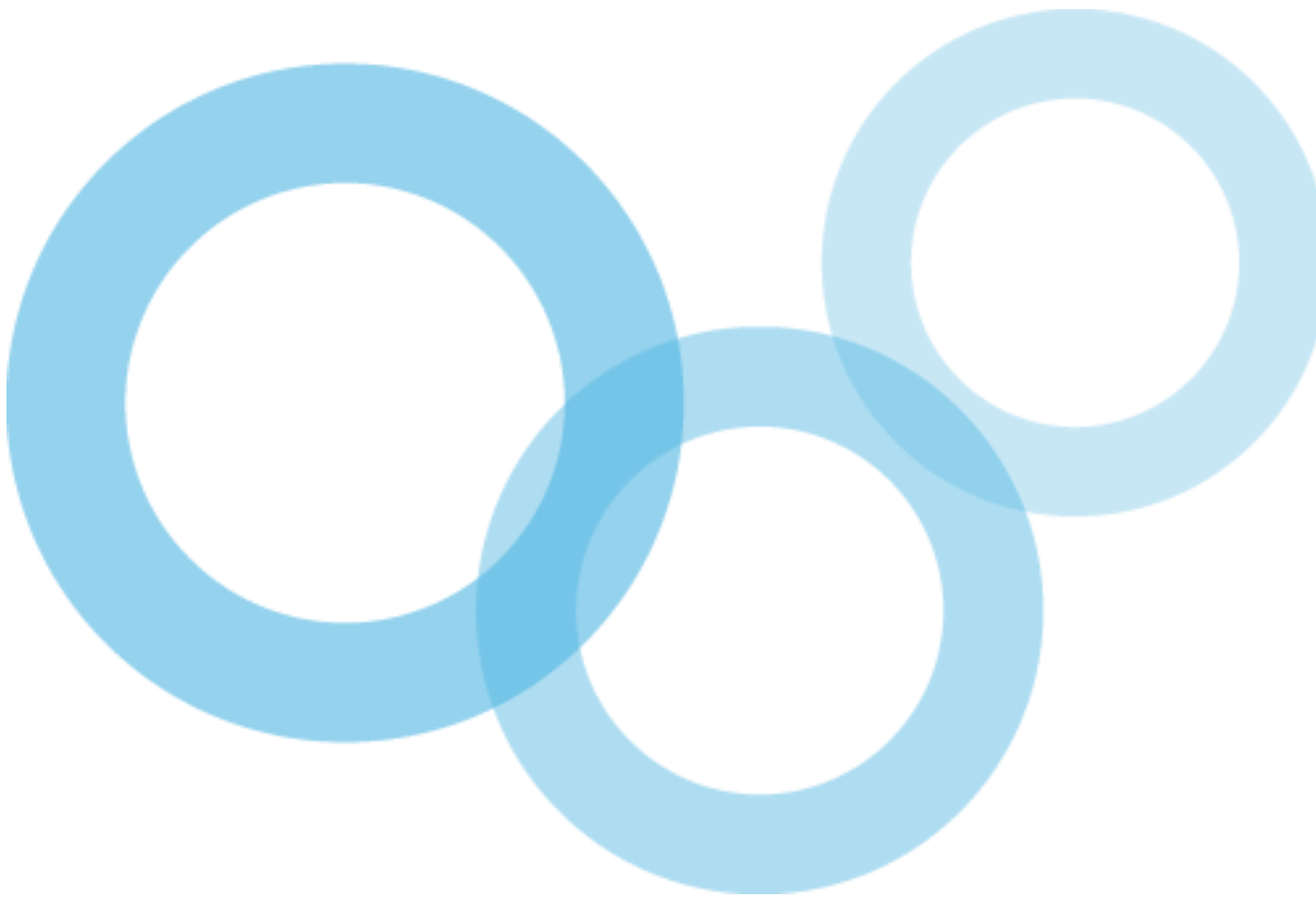




IPA MULTI-COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

ACTIVITY REPORT

JANUARY - JUNE 2019



D.5 WESTERN BALKANS REGIONAL COOPERATION AND PROGRAMMES

*Neighbourhood and
Enlargement
Negotiations*

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For any additional information on specific projects, contact us via the same address and your e-mail will be forwarded to the relevant Task Manager in DG NEAR unit D.5 – Western Balkans Regional Cooperation and Programmes.

