



# Joint Valletta Action Plan Follow-up

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## Lessons Learnt Report

Project implemented by ICMPD



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## Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CSO	Civil society organisations
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUTF	EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IO	International organisations
JVAP	Joint Valletta Action Plan
JVAP ST	Joint Valletta Action Plan Follow-up Support Team
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SOM	Senior Officials Meeting

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## 1. Introduction

Following its first three and a half years of implementation, the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) Partners decided to review the Valletta process, specifically to take stock of the JVAP reporting tool. The purpose of this report is to identify key lessons learned from running of the JVAP Database and related activities, including its key challenges, uses and benefits. This look back led to the elaboration of recommendations for improvement and future use.

### 1.1 Methodology

The Lessons Learnt exercise launched in November 2018 was conducted by the team supporting the Rabat and Khartoum Processes Secretariats (i.e. the MMD Support Project implemented by ICMPD), specifically the JVAP Follow-up Team (later referred to as JVAP FUT) which was in charge of developing the technical and operational aspects of the Follow-up, namely the JVAP Database. The JVAP reporting tool not only includes the JVAP Database per se, but also the related procedures (training sessions, data collection), and documentation that power and regulate the Database. The JVAP FUT applied a mixed research methodology, meaning that both quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (interviews adopting a representative research sample) methods were used to harvest information meant to feed this Lessons Learnt Report. Additionally, the JVAP FUT compiled short summaries that shed light on first-hand insider knowledge. More information on the methodology can be found in ANNEX 1.

The remainder of this report is structured into three sections. Section II (background) provide general information on the JVAP reporting process (section II), section III describes key findings regarding the JVAP Database, and offer recommendations that focus on how to strengthen and ensure the usefulness of the JVAP reporting Database and processes. The report concludes with a summary of main lessons learned and key take-aways (Section IV).

## 2. Background

### 2.1 The political process

In November 2015, the Valletta partners endorsed the JVAP at the Summit on Migration in Malta. Several high-level meetings took place since 2015 reporting on the implementation progress:

November and December 2015, Rabat and Khartoum SOMs – Cabo Verde, United Kingdom: Dialogue partners confirmed the mandate to follow-up on the JVAP.

- **June 2016, Valletta stock taking meeting – Belgium:** JVAP partners exchanged on the modalities of the Follow-up and prepared recommendations. The MMD Support Project was entrusted with the technical and operational aspects of the Follow-up. A data collection and analysis exercise was organised ahead of the 2017 Valletta SOM.
- **February 2017, Valletta Follow-up SOM – Malta:** The partners also called for equal attention to be given to the five domains. They reiterated their engagement and endorsed the establishment of the JVAP Database.
- **November 2017, Trilateral Meeting - Egypt:** The JVAP Database was launched and endorsed.
- **November 2018, Valletta Follow-up SOM – Ethiopia:** Partners discussed the Rabat and Khartoum progress reports, and formulated Joint Conclusions. In point 10, JVAP partners urged to ensure sustained provision of updated data. Point 11 called for an update of the JVAP to reflect delivery to date. Accordingly, a Lessons Learnt exercise was launched.
- **February/ March 2019, Rabat and Khartoum SOMs – Burkina Faso, Eritrea:** The preliminary results of Lessons Learnt activities were presented.

## 2.2 Development phases of the JVAP Database

The JVAP Database was designed, developed, tested, launched, and maintained during four main phases. In October 2016, the JVAP FUT elaborated the terms of references, requirements, and functionalities of the future JVAP Database. The team presented a prototype at the JVAP Follow-up SOM in Malta (February 2017) and received endorsement to pursue establishing the Database. The JVAP FUT developed and tested all features needed exclusively for data collection, cleaning, and searching prior to the launch of the pilot JVAP Database, in Egypt in November 2017. In 2018, the JVAP Database hosted the first online data collection exercise. The pilot JVAP Database was being further developed with its first data analysis functionality designed and developed in preparation for the November 2018 JVAP Follow-up SOM in Ethiopia. In 2019, the Lessons Learnt Report and endorsement of its recommendations may lead to further developments.

## 3. Key Findings

### 3.1 The JVAP reporting's objective

#### Background

The objective of the JVAP is for the African and European region to tackle migration challenges in spirit of solidarity, partnership, and shared responsibility. It includes 16 priority actions and 89 priority areas under which the partners supported implementation of initiatives. The JVAP's long-term objective is to ensure sustainability of these commitments.

#### Key findings

When asked whether those long-term objectives were currently being fulfilled, interviewees largely agreed they were: the JVAP Follow-up state-of-play is regularly discussed in the chosen Migration Dialogues, the JVAP partners use their legal and financial instruments for implementation, the implementation of the JVAP is delivered flexibly and efficiently. The speedy response of JVAP partners through funding various projects and drafting numerous policies directly shows that they followed-up on their commitments. Some interviewees conceded that more efforts has to be made within their country/ organisation to keep other JVAP partners better informed regarding their initiatives and their relevant financial instruments.

When asked about the data collection cycle or the Database, all interviewees had a hard time remembering due to the many months separating the data collection and the interview. Implicitly this means that none of the interviewed Focal/Contact Points used the JVAP Database for something other than the dutiful reporting of initiatives. In fact, according to survey results, 37% of respondents do not use the Database at this stage, for various reasons; either Focal/Contact Points lack time and skills but are interested to use it more, or Focal/ Contact Points lack interest as the JVAP Database is not needed to perform daily tasks, however, they mention that colleagues responsible for developing projects should be granted access (refer to section III.7)

The JVAP Follow-up shows the relation between the partners and the JVAP Database has evolved over time following a positive trend.

Nowadays, all interviewed partners could envision a potential and/or existing added value to the JVAP Database, which include:

- The JVAP Database ensures transparency of the JVAP Follow-up process thus promoting trust building across the regions.
- The visibility of commitments is assured.
- The JVAP Database gives an unprecedented access that JVAP partners could not achieve individually.
- The JVAP Database allows an overview that may avoid duplication of initiatives by different donors and implementing organisations in the field.

- The JVAP dataset exponentially improves the quality of each partner's macro-analyses: initiatives are recorded through a complex data collection exercise spanning over two continents in a Database that is subject to rigorous upkeep while ensuring real-time and up-to-date information is directly accessible to all JVAP partners.
- The JVAP dataset valuably substantiates the Dialogues' discussions with facts.
- A common repository is more practical than having to visit a plethora of national or institutional online databases (should they have been made publicly available).

The objective of providing a fully functional reporting tool has been achieved however, the 2015 intent of monitoring the progress of such commitments falls short in the present context. The JVAP partners are not yet reporting project outputs and thus efficiency of action cannot be evaluated, that is why the Database is a monitoring and reporting tool rather than its intended role as a monitoring and evaluation tool. The possibility to develop the monitoring and evaluation dimension of the Database should be discussed and agreed upon among partners. JVAP partners regret the current absence of an output mechanism that would help reap the rewards of their labour (namely a resource draining data collection/ cleaning procedure). In their view, a simple analysis tool allowing them to customise search requests and extract data in an engaging format (even without project results for the time being) would counteract the current lack of an output mechanism. The dissemination of fact-based analyses would further strengthen common understanding.

#### JVAP Follow-up Support Team input

The evolving nature of migration dialogues affects the JVAP Follow-up, thus the Database is in constant development. Since its pilot inception in October 2016, it has been regularly updated and improved in order to transpose the feedback received from the JVAP partners. The team was balancing out developing (and testing) additional technical functionalities and JVAP activities (such as training and data collection). A fruitful result of this balance was the analysis prepared and disseminated in the form of an infographic (see ANNEX 2) at the 2018 JVAP Follow-up SOM. Maintaining momentum the Lessons Learnt exercise and its recommendations will now allow further developments, namely setting-up a functionality enabling the generation and extraction of data in a customised and appealing report.

### 3.2 The JVAP topical structure

#### Key findings

In spring 2018, the JVAP Follow-up Support Team (later referred to as JVAP ST) proactively designed for the Focal and Contact Points a simplified table classifying the JVAP topical structure (5 domains and 89 priorities areas, 16 priority actions) using colour codes and structured numbering. This template was only meant to support data entry in the JVAP Database, but the team soon realised that it served a much larger and simpler purpose of clarifying the JVAP text per se. According to the survey respondents, that document is one of the most useful outputs disseminated by the JVAP ST: 68% always and 24% sometimes use it for orientation when collecting and entering data. This keen interest may be explained by the high turnover among JVAP partners acting as Focal and Contact Points and the need for easy-to-grasp, straight to the point supporting documentation to catch-up.

