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How does the European Union Trust Fund for Africa manage potential unintended effects of its programmes? Meindert Boersma, Louise Kroon, Dion McDougal, Gijs Verhoeff, Yue Wang

Abstract:

There has been a debate on the unintended effects of migration management programmes, largely focusing on the unintended effects with respect to migration. This article contributes to the existing literature on the unintended effects of migration management programmes beyond migration. By combining a structured literature review with in-depth interviews with policy makers, this article examines the unintended effects of the largest migration management programme of the last five years, the European Union Trust Fund for Africa. The paper identifies four unintended effects: (1) increased border guard violence; (2) increased organised crime of smugglers; (3) exacerbation of poor governance in recipient countries; and (4) legitimisation of governments with limited legitimacy. While officials involved in the EUTF broadly recognise these unintended effects in interviews, the risk management systems of the EUTF insufficiently addresses these. This article analyses the ideological, institutional, and technical drivers for the emergence and persistence of unintended effects. Acknowledging these drivers is an essential first step for a better mitigation of unintended effects.

Key words: unintended effects; migration management; Trust Fund; EUTF; policy learning

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Chapter 1. What are the unintended effects?

1 Introduction

With the central aim of managing migration from Africa to Europe, the European Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) is embedded in a “root causes approach” (Fine et al., 2019). This approach is based on the central premise that irregular migration is a symptom of underdevelopment, and that migration goals can thus be achieved by focussing on development cooperation with origin countries (Zanker, 2019). Since its inception in November 2015, over EUR 4.4 billion has been committed to projects in 26 countries in the Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa and the North of Africa (EUTF, 2020). The number of African migrants trying to reach Europe through the Mediterranean has sharply decreased since the EU set out to play an increasingly active role in managing migration on the African continent (ECFR, 2018). Even though its impact is unequal across the different Mediterranean migration routes, the broader EU strategy has been effective at reaching its immediate goal. Within this broader strategy, the EUTF has made significant contributions. According to the most recent data, it has created over 55,000 jobs, assisted 277,000 people in developing income-generating activities and supported 66,700 vulnerable migrants’ voluntary returns (EUTF, 2020). Within this context, this research will set out to investigate possible unintended and unanticipated effects of the EUTF. As the analysis will show, we investigate this issue through the lens of four possible unintended consequences.

This chapter is divided into six sections. After this introduction, the second section will discuss the conceptual and analytical framework within which we situate our research. Based on a review of the existing literature, we develop five dimensions through which we can analyse and evaluate unintended effects: ‘knowability’, ‘value’, ‘distribution of effects’, ‘temporality’, and ‘the possibility to be mitigated or avoided’. This section will be followed by a brief discussion on methodology and methods. The fourth section will give an overview of how the EUTF relates to other EU policies and goals in Africa, as well as a broad introduction to issues and developments related to migration in Africa. The fifth section will introduce the three countries we selected as case studies to analyse the unintended effects of EUTF projects: Niger, Libya and Eritrea. In the sixth and final section of this chapter, these three case studies will be examined through the lens of four types of unintended effects we identified for the purpose of our research: increasing border guard violence, increasing organised crime of smugglers, further exacerbating poor governance in recipient countries and empowering dubious governments. These unintended effects will be discussed based on the literature review and interview analysis.

2 Conceptual and analytical framework

2.1 Definition of unintended effects

Generally speaking, there is a gap between the practice and the theoretical discussion of program evaluation concerning the program’s unintended effects. On the one hand, it seems that the unintended effects of the implemented programs have not been given enough attention in the evaluation practice, especially the evaluation of development (aid) programs. On the other hand, the concept of ‘unintended effects’ has been a substantial point of discussion among scholars, which could potentially shed more light on the evaluation practice.

There are various understandings of ‘unintended effects.’ Based on the sociological functionalist tradition, Baert (1991) pinpointed that an intended consequence means “a particular effect of purposive action, which is different from what was wanted at the moment of carrying out the act, and the want of which was a reason for carrying it out” (p.201). It indicates that unintended effects are relative to intended ones. Also, Newby (2010) pointed out the importance of context and perception in identifying actual effects, which reveals that observers and participants in recipient areas might have distinct understandings of ‘unintended effects’ due to the differences in contexts and perceptions. What is more, Elster (1985) argued that ‘unintended effects’ are the “willing what cannot be willed” (p.45), which is further explained from the angle of the by-product (Wiig & Holm-Hansen, 2014). They underlined that

some of the aims of development aid could only be achieved as by-products; that is to say, “they will appear only if other goals is [are] the prime focus” (Wiig & Holm-Hansen, 2014, p.5). Giddens (1993) supported this view, and Jabeen (2018) further highlighted unintended effects as natural by-products of a complex intervention system (p.262). Ferguson (1994) highlighted that the intended effects are insufficient for deciding on the final result of programs. However, the unintended effects, despite being by-products, together with the views of observers, play a more influential role when assessing whether (development) programs are failed or successful. Following that, unintended effects can be considered as the by-products of the aid system and programs of the EUTF, relative to the ‘intended effects’ (such as the improved management of migration and development), from the perspective of the observer.

Moreover, some academics proposed that there are different dimensions of ‘unintended effects’ (Merton, 1936; Sherill, 1984; Baert, 1991; Morell, 2005). Based on their research findings, Jabeen (2018) developed a comprehensive classification framework of unintended effects, including ‘knowability’, ‘value’, ‘distribution of effects’, and ‘temporality’. To be more specific, ‘knowability’ focuses on whether such effects are anticipated or unanticipated; ‘value’ highlights the different polarities of unintended effects (positive, negative, or neutral); ‘distribution of effects’ pays attention to who is affected; and ‘temporality’ underscores whether the unintended effects happen simultaneously with the intended effects. Besides that, although some scholars (for example, Jabben, 2018) claimed that unintended consequences could not be eliminated or denied, some examples prove that it is possible to limit and even avoid some unintended negative effects (Preliminary Take-aways of the Unintended Effects of International Cooperation, 2017). Following that, donors play a great role in the mitigating process (Newby, 2010). As such, the possibility to be mitigated or avoided will be the fifth criterion of the classification framework.

The notion of ‘unintended effects’ is often equated with ‘unanticipated effects’, which was coined by Merton (1936) to emphasize that every formally organized action has unanticipated effects and that such effects can be either desirable (positive) or undesirable (negative). Also, Merton (1936) identified the possible reasons for the occurrence of unanticipated effects, mainly highlighting the mistaken assumption in decisions and the excessive focus on the immediate benefits instead of long-term effects. More importantly, he used these two terms without distinction in his later research (Merton, 1968). Besides Merton, an increasing number of scholars adopted these two terms as synonyms. For example, Suchman (1967) adopted these two terms in an interchangeable manner when discussing the ‘differential effects’ of interventions. Scriven (1972) used both ‘unanticipated effects’ and ‘unintended effects’ to describe the side-effects of conducted programs.

However, other scholars highlighted that these two terms are not the same. In contrast, ‘unanticipated effects’ is a subcategory of ‘unintended effects’ (Sherill, 1984; Baert, 1991; Morell, 2005; De Zwart, 2015; Jabeen, 2018). It indicates that ‘unintended effects’ consists of ‘unintended and unanticipated effects’ and ‘unintended but anticipated effects’, which will be adopted in this research. Some of the unintended effects of development aid, including the aid offered by the EUTF, could be anticipated. This means those effects could be predicted, be it correctly or incorrectly (and incorrect prediction leads to ‘unintended but anticipated effects’), if comprehensive pre-analysis of development programs, rather than prior risk assessment only, could be conducted from the political, economic, and social perspectives. At the same time, some effects can not possibly be predicted, and hence are ‘unintended and unanticipated’. ‘Unintended and unanticipated consequences’ were mentioned in the official documents of the EUTF (European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing the Root Cause of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa, n.d.), which also reveals that the distinction between ‘unintended and unanticipated effects’ and ‘unintended but anticipated effects’ holds. In this research, ‘unintended and unanticipated effects’ are understood as the consequences that are not thought of when conducting development programs, while ‘unintended but anticipated effects’ refer to the consequences that are predicted but considered not that important when conducting development programs.

In short, in order to explore how the EUTF manages potential unintended effects of its programs, ‘unintended effects’ needs to be defined clearly as follows: relative to intended effects, unintended

effects are the by-products of the EUTF aid system and programs, including ‘unintended and unanticipated effects’ and ‘unintended but anticipated effects’, from the perspective of observers. Also, there are five dimensions of the unintended effects in this research, and the criteria include ‘knowability’, ‘value’, ‘distribution of effects’, ‘temporality’, and ‘the possibility to be mitigated or avoided’.

2.2 Analytical framework of unintended effects

Unintended effects of the EUTF can be grouped into two broad categories: unintended effects of specific EUTF projects (for instance, the local impact of a border guard training programme) and unintended effects of general EUTF policies (for instance, the impact of EUTF projects on irregular migration flows through the Mediterranean). Analysing the latter category would necessitate a holistic approach with quantitative methods. Moreover, the policy relevance for criticising the EUTF as a whole is much lower than for individual projects. Therefore, this paper only focuses on the unintended effects of specific EUTF projects, with the principle of identifying specific but replicable unintended effects. The analytical framework of unintended effects, as shown in Table 1, is proposed by combining the general effects of development aid from literature with inductively-generated themes (that are more nuanced) after checking specific projects iteratively. This framework mainly includes four preliminary categories of unintended effects, namely, ‘increasing border guard violence’, ‘increasing organised crime of smugglers’, ‘further exacerbating poor governance in recipient countries’ and ‘empowering dubious governments’. At the same time, the five indicators identified in the conceptual discussion, namely, ‘knowability’, ‘value’, ‘distribution of effects’, ‘temporality’, and ‘the possibility to be mitigated or avoided’, will also be included in this analytical framework. It should be noted that the final framework will be further modified and developed following the deepening of the research.

Table 1 The analytical framework of unintended effects of the EUTF for Africa

	Knowability	Value	Distribution of effects	Temporality	Possibility to be mitigated or avoided
Increasing border guard violence					
Increasing organised crime of smugglers					
Further exacerbating poor governance in recipient countries					
Empowering dubious governments					

3 Methodology

This section will provide an overview of the approach we took for this research and our rationale for doing so. Based on an iterative approach, our research design includes a structured literature review and interviews with a variety of experts. The iterative nature of our study allows us to commit to systemic

research methods while remaining flexible enough to account for the broad scope of our analysis. This approach allows us to answer our research question and give policy advice from both an academic and a more practical perspective.

3.1 Empirical source collection literature review

As mentioned above, we aim at doing academic research with practical policy advice as a goal. As our research focuses on (un)anticipated unintended effects we found it necessary to extend our scope of analysis beyond mainstream reporting. Therefore, we did not limit our research to official EUTF monitoring and evaluation documents. Rather, we included a range of more peripheral sources to gain a broad image of unintended and unanticipated effects and the ways the EUTF (does not) account for these effects. Therefore, this research includes academic peer-reviewed sources, internal EUTF reports as well as external NGO reports. We included these NGO reports in our analysis to use them as an initial orientation point for increasing our understanding about potential unintended effects rather than using them to make our final substantive argument. By virtue of their academic credibility, our main sources of information remain peer-reviewed academic sources and internal EUTF reporting. We gathered these sources exclusively by using online databases.

3.2 Expert interviews

We selected and interviewed 14 experts and practitioners working within the field of the EUTF and/or Dutch foreign policy in the regions we analysed. The interviewees can be grouped into four main categories: academics, researchers, diplomats and consultants. The reason for selecting these diverse actors both from within and outside of the structure of the EUTF was to gain an understanding of the EUTF and its (un)anticipated unintended effects from different perspectives. All academics and researchers interviewed directly addressed the EUTF in their published work. Additionally, they specialised in one or more of the four unintended effects identified in the literature review. Furthermore, the diplomats interviewed were either directly involved in the establishment and formation of the EUTF or entered the EUTF at a later stage with functions varying from being present in recipient countries of the EUTF, deciding on the content of EUTF policies and programmes or having a more general role within the larger European and Dutch migration and development aid framework. Lastly, the consultants interviewed were more specifically involved with the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the EUTF. All interviews were conducted between April and June 2020 (Appendix 1).

The interviews were semi-structured and lasted between 45 and 80 minutes. Interviews were conducted by two researchers, this pair varied per interview. The interviews were recorded and notes were taken during the interview. At the start of the research it was decided that the interviews would be done in person, but because of the changing circumstances caused by COVID-19 it was decided that the interviews would be done using online software such as Zoom and Google Meet.

The goal of conducting interviews was to substantiate the research by using sources which would otherwise not have been available to us. This information gave insights on how unintended effects are (not) anticipated, valued and managed during the decision-making, implementation and evaluation phases of EUTF projects. Additionally, the perspectives from policy-makers made it easier for us to develop practical advice.