We have followed the usual practice for Kosovo*.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

LINK

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme/index_en.htm

LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| AEI | Agency for European Integration |
| ATA | Administrative and Technical Assistance Facility |
| BAS | Business Advisory Services |
| BIRN | Balkan Investigative Reporting Network |
| BKA | Bundeskriminalamt/Federal Criminal Police Office Germany |
| BPR | Biocidal Products Regulation |
| CAB | Conformity Assessment Bodies |
| CAN | Capacity Needs Assessment |
| CBC | Cross-Border Cooperation |
| CBIB | Cross-border Institution Building |
| CC | Climate Change |
| CCW | Climate Change Window |
| CEB | Council of Europe Development Bank |
| CEECIS | Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent states |
| CEFTA | Central European Free Trade Agreement |
| CEN | Comité Européen de Normalisation |
| CFR | Country Feasibility Report |
| CHP | Country Housing Projects |
| CHU | Central Harmonisation Unit |
| CIRCA | Communication & Information Resource Centre Administrator |
| CLP | Classification, labelling and packaging |
| CN | Contract |
| CO | Coordination Office |
| CoE | Council of Europe |
| CoP | Community of Practice |
| CSF | Civil Society Facility |
| CSF | Classical Swine Fever |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |

| | |
|--------|--|
| CSP | Country strategy paper |
| CSR | Country Strategy Report |
| CVO | Chief Veterinary Officers |
| DG | Directorate General |
| DRR | Disaster risk reduction |
| EACEA | Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency |
| EAMLA | European Accreditation multilateral agreement |
| EBRD | European Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| EBU | European Broadcasting Union |
| EC | European Commission |
| ECAS | European Citizen Action Service |
| ECENA | Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network for Accession |
| ECS | Energy Community Secretariat |
| ECT(S) | European credit transfer (System) |
| EDIF | Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility |
| EE(FF) | Energy Efficiency Finance Facility |
| EEA | European Economic Area |
| EESC | European Economic and Social Committee |
| EETF | Energy Efficiency Task Force |
| EFSE | European Fund for Southeast Europe |
| EGP | Enterprise Growth Programme |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| EIB | European Investment Bank |
| EIDHR | European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights |
| EIF | European Investment Fund |
| EJN | European Judicial Network |
| EMMA | European Multi-services Meteorological Awareness |
| ENEF | Enterprise Expansion Fund |
| ENER | Energy |
| ENIF | Enterprise Innovation Fund |
| ENIF | Enterprise Innovation Fund |
| EPPA | Environmental Partnership Programme for Accession |

| | |
|----------|--|
| ETF | European training Foundation |
| EU | European Union |
| EUBEC | EU Platform for Blending in External Cooperation |
| EUD | European Union Delegation |
| EUI | European University Institute |
| EUMETNET | European National Meteorological network |
| EURAMET | European Association of National Metrology Institutes |
| FAD | Fiscal Affairs Department |
| FPA | Framework Partnership Agreement |
| GB | Governing board |
| GF | Guarantee Facility |
| GGF | Green for Growth Fund |
| GHG | Green House Gases |
| GIS | Geo Information System |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| HEREs | Higher Education Reform Experts |
| HFA | Hyogo Framework for Action |
| HLC | Humanitarian Law Centre |
| HOT | Hands-on training |
| HRM | Human resource Management |
| IACS | Integrated Administration and Control System |
| IAEA | International Atomic Energy Agency |
| IBM | Integrated Border Management |
| IC | Investment Committee |
| ICJ | International Court of Justice |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| ICTY | International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia |
| IFC | International Finance Cooperation |
| IFI | International Financial Institution |
| IFICO | International Financial Institution Coordination Office |
| ILECU | International Law Enforcement Coordination Units |
| IMO | International Maritime Organisation |
| IOM | International Organisation for Migration |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| IPA | Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance |
| IPF | Infrastructure Projects Facility |
| IPSAS | International Public Sector Accounting Standards |
| ISCED | International standard classification of education |
| IT | Information technology |
| ITC-ILO | International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization |
| JCM | Joint committee meetings |
| JIT | Joint Investigation Teams |
| KfW | Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau – banking group |
| KLA | Kosovo Liberation Army |
| LLEL | Life Long Entrepreneurial Learning |
| LLL | Life Long Learning |
| LPIS | Land Parcel Identification System |
| LSEE | Research unit established within the London School of Economics and Political Science's European Institute |
| MB | Multi-beneficiary |
| MCSP | Multi-country strategy paper |
| MDAS | Market development activities |
| MFF | Multi-annual financial framework |
| MIDWEB | Migration for Development in the Western Balkans |
| MIPD | Multi-Annual Indicative Planning Document |
| MMF | Multilateral monitoring framework |
| MoF | Ministry of Finance |
| MSC | Migrant Service Centres |
| MSME | Micro and small enterprise |
| MWh | Megawatt hours |
| NATURA EU | Nature & biodiversity policy |
| NCTS | National computerized transit system |
| NEEAP | National Energy Efficiency Action Plan |
| NEAR | Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations |
| NICO | Northern Ireland Cooperation Overseas |
| NIPAC | National IPA Coordinator |

