

# GUIDELINES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF AVR(R) PROGRAMMES

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## Aim and content of this document

The overall aim of these guidelines is to improve the evidence-base to inform the policy debate on return by identifying **a common methodology for monitoring and evaluation that Member States can apply on a voluntary basis**. Through such monitoring, Member States will be able to design more effective and efficient AVR(R) programmes. Specifically, the guidelines propose a **common set of core indicators** for monitoring and evaluation which – if applied consistently in all EU Member States – will enable the analysis of EU-level aggregate data on AVR(R) programmes. The core indicators have been selected on the basis of their usefulness for evaluating the programmes and data-collection feasibility. Indeed, many of the indicators are already being collected in Member States.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally the guidelines aim to:

- ★ Define monitoring and evaluation;
- ★ Clarify the rationale for monitoring and evaluation of AVR(R) in the EU;
- ★ Outline current Member State practices in monitoring and evaluation;
- ★ Propose a common methodology that Member States can use to monitor and evaluate their AVR(R) programmes;
- ★ Identify indicators for monitoring and evaluating AVR(R) programmes.

The guidelines will be of use to programme designers and programme implementers at national level and may also be useful to any other interested institutions/organisations/authorities at both national as well as EU level including also policy-makers and politicians.

This remainder of the document is structured as follows:

2. General introduction to monitoring and evaluation of AVR(R) programmes, including a description of the scale and nature of current AVR(R) monitoring in Member States.
3. Guidelines for monitoring AVR(R) programmes.
4. Guidelines for evaluating AVR(R) programmes.
5. Suggested core monitoring data, evaluation questions and AVR(R) performance indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> As reported in the EMN Ad-Hoc Query to collect information for the development of the REG Guidelines on Monitoring and Evaluation

## Core indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of AVR(R) in the EU

This document sets out **core indicators** for **monitoring** and **evaluating** (M&E) AVR(R) in the EU.

The indicators form a framework which comprises five evaluation questions, eleven sub-questions, fifteen indicators and thirty data units.

The purpose of providing a common framework for the monitoring and evaluation of AVR(R) is:

- ★ To promote the M&E of AVR(R) throughout the EU
- ★ To help those Member States not currently monitoring and evaluating AVR(R) to start doing so
- ★ To improve the quality of AVR(R) M&E throughout the EU
- ★ To help make the data collected through AVR(R) M&E more comparable at EU level, which in turn will support the exchange of good practices on AVR(R) between Member States and support EU policymaking on return.

To support the collection of comparable data for M&E of AVR(R), the guidelines include a monitoring data collection tool. Other ways of supporting comparable data collection are also discussed.

Both the monitoring [data collection tool](#) and the [core evaluation framework](#) can be printed as tools for easy reference.

## 1 Introduction

A humane and effective return policy is essential to a comprehensive and sustainable migration policy. The return of third-country nationals without legal grounds to stay in the EU is an important tool for facing the challenge of irregular migration and is also essential to the credibility of EU legal migration and asylum policy. The Return Directive is the main piece of EU legislation in this field. Under the Return Directive, a third-country national subject to a return decision has 30 days to voluntarily depart at his/her own expense. Should the TCN not comply with the order to leave, Member States may subsequently, as a last resort, use coercive measures for the removal of the third-country national. EU return policy thus initially favours voluntary departure over forced return. As TCNs however often lack the financial means to leave voluntarily, Member States have developed Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVR(R)) Programmes<sup>2</sup> under which third-country nationals can be provided with in-cash and/or in-kind assistance to facilitate their voluntary departure. The form and nature of the assistance provided differs between Member States and not all Member States provide reintegration assistance. For more information on Member State AVR(R) programmes, please see the 2015 EMN Inform on Incentives to return to a third-country and support provided to migrants for their reintegration, and the 2014 EMN Return Experts Group Directory.

Over recent years, AVR(R) programmes have become an increasing policy priority as these programmes are considered to be more humane, dignified, and less costly than forced return. Simultaneously however concerns have also been raised as to their effectiveness, cost-efficiency and potential to produce side-effects (e.g. repeat/copycat migration to the EU as well as return shopping). To date, AVR(R) programmes have only been monitored and evaluated to a limited extent<sup>3</sup> and, as a result, little reliable data is available on their performance. Further, because Member States use different methodologies to monitor and evaluate, the results can often not be compared.

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<sup>2</sup> AVR programmes are those which provide assistance in the run-up to return (e.g. counselling, financial or in-kind support whilst awaiting return, payment of flights) and possibly start-up cash. AVR(R) programmes offer, additionally, support to the returnee, either cash, in kind or in combination, with the aim of helping them to lead an independent life after return in the country of origin/ country of destination.

<sup>3</sup> Due to also the challenges involved; particularly costs and the challenge of engaging returnees in data collection post-return.

Recently, the European Commission and the Justice and Home Affairs Council of the EU have emphasised the need to use reintegration support as tool for increasing the “sustainability” of return<sup>4</sup> - i.e. for consolidating the position of returnees in their home countries in order to deter new irregular migration<sup>5</sup>. By monitoring and evaluating AVR(R) programmes, Member States can learn about the factors that may or may not increase sustainability and use this information to improve their programmes. By following a common methodology for monitoring and evaluation, Member States can produce data which is comparable at EU level and thus which increases wider understanding of good practices in AVR(R). Further, use of a common methodology may better enable Member States to design and implement joint reintegration projects, as requested by the JHA Council also in October 2015.<sup>6</sup>

## 2 General introduction to monitoring and evaluation of AVR(R)

### 2.1 WHY IS MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF AVR(R) PROGRAMMES IMPORTANT?<sup>7</sup>

Effective return policy has in recent years become increasingly important to European governments due to a growing population of third-country nationals residing irregularly in the EU. However, currently a gap exists between the number of persons issued a return decision and those who, as a consequence, leave the EU. With a view to closing this gap, voluntary return, rather than forced return, has become an increasing policy priority with much funding allocated to the development of AVR(R) programmes at EU as well as national level. However, in view of the limited monitoring and evaluation conducted to date on their performance, little is known about their effectiveness.

In a political climate of financial budgetary pressure, demands are increasingly made for good governance, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and delivery of tangible results. Whilst AVR(R) programmes are assigned significant financial resources, the lack of knowledge on their effectiveness is increasingly subject to criticism from both internal as well as external stakeholders.

Public sector organisations, like any other organisations, must demonstrate their performance, achievements and impact. Monitoring and evaluating return and reintegration assistance is therefore of crucial importance to evaluate AVR(R) programmes' impact and *appropriateness*, identifying best practices and addressing any unforeseen obstacles encountered in order to offer more appropriate solutions in making returns more sustainable.

### 2.2 UNDERSTANDING MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation are used in various contexts without precise delimitations and definitions. The box below provides a brief theoretical explanation of what is commonly understood by these concepts, as well as the concept of 'indicator':

*Box 1: What is meant by monitoring and evaluation?*

**Monitoring** aims to inform programme management decisions, and involves carrying out systematic internal data collection and analysis activities to identify and measure gaps between actual and planned performance. For AVR programmes, the monitoring typically undertaken can be classed as one of two types:

- Programme implementation monitoring: this type of monitoring focusses on how activities are being implemented, the types and numbers of outputs of these activities and their costs;
- Beneficiary monitoring: this type of monitoring focuses on outcomes for the returnee (e.g. the extent to which they return, their well-being and the extent of their reintegration on return).

**Evaluation** aims to assess project performance systematically and objectively on the basis of set criteria and indicators and aims to establish findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future programming or improvements to the

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<sup>4</sup> \_COM(2015) 453 final

<sup>5</sup> Consilium Europe Press Release 711/15 'Council conclusions on the future of the return policy'

<sup>6</sup> Consilium Europe Press Release 711/15 - *Ibid*

<sup>7</sup> For more information on why monitoring and evaluation of AVR(R) is necessary, please see: Paasche, E. (2014) 'Why Assisted Return Programmes Must Be Evaluated: Insights from the project 'Possibilities and Realities of Return Migration'' in *Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Policy Brief 08: 2014*

current programmes. It can be conducted at different stages and can be carried out internally or externally to the organisation. Evaluations entail analysis of a range of data, including that gathered through project monitoring.

An **indicator** is a performance measure used for assessing the results and achievements of an intervention or programme.

Monitoring differs from evaluation in that it is typically a continuous or recurring activity throughout the course of the programme and focuses on outputs delivery of actual against planned outputs, whereas evaluation is typically a retrospective review of a range of data at key points in the programme life-cycle, with conclusions about to what extent the aims were reached.

Source: derived from the Public Consultation on the Commission Guidelines for Evaluation, November 2013: [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/docs/20131111\\_guidelines\\_pc\\_part\\_i\\_ii\\_clean.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/docs/20131111_guidelines_pc_part_i_ii_clean.pdf)

### 2.3 SCALE AND NATURE OF AVR(R) MONITORING IN THE EU AND EFTA

All Member States receiving funding for AVR(R) from the EU are obliged to conduct programme monitoring (see definition in Box 1 above). Information collected in the context of the EMN Return Expert Group (REG) indicates that the majority of Member States also conduct beneficiary monitoring in the country of origin. Such beneficiary monitoring is usually performed by the local implementing authority (i.e. IOM or other NGOs) for a period of 3, 6 or 12 months after arrival (12 months being more exceptional).

To date, monitoring appears to have been limited in scope and non-comparative. It has been undertaken, largely, for the purposes of audit – i.e. to verify that budgets are being spent as planned and that target outputs (e.g. number of persons assisted) and immediate outcomes (i.e. number of persons returned) are being reached. Only a few Member States have monitored for other purposes, including to identify longer-term outcomes from beneficiaries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Norway) and to detect problems in implementation and programme efficacy in meeting objectives (Belgium). Many Member States report that the monitoring of returnees constitutes a challenge. For example, returnees cannot always be reached in areas where the local implementing authority's access is limited. The extent to which challenges are experienced further also depends on the specific third country's context. A significant obstacle to monitoring may for example be the security situation in the country of origin (as is the case in e.g. Afghanistan<sup>8</sup>). The resource implications of post-return monitoring of all people returned may also limit the scope of such activity.

### 2.4 SCALE AND NATURE OF AVR(R) EVALUATION IN THE EU

To date, only five (Member) States (Austria, Belgium, Sweden, United Kingdom and Norway) report having independently evaluated their AVR(R) programmes.<sup>9</sup>

#### Objectives of (Member) State evaluations conducted to date

While evaluation objectives have varied between (Member) States, most have included an aim to learn more about the extent to which AVR(R) played a role in influencing the returnee to return and the factors which might encourage / discourage the returnee to stay in the country of origin. Often they have tried to explore the extent to which AVR(R) influences trends in return statistics, (potential) returnee's knowledge and awareness (about return), attitudes (about return, reintegration and re-migration) and behaviour (i.e. whether they do return and/or do re-migrate).

Some of the specific topics these evaluations have addressed include:

- ★ Whether and to what extent the intended results of the project have been achieved (AT, UK);
- ★ The extent to which AVR(R) programmes are operating as intended and, if not, which elements can be improved – i.e. to identify best practices and lessons learned (BE, UK);

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<sup>8</sup> See the EMN Inform on Return and Reintegration to Afghanistan.

<sup>9</sup> Based on information provided in the EMN Ad-Hoc Query on Ad Hoc Query to collect information for the development of the REG Guidelines on Monitoring and Evaluation. This excludes (Member) States who self-evaluate the implementation of AVR(R) programmes funded by the EU Return Fund and now the AMIF in order to comply with final reporting requirements of the Funds.