#### JVAP Follow-up Support Team input

Moving past the density of the JVAP text, JVAP partners also communicated about the JVAP structure's shortcomings via different avenues prior to the Lessons Learnt exercise, such as during training sessions and data cleaning feedback loops. The partners mentioned that the phrasing of the 89 priority areas and 16 priority actions make it difficult to attribute initiatives, for the following reasons:

- Priorities are dual, or even heterogeneous: combining more than one topic. As a result, assigning them to a project is difficult because only part of the priority description fits;
- Priorities are repetitive: similar topics are repeated in different combinations in several priorities. Contact Points may not share the same understanding and:

- assign their initiatives to all priorities listing a specific topic, hence inflating the number of attribution for several priorities and giving the impression that it is prominent, or;
- assign their initiatives to one arbitrarily chosen priority mentioning the topic (for lack of time in data entry) and thus inflating disproportionately one specific priority, leaving behind the impression that a large range of similar topics are not being tackled;
- Priorities are not always explicit: Contact Points have difficulties pinpointing what is unequivocally the most important aspect of a priority and often asked for additional guidance on how to understand the phrasing of certain priorities;
- Priorities are numerous: Contact Points sometimes assign all their projects to a transversal option called “cross-cutting priorities” created for specific purposes<sup>1</sup>, meaning some priorities may seem unaddressed but actually are. The “cross-cutting priorities” category cannot flow into the analysis of priorities therefore data is unexploited for lack of better assignment;
- Priorities are limited thematically: initiatives, which fit under a domain but do not match any priority, are assigned by default with the transversal option “cross-cutting priorities”. For example, agriculture is very prominent in the JVAP, but no mention is made of fishery although many of JVAP partners have a coastline and some littoral-related projects;
- Priorities are unbalanced: with an important share being dedicated to domain 1 rather than equally split on domain 2, 3, 4 and 5. In domain 1, it is also difficult for partners to identify whether a project is actually linked to migration or not.

### 3.3 Data collection

#### Background

As mentioned previously, a data collection and quality check process was initiated in 2018, lasting a total of 8 months (including a training session period). The data collection consisted of JVAP partners collecting and entering initiatives into the JVAP Database according to the following criteria:

- projects (programmes, initiatives, etc.) & policies (legislation, MoUs, strategies, bi-/multilateral agreements, etc.),
- covering one or more of the five domains and priority actions/areas of the Action Plan,
- funded by JVAP partners only,
- since November 2015.

JVAP partners were asked to update initiatives they had shared for the 2016 data collection as well as to complete them by adding initiatives they had funded or drafted since then. The challenge identified in merging the data from the Emergency EU Trust Fund (EUTF) and the pre-existing JVAP dataset was AKVO's (the EUTF Database) structural set-up, which does not support compulsory reporting on JVAP domains and priorities. Therefore, JVAP domains and priorities had to be added manually at a later stage, which impacted the JVAP ST resources.

By 4 September 2018, 40 entities (including countries, institutions and organisations) participated in the data collection: 13 out of 38 African countries, 0 out of 3 African institutions, 19 out of 31 European countries, 5 out of 6 European institutions, 3 out of 5 International Organisations.

#### Key findings

Overall, 90% of JVAP partners found it difficult to collect data internally, for various reasons.

- Challenges related to internal factors:
  - Data on policies and funded projects are not collected on the basis of their linkage with the JVAP, hence they may be scattered in different national institutions. Accordingly, staff from the various institutions need to be prompted, for example in certain cases:
    - border management projects are often coordinated by the Ministry of Interior;

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<sup>1</sup> The “cross-cutting priorities” option was created for projects touching upon more than one PA or A within one domain.

- development initiatives are recorded by national or even international implementing agencies;
- legislations are catalogued on parliamentary websites.
- There were not enough resources (time, human, material) available to the Focal/Contact point to conduct an exhaustive data collection, for example collect all policies related to the JVAP.
- There is simply no harmonised internal data collection structure available for migration related policies and projects.
- When internal data collection systems exist, they are not streamlined - reporting systems differ from the one elaborated by the JVAP partners.
- No public funding has been allocated to migration or development projects and no specific migration policy was identified so far.
- Finally, data was not collected because of internal unwillingness or indisposition to share data, whether sensitive or not.
- Challenges directly linked with the JVAP data collection format:
  - The time slot allocated for data collection (3-5 months) was estimated to be too short for some because too many data sources had to be consulted, too many information had to be reported.
  - The JVAP topical structure is unclear or challenging (see section III.2)
  - Data is not available in the form asked, for example, project budgets are not disaggregated by domain or donor, sometimes a project contract mentions only the total budget allocated and it is difficult to retrace in which proportions and which funding scheme was used.
  - Focal/Contact Points are already requested to fill out several databases, provide feedback questionnaires in the framework of their activities and the JVAP data collection is considered as duplication of internal work: already existing databases and data collection processes are more comprehensive, not only related to migration
  - Data needs to be translated, requiring additional work, capacities and skills.

According to responses from the survey, the situation is very different between and among entity groups.

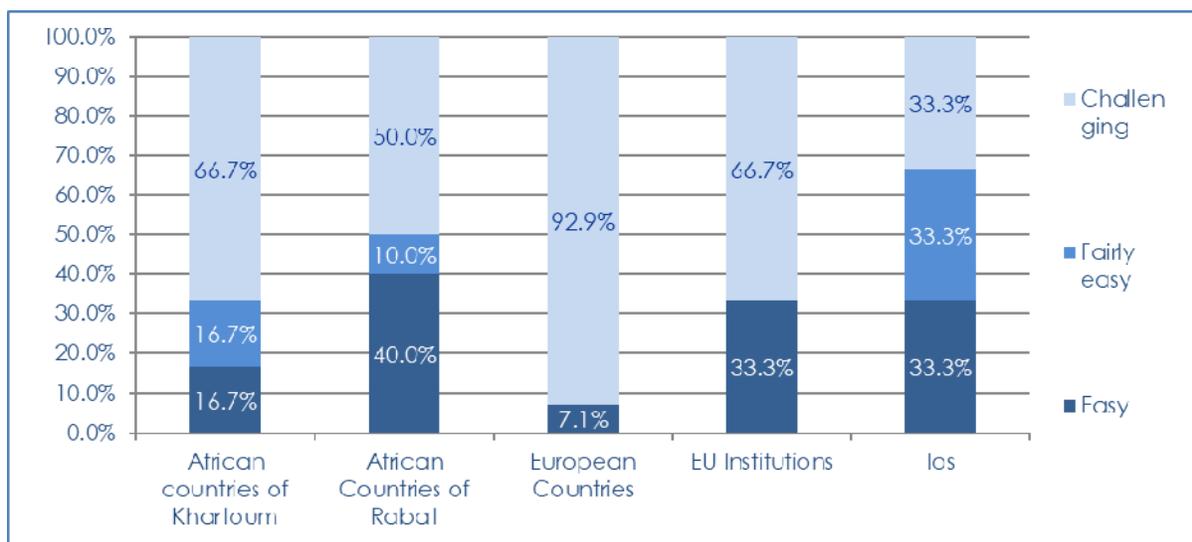


Figure 1 - Breakdown of data collection experience per entity group

According to the survey, the depth of the data collection efforts can only be decreased for the Focal/Contact Point in charge of data collection if shared. At the launch of the JVAP Database end of 2017, the technical position of “Contact Point” supporting the Focal Point was created for exactly the purpose of decreasing the volume of work expected from the Focal Point.

During the current Lessons Learnt exercise, JVAP partners communicated that when data is too scattered among institutions, Focal/Contact Points depend on their colleagues and need to organise an information session on the data needed and forward the methodology elaborated by the JVAP ST. 74% of respondents to the survey would favour the inclusion of their colleagues in possible data collection trainings sessions organised by the JVAP ST in order to alleviate the workload (83-90% of African countries, 61% of European Union Member States (EU MS), 66% of EU institutions, but half of the respondents from International Organisations would not involve their colleagues).

Another possible solution is discussed below, namely that more staff per entity have access to the JVAP Database alongside the Focal and Contact Point.

In the framework of the interviews, the JVAP ST developed the section of questions touching upon data collection issues such as frequency of the cycle and inclusiveness, knowing that these were the most recurrent questions from Focal/Contact Points.

Regarding the frequency of data collection cycles, the interviewed JVAP partners hold very different views. Some prefer to have a continuous data collection cycle, because on the long run it would be less work-intensive, while others indicated that a continuous cycle is too expensive and prefer to report data punctually on an annual basis, preferably in unsaturated working periods, with the JVAP ST setting deadlines and following-up.

The interviewees were also consulted on the issue of including non-JVAP stakeholders' contribution. So far, the methodology elaborated and agreed upon by JVAP partners was only to enter projects and policies that were exclusively funded or sponsored by JVAP partners, hereby automatically excluding programmes co-funded by other international stakeholders, irrelevant of whether they targeted a JVAP priority or not. All interviewees agreed that it would be more comprehensive to include those initiatives in the future, meaning that the dataset could expand.

The JVAP ST launched a data collection cycle, implemented training to support data collection, worked on checking the quality and cleaning the data submitted by JVAP partners and concluded the cycle by issuing a dataset to the Dialogue Secretariats for analysis. The yearly fixed data collection will likely be the main frame of action, meaning that although certain JVAP stakeholders might be in a position to enter/ check for quality continuously, most will update during this fixed timeframe, given that during the reporting period they had informed the Support Team that they would not be able to collect data more regularly.

#### JVAP Follow-up Support Team input

A thorough monitoring of participation was done during the data collection period and reported to the preparatory organising committee of the 2018 JVAP SOM. By September 2018, it was estimated that 50% of JVAP partners participated in the data collection. Interviewees were asked to contribute with new ideas on how to best encourage more JVAP partners to take part in data collection. Most replied that the efforts deployed by the JVAP ST so far were the correct and productive ones. The team provided an efficient combination of keeping the JVAP Follow-up as an integral part of the Migration Dialogues SOMs agenda, providing cutting edge but easy-to-grasp data visualisations.