3.3 Case selection

The EUTF funds various projects in many African countries and it would be impossible to account for and provide an analysis of all of these. Therefore, in order to ground our research, we have chosen to primarily focus on three country contexts as case studies in our literature review; Libya, Niger and Eritrea. These represent all three windows of EUTF funding, namely the North of Africa, Sahel/Lake Chad and Horn of Africa respectively. Through this, we aim to ensure a degree of variance in contexts to highlight the replicability of specific unintended effects. In this respect, Libya primarily represents a transit country, Niger both a transit and departure country, and Eritrea a departure country. This is

exemplified through the type of projects implemented in each country - ranging from all of Libya's 11 national projects coming under 'improved migration management', to the solely development-aimed projects in Eritrea (EUTF, 2020). In addition, all of the respective countries are fairly large recipients of EUTF funds, accounting for over 15 percent of EUTF funding between their national projects alone and additionally benefiting from broad data accessibility (EUTF, 2020).

However, these three case studies should not be seen as a clear delineation of our scope of analysis. Even though we aimed at connecting the potential unintended effects to these three countries, we discussed other cases with our interviewees based on their expertise. This resulted in an even better understanding of the context of the EUTF and its possible unintended effects.

In terms of data accessibility, the three funding windows that the country contexts represent have slight variation in their monitoring and evaluation practices, and this can form a means of ensuring access to different data sources and by which to compare and contrast monitoring and evaluation practices. Whilst the EUTF is actively aiming to use a universal monitoring system, its implementation remains highly inconsistent (European Court of Auditors, 2018). Therefore, we have the added benefit of learning from different frameworks, such as Altai Consulting's work for the EUTF in the Sahel/Lake Chad region.

4 The EUTF in context

4.1 Migration in Africa

In order to give a contextual overview of migration in Africa, it is important to gain some perspective on the historical role of migration within the continent. Migration has always been an integral part of economic mobility within Africa, and importantly a means by which people can exercise agency over social transformation in light of opportunity inequalities (Castles, 2009). Indeed, (recorded) remittances to developing countries are estimated at about USD 441 billion, nearly triple the amount of official development assistance (World Bank, 2016).

Migration can be measured by many means, and indeed said means give us a different picture over the story. Here, we will focus on capturing migrant flows as opposed to migrant stocks (the latter of which has remained roughly stable at 0.3 percent emigrants globally) in order to gain a more focused impression on the short-term changes in migration specific to the African-European context (Lanati and Thiele, 2018). To this, the majority of African migrants have stayed, and continue to stay, within Africa (Flahaux and De Haas, 2016). Likewise, Global South-South migration accounts for 38 percent of total migration, as opposed to only 34 percent for South-North (the rest being North-North migration at 23 percent and North-South migration at 6 percent) (World Bank, 2016). This is additionally reflected in the opinions of those considering emigration, for whom 29 percent want to stay in their respective regions and 7 percent elsewhere in Africa, compared to 27 percent for Europe (Sanny & Rocca, 2019). However, it is important to note that intra-African migration is relatively decreasing compared to extra-African migration whilst extra-African migration is generally increasing (Flahaux and De Haas, 2016). Extra-African migration is concentrated in the Mahgreb and West Africa, while intra-African migration tends to be lower in the Mahgreb (ibid). High intra-African migration concentrated around West Africa can in part be explained by the historical salience of ethnic identities that supersede national identities drawn along colonial lines (ibid). This is exacerbated by the relatively small sizes of countries in West Africa and therefore the proximity of borders, and the visa-free movement between ECOWAS states (ibid). Increasing migration out of Africa is primarily understood to be driven by processes of development and social transformation (ibid). This is exemplified by the understanding of migration as a hump-shaped distribution (de Haas, 2010). Following from this, UNDP identifies migration as "a reverberation of uneven development and particularly of a development trajectory that is failing young people", where migrants tend to be relatively wealthy, urbanised and educated young Africans with the agency and volition to take risks to create more opportunities (UNDP, 2019). In parallel to this is the understanding that projections suggest Sub-Saharan African populations are expected to nearly double in the next 30 years (99 percent growth) whilst European population growth stagnates, whereby Africa's

share of the global population is expected to increase from 17 percent in 2020 to 26 percent by 2050 (UN DESA, 2019).

“We must not become distracted by the false promise of short-term fixes: unnecessarily harsh domestic policies and diverting much needed development assistance from core priorities. Doing so may only serve to further circumscribe the ambitions of young Africans instead of fostering and harnessing their potential as an engine of transformative change” (UNDP, 2019)

Routes to Europe

It is difficult to accurately assess migration routes to the EU due to varying practices in measurements by EU member states, lack of proper migrant documentation and the large number of unauthorised and unregistered migration. It is important to remember that a large (and potentially overlooked) proportion of migration to the EU remains legal migration that is then overstayed (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Whilst the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) was the most popular irregular migration route from Africa until 2017, despite being the most dangerous, it has been overtaken in popularity by the Western Mediterranean Route (WMR) to Spain (FRONTEX, n.d.). The CMR peaked in 2016 with 181,459 registered irregular arrivals, reducing to 13,760 in 2019 (ibid.). In contrast, the WMR only registered 9,990 crossings in 2016, rising to 56,644 in 2018 before dropping to 23,733 in 2019 (ibid.). However, it is important to note that it is not as simple as overall traffic simply being diverted between more and less favourable routes but route changes also reflect changes in migrants’ countries of origins (UNHCR, n.d.). For example, there is a correlation between arrivals in Spain, the socio-economic climate in Algeria and rising political tensions in the Rif region of Morocco (ECFR, n.d.). Importantly, 85 percent of migrants interviewed registered in their country of arrival (UNDP, 2019).

4.2 The EUTF and other EU initiatives

This section will give a brief overview of the EUTF and other EU initiatives related to migration in Africa. The rationale of the EUTF is embedded in a broader EU policy that can be characterised as a “root causes approach” (Fine et al., 2019). This approach is based on the central premise that irregular migration is a symptom of underdevelopment, and that migration goals can thus be achieved by focussing on development cooperation with origin countries (Zanker, 2019). Since the assumption is that development benefits recipient populations and reduces illegal migration to Europe’s frontiers, this approach carries support across the political spectrum (Vermeulen et al., 2019).

Set up at the Valletta Summit on Migration held in November 2015 amidst the European ‘migration crisis’, the EUTF has become a flexible tool for the EU to fund projects linked to migration and development (European Court of Auditors, 2018). Next to the EUTF, there are three other pillars upon which the EU migration policy in Africa rests: the Migration Partnership Framework with third countries (MPF), small-scale initiatives and informal initiatives. This brief section will cover these three pillars and evaluate their relationship with the EUTF.

The MPF was set up in June 2016 to encourage African governments to cooperate with the EU on migration management with “a mix of positive and negative incentives” (European Commission, 2016). The Commission pledged to contribute EUR 3.1 billion to the MPF, as compared to over EUR 4 billion already contributed to the EUTF (European Commission, 2016). The main difference is that the MPF exclusively focuses its efforts on governments, while the scope of the EUTF is much broader (e.g. including partnerships with local and international organisations).

There are several relatively small-scale regional and national EU migration projects going on in Africa. One notable example is the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger), an operation ongoing since July 2012. What started as a response to growing concerns about terrorism and organised crime in the region has evolved to a long-term project committed to support the Nigerien security forces in controlling irregular migration flows (European External Action Service, 2019).

Lastly, there are the informal EU efforts to bring down irregular migration numbers. For example, informal lobbying (and alleged coercion) by EU representatives contributed to Niger restricting illegal migration in May 2015 (Reuters, 2015).

The EUTF relates to these three pillars in a similar way: it is mitigating the negative effects these initiatives have on local populations. The EUTF sets up employability projects for people who otherwise would have migrated from origin countries, or remunerates people previously reliant on migration in transit countries (see for example Reidy, 2018). Because of this strong connection, it is important to situate the EUTF with broader EU policies and policy goals in Africa.

4.3 EUTF governance and policies

The Strategic Board is responsible for setting out the Global Strategy of the EUTF. This global strategy has been divided into four Strategic Axes in the Strategic Orientation Document, which was adopted by the Strategic Board in 2015 (EUTF, 2020). The framework of the EUTF is built up across four different themes, or ‘Strategic Axes’ (as mentioned in the Annual Report of the EUTF from 2018): 1) Greater economic and employment opportunities, 2) Strengthening resilience of communities, 3) Improved migration management, and 4) Improved governance and conflict prevention (EUTF, 2018).

Furthermore, the Board validated six priority areas for the Horn of Africa and the Sahel/Lake Chad region: 1) Return and reintegration, 2) Refugees management (Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework), 3) Completing progress on the securitization of documents and civil registry, 4) Anti-trafficking measures, 5) Essential stabilization efforts in the Horn of Africa (in particular in Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia) and in the Sahel/Lake Chad region, and 6) Actions supporting migration dialogues. These differ from the priority areas that were set out for the North of Africa in 2018: 1) Protection of vulnerable migrants, assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration and community stabilization, 2) Support to integrated border management, 3) Support to labour migration and mobility, and 4) Support to improved migration governance (EUTF, 2018).

For the implementation phase of the policies and programmes that build upon these strategic axes, three Operational Committees have been formed. There is one Operational Committee for each of the regions that the EUTF is active in, respectively: the North of Africa (NOA), the Sahel/Lake Chad region (SLC), and the Horn of Africa (HOA). They are responsible for the approval of the programmes. The Strategic Board and the Operational Committees are composed of the European Commission (as chair), the EEAS (as member), and EU members and other donors (as members) that have donated more than EUR 3M to the EUTF.

4.4 Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the EUTF

This section will provide a brief overview on the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are instrumentalised within the framework of the EUTF. All information gathered for this section is based on the EUTF’s own website (EUTF, 2020). The EUTF monitors and evaluates its workings and fundings at three different levels, these being; programmes, regions and the EUTF as a whole.

At the programme level, the EUTF monitors and evaluates its funding both internally and externally, by EU delegations and independent external partners respectively. Additionally, at the programme level, the EUTF makes use of the EU Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) system. This system supports internal monitoring and reporting of EU Delegations by complementing their work with an independent and external monitoring service provided along the different phases of the policy cycle. This evaluation is executed by a visiting independent expert who reports on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, potential impact, and sustainability of each programme.

At the regional level, the EUTF monitors and evaluates whether the priorities identified within each specific region (Horn of Africa, Sahel & Lake Chad and North of Africa) are addressed. The Monitoring and Learning System (MLS) as an evidence-based approach is adopted, which tries to measure the

performance of the EUTF portfolio against the overarching objectives and principles of the EUTF. It consists mainly of two broader objectives. First, the goal is to strengthen monitoring and reporting in general. Secondly, building upon the first objective, the goal is to create a learning component to inform the regional programme strategy. For the Horn of Africa window, the most recent monitoring report was conducted and presented in June 2020 and covered until the 31st of December 2019. For the Sahel & Lake Chad region, the latest report covered until the 30th of September 2019 and was presented on the EUTF website in January 2020. All reports of monitoring and evaluation for the regions Horn of Africa and Sahel & Lake Chad were conducted by Altai Consulting. For the North of Africa window, only one report is presented dating back to June 2019 and was conducted by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

At the level of the EUTF as a whole, an EUTF Results Framework was developed. This was constructed around the four strategic priorities of the EUTF, including; greater economic and employment opportunities; strengthening resilience of communities and in particular the most vulnerable including refugees and other displaced people; improved migration management in countries of origin, transit and destination and; improved governance and conflict prevention and reduction of forced displacement and irregular migration. Each of these priorities, in turn, is divided into expected results which are measured using a set of indicators. These indicators are both macro and output based. Output-based indicators are, for example, the number of jobs created or the number of projects by diaspora members.

Finally, there is a common EUTF for Africa Risk Register, which is based on all three of the regions. Risks include, but are not limited to, the wrong perception that EUTF-funded actions support the security and migration agenda of countries violating human rights or inadequate coordination mechanisms affecting relations between EU, EU Member States and partner countries.

Thus, the EUTF uses several different monitoring and evaluation mechanisms which are independent but simultaneously build upon each other. By making use of both internal and external actors and looking at funding from the three different levels of programming, regional and the EUTF as a whole, the EUTF tries to ensure that there is maximum transparency and accountability for all their actions.

5 Case Studies

5.1 Context of the case studies: Niger, Libya and Eritrea

In order to ground our research, we have chosen to primarily focus on three country contexts as case studies. These are Libya, Niger and Eritrea. These represent all three windows of EUTF funding, namely the North of Africa, Sahel/Lake Chad and Horn of Africa respectively. Through this, we are aiming to ensure a degree of variance in contexts to highlight the replicability of specific unintended effects. In this respect, Libya primarily represents a transit country, Niger as a combination, and Eritrea as a departure country for migrants. This is exemplified through the type of projects implemented in each country - ranging from all of Libya's 11 national projects coming under 'improved migration management' to all more development-aimed in Eritrea (EUTF, 2020). All three countries are classified as autocratic, however to varying degrees (The Economist, 2019). In this regard, we aim to include arguments surrounding the salience of the political context in development aid, primarily through our later investigation into the unintended consequence of empowering dubious governments.