| | |
|--------|--|
| NSI | National Statistics Institute |
| NTB | Non-Tariff Barriers |
| NTOs | National Tempus Offices |
| ODIHR | Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| OTP | Office of the Prosecutor |
| P2P | People to People |
| PADOR | Potential Applicant Data Online Registration |
| PAG | Platform Advisory Group |
| PAR | Public Administration Reform |
| PB | Partner bank |
| PC | Partner country |
| PCA | Post clearance audit |
| PEFA | Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability |
| PEM | Pan-Euro-Mediterranean |
| PEMPAL | Public Expenditure Management Peer Assisted Learning |
| PFG | Project Financiers Group |
| PFI | Participating Financial Institution |
| PFM | Public Financial Management |
| PGSC | Policy Group for Statistical Cooperation |
| PIFC | Public Internal Financial Control |
| PIU | Project Implementation Unit |
| PMU | Project Management Unit |
| PoW | Programme of Work |
| PP | Public Procurement |
| PPA | Public Procurement Authority |
| PPF | Project Preparation Facility |
| PPP | Public-private partnership |
| PSSF | Private Sector Support Facility |
| PV | Photovoltaic |
| QA | Qualitative Assurance |
| R&D | Research and Development |

| | |
|------------|--|
| RCC | Regional Cooperation Council |
| RCI | Regional Competitiveness Initiative |
| RE | Renewable energy |
| RECOM | Regional Coalition for the establishment of a Regional Commission for Establishing the Facts about War Crimes and Other Gross Violations of Human Rights Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia |
| REEP | Regional Energy Efficiency Programme |
| REG | Regional |
| REACH | Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals |
| RENA | Regional Environmental Network for Accession |
| ReSPA | Regional school of public administration |
| RHP | Regional Housing Programme |
| RIPA | Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act |
| SAA | Stabilisation and Association Agreement |
| SAI | Supreme Audit Institution |
| SBA | Small Business Act |
| SBS | Small Business Support Programme |
| SC | Steering Committee |
| SEE | South East Europe |
| SEECEL | South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning |
| SEED | Systematic Electronic Exchange of Data |
| SEEIC | Southeast Europe Investment Committee |
| SEETO | South East Europe Transport Observatory |
| SEI | Strengthening European Integration |
| SELEC | Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| SIGMA | Support for Improvement in Governance and Management |
| SME | Small and medium-sized enterprise |
| SMECSF SME | Competitiveness Support Window |
| SPS | Sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats |
| SWP | Strategic work programme |

| | |
|----------|---|
| TA | Technical Assistance |
| TAC | Travel, accommodation and conference facility |
| TACSO | Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations |
| TADAT | Tax Administration Diagnostic Assessment Tool |
| TAXUD | Directorate General Taxation and Customs Union |
| TBC | To be confirmed |
| TBT | Technical Barriers to Trade |
| T-CY | Cybercrime Convention Committee |
| TFCS | Task Force for Culture and Society |
| TGNA | Turkish Grand National Assembly |
| TNA | Training needs assessment |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| ToT | Training of trainers |
| TVR | Temporary and Virtual Return |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNISDR | United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction |
| UNMIK | United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo |
| UNODC | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |
| UNOPS | United Nations Office for Project Services |
| UNPROFOR | United Nations Protection Force |
| UNSCR | United Nations Security Council Resolution |
| USKOK | Office for the Prevention of Corruption and Organized Crime |
| VAC | Violence against Children |
| VAT | Value Added Tax |
| VIND | Vinca Institute Nuclear Decommissioning |
| WB | Western Balkan |
| WBG | World Bank Group |
| WBIF | Western Balkans Investment Framework |
| WeBSEDF | Western Balkans Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility |
| WeBSEFF | Western Balkans Sustainable Energy Financing Facility |
| WELMEC | European cooperation in the field of legal metrology |
| WG | Working group |

