023.

**47** The general terms of all financing agreements provide that the action will be suspended if the EU formally identifies a violation of human rights. The contract for one project included a new clause making the delivery of equipment conditional on respect for the do-no-harm principle and human rights. The clause was added during project implementation and did not apply to any equipment handed over previously. Another project had similar but less rigorous restrictions on use, but did refer to the need to observe the EU restrictions in the general terms of the contract. However, this clause was not applied systematically to all projects, in particular those relating to security, border management or other sensitive activities.

### **Human rights monitoring and reporting were not sufficiently robust, despite piloting third-party monitoring**

**48** We assessed whether the Commission had:

- identified reliable partners to carry out additional monitoring of EUTF activities focusing on human rights;
- put procedures in place to record and check the accuracy of allegations of human rights violations in relation to EUTF projects;
- established clear lines to take when dealing with enquiries about sensitive projects; and
- set clear criteria for suspending EUTF activities.

### **Checks on respect for the do-no-harm principle started in 2020 but were not sufficiently evidenced in the Commission's own reports**

**49** The Commission considers that project implementers (member states' development agencies, UN agencies or non-governmental organisations) have primary responsibility for ensuring respect for human rights and the do-no-harm principle during implementation. Although we found that implementing partners had put procedural guidelines in place, we were shown no evidence of documented checks.

**50** The volatile environment in which the EUTF operates poses challenges to project monitoring. The Commission, project implementers and other contractors have faced similar obstacles to those we experienced in, for example, gaining access to detention centres and other locations requiring official authorisation. In Somalia and Libya, the Commission employs external contractors to assess results by monitoring the implementation of specific projects. A large majority of the programme officers we

surveyed were able to carry out field visits to the projects under their responsibility, but one quarter of them reported that this was not possible – mainly because of limited resources (staff, budget, vehicles) and/or security concerns. We reviewed 58 mission reports on EUTF projects in the five countries we visited, and found only one indicating that checks had been made on the do-no-harm principle. None of the other 57 gave any evidence of such checks or explained why checks were not necessary.

**51** Since 2020, the consultants have included in ROM reports checks on human rights and the do-no-harm principle. According to these checks, 121 out of 130 projects (93 %) were free of human rights issues. The ROM consultants found that do-no-harm risks had not been mitigated in nine projects.

### **The monitoring of human rights risks in Libya is new, but follow-up was not demonstrated**

**52** In December 2019, for the first time, the Commission took the step of contracting an external consultancy in Libya to monitor:

- to what extent EUTF projects have promoted and protected the human rights of beneficiaries in line with the approach to which the EU is committed; and
- how EUTF training activities have affected respect for human rights.

**53** Third party monitoring of human rights is a complex and sensitive mechanism. The EU has used this approach for the first time in Libya. However, this mechanism has not been put in place in other countries where human rights could be at risk. The contract in Libya did not cover the full implementation period of EUTF contracts. While the EUTF started to implement projects in Libya in 2016 and activities will continue until 2025, the contractor produced 27 monthly reports from September 2020 to December 2022. There was then a gap of 9 months before a second contract was signed in September 2023.

**54** Each of the monthly monitoring reports describes a wide range of events and potential risks that were observed in Libya during the previous month. The scope of monitoring depends on the context and does not include close scrutiny of the human rights impact of all outputs and activities (e.g. electric generators or training courses). The reports provide EUTF staff with useful information about the complex situation on the ground.

**55** The monthly monitoring reports are potentially a useful and new source of information for Commission staff, however, the Commission did not set up a process to follow up on the information included in these reports. Commission staff with no in-depth knowledge of the activities funded by the EUTF in Libya, in particular their location, cannot link the highlighted risks to EUTF projects and cannot assess whether EU funded equipment is being used as intended and in line with the do-no-harm principle.

**56** We noted during our audit work that some Commission staff, both in Brussels and in the delegation, were not fully familiar with the details or location of EUTF activities in Libya. Our survey of programme officers across all windows showed that several of them did not have full information on the location of outputs and activities.

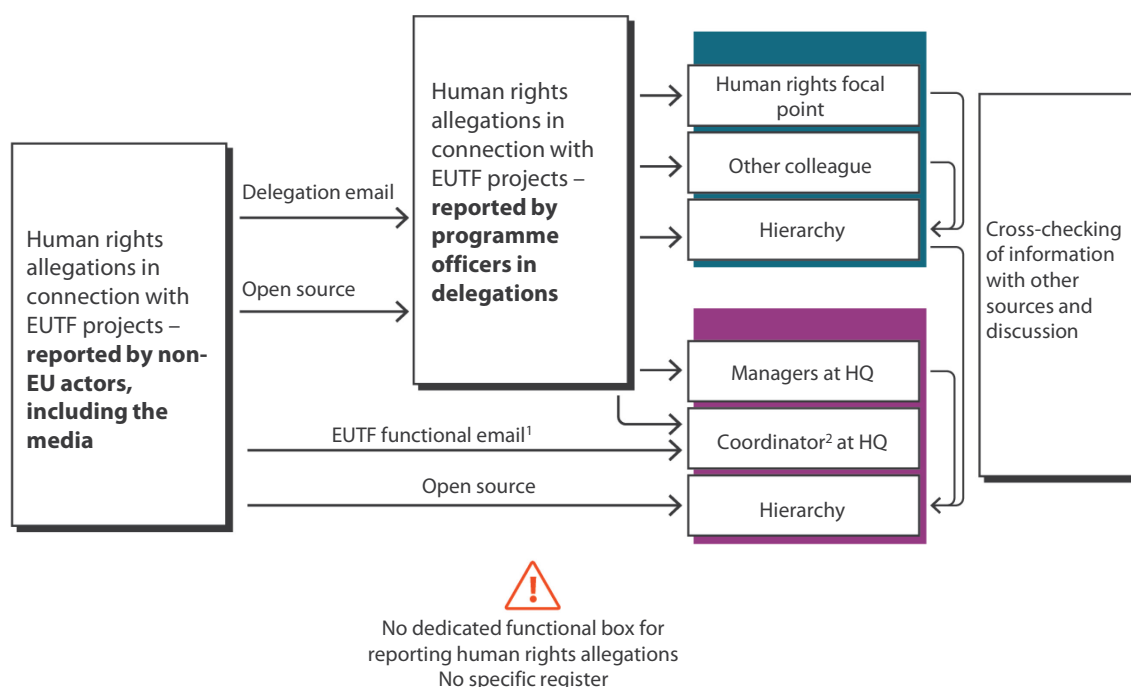
**57** The Commission and the EEAS have not shared the monthly monitoring reports with EUTF donors or project implementers. However, project implementers did receive copies of five thematic reports containing details of concrete risks to EUTF activities and proposing recommendations. These reports pointed to the lack of a systematic and thorough conflict sensitivity assessment. The Commission, the contractor and the relevant project implementers agreed on a plan of action, which is being followed up in monitoring reports under the second contract (see paragraph 54).