In terms of data accessibility, the three funding windows that the country contexts represent have slight variation in their monitoring and evaluation practices, and this can form a means of ensuring access to different data sources and by which to compare and contrast monitoring and evaluation practices. Whilst the EUTF is actively aiming to use a universal monitoring system, its implementation remains highly inconsistent (European Court of Auditors, 2018). Therefore, we have the added benefit of learning from different frameworks, such as Altai Consulting's work for the EUTF in the Sahel/Lake Chad region. In addition, all of the respective countries are fairly large recipients of EUTF funds, accounting for over 15 percent of EUTF funding between their national projects alone and additionally benefit from broad data accessibility (EUTF, 2020).

The EUTF has spent EUR 363.9 million in Libya over 11 national projects, all under the ‘improved migration management’ bracket. In Niger, the EUTF has spent EUR 253 million over 12 national projects. Of this, EUR 101.5 million is to ‘improved governance and conflict prevention’, EUR 66.9 million to ‘greater economic and employment opportunities’, EUR 47 million to ‘improved migration management’ and EUR 37.6 million to ‘strengthening resilience’. In Eritrea, EUR 115 million has been spent in 4 national projects - EUR 87.5 million to ‘greater economic and employment opportunities’, EUR 25 million to ‘strengthening resilience’ and EUR 2.5 million to ‘improved governance and conflict prevention’. (EUTF, 2019)

5.2 Libya

Libya is a key transit country for migrants, with the Central Mediterranean Route, through Libya, being the most popular and most dangerous route for migrants leaving Africa until 2017 (Frontex, n.d.; UNHCR, n.d.). Migration proportionally fell substantially slower on the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) as compared to total migration from 2016 to 2017 (ibid). However, from July 2017 onwards, this trend began to change dramatically and migration dropped by 80 percent on this route in 2018, and 87 percent in Libya (ibid). Therefore, Tunisia has overtaken Libya as the main country of departure and the CMR has been in turn overtaken by the Western Mediterranean Route (Frontex, 2019).

Concurrent to EUTF project implementation and rapidly decreasing migration numbers, the political situation in Libya has dramatically worsened with the escalation of violent civil war and gains made by the Libyan National Army against the UN-recognised Government of National Accord. This precarious and ongoing situation has caused significant instability and displacement across Libya and may have impacted the ability of migrants to traverse Libya safely and successfully. Likewise, caution must be exercised when taking the safety statistics of the CMR into account too, as this is self-reported by the Libyan coastguard, whose credibility has consistently been brought into question due to numerous accusations of human rights abuses (Loschi et al., 2018).

In light of the importance of Libya as a transit country for migrants, the EUTF has so far provided EUR 408 million for projects in Libya (this is compounded by other funding, including EUR 98 million through the European Neighbourhood Instrument funding from 2014-2020) (Raty & Shilhav, 2020). The EUTF funding in Libya can be broken down into three main goals, namely;

1. Protection and Assistance to those in need (migrants, refugees and IDPs): including repatriation and facilities - EUR 185.3 million.
2. Stabilisation of Libyan municipalities: social infrastructure - EUR 135.8 million.
3. Integrated border management: mainly coastguard training and support - EUR 87.2 million (EUTF, 2020).

5.3 Niger

Next to being a departure country for many refugees, Niger is the main transit country in the Sahel and Lake Chad region (EUTF, 2020). Before the incubation of the EUTF in 2015, migrants in Niger were predominantly from Mali, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Benin (UNICEF 2014). With the increase of violent conflict in Nigeria, Niger has seen an increased influx of Nigerian migrants in recent years (Altai Consulting, 2019). Even though migration numbers have been going down in recent years, Niger was still hosting over 200,000 refugees as of July 2019 (Altai Consulting, 2019). Increasing political instability, economic insecurity and climate change have been contributing to a constant influx of migrants (ibid.).

Because of its transit country status (and its relative political stability in an unstable region), managing migration in Niger has been of particular interest for the EU since migration became an increasingly important point on the European political agenda in 2015. Traditionally, Niger has been allowing visa-

free travel since 1979 by virtue of its ECOWAS membership. The EU pressured Niger to restrict migration, which contributed to the adoption of the May 2015 “Law 36”. This law criminalised the migration business, which had been a source of income for a big part of the Nigerien population, particularly in the Agadez region (Hoffmann et al., 2017). Niger began to actively crack down on migration in September 2016, which has significantly hurt the informal economy of regions such as Agadez.

Niger is the biggest recipient of EUTF funds (Altai Consulting, 2019). Because of its nature as a departure and transit country, the EUTF is involved in a much wider range of projects than in most other partner countries (EUTF, 2020). The EUTF strategy in Niger can be divided into four priorities: protecting migrants and offering them return opportunities, improving economic opportunities, reducing criminal networks and supporting resilience projects (Altai Consulting, 2018).

5.4 Eritrea

Eritrea is one of the largest origin countries of migrants, with over 315,000 Eritrean registered asylum seekers in the Horn of Africa alone (Altai Consulting, 2019). There are an estimated 500,000 Eritrean refugees worldwide from a country with only roughly 5 million people (UNHCR, 2018). This exodus has largely been driven by a longstanding border conflict with Ethiopia, and a lack of political, social and economic freedom where there is a mandatory indefinite national service (Reuters, 2016). Of migration in the Horn of Africa in September 2019, the primary destination was understood to be Saudi Arabia, with 41 percent of those tracked explicitly stating this intention, overwhelmingly for economic reasons (Altai Consulting, 2019).

High numbers of Eritreans have consistently sought asylum in Europe, with the EU registering over 5,000 registered asylum seekers from the country annually for the past decade. This number peaked in 2015 and 2016, with over 30,000 Eritrean asylum seekers, and remained at over 10,000 in 2019 (NY Times, 2020). In light of this, Blodgett Bermeo & Leblang’s analysis of the influence of settled migrant groups in influencing the focus of donor countries’ development budget highlights the potential heightened visibility of Eritrea as an EUTF funding recipient (Blodgett Bermeo & Leblang, 2015).

Out of the three EUTF for Africa regions, the Horn of Africa window is the most development-focused, with 71 percent of funding going to development programmes (Raty & Shilhav, 2020). This represents the EUTF goal of providing “alternative opportunities for communities to foster growth and development in the long term” where funding comes largely under the ‘greater economic and employment opportunities focus’. Thus far, the EUTF has funded 4 projects in Eritrea, totalling EUR 115 million (EUTF, 2019). Investment in projects in Eritrea have largely picked up in the last year, signalling increased cooperation with the government from the EU in light of resumed relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Despite increasing relations with international organisations and other governments, it is important to note that EU projects in Eritrea have been called into question in the recent past, with the EU halting development aid due to the lack of accountability surrounding the use of forced labour after accusations of ‘crimes against humanity’ (The Guardian, 2015). Likewise, USAID has not implemented any projects in Eritrea since 2015 (US Foreign Assistance). Given that over 80 percent of asylum requests by Eritreans in EU countries were successful (Eurostat), and so we can deduce European countries generally consider Eritreans to be legitimate refugees, questions are raised about the ethics of working with a government whose practices are considered to legitimise asylum seekers’ claims.

6 The unintended effects

This section of the research will give an in-depth analysis of the four unintended effects we have identified. These being; ‘increasing border guard violence’, ‘increasing organised crime of smugglers’, ‘further exacerbating poor governance in recipient countries’ and ‘empowering dubious governments’.

6.1 Increasing border guard violence

“Positive rewards for regimes that rely on military interventions to reduce human mobility may undermine respect for human rights, democracy and resilience.” (Raty & Shilhav, 2020)

The EUTF supports the enforcement agencies of border policing through ‘integrated border management’ funding under the ‘improved migration management’ objective. ‘Improved migration management’ accounts for EUR 1.4 billion of EUTF funding (EUTF, n.d.). The ‘integrated border management’ funding is most utilised in transit countries as opposed to origin countries - with the North of Africa window accounting for 56 percent of these types of projects (ibid). The best value for money in terms of migrants affected per project is represented by focussing on final transit countries before reaching Europe as projects here will inevitably affect the largest number of migrants who have aggregated from various routes. This can be seen by the relative concentration of these types of projects in North Africa. However, this potentially has the effect of targeting migrants after they have already invested heavily in their migration, meaning they are more likely and willing to avoid loss by continuing to attempt more precarious routes to circumvent border guards.

In aiming to enforce stricter border policing, the EUTF has contributed to border patrol agencies across Africa, some of whom have been accused of violence against migrants. In Niger for example, border police corruption limits the effectiveness of funding decreasing migration, with a study finding that there was no positive correlation between border checkpoints and border control (Hahonou, 2016). Additionally, increased border security has had the effect of forcing migrants to take increasingly precarious journeys through new routes and at night, with the UN assisting 20,000 migrants lost in the desert since 2016 (Lucht & Raineri, 2019). This is largely raised by Academic 1 and Researcher 2, although it remains innately context-specific. However, the militarisation of border forces is most present where the issue is most politicised, with both diplomat and researcher interviewees alike commenting that these largely arise from bilateral Member State arrangements – most prescient in the case of Libya.

In two phases, and amidst internal and external criticisms, the EUTF has provided EUR 87.2 million to integrated border management, some of which went to providing training to 83 members of the Libyan General Administration for Coastal Security (GACS). This is arguably the most politicised and contentious project the EUTF has funded, with various accusations of human rights abuses being levied alongside supporters hailing large reductions in migrant crossings and deaths along the route. The allegations levelled against Libya’s coastguard are manifold (MSF, 2019), and the question of EUTF responsibility has been raised as a legal submission to the ICC, claiming the EU’s migration policy constitutes ‘crimes against humanity’ for its intent “to ignore the plight of migrants in distress at sea, in order to dissuade others in similar situations from seeking safe haven in Europe.” (Shatz & Branco, 2019, p. 8). These allegations are nothing new, with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Raad Al Hussein, saying in November 2017 that “the increasing interventions of the EU and its member states have done nothing so far to reduce the level of abuses suffered by migrants. Our monitoring, in fact, shows a fast deterioration in their situation in Libya” (Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2017). The 2019 Malta Declaration and the entailed legitimisation of the Libyan coastguard signal the EU’s continued position of overlooking the extent of these allegations in favour of a narrative that ‘intercepting migrants’ is equivalent to ‘saving lives’ (Carrera and Cortinovis, 2019).

Researcher 2 and 5 express heightened senses of risk in these projects, most notably in the Sahel, of border management undermining local support of the government through enticing recipient governments with eurocentric agendas that contradict local needs. This will be further expanded upon in the following sections. Notably, this speaks to the tensions between differing agendas; namely, a traditional development agenda that is primarily needs-based and a migration agenda that aims to manage irregular migration. Importantly, this has implications in project visibility, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation through the definition of outputs and outcomes along either migration or development lines. In essence, transit countries, where increased border guard violence is

a tangible unintended effect, are normally those that are most ‘in crisis’ and thus see the most politicised, humanitarian programming. This humanitarian programming is often shorter-term than the more-developmental programming found more in origin countries.

With the attention the Libyan case has been given and the subsequent availability of data and analysis, as well as the acuteness of the allegations of violence, we see this as the most salient example of border guard violence and aimed our analysis accordingly. Whilst we acknowledge the specificity of the Libyan context impacts the replicability of this case, we argue that the insecurity of the contexts in which the EUTF works is not unique to Libya and that the unintended effects can therefore be replicated in another context, most likely other transit countries for whom the EUTF is more politicised. In the case of Libya, the root problem can be described as one of legitimacy.

Coastguard legitimacy

Fundamentally, there are two authorities with overlapping functions within Libya: The General Administration for Coastal Security (GACS), that sits under the auspice of the Ministry of Interior, and the Libyan Coast Guard and Port Security (LCGPS), that sits under the Ministry of Defence (Monroy, 2019). By designating culpability to legitimacy issues, the case study of Libyan coast guard authorities can be replicated in other EUTF contexts where the legitimacy of enforcement agencies are questioned. In Libya, both authorities are largely composed of former militia members and have at various times cooperated with EU institutions in training. Concurrent to EUTF funding, Operation Sofia (EU NOVFOR Med) has attempted to unravel the legitimacy problems the competing coastguards face whilst providing military training, technology and expertise (ibid).