WINPRO Witness Protection in the Fight against Serious Crime and
 Terrorism

WMO World Meteorological Organization

WPU Witness Protection Unit

WSSD World Summit on Sustainable Development

CHAPTER 1: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

1.1 PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Revenue Administration and Public Financial Management in Southeast Europe

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2018/040-113.08 |
| Project title: | Revenue Administration and Public Financial Management in Southeast Europe |
| EU contribution: | EUR 10 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | PAGODA with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/401-658 |
| Duration of activities: | 07/12/2018 – 06/12/2021 |
| Links: | http://www.imf.org |
| Contact: | Damien Ruggeri, damien.ruggeri@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The purpose of this IMF-led project is to support the implementation of the relevant parts of the partners' Economic Reform Programmes and the preparation and implementation of their national revenue administration and public financial management reform plans.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Albania – Public financial management (PFM) activities during this period focussed on supporting development of the revised PFM strategy for the period 2019-2021, providing further advice on strengthening and streamlining processes for public investment planning and public-private partnerships (PPP), and strengthening analysis of fiscal risks related to state-owned enterprises (SOE).

For revenue administration (RA) support was provided to develop a sectoral compliance plan and strengthen the audit function of the large taxpayer office (LTO). An medium-term revenue strategy (MTRS) workshop was held in June to discuss the benefits of and the formulation process of an MTRS.

Bosnia and Herzegovina – The focus of PFM capacity development (CD) was on training to both strengthen coordination and planning of the medium-term fiscal framework and

budgeting. CD was also provided to support the Republika Srpska (RS) in drafting its PFM strategy.

For RA, a new IT system for VAT, including e-filing for all taxpayers, was implemented in February 2019 for the Indirect Taxation Authority*. Assistance was also provided to the Brčko District Tax Administration to develop an IT strategy/action plan to address significant IT risks. Proposals for amendments to the Republika Srpska Tax Procedure Law were developed with the Serbia Tax Administration (RSTA) and endorsed by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), with a new tax procedure law to be drafted by end-2019. Data mining/analysis for the identification of compliance risks and taxpayer profiling rules were supported in RSTA as a basis for specifying system functionality in a planned tender. Standard operating procedures for VAT and customs risk management have been developed. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Tax Administration finalization of an audit manual was supported†.

Kosovo – PFM CD provided support to further strengthen the medium-term budget framework (MTBF) and fiscal risks oversight, reporting and monitoring. Hands-on support was provided to the Ministries of Finance and Economic Development to improve the quality of analysis and reporting of the financial position and fiscal risks from publicly owned enterprises. RA CD focussed on improving management and governance, strengthening the tax audit function; developing a compliance project for the construction industry; and strengthening the LTO.

North Macedonia – For PFM, comments were provided on the draft Organic Budget Law, based on the CD missions in 2018. RA CD was delivered to support and strengthen the LTO's operations, specifically to introduce a modern risk differentiation framework. Additional support was provided for project management, IT reform and change management.

Montenegro - For PFM, two training programmes were provided on the PPP Fiscal Risk Assessment Model‡, to equip staff of the MoF and key line ministries with the tools and skills to analyze and evaluate risks related to public investment contracts, particularly PPP. RA CD focussed on supporting the tax administration's governance arrangements particularly with planning and reform management. Support was also provided to develop a human resource management strategy and to improve the LTO.

Serbia – For PFM, assistance was provided to the MoF to support the development of a sustainable system to manage all public investment projects, in particular the interfaces of the proposed system with existing public finance systems. RA CD was provided to complete the organizational changes for July 1 implementation, specifically separating non-core functions from core functions. Additional support was given to facilitate the upcoming IT reform and to further develop the operations of the LTO.

** There are several tax administrations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Indirect Taxation Authority (ITA), which is a national level agency, administers the collection of indirect taxes (VAT, customs duties and excise) for the whole country.