When JVAP partners managed to collect internally, they did so by predominantly collecting one or the other type of data (policies or projects). In 2018 as in 2016, African countries of both dialogues mostly collected policies and legislations, while European Member States and European Institutions overwhelmingly collected projects.

### 3.4 Data Entry

#### Background

The 2016 data collection was conducted on a five columns excel table form which was disseminated widely to JVAP partners. Unfortunately, data collectors had taken formatting liberties (changing the columns, inserting inadequate information), which lead to an unnecessary and massive workload for data cleaning. The dataset was merged in a long excel table, which made analysis and visualisation challenging due to the

massive volume of data. For these reasons, a swift-to-set-up database solution with pre-built modules and interfaces was sought. The JVAP Database interface is meant to allow only a standardised data entry thanks to predefined values in dropdown fields and more proficient calculation capabilities.

#### Key findings

JVAP partners highlighted that once trained; finding fields in the JVAP Database is relatively straight forward. According to the survey, 56% found data entry easy whereas 44% found it challenging. The challenges mentioned related to data entry are linked to inadequate office infrastructure and supplies. But the survey also shows that only 48% of respondents entered one initiative in less than 15 minutes, hence more strategies need to be developed to facilitate data entry. Another challenge is directly linked to the nature of the information to be inputted, hence touching upon data collection problems.

According to JVAP partners' feedback in the survey and interviews, certain information pertaining to initiatives should not be mandatory. In the survey, each respondent who participated in the data collection was given a chance to flag mandatory fields of the JVAP Database that are difficult to fill out (refer to Fig. 2 "Data entry experience per field of the JVAP Database") the results are the following:

- Partners found that entering start/end dates was challenging. There are often cases where partners are unsure about the planned start/end date or date of implementation, however, without this information, one cannot differentiate between ongoing or concluded projects or analyse the implementation progress over the years.
- Partners also found that entering project descriptions was difficult. Nonetheless, without this information, one cannot assign accurate JVAP domains and priorities;
- Partners additionally had issues with the topical information assignment. Accordingly, the topical information section is indeed difficult to fill-out due to the technical structure the text implies as four hierarchical dropdowns are necessary. Nevertheless, without this information, the JVAP ST would not be able to deliver an analysis of project distribution per domain and priority.
- Certain partners had difficulties in the funding section. For International Organisations and Regional Institutions such as the EU and African Union (AU), establishing the exact origin of a fund may prove difficult, however without this information, the JVAP ST would not be able to do the following:
  - Deliver an analysis on project funding distribution per domain, region/country, etc.
  - Ensure that there are no duplicated initiatives in the JVAP Database which could alter the analysis.

Interview partners had various comments on sharing sensitive data, their feedback includes the following points:

- Certain JVAP partners who did not enter data, have confirmed that it is not because the data is sensitive, because most are available online, it is rather due to lack of resources.
- Other partners – mostly Focal/Contact Points from Ministry of Interior – confirmed that sensitive data on for example border management projects are not entered into the JVAP Database.

#### JVAP Follow-up Support Team input

During the interview, JVAP partners conveyed that a more forthcoming data entry procedure should be sought or in certain cases (JVAP partners with a large number of initiatives) shift data entry responsibilities to a mandated JVAP ST.

### 3.5 Data cleaning/quality check

#### Background

The data cleaning process was designed by the JVAP ST to ensure a minimum standard for data quality, completeness, and accuracy. The JVAP partners, in particular the Focal/Contact Points who took the

introductory training, have been made aware of the importance of thorough reporting. This ensures that the efforts of JVAP partners are not discredited by a low-quality dataset and consequently low-quality analysis. For each set of submitted initiatives, the Focal/Contact Point received feedback based on the following objectives and is requested to make appropriate changes:

- comparability: all mandatory fields ought to be completed;
- content consistency: for example, priority assignment corresponds to project description, the budget shares add-up, the project has no duplicate in the Database;
- linguistic accuracy: the language of entry is English and French at the moment;
- duplications: the initiative entered is not already published in the Database.

Each instance of data quality check implies a thorough process. The data is then either published in the Database or resubmitted to the Focal/Contact Point for completion. As required, the Focal/Contact Point receives a written statement to support the completion or update of missing or incorrect data.

By 20 September 2018, 23 entities (including countries, institutions and organisations) from 44 in total, checked the quality and certain information on the data they submitted: 4 out of 12 African countries, 15 out of 23 European countries, 3 out of 5 European institutions (incl. EUTF), 1 out of 3 International Organisations.

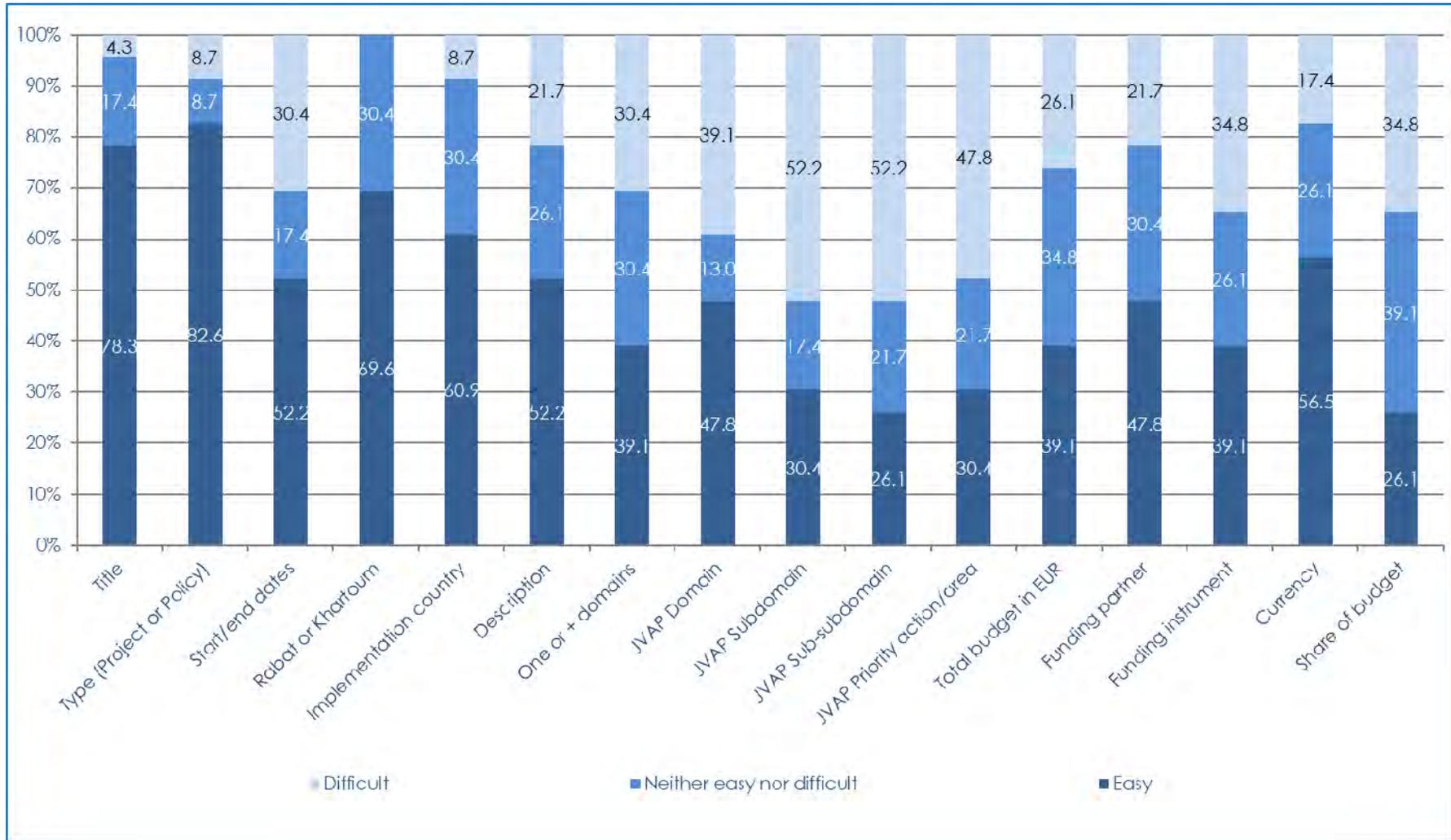


Figure 2 - Data entry experience per field of the JVAP Database

From June to September 2018, the JVAP Database undertook a data cleaning procedure. At the beginning of the process, users were invited to upload project documentation and enable the JVAP ST to perform a bigger share of data cleaning. For example with a project factsheet entailing a thorough project description, the JVAP ST could better suggest domains or priority assignment. Gathering and uploading such documents proved too cumbersome for some Focal/Contact Points, hence this step was not made mandatory. In short, it was decided that JVAP partners have full ownership over their data and thus are responsible for its accuracy. The JVAP ST is not correlating information but merely ensuring that all fields are completed uniformly with relevant information. Once a project or a policy was reviewed, it was shifted to a “published” status making it immediately retrievable by all users. If corrections were not done, the project or policy stayed “unpublished” meaning it is only viewable for the user who entered it and the JVAP ST.

#### Key findings

A broad majority (92%) of survey respondents felt supported by the JVAP ST throughout this process. One survey respondent said they felt reassured by the idea of being prompted should the data not be clean. Challenges linked to that feedback loop were usually the timeframe given to consult internally or technical problems.

With regards to frequency and time frame, data cleaning is closely linked to data collection. Any recommendation or decision made (in the section above) should apply to data cleaning.