This legitimacy struggle and the EU’s role within it highlight two main consequences for the functionality of the EUTF. Firstly, the EUTF is directly funding and training a coastguard authority that has been accused of widespread human rights abuses, violating the principle of non-refoulement, and who have themselves been accused of trafficking (MSF, n.d.; Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 2017). Secondly, the complexity and instability of the Libyan political context mean any government body funding has an effect on the legitimacy and strength of the Government of National Accord and the various competing militias supporting it (al-Arabi, 2018; Shatz & Branco, 2019) which we will touch on further in the section on empowering dubious governments. Both of these could have the effect of contributing to instability and the subsequent infeasibility of Libya as a migration route, but the question remains at what cost (Bartels, 2019)?

In the case of Libya, questions were raised around the accountability and subsequent risk/reward balance of working with the Libyan coastguard with Academic 1 commenting that increasing borderization is simply “sweeping the problem under the rug”. Furthermore, they highlight allegations against militia members receiving EUTF funding for playing a ‘double game’ that the UN and EU itself has acknowledged through sanctions (Official Journal of the European Union, 2018). Indeed, whilst acknowledging that decreased (measured) deaths in the Mediterranean is undoubtedly good, they suggest this may be due to an increase in deaths in the Sahara instead.

Researcher 5 refers to the EUTF’s involvement with the Libyan coastguard as ‘militarisation’ and warns that these types of projects can often undermine human rights, especially in unstable contexts. Furthermore, Academic 1 speaks of the decreased ability of monitoring programme success in Libya due to the deteriorating political situation, which has additionally hampered implementation through the closing of migrant centres for safety reasons. Notably, Diplomats 1, 2 & 3 all talk about the crucial facilitatory role Italy played in Libya in funding and implementation of these projects, speaking to the increased agency of Member States in the EUTF. Researcher 2 and 5 express that the high risks in these projects are often foreseen but attempted regardless because of high stakes, in this case driven by pressure due to high arrivals in Italy. In essence, transit countries, where increased border guard violence is a tangible unintended effect, are normally those that are most ‘in crisis’ and thus see the most politicised, urgent and humanitarian programming.

6.2 Increasing organised crime

This part of the research will provide an overview of the ways in which the establishment of the EUTF and its specific projects could have implications for the unintended effect of increased organised crime among human smugglers. One of the core objectives of the EUTF is to “improve migration management” (EUTF, 2020). The accompanying action plan to achieve this is to “improve capacities to prevent irregular migration and fight against trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling” (ibid.). This is part of a larger underlying idea which assumes that “smugglers are the main driver of migration” (Golovko, 2019, p.11). Thus, efforts by the EUTF and its specific projects have tried to undermine smuggling capacities. By undermining the smugglers’ capacities, the logic goes, it will become increasingly hard for people to migrate, thus decreasing migration numbers (ibid.).

Arguably, after the EU cracked down on human smugglers the amount of smuggled migrants reaching the shores of Europe decreased (IOM, 2017; IOM, 2017). However, simultaneously, various reports pointed out that an increase in deaths of migrants in the Sahara Desert could be identified as “smugglers broaden the death trap from the Mediterranean to the Sahara Desert.”(UNHCR, 2017; Penney, 2017). The assumption that criminalizing human smuggling will lead to a direct result of a decrease in migration is potentially flawed and its implementation may have possible unintended effects (see for example Concord, 2017; Triandafyllidou, 2018; Golovko, 2019; Micallef, Horsley & Bish, 2019).

The ‘business’ of smuggling

Before delving into the research surrounding the possibility of the unintended effect of increased organised crime of human smugglers through EUTF funding, we will first discuss the importance of the differentiation between human trafficking and human smuggling (Arnowitz, 2001). Different criteria can be identified when defining as to when a person belongs to either a smuggled or a trafficked group (Golovko, 2019). The most important distinction can be found in the manner in which agency is involved. Whereas smuggled persons travel voluntarily, trafficked persons might start their trip voluntarily but coercion will play a role at some point in their journey (Shelley, 2014). Additionally, human smuggling entails the movement of people across international borders whereas trafficking can also happen within a country (Molenaar, Tubiana & Warin, 2018). It becomes clear that a distinction between the two groups is difficult as smuggled persons can become trafficked persons. However, it is important to acknowledge this distinction as the solutions to these problems are different (Reitano, 2016).

Researcher 2 notes that prior EU research and policy documents were not clear in their acknowledgment of the distinction between human trafficking and human smuggling and conflated the two. This is further supported by Reitano in his research paper on the Khartoum Process (Reitano, 2016). The EUTF and its policy documents do a sufficient job in acknowledging the difference and make the distinction between “migrant smuggling” and “human trafficking” (EUTF, 2020 [emphasis added]). In this research we will mainly focus on migrant smuggling as we argue that this group of people, because of their voluntary choice to migrate, provide for a good understanding of how migrant smuggling is related to the root causes which are addressed by the EUTF.

The human smuggling business is based on supply and demand (Raineri, 2018). People make the choice to migrate, which makes them the buyers or demanders on the market. The sellers or suppliers of the market are the people willing to smuggle the migrants in return for money. There is a compelling misconception of smugglers by European media and policy makers which consequently leads to policies failing to take into account the entire role of the smuggling industry. An example is the stated goal in the EUTF Factsheet on the North of Africa window to “fight the vicious economy of smugglers and traffickers” (EUTF, 2020, p.4). This statement fails to understand the smuggling industry in a wider historical African context (International Crisis Group, 2017). To illustrate, the French word ‘passeur’ has a much more positive connotation than the English word ‘smuggler’ (Raineri, 2018; Golovko, 2019).

The smuggling industry is a large source of income for many individuals in the countries where the EUTF has set up specific projects trying to counter and undermine the business and is “tolerated, normalized and institutionalized” (Raineri, 2018, p.69). The city of Agadez, one of the main destination and transit cities in Niger, provides a clear example (Kipp, 2018). We will come back to this example in the case-study section of this part of the research. Additionally, it is important to understand the nature of human smuggling networks. Prior to EU intervention, the networks were horizontal, informal and non-hierarchical structures (Golovko, 2019).

The EUTF and its efforts

Several projects and efforts can be identified within the larger framework of the EUTF. The Khartoum Process is a joint effort by both European and Horn of Africa countries, which is partly sponsored by the EUTF. One of its key goals is to strive for “identifying and implementing concrete projects to address trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants” (Khartoum Process, 2016). As always it is important to acknowledge that this is not the only EU project in the region that is addressing this problem. However, the budget of EUR 40 million allocated to the Khartoum Process from the EUTF budget is the largest proportion of the fund (Reitano, 2016).

In the Khartoum Process, the action plan states that there should be focus on the promotion of “a victim-centred approach” (Khartoum Process, 2016), which aims to support and protect the victims of human smuggling and trafficking. Furthermore, the action plan places the responsibility to combat irregular migration on the source countries. This, in return, is made possible by investing in criminal-justice and law-enforcement instruments (Reitano, 2016). The victim-centred approach portrays migrants as passive victims in the human smuggling process. This resonates with the argument presented above that the human smuggling market is composed of both the supply element, and the often-neglected demand element. This is highlighted by the fact that oftentimes smugglers do not instigate migration and that the choice to migrate is mainly due to personal decisions (Golovko, 2019).

As Niger is the main transit country for migrants heading to Libya, large sums of money have been sent to curb migration, including EUR 230 million from the EUTF in 2018 (Molenaar, Tubiana & Warin, 2018). In Niger, under pressure from the European Union, the 2015 anti-smuggling law was adopted (LOI N36 Relative au trafic illicite de migrants relative, 2015). Its enforcement, however, only started more than a year later in mid-2016 (Tubiana, Warin, Saeneen, 2018). This law criminalised the smuggling of people and led to arrests of smugglers and the confiscation of their vehicles (Molenaar, 2018). The law was met with local discontent and in 2017 the authorities reportedly stopped arrests and admitted that it had been responsible for an increase in banditry (Tubiana, Warin, Saeneen, 2018).

The high hurdle paradox

As mentioned above, the instruments employed to achieve this goal are mainly based on a criminal-justice and law-enforcement approach. This is illustrated by the implementation of the 2015 anti-smuggling law in Niger. However, as is made clear by Triandafyllidou (2018, p.3), increasing restrictions on migration has the possibility of creating other unintended negative effects:

“Increasing restrictions on migration or asylum seeking risks perpetuating a vicious circle: the restrictions generate irregular migration, increasing the risks and costs to migrants and their dependence on smuggling networks, the latter of which turn to more sophisticated methods to avoid controls, and hence of course provide reasons for even more restrictions and heightened controls.”

Increasing restrictions to the human smuggling industry may, in the short-term, decrease the number of people migrating. However, there are serious flaws in this argumentation which consequently lead to negative unintended effects. Admittedly, when first implemented, the EU interventions were fairly successful. In the Agadez region fewer smugglers are in operation and the ones which remain have had to adapt their methods (Micallef, Horsley & Bish, 2019). However, as Molenaar shows, the interventions targeted “mainly low-level facilitators of migration who were often unaware of the

illegality of their actions” (Molenaar, 2018, p.2). Additionally, the adaption of methods has resulted in increased difficulty in tracing the smuggling routes which, in return, have become more dangerous (ibid.; International Crisis Group, 2017). Consequently, “as smuggling activities are pushed underground, the networks become more closed, less accessible and more professionalized” (Golovko, 2019, p.31). The difficulty in accurately measuring and tracing the flows makes it complicated to accurately estimate the decrease of migrants due to the specific restrictions on human smuggling (ibid.).

The paradox of this unintended effect is thus that of a high hurdle. Restrictions, at first, might lead to a decrease in migration flows. However, “the higher the hurdles the more professionalized the assistance unauthorized migrants (and asylum seekers) will need” (Triandafyllidou, 2018, p.2). The restrictions have also led to a change in the structure of the smuggling networks. Whereas first they were loosely organized informal networks, now they have become formal, structured organizations with fixed hierarchical roles (Golovko, 2019). The EUTF projects have led to the “small fish in the human smuggling pond” being caught, giving the sharks, the criminal kingpins, more space to roam freely (Molenaar, 2018, p.4).

When conducting our interviews this paradox of criminalising smuggling became even more apparent. On the one hand, interviewees state that the criminalization led to a decrease in the amount of migrants entering Europe after the crisis which, in part, can be attributed to the successful implementation of EUTF projects and policies. Several interviewees pointed out that

indeed some human smugglers went underground and continued their practice and, in some cases, converted to more criminal and dangerous practices including human trafficking. With Academic 2 stating that “EU policies are pushing people into more specialised directions” and Diplomat 4 even disagreeing with us arguing that “human smugglers are criminals”. However, these issues are seen as anticipated risks taken by the EUTF and these side-effects are accepted as collateral damage. The significant decrease in migrant smuggling was achieved, even though some smugglers resorted to more criminal or underground activities.

Others argued that the increased organised criminal activities of human smugglers should not be seen as mere side-effects and state that by pushing human smuggling underground they will pop up somewhere else making use of more difficult routes. Another aspect worth mentioning is that certain smugglers were involved in “playing a double game”. After receiving EU funding militias and/or smugglers would intercept migrants, receive money and re-smuggle these migrants thus receiving double the amount of money. Researcher 1 echoed this and highlighted the specific risk of women being vulnerable to re-trafficking practices when no sustainable reintegration plans are available. According to Researcher 3, the only way to solve the problem is not by criminalizing human smuggling, as done and failed by implementing Law 2015-36 in Niger, but by regularising it. Other interviewees argue that people first involved in the human smuggling business resorted to other income methods by engaging with criminal activities such as drug trafficking or resorted to more extreme religious affiliations such as jihadism. Additionally, an interesting point mentioned by Diplomat 5, was that organised crime and human smuggling cannot be tackled by single countries alone. As human smuggling often is across borders and part of larger regional migratory routes it is necessary to have a larger regional plan to address the possibilities of organised crime rather than single countries trying to tackle the problem.

Unanticipated, unintended and unjust?

The EUTF project under the name of the ‘Reconversion Plan’ (Molenaar, Tubiana & Warin, 2018, p.39), aimed to address one of the unintended consequences of the restrictions on smuggling. Many individuals who had once earned their income through the human smuggling business found themselves without a job. This plan intended to provide the affected individuals with funding to set up new economic projects (EUTF, 2018). However, this project has faced many difficulties ranging from structural design flaws through to the implementation process (Molenaar, 2018). The municipalities in the Agadez region set up a list with the names of individuals who directly lost income due to the new restrictions on smuggling. It was estimated that sponsoring these 6,565 individuals would cost at least

EUR 400 million. The EUTF, in comparison, funded a small pilot project with a budget of EUR 500,000 (ibid.)

Academic 1 highlights the flaws of the plan by stating that the “main mistake was not the quantity of the funds but rather the procedure.” Researcher 2 echoes this by stating that it is “not a lack of money but rather that this money is not given to the right people”. According to this interviewee, the money, intended to be received by former smugglers, was issued to politically well-connected people who were not involved in the smuggling business instead of this broader pool of intended beneficiaries. In another interview, Researcher 4 substantiated this argument by stating that the Reconversion Plan in Niger was “a hollow plan from the start”. According to this researcher, the Reconversion Plan was set up to fail and it should have been implemented from a more broader macroeconomic perspective.