#### **There are no formal procedures for reporting and assessing alleged human rights violations**

**58** The Commission considers that contract clauses allowing an activity to be suspended in the event of an EU decision are part of adequate safeguards to mitigate do-no-harm or human rights risks. However, we found no clear or documented examples, nor practical guidance, on what actions may trigger an EU decision to suspend an activity. The Commission has stated that it would suspend support in the event of a direct link between EU spending and an allegation of human rights violations, based on an individual assessment of necessity and proportionality, also taking into account the country context. Despite the existence of allegations of such violations, the Commission could not provide examples of any such formal assessments being made in connection with EUTF activities. The Commission has described to us examples of situations that would result in the suspension of certain activities in Libya. While we found clear indications that one of these situations had occurred, the Commission has so far not suspended any EUTF activities in Libya, considering that support must continue to preserve life and alleviate migrants' suffering.

**59** Ten of the EUTF programme officers we surveyed confidentially, across the three windows, stated that they had reported allegations of human rights violations to other colleagues. However, the Commission, at headquarter level, had a record of only one allegation. The Commission explained to us that allegations can be shared with the reporting person's line manager (head of sector, head of cooperation, head of finance and contract, head of delegation) on a need-to-know basis to ensure the confidentiality of the reported information. There are no formal written reporting procedures common for all three EUTF windows. Allegations can thus be reported to different persons through different means (see [Figure 12](#)). Almost three quarters of respondents said they had not received any guidance on how to forward allegations of human rights violations.

**Figure 12 – Reporting and processing allegations of human rights violations in the context of EUTF projects is varied**



<sup>1</sup> INTPA-EUTF-AFRICA@ec.europa.eu

<sup>2</sup> Coordinates the 3 windows

Source: ECA, based on survey replies and discussion with the Commission.

**60** There is a risk that allegations may not be documented and processed fully, especially in the event of staff turnover. At the time of the audit, neither the Commission nor the EEAS had a common confidential repository to help ensure that allegations were registered and managed properly. As a result, we cannot confirm that all allegations were followed up.

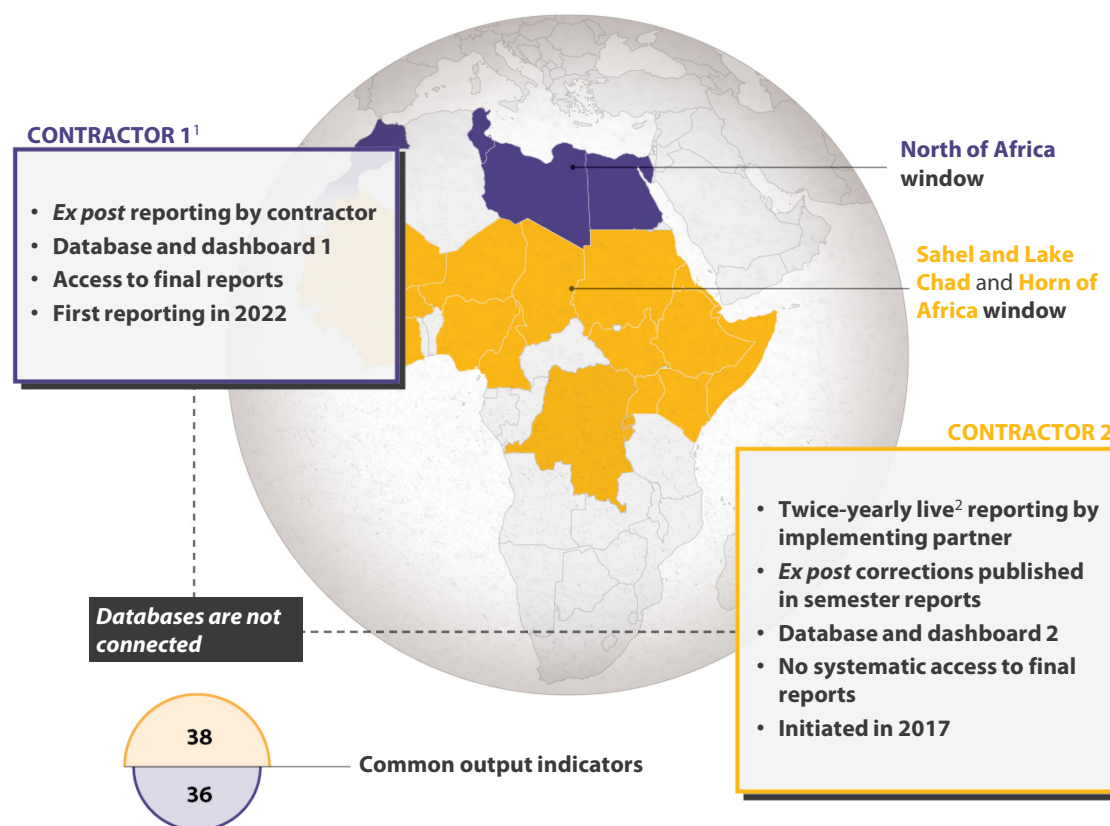
## Elements of the monitoring and reporting system lack accuracy and do not yet demonstrate which approaches worked best