† Most RA CD efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina are being financed by a separate Netherlands program that commenced in June 2017

‡ <https://www.imf.org/external/np/fad/publicinvestment/pdf/PFRAM.pdf>

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Albania – For PFM, a fiscal risks statement was published with the 2019 Budget documents, a good first step, but needs significant strengthening, particularly in the areas of SOE oversight and broadening the analysis of PPPs. For RA, a plan for the establishment of a pilot project to consolidate the arrears collection function has been developed. A compliance plan for the restaurant and café sector was developed. The LTO implemented the initial phase of a modern risk differentiation methodology. The authorities have committed to developing an MTRS strategy.

Bosnia and Herzegovina – The PFM strategy for the Republika Srpska (RS) has been drafted and awaits government approval, this should set the stage for drafting a country wide strategy. For RA, improved services to VAT taxpayers and more efficient administration have been achieved with implementation of the new IT system. VAT and custom risk management is now better managed with clear responsibilities described for each step in the process. Political buy-in for a tax procedural reform has been secured in Republika Srpska

Kosovo – For PFM, the medium term expenditure framework (MTEF) published in April 2019 included much strengthened analysis of the underlying causes of variations over the 3-year MTEF period and a more in-depth analysis of the risks reported. The tax administration adopted and implemented a new organization structure. Progress has been made in increasing the percentage of audit selected by tax administration headquarters and reducing the number of non-productive visits to taxpayers. A high-level compliance plan for the construction industry was developed.

North Macedonia – The Organic Budget Law has been drafted, and comments provided, and include many of the provisions proposed by advice provided under the project. For RA, an updated strategic plan for Public Revenue Office 2019-21 has been adopted.

Montenegro – For PFM, staff are trained on tools to assess potential fiscal risks emanating from PPP contracts and how to analyse these. For RA, the Montenegro's Tax Administration now has more autonomy. A structured annual planning and reporting framework is in place; core tax processes have improved and resulted in an increase in electronic filing of tax declarations and better taxpayer services. A draft human resource strategy was developed.

Serbia – For PFM, inputs provided into public investment management information system design. For RA, the revised organizational structure separating core and non-core Serbia's Tax Administration activities was adopted on July 1st2019. A capability development plan for the LTO has been approved.

Regional – The Coordination and Steering Committee meeting was held in June 2019.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Albania – For PFM, assistance will focus on developing the regulations to support the new law on PPPs and align the PIM regulations with PPP procedures. Assistance will also be provided in further strengthening fiscal risk management. RA CD delivery will focus on supporting a new management team in understanding modern tax administration and need

to actively progress the reform initiatives. Support will also be provided to develop an MTRS and to strengthen the tax audit function.

Bosnia and Herzegovina – For PFM, an HQ mission has been requested by the Federation MoF to provide support in strengthening the oversight of potential fiscal risks from state-owned enterprises, the Republika Srpska has not yet agreed to this support. Upon approval of the Serbia PFM strategy, the project will support development of a country wide strategy in cooperation with OECD SIGMA.

For RA, a Tax Administration Diagnostic Assessment Tool (TADAT) assessment* of the Republika Srpska Tax Administration will be undertaken in September 2019 to guide the reform agenda and substantiate investment needs. Indirect Taxation Authority has requested an HQ-led mission advising on human resource management and customs administration, which has been agreed for October 2019. Other RA activities will focus on compliance risk management, procedural legislation for tax administration and audit efficiency.

Kosovo – An HQ mission will work to further strengthen the credibility of the medium-term budgetary framework and costing underpinning budget estimates. Follow up on fiscal risks work in the previous period will also be undertaken. RA CD delivery will focus on mentoring a new management team to ensure reforms will continue. In addition, support will be provided to the authorities to strengthen the tax audit function; deliver the compliance project for the construction industry and to facilitate the consolidation of tax arrears collection functions with a substantial reduction in physical locations.

North Macedonia – Preparatory work for the public investment management assessment (PIMA), tentatively planned for January 2020 and follow up to the fiscal transparency evaluation will be the main focus for this period. RA CD delivery will focus on strengthening Compliance Risk Management (CRM), supporting the implementation of the risk differentiation framework in the LTO, reviewing the VAT refund process and risk management, and further strengthening reform management.