Obviously, the Reconversion Plan was a limited project in a particular region and replicable conclusions can not necessarily be made based on this specific case. The Reconversion Plan was set up to counter possible unintended effects, such as the loss of income for human smugglers. However, the plan failed due to a lack of funding, but most importantly due to a lack of adequate implementation processes.

Conclusion

This section set out to show the possible unintended effects that occur when focusing on criminalising an increasing restrictions on human smuggling. Increasing restrictions might lead to a decrease in migration flows in the short-term. However, possible negative unintended effects are overlooked when using this cause-effect logic and in the long-term it might not hold true. One of the unintended consequences identified was the loss of income for many individuals whose livelihood was connected to that of the smuggling industry. Another unintended consequence is that the smuggling networks are now formal, structured organizations which have continued underground and are increasingly dangerous. The relatively small amount of funding by the EUTF highlights the lack of will on the part of EU donors to help solve the unanticipated and unintended problems their funding has created.

6.3 Further exacerbating poor governance in recipient countries

Many African countries have been suffering from various fundamental challenges, “ranging from demographic pressure, extreme poverty, weak social and economic infrastructure, internal tensions and institutional weaknesses to insufficient resilience to food crises and environmental stress” (EUTF-Our mission, n.d.); in this context, instability, forced displacement and irregular migration can be increasingly witnessed in these areas. The EUTF aims at addressing the root causes of these problems. However, security, democracy, human rights protection, and sustainable development cannot be guaranteed without good governance (Stetter & Tocci, 2019, p.7). The target countries of the EUTF generally rank at the bottom of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (World Bank, 2019), including Libya, Niger, and Eritrea. Although the EUTF sets governance improvement as one of its strategic objectives and tries to make a tangible difference, based on the extensive literature review and semi-structured elite interviews, this paper argues that the poor governance in recipient countries is still being further exacerbated unintentionally by the funded projects of the EUTF.

There are four strategic foci of the EUTF, namely “greater economic and employment opportunities”, “strengthening resilience of communities”, “improved migration management”, and “improved governance and conflict prevention” (EUTF-Our mission, n.d.). However, many researchers (for example, Venturi, 2017; Venturi & Ntousas, 2019) highlight that the actual practice of the EUTF for Africa is largely conditioned by European short-term needs - curbing and securitising migration, without sufficiently taking the local interests into account. This hinders the reforms in local governance. For example, Libya has the worst governance indicator in almost all governance dimensions of the three case countries, including ‘political stability and no violence’, ‘government effectiveness’, ‘regulatory quality’, ‘rule of law’, and ‘control of corruption’ (World Bank, 2019). Nevertheless, all of the eleven projects of the EUTF in Libya are categorised into the one sole objective of “improved migration management”, whilst no projects are aimed at improving its domestic governance (EUTF- Libya, n.d.).

This is an example of how European short-term migration needs take precedence over the official foci of the EUTF.

Venturi (2017) further argues that the finance of the EUTF with the focus on controlling migration is “at the cost of ongoing and planned development activities”, including the efforts to realise good governance in Africa (p.24). As some of the key implementers of the EUTF projects, NGOs sometimes even find themselves pressured to change their agenda and “relocate their headquarters on migratory transit routes” and to focus on young men who are most prone to be migrants to the EU, rather than vulnerable women and children (De Guerry et al., 2018, p.27). This would twist the efforts that NGOs make to improve governance such as poverty eradication and the protection of women and children, unintentionally fuelling poor governance in the recipient countries of the EUTF, instead of improving governance as it planned initially.

What is more, most of the EUTF projects (more than 80 per cent) are implemented by Member States agencies, UN agencies, and NGOs (European Commission, EUTF, 2017, 2018, 2019). The role of partner countries (that is, recipient countries) is quite limited in the implementation, even though there is an increase in the implementation percentage that recipient countries occupy (from 5 per cent in 2017 to 14.8 per cent in 2019), presented in the annual reports of the EUTF (ibid). Amongst the three case countries, only Nigerien authorities are the direct implementers or co-implementers in the quarter of projects conducted in Niger. This means that donor agencies and NGOs primarily undertake the tasks that the recipient governments should do to offer public service to the citizens and to promote sustainable development in these countries, which unintentionally makes these governments “escape accountability for their developmental failures” and additionally pushes the outsourcing tendency of authoritative responsibilities in various fields, such as economic development, security, and service provision, in recipient countries (Newby, 2010, p.12).

Even worse, little direct involvement of the recipient governments in implementing the EUTF projects might further unintentionally create opportunities for these governments to redirect resources that would have been spent on these purposes into other activities that can “help them maintain their power”, such as “military and personal appropriation funds”(Moss, Pettersson, & van de Walle, 2006; Newby, 2010, pp.10-12). This could undermine the incentive and pressure for recipient governments to improve their governance capacity and further deteriorate the poor governance in recipient countries. Such a ‘fungibility’ is more likely to occur in countries with dubious governments, and Libya, Niger, as well as Eritrea, are all “authoritarian” countries based on the Economist Democracy Index (The Economist, 2019).

Although some recipient governments directly participate in the implementation of projects, the EUTF projects may still unintentionally deteriorate the bad governance in these recipient countries. For instance, corruption in the domestic governmental agencies is commonly perceived by the Nigerien public, and the mechanisms such as the parliament cannot control it (Ali Idrissa, 2018, as cited in De Guerry et al., 2018), but it does not stop the EUTF from providing EUR 70 million for the Nigerien government in the form of budget support in the project – State Reconstruction Contract in Niger Complementary to SBC II in Preparation / Support to Justice, Security and Border Management in Niger. This is considered as a “controversial tool” (De Guerry et al., 2018, p.25). Since it is very difficult for the budget support funding to be tracked (Diplomat 5), it is tricky to ensure that the Nigerien government can use the budget support offered by the EUTF in a transparent way, which is likely to further intensify corruption. In this context, the loss of legitimacy of the local governmental agencies in public might be further deteriorated, partly because of the unintentionally intensified corruption and the public perception that the local governments are becoming the proxy of the EU. This is detrimental for the improvement of governance capacities of local authorities in recipient countries.

Besides that, the funding support offered by the EUTF could lead to and intensify the dependency of recipient countries on foreign aid. Raineri and Bâ (2019) pinpoint that some of the Nigerien ministries have “almost entirely” been relying on international aid, including EU funding (p.19). Such a heavy dependence urges the Nigerien government to prefer to satisfy its main donors such as the EU rather

than its citizens (Researcher 2, which “clearly derogates from the principles of good governance” in African recipient countries (Raineri & Bâ, 2019, p.20). Researcher 1 seems to be reluctant to agree with the foreign aid dependency tendency, and he argues that the EUTF projects could be able to strengthen institutionalisation in local governments in some cases. However, he still pinpoints that the institutionalisation is “donor-driven”, which means that the focus shift of local institutions will only be promoted by a shift of focus of the main donor – the EUTF.

In addition, since the EU highlights that “budget support favours true partnerships” (European Commission, n.d.), the EUTF might unintentionally empower the semi-authoritarian Nigerien government to some extent by providing direct budget support, which will be discussed in detail in the next section.

The High Authority for the Consolidation of Peace (HACP), placed under the supervision of the Presidency of the Republic of Niger, is responsible for undertaking two projects, including Rapid Economic Impact Action Plan in Agadez (PAIERA), and Stabilisation and Socio-Economic Strengthening of Populations Affected by Irregular Migration in Transit Areas in Niger. However, the main efforts of the EUTF in fighting irregular migration and border control lead to increasing discontent at the local level as the local Nigerien populations rely heavily on migration for the livelihood given that Niger is a vital transit country and “major smuggling hub” (Benattia, Armitano, & Robinson, 2015; International Organization for Migration, 2020). These two EUTF projects are perceived insufficient to counterbalance the adverse effects of repressive anti-migration actions on the local economy, which further exacerbates popular discontent in Niger (De Guerry et al., 2018, pp. 26-27). Since these two projects are conducted by central-governmental agency HACP, the strong discontent in certain local areas, especially transit areas, might unintentionally cause decentralisation and political instability or crises (Raineri & Bâ, 2019; Venturi, 2019), which poses risks to the intended good governance efforts.

To summarise, the EUTF could unintentionally exacerbate poor governance in recipient countries, even though improving governance is one of its strategic objectives. The EUTF’s overemphasis on migration marginalises other aspects of development aid, and its finance is even at the cost of other aspects, including seeking good governance, unintentionally fueling poor governance in recipient countries. Also, in most of the cases, donor agencies and NGOs replace recipient authorities to offer public service and promote sustainable development based on the implementation arrangement of the EUTF projects, unintentionally making these recipient governments escape accountability for their bad governance and developmental failures and even redirect the domestic resources to maintain their power, particularly in dubious countries. Niger directly undertakes the EUTF projects in some cases, but these projects might still unintentionally break the intended good governance efforts. The offered budget support may unintentionally exacerbate corruption and the loss of legitimacy of governmental agencies in Niger. Also, it could further lead to the aid dependency tendency of recipient governments, unintentionally hindering the improvement of the governance capacity of the recipient governments. Besides those, the insufficiency of EUTF projects to counterbalance the negative impact of anti-migration efforts on the local economy could lead to growing local discontent and possible decentralisation as well as political instability.

6.4 Empowering dubious governments

As of 2018, 12 percent of EUTF funds were directed at projects implemented by partner countries, amounting to a total of EUR 299.02 million. The EUTF is funding projects in 26 countries (European Commission, 2019). Eleven of these 26 countries are classified as “authoritarian” by The Economist Democracy Index 2019. On a scale from 1 to 10, all three case study countries are classified as “authoritarian”. Libya is ranked the lowest with a score of 2.02, followed by Eritrea with a score of 2.37 and Niger with a score of 3.29 (The Economist, 2019). The fact that so many funds are spent on cooperation with governments that are categorised as non-democratic raises the question of whether the EUTF unintentionally plays a role in empowering these “authoritarian” governments.

This section sets out to test whether the EUTF may indeed empower dubious governments, and most importantly, to understand why this unintended effect is present (i.e. not exhaustively addressed by policymakers and implementers). It is divided into three parts. First, this section will give a short overview of EUTF engagement with dubious governments. Second, this section will give a brief literature review and introduce some central concepts on the issue in question. Third, this section will lay out findings from the interviews in light of the theory. This section will conclude that the EUTF does, to some extent, empower dubious governments. Moreover, diplomats and policymakers make a dual case for the EUTF by on the one hand arguing that the EUTF anticipates this unintended effect and on the other hand justifying the fact that the EUTF does not exhaustively address this unintended effect based on the belief in a trade-off between positive impact and what Diplomat 4 refers to as a “clear conscience”.

EUTF cooperation with recipient governments

In Niger, the EUTF is involved in two projects related to the Nigerien government. Both are primarily aimed at directly combating irregular migration by promoting stability and border security enforced by the Nigerien state. The biggest project in terms of monetary size is the Contract relating to the Reconstruction of the State in Niger as a complement to the SBC II under preparation / Support to Justice, Security and Border Management in Niger project. Its overall objective is “to help eradicate poverty, promote sustainable and inclusive growth and consolidate democratic and economic governance” (EUTF, 2020). In accordance with its high budget, it has a broad scope of specific goals, including but not limited to strengthening the financial capacity of the government to maintain peace and stability and the capacity of the different national security forces to enforce security and border management.

The other project is the Creation of a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) for the fight against criminal networks linked to irregular immigration, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, which is aimed at strengthening the national police services and improving the resolution of investigations related to the fight against smuggler networks (EUTF, 2020).

In Libya, the EUTF is partnering with the Italian Ministry of Interior in supporting “competent Libyan authorities” with its Support to Integrated border and migration management in Libya project. As further elaborated on in the section on border guard violence, this project sets out “to strengthen the capacity of relevant Libyan authorities in the areas of border and migration management, including border control and surveillance, addressing smuggling and trafficking of human beings, search and rescue at sea and in the desert” (EUTF, 2020).

In Eritrea, the EUTF is taking more of a ‘root causes’ approach than in Niger and Libya. The EUTF is partnering with the United Nations Development Programme in cofinancing the Strengthening Eritrea’s National Statistics and Macroeconomic Statistics Systems (SENS) project, aimed at strengthening Eritrea’s statistics systems. The overall objective is “to strengthen the economic governance capacity of the Government of the State of Eritrea” (EUTF, 2020). The specific objectives are divided into improving the availability and access to statistics and to strengthen the cohesion of the national statistics systems of Eritrea.