### The monitoring system aggregates output indicators from all projects but we found it lacks accuracy and overstates achievements

**61** We assessed whether the EUTF results were monitored effectively at project and EUTF level. The monitoring at project level is done by the implementing partners and EUTF operational managers in the EU delegations and through ROM and third party monitoring reports. The EUTF has set-up a new and specific system to measure collective achievements. In 2018, we recommended that the Commission improve the monitoring of the EUTF. In 2017, the EUTF had already started to put in place a new monitoring and learning system (MLS) to aggregate information from all EUTF projects under 38 common output indicators for the SLC and HoA windows and 36 for NoA (see examples in [Annex IV](#)). The MLS is the EUTF's main tool for monitoring these common output indicators and sharing results with stakeholders. Output figures are presented in the EUTF annual report, at Strategic Board meetings and on the EUTF [website](#), but without external independent verification.

**62** Three separate external contractors have collected and aggregated data and carried out studies and analyses for the MLS at a cost of approximately €18 million since 2016. Currently, one manages the data for the HoA and SLC windows, and the other is in charge of NoA (see [Figure 13](#)).

**Figure 13 – Collection of data by the contractors as a basis for MLS reporting**



<sup>1</sup> The figures for 2017-2021 were initially reported by a different contractor but the methodology applied by contractor 1 allowed to report on cumulative results from 2017 onwards.

<sup>2</sup> Live reporting is not necessarily based on available (official) narrative reports, but aims to reflect the situation every quarter or every semester, unlike the *ex post* reporting based on these reports.

*Note:* The boundaries shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

*Source:* ECA, based on MLS.

**63** We used the sample of 11 indicators included in [Annex IV](#) to verify whether MLS reporting was accurate. We found mistakes and inaccuracies in respect of all the projects we sampled. There were more inconsistencies in reporting on SLC and HoA than on NoA. This is partly because the consultant for the NoA window relied on the information reported by project implementers after validation by the Commission’s operational managers, but also tried to avoid double counting by applying a more prudent approach. For the other windows, data were included in the MLS on a quarterly basis before the Commission’s managers validated the reports. The inconsistencies were caused by:

- methodological changes (the MLS system was set up in 2017, after contracting of the first projects);

- o methodological weaknesses (see [Box 8](#));

### Box 8

#### Example of a methodological weakness resulting in inaccurate reporting

A project was run in Ethiopia to address the lack of handwashing points as a mean to slow down the transmission of COVID-19. The project implementer reported 100 handwashing stations, but the MLS reported these outputs as 100 separate units and not as one social infrastructure built and/or rehabilitated. We consider that this equipment should have been reported as “micro infrastructures (latrines, wells, electricity)” under the indicator for “basic services” and counted as one unit.



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- o over-reporting of outputs in 13 of the 16 projects (more common than under-reporting, such as double counting of beneficiaries, infrastructure or area (see [Box 9](#));
- o the absence of detailed information shared by the project implementers that we found during on-the-spot checks; and

- o difficulties for MLS contractors to obtain accurate and timely data from implementing partners.

### Box 9

#### Examples of over-reporting and misrepresentation of the number of industrial parks and business infrastructures

Four projects in our sample reported a total of 62 “industrial parks and/or business infrastructures constructed, expanded or improved”. We found that no industrial parks were concerned by the four projects. The outputs we were able to check related to business infrastructure or equipment. We were unable to obtain sufficient information to confirm the existence of 33 of the 62 reported units, or they were incorrectly reported in MLS.

One project reported 12 outputs under this indicator. We visited one of the structures supported and found that it had already existed for several years and had been built by the local authorities. EUTF support had only been given in the form of small items of IT equipment: a laptop, a printer, a headset and a notepad.

**64** In our 2018 report we recommended that project planning documents known as logframes include specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed (SMART) objectives (see [Annex I](#)). In its replies to the report, the Commission said that it would also ensure that indicators were SMART. The logframes have since been updated. However, the indicators used to measure general and specific objectives are still not fully specific, relevant, measurable or achievable (see [Box 10](#)). Progress measurement is complicated by the fact that almost half of the indicators do not have clear baselines, and one third have unclear or no targets. Since 2020, the contractors performing results-oriented monitoring of EUTF projects have found issues in the logframes of more than half of the monitored projects.

## Box 10

### Example of a non-SMART indicator

One project set up the indicator ‘Perception of national and international experts and share of experts who perceive a decrease in irregular migration and a mitigation of vulnerabilities arising thereof’ to measure progress towards the objective ‘mitigate vulnerabilities arising from irregular migration and combat irregular migration’.

The indicator is not specific: not only is it opinion-based, it also fails to state which experts are to be consulted and which sources are to be used for data collection. It sets no baseline value, and the only target is ‘a decrease’.