Montenegro – No PFM activity planned for this next semester. RA CD support will continue to focus on helping the tax administration to streamline the HQ and regional structures and improve governance and the management of regional offices. In addition, support will be provided to the authority's efforts to strengthen CRM; human resource management, and tax audit.

Serbia – PFM CD delivery will support the newly formed fiscal risks unit in building its capability to assess and report fiscal risks. RA CD delivery will focus on supporting the management of the modernization program, improving VAT audit and fraud prevention and establishing a system to collect and report the key performance indicators. A mission to review Serbia's Tax Administration reform will be undertaken in October. It will also review the IMF Fiscal Affairs Department CD program to ensure it complements the World Bank Tax Administration Modernization Project.

* TADAT provides a framework for assessing the health of key components of a county's tax administration system and its level of maturity in the context of international good practice.

Regional - A four-day PFM workshop entitled “Strengthening Governance of Public Infrastructure” will be held at the Center of Excellence in Finance (CEF) in Ljubljana during the period 12-15 November. A three-day workshop on Compliance Risk Management for Revenue Administrations will be held at the CEF in December.

1.2 REGIONAL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (RESPA)

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-Country Annual Action Programme 2018 (IPA 2018/040-113) |
| Project title: | Support to the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 4,35 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant contract |
| Contract reference: | CN 2019/405 139 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/05/2019 – 30/04/2022 |
| Links: | http://www.respaweb.eu |
| Contact : | Inma Perez-Rocha, perez-rocha.maria-inmaculada@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The main aim is to support the public administrations in the Western Balkans to provide better services for citizens and businesses. All the actions under this programme focus on improving the professionalism of the public service, building capacity of senior civil servants at the central level and improving efficiency of service delivery. The activities are in line with the Commission's approach to public administration reform (PAR) in the Western Balkans and are organised/implemented following the reference framework given by the Principles of Public Administration.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The implementation of the grant contract CN 2019/405 139 – “Support to the Regional School of Public Administration” started on 1st May 2019.

Between May and June 2019, five Open day meetings were organised in all the ReSPA Members to present the content of the Work Programme 2019-20. In addition, high-level representatives of ReSPA members participated in the Open Government Partnership (OGP)

held in Ottawa in July and in the Conference of United Nations Public Service Forum that took place in Baku in July.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Increased awareness among key stakeholders in all ReSPA members about the objectives, novelties and challenges in the implementation of the new Work Programme 2019-20.
- Increased visibility of ReSPA among international organisations.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- ReSPA Summer School on the Challenges for Further Enlargement of the European Union (Danilovgrad, 1 July);
- First meeting of the Programme Committee (Ohrid, 16-17 October);
- Policy paper on Coordination of Public Policies;
- Translation, publication and dissemination of the study on merit-based recruitment;
- Translation, publication and dissemination of the study on performance appraisal of civil servants;
- Working visit for the members of the Programme Committee and Working Group of Centre-of-Government Institutions (Latvia, November 2019);
- Publication and dissemination of the Regional Comparative Study on Service Delivery
- Seasonal School on Digital Transformation;
- Working Visit for the members of human resources management and development working group to Northern Ireland;
- Development of the Guidelines for conducting performance appraisal of civil servants;
- Regional Conference on Managerial Accountability - joint event with SIGMA (Skopje, 18-20 September);
- High-level ministerial dialogue (Ljubljana, 1 October);
- Manual on how to make merit-based recruitment work;
- OGP Regional Conference (Budva, 3-4 October);
- Methodology for Public Administration Awards including consultative meetings with stakeholders;
- Development of Zero Open Data Guideline;
- Participation of the regional working group on Quality Management(QM) at the Common Assessment Framework Users Conference in Helsinki (dates tbc);
- Ministerial Conference Devoted to the Digitalization QM and human resources management in Skopje (November).