Throughout the data entry and cleaning period, JVAP partners’ voiced very different opinions about the support the JVAP ST should offer to alleviate the workload of data cleaning. The following positions crystallised from the survey:

- One round of cleaning is enough to guarantee quality data, meaning that the JVAP ST should not prompt a user more than once to correct an initiative, but simultaneously;
- Incomplete initiatives should be rejected, meaning that, if after one round of cleaning, the user has not complied with necessary corrections; it remains at the team’s discretion not to publish the initiative. This measure is important in order to ensure the dataset is homogenous and aggregated;
- The JVAP team is mandated to operate minor updates on data (such as correcting spelling, double entries/repetitions, format, etc.) however JVAP partners are split on whether the JVAP ST should be mandated to do logical changes (amending a domain or priority if wrongly assigned, re-calculating a total budget if shares do not match, adding a country of implementation if forgotten in the list but mentioned in the project description, etc.).

#### JVAP Follow-up Support Team input

The JVAP ST also provided the 2018 JVAP SOM organising committee with a monthly comprehensive state-of-play including additional indicators on the progress of the data cleaning cycle (June to September 2018):

- The number of JVAP partners contacted to re-submit updated initiatives
- The number of JVAP partners who re-submitted
- The number of re-submissions by JVAP partners
- The number of initiatives checked for quality assurance by the JVAP ST

These figures were used in organising committees to tally progress as well as to entice JVAP partners that have not been active in the Follow-up on JVAP commitments. By September 2018, it was estimated that 52% of JVAP partners who participated in data collection, cleaned, and checked their data for quality, which resulted in the publication of 1252 checked initiatives. This number is partly influenced by the fact that some JVAP partners do not currently have a Focal Point or because identification of a suitable and available Contact Point is still ongoing.

### 3.6 Data analysis and Database usage

#### Background

In preparation for the 2018 Ethiopia JVAP SOM, the JVAP ST, Rabat and Khartoum Secretariat were tasked with preparing a quantitative input-oriented analysis of data collected. The JVAP ST first concentrated on developing the global or Valletta report<sup>2</sup>, which compiles a comprehensive overview of the JVAP Follow-up state of play. The global report was used as a basis by the drafting committees of the Rabat and Khartoum Processes to develop the respective Analysis Reports for the Ethiopia JVAP SOM of November 2018.

#### Key findings

At the time of the survey (November 2018), 55% of respondents used the Database, 45% of them estimated having used it 1 – 5 times per week since their registration. When using the JVAP Database for purposes other than the data collection/cleaning cycle, survey respondents said they searched the JVAP Database for information to prepare for Rabat/ Khartoum/ JVAP meetings and internal meetings on JVAP related matters. To a lesser extent, some used the Database to identify successful initiatives, report to external stakeholders on the JVAP Follow-up, and research to develop a paper on JVAP related thematic areas.

When asked what kind of analysis they would need, survey respondents had very different expectations, these include:

- Some highlighted the need to know essential aggregated data such as:
  - Projects per domain and region;
  - Implementing partners per domain, region and donor (predominantly requested by African countries of Rabat and Khartoum);
  - Ongoing/concluded projects per region and donor.
- Some insist on conducting assessments, such as a cost/benefit analysis (“Are projects outputs corresponding to the input costs?”)
- Certain survey respondents wish to receive finalised communication products such as: “Quantitative data with charts” or simply be able to compare the Follow-up at Valletta, regional, and national level;
- One interview partner insisted on analysing the 89 priority areas which are equally important (than the 16 priority actions);
- Another interview partner communicated interest in analysing duplication of initiatives by different donors and implementing organisations in the field.

In the interview, Focal/Contact Points were asked whether they received the infographic (see ANNEX 2) prepared for the 2018 JVAP SOM, while many did, outreach was not optimal as it did not reach those who were not present. All, however, confirmed that such formats (simple, colourful macro) were attractive and needed to be communicated internally as well as externally.

The interviewees also shared their preferred method of receiving such infographics in the future. Those who had taken part in data collection and cleaning, irrelevant whether African or European,

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<sup>2</sup> The 2018 Valletta report is a template with tables generated by the JVAP Database on demand. The tables contain aggregated data obtained through calculation of algorithms. The tables are grouped in 5 sections: database analytics (# of users, # of initiatives, etc.), general analysis (# of projects vs policies, distribution by start date, etc.), geographic analysis (# of initiatives by migration dialogue, etc.) topical analysis (# of initiatives and volume of projects by domain, by priority, per migration dialogue, etc.) financial analysis (# of projects and their volume per country of implementation, per domain, etc.).

would prefer to learn how to extract and visualise data themselves. Whereas those who did not, would rather contact the JVAP ST on an ad hoc basis and receive fully-fledged infographics per inbox. Some are open for both options, depending on the capacities of the JVAP ST.

#### JVAP Follow-up Support Team input

From December 2018 onwards, the JVAP ST focused on defining the entity report, which provides an overview of each stakeholder's (whether a country or an organisation) own contribution to the JVAP Follow-up.

### 3.7 Access to the JVAP Database

#### Key Findings

When developing the JVAP Database in 2017, discussions focused on striking the right balance between granting sufficient access points and limiting access to the JVAP Database. The reason for limiting the access is due to the fact that some stakeholders would share data that is not publicly available. It was decided that Rabat and Khartoum Focal Points become automatically JVAP Database Focal Points as they are ideally positioned to receive information on JVAP via the Dialogues and pass it on, to their hierarchies. In addition a supporting position called "Contact Point" was created to share or take over the technical data collection, entry and cleaning tasks. This structure was endorsed by JVAP partners. Throughout the 2018 data collection procedure, Focal/Contact Points realised that there is a significant effort and accordingly additional Contact Points would prove beneficial. Half of the interviewed JVAP partners reported that additional resources (financial, human, technical) were not acquired although they were needed to comply with the JVAP. 82% of survey respondents (Focal/Contact Points combined) are willing to grant more access points per entity (country, institution, or organisation), however, there is no consensus on how many additional access points are necessary:

- According to survey respondents, a simple majority mentioned at least 3;
- One respondent suggested that entities should request as many accesses as needed, moving away from the current 2-access points system;
- Another respondent could not give a decision as it would require time to give proper feedback as the question may probably stir some interest internally;
- Another survey respondent mentioned that the 2-access point system should be kept and only additional viewer accesses should be granted;
- A Survey respondent straightforwardly mentioned 3 persons distributed per institution as it would enable countries to input initiatives from various institutions/ministries.

In the same spirit, JVAP partners were presented with an option of limiting access to a certain number of initiatives of the JVAP Database. Currently, only Focal Points can see all initiatives entered by all JVAP partners, while Contact Points only access initiatives entered by themselves or the Focal Point pertaining to his entity, meaning s/he has a restricted access and can only view her/his entity's contribution. This arrangement was endorsed by JVAP partners when it was presented at Rabat and Khartoum SOMs. It was based on the following logic, ownership of the process and data analysis is expected to derive from Focal Points while Contact Points were only envisaged to provide technical support. Against the backdrop of the past year, it is now clear that the efforts related to the JVAP Follow-up related activities surpass what JVAP partners had expected. Even if Focal Points continue leading the effort, Contact Point(s) are needed to undertake considerable responsibilities (data accuracy as well as data analysis) and therefore need more width and access in the JVAP Database.

#### JVAP Follow-up Support Team input

An additional finding pertains to the interest the JVAP Follow-up has steered. Early on, with the publication of SOMs reports and articles on the Rabat and Khartoum websites, the JVAP Database gained traction in the migration community. Interested third parties regularly contact the JVAP ST to gain access to the dataset. Until now, viewing access was granted to the requestor if linked to a Focal/Contact Point and for the synergy purposes like linking the JVAP Follow-up to other related initiatives, for example; when giving access to the EUTF Horn of Africa window team for enhanced coordination among EC directorates/agencies. European institutions and International Organisations have expressed their wish to enlarge the overall number of access points once the JVAP Database is fully developed and several data collection/ cleaning procedures have ensured a high-quality set of data. Both believe that a wider access to the dataset will provide visibility, shed a positive light on the efforts made in the framework of the JVAP Follow-up, as well as partly offsetting the important efforts data collection entails in their respective cases. An African interviewee highlighted that granting even a restricted viewing access “contributed to transparency of the Valletta Process”. If JVAP partners agree, viewing access may be considered for academia (well represented among the interested third parties registering to the JVAP Database) or civil society organisations (CSOs), including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which may play a more participatory role in Migration Dialogues in the future.