## There is still insufficient data to demonstrate how sustainably the EUTF is addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacements

**65** We checked whether EUTF reporting is accurate and provides a fair picture of achievements (efficiency, effectiveness, impact) and challenges. We also checked whether the outputs of the projects we visited have remained in place or in use after completion; and whether the projects have contributed to positive development outcomes and impacts.

### Reported achievements are positive but do not identify the best approaches to reducing irregular migration and forced displacements

**66** ROM reports indicate that half of all EUTF outputs are of the expected quality. At the time of the audit, the projects in our sample were reported to have delivered a significant portion of their planned activities, equipment or works, but not all (see [Annex II](#)). However, five of the 16 projects were still being implemented. In the course of our on-the-spot visits we identified over-declarations of outputs by the implementers of three projects (see example of the construction of a craft workshop building reported as being completed in [Picture 3](#)).

**Picture 3 – Unfinished craft workshop building at the end of the contract**



Source: ECA.

**67** The EUTF has defined neither baselines nor targets for measuring overall improvements and achievements. In addition, it is not possible to aggregate outcome data for the EUTF portfolio in the same way as output data, mostly because common EUTF outcome indicators were not designed prior to programming<sup>18</sup>. However, the EUTF monitoring reports include project-specific analyses for the SLC and NoA windows. HOA has aggregated a limited of indicators across similar projects, focusing on the benefits of EUTF support for household incomes, food security, nutrition and health, the reduction of irregular migration, and migration management.

**68** A high number of more problematic EUTF projects (220 at the time of the audit) had been monitored through ROM reports – two thirds of which concluded that the intended outcomes were at risk. Even after seven years, and despite the lessons learned and a mid-term review, the Commission is still unable to identify and report on the most efficient and effective approaches to reducing irregular migration and forced displacements in Africa.

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<sup>18</sup> EUTF Monitoring and Learning System Horn of Africa, December 2023, p. 14.

**69** We found that that one of the projects in our sample has achieved its general and specific objectives and 11 have partially achieved it (see [Annex II](#)). However, data gaps and the lack of SMART indicators make it difficult to measure precise outcomes and impacts (see example in [Box 10](#)). The other four projects are still implementing activities.

### **Reported results are affected by problems related to sustainability and overestimation**

**70** In Mauritania we audited one security project, relating to training and equipping mobile security forces, particularly in more remote areas, with the aim of improving public security and contributing to the country's stability. The security forces have evacuated people and property in the event of floods, and intercepted trafficked arms, drugs, fuel and irregular migrants. They have also helped to arrest convicted terrorists who had escaped from prison. The project has been successful, but not in terms of its transnational objectives (there was no regional coordination with other countries).

**71** Three of the projects we sampled supported border management and in particular border control, but none of them had a results indicator with which to measure the number of rescued/intercepted people or the impact on migratory flows. Overall, there is insufficient data to show the impact of EUTF support, in particular on the reduction of the number of migrants using the central Mediterranean route (see one example out of the three projects in [Box 11](#)).

#### **Box 11**

##### **Despite improvements, there is still insufficient data to make a clear link between the EUTF support and the Libyan authorities' capacity in the areas of border and migration management**

Since 2018, the Libyan General Administration for Coastal Security has received training and equipment, in particular repaired boats, but its role in search and rescue operations is far more limited than that of the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG). The main Libyan actor at sea is the LCG, which received its first EUTF-funded boat in June 2023.

Except for 2019 and 2020, the reported number of people returned to Libya has remained higher than the figure of 2016. Whereas the ratio of returns to Libya in comparison to the departures started to decline in 2019 – despite the fact that the number of people reaching Europe via the central Mediterranean route has increased steadily since 2019. That said, the number of migrants departing from Libya and the number of arrivals in Italy remains much lower than in 2016.

Finally, Libya has no national search and rescue coordination centre, and its Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre is not yet operational, even though EUTF funded equipment was delivered in December 2021 (see [Picture 4](#)).

#### **Picture 4 – Locked and unused containers intended for the future Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Tripoli**



*Source: ECA.*

Human rights monitoring reports produced for the Commission (see paragraph [54](#)) have noted that the Libyan coastal authorities do not always respond to emergencies at sea, nor do they systematically inform the humanitarian organisations that can provide assistance at disembarkation. The reports have also drawn attention to the conduct of search and rescue operations at sea in a manner that potentially infringes international law.

**72** Our sample included five projects intended to provide protection for refugees and migrants. Two projects in Ethiopia and one in The Gambia supported activities to improve the reintegration of returning migrants and strengthen national structures. Despite valuable logistical and material support, the Gambian national migration

coordination body rarely met, but developed an action plan for 2023/2024, and the network of migration information centres became inactive when funding stopped. The Ethiopian and Gambian projects both had plans for a referral system so that information on migrants could be shared with other partners for further assistance. We found that the online platform was not systematically used by all donors in The Gambia, and referrals relied on ad hoc exchanges (email or phone), resulting in a risk of duplication of support (see [Box 12](#)). The online platform was not operational at all in Ethiopia.

## Box 12

### An example of repeated EUTF support without results

In 2018, a beneficiary in The Gambia received training and a grant to set up a business in the poultry sector as part of reintegration support from a EUTF project. He had received chickens, feed, medication and equipment.

In 2022, he received the same support as in 2018, though he confirmed orally that he had had no previous activity.

By 2023, when we visited him, he had sold all his animals and this second EU-funded project was also no longer operational.