To sum up, EUTF-funded projects are directly involved with supporting state institutions, specifically capacities of national state organs (Niger and Eritrea) and local security forces (Niger and Libya; further elaborated on in the sections on border guard violence and organised crime). Rather than investigating the direct way in which these projects may cause an increase in violence against refugees (see for example the section on border guard violence), this section analyses the way in which these projects may have a somewhat broader impact on empowering recipient governments with a dubious human rights record or other flaws in unintended ways.

The donor’s dilemma

In light of the goal of improved governance and conflict prevention set out by the EUTF as one of the four strategic axes, the risk of unintentionally empowering authoritarian governments is problematic. There might be a so far unrecognised trade-off between the goals of “promoting conflict prevention, addressing human rights abuses and enforcing the rule of law” (European Commission, 2019).

International development policymakers widely recognise the effectiveness of delivering socio-economic development aid through national governments and institutions in developing countries. Aid to governments may contribute to development in a country, but this aid may also increase the power of the government to do other things than furthering development goals. This raises the question of whether aid may have the unintended effect of increasing government repression and human rights abuses (Dasandi and Erez, 2017). Recipient governments may also use the donor-recipient relationship to secure regime authority and legitimacy by attracting foreign aid (Fisher, 2013). This potential for aid to strengthen the position of recipient governments with a dubious human rights record constitutes the “donor’s dilemma” (Dasandi and Erez, 2017).

Aid does not have a strong impact on democracy per se (Knack, 2004), and neither does successful long-term development (de Mesquita and Downs, 2005). Nevertheless, if used in appropriate ways, aid can promote positive political change. A popular tool to help initiate a process of political democratisation and liberalisation is political conditionality. Multiple studies have shown the ways by which tying political conditions to aid can provide a strong incentive for recipient governments to democratise, especially if they have a secure domestic power base (Knack, 2004; Wright, 2009).

Empowering dubious governments may be unintended, but it is not necessarily unanticipated (see theoretical section above and De Zwart, 2015 for a discussion of the difference between unintended and unanticipated consequences). The EUTF operates an extensive evaluation and risk-assessment mechanism itself. In the EUTF for Africa Risk Register, “Wrong perception that EUTF-funded actions support security & migration agenda of countries violating human rights” is identified as a risk with a likelihood of 4 out of 5. Evaluating project objectives and activities during the formulation phase is listed as a mitigation strategy, but there is no explicit evaluation of the role of conditionality in EUTF project formulation and negotiation (EUTF, 2019).

Because the EUTF evaluation reports only evaluate the direct outcomes of a project rather than the way in which the EUTF negotiated the terms of a project with the recipient government, the risk of partnership with these governments per se and ways in which the EUTF may or may not try to address these issues will be a key point of inquiry in the interviews. These two issues will be the basis of interviews regarding the “donor’s dilemma” of the EUTF.

Anticipation and justification

Our interviews support the thesis that the EUTF is prone to the donor’s dilemma and that it should take this duly into account. One instance in which the EUTF directly legitimised a dubious government was described by Diplomats 1, 2, 3 and 4, all either involved in the negotiation of the EUTF or implementation of EUTF projects. They contend that legitimising the militia controlling Tripoli as the “competent Libyan authority” was questionable at best and regrettable at worst. Diplomat 3 points out that the Italian government played a leading role in setting up the bilateral agreement which the EUTF started funding only later, but overall the diplomats are critical of the role of the EUTF in particular in legitimising the Libyan authorities. Researcher 2 mentions that after receiving EU funding the Nigerian government became less concerned with satisfying its own population vis-a-vis attracting more funding by satisfying EU interests. This section will now go on to give an overview of how the interviewees explained and at times defended the inability or unwillingness of the EUTF to exhaustively address this unintended effect upon acknowledging that it was anticipated.

The view that the unintended effect of empowering dubious governments was anticipated is either explicitly or implicitly acknowledged by all interviewees by discussing why empowering dubious governments was justified rather than why it was not anticipated. Academic 2 stresses that empowering

dubious governments is a classic development dilemma not unique to the EUTF, which means that it ought to be taken into account in the development phase (along with the risk of exacerbating poor governance discussed above). This view is further supported by Diplomat 3, who explicitly states that the unintended effects regarding dubious governments were anticipated by EUTF policymakers. The view of Diplomat 3 is that the priority was to decrease irregular migration, which meant that negative effects such as empowering dubious governments were accepted (this point will be further discussed in the chapter below). Whereas not every diplomat explicitly acknowledges the anticipation of this unintended effect, none of them mentions the EUTF not anticipating this unintended effect as a reason for its occurrence.

Upon either explicitly or implicitly acknowledging that the EUTF anticipated this unintended effect, diplomats generally go on to justify its occurrence. Asked about the risk of empowering dubious governments in the context of the EUTF, Diplomats 1, 2, 4 and 5, all either involved in the negotiation or monitoring of the EUTF, emphasise that refraining from action may also cause harm and unintended effects. Diplomats 1 and 2 mention the example of Eritrea, where the operating context is so difficult that setting conditionalities would make it impossible to operate. Researcher 5 also emphasises that conditionality may have an adverse effect on development goals.

Based on the interviews, diplomats share the view that having to deal with authoritarian, illegitimate or rogue regimes at least to some extent is inevitable when attempting to achieve development and migration goals. Diplomat 4 justifies EU budget support to the (semi-)authoritarian Moroccan authorities to combat irregular migration by saying “that’s how international relations is”. Although the EUTF was not directly involved in setting up this cooperation, it is reflective of the mindset of policymakers involved with the EUTF. Also touching upon the Libyan example, Diplomat 4 expresses the view that “Helping people is more important than having a clear conscience”.

Whereas the majority of diplomats and policymakers was under the impression that cooperation with governments can be justified to at least some degree, they also nearly always emphasise that in practice the EUTF was directly involved with dubious governments to a very low extent. They stress that hardly any direct funding of governments is taking place, and there are red lines and safeguards established for all agreements. Diplomats contend that the sensitivity of dealing with countries with a mixed human rights record has been sufficiently addressed in policy-making. The EUTF is careful and reserved with giving direct budget support to governments or local authorities. For instance, Diplomat 5 emphasises that governments do not get to spend EUTF funds on equipment that could be used against civilians. Moreover, Diplomat 5 mentions that in Sudan the EUTF has been trying to work with local or international actors as much as possible, and only with the government when absolutely necessary. Also in this case, simple direct budget support is out of the question.

As for the “anticipation” part of the pro-EUTF narrative, none of our 14 interviewees explicitly rejected the idea that the EUTF anticipated the risk of supporting dubious governments. Regarding the “justification” part, there was less of a consensus, especially amongst academics and other researchers. For example, Researcher 5 says that the migration agenda of the EUTF not only allows for cooperation with dubious actors, but also actively incentivises it. This is because of the fact that people are more eager to leave politically oppressive and unequal countries than flourishing democracies, which means that countries with an oppressive or unstable political context are more likely to become an origin country. This may create a bias to work with autocratic governments rather than well-functioning democracies.

To conclude, there is a dual “anticipation-justification” narrative amongst EUTF policymakers and implementers. First, the unintended effect of empowering dubious governments through providing them with project funding without setting strong conditions for improving for instance the human rights situation or government transparency and accountability is regarded as anticipated. Second, when the EUTF does not sufficiently mitigate this goal it is regarded as justified based on the premise that development and migration goals take precedence over other goals, provided the EUTF is not empowering dubious actors when there are other ways. The “justification” part is inextricably linked

with the idea that some unintended effects are unavoidable in the development and migration sector, a notion which will be explored further in the chapter below.

7 Other unintended effects

7.1 Negative unintended effects

This research focuses on four specific unintended effects. However, it should be noted that the unintended effects used in the literature review and interviews do not encompass all possible unintended effects of the EUTF. During the interviews, other possible negative unintended effects were touched upon including the potential corruption of money due to the flexibility of the EUTF and the negative reception by local populations.

The first new negative unintended effect is related to the structural flexible set-up of the EUTF as a mechanism (see section 6.2 for more information on this). The flexibility of the EUTF provides the possibility of fast and flexible responses to the funding of new projects and learning from others which were already implemented. However, this flexibility has the potential of being misused. As Academic 1 responds, the flexibility of the EUTF “increases the chances that money can become diverted”. If money from the EUTF ends up in the wrong hands which do not use the EUTF money for the right purposes, this can lead to consequences that are not wanted by European countries and populations.

The second negative unintended effect relies more on the general reception of the EUTF by the local population in recipient countries. Researcher 2 mentions that the “Libyan people perceive the government as playing a proxy role for the European Union”, this was further echoed in another interview (Researcher 5). European funding in general, and the EUTF in particular, can be perceived as the funding used to further develop and achieve its own goals without actually trying to solve problems on the ground that affect local populations. To illustrate, the Law 2015-36 in Niger, criminalizing human smuggling and trafficking, was very much a European idea and was implemented keeping in mind the EU agenda instead of actually “taking into account what was ‘good’ for the country”(Researcher 2). However, after it became apparent that a large part of the economy of the country was based on human smuggling, the Nigerien government decided to stop arresting smugglers and effectively withdrawing the law. It is understandable that local populations thus might view the EUTF negatively, if they feel that their own governments are merely pawns in the larger European chess game. Additionally, Researcher 2 stresses that the views of local populations are, to a certain extent, justifiable. The example mentioned is Libya, where the boats, salaries and equipment financed by EUTF projects to intercept migrants were simultaneously used by militias in Libya to fight a ‘second’ civil war.

7.2 Positive unintended effects

This research has mainly focused on the possible negative unintended effects of the EUTF. However, during conducting the interviews and furthering our research, it became clear that an in-depth understanding of all unintended effects of the EUTF cannot overlook the possibility of positive unintended effects. As indicated in section 2.1, positive unintended effects are desirable and thus without anticipating these effects do build upon the goals set out for certain decisions. In this research, desirable (positive) unintended effects are effects that might further contribute to the goals of addressing the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration and improving migration management when implementing the EUTF projects.

The first positive unintended effect is the potential discouragement of irregular migration by former migrants. When migrants return home, making use of for example voluntary repatriation, they bring with them stories of the dangerous and difficult experiences of migration. Thus, the intended goal of the EUTF for this specific aspect of migration is the (voluntary) returning of migrants to their homes. Simultaneously, an unintended effect can be identified of migrants becoming educators and warners of the perilous journey to migrate and as a consequence discouraging other people possibly considering to

migrate. As Researcher 1 states: “migrants send messages”. The returning migrants build awareness in their home communities of the risks of irregular migration. A possible recommendation for the EUTF is to acknowledge the potential that returning migrants could discourage other members of the community to migrate. The efforts of the EUTF to decrease the number of migrants to enter Europe additionally made possible the discouragement of migration by former migrants. Based on the interviews, the returning migrants tell their stories in an informal, casual manner. If the EUTF were to capitalize on these stories and possibly transform these stories into more structural, educational warnings, this could be a way to further enhance this positive unintended effect.

The second positive unintended effect relates more to the structural set-up of the EUTF itself rather than specific policies or project outcomes. It is debatable whether these positive effects are also anticipated. However, we deem it important to mention these desirable, positive effects as it is here that the EUTF can use its own mechanisms and workings to further for its own benefit(s). One of the main features of the EUTF is its flexibility. Several interviewees mention this as one of the main strengths of the EUTF. The EUTF was set up as an emergency trust fund therefore, the flexibility was somewhat imperative and necessary to set up new projects and policies and build upon older ones. The intended effect of the flexibility of the Trust Fund was to be able to make relatively quick, ad hoc decisions to counter the root causes of migration. However, this flexibility provided for a platform for other possibilities with potential positive unintended effects. According to Researcher 5, the flexibility of the EUTF allows the EU representatives and recipient governments “to have real conversations about needs based on longer-term projections”. An example given was of a specific project in Burkina Faso which was not achieving its goals, the EUTF as a learning mechanism was able to realise this and thus change its focus. Additionally, because the EUTF built on programmes that were already present in the recipient countries, it was possible to start specific projects with a deep understanding of regional dynamics. The EUTF, by virtue of its flexibility, has the interesting potential to acknowledge, learn and re-evaluate when projects are not achieving the goals they intended to achieve. The EUTF should thus capitalize on this positive unintended effect as it is different from other development aid programmes by virtue of its ‘emergency’ label and can therefore be active in its responses.

Chapter 2: Why are there unintended effects?

A series of unintended effects of the EUTF and its projects are identified from the extensive literature review and elite interviews, and most of the unintended effects are negative. This chapter analyses the occurrence of these unintended effects, from the perspectives of unforeseeable unintended effects and foreseeable unintended effects, respectively.