- ★ The effect of the provision of information on voluntary return (NO);
- ★ Career planning and its contribution to reintegration (NO);
- ★ Rates of participation in AVR(R) programmes and the usefulness of AVR(R) programmes for participants (NO);
- ★ The effectiveness of the Swedish Migration Agency's internal working procedures for AVR(R) and the nationalities that are the most relevant to obtain support (SE);
- ★ The impact of AVR(R) on motivations to return and actual return behaviour (UK);
- ★ Efficiency of the AVR(R) return and application process (UK); and
- ★ Effectiveness of reintegration assistance in promoting 'sustainable returns' (UK).

#### Methods used in (Member) State evaluations conducted to date

Whilst the five Member States discussed above have not followed the same methods for evaluating, most have tended to make use of a mixture of quantitative data (e.g. statistics on return and the participants in AVR(R) programmes) and qualitative data (interviews with implementing partners, return counsellors and participants in AVR(R) programmes). All evaluations have involved some consultation with a sample of AVR(R) participants in their country of return in order to gather information on their experiences of and attitudes towards the return and reintegration process and life after return including expectations around re-migration. Most have involved consultation with other AVR(R) stakeholders (such as delivery partners and diaspora groups) to seek their views. Some have also involved consultation with *potential* AVR(R) participants to gather information about the processes driving their decisions to participate in AVR(R) or not.

AVR(R) evaluations to date have typically focused on the relationship between the AVR(R) process and the outcomes observed. The impact of AVR(R), on trends in return statistics, on the sustainability of return, and on sending and receiving societies, is much more difficult to establish because a complexity of dynamic factors external to AVR (e.g. the situation in the country of return, the situation in the Member State / EU, and the returnees own ambitions) influence these, and so establishing causality or impact is difficult. One Austrian study has, however, sought to test the causal relationship between AVR(R) and any observed changes in attitude or behaviour by looking not only at the situation of beneficiaries of AVR(R) but by comparing this to the situation of non-participants. This is described in Box 2 below.

#### *Box 2 - Evaluating the impact and sustainability of AVR(R) programmes*

In 2015, ICMPD conducted an impact evaluation of Austria's reintegration programme for Kosovars.<sup>10</sup> The aim was to investigate whether there was a causal link between the reintegration support provided and (a) the economic and psychosocial situation of returnees and (b) returnee's attitude towards re-migration. The study assumed at the outset that the economic and psychosocial situation of returnees and the returnee's attitude towards re-migration could be considered indicators of sustainable / non-sustainable return (see section 3.1.3).

To assess causality, data for a group of returnees who had been offered reintegration assistance was compared to that of a "control group" of returnees who had not been offered any reintegration assistance. The study found that a lower proportion of assisted returnees (40%) expressed a desire / intention to re-migrate than non-assisted returnees (50%), suggesting that the AVR(R) programme might have had some influence on the desire / intention to re-migrate. However, the study found that there was little difference between the two groups in terms of other possible indicators of sustainability (e.g. satisfaction with job and income and sense of belonging in the country of return).

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<sup>10</sup> ICMPD (2015) Evaluation of the Medium-Term Effectiveness of the Reintegration Measures of the Projects 'Reintegration in Kosovo - Cooperation with Microcredit Institutions and the Economy' (ReKoKO I - III)

### 3 Guidelines for monitoring AVR(R) programmes

#### Purpose of monitoring

As discussed in section 2.2, monitoring has the purpose of reviewing the performance of an intervention as it is being delivered so that any issues with performance can be identified at an early date. Monitoring also has a second purpose of feeding into and informing audits and evaluations. Therefore it is often useful to define the aspects of a programme that are to be monitored (i.e. measured) in terms of a programmatic framework, such as the intervention logic and/or the evaluation framework. An intervention logic for AVR(R) programmes is provided in section 4.1 of these guidelines and a core evaluation framework is provided in section 5 with an expanded framework provided in Annex 1.

#### Methods for monitoring

Programme monitoring entails the collection of programme-level information on:

- ★ Programme duration and work flow (e.g. key milestones, etc.)
- ★ Budget
- ★ Costs and expenditure (usually per unit – e.g. staff costs, equipment costs, etc.)
- ★ Beneficiary-related outputs (e.g. no. of beneficiaries assisted, no. of flights, no. of return counselling sessions provided, etc.)
- ★ Other outputs (e.g. training of staff, pre- and post- assistance surveys conducted, etc.)

Sometimes information on beneficiary outputs can be aggregated from data collected through beneficiary monitoring.

Beneficiary monitoring combines three different data collection methods:

- ★ Recording of management information (e.g. assistance received (counselling, return assistance, reintegration assistance by type), country of return whether return took place and the dates assistance received, return took place, etc.)
- ★ Interviews conducted as part of the administration of the programme to collect data demographic characteristics, including nationality, family status, etc.
- ★ Beneficiary surveys conducted at different stages of the procedure (before return and at 3, 6, 12 months etc. after return depending on budget and practical possibilities) to collect data on attitudes and expectations.

Beneficiary surveys may also be conducted on an ad-hoc basis to inform evaluations. However, when surveys are conducted systematically on a regular, obligatory basis they form part of monitoring. Annex 4 provides some guidance on how to conduct beneficiary surveys.

#### Data to be captured through monitoring

[Table 2](#) in section 5 lists core data to be collected in Member States. [Tables A.2](#) and [A.3](#) in Annex 2 repeat these and provide further examples of potential indicators that could be used for monitoring purposes. The tables have been developed so as to enable the population and measurement of indicators listed in Column 4 of [Table 3](#) (section 5) and Column 4 of [Table A.1](#) in Annex 1 respectively. Monitoring gathers information, but because data collected is typically restricted through closed questions, the reasons and meaning behind the responses cannot be fully explored. The reasons and meaning behind the findings of monitoring tend to be explored through evaluation– e.g. by asking beneficiaries to explain any patterns in the data or by comparing characteristics of data for AVR(R) beneficiaries with other returnees.

## 4 Guidelines for evaluation

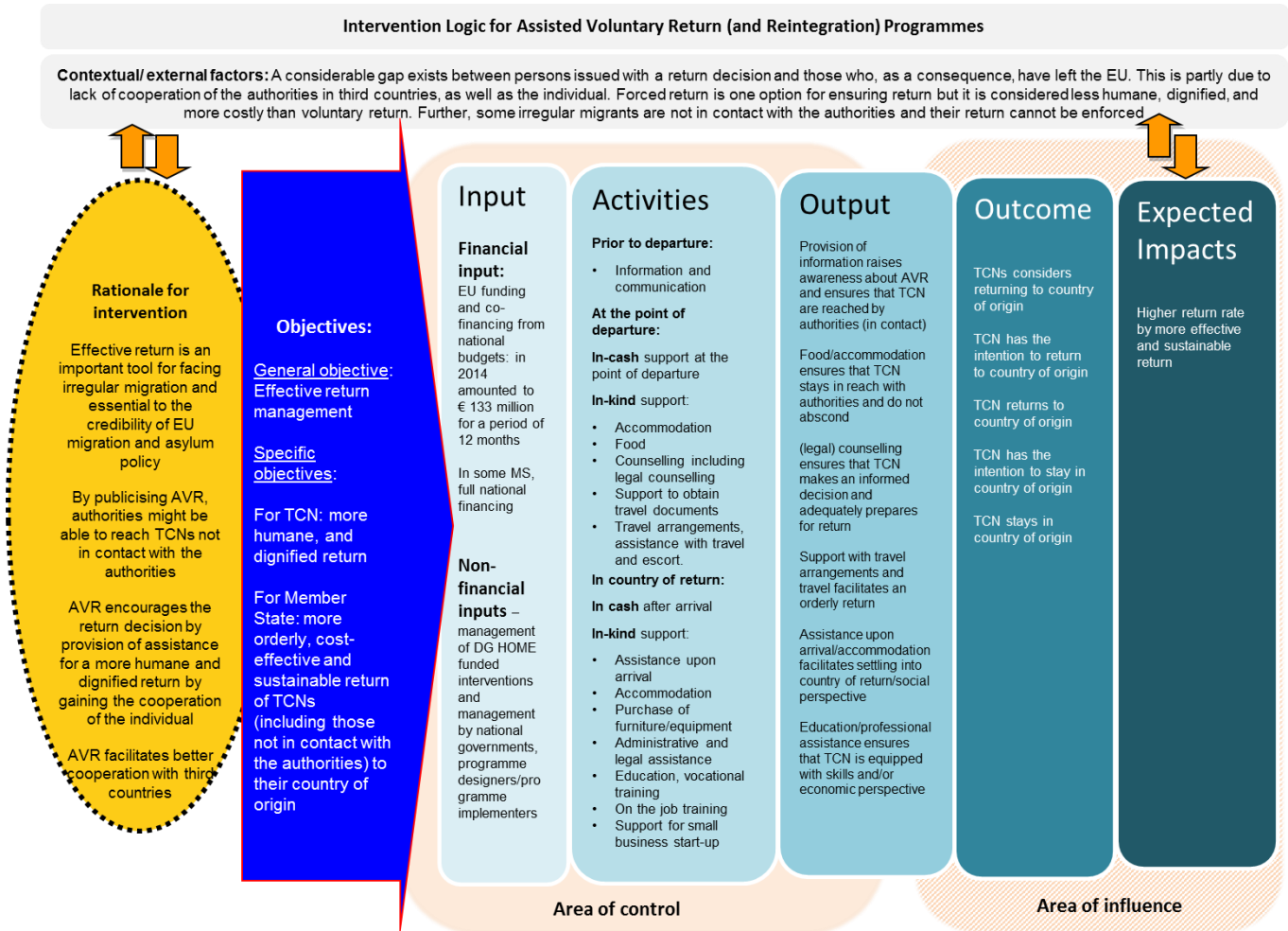
### 4.1 INTERVENTION LOGIC FOR AVR(R) PROGRAMMES

The starting point for all evaluations should be to understand the logic of the intervention to be evaluated. Intervention logics are also useful for project managers or persons planning and conducting monitoring and evaluation activities as they can support the planning and implementation of a programme as well as associated monitoring and evaluation activities, notably by:

- ★ Clarifying logical connections between objectives, activities and results and
- ★ Facilitating the identification of indicators.

Figure 1 below presents a general intervention logic for AVR(R) programmes. The intervention logic provides an overview of the main elements of AVR(R) programmes (its inputs and activities) and shows how these work together to reach the programme’s objectives and intended results (measured in “output”, “outcome” and “impact”).

Figure 1: Intervention logic AVR(R) programmes



Source: the Return Expert Group (REG)

## 4.2 WHAT TO EVALUATE: EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

### Evaluation criteria and when to assess them

As discussed in section 2.1, the EU and its Member States are under increasing pressure to justify AVR(R) programmes by demonstrating their effectiveness in achieving specific objectives and the efficiency with which they can do so. From the perspective of such policymakers, evaluations must crucially assess two criteria:

- ★ Effectiveness: the extent to which planned results were achieved, or are expected to be achieved;
- ★ Efficiency: the extent to which the resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time) were justified, given the changes/effects which have been achieved.

In addition, some evaluations may consider the following criteria. The findings of such assessments are more likely to be of interest to practitioners implementing the programme or to donors wanting to account for their funding.