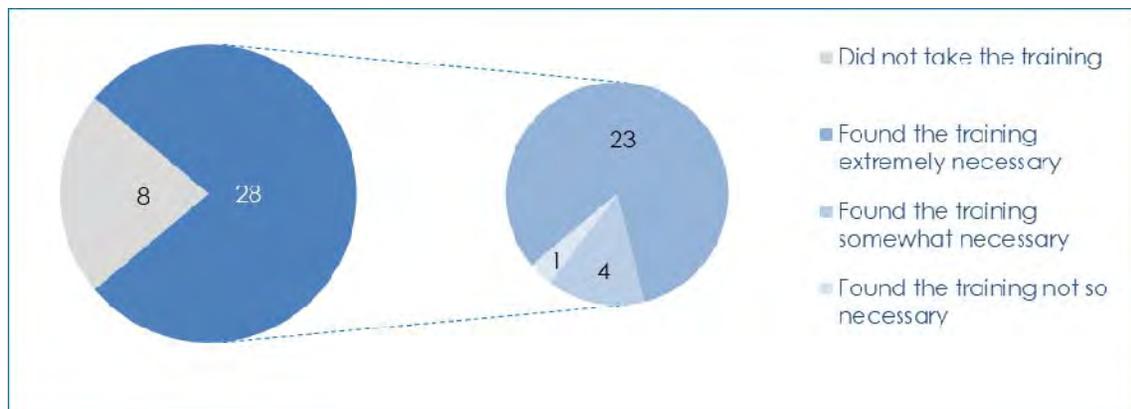
### 3.8 Training sessions

#### Background

The Database included a training component from the start. Early in the project, the JVAP ST invited all Focal/Contact Points to an introductory training. This initial training focused on data collection, entry and cleaning into the Database. JVAP partners responded enthusiastically, creating high demand that in turn led to the need to extend the training period and offer training in multiple formats. The team trained about 85 Focal/Contact Points (80%) via six in-person training sessions in the margins of Rabat and Khartoum meetings and 36 online training sessions between late 2017 and late 2018.

#### Key findings

According to survey results, 82% of respondents reported that they found the JVAP training on data collection “extremely/very necessary” (14% “somewhat necessary” and 4% “not so/at all necessary”). Some respondents further commented that they found it “essential” and “educational”.



**Figure 3 - Participation and satisfaction of JVAP training sessions**

Some of the challenges faced during the training were linked to technical difficulties (unstable internet connections during training) or delays related to the implementation of the General Data

Protection Regulation. JVAP partners were split with regard to training duration: one respondent commented the training should be made longer (1-2 days instead of 2 hours) while others found it longer than it should have been.

A majority of survey respondents (54%) reported that they would like to (re-)take the introductory training to increase their understanding of the Database. Some 60% reported that they would like to receive targeted trainings on such topics as data collection, while 69% would like training on data analysis and report extraction

JVAP Follow-up Support Team input

The JVAP ST experimented with another type of in situ training, namely a mission to an African JVAP partner state in March 2018. The activity helped gauge an understanding whether in the future the work plan of the JVAP ST should entail targeted capacity building workshops on Database use. The information session included colleagues of the Focal/Contact Point, who were to be involved in the data collection. Unfortunately, the mission did not yield the expected results as no data was entered by that JVAP partner state, which highlights the full range of difficulties that some JVAP partners may encounter in the framework of the JVAP Follow-up.

3.9 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): collection of project results, outputs, outcomes, impact

Key findings

Throughout the testing period, JVAP partners consistently reaffirmed, whether formally or informally, their interest in a tool offering more than mapping and report extracting functionalities. One interview partner mentioned the recent European Court of Auditors report which pointed out that the EUTF, a rather substantial part of the JVAP Follow-up, needs to harmonise its monitoring system among its three operational windows<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, considering the work load behind data collection, the exercise may be considered truly valuable once data on project results or even outputs, outcomes, impact are collected, in order to evaluate cost-benefits and

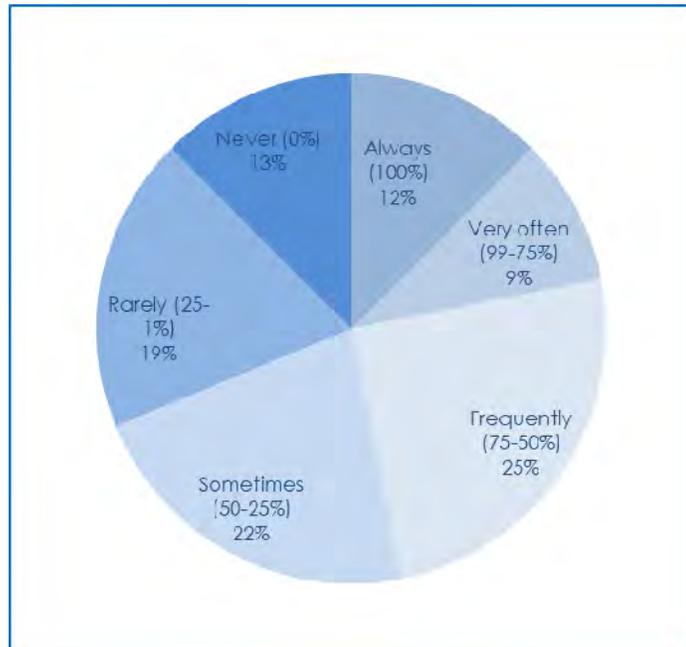


Figure 4 - Frequency of output collection by JVAP Partners independently from JVAP Follow-up

share best practices. Some even made the effort to provide this information during the 2018 data collection although not mandatory. Given the above mentioned willingness of JVAP actors to go beyond the current scope, the survey intended to seek information on stakeholders' capacity to collect outputs and their preparedness to

<sup>3</sup> For more information, please consult: [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR18\\_32/SR\\_EUTF\\_AFRICA\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR18_32/SR_EUTF_AFRICA_EN.pdf)

share such information. According to the survey, 54% of respondents collect project outputs less than 50% of the time.

Practices of data collection on project results among different entities varied, for example: international organisations collect project results between 75 and 100% of the time, while 15 % of European countries always collect project results, 8% very often collect (75-99% of the time), 23% frequently collect (50-75%), 15.5% sometimes collect (25-50%), 23% rarely collect (1-25%) and 15.5% never collect.

Some of the main difficulties outlined by survey respondents include:

- Internal difficulties:
  - The absence of institutional M&E frameworks in the relevant institution;
  - The lack of harmonisation of different internal M&E frameworks;
  - The lack of internal monitoring and evaluation practices;
  - The willingness of colleagues in addition to their preparedness, and capability to gather and share output data.
- Personal difficulties:
  - Lack of M&E expertise highlighted by survey respondents who were unsure how to answer questions on project outputs.
- External difficulties:
  - The output is too sensitive to be shared.
  - The lack of harmonisation between national M&E frameworks, EUTF, and JVAP means that countries are unable to provide the requested accuracy (for example, disaggregation by gender and age).
  - The internally perceived unimportance of the added value of collecting project results, requires a lot of internal negotiation and swaying.

In the face of all these difficulties, interviewees were asked to clarify whether common outputs shared across JVAP partners would be helpful, to which one responded that it could, if a) a structure (result, output, outcome, impact) was applied from domain to priority and b) outputs from different domains were comparable.

Based on the survey and the interviews, it seems that the low collection rate of outputs by partners would make it challenging to monitor the implementation of the JVAP even if an output structure is developed.

#### JVAP Follow-up Support Team input

At a technical level, collecting output data in the JVAP Database is feasible but would require additional resources for development, testing and collaboration between all JVAP partners (including the EUTF). In that regard, the survey unveiled some of the critical challenges, which in sum highlight the need for a comprehensive, inclusive, and thorough concertation. Regarding the already existing output section in the Database, analogous feedback was collected, namely that the level of disaggregation by gender and age was too detailed to be complied.

## 4. Recommendations

### 4.1 The JVAP reporting's objective

1. *The Follow-up activities (including the Database) should continue.*
2. *The JVAP Database is a demand-driven tool: more efforts must be made on all sides to proactively engage in JVAP activities and more support may be provided to include all stakeholders.*

### 4.2 JVAP partners' joint decision-making on the JVAP update

Ongoing discussions on the JVAP update started early 2019 in the framework of the Rabat and Khartoum Process. It is essential to highlight that those political considerations are closely linked to some technical aspects of the Database meaning that any modification made to the JVAP would need to be reflected in the Database and potentially in the partners data, requiring additional resources. From a data management perspective, it would however make sense to update the JVAP to facilitate data collection and data analysis by rationalising the number of priority actions and action areas. These efforts would be even more needed if partners decide to move forward with the set-up of a JVAP M&E framework. The below recommendations could be followed.

At dialogue level:

3. *Open a space for comprehensive consultation of JVAP partners and collect views and suggestions for improvement on the JVAP;*
4. *Engage M&E expertise in the JVAP update to support strengthening structure and formulation and help ensure coherence of objectives and results measurement;*
5. *Adjust parsimoniously, taking into account that any structural change will have to be reflected on the data collected in the past and require work (on the JVAP Database);*



At JVAP ST level:

6. *Draft a guide to support Contact Points in determining which JVAP priorities match their initiatives, if the JVAP ST is not mandated for data entry.*

### 4.3 Data collection

Data collection remains the key step in the JVAP data management landscape and should be improved and tailored to the variety of JVAP partners' needs.

