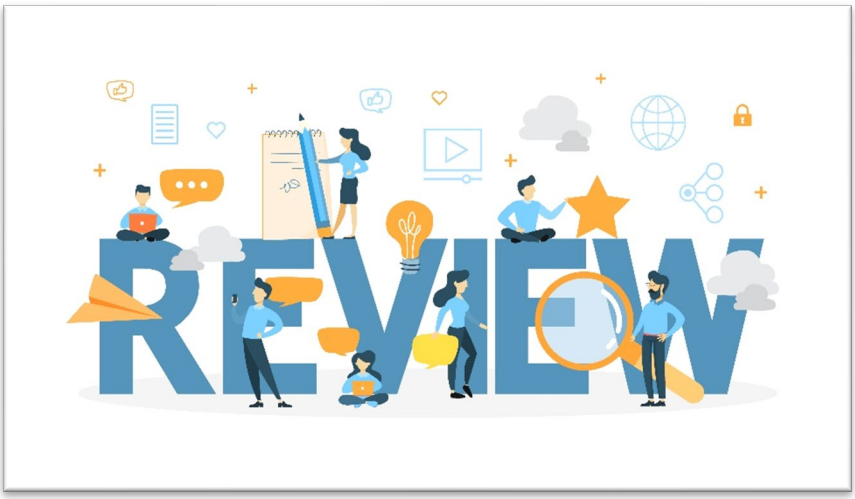
New Year Reflections and Reflective Practice



The beginning of a new calendar year usually signals a time to reflect, review and, if necessary, reposition. Whilst the process of implementation usually continues seamlessly following the calendar cross-over, the transition can provide a welcome opportunity to re-examine the success of current approaches and to re-imagine new and improved ways of working, taking into account lessons learned from the previous year.

Since the most effective evaluations are, by definition, inclusive and participatory activities, the evidence of effective learning experiences is the involvement and feedback from all relevant stakeholders. The participatory nature of the process promotes the robust analysis of issues and the collective development of solutions by project staff and stakeholders.

Having prioritised the preservation of stakeholder relationships in project implementation, the Implementing Partners of the Port Security Project have made concerted efforts to share information and learning with each other, as a matter of course – in the interest of smoothing the path ahead for everyone. A mixed economy of formal coordination and monitoring and informal discussions and catch-ups have enabled project teams to navigate inherently challenging waters, and have minimised disruption to implementation, reducing the risks to delivery and potential time slippage as far as practicable. This multi-way flow of information has also encouraged project teams to build on each other's learning; relaying feedback from in-country stakeholders (both concerns and compliments) to each other and employing good (reflective) practice irrespective of the source. An approach that is made all the more valuable given the need to demonstrate the unity of all IPs - as different 'parts' of one project team. It has further enabled the efficient allocation and sharing of resources (financial, human or otherwise) to allow for successful joint delivery of activities wherever possible. As we move forward, into the year ahead, with both familiar and unexpected challenges likely to arise, it is preferable that this 'communal' type of reflective practice will continue to support interagency links and facilitate the application of timely, but impactful micro adjustments as the need arises.