- ★ Impact: the extent to which changes / results can be attributed to the intervention / programme;
- ★ Sustainability: whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after this funding has been stopped;
- ★ Relevance: the extent to which a programme is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group; and
- ★ Coherence: the extent to which there is consistency between the programme and the wider policy context.<sup>11</sup>

### Evaluation questions and sub-questions

This section outlines some common questions for the evaluation of AVR(R) programmes in the EU. As discussed above, evaluations of AVR(R) programmes are likely to focus mainly on assessing the effectiveness of the programme in achieving its objectives. AVR(R) programmes often have the following overall objectives:

- ★ To inform eligible third-country nationals about voluntary return options available to them;
- ★ To encourage third-country nationals to return voluntarily to destination countries;
- ★ To help returnees to settle and 'build a life' (reintegrate) in their country of return, so that they do not re-migrate irregularly (so-called 'sustainable return').

An evaluation of effectiveness will therefore assess the extent to which these objectives have been achieved. The main questions which could form the basis of AVR(R) evaluations are outlined below:

- ★ 1. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in reaching all potential TCNs eligible to participate in AVR(R) programmes?
- ★ 2. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in returning TCNs?
- ★ 3. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in reintegrating TCNs into their countries of return?
- ★ 4. Do AVR(R) programmes address the factors that would prevent TCNs from returning voluntarily?
- ★ 5. What are the costs of AVR(R) programmes in comparison with the results they produce?

These 'main questions' are elaborated into core sub-questions and indicators in Table 3 in section 5. The core indicators have been selected on the basis of their importance for assessing the evaluation criteria and the feasibility of collecting them. Additional sub-questions and indicators which Member States may also choose to investigate / measure are provided in A.1 in Annex 1.

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<sup>11</sup> Based on the EU's evaluation guidelines, available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat\\_general/evaluation/docs/20131111\\_guidelines\\_pc\\_part\\_i\\_ii\\_clean.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/evaluation/docs/20131111_guidelines_pc_part_i_ii_clean.pdf) and OECD / DAC criteria available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>



Additional evaluation questions may include:

- ★ 6. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in encouraging 'sustainable return'?
- ★ 7. Do AVR(R) programmes herald any unintended consequences (e.g. increased re-migration, different use of reintegration grants other than those intended, participation in more than one programme, corruption, etc.)?
- ★ 8. Are AVR(R) programmes cost-efficient in comparison to forced return?
- ★ 9. Are AVR(R) programmes targeting the most relevant beneficiaries (or are they targeting those who would have returned anyway without assistance)?
- ★ 10. Do AVR(R) programmes address the factors that are really preventing voluntary return (i.e. is AVR(R) relevant to the needs they set out to address)?
- ★ 11. Are AVR(R) programmes coherent with EU policy?

These questions have not been included as core either because it would be challenging to collect the data necessary to respond to the accurately (e.g. Q7) or because they are not considered important by all Member States (e.g. Q8, Q9, Q11). Specifically, for question 11, the question is not so important, because it is assumed that those programmes funded by the EU will be coherent with EU policy. For question 10, the data on forced returns might be challenging to collect due to its sensitive nature or due to the programme being ran by different actors. Further, specific methods would have to be developed to ensure that data on the unit costs of forced return (e.g. costs of food, accommodation, the return flight etc.) were comparable with AVR(R) unit costs.

Question 6 is conceptually and practically challenging to answer.

There is currently no common – universally agreed – definition for the concept of 'sustainable return'.<sup>12</sup> Data gathered through an EMN Ad Hoc Query on AVR(R) evaluation and monitoring confirms that most Member States do not define 'sustainable return'. The European Commission, following the publication of the EU Action Plan on Return,<sup>13</sup> considers sustainable return to be that which is supportive of the EU's policy on irregular migration by discouraging irregular remigration. A suggested definition is outlined in Box 3 below.

*Box 3: Suggested definition the concept of 'sustainable return'*

Sustainable return is return which **deters new irregular migration of the returnee** and – where possible – of other third-country nationals in the Country of Return **by consolidating the position of returnees in their home countries** and – where possible – enabling the returnee to consolidate the position of other people in his / her community or country of return.

This concept is based on the assumption that AVR(R) programmes can influence individuals' (re-)migration decision. Whilst it is likely that they do have some degree of influence, the scale and scope of this influence is highly challenging to measure since – as discussed in section 2.4, it is highly challenging to measure causation and impact in situations where multiple other factors (the situation in the country of return, the migrant's ambitions) affect outcomes.

Further, to measure 'sustainability' in terms of the future / ongoing migration patterns of AVR(R) beneficiaries would require in-depth analysis. Self-reported data could be collected through interviews (on intentions to re-migrate), but actual data on migration behaviour would be more reliable, yet this would require the tracking of individual's migration patterns, which would be unethical and highly challenging (since information is not always stored for more than a few years and since individual's change their personal details and – if re-migrating irregularly – travel with different details).

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<sup>12</sup> See also: ICMPD (2015) Evaluation of the Medium-Term Effectiveness of the Reintegration Measures of the Projects 'Reintegration in Kosovo – Cooperation with Microcredit Institutions and the Economy' (ReKoKO I – III)

<sup>13</sup> COM(2015) 453 final, published 09 September

### 4.3 METHOD FOR EVALUATION

The first stage in designing an evaluation is to frame the evaluation in terms of its objectives, scope, evaluation questions and subsequent methodology. Table 3 in section 5 sets out a core evaluation framework for AVR(R) evaluations. An expanded framework is set out in Table A.1 in Annex 1 AVR(R). Both frameworks indicate main evaluation questions, sub-questions, proposed indicators, data and sources to be used to address the evaluation questions. The table can be adapted dependent on the objectives of the evaluation and used to develop research tools, structure the evaluation report and review the evaluation's progress. One of the main data sources for evaluation should be beneficiary monitoring. Data collected through monitoring can then be investigated further through interviews in the field.

Evaluations draw on information from multiple sources. They 'triangulate' the following types of information to build up an overall picture and to validate the findings of one method against the other. The different types of data, examples of what this data might include, and possible sources of such data are outlined in the table below.

Table 1 – Methods for evaluation

Type of data	Example of data	Possible source
Factual quantitative information	No. returnees overall, no. in the target population, participants in the programme, no. persons receiving return counselling	Statistics prepared regularly by migration authorities, as well as statistics on AVR(R) target population and beneficiaries prepared programme implementing organisations.
Factual qualitative information	Descriptions of AVR(R) programme regulations, procedures and any programme design documents which describe the intervention logic.	Programme documentation
Findings from previous studies	Evidence of good practices or the links between AVR(R) and re-migration	Previous studies at both national and EU level.
Cost information	Costs per returnee, overall programme budget, costs per unit (staff, travel, support, etc.)	Programme documentation (on budget allocation, etc.) and programme monitoring on expenditure.
Perspectives of implementing partners	Opinion on the effectiveness / quality / appropriateness of the programme	Interviews (conducted for of the evaluation). Programme documentation – e.g. minutes of meetings, emails, etc.
Perspectives of AVR(R) beneficiaries / returnees	Opinions on their experience of the programme, the likelihood that they will re-migrate	Beneficiary monitoring (includes regular / frequent surveys of beneficiaries and other members of the target population) and/or surveys conducted for of the evaluation. In-depth interviews (conducted for the evaluation).
Perspectives of AVR(R) service providers and other stakeholders (e.g. migration / return authorities)	Opinions on the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, etc. of the programme(s)	In-depth interviews (conducted for the evaluation).

Because evaluations utilise multiple sources of information they require a mixture of methods for data collection and analysis. Typically, a 'mixed methods' evaluation will involve the quantitative analysis of statistics based on administrative registrations related to the programmes (.e. monitoring data), a review of programme documentation and management information, a review of literature relevant to the evaluated phenomena and consultation (surveys, interviews, focus groups) with key stakeholders. Additionally, it might include direct observation (e.g. sitting in on return counselling sessions, visits to the countries of return, etc.).

## 5 Core monitoring data, evaluation questions and performance indicators to be collected for a common cross-EU approach to AVR(R) monitoring and evaluation

This section sets out the **core evaluation questions** and **performance indicators** for the evaluation of AVR(R) programmes. Importantly the section also includes a list of the **core monitoring data** that should be collected in order to enable the analysis of indicators.

The purpose of identifying common core evaluation questions and indicators is to help Member States to develop comparable evaluative data on AVR(R) programmes. As such, the identification of core questions and indicators, which can be answered / populated using a realistic and cost-effective methodology, is expected to lead to more systematic monitoring and evaluation activities across Member States. The use of similar methodologies will also increase comparability of the results of monitoring and evaluation across Member States. This will ultimately inform the design of more effective and efficient AVR(R) programmes in the EU.

The section consists of two tables:

- ★ Table 2 (below) lists the **core data** to be captured through **monitoring** in Member States. They should be collected according to common specifications to enable the reasonable comparison<sup>14</sup> of statistics and other information across Member States;
- ★ Table 3 sets out the **core evaluation questions** and **indicators** for **evaluation** enabling a basic analysis of effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of AVR(R) programmes in the EU.

An expanded evaluation framework, including those questions not considered 'core' (see section 4.2) is outlined in Table A.1 of Annex 1. Similarly, a full list of monitoring data that could be collected (including core and non-core data) is provided in Annex 2.

### Collecting comparable data: moving towards a common cross-EU approach to AVR(R) monitoring and evaluation

By collecting similar information on AVR(R) using the method proposed in these guidelines, Member States should be better able to compare the performance of their national programmes. Evaluative analysis of the monitoring information, triangulated with findings from primary research and analysis of information from secondary sources and other background (context) information could help explain differences in performance between MS. This in turn will support the identification and exchange of good practices and support cross-EU learning.

The list of core indicators provide a first step towards collecting common and comparable information. However, for Member States to produce reasonably comparable information they would need to also ensure that they have the same understanding of the concepts they are monitoring (e.g. "return counselling", "return assistance") or that they carefully define what these mean at national level and include this in the meta-data. Similarly, when collecting information on costs, Member States would need to make clear the methodology applied to calculate the costs – e.g. (for cost per beneficiary) whether this is based on a flat rate service fee per returnee, flat rate service fee per case or calculating from a lump sum contract. This information, again, would need to be included in metadata.

To ensure reasonable comparability Member States would also - ideally - need to follow the same or similar methods for data collection, surveying beneficiaries at the same points in the procedures (e.g. immediately after their application has been registered, when it has been accepted, immediately after the return has been implemented, after 3 months following the implementation, after 6 months, etc.) with a registration of dates for all events and collecting information in a similar way (e.g. using the relevant administrative registrations as well as through face to face interviews with returnees and other relevant actors or all through online systems). The timing of data collection with interviews and the

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<sup>14</sup> Given the differences in national legislations and administrative procedures it is meaningless to expect statistics and other information that is more than 'reasonably comparable'.

mode can affect the response received. Such harmonisation of methodology will be even more challenging than encouraging Member States to register and collect similar information and it is a goal for future years.

In the meantime, the EMN can help improve the comparability of data collected not only by promoting the use of this core framework for monitoring and evaluation, but also by clearly defining concepts linked to AVR(R) in the EMN Glossary. Currently the following terms which might be usefully defined in the Glossary are missing from the current version:<sup>15</sup>

- ★ Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme
- ★ Return counselling
- ★ Return assistance
- ★ Reintegration assistance

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<sup>15</sup> Though return assistance and reintegration assistance have been described in the following REG documents: EMN Inform on Incentives to return to a third-country and support provided to migrants for their reintegration; EMN Return Experts Group Directory; the EMN REG Informs on return and reintegration focused on the following regions (so far produced): Afghanistan and Pakistan; Western Africa; Western Balkans.