At dialogue level:

7. *Add the JVAP Follow-up process to permanent items on the Rabat/ Khartoum meetings' agendas.*

At JVAP partners level:

8. *Flag to the JVAP ST all top-up contributions to regional funding schemes in order to avoid duplicated initiatives or budget volumes;*

9. *Strive for balance between collecting projects and policies;*
10. *Mandate information needed to populate the required fields in the JVAP Database.*
11. *Request support for data collection from the JVAP ST, if needed.*

At JVAP ST level:

12. *Plan and disseminate a clear data collection plan and cycle for the JVAP database. This includes:*
  - *Deadlines for a one-off data collection and cleaning process, while JVAP partners who prefer a continuous or rolling data collection may do so;*
  - *Updates to the data collection methodology, including the initiatives funded (for projects) or sponsored (for policies) by non-JVAP partners, only if directly linked to JVAP priority/ies;*
13. *Extend data collection training offer;*
14. *Prepare refined data collection guidelines including more scenarios (data collection for research projects, for multilateral funding schemes, etc.);*
15. *Provide support if requested through online research or directly with the partner.*



#### 4.4 Data entry

To reduce the burden of manual data entry for JVAP partners, a more streamlined approach could include:

16. *Mandate the JVAP ST to do data entry and continue offering the possibility to JVAP Partners to do manual data entry;*
17. *Extend capacity of the JVAP Support Team in charge of the Database's technical support;*

#### 4.5 Data cleaning and quality check

Methodological aspects:

18. *Mandate the JVAP ST to performs logical changes (non-matching budget shares and total, domain and priority attribution, etc.) to guarantee accuracy and uniformity in the dataset provided the Focal(Contact Point is continuously informed.*

Technical aspects:

19. *A comment box inserted in the entry interface shall improve exchanges between each user and the JVAP ST to inform about the updates made, if mandated and corrections to be made if not mandated;*
20. *Automatic notifications issued by the JVAP Database to prompt the user:*
  - *to switch the status of a project from “ongoing” to “concluded”*
  - *or alert about a recent comments inserted by the JVAP ST*

#### 4.6 Data analysis

The ultimate aim of the JVAP Database is to inform JVAP partners of the state of play of the implementation of the JVAP through a number of reports and visuals. These aspects should be further develop and tailored to the needs of the partners.

21. *Pre-define and offer aggregated data analysis in form of visual charts, maps, and graphs for all levels (Valletta, Rabat, Khartoum, country, institution, and organisation) to all JVAP partners;*
22. *Offer data search and analysis training for Focal/Contact Points to help them use the JVAP data tools to develop customised data analysis;*



#### 4.7 Data dissemination, communication and visibility

The potential of the Database was acknowledged by the majority of partners. In this sense, the data stored should be further exploited and used for different purposes.

23. *Record and convey technical changes via a Database update subscription to active and interested Database users;*
24. *Develop communication and disseminate visibility outputs laying out JVAP data analysis to:*
  - Demonstrate the added value of the JVAP Database, hence entice data collection;
  - Populate different communication channels, tools and websites.



#### 4.8 Database access

Access to the Database should be revised according to most JVAP partners.

25. *Revise JVAP Database user access rules:*
  - Grant access to new Contact Points to find best practices (e.g., information pertaining to development and employment, etc.);
  - Grant access to all initiatives published by all JVAP partners to Contact Points.
26. *Revise JVAP Database viewer access rules:*
  - Grants temporary viewing access to new Contact Point if listed by a Focal Point and mandated for data entry ;
  - Grant viewer access to interested third party (from the migration community) granted viewer access (including time frame and reasons) in the past;
  - Formulate rules to regulate viewing access of interested third parties from academia or CSOs.

#### 4.9 Database training

27. *Rework the introductory JVAP training into an interactive e-learning format and include:*
  - Uninterrupted availability on the web as a download for new Focal/Contact Point to use as they join the project;
  - Independent modules for self-pacing;

- Participatory learning, including quizzes, questions/comments and feedback fields to allow for (technical or substantial) adjustments.

**28. Develop and offer additional specialised trainings for specific entities, as resources allow**

- Focus on targeted trainings on data collection, analysis and reporting.

The implementation of such a training tool may be scheduled depending on the date of the next data collection and is subject to budget restrictions.

#### 4.10 JVAP M&E System

As described above in the key findings section, the JVAP Database is currently a reporting tool and has not yet fully developed its monitoring aspect. This derives from various elements including the absence of outputs and indicators and more generally of a rationalised JVAP logframe. Another challenge identified lies in the diversity of monitoring and evaluation frameworks used by the JVAP partners and the absence of common standards. In addition to this, a number of partners do not collect outputs or indicators, hence would not be able to provide such information. Therefore, setting-up a JVAP M&E framework would be a highly complex and resource intensive exercise for partners. However, it would allow to actually assess the impact of the actions implemented in the framework of the JVAP and see what works best. If partners deem it necessary to develop such framework, the below recommendations could be implemented.

**29. Develop a comprehensive M&E framework for JVAP based on:**

- Existing M&E structures of JVAP partner initiatives;
- Common indicators capturing the planned outputs, outcomes and objectives of JVAP initiatives;
- The existent M&E frameworks of the three EUTF windows;
- Endorsement by JVAP partners.

**30. Implement monitoring data collection:**

- Crafting dedicated communication materials about the added value of collecting project results based on the EUTF example for Contact Points to entice colleagues internally;
- Offering training on the JVAP M&E for Contact Points who request it including a project result data sources diagnostic;
- Allocating more time to collect project results/ outputs/ outcomes/ impacts so as to enable all Contact Points to undergo a thorough internal consultation;
- Implement summative and formative evaluation plans.

The implementation of these recommendations can only be pursued once the current discussions of a JVAP topical structure update have concluded.

## ANNEX 1 – Lessons Learnt Report Methodology

The Lessons Learnt exercise launched in November 2018 was conducted by the team supporting the Rabat and Khartoum Processes Secretariats (i.e. the MMD Support Project implemented by ICMPD), specifically the JVAP ST which was in charge of developing the technical and operational aspects of the follow-up. The JVAP Monitoring and Reporting tool not only includes the JVAP Database per se, but also the related procedures (training sessions, data collection), and documentation that power and regulate the Database.

### 2.1 Online Survey

#### 2.1.1 Survey design

The purpose of the survey was to collect feedback on partner engagement with and ease of use of the JVAP Database and to target future capacity building support and tools to partner needs. Specific survey topics included:

- Respondent affiliation
- Data collection experience
- Data entry and cleaning experience
- Data analysis experience and expectations
- Database usage
- Access to the Database and data
- Collection of project outputs
- Training experience and expectations

#### 2.1.2 Survey dissemination

The survey was launched at the 2018 JVAP Follow-up SOM in Ethiopia, using the momentum of the Joint Conclusions endorsement. In practical terms, an invitation to take part was sent to the 83 users of the JVAP Database (from 57 entities), priority was given to those who engaged in the JVAP follow-up activities so as to model and weigh on the future format of activities. The JVAP partners were given a generous timeline of 4 weeks (15 November – 10 December) to participate in the survey. Moreover, the JVAP ST exercised flexibility when some participants couldn't abide by the deadline. Throughout the surveying period, the 83 invitees received two email reminders as well as a personal phone call to push up the participation rate.

#### 2.1.3 Survey participation and results

In total, 47 JVAP partners took the survey (response rate = 56 percent). Some 23 percent of respondents were Focal Points and 72 percent were Contact Points. When analysing participation the participation rate of two JVAP entity groups did not reach a qualified majority; only 46 percent of all European Member States took the survey while no African Institution did (Figure 1). In the future, efforts must be made on both sides to include stakeholders from African Institutions.

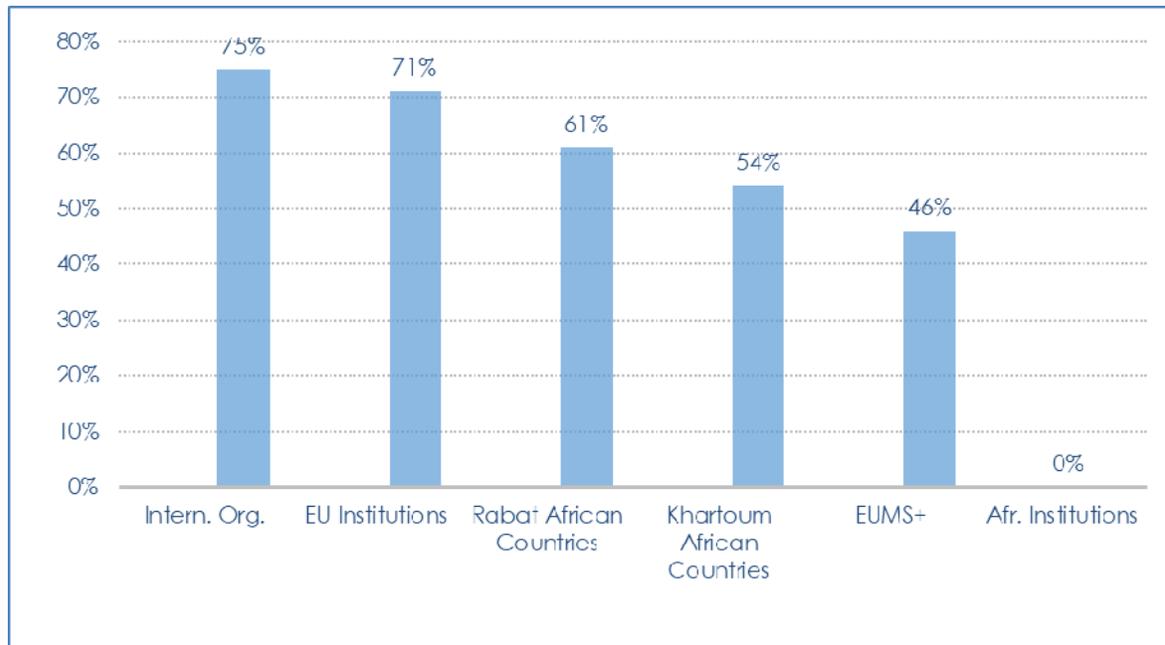


Figure 5 - Participation by entity in descending order

The following modifications were applied to the survey result data to allow for better analysis:

- Inconsistencies in the survey's logical structure due to differences in the FR and EN version were fixed using IBM's SPSS statistical analysis software;
- 5-points Likert scale questions were transposed into a 3-points scale (very good and good became good, neutral stayed neutral, bad and very bad became bad).