**73** A project in Libya provides multi-sectoral assistance to migrants and refugees in a range of locations. However, humanitarian organisations have very restricted access to these places, which limits what they can do for people in need. Some returnees we interviewed had received non-food items (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap) that they could not use as they had no access to water, but they praised other items such as clothes and blankets. EUTF-funded human rights monitoring reports have drawn attention to the misappropriation of material assistance. The Libyan authority running the official detention centres has closed a number of them down, and could not tell us who is now responsible for the buildings which benefited from EUTF support. We were unable to visit any of the EUTF funded detention centres, as the Libyan authorities did not grant us access. According to the human rights monitoring reports the living conditions in detention centres improved slightly when works were carried out, but the treatment of detainees did not change.

**74** Ten of the projects we sampled consisted of activities to create employment and economic opportunities. The project reports show an increase in income for the beneficiaries of support. We met beneficiaries for all 10 projects and they were

generally satisfied with the support they had received, although some complained that it did not fully address their needs.

**75** Eight of these 10 projects reported a total of 14 028 jobs created. However, the documentation underlying our sample shows that this figure has been significantly inflated. Our on-the-spot visits revealed that many activities and therefore the claimed jobs were not sustainable (see [Box 13](#)). It is difficult to address long-term needs during the timespan of a project. Beneficiaries were given little support, and insufficient guidance or coaching, for drawing up a credible business plan, carrying out market analysis or acquiring the basics of bookkeeping. One action document we sampled states that ‘training and support for small-scale livelihood activities have not always proved successful in terms of subsequent employment or better self-reliance’, but this risk was not highlighted in the other projects implementing similar activities.

### **Box 13**

#### **Examples of unsustainable achievements**

##### **Jobs created by one project in Ethiopia were unsustainable**

A project to prevent irregular migration by boosting employment in Ethiopia reduced the unemployment rate in five migration-prone areas by only 0.32 % – achieving just 3.61 % of the target set. In 2021, an estimated 3 335 out of 5 422 jobs were still in place after 3 months of employment. However, in 2023, at the time of our audit, no follow-up data was available on the jobs created. It is thus unclear how sustainable the jobs were and to what extent the project helped to dissuade returnees from trying to leave again.

##### **Slaughterhouse and poultry shed inactive and on hold as not economically viable**

One project in SLC financed in 2021 a model poultry processing farm, comprising a solar-powered chicken shed for 1 000 birds, a containerised slaughterhouse, a management office, storehouses, public toilets and a 60 kVA generator. It also financed the premises of the youth association running the farm.

At the time of our visit, the beneficiary explained it was not economically viable to operate the business. The premises were empty (see [Picture 5](#)) and the association was in contact with non-EU investors to take over the rent.

**Picture 5 – Unused slaughterhouse**



Source: ECA.

**76** Support for village/loan associations and income-generating activities can be counted as jobs created. However, according to the methodology, figures should not be reported as jobs until results have been checked after six months. Because success rates are not measured, however, it is not possible to ascertain exactly how many new jobs have been created. The methodology states that collaterally created jobs (indirect and 'induced') should generally be excluded. However, two of the 16 projects in our sample also reported indirect or induced jobs.

**77** We checked 57 beneficiaries receiving economic support to help them set up or expand a business activity. Though three of the activities were not yet complete, 42 businesses were still totally or partially in place at the time of the audit, although sustainability was a risk for 21 of them. Two projects implemented in Ethiopia provided grants to beneficiaries under the condition that these shared the financial risk. We visited one such small-grant beneficiary, who had contributed 40 % of the total investment and was still running the business (see [Picture 6](#)).

Picture 6 – Shop in the Kebribeyah refugee camp, Ethiopia



Source: ECA.

**78** One project in Tunisia was successful in creating start-ups because it provided extensive coaching, via a €27 000 grant per start-up, and respected the personal choices of beneficiaries. It also targeted far fewer beneficiaries, and provided less diluted levels of support, than other projects.

**79** The environments in which the EUTF operates are fragile and volatile and endanger the sustainability of support. Overall, we found that 33 out of the 115 investments (businesses, constructions and equipment) we examined were no longer operational at the time of our visit, and a further 66 risked becoming unsustainable. More than one half of the respondents in our survey felt that the EUTF has put sufficient emphasis on longer-term outcomes and project sustainability. However, more than 60 % agreed that the national authorities did not systematically follow up or take over project activities. The 2021 lessons-learned exercise also

reported on the lack of exit strategies, raising concerns about the sustainability of EUTF results<sup>19</sup>.

**80** According to the member states' development agencies and EU delegation staff, the EUTF has helped EU member states to engage in migration dialogues with partner countries. It has in particular opened doors to non-development stakeholders, such as interior ministries and defence or security forces. One aim of the EUTF was to contribute to migration 'dialogues', in particular in The Gambia and Ethiopia. At the time of the audit migration dialogues were ongoing, and have restarted in Ethiopia after the end of the conflict in Tigray.

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<sup>19</sup> ALTAI, [Learning Lessons from the EUTF](#), phase 2, 2021, pp. 25 and 28.

## Conclusions and recommendations

**81** In its eight years in operation, the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa has developed a new approach for collecting information about the root causes of instability, irregular migration and displacements, identifying human rights risks in a volatile environment and reporting on the cumulative achievements of its actions. EUTF projects have reported the delivery of many of the planned outputs and partially achieved their objectives. Despite this, the financial support from the EUTF support is still insufficiently focused on the agreed priorities. Furthermore, there are challenges in relation to reporting, ensuring the sustainability of results and safeguarding human rights.