Table 2 – Tool for the collection of core data for monitoring

Data to be monitored	Details	Notes	Method for data collection
<b>Basic data on TCNs using AVR(R) services (including return counselling, return assistance and reintegration assistance)</b>			
ID number <sup>16</sup>		Assigned on applying for AVR (if not assigned when applying for protection)	Management information.
Date of registration with AVR(R) providers Date of application for AVR(R)		Note that, in some cases return counselling assistance may be provided anonymously, in which case TCNs will not be registered until they begin the process of return	Management information
Name / ID number of AVR(R) programme on which registered		Information on that programme (e.g. eligibility criteria and assistance available) to be captured through the programme monitoring	Management information
Number of years spent in Member State on date of application to participate in the AVR(R) programme		The purpose of this information is to support analysis of whether there is a correlation between certain groupings of returnee and return attitudes / behaviour.	Management information or interview with AVR(R) applicant on application
Migration status of the (potential) returnee at time of application	asylum applicant / failed asylum applicant / general (non asylum) irregular migrant / refugee/ other	Further, some AVR programmes are tailored specifically to certain categories of vulnerable TCN or nationalities, so it is important to have data aggregated for these so as to assess the effects of such programmes.	Service provider's own assessment using existing information or based on info collected in interview
Migration status of the returnee at time of return			
Country of citizenship/ nationality			
(Planned) country of return			
Date of birth			
Family status	Single (no children or partner) / returning with partner / partner remaining in MS / returning with dependent children/ dependent child	This information is likely to be largely self-reported data provided by applicants to the service provider delivering the AVR(R) programme so some information (e.g. on migration status) may differ from data held by national authorities. To the extent possible the source of the information (self-reported or legal migration data) should be specified.  The applicant may not be willing to share some personal (identifying) data such as date of birth. This is normally needed for identification purposes.	
Considered vulnerable	Yes / No		Management information or service provider's own assessment using existing
If 'yes' to question above, recognised victim of human trafficking	Yes / No		

<sup>16</sup> In order to maintain data protection, data will be anonymised.

Data to be monitored	Details	Notes	Method for data collection
If 'yes' to question above, recognised as an UAM?	Yes / No		information or based on info collected in interview
If 'yes' to question above, other type of vulnerable person?	Yes / No		
<b>Data related to application</b>			
Application accepted	Yes / No	With date of decision	Management information
If not accepted, reason for non-return	Non-eligibility / fraudulent application / etc.	It may not be possible to disclose this information. The categories to be included may be specific to individual eligibility criteria for AVR(R) in each MS. Therefore these may be subject to change.	Management information
<b>Data on return counselling</b>			
Return counselling provided?	Yes / no	Information about the return counselling provided (including dates to determine how long after application and before return it was provided) might be affect the beneficiary's overall experience of AVR(R).	Management information
Date counselling first provided			Management information
Date counselling last provided			Management information
No. of counselling sessions			Management information
Actor providing the counselling	<i>[to be selected from an agreed list]</i>		Management information
<b>Data related to the return</b>			
Returned through the AVR(R) programme?	Yes / no		Management information
Date of return			Management information
If not returned' within the time frame planned, reason for non-return	lost contact – i.e. participant absconds / individual's unwillingness to return / medical issue meaning return not possible / applicant able to stay legally in MS / lack of documents / problems in securing accommodation in a third country / etc.	The categories to be included may differ between MS. It might be useful to first collect open data here with a view to defining closed categories at a later stage.	Management information / service provider's assessment
Return assistance provided?	Yes / No		Management information
Type of assistance provided	-The cost of the ticket was met by the AVR programme - The cost of travel documents was met by the AVR programme - Medical support was provided prior to departure - Accommodation was provided prior to return - Meals were arrange for the returnee prior to return - Cash was given to the returnee prior to return.	These would be provided as different options to each of which the service provider would mark yes / no since in some cases a single individual might have received more than one type of assistance	Management information
Beneficiary perceptions on extent to which the promise of (and the content of) return assistance influenced the decision to return	The factor that most influenced return / One of the factors that most influenced return / A factor which partly influenced return / Did not influence decision		Beneficiary survey conducted prior to return <i>This information could additionally be collected post-return if post-return monitoring is conducted to see if the response changes.</i>

Data to be monitored	Details	Notes	Method for data collection
<b>Data on the reintegration assistance provided</b>			
Dates reintegration first accessed		The purpose of collecting this data is to be able to assess timeframes between return and access to assistance so as to assess efficiency	Management information
Date reintegration assistance last accessed			Management information
Reintegration path specifically tailored to the individual?	Yes / No		Management information
Type of reintegration assistance provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medical support in CoR</li> <li>- Accommodation</li> <li>- Primary goods</li> <li>- Cash</li> <li>- Training</li> <li>- Education support</li> <li>- Job search support</li> <li>- Family tracing</li> <li>- Small business set up</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul>	These would be provided as different options to each of which the service provider would mark yes / no since in some cases a single individual might have received more than one type of assistance	Management information
Reintegration activity fully completed?	Yes / No		Management information
Was the assistance received the same as expected	Yes / No If the answer is no, request reason why	This is a complex question and may be more appropriate for an evaluation where the matter can be explored with a subset of returnees in a qualitative manner.	Beneficiary survey conducted post-return
For <u>cash assistance</u> , amount of cash received (where relevant)		With dates	Management information
For <u>in kind assistance</u> , value of the reintegration assistance provided		With dates	Management information
Reintegration assistance perceived to have improved your situation?	Yes / No If possible, provide further explanation for answers	This is a complex question and may be more appropriate for an evaluation where the matter can be explored with a subset of returnees in a qualitative manner.	Beneficiary survey conducted post-return
Beneficiary perceptions on extent to which the reintegration assistance influenced the decision to return	The factor that most influenced return / One of the factors that most influenced return / A factor which partly influenced return / Did not influence decision		Beneficiary survey conducted post-return
<b>Programme-level data on costs</b>			
Cost per unit (here unit = staff member): staff costs (MS offices)		This list is non-exhaustive and unit costs will be – to some – extent dependent on the content of the programme. Units would also need to be defined commonly. Member States must ensure that they track and record the methods used to calculate the costs as metadata	Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: staff costs (offices in country(s) of return)			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: office / overhead costs (MS offices)			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: office / overhead costs (offices in country(s) of return)			Programme monitoring

Data to be monitored	Details	Notes	Method for data collection
Cost per unit: office equipment (MS offices)			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: office equipment (offices in country(s) of return)			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: communications and dissemination (MS offices)			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: communications and dissemination (offices in country(s) of return)			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: overall cost of accommodation for (potential) returnees pre-departure			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: overall cost of food for (potential) returnees pre-departure			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: overall cost of travel for (potential) returnees pre-departure			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: overall cost of travel documents			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: overall cost of flight tickets			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: subsistence during travel			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: overall cost of accommodation for (potential) returnees post-arrival			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: overall cost of food for (potential) returnees post-arrival			Programme monitoring
Cost per unit: overall cost of travel for (potential) returnees post-arrival			Programme monitoring



Table 3 – Core evaluation questions and indicators for evaluating and monitoring AVR(R) programmes

Evaluation criteria	Main evaluation question	Sub-questions	Indicators	Data to be collected	Sources of information / methods <sup>17</sup>
Effectiveness	1. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in reaching potential TCNs eligible to participate in AVR(R) programmes?	What is the number of AVR(R) participants compared to the number of TCNs issued a return decision? <sup>18</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) applications as a proportion of the total number of TCNs issued a return decision</li> <li>- AVR(R) returns as a proportion of all returns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) applications</li> <li>- Return decisions issued</li> <li>- Overall returns</li> </ul> Disaggregated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Date of registration with AVR(R) providers</li> <li>- Number of years spent in Member State on date of application to participate in the AVR(R) programme</li> <li>- Migration status</li> <li>- (Planned) country of return</li> <li>- Age category</li> <li>- Vulnerability category</li> <li>- Family status</li> <li>- Employment status in Member State</li> </ul> Evaluation might also gather qualitative information about sources of information and how it accessed.	<b>National migration statistics</b> <b>Beneficiary monitoring (registration data)</b>  <b>In-depth qualitative information to be collected through evaluation</b>
		Are some groups of TCN more likely to access / learn about AVR(R) programmes than others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proportion of AVR(R) applicants / returnees of X nationality / age / migration status etc. as compared to overall returns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Date of registration with AVR(R) providers</li> <li>- Number of years spent in Member State on date of application to participate in the AVR(R) programme</li> <li>- Migration status</li> <li>- (Planned) country of return</li> <li>- Age category</li> <li>- Vulnerability category</li> <li>- Family status</li> <li>- Employment status in Member State</li> </ul> Evaluation might also gather qualitative information about sources of information and how it accessed.	<b>In-depth qualitative information to be collected through evaluation</b>
		What is the proportion of TCNs who participate in return counselling who actually apply for AVR(R)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proportion of persons benefitting from return counselling who go on to apply for AVR(R)</li> </ul>	Whether applied for AVR(R) or not (Yes / No) for every beneficiary of return counselling.	Beneficiary monitoring (tracking of beneficiary outcomes)
	2. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in returning TCNs?	What is the proportion of eligible TCNs who apply for AVR(R) who actually return through AVR(R)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proportion of TCNs applying for AVR(R) who go on to return</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whether returned through AVR(R) or not (Yes / No) for every applicant of AVR(R).</li> </ul>	<b>In-depth qualitative information to be collected through evaluation</b>
		What are the characteristics of those returning through AVR(R) programmes and those who do not return?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comparison of characteristics (including return counselling and other support received) of AVR(R) participants who return vs those who do not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) participants who return</li> <li>- AVR(R) participants who do not return</li> </ul> Disaggregated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Date of registration with AVR(R) providers</li> <li>- Number of years spent in Member State on date of application to participate in the AVR(R) programme</li> <li>- Migration status</li> <li>- (Planned) country of return</li> <li>- Age category</li> <li>- Vulnerability category</li> <li>- Family status</li> <li>- Employment status in Member State</li> <li>- Whether received return counselling (yes / no)</li> <li>- Category of return assistance offered</li> <li>- Category of reintegration assistance offered</li> </ul>	Beneficiary monitoring (registration data)  Beneficiary monitoring (tracking of assistance provided)

<sup>17</sup> Sources / methods listed in **bold** are those data-collection methods which would be implemented additional to the monitoring of AVR(R) programmes.

<sup>18</sup> This sub-question assumes that the number of migrants ordered to leave / issued a return decision is a proxy for the (unknown) baseline number of AVR eligible migrants.