1 The occurrence of unforeseeable unintended effects: monitoring and evaluation

Not all the effects of an intervention can be foreseeable (Jabeen, 2018; Morell, 2010; Sieber, 1981; interviewees such as Researcher 4. Drawing on the research of Jabeen (2018) and Pawson & Tilley (1997), social programmes, including international development aid, can be considered as sub-systems and are implemented in open complex systems or webs of relations where broader economic, political, cultural, and geographical aspects are interconnected in a dynamic situation. Therefore, it is important that the monitoring and evaluation of development aid programmes comprehensively takes into account the comprehensive effects on the complex and dynamic systems within which they operate. However, the monitoring and evaluation of the EUTF projects rely on predetermined and incomplete indicators (Consultant 1 & 2), which might be effective to measure and assess linear consequences, rather than the more comprehensive effects in complex and dynamic systems. Therefore, the occurrence of unintended effects of the EUTF projects is arguably inevitable, owing to the dynamic and complex contexts of implementing projects and the potential limitation of the primary monitoring and evaluation approaches adopted by the EUTF.

2 The occurrence of foreseeable unintended effects

In addition to the unanticipated unintended effects, many unintended effects were acknowledged as anticipated by the interviewees. We identified four possible explanations for why these effects occur despite being foreseeable.

2.1 Neglectance and acceptance

Many interviewees deem that the unintended effects identified from the literature are foreseeable, but they are accepted or neglected by the EUTF to a high degree. For example, Diplomat 3 and Academic 2 believe that these unintended effects are accepted as ‘collateral damage’ and can be mitigated or even solved by future development projects. The acceptance of unintended effects is inextricably linked to the belief that some unintended effects are unavoidable. Academic 2 classifies exacerbating poor governance and empowering dubious governments as classic unintended effects that every development programme has to be wary of. Asked about unintended effects in a general sense, Diplomats 1 and 2 emphasise that doing nothing may also cause harm and have unintended effects. Asked about border guard violence and the crackdown on human smuggling in Libya, Diplomat 4 acknowledges that “yes, human rights abuses happen”. With regards to budget support to the (semi-)authoritarian Moroccan authorities (not exercised by the EUTF but by another EU organ), Diplomat 4 says “that’s how international relations is”. Diplomat 4’s view that “helping people is more important than a clear conscience” reflects the idea that there is an inevitable trade-off between the two. To conclude, because some unintended effects are seen as problems inherent to international development projects, they are to some degree accepted by the EUTF.

2.2 Migration ‘obsession’

As Researcher 5 and Academic 2 highlight, there is an ‘obsession’ with (irregular) migration in EUTF policy-making. Diplomat 4 characterises the EUTF as a “migration management instrument”. In this sense, the reduction of migration becomes the dominant parameter to assess the success of EUTF projects, while crucial parameters to evaluate development aid such as the concrete benefits to local communities are generally overlooked.

When the EUTF was set up, there was little recognition for the political goals of the recipient countries (Academic 1). Therefore, the broader goals and interests of the EUTF do not necessarily meet the interests of recipient countries. According to Academic 2, African governments generally do not have a strong desire to reduce irregular migration to Europe. The reason for that is twofold. First, the number of people who migrate within the region by far outnumbers the number of people who migrate to Europe. Second, the relatively small number of people that do migrate to Europe can be an important source of income for their origin country in the form of remittances.

Researcher 5 emphasises that the EUTF is based on political rather than development-oriented priorities. When policy is designed from a migration perspective, policymakers care about other things than if it would be designed from a development perspective. Researcher 1 characterises this as a problem of measuring outcomes rather than impact. Academic 1 has a somewhat more radical view, pointing out that the EUTF may circumvent important local feedback on purpose in order to pursue its political migration goals. Even if the purposeful circumvention of feedback may be an overstatement, based on the interviews, it is safe to conclude that migration is higher on the EUTF agenda than development and other local concerns. This does not necessarily preclude the possibility of achieving goals unrelated to migration, but does run the risk of obscuring unintended effects unrelated to migration.

For instance, the EUTF-sponsored reintegration programmes in Guinea-Bissau only provided support for migrants returning from an attempted journey to Europe while migrants returning from attempts at regional migration were not eligible, which caused socio-economic disruption (Researcher 1). This unintended effect could occur because the EUTF focussed on outcomes (quantified by how many

potential migrants to the EU were being reintegrated) rather than impact (all the regional migrants that were not eligible; creation of local socio-economic cleavages).

While the interviewees generally agree that the EUTF started out as a “migration management instrument”, they evaluated its trajectory since its founding in November 2015 in different ways. For instance, whereas Academic 1 sees a decreasing importance of migration, Researcher 5 says that if anything the EUTF has become “more obsessed with migration”. Not all diplomats explicitly voiced their view on the future trajectory of the EUTF, but it is notable that Diplomat 4 says that the EUTF needs to adjust its focus from migration to what is referred to as “the root of all problems: poverty”. The EUTF has to be integrated into the bigger development picture, rather than development being integrated into the EUTF migration picture. This view very much aligns with the researchers’ criticisms described above, and offers potential for a rearticulated focus.

2.3 Institutional deficiency in the monitoring and evaluation system

The potential institutional deficiency in the monitoring and evaluation system could also result in unintended effects. Although the EUTF puts a lot of emphasis on project monitoring and evaluation - to such an extent that an ‘evaluation fatigue’ could be noticed (Researcher 1) - the current monitoring and evaluation system of the EUTF is still criticized as being superficial and insufficient by most of the interviewees, such as Academic 1, Academic 2, Diplomat 4, and Researcher 5. For example, according to Consultant 1 & 2, potential unintended effects are not involved in the monitoring system of the EUTF, more specifically, the Monitoring and Learning System (MLS), and merely the positive outputs of the EUTF projects are measured and further generalized in the MLS. Besides that, it is very difficult for the EUTF to sufficiently and timely understand what is exactly happening to the funding in recipient countries, which could be partly attributed to the increase in visible sub-contracts when implementing the EUTF projects (Researcher 2). Another possible reason could be that many main implementers, which link to the Ministries of Interior of the EU Member States, lack sufficient experience in the monitoring and evaluation of international development aid projects.

2.4 Responsiveness-accountability trade-off

Humanitarianism, development and peacebuilding are traditionally funded separately due to differing agendas (Hinds, 2015). The EUTF, in striving for emergency responsiveness, risks obfuscating accountability mechanisms in funding awards and in the separation of humanitarianism and development by diverging from the Humanitarian Principles. The rhetoric of the EUTF is to respond to an ‘emergency’ in the countries in which it operates, referring to the 2015/2016 migration crisis in Europe (Valletta Summit, 2015). The definition of an emergency in Africa as experienced by Europe is commented on by Academic 1, Diplomat 4 and Researchers 2, 3 and 5 in that it raises questions about the eurocentricity of focus; a crisis for whom? This has consequences for the potential contradiction inherent in needs-based programming - managing irregular migration is an issue that affects EU Member States and recipient countries differently. Whilst there certainly has been mutually beneficial programming, there should be more focus on ensuring funding responds to needs in programme countries too, with Researcher 5 highlighting the inappropriateness and lack of area knowledge of a relatively unsuccessful past agricultural EUTF project in Niger.

As a European mechanism driven by European political interests, the EUTF, in its adaptability and responsiveness, risks curtailing accountability through circumventing traditional tendering processes and localisation. Along with prioritising needs along eurocentric lines, this circumvention could risk reducing accountability to intended beneficiaries. This can also compound issues arising from a lack of local contextual knowledge, as highlighted by Diplomat 4 and Academic 1, and therefore can raise the possibility of unintended effects. Decreased formalised accountability checks and localisation does not necessarily have the effect of reducing local accountability if Member States are indeed acting in the best interests of recipients/beneficiaries through sufficient area knowledge. Hence, funding can be mutually beneficial.

In this sense, the EUTF has leveraged the crisis rhetoric in order to build trust. This in turn aims to increase the responsiveness of programming. Diplomat 5 and Researcher 5 both express their trust in Member State's information, sourcing and scrutiny, notably also saying that local knowledge is incorporated in needs-assessments sufficiently. Diplomats 1 and 2 further express trust in the evaluation mechanisms of the European Commission and European Court of Auditors. Although Member States were largely seen as competent, there are still gaps highlighted by Academic 1, Researcher 2 and Researcher 5 in local knowledge and input into projects in order to best assess needs. For example, the competency of the Italian Ministry of Interior to fulfil development projects is questioned by Academic 1.

In terms of accountability, Researcher 2 expresses concern in how responsibility is divided amongst the EUTF and recipients of funding, noting that there has been a trend towards increased subcontracting, especially in the case of Libya where the EU's formal position is against arbitrary detention in migrant centres (AU-EU-UN Taskforce, 2019). They argue that through subcontracts, the EUTF still indirectly contributes and indeed incentivises the continuation of said centres. Misappropriation of EUTF funding is also pointed out by Academic 1, who notes that regardless of evidence pointing to coast guard authorities engaging in human smuggling, funding continued. Questions surrounding accountability show that the EUTF's crisis-based responsiveness may hinder its ability and responsibility to foresee and react to potential unintended effects.

Implicit in this possibility of a responsiveness-accountability tradeoff are further tensions between humanitarian and development programming. Through attaining more flexibility and responsiveness, the crisis rhetoric allows for more short-term humanitarian interventions and non-tendered bidding procurement processes. Researcher 5 speaks of the focus in Brussels of cultivating on the Nexus. The synchronisation and cohesion of humanitarian goals with development (and peacebuilding) is referred to as the Nexus, with an aim of achieving a "transition from aid dependency to sustainable development" (ICVA, 2017). The EUTF actively promotes this with specific reference, as well as through its simultaneous aims of conflict prevention, economic development, migration management, and emergency response. However, the realignment of humanitarianism, development and peacebuilding is not as uncontentious amongst humanitarian actors, with DuBois commenting that "Hidden beneath the jingoism of 'ending need' lies the contradiction of shifting humanitarianism's overarching objective while simultaneously expecting that it will continue to exist, let alone honour its defining principles" (DuBois, 2016).

UN OCHA actively promotes the Nexus through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), claiming that they should serve as a joint aim for both the humanitarian and development sectors. The EUTF follows suit by aiming for alignment between EUTF objectives, the Valletta Action Plan and Sustainable Development Goals in its action plans (EUTF Action Document, 2018). In the Nexus approach, the sectors remain distinct due to the time, scale and type of intervention. This separation is preserved by the Humanitarian Principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence formally established by the UN GA in 1991 and 2004 (UN OCHA, 2017). However, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) raises questions surrounding the necessary "distance needed to maintain neutrality and independence" and the potential "slowing down of humanitarian response" when funding mechanisms are aligned between the sectors (ICVA, 2017). Humanitarian programming, as alluded to earlier, is per definition based on needs. Building on the previous argument surrounding possible tensions between needs-based and migration-based programming, the inclusion of Member States in humanitarian programming might serve to skew the visibility of needs along eurocentric lines or through a lack of area knowledge and localisation. Researcher 5 notes that this can create potential biases that may be better mitigated in other EU funding mechanisms where a larger buffer does exist between the often politicised and thus eurocentric Member State interests and those of implementers who aim to best capture local needs, such as in the European Development Fund.

Whilst removing buffers between Member States and implementers in principle serves to increase adaptability and responsiveness through removing lengthy bidding and procurement processes, caution must remain with regards to mitigating against potential biases in defining needs. Academic 1 also

highlights a potential lack of transparency in subcontracting and warns against a subsequent reduction in accountability. Whilst in practice the humanitarian sector is becoming increasingly politicised and the continuum model for intervention is threatened, the Humanitarian Principles serve as a buffer between the development and humanitarian sectors. The contradiction in the Principles then serving as a means of increasing cohesion is raised by the ICVA - whilst aware of the potential disruption that linking the Sustainable Development Goals to Humanitarianism under the New Way of Working (NWoW) will have, they ultimately believe “the literature on the NWoW clearly states that in linking to national targets, the prioritization of the most vulnerable must remain paramount, not compromised or traded off for the sake of a governments’ political priorities” (ICVA, 2017).

2.5 Conclusion

As discussed above, the extent to which the EUTF can be expected to respond to unforeseeable unintended effects is limited, and undoubtedly the complexity of operating contexts means that not all unintended effects can reasonably be foreseen. Building on this, foreseeable unintended effects can be either neglected or accepted by the EUTF. Interviewees regard a certain degree of unintended effects innate to any development programming in complex and dynamic contexts. This is balanced by the notion that although programming may not be without unintended effects, it is inherently better than doing nothing. When reward was perceived to outweigh risk, programming was *ex ante* identified as viable. This can potentially deinceivise risk reduction in programmes where reward is deemed to be high, most commonly in the most politicised cases such as Italy’s leading role in border management programmes in Libya despite high risks.

Whilst the foreseeability of unintended effects cannot be taken for granted, the ability of the EUTF to identify and respond to unintended effects that occur during implementation is limited by institutional deficiencies in the monitoring and evaluation systems. Whilst there was a general consensus among interviewees that monitoring and evaluation systems are improving, there were still large doubts cast over the effectiveness and coherence of monitoring and evaluation systems and, as Researcher 5 put it, there was perhaps a reluctance to learn on behalf of the Board. In this sense, the EUTF may have overlooked its capacity to improve as simply by ostensibly reducing irregular migration, it was seen as successful.