**82** The EUTF has contributed to keeping migration high on the development and political agenda. In our previous audit of the EUTF, we concluded that, while it was a flexible tool, its design should have been more focused. We therefore recommended, among other things, that use be made of research and evidence-based reports to sharpen the focus of the EUTF's broad objectives and priorities. However, at strategic level not much has changed and the support remained insufficiently focussed. The Board approved more specific priorities in 2018, but these had little impact on strategic choices or the actions to be funded. See paragraphs [23-26](#), and [80](#).

**83** All the projects we examined responded to needs, but not those that were most urgent. The allocation of funding was not based on migration-specific indicators. The EUTF decisions could be made quickly, but it continued to support a wide range of sectors and actions and was less quick in terms of contracting. See paragraphs [27-28](#).

**84** In comparison to previous development aid, the EUTF aimed to focus its support on evidence-based information. The EUTF has financed the publication of over a hundred research-based reports to help identify needs. However, the vast majority of these reports did not become available until almost all EUTF funding had been committed. They were useful nevertheless for the design of action plans under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe for the 2021-2027 programming period, and have provided the Commission with valuable information on the drivers and dynamics of conflict, irregular migration and displacement in Africa. See paragraphs [29-37](#).

## Recommendation 1 – Increase evidence-based targeting of geographical areas and beneficiaries

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To prioritise and focus its future support for the prevention and management of irregular migration, the Commission should target the most relevant geographical areas and needs by using migration-specific data and research-based information.

**Target implementation date: End 2025**

**85** References in action documents to lessons learned were short and generic and did not highlight previous challenges, pitfalls or best practices. We came across project activities that did not correspond to emergency needs in the migration context, and others that were no longer sustainable. The EUTF has commissioned two lessons-learned reports, but these became available just before the EUTF stopped contracting for operations. See paragraphs [34-39](#).

## Recommendation 2 – Include EUTF documents in a central repository to inform future action and expand lessons learned for action documents

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With a view to its future development action, including through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, the Commission should include the lessons learned from EUTF projects in a central repository and expand the lessons learned section of action documents by mentioning the documents consulted and listing the pitfalls or best practice observed in the country and elsewhere for similar activities.

**Target implementation date: End 2026**

**86** EUTF projects are run in difficult environments in which aid may be diverted for unintended purposes. In this context, *ex ante* checks of a project's potential human rights impact were not sufficiently comprehensive. Where an action document included mitigating measures, these did not systematically translate into specific activities or indicators at project level that would confirm the measures were being properly implemented. See paragraphs [42-46](#).

**87** The volatile environment in which the EUTF operates poses challenges to project monitoring. Given the heightened risks in Libya, the Commission elected for third-party monitoring to enhance its oversight of the impact of EUTF activities on human rights in that country. It is the first one of its kind. This practice is a useful source of information

on human rights risks in Libya, but follow-up of these was not demonstrated. See paragraphs [52-57](#).

**88** The Commission considers that contract clauses allowing an activity to be suspended in the event of a court judgment or an EU decision are part of adequate safeguards to mitigate do-no-harm or human rights risks. The Commission does not have formal internal procedures for reporting, recording and following up allegations of human rights violations in relation to EU-funded projects. Regardless of the source of allegations of human rights infringements or breaches of the do-no-harm principle, there is no system for showing that information of this kind has been properly examined and taken into account when deciding whether to continue or suspend EU support. See paragraphs [58-60](#).

### **Recommendation 3 – Strengthen the identification of human rights risks and take mitigating action**

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To enhance respect for the do-no-harm principle in decision-making on any future development action, the Commission should:

- (a) systematically assess the specific level of risk to human rights in the design and formulation phase, and translate the proposed mitigating measures into specific activities or outputs indicators where a project presents significant human rights risks;
- (b) draw up and circulate clarified internal procedures for reporting and following up human rights allegations in the context of EU-funded projects;
- (c) analyse information related to human rights risks whether obtained through third-party monitoring of human rights or other means such as allegations; identify the entity responsible for making such analyses; maintain a record of all actions taken in response and the reasons for deciding to continue or suspend EU support.

**Target implementation date: End 2025**

**89** While the implementers of the projects in our sample reported that they had delivered most of their intended outputs, but not all, and achieved many of their objectives, sustainability was often in doubt. However, the EUTF has facilitated dialogue on migration issues. All EUTF contributions were reported to the OECD as eligible official development assistance. We found that some activities should not have been categorised in this way. See paragraphs [40](#) and [66-80](#).

**90** In addition to monitoring at project level, the Commission has set up a system to measure the collective achievements of its actions by aggregating the results of all EUTF projects. The system contains almost 40 output indicators, but it neither considers the sustainability of outputs nor reports on whether the projects have helped to address the root causes of instability, irregular migration and displacements. The outputs reported for the projects in our sample were not entirely accurate and often overstated, partly because of methodological weaknesses and lack of detailed information shared by project implementers. See paragraphs [61-64](#).

### **Recommendation 4 – Improve the accuracy of reported achievements**

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To improve the accuracy of reporting on the achievements, the Commission should:

- (a) explore ways to ensure project implementers share more detailed information on the underlying data used for reporting on indicators including lists of equipment, information on final beneficiaries, location, amount of support of any future development action;
- (b) for any future development action, include checks on the accuracy and sustainability of the reported results deriving from the aggregated NDICI indicators in its results-oriented monitoring or project evaluations;
- (c) identify the EUTF projects at risk of having been incorrectly assessed as fully ODA eligible and where necessary correct the ODA reporting to the OECD.

**Target implementation date: End 2025**

This report was adopted by Chamber III, headed by Mrs Bettina Jakobsen, Member of the Court of Auditors, in Luxembourg at its meeting of 9 July 2024.