		For those who participate in AVR(R), what are the factors that they report finally encouraged/influenced them to take up voluntary return?	- Reasons for (planned) return per beneficiary	- Reason for returning, per beneficiary Through an evaluation, information on the reasons for return might be discussed in-depth with both those who returned through or who plan to return through AVR(R) and those who returned without or who plan to return without AVR(R) assistance.	Beneficiary survey conducted prior to return  <b>In-depth qualitative information to be collected through evaluation</b>
	3. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in reintegrating TCNs into their countries of return?	Is the assistance delivered as expected, i.e. does it meet the needs of beneficiaries?	- No of beneficiaries who consider that the assistance meets their needs  - No of beneficiaries who received the AVR(R) they expected  Disaggregated by type of assistance provided and country of return	- Type of assistance provided - country of return - Assistance meets needs (Yes / No) per beneficiary - Assistance as expected (Yes / No) per beneficiary  Through an evaluation, the needs of (potential) returnees and the extent to which the programmes met these – as well as the rationale for their responses to the survey - might be discussed in-depth.	Beneficiary survey conducted post-return /monitoring post-return  <b>In-depth qualitative information to be collected through evaluation</b>
		Are beneficiaries satisfied with their level of reintegration?	- Existence of reintegration challenges  - No of beneficiaries who regret returning to country of return  - No of beneficiaries who consider reintegration assistance improved their situation in the country of return  Disaggregated by type of assistance provided and country of return  Number of beneficiaries who expect to have re-migrated within x years	- Type of assistance provided - country of return - Reintegration challenges per type of challenge, per beneficiary - Regrets returning to country of return (Yes / No) per beneficiary - Reintegration assistance improved assistance (Yes / No) per beneficiary  Qualitative information – collected through evaluation - could be useful in explaining the meaning behind these quantitative indicators.	Beneficiary survey conducted post-return In-depth qualitative information to be collected through evaluation
Relevance	4. Do AVR(R) programmes address the factors that would prevent TCNs from returning voluntarily?	What factors affect TCNs willingness to return voluntarily?	-Factors affecting TCN's willingness to return voluntarily	- Stakeholder perspectives on the factors affecting TCN's willingness to return voluntarily (e.g. family-related issues, security situation in country of return, economic perspectives, existence of social network, etc.)	<b>Literature review of previous studies and interviews with AVR(R) beneficiaries</b>
		Do AVR(R) programmes address these factors?	- Comparison of the needs of beneficiaries and target beneficiaries and the intervention logic of the programme	- Stakeholder perspectives on the factors affecting TCN's willingness to return voluntarily - Information on the objectives, actions and expected results (i.e. the intervention logic) of the programme	<b>Analysis of programme documentation and interviews with AVR(R) beneficiaries</b>

Efficiency	5. What are the costs of AVR(R) programmes in comparison with the results they produce?	What are the costs of AVR(R) programmes? Which aspects (e.g. staff costs, pre-return assistance, return assistance, reintegration assistance, etc. are most costly?	- Comparison of unit costs	<i>Data on costs / expenditure</i> - Total cost of AVR(R) programme(s) - Costs per unit data <i>Programme metadata</i> - Targets for no. persons returned (if existing) - Targets for no. persons provided reintegration assistance (if existing)	Programme monitoring for AVR(R) programmes  <b>AVR(R) programme metadata</b>
		Is there any evidence of underspend / overspend? If so, what are the reasons for this? Could this have been avoided	- Comparison of target budget with actual expenditure - Reasons for overspend / overspend	<i>Data on costs / expenditure</i> - Total cost of AVR(R) programme(s) - Costs per unit data <i>Programme metadata</i> - Targets for expenditure / budget  Through an evaluation, the reasons for underspend / overspend can be discussed in-depth.	Programme monitoring for AVR(R) programmes  <b>Interviews with programme managers and other staff</b>
		What are the costs of AVR(R) programmes in comparison with the results they produce?	- Comparison of the overall cost (a) per AVR(R) programme, (b) per country of return and (c) per returnee of AVR(R) with the benefits per programme, per country of return and per returnees	<i>Data on AVR(R) costs</i> - Total cost of AVR(R) programme(s) <i>Data on AVR(R) outputs / outcomes</i> - No. of persons receiving return counselling - No. of returnees returned through AVR(R) - No. of persons receiving reintegration assistance	Programme monitoring for AVR(R) programmes

## Annex 1 Proposed (overall) Framework for AVR(R) evaluations

Table A.1: Core and additional evaluation questions, sub-questions and indicators

\*\* core evaluation questions and indicators are in bold

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible sources data
Effectiveness / impact	<b>1. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in reaching all potential TCNs eligible to participate in AVR(R) programmes?</b>	<b>1a. What is the number of AVR(R) applicants compared to the number of TCNs issued a return decision?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) applications as a proportion of the total number of TCNs issued a return decision</li> <li>- AVR(R) returns as a proportion of overall returns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) applications</li> <li>- Return decisions issued</li> <li>- Overall returns</li> </ul>	Data to be disaggregated by age, nationality, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eurostat</li> <li>- National migration statistics</li> <li>- Beneficiary monitoring (registration data)</li> </ul>
		<b>1b. What are the characteristics of those applying for AVR(R) programmes? (Are there any patterns? Are some groups more likely to apply for AVR(R) programmes than others?)</b>	<b>Comparison of the characteristics of AVR(R) applicants and returnees in general</b>	<b>Data on:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) applications</li> <li>- Overall returns</li> </ul> <b>disaggregated by characteristics</b>	Characteristics include migration status, country of return, age, whether return counselling was received, etc. (see Table 2)	
		1c. What is the proportion of TCNs who learn about the programme who apply for AVR(R)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) applications as a proportion of number of TCNs reached through information activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) applications</li> <li>- No. of leaflets distributed / unique visits to AVR(R) website / calls to helpline / visits to drop-in clinics / return counselling received / etc.</li> </ul>	The exact no. of TCNs reached through communications cannot be quantified.	Programme monitoring
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Applicant reporting on the channel through which they learned about AVR(R).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Method of finding out about AVR(R) per AVR(R) applicant</li> </ul>		Beneficiary survey conducted prior to return / beneficiary monitoring

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources
		1d. What is the proportion of TCNs who participate in return counselling who apply for AVR(R)?	Proportion of persons benefitting from return counselling who go on to apply for AVR(R)	- Whether applied for AVR(R) or not (Yes / No) for every beneficiary of return counselling	This information might be challenging to collect, as many service providers provide counselling anonymously, meaning they cannot trace whether it is the same person who applies	Beneficiary monitoring (tracking of beneficiary outcomes)
		1e. What are beneficiary views on communication and information activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No. of returnees who were satisfied with communication outputs (clarity / accessibility / etc.)</li> <li>- No. of returnees who were satisfied with return counselling</li> <li>- etc.</li> </ul>	- Level of satisfaction with communication outputs, return counselling, etc. per beneficiary of AVR(R)		Beneficiary survey conducted prior to return / beneficiary monitoring
Effectiveness / impact	<b>2. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in returning TCNs?</b>	<b>2a. What is the proportion of eligible TCNs who apply for AVR(R) who actually return through AVR(R)?</b>	<b>- Proportion of TCNs applying for AVR(R) who go on to apply for it</b>	<b>- Whether returned through AVR(R) or not (Yes / No) for every applicant.</b>		Beneficiary monitoring (tracking of beneficiary outcomes)
		<b>2b. What are the characteristics of those returning through AVR(R) programmes and those who do not return? (Are there any patterns? Are some groups more likely to successfully return through AVR(R) than others among all eligible, and among those who initially participate? Are some forms of</b>	<b>Comparison of characteristics (including return counselling and other support received) of AVR(R) participants who return vs those who do not</b>	<b>Data on:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) applicants who return</li> <li>- AVR(R) applicants who do not return</li> </ul> <b>disaggregated by characteristics</b>	Characteristics include migration status, country of return, age, etc. (see Table 2)	- Beneficiary monitoring

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources
		<b>assistance more likely to lead to successful return?)</b>				
		<b>2c. For those who participate in AVR(R), what are the factors that they report finally encouraged / influenced them to take up voluntary return?</b>	<b>Reasons for return per beneficiary</b>	<b>- Reason for returning, per beneficiary</b>	It is likely that multiple factors will drive return, so beneficiary should be asked either to provide more than one response or to rate the reason in order of importance.	- Beneficiary survey conducted prior to return / beneficiary monitoring
		2d. What are the factors that prevent the return of those who apply for voluntary return / initially participate in AVR(R)?	- Non-successful AVR(R) applications by reason for non-eligibility - Non-successful AVR(R) returns by reason for non-return	- Reason for non-acceptance for every non-successful applicant - Reason for non-return for every AVR(R) participant who does not return.	It is likely that multiple factors will drive return, so beneficiary should be asked either to provide more than one response or to rate the reason in order of importance.	Beneficiary monitoring (tracking of applicant outcomes) Beneficiary monitoring (tracking of beneficiary outcomes)
		2e. What are the factors that prevent eligible TCNs from applying for AVR(R) support?	- Eligible TCNs not applying for AVR(R) by reason for non-application	- Reason for non-application for every non-applying TCN consulted	It will be challenging to identify a representative pool of TCNs who have not applied in order to draw representative / useful information	Survey of TCNs TCN consultation (targeting groups known to have not applied – e.g. those who attend information sessions but do not later apply).
effectiveness / impact	<b>3. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in</b>	3a. What type of reintegration assistance was received and how is it being used by the beneficiary?	- No. of beneficiaries by type of assistance	- Assistance received per beneficiary - Use of cash / training / etc. per beneficiary		Beneficiary survey conducted post-return

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources
	<b>reintegrating TCNs into their countries of return?</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Application of assistance by assistance type</li> <li>- % of beneficiaries who complete the reintegration activity within the period of eligibility / within the period defined in the reintegration plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completion of reintegration activity (Yes / No) by type of beneficiary</li> </ul>		Programme registrations
		<b>3b. Is the assistance delivered as expected / to meet needs?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>No. of beneficiaries who consider that the assistance meets their needs</b></li> <li>- <b>No. of beneficiaries who received the AVR(R) they expected</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Assistance meets needs (Yes / No) per beneficiary</b></li> <li>- <b>Assistance as expected (Yes / No) per beneficiary</b></li> </ul>		Beneficiary survey conducted post-return
		3c. What is the AVR(R) beneficiaries' living situation in the country of return on returning comparative to when they left it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accommodation / employment / social network status before and after AVR(R) assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accommodation / employment / social network status before AVR(R) assistance</li> <li>- Accommodation / employment / social network status after AVR(R) assistance</li> </ul>	Data should ideally be monitored at different intervals of time (e.g. 6, 12, 24 months). Indicators of 'reintegration' (in	Beneficiary survey conducted post-return (once indicators of reintegration are defined)
		3d. What are the factors that prevent the reintegration of those who return through AVR(R)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No. of AVR(R) beneficiaries still not in own accommodation / earning steady income / etc. (</li> <li>- Beneficiary perceptions on the reasons for non-integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reason for non-acceptance for every non-successful applicant</li> <li>- Reason for non-return for every AVR(R) participant who does not return.</li> </ul>	steady income, children in school, living in own accommodation, etc.) is culturally and individually variable. Indicators are therefore to be defined for each programme. Variables and their value sets should correspond to those	+ In-depth beneficiary interviews

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible sources data
					used for official statistics if available Further, 'reintegration' is a subjective concept, so it will be necessary to explore this through interviews with beneficiaries.	
		<b>3e. Are beneficiaries satisfied with their level of reintegration?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existence of reintegration challenges</li> <li>- No. of beneficiaries who regret returning to country of return</li> <li>- No. of beneficiaries who consider reintegration assistance improved their situation in the country of return</li> <li>- Number of beneficiaries who expect to have re-migrated within x years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reintegration challenges per type of challenge, per beneficiary</li> <li>- Regrets returning to country of return (Yes / No) per beneficiary</li> <li>- Reintegration assistance improved assistance (Yes / No) per beneficiary</li> </ul>		Beneficiary survey conducted post-return



Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources
Effectiveness / impact	6. Are AVR(R) programmes effective in encouraging 'sustainable return'?	6a. Do those participating in AVR(R) re-migrate irregularly to the EU/EFTA or other 'safe' countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No. beneficiaries leaving country of return (by country of migration destination) to (re-) migrate irregularly</li> <li>- No. of beneficiaries who plan to (re-) migrate irregularly (by country of migration destination)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) beneficiaries categorised by whether they have left country of destination (Yes / No) after 3 / 6 / 12 / 24/ etc. months</li> <li>- AVR(R) beneficiaries categorised by whether they plan to leave country of destination (Yes / No) after 3 / 6 / 12 / 24/ etc. months</li> </ul>	Time references are needed	AVR(R) management information Beneficiary survey conducted post-return
		6b. What are the characteristics of those who re-migrate / have plans to re-migrate? (Are there any patterns? Are some groups more likely to successfully re-migrate than others?)	Comparison of the characteristics of AVR(R) returnees who re-migrate / have plans to re-migrate AVR(R) compared to those who do not re-migrate / have plans to re-migrate.	Data on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) beneficiaries who (have plans to) re-migrate</li> <li>- AVR(R) beneficiaries who do not (have plans to) re-migrate</li> </ul> disaggregated by characteristics	Characteristics include situation in country of return, country of return, age, attitude towards reintegration, etc. (see Table 2)	- Beneficiary survey conducted post-return

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources	
		6c. For those re-migrating, what are the factors (push and pull) that they report encouraged / influenced them to re-migrate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No. of beneficiaries re-migrating / with plans to re-migrate by country</li> <li>- Situation in country of return (government policy towards AVR(R) and returnees / labour market / political and economic situations in the country of return / etc.)</li> <li>- Given / reported reasons for return</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AVR(R) beneficiaries who (have plans to) re-migrate by country of return</li> <li>- AVR(R) beneficiaries who (have plans to) re-migrate by reason for re-migration</li> <li>- Given / reported reasons for return per beneficiary planning to re-migrate</li> </ul>	Some indication of reasons for (planned) re-migration can be gathered through beneficiary surveys that inform regular monitoring. Otherwise, the reasons can be explored through interviews conducted for the evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Country research</li> <li>- Beneficiary survey conducted post-return / beneficiary post-return monitoring</li> <li>- In-depth interviews with beneficiaries</li> </ul>	
Unintended consequences	7. Do AVR(R) programmes herald any unintended consequences (e.g. increased re-migration, different use of reintegration grants other than those intended, participation in more than one programme, etc.)?	7a. What reasons do TCNs give for participating in AVR(R) programmes? Do these reasons align with the objectives of the programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beneficiary explanations on why they took up AVR (<i>collected through interview</i>)</li> <li>- Information on programme objectives (intervention logic)</li> <li>- Beneficiary monitoring information on factor driving their decision to return</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reasons for return (per beneficiary)</li> <li>- Reasons for taking up AVR (per beneficiary)</li> </ul>	The questions of why the beneficiary participated in AVR(R) can be better explored through semi-structured interviews than beneficiary monitoring. Information on beneficiary's reasons for return might also be indicative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beneficiary survey conducted post-return / beneficiary post-return monitoring</li> <li>- In-depth interviews with beneficiaries</li> </ul>	
		7b. What proportion of AVR(R) participants re-migrate irregularly?	See 4a.				
		7c. What reasons do TCNs give for re-migrating?	See 4b and 4c				

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources
		7d. What proportion of AVR(R) participants have previously benefitted from an(other) AVR(R) programme?	- No. of beneficiaries by no. times they have received reintegration assistance more than once (Yes / No)	- No. of times have received reintegration assistance by beneficiary		- Beneficiary survey conducted post-return
		7e. What reasons do TCNs give for participating in more than one AVR(R) programme? Why do they need assistance the second time?	- Reasons given by beneficiaries for participating in more than one programme	- Reasons given by beneficiaries for participating in more than one programme		In-depth interviews
		7f. Do TCNs participating in AVR(R) programmes use their reintegration assistance in the way it was intended? If not, why not?	Comparison of uses of reintegration assistance with Intervention Logic of the programme	- Use of AVR(R) assistance by (a) type of assistance given and (b) beneficiary		- Beneficiary survey conducted post-return / beneficiary monitoring - programme documentation
		7g. Do stakeholders consider that there are other unintended consequences of AVR(R) programmes? What are these? What is the evidence of these?	- Stakeholder perspectives on unintended consequences of AVR(R) programmes - List of programme outcomes based on beneficiary and programme monitoring	- Unintended consequences - Programme outcomes based on monitoring (level of reintegration, living situation of AVR(R) beneficiary comparative to situation before migration, etc.)		In-depth interviews
Efficiency	5. What are the costs of AVR(R) programmes in comparison with the results they produce?	<b>5a. What are the costs of AVR(R) programmes? Which aspects (e.g. staff costs, screening and selection pre-return assistance, return assistance, reintegration assistance, etc.) are most costly?</b>	- Comparison of unit costs	<i>Data on costs / expenditure</i> - Total cost of AVR(R) programme(s) - Costs per unit data <i>Programme metadata</i> - Targets for no. persons returned (if existing) - Targets for no. persons provided reintegration assistance (if existing)		Programme monitoring for AVR(R) programmes  <b>AVR(R) programme metadata</b>
		<b>5b. Is there any evidence of underspend / overspend? If so, what are the reasons for</b>	- Comparison of target budget with actual expenditure	<i>Data on costs / expenditure</i> - Total cost of AVR(R) programme(s)		Programme monitoring for AVR(R) programmes

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources
		<b>this? Could this have been avoided</b>	- Reasons for overspend / overspend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Costs per unit data</li> <li><i>Programme metadata</i></li> <li>- Targets for expenditure / budget</li> </ul> <p>Through an evaluation, the reasons for underspend / overspend can be discussed in-depth.</p>		<b>Interviews with programme managers and other staff</b>
		<b>5c. What are the costs of AVR(R) programmes in comparison with the results they produce?</b>	- Comparison of the overall cost (a) per AVR(R) programme, (b) per country of return and (c) per returnee of AVR(R) with the benefits per programme, per country of return and per returnees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Data on AVR(R) costs</i></li> <li>- Total cost of AVR(R) programme(s)</li> <li><i>Data on AVR(R) outputs / outcomes</i></li> <li>- No. of persons receiving return counselling</li> <li>- No. of returnees returned through AVR(R)</li> <li>- No. of persons receiving reintegration assistance</li> <li>- No. of persons stating that the AVR(R) assistance addressed their needs</li> <li>- No. of persons still benefitting from their participation in AVR(R) 3, 6, 12 months after return (e.g. no. persons still in employment)</li> </ul>		Programme monitoring for AVR(R) programmes
	8. Are AVR(R) programmes cost-efficient in comparison to forced return? <sup>19</sup>	8a. How do the costs of AVR(R) programmes compare with the costs of forced return?	- Difference between the overall cost (a) per country of return and (b) per returnee of AVR(R) as compared to forced return	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Data on AVR(R) costs</i></li> <li>- Total cost of AVR(R) programme(s)</li> <li>- No. of returnees returned through AVR(R)</li> <li>- Country of return of returnees returned through AVR(R)</li> <li><i>Data on forced return</i></li> </ul>		Programme monitoring

<sup>19</sup> Data on forced return will not be provided by AVR(R) programme monitoring, and may not be readily available or available in a way that enables direct comparison between AVR(R) and enforced return.

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total cost of forced return (within period covered)</li> <li>- No. of returnees returned through forced return</li> <li>- Country of return of returnees returned through forced return</li> </ul>		
		8b. Are the financial resources made available for AVR(R) programmes sufficient to incentivise the return decision of a TCN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No. of beneficiaries requiring further money to activate their reintegration activity</li> <li>- Additional financial resources provided by MS</li> <li>- Limitations on realisation of reintegration assistance when drafting reintegration plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No. of beneficiaries requiring further money to activate their reintegration activity</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beneficiary monitoring</li> <li>- In-depth interviews</li> </ul>
		8c. To what extent are the financial resources used in an efficient way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of weeks/months between application to participate in AVR(R) and actual return per applicant</li> <li>- Extent to which third countries are more likely to allow / facilitate returns of AVR(R) returnees than other returnees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data on date of registration, counselling and return</li> <li>- Trend data on AVR returns compared to non-AVR returns for specific countries / types of returnee</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficiary monitoring</li> <li>Migration administrative data</li> </ul>
		8d. To what extent is the allocation among different activities efficient? For example, do high administration costs result in lower incentives offered to TCNs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unit costs for different programme components (e.g. travel costs, reintegration assistance etc.)</li> <li>- Perceptions of programme implementing staff and donors on reasons for allocations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unit costs for different programme components (e.g. travel costs, reintegration assistance etc.)</li> <li>- Explanations of programme implementing staff and donors on reasons for allocations</li> </ul>	It may be difficult to distinguish 'administration costs' from other costs in a standard manner which will allow meaningful comparisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme monitoring</li> <li>In-depth interviews</li> </ul>
Relevance	<b>4. Do AVR(R) programmes address the factors that</b>	<b>What factors affect TCNs willingness to return voluntarily?</b>	-Factors affecting TCN's willingness to return voluntarily	- Stakeholder perspectives on the factors affecting TCN's willingness to return voluntarily (e.g. family-		Literature review of previous studies and interviews with AVR(R) beneficiaries

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources	
	<b>would prevent TCNs from returning voluntarily?</b>			related issues, security situation in country of return, economic perspectives, existence of social network, etc.)			
		<b>Do AVR(R) programmes address these factors?</b>	- Comparison of the needs of beneficiaries and target beneficiaries and the intervention logic of the programme	- Stakeholder perspectives on the factors affecting TCN's willingness to return voluntarily - Information on the objectives, actions and expected results (i.e. the intervention logic) of the programme		Analysis of programme documentation and interviews with AVR(R) beneficiaries	
	9. Are AVR(R) programmes are targeting the most relevant beneficiaries (or are they targeting those who would have returned anyway without assistance)	9a. What reasons do TCNs give for participating in AVR(R) programmes?	<i>See 7a</i>				
		9b. For those who participate in AVR(R), what are the factors that they report finally encouraged / influenced them to take up voluntary return?  (Was the assistance offered through AVR(R) an important / a 'deciding' factor or not?)	<i>See 2c</i>				

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources
	10. Do AVR(R) programmes address the factors that are really preventing voluntary return (i.e. is AVR(R) relevant to the needs they set out to address)?	10a. What factors affect TCN's willingness to return voluntarily?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Factors affecting TCN's willingness to return voluntarily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder perspectives on the factors affecting TCN's willingness to return voluntarily (e.g. family-related issues, security situation in country of return, economic perspectives, existence of social network, etc.)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature review of previous studies</li> <li>In-depth interviews with target non-beneficiaries, beneficiaries and stakeholders</li> </ul>
10b. Do AVR(R) programmes address these factors?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparison of the needs of beneficiaries and target non-beneficiaries and the intervention logic of the programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder perspectives on the factors affecting TCN's willingness to return voluntarily</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme documentation</li> <li>Results of interviews</li> </ul>	
10c. What are the reasons for the TCN migrating to the EU in the first place? Have these driving factors changed?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reasons for migration provided by returning / returned and other TCN</li> <li>- % of asylum applicants, visa overstayers, etc. amongst AVR(R) applicants</li> <li>- Level of education, access to income, health, etc.</li> <li>- Country information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reasons for migration provided by returning / returned and other TCN</li> <li>- AVR(R) applicants by migration status when applying for AVR(R) (asylum applicants, visa overstayers, etc.)</li> <li>- AVR(R) applicants by level of education, access to income, health, etc.</li> <li>- AVR(R) applicants by country of return</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-depth interview</li> <li>Migration administrative data</li> <li>Beneficiary survey conducted prior to return</li> <li>In-depth interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders</li> </ul>	