Finally two opportunities were identified:

- The survey was utilised as a basis for the development of the interview questions;
- The survey results not only help in substantiating the present Lessons Learnt Report but could also provide a solid basis for developing targeted JVAP follow-up activities.

## 2.2 Interviews

### 2.2.1 Interview design

The aim of the interviews was to better understand the working realities of specific stakeholders with regards to trends that emerged from the survey. The interviews also enable a constructive discussion with JVAP partners on their strategic vision for the future of the Database.

The interview guide included questions focused on the following key topics:

- Objective(s) of the JVAP and its follow-up
- Data collection experience
- Data entry and cleaning experience
- Data analysis and its dissemination
- Database usage experience
- Database and data access
- Project outputs collection
- Training experience and expectations

Similar to the survey, interviews were tailored to the different profiles of respondents anticipating the input they were able to provide. Along the interview guide, the interviewer would adapt the line of questioning to the experience and past involvement of his/her counterpart. The interview transcripts were anonymised. JVAP partners were offered the possibility to conduct the interview either in French or English.

### 2.2.2 Interview sample

The JVAP ST interviewed a purposive sample of key stakeholders from various entities and regions using the following criteria:

- The degree of active/inactive participation in JVAP follow-up activities;
- The size of the group they pertain to;
- The availability and the willingness to be interviewed.

In total, **seven respondents** declined to be interviewed:

- **One** African Institution
- **One** European institution
- **Two** African countries of Khartoum Process
- **Three** African countries of Rabat Process
- **One** International Organisation

Seven interviewees included:

- Two African countries of the Rabat Process;
- Two African countries of the Khartoum Process;
- Two European Member States;  
(One of which entailed two interviewees and feedback from colleagues internally);
- One International Organisation.

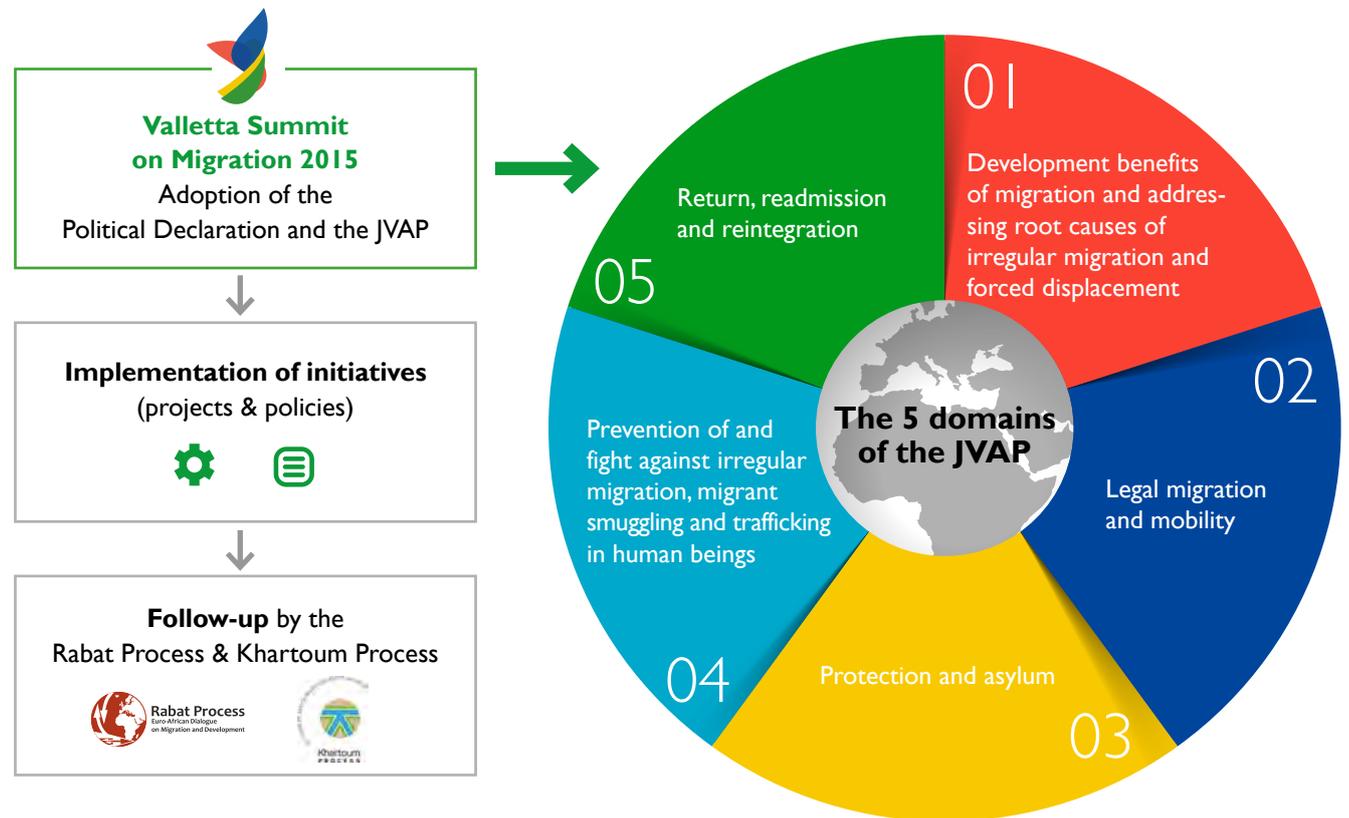
### 2.2.3 Conduct of interviews and results

An interview guide was sent by email prior to the interview, enabling interviewees to provide more detailed answers and suggest recommendations to be included in this report. The interviews were recorded and transcribed with the approval of all interviewees. The results of the interviews were used to support or contrast survey results and presented together in the third section of this report as key findings.

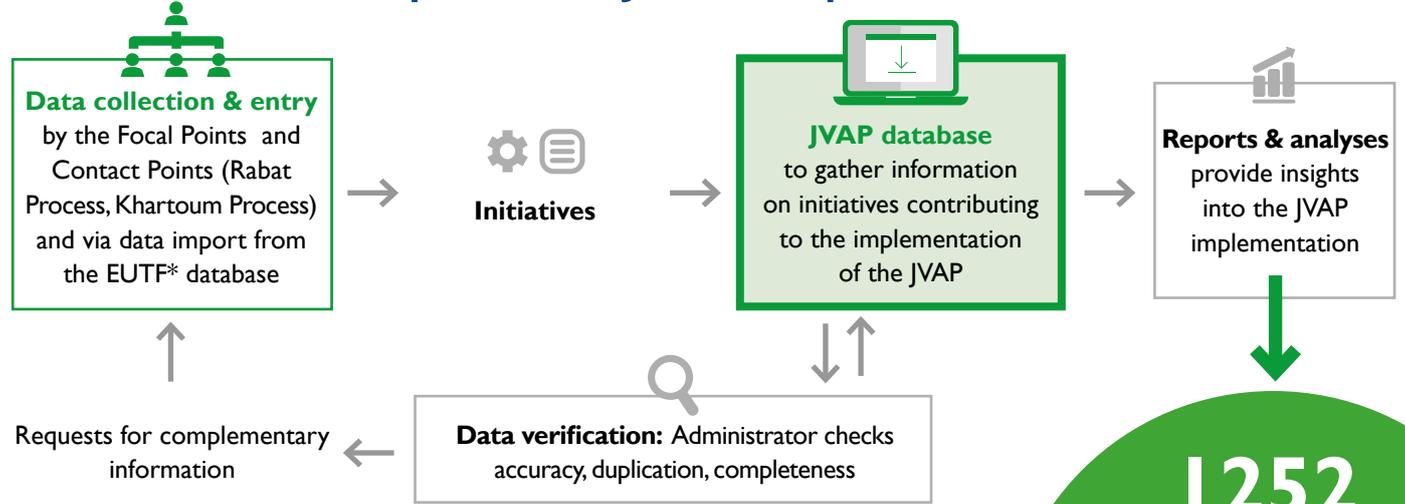
# IMPLEMENTING THE JOINT VALLETTA ACTION PLAN