1.3 SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (SIGMA)

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme, 2017 / 039-402 |
| Project title: | Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) in the Western Balkans and Turkey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 15 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Contribution agreement with OECD |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/394-970 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/07/2018 – 30/06/2021 |
| Links: | www.sigmaweb.org |
| Contact: | Damien RUGGERI, Damien.RUGGERI@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

SIGMA supports public administration reform (PAR) in the Western Balkans and Turkey, providing the beneficiaries with assistance to strengthen their legal frameworks, administrative capacities and processes for sound implementation of national policies and harmonisation and implementation of the EU *acquis*. Areas of intervention are the core areas of PAR: (1) strategic framework of PAR, (2) policy development and co-ordination, (3) civil service and human resource management, (4) accountability, (5) service delivery, (6) public financial management (PFM) including public procurement (PP) and external audit.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2019)

- Eleven assessment monitoring reports against the Principles of Public Administration, covering selected areas of PAR, were delivered to the European Commission and published on the website (Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey).
- Twenty concept papers, analyses and studies were prepared addressing: strategic planning, capital investment projects, public consultations, implementation of the Code of Administrative Procedures, public procurement including peer reviews and public procurement agendas, regulatory impact assessment, free access to public information, civil service and administrative justice, relations of state audit institutions with stakeholders (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia).
- Thirty-three advisory papers and written commentaries were delivered on: better regulation strategies; PAR and PFM strategy implementation reports; civil service and

its organisation; auditing budget execution statements; audit reporting; external audit; public procurement including draft laws; public private partnerships; public internal financial control (PIFC) draft policy papers, manuals, reports and secondary legislation; transposition of *aquis* (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey).

- Forty-seven workshops, seminars, presentations, working sessions or roundtables were organised on: strategic planning, co-ordination and monitoring; performance indicators; delegation of administrative decisions; administrative procedures; regulatory impact assessment methodology; reforming the organisational structure of the administration; organisation of the civil service, staff planning, training and optimisation; measuring the satisfaction of citizens; public consultations; free access of information; audit of the budget implementation; improving PIFC; organisation of financial inspection; strengthening public procurement systems; capacity building of state audit institutions (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey).
- Results of three peer reviews of public procurement organisation and of state audit institutions were discussed or presented (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia).
- Two conferences were co-organised for the administrations across the region: on better regulations and on linking PIFC policy with PAR and PFM Strategies (Albania, North Macedonia).
- Three pilots for developing additional tools to the *SIGMA Toolkit for the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of public administration reform and sector strategies* (SIGMA Paper No. 57) took place (Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia).
- SIGMA Paper No. 59, *Guidelines for assessing the quality of internal control*, was finalised and published.
- Data for the *Government at a Glance* publication has been collected (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia).
- Support was provided to three PAR Special Group meetings (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo) and one high-level discussion on the PAR implementation (Serbia).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

- Improved monitoring, reporting and evaluation for PAR and PFM (Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia).

- Package of laws reforming the state administration adopted; improved legislative PIFC framework (Kosovo).
- Ongoing process of PAR and PFM strategy implementation; advanced preparation for creation of senior management service and reorganisation of the state administration; better understanding of the process of *aquis* transposition (North Macedonia).
- Policy papers on long-term PIFC, interlinked with PAR and PFM strategies, agreed with the European Commission or under the process of consultation or preparation (Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia).
- Increased capacity of the supreme audit institutions (Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia).
- Ongoing discussions on civil service laws; improved quality of planning for implementation of reforms (Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- Improved public procurement legislation and increased awareness of good practice (Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey).
- Increased awareness of practical aspects of the quality of management and control systems among the countries in the region.
- Better understanding and increased knowledge of practical aspects of the process of development of PAR strategies among the countries in the region.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

SIGMA will continue to provide country-specific assistance to strengthen the functioning of public administration in all the beneficiaries. A regional conference on PIFC will be organised in September. New Action Plans for SIGMA assistance in all PAR areas for all the beneficiaries will be prepared and agreed with the European Commission.

1.4 STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE FIDUCIARY ENVIRONMENT (SAFE TF)

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2015/031-609 |
| Project title: | Strengthening Accountability and the Fiduciary Environment (SAFE), EU Single-Donor Trust Fund |
| EU contribution: | EUR 3 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Administration Agreement with the World Bank (WB) |
| Contract reference: | IPA 2015/369-168 |
| Duration of activities: | 21/04/2016 to 30/06/2020 |

Links: www.worldbank.org/

Contact : Damien RUGGERI, damien.ruggeri@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The overall objective is to improve public financial management (PFM) in beneficiary countries by supporting the design, implementation, and management of PFM reforms and by building capacity for reforms effectiveness.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Albania - Public Financial Management Technical Assistance: Two Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) fiscal risks workshops were conducted. A technical assistance report on establishing a PPP monitoring framework was completed. A technical assistance on implementing a local government solvency framework (including the launching of pilots in two municipalities) was provided.