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Potential indicators	Data to be collected	Notes on the data	Possible data sources
Coherence	11. Are AVR(R) programmes are coherent with EU policy?	11. Are AVR(R) programmes are coherent with EU policy?	Comparison of the objectives of AVR(R) programmes with EU policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key messages of EU policy on return / AVR(R)</li> <li>- List of AVR(R) programme objectives for the AVR(R) programme(s) under evaluation (e.g. to decrease the likelihood that returnees will want to return irregularly to the EU; to help the returnee live independently in the country of return, etc.)</li> </ul>		Programme documentation



## Annex 2 Suggested additional data to be collected through monitoring

Table A.2: Suggested data to be collected through monitoring

Data to be monitored	Details	Notes	Method for data collection
Basic data on TCNs using AVR(R) services (including return counselling, return assistance and reintegration assistance)			
ID number <sup>20</sup>		Assigned on applying for AVR or already when applying for protection Need also data on qualified non-applicants	Management information
Date of registration with AVR(R) providers		Note that, in some cases return counselling assistance may be provided anonymously, in which case TCNs will not be registered until they begin the process of return	Management information
Name / ID number of AVR(R) programme on which registered		Information on that programme (e.g. eligibility criteria and assistance available) to be captured through the programme monitoring	Management information
Number of years spent in Member State on date of application to participate in the AVR(R) programme		The purpose of collecting such data is so as to support analysis of whether there is a correlation between certain groupings of returnee and return attitudes / behaviour. Further, some AVR programmes are tailored specifically to certain categories of vulnerable TCN or nationalities, so it is important to have data aggregated for these so as to assess the effects of such programmes.  This information is likely to be largely self-reported data provided by applicants to the service provider delivering the AVR(R) programme so some information (e.g. on migration status) may differ from data held by national authorities. To the extent possible the source of the information (self-reported or legal migration data) should be specified.  The applicant may not be willing to share some personal (identifying) data such as date of birth.	Management information or Interview with AVR(R) applicant on application
Migration status of the (potential) returnee	asylum applicant / failed asylum applicant / general irregular migrant / refugee		
Nationality / country of citizenship			
(Planned) country of return			
Birth date			
Family status	Single (no children or partner) / returning with partner / partner remaining in MS / returning with dependent children		

<sup>20</sup> In order to maintain data protection, data will be anonymised.

Considered vulnerable	Yes / No		Management information and/or Service provider assessment using existing information or based on info collected in interview
If 'yes' to question above, recognised victim of human trafficking	Yes / No		
If 'yes' to question above, recognised as an UAM?	Yes / No		
If 'yes' to question above, other type of vulnerable person?			
Application accepted	Yes / No		Management information
If not accepted, reason for non-return	Non-eligibility / individual assessment of the application made by the AVR service provider / fraudulent application / etc.		Management information
Data on referral and information received			
Information channel for first learning about the programme	Leaflet / poster / Internet search / information session at reception centre, detention centre, etc. / word-of-mouth / other		Beneficiary survey
Whether the applicant was referred from another person / organisation	Yes / No		
If yes, referred, referring entity	Migration authority / asylum case worker / law enforcement officer / health service provider / social services / NGO / diaspora organisation / etc.		
Other information channels used for further information	Website / helpline / drop-in clinic / information event / etc.		Beneficiary survey
Data on return counselling			
Return counselling provided?	Yes / no	Information about the return counselling provided (including how long after application and before return it was provided) might be affect the beneficiary's overall experience of AVR(R).	Management information
Date counselling first provided			Management information
Date counselling last provided			
Actor providing the counselling	<i>[to be selected from an agreed list]</i>		Management information
No. of return counselling sessions provided			Management information
Satisfaction with return counselling	Very satisfied / somewhat satisfied / not very satisfied / not at all satisfied		Beneficiary survey
Beneficiary perceptions on extent to which the return counselling influenced the decision to return	The factor that most influenced return / One of the factors that most influenced return / A factor which partly influenced return / Did not influence decision		Beneficiary survey
Data related to the return			
Returned through the AVR(R) programme?	Yes / no		Management information

Date of return			Management information
If not returned within the planned timeframe, reason for non-return	Lost contact – i.e. participant absconds / individual’s unwillingness to return / medical issue meaning return not possible / applicant able to stay legally in MS / lack of documents / problems in securing accommodation in a third country / etc.		Management information
Number of years spent in Member State on date of return		It might be possible to gather this data from administrative data on migration history, otherwise to be gathered through beneficiary survey	Management information OR beneficiary survey
Return assistance provided?	Yes / No		Management information
Type of assistance provided	Cost of ticket / cost of travel documents / medical support / accommodation before return / food / cash / etc.		Management information
Satisfaction with level of support provided during return	Very satisfied / somewhat satisfied / not very satisfied / not at all satisfied		Beneficiary survey
Beneficiary perceptions on extent to which the return assistance influenced the decision to return	The factor that most influenced return / One of the factors that most influenced return / A factor which partly influenced return / Did not influence decision		Beneficiary survey
<b>Data on the reintegration assistance provided</b>			
Date reintegration accessed		The purpose of collecting this data is to be able to assess timeframes between return and access to assistance so as to assess efficiency	Management information
Tailored reintegration path?	Yes / No		Management information
Type of assistance provided	Medical support in CoR / accommodation / primary goods / cash / training / education support / job search support / family tracing / etc.		Management information
Completed reintegration activity?	Yes / No		
Was the assistance received the same as expected	Yes / No	If the answer is no, request reason why	Beneficiary survey
Benefitting from any other IOM/Caritas programmes (in country of return)?	Yes / No		Beneficiary survey
Benefitted from AVR(R) more than once?	Yes (1x, 2x, 3x, 4x, more than 4x), No		Beneficiary survey triangulated with management information where possible
For <u>cash assistance</u> , amount of cash received (where relevant)			Management information

For <u>cash assistance</u> , use of cash allowance	Invested in assets / savings account / etc.		Beneficiary survey
For <u>income-generation support</u> , type of business developed	[options to be developed]		Beneficiary survey
For <u>income-generation support</u> , how would you evaluate the performance of your business	Rate 1-5 (where 5 is excellent)		Beneficiary survey
For <u>income-generation support</u> , did your business generate jobs other than just for yourself?	Yes	If yes, provide the number of jobs	Beneficiary survey
For <u>income-generation support</u> , number of working hours/week/person			Beneficiary survey
For <u>training / schooling</u> , type of support received			Beneficiary survey
For <u>training / schooling</u> , start and end dates			Beneficiary survey
For <u>training / schooling</u> , whether skills acquired helped get job	Yes / No / No, but maybe they will in the future		Beneficiary survey
For <u>job placement</u> , start and end dates			Beneficiary survey
For <u>job placement</u> , still employed following end of placement	Yes, same employer/Yes, other employer/ Yes, own business / No /		Beneficiary survey
For <u>job placement</u> , if still employed by same employer, working conditions	Same as during job placement / better than during job placement / worse than during job placement	If possible, provide further explanation for answers	Beneficiary survey
For <u>job placement</u> , if no longer employed by same employer, whether skills acquired help find another job	Yes / No / No, but maybe they will in the future		Beneficiary survey
For <u>assistance to vulnerable groups</u> , type of assistance received	[options to be defined]		Beneficiary survey
For <u>assistance to vulnerable groups</u> , whether duration of support is appropriate	Yes / No	If possible, provide further explanation for answers	Beneficiary survey
Additional borrowing of money needed to set-up the reintegration activity?	Yes / No		Beneficiary survey
How much additionally borrowed?			Beneficiary survey
Reintegration assistance perceived to have improved your situation?	Yes / No	If possible, provide further explanation for answers	Beneficiary survey
Beneficiary perceptions on extent to which the reintegration assistance influenced the decision to return	The factor that most influenced return / One of the factors that most influenced return / A factor which partly influenced return / Did not influence decision		Beneficiary survey
Data on reintegration and re-migration behaviour			

Return / re-migration status	Still in country / migrated to non-EU country / migrated to EU		Beneficiary survey
Accommodation before leaving country of return	Owned house/flat / rented accommodation / with relatives / with friends / at a shelter		Beneficiary survey
Accommodation in country of return on return			Beneficiary survey
Employment situation before leaving country of return	Self-employed / odd jobs / regular job / unemployed / education / other	Where is employment, specify the <i>type</i> of employment (before and after) and no. of hours per week working	Beneficiary survey
Employment situation in country of return on return			Beneficiary survey
Self-sufficient? (i.e. able to provide for oneself?)	Yes / No		Beneficiary survey
Main sources of income	Employment / business / savings / none – get support from families / friends / other		Beneficiary survey
Social network on return	None / nuclear family / extended family / friend / other (specify)	More than one answer can be selected	Beneficiary survey
Minor children?	Yes / No		Beneficiary survey
Children attending school?	Yes / No		Beneficiary survey
Data on beneficiary attitudes towards reintegration			
Overall assessment of situation experienced on return	No difficulties / no proper accommodation / no job / financial difficulties / social difficulties (family / friend) / other		Beneficiary survey
Regrets in returning to country of return	Yes / No	If possible, provide further explanation for answers	Beneficiary survey
Reintegration assistance improved beneficiary's situation in country of return?	Yes / No		Beneficiary survey
If yes, extent to which it improved it	1 to 5 (where 5 is a large improvement)		Beneficiary survey
Perceived level of support from social networks in country of return	High / medium / low		Beneficiary survey
Data on beneficiary attitudes towards reintegration			
Plans to leave country of return	No / Maybe / Yes		Beneficiary survey
Reasons for plans to leave country of return	Political instability, insecurity / Unemployment / Low income / Difficult to reintegrate in country of origin (socially) / Health reasons / Others		Beneficiary survey
Destination of planned migration	Non-EU / EU / Same MS as from which returned		Beneficiary survey
Mode of planned migration	labour migration / family reunification / international protection		Beneficiary survey



Table A.3 Programme monitoring

Table A.3 outlines some suggested data to be monitored at programme level. These will have to be discussed and defined in view of the requirements on programme monitoring within the AMIF fund. As a result, the table is not comprehensive. It will also be dependent on the programme implemented.