## DATABASE INSIGHTS 2018

### The Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP)



### How is follow-up to the JVAP implementation ensured?



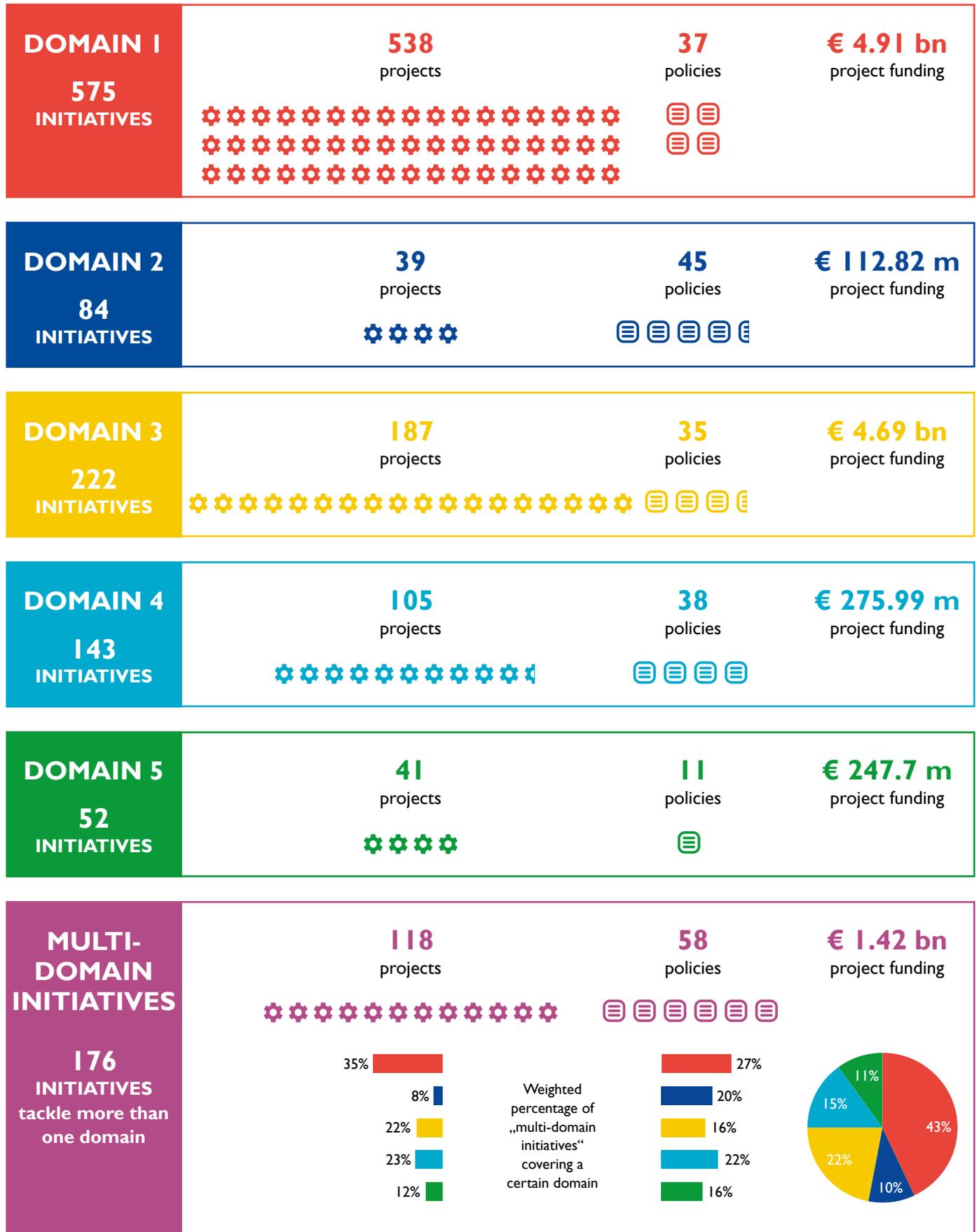
**1252**  
initiatives published in the database

**1028** projects      **224** policies

**NOTE:** The JVAP follow-up is an ongoing process and figures are evolving. This infographic is solely based on verified and complete entries in the JVAP database (status: 15 October 2018) that have been added by the JVAP partners by mid-2018.

\* EUTF: EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa

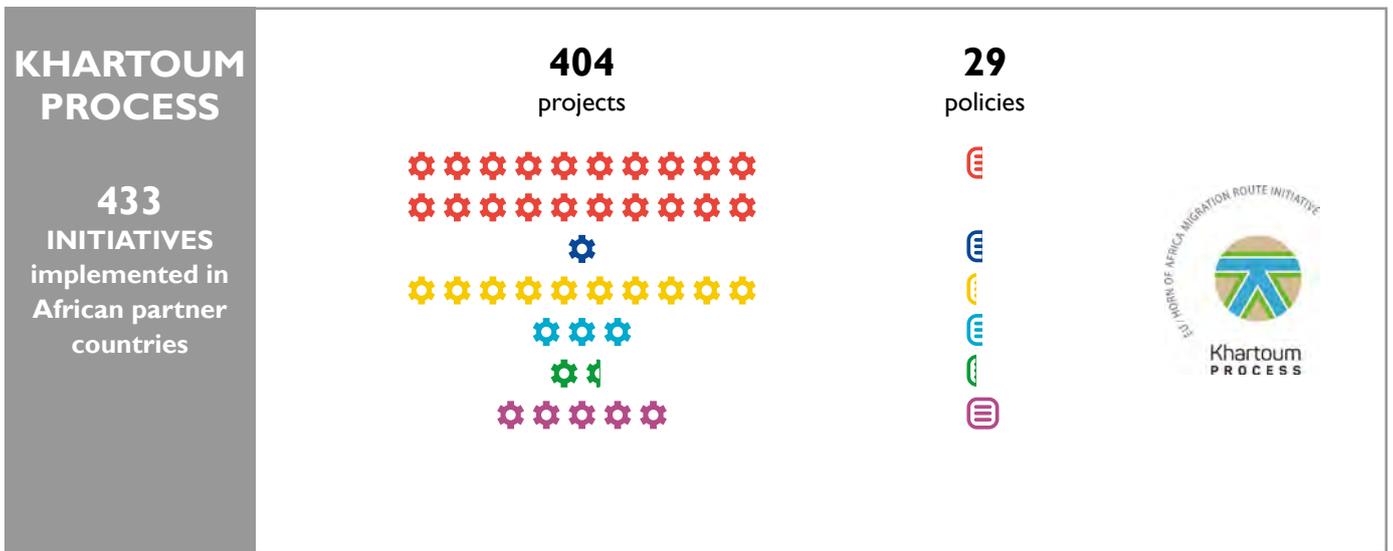
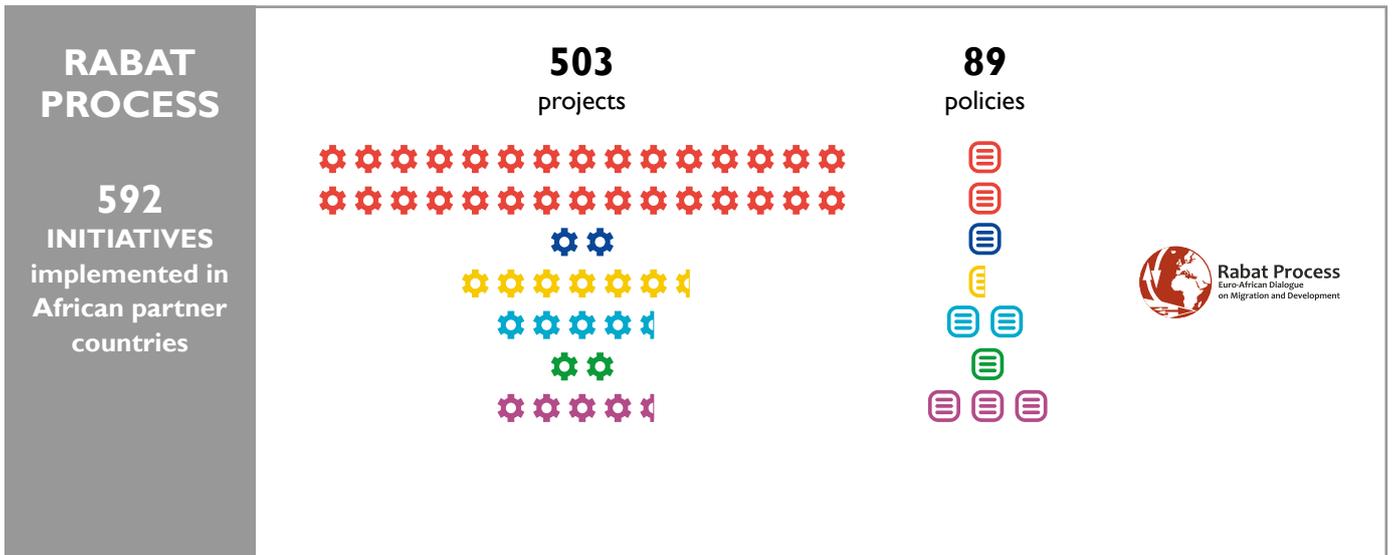
# What has been done in each domain?



The initiatives presented are funded by the JVAP Partners namely African countries, African organisations, European Union institutions, European countries, international organisations. 15 % of the initiatives gathered in the JVAP Database are funded through the EUTF (N.B: This % does not reflect the total amount of EUTF Africa funding).

In the pie chart above, the total funding volume for multi-domain projects has been split equally among all the domains the respective projects are tackling.

# Where are the initiatives being implemented?



The initiatives listed in the „Rabat Process“ and the „Khartoum Process“ sections are mainly initiatives implemented in single countries.

Multi-country initiatives are mostly found in the section „Across dialogues“

- Domain 1
- Domain 2
- Domain 3
- Domain 4
- Domain 5
- Multi-domain

# What happened since?

A timeline of newly launched initiatives since the Valletta Summit on Migration



This infographic has been produced in the framework of the project "Support to Africa-EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue (MMD)"

Project funded by the European Union

Project implemented by ICMPD



Consult the JVAP database on [www.khartoumprocess.net](http://www.khartoumprocess.net) or [www.rabat-process.org](http://www.rabat-process.org)