The deinceivisation of risk reduction in high-reward scenarios and the use of no-intervention as a control can potentially lead to oversights in mitigating potential foreseeable unintended effects by rendering them invisible or acceptable. Furthermore, the deficiencies in the monitoring and evaluation system can reduce abilities to respond to and adapt to new unintended effects as they are identified and reduce capacities for learning. This is largely facilitated by the ‘migration obsession’ detailed above. Reduction in irregular migration is not necessarily a reasonably attributable outcome to EUTF development programming, obfuscating the accuracy of the monitoring and evaluation systems. Therefore, programmes can be seen as successful without necessarily fulfilling due diligence in responding to local needs. By excessively focusing on migration, beyond deinceivising learning, local needs may be overlooked. This raises questions around the possible tension between needs-based and migration-based programming. The EUTF is unique in that it removes buffers that conventionally exist in EU development programming under the call of an ‘emergency’. Whilst this obfuscation serves to make funding faster and more responsive, it carries the risk of compromising accountability and the inclusion of Member States in humanitarian programming might serve to skew the visibility of needs along eurocentric lines or through a lack of area knowledge and localisation.

Chapter 3: Looking forward

Five years after the founding of the EUTF in November 2015, we asked our interviewees about their prognosis for the EUTF. In addition to this more or less ‘objective’ prognosis, we also focused on the somewhat more normative questions of how the EUTF can be turned into a long-term development mechanism for Africa, what institutional structure it should assume and which areas it should focus on.

There appears to be a consensus amongst the interviewees about the origins of the EUTF and the causes of its creation: the 2015/2016 migration crisis. Diplomat 3 formulates the reason for the creation of the EUTF as follows: “We gave 6 billion to Turkey, so we had to give 5 billion to 26 countries in Africa.”

This chapter will provide an analysis of our interviewees’ responses on what can be labelled as the ‘future’ of the EUTF. This will be done from three different angles: the institutional structure of the EUTF, the politics behind the EUTF, and the projects and programmes of the EUTF.

1 Structure of the EUTF

Academic 1 and Researcher 3 both see the pressing nature of ‘migration’ on the political agenda fade. Academic 1: “Migration as a priority will decrease on the EU agenda in the coming years, which may in turn allow for better deals to be negotiated under less pressure.” Researcher 3: “The crisis has passed. (...) How long are we going to throw money at this? The EUTF was crisis management, arising from [a bipartisan concern for the 2015/2016 migration crisis]. Now hopefully in the current calm, we can look behind the EUTF and the crisis moment.” The consequences of this observation would be twofold: on the one hand, it allows to start thinking about how the EUTF could develop into a long-term project; on the other hand, it may impact the existing linkage between migration and development aid that is keeping the EUTF together (Academic 2 refers to this as “migration-motivated development aid”). In the sense of addressing migration issues, Researcher 5 goes as far as to say: “The EUTF is over”. Diplomat 5 supports the depiction of Academic 1 and Researcher 3, describing how the EUTF was created as an instrument to respond to a crisis and that this crisis as such is regarded to be over. The “obligation” for the EU to assist in the countries it is currently supporting still remains, however, there continue to be high amounts of regionally displaced people and refugees, in particular in Eastern Africa, as pointed out by Diplomat 5.

The interviewees anticipate that, in one way or another, the EUTF will be integrated within the larger framework of the EU in the long term. Consultant 2 anticipates that the different areas in which the EUTF is active (e.g. development aid, reintegration support, etc.) will be divided over different departments of the European Commission. Consultant 2 also emphasises that the EUTF should focus on the continuation of its transnational approach to regulating migration. As far as its migration goals are concerned, Academic 2 adds that the EUTF is not about “controlling migration, but about making it regulated”. Researcher 3 shares this perspective, noting that the solution does not lay in criminalising migration but in regularising it.

Furthermore, Academic 2 says that when reforming the EUTF into a structural part of the EU development framework, it is important to take valuable learning points from the EUTF in its current form. Academic 2 ascribes this to the EUTF being an emergency trust fund first and foremost, where a lot of money was available right away. As Academic 1 notes, this stands in juxtaposition with previous EU mechanisms in the area of development aid such as the European Development Fund that benefits from having more accountability and transparency since it was not a response to a crisis, unlike the EUTF. Researcher 1 talks about the rationale of the EUTF as being about ‘fixing a problem’ (i.e. the migration crisis). This rationale sets constraints on the degree to which the EUTF can progress into more sustainable structures of development aid. Because there is the risk of “overstepping [their] line”, the EUTF cannot go about heavily investing in long-term (non-migration-related) development in its recipient countries. The creation of a more sustainable form of development aid through EUTF programmes will be addressed later in this chapter.

2 Politics

As mentioned above, the transition from the EUTF in its current structure to a new form was seen by some of our interviewees as an opportunity to critically evaluate it. To some interviewees, it seems that the Board is unwilling to learn and that there is no strong willingness to discuss changes to the system (according to Researcher 5) Yet, based on the literature and the sources that this research has covered

(and the existence of our research assignment to begin with) the EUTF seems willing to learn and improve its mechanisms.

Diplomats 1 and 2 point out that the European Commission is taking a more proactive stance in their communications regarding the EUTF, also referring to an increase in transparency and publicly accessible data on the EUTF. Academic 2 says that the EUTF cherishes research and is willing to invest in it: “There is a desire for independent research, specifically on the Horn of Africa, to get internal criticism and feedback.”. Academic 2 continues by describing how monitoring and evaluation requires researchers to “tell the story as it is”. Hence, it should go without saying that these researches can also be critical. It is then up to the EUTF to what extent these (critical) researchers are made public. Overall, Academic 2 says: “We [c.q. the researchers] are trying to be constructive. We are just concerned with improving the quality of lives of people in Africa.” Researcher 3 points out that researching the EUTF evidently means “writing about an extremely political topic”. Researcher 3 notes that they are taken seriously, and they will always be able to meet with e.g. delegations. Nevertheless, the researcher also describes that there is a tendency within the EUTF of “trying to fly under the radar”, as that would “make life easier.”

It emerges from the interviews that diplomats, academics and researchers contend that publications about the EUTF are closely scrutinised and that there are implications for the EUTF if these publications are negative. When looking at the EUTF for Africa Risk Register, it shows that in fact one of its highest and most likely risks is “Wrong perception that EUTF-funded actions support security & migration agenda of countries violating human-rights”. (EUTF , n.d.)

Besides monitoring on a project and organisation-level and the evaluation that happens on a mostly regional level, Academic 2 also refers to Altai Consulting that took up the task of evaluating the entire organisation and quantifying outcomes, where common denominators are necessary. This resulted in the Monitoring and Learning System that was produced by Altai, which will be discussed in the section below.

3 Programmes

If the EUTF is to continue – one way or another – it is important to look at take-away lessons from the specific projects and programmes of the EUTF. This section will provide an outline of the comments and experiences of our interviewees regarding the projects of the EUTF, by looking at three categories of contestation: the innovativeness of the EUTF, the flexibility of the EUTF, and the nature of its programmes.

3.1. Innovativeness of the EUTF

There is no consensus amongst the interviewees on how ‘innovative’ the EUTF is. Diplomat 3 says that a positive aspect of EUTF was that it built upon existing programmes in recipient countries. The presence of the EUTF in most of its recipient countries mainly consists of support to existing programmes and projects. According to Diplomat 3, this could be candidly described as “business as usual but with a lot more money.” Academic 1 adds that a large part of EUTF funding was simply taken from the existing European Development Fund and relabeled as the EUTF. Researcher 3 states that in Niger they merely see more of the same “typical development programmes”.

To the contrary, Consultants 1 and 2 describe that the EUTF has been very open for learning about its programmes and that it has initiated pilot programmes. Examples of this would be the focus on cross-border and cross-window programmes, and investing heavily in the creation of the Monitoring and Learning System.

3.2. Flexibility of the EUTF

Another issue of contention is the flexibility of the EUTF. A common concern amongst Researcher 2, 3, 4 and 5, was that the EUTF might not be swift enough at addressing the core issues of development aid. Researcher 3 describes that it takes a lot of time for the EUTF to implement this form of development aid in a new region with for example a lack of infrastructure. Additionally, as Researcher 2 and 4 highlight, the complicated issue of situations on the ground changing faster than project implementation means that there is a serious risk of not providing a timely and effective response. In light of the high number of stakeholders that are involved in each project, country, and region, streamlining processes is a commonly offered solution. Researcher 1 adds to this specific point that the EUTF is already heavily involved in many different ways in monitoring the effectiveness of its programmes (i.e. on a programme level, the level of the MLS, and the level of the Audit). Academic 1 sees potential in the big size and broad scope of the EUTF because of economies of scale: it increases the flexibility to implement widespread improvements on the designs of projects quickly.

3.3. Nature of the programmes

Improving the programmes of the EUTF is, based on the interviews we conducted, not simply a matter of more money, but a matter of procedure. (e.g. Academic 1). The interviewees differ on how to better the procedural workings of the EUTF. Ultimately, it is a combination of utilising the benefits of a transnational framework (that includes the unique nature of the cross-window and cross-region programmes of the EUTF) (Consultants 1 & 2; Diplomat 5) and, simultaneously, investing in ‘localisation’ of programmes.

3.3.1 – Expertise

With regards to the expertise of implementers of EUTF programmes, a certain distinction between different windows of the EUTF can be discerned. Academic 2 tells us that, in their opinion, enough specialists are present in the Horn of Africa. They do admit that it is complicated to make a claim like this, as the EUTF is a “vehicle for a set of initiatives” that require multi-level and multi-faceted expertise. Academic 1 tells us that in the SLC-region they have noticed a lack of expertise on the specificness of highly dynamic and complex contexts of programmes in implementing partners and Ministries of Foreign Affairs of EU member states. What is necessary according to them, is a clear and deeper understanding of the needs in specific regions and countries, in order to adequately assess what sort of development programme is necessary for what purpose. This requires, besides a more in-depth understanding of the area, a stronger needs assessment from the side of the recipient, than from objectives (e.g. on migration) set out by the EUTF. Researcher 5 describes this as a better understanding of regional dynamics.

This critique falls under a bigger objective that could be labelled as ‘knowing your recipient’. Besides a better understanding of specific contexts and regions a more active engagement with local actors is necessary, according to Diplomat 5 and Academic 1. Diplomat 5 mentions the need to improve legislation at a local level in relation to law enforcement and police. This is a complex area, however, as Researcher 1 stressed before one needs to be aware to not start governing a different country. Academic 1 mentions instead that there should be a stronger focus on local ownership for a successful implementation of the programmes by the EUTF: “Local actors feel dispossessed and circumvented as they are in a passive position.” This would also contribute to increasing knowledge and understanding of the area, allowing the EUTF to more adequately streamline its programmes. Diplomat 5 adds to this by stating that it allows for incorporating local populations’ feedback.

Researcher 1 provides another example of ‘knowing your recipient’ by stressing the need for more ‘aftercare’ as part of programmes. The success of programmes is only as strong as their continuation after the end date of a programme. To illustrate, returning migrants, upon arriving back in their home communities, face the same problems that caused them to leave to begin with. There is a lack of sustainable reintegration plans, as migrants are often plagued by debts due to them leaving or being

forced to return to the same context as where the problem started: “there is no linear progress when people return.” The broader lesson is that programmes should not focus as much on the individual, but rather focus on successful aid to the community of that individual.

3.3.2 – Monitoring and evaluation of programmes

Building on the argument of ‘aftercare’, a criticism surfaces of how the ‘success’ of programmes is expressed and emphasized. Academic 1 and Researcher 1 urge for a realistic view on the projects and their impact. This requires a shift in looking at impact or outcome, rather than merely output. A triangulation of local sources might not only give a more realistic view on the impact of the EUTF, but also aid in early recognition of points of improvement. As Researcher 1 puts it: “Outputs don’t really tell you much. It tells you whether or not you met the goals of your plan, not the long-term effects.”

Diplomat 1 and 2 stress that these sorts of criticisms are part of a broader discussion on development aid, not specifically the EUTF. It is evident to them that the countries where the EUTF operates are innately risky and complex environments.

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Appendix 1: interview dates

	Title	Interview date (2020)
1	Diplomat 1	22 April
2	Diplomat 2	22 April
3	Diplomat 3	22 April
4	Academic 1	27 April
5	Academic 2	28 April
6	Researcher 1	8 May
7	Researcher 2	15 May
8	Diplomat 4	26 May
9	Researcher 3	28 May
10	Consultant 1	11 June
11	Consultant 2	11 June
12	Researcher 4	17 June
13	Diplomat 5	24 June
14	Researcher 5	26 June