Data to be monitored	Details
Programme title	
Programme duration	
Stakeholders involved	
Budget allocated	
Expected expenditure	
Actual expenditure	
Cost per unit: staff costs (MS offices)	
Cost per unit: staff costs (offices in country(s) of return)	
Cost per unit: office / overhead costs (MS offices)	
Cost per unit: office / overhead costs (offices in country(s) of return)	
Cost per unit: office equipment (MS offices)	
Cost per unit: office equipment (offices in country(s) of return)	
Cost per unit: communications and dissemination (MS offices)	
Cost per unit: communications and dissemination (offices in country(s) of return)	
Cost per unit: overall cost of accommodation for (potential) returnees pre-departure	
Cost per unit: overall cost of food for (potential) returnees pre-departure	
Cost per unit: overall cost of travel for (potential) returnees pre-departure	
Cost per unit: overall cost of travel documents	
Cost per unit: overall cost of flight tickets	
Cost per unit: subsistence during travel	
Cost per unit: overall cost of accommodation for (potential) returnees post-arrival	
Cost per unit: overall cost of food for (potential) returnees post-arrival	
Cost per unit: overall cost of travel for (potential) returnees post-arrival	
Number of beneficiaries provided return assistance	
Number of beneficiaries returned	
Number of beneficiaries provided reintegration assistance	

## Annex 3 Overview of AVR(R) in the EU

### EU CONTEXT

At EU level, the Return Directive sets out the legal framework for a common approach on return measures in Member States. The Directive's aim is to ensure that the return of third-country nationals without legal grounds to stay in the EU is carried out effectively whilst fully respecting the fundamental rights and dignity of the people concerned<sup>21</sup>. According to EU return policy, voluntary return is preferred over forced return as it is generally considered as being more dignified for the third-country national and more cost-effective for Member States. It is also considered to be more beneficial in fostering cooperation from concerned authorities in third countries.

Following the Return Directive, return decisions provide for a 30-day period with a view to voluntary departure within which TCNs have to leave the European territory. The Directive calls on Member States to "promote voluntary return by the provision of return assistance and counselling" for which they should "make best use of the relevant funding possibilities offered under the European Return Fund (currently funded through the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund -AMIF)"<sup>22</sup>.

### AVR(R) PROGRAMMES: SCALE, FORMAT AND OBJECTIVES

To encourage voluntary, assisted departure,<sup>23</sup> Member States use funds under the Return Fund/AMIF and their national budgets to develop AVR(R) programmes under which returnees are provided with in-cash and/or in-kind assistance to facilitate return and to enhance the sustainability of return. Some Member States have a long history of implementing AVR(R) programmes (e.g. Germany has implemented such programmes since 1978, and Belgium since 1984). Whereas the programmes initially focused primarily on assisting the TCN to return (travel assistance), the focus has increasingly shifted to ensuring the sustainability of return by the provision of reintegration assistance in the country of origin.

Following the adoption of the Return Directive and with the support of the Return Fund/AMIF, AVR(R) programmes have become more widespread across the EU. To date, all Member States implement AVR(R) programmes, except Croatia (yet to be developed). The EMN Inform on "Incentives to return to a third country and support provided to migrants for their reintegration" indicates that at the end of 2014 a total of 96 assisted voluntary return programmes were implemented by 26 Member States with a total budget of 133 million Euro (for a standardised period of twelve months of implementation). These programmes are, on average, financed 55% by the European Return Fund and 45% by national budgets.

At present, Member States implement three different types of AVR(R) programmes:

- ★ General Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes,
- ★ Programmes that are tailored to a specific target group (e.g. those in detention, failed asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, etc.),
- ★ Reintegration programmes targeting reintegration assistance in a particular third country.

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<sup>21</sup> COM (2014) 199 final, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on EU Return Policy, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Return Directive, recital 10.

<sup>23</sup> Voluntary departure within the understanding of EU legislation on return is understood as "compliance with the obligation to return within the time-limit fixed for that purpose in the return decision" – EMN Glossary V3.0. The UK definition of the term voluntary departure encompasses: notified voluntary departures, assisted voluntary returns and other confirmed voluntary departures.



AVR(R) programmes aim for an effective, sustainable, humane, dignified, orderly and cost-effective return.<sup>24</sup> However, the specific objectives of these programmes differ per Member State and per programme. Most commonly, AVR(R) programmes have one or more of the following objectives (or intended impacts):

- ★ To inform eligible third-country nationals about voluntary return options available to them / to publicise AVR(R);
- ★ To encourage third-country nationals to return voluntarily to destination countries (and in doing so, reduce the number of forced removals);
- ★ To support and assist the return of vulnerable migrants (e.g. UAMs, victims of trafficking, etc.);
- ★ To help third-country nationals to return voluntarily to destination countries;
- ★ To help returnees to settle and 'build a life' (reintegrate) in their country of return;
- ★ By supporting reintegration, to dissuade TCNs from re-migrating irregularly (so-called 'sustainable return').

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<sup>24</sup> As reported by the implementing partner on their websites, see for example: [https://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/where-we-work/europa/european-economic-area/austria.default.html?displayTab=map#AVR\(R\)](https://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/where-we-work/europa/european-economic-area/austria.default.html?displayTab=map#AVR(R)); <http://fedasil.be/en/return/home>; <http://fedasil.be/en/return/home>; <http://www.caritas-int.be/en/activity/voluntary-return>; <http://www.iom.cz/aktivita/voluntary-returns-reintegration-and-resettlement>; <http://www.iom.ee/varre/services-and-benefits>; [http://www.ofii.fr/rentrer\\_au\\_pays\\_grace\\_a\\_l\\_aide\\_au\\_retour\\_57/index.html?sub\\_menu=7](http://www.ofii.fr/rentrer_au_pays_grace_a_l_aide_au_retour_57/index.html?sub_menu=7); <http://www.iom.hu/assisted-voluntary-return-and-reintegration-0> etc.

## Annex 4 Guidance on engaging beneficiaries in survey participation

Most Member States conduct some form of (potential) beneficiary survey, both before, but usually after return. Surveys can either be conducted systematically as part of beneficiary monitoring (see section 3) or on a more ad-hoc basis as part of the primary data collection for evaluation. A major challenge to this is the willingness to participate in a survey and the ability to locate members of the target group(s), both in the (member) country and in the country of return. One Member State has reported that although the necessity to take part in a monitoring interview after six months is stated already in the initial RA documents signed by the beneficiary, some of them refuse to take part in it when the time comes. Beneficiaries are sometimes suspicious towards monitoring activities and in some cases perceive them as interference in their privacy or as a “waste of time”.<sup>25</sup> One way to address this is by ensuring that the AVR(R) beneficiary is informed that the monitoring will take place *before* they agree to participate (although this does not always work, as shown above). By demonstrating to the participant the actual questions they will be asked and the format of the monitoring they might be more open to the idea. By explaining the benefits of monitoring (to help improve the programme and its targeting in the future) to participants, the latter might also be more likely to engage in monitoring. Partners implementing the reintegration support (i.e. those providing training, etc.) might also be employed to encourage participation in monitoring where possible. A further way to incentivise participation in monitoring is to provide a financial incentive, but this might also influence the responses given and may render the monitoring too expensive.

Since it is not always possible for financial and practical reasons to monitor *all* beneficiaries of AVR(R) once they have returned to the country of return, it is cost-effective and robust methodologically to sample a group within the wider population of the AVR(R) programme to be surveyed. Ideally, a sample should be as representative of the wider population as possible so as to allow for the generalisation of findings to the wider population. Box 4 provides some information on sampling.

### Box 4 – Sampling methods and their application

There are two main forms of sampling: **probability** and **non-probability sampling**. Probability sampling is used for selecting individuals from populations with a known probability such as all legal migrants in a particular Member State, or all persons issued a return order in the EU in 2015, when the current location is known. It usually requires special sampling methods to be used to ensure that the sample includes a sufficient number of target group members and of individuals with the different characteristics (age, gender, background, etc.) that can affect the individual’s behaviour and therefore the response they will give to any survey.

Non-probability sampling is used for studies and surveys when a probability sample is not possible or unreasonably expensive, e.g. all those benefitting from AVR(R) in a particular year in a specific Member State, or all those beneficiaries of AVR(R) returned to a particular third country. To gather a reasonably representative sample of the population, **quota sampling** can be used. In quota sampling, the composition of the sample is predefined to proportionally represent the wider population in terms of specific characteristics considered to be likely to affect survey responses (e.g. age, gender, background, content of the AVR(R) programme), thus the quotas have to be defined by those characteristics which are known in advance. For example, if there is evidence to suggest that men and women, or people of different ages, are likely to experience the programme differently, then the sample should represent these groups in a way that is proportional to the wider population (i.e. if 30% of all beneficiaries were women then 30% of the sample should also be women). Note that the precision of estimates based on quota samples, cannot be meaningfully estimated, e.g. the standard deviation cannot be calculated unless you have a random sample.

**Purposive sampling** is similar to quota sampling in that the sample is composed of individuals considered to be likely to affect survey responses, but the numbers of each group of person are not predefined (unlike quota sampling). For example, for a survey of AVR(R) beneficiaries, if the research question of interest is overall satisfaction with the AVR(R) programme, the sample could usefully include beneficiaries from different programmes or include some people who had lived in the Member State for more than five years and those who had lived there for less than six years, since length of time in the Member State might also affect the extent to which the beneficiary is likely to feel

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<sup>25</sup> Based on the information reported in EMN Ad Hoc Query on AVR(R) evaluation and monitoring.

satisfied with the programme. With purposive sampling it is not possible to estimate the precision of results reached, for the same reasons as with quota sampling: i.e. the results are only valid for those included in the survey.

It is, however, often not possible to survey the 'ideal' / most representative sample, since respondents may not always be available or willing to participate, they may change their contact coordinates (usually address or phone numbers) and cannot be contacted any more. This issue has been somewhat mitigated by the fact that mobile networks are constantly improving globally. Another way to possibly mitigate this is by having a representative partner organisation or a field office in the country of return which can act as a point of contact for the returnee.

Where few beneficiaries make themselves available for post-assistance surveying / monitoring, it is still useful to gather information from those willing to participate, but the potential bias that might be introduced should be noted (e.g. the satisfied beneficiaries than dissatisfied ones might be more likely to participate as they are happy with the programme and therefore willing to contribute; conversely, more dissatisfied beneficiaries might participate for the possibility to lodge their complaints) – in either case this would skew the results of the data collection.

Beneficiary surveys will typically combine two methods: observation and interviews. Fedasil in Belgium has produced a questionnaire<sup>26</sup> for survey beneficiaries for the purpose of monitoring which comprises a part to be completed by the partner organisation conducting the survey, which asks about behaviour (i.e. whether the beneficiary is housed, in employment, etc.) and a part which is more subjective and to be completed by the beneficiary (e.g. related to opinions and perspectives). A similar structure is followed by IOM: their monitoring form<sup>27</sup> consists of two parts: one which requires IOM partners to make their own assessment of the quality of reintegration based on their own expert observations, and another which requires the beneficiary to provide factual information and to assess the quality of their own reintegration.

The usual period for conducting the monitoring and evaluation is six months after arrival to the Country of Return. However, at this stage it is difficult to monitor for long-term effects. Ideally, monitoring should be repeated after additional six (or more) months and to learn about long-term influence of RA on sustainability of the return. This might, however, be challenging in view of costs.

One cost-effective way to collect beneficiary information is to use a web portal through which returnees can self-report / respond to the survey. Such a tool is used in Belgium.

#### *Box 5 – Belgium's online tool for beneficiary surveying*

In July 2015, Fedasil started to implement an online monitoring tool in ten countries of origin, for returnees who have been granted a reintegration assistance. This tool was developed in order to collect data, to (statistically) analyse and to evaluate the return process and the impact of return and reintegration activities at large. The principle is the following: the service provider and returnee fill in an online questionnaire 6 months after the return and evaluate the situation at this moment regarding the social, economic and medical reintegration of the returnee. Beneficiaries complete the information at the service provider's premises.

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<sup>26</sup> Fedasil (2010) 'Reintegration Assistance Monitoring Form', shared by the BE REG contact point.

<sup>27</sup> As described in the responses to the Ad-Hoc Query to collect information for the development of the REG Guidelines on Monitoring and Evaluation