*For the Court of Auditors*






Tony Murphy  
*President*

# Annexes

## Annex I – Follow-up of our recommendations in special report 32/2018

Level of implementation:  fully;  in most respects;  in some respects;  not implemented.

ECA recommendation	Commission's acceptance of the recommendation	Level of implementation
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p>The Commission should propose to the Trust Fund Board a review of the existing objectives and priorities of the EUTF for Africa to make them more specific and achievable. It should take into account the particular challenges of the three windows, and to the extent possible, include targets and baselines. In this exercise, the Commission should, in particular, use:</p>		
(a) the outputs of the Research and Evidence Facilities;	accepted	
(b) the capabilities of all donors;	accepted	not implemented
(c) a lessons-learned mechanism for the TF as a whole.	accepted	
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>The Commission should:</p>		
(a) establish clear common criteria applied across windows and document the assessment of project proposals against these criteria	rejected	
(b) provide the Operational Committees with a list of received proposals that have not been developed into an Action Fiche, including the reasons for their rejection, by the TF Manager	rejected	

ECA recommendation	Commission's acceptance of the recommendation	Level of implementation
(c) inform the Operational Committees of any substantial changes to already approved projects (i.e. changes in objectives, budget and duration)	accepted	
(d) create a dedicated section in the Action Fiche demonstrating the comparative advantage of supporting the project through the EUTF for Africa rather than through other forms of EU support	accepted	
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>The Commission should identify all accelerated procedures that can be applied to the EUTF for Africa and enhance their use in consultation with potential implementing partners where relevant.</p>	accepted	
<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p>The Commission should:</p>		
(a) make the common monitoring system fully operational;	accepted	
(b) include SMART objectives in the project logframes, and improve the quality of indicators by establishing quantified baselines and targets.	accepted	

## Annex II – ECA sample and assessment of projects

No	Contract name	EUTF window	Country	Country audited	Amount committed	Amount paid as at 12.2023	Achievement of outputs as per ECA	Achievement of outcome as per ECA	Sustainability of the sampled activities
1	Better Migration Management Programme	HoA	Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia	Ethiopia	40 000 000	40 000 000			
2	Omo Delta Project: Expanding the Rangeland to achieve Growth & Transformation in Turkana (Kenya) and South Omo (Ethiopia)	HoA	Ethiopia, Kenya	Ethiopia	12 000 000	11 807 731			
3	Sustainable reintegration support to Ethiopian returnees from Europe and support to vulnerable displaced populations affected by COVID-19	HoA	Ethiopia	Ethiopia	15 000 000	13 500 000			
4	Stemming Irregular Migration in Northern & Central Ethiopia- SINCE (IDC)	HoA	Ethiopia	Ethiopia	19 844 494	19 844 494			

No	Contract name	EUTF window	Country	Country audited	Amount committed	Amount paid as at 12.2023	Achievement of outputs as per ECA	Achievement of outcome as per ECA	Sustainability of the sampled activities
5	Strengthened Socio-Economic Development and Better Employment Opportunities for Refugees and host communities in the Jigjiga Area	HoA	Ethiopia	Ethiopia	10 000 000	9 000 000			
6	Renforcement des capacités pour une meilleure gestion de la migration afin de protéger les enfants migrants contre l'exploitation et la traite	SLC	Mauritania	Mauritania	2 905 772	2 905 772			
7	GAR-SI SAHEL (Groupes d'Action Rapide – Surveillance et Intervention au Sahel)	SLC	Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, Senegal	Mauritania	17 986 073	17 383 993			

No	Contract name	EUTF window	Country	Country audited	Amount committed	Amount paid as at 12.2023	Achievement of outputs as per ECA	Achievement of outcome as per ECA	Sustainability of the sampled activities
8	Renforcement de la résilience et de la capacité d'autonomisation des réfugiés des rapatriés et des personnes déplacées internes liés au conflit du Nord Mali	SLC	Mauritania	Mauritania	4 900 000	4 900 000			
9	Strengthening the management and governance of migration and the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants in the Gambia	SLC	Gambia	Gambia	3 900 000	3 900 000			
10	Make it in The Gambia - Building a Future – Promoting agribusiness and strengthening social cohesion	SLC	Gambia	Gambia	5 000 000	4 990 299			
11	Make it in The Gambia - Rural Infrastructure for Employment Creation in The Gambia (RIEC)	SLC	Gambia	Gambia	7 000 000	7 000 000			

No	Contract name	EUTF window	Country	Country audited	Amount committed	Amount paid as at 12.2023	Achievement of outputs as per ECA	Achievement of outcome as per ECA	Sustainability of the sampled activities
12	Support to Integrated border and migration management in Libya (phase 1)	NoA	Libya	Libya	42 223 927	27 279 629			
	Support to Integrated border and migration management in Libya (phase 2)	NoA	Libya	Libya	16 800 000	15 632 088			
13	Protecting vulnerable migrants and stabilizing communities	NoA	Libya	Libya	70 800 000	70 603 804			
14	Strengthening Local Capacities for Resilience and Recovery	NoA	Libya	Libya	18 000 000	17 083 270			Visited only 1 output
15	Border Management Programme for the Maghreb region (BMP-Maghreb)	NoA	Tunisia	Tunisia	65 000 000	60 395 998			Not visited
16	Développement des opportunités d'emploi et d'investissement à travers la mobilisation de la diaspora	NoA	Tunisia	Tunisia	4 000 000	4 000 000			

Legend	Outputs and outcomes	Sustainability
Achieved	More than 75 % of planned targets achieved	Most sampled activities sustainable at the time of the visit and likely to remain sustainable
Partially achieved	More than 50 % of planned targets achieved	Most sampled activities sustainable at the time of the visit but at risk
Unsatisfactory	Less than 50 % of planned targets achieved	Most sampled activities not sustainable at the time of the visit
Not yet possible to conclude	Project not finalised	Not possible to conclude as not visited

### Annex III – Follow-up sample on recommendation 2 in special report 32/2018

T05-EUTF-SAH-GM-04: Digitalising The Gambia – Technical assistance to strengthen the ICT sector
T05-EUTF-SAH-MR-09 - Partenariat Opérationnel Conjoint pour la Mauritanie
T05-EUTF-SAH-REG-25 Radio Jeunesse Sahel
T05-EUTF-SAH-REG-26 Contribution au financement du Secrétariat de la Coalition pour le Sahel
T05-EUTF-NOA-LY-11 Managing mixed migration flows: protection, health assistance, resilience and community engagement
T05-EUTF-NOA-TN-03 Action pour la protection des personnes migrantes en situation de vulnérabilité
T05-EUTF-NOA-REG-16 Fast track emergency response to COVID-19 in NoA countries for the most vulnerable populations
T05-EUTF-NOA-REG-14: Durable solutions for Refugee Unaccompanied and Separated Children (Libya and Egypt) and Family Reunification
T05-EUTF-HOA-ET-77 - Stability and basic services Gambella
T05-EUTF-HOA-REG-81 - Enhancing protection, lifesaving assistance and sustainable solutions for evacuees from Libya through the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Rwanda
T05-EUTF-HOA-REG-67 - CRRF Urban Development and Mobility

## Annex IV – Sample of MLS output indicators

EUTF indicators
1.1 Number of direct jobs created or supported through EUTF-funded projects
1.2 Number of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) created or supported
1.3 Number of people assisted to develop income generating activities (IGAs)
1.5 Number of industrial parks and/or business infrastructures constructed, expanded or improved
2.1 bis Number of social infrastructures built and/or rehabilitated
2.6 Hectares of agricultural and pastoral ecosystems where sustainable management practices have been introduced with EU support
4.1 Number of infrastructures supported to strengthen governance
4.1 bis Number of items of equipment provided to strengthen governance
4.2 Number of staff from governmental institutions, internal security forces and relevant non-state actors trained on governance, conflict prevention and human rights
4.6 Number of strategies, laws, policies and plans developed and/or directly supported (National level)
6.1 Number of COVID-19 pandemic-related supplies provided and/or distributed

# Abbreviations

**DG ECHO:** Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

**DG HOME:** Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs

**DG INTPA:** Directorate-General for International Partnerships

**DG NEAR:** Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

**EEAS:** European External Action Service

**EUTF:** European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa

**Frontex:** European Border and Coast Guard Agency

**HoA:** Horn of Africa

**JRC:** Joint Research Centre

**MLS:** Monitoring and learning system

**NDICI:** Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument

**NoA:** North of Africa

**ODA:** Official development assistance

**OECD:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**ROM:** Results-oriented monitoring

**SLC:** Sahel and Lake Chad

# Glossary

**EU trust fund:** EU-administered fund that pools money from multiple sources to finance the international response to an emergency or ongoing crisis, generally in the developing world.

**Impact:** Wider long-term consequences of a completed project or programme, such as socio-economic benefits for the population as a whole.

**Induced job:** Employment generated through additional spending of income from direct and indirect employment.

**Irregular migrant:** Person entering or residing in a country without the necessary authorisation.

**Logical framework:** Detailed planning tool covering the implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of a project. Also known as a **logframe**.

**Outcome:** Immediate or long-term change brought about by a project and which normally relate to its objectives, such as the benefits resulting from a better-trained workforce.

**Output:** Something produced or achieved by a project, such as delivery of a training course or construction of a road.

**Referral system:** A process of cooperation between multiple stakeholders to provide protection and assistance services to vulnerable migrant.

**Results-oriented monitoring:** Review by independent experts of the outputs and outcomes of ongoing projects against criteria such as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

# Replies of the Commission

<https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications/sr-2024-17>

## Timeline

<https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications/sr-2024-17>

## Audit team

The ECA's special reports set out the results of its audits of EU policies and programmes, or of management-related topics from specific budgetary areas. The ECA selects and designs these audit tasks to be of maximum impact by considering the risks to performance or compliance, the level of income or spending involved, forthcoming developments and political and public interest.

This performance audit was carried out by Audit Chamber III – External action, security and justice, headed by ECA Member Bettina Jakobsen. The audit was initially led by ECA Member Hannu Takkula, supported by Turo Hentila, Head of Private Office and Nita Tennila, Private Office Attaché.

The audit was finalised by ECA Member Bettina Jakobsen, supported by Katja Mattfolk, Head of Private Office; Michael Bain, Principal Manager; Aurelia Petliza, Head of Task; Loulla Puisais-Jauvin and Edwin van Veen, Auditors. Thomas Everett provided linguistic support. Giuliana Lucchese provided graphical support. Britta Middelberg provided methodological survey support and Terje Teppan-Niesen and Ramunė Šarkauskienė provided administrative support.



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Established in 2015, the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) is an EU response to address the root causes of migration, instability and internal displacements in Africa.

We followed up our 2018 recommendations and assessed whether the EUTF has improved the focus of its support, while showing due concern for human rights. We found that supported projects have reported the delivery of many results. However, the EUTF support remains insufficiently focused on the agreed priorities. Furthermore, there are weaknesses in the accuracy and sustainability of reported results and a lack of procedures and follow-up on allegations of human rights violations.

With a view to the ending of the EUTF and/or future development action, we make four recommendations.

ECA special report pursuant to Article 287(4), second subparagraph, TFEU.



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