Kosovo - Strengthening Cash Planning and Execution: A cash management expert was appointed and thereafter assessed the current practices applied in Kosovo for cash and allocations management. Consultations with various internal and external stakeholders were conducted. Data collection and discussion of the preliminary findings with the Kosovo Treasury took place.

Kosovo - Strengthening Office of the Auditor General capacities in procurement audits:

Mentoring and coaching of two teams during a performance of four pilot audits and two pilot audits in regularity. IT project management training, cyber operations training, and ISACA training were conducted. Three mentored audits for donor financed projects (2 Western Balkans projects and 1 Decentralisation and Municipality Support (DEMOS) Swiss organization project) were completed. Training for 120 auditors covering local and international EU and Western Balkans regulation on procurement, and audit methodology were delivered.

Montenegro PEFA 2019: a PEFA methodology training was conducted in Podgorica on March 13-14, 2019, for representatives of relevant country institutions and international organizations. Data collection was completed. The Western Balkans shared the draft PEFA indicators with the Serbia MoF and other involved country institutions on June 17, 2019. The draft included the core part of the assessment, i.e., findings and ratings related to 31 PEFA indicators. The first draft was discussed between the Ministry of Finance, the Western Balkans and the EU, during a mission on June 26-28, 2019.

Serbia - Supporting implementation of Public Investment Management (PIM) reforms: A multi-stakeholder working group was formed by the MoF with the aim of agreeing on a set of methodologies and revisions to the regulation. An assessment survey of PIM capacity and resources across selected central government institutions and State Owned Enterprises (SOE) was conducted.

Turkey - Enhancing the Impact of the Turkish CoA on Good Public Governance: an intensive five-day course on Public Private Partnership (PPP) training for auditors in the Turkish Court of Accounts (TCA) was conducted in February 2019. A study visit to the UK was organised to meet with the National Audit Office and the UK Treasury Department representatives to learn the UK's approach to the audit of consolidated government statistics and the audit of public debt management systems.

Regional - Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny of Internal Audits in Western Balkans Countries: a knowledge exchange seminar was organized on May 9-10, 2019 to enhance the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) - Parliamentary Cooperation in the Western Balkans. Participants reviewed outputs from the Technical Working Group to strengthen consensus on how to operationalize stronger SAI-Parliamentary relations and develop jurisdiction level action plans aimed at translating regional principles into concrete country-level reforms.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Albania - Public Financial Management Technical Assistance: A subnational solvency bylaw was drafted by the Government based on TA recommendations. pilots for the subnational solvency bylaw in two local governments was launched. A TA report on establishing SOEs monitoring framework was completed.

Kosovo - Strengthening Cash Planning and Execution: The ICT team drafted technical requirements for the customization of the cash management module.

Kosovo - Strengthening Office of the Auditor General capacities in procurement audits: Auditors' skills and knowledge in the following field were increased: auditing information technology systems; auditing donor-funded projects and a better understanding of rules and regulations of the EU and WB; auditing procurement area and detection of fraud in procurement. Moreover, the benefits for civil society were maximized by receiving inputs for shortcoming and risks in the procurement area and in the public sector in general.

Serbia - Supporting implementation of Public Investment Management (PIM) reforms: A final PIM methodology was agreed by the working group on June 2019. The Government of Serbia adopted the new PIM decree thereafter. Government officials are better informed on international good practices and design options for PIM information systems.

Montenegro PEFA 2019: Government officials were better informed on the PEFA methodology, PEFA framework and objectives of the assessment. Government officials' awareness was raised regarding the areas of the PFM system needing improvement.

Turkey - Enhancing the Impact of the Turkish CoA on Good Public Governance: A cohort of sixteen TCA auditors are better informed and qualified to conduct PPP audits and train additional cohorts going forward. A list of potential risks and action items to conduct effective PPP audits was prepared and will inform the next TCA strategy.

Regional - Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny of Internal Audits in Western Balkans Countries: Progress made in the operating relationship between SAIs and parliamentary oversight committees because of the development and ongoing implementation of the

Action Plans. Consensus achieved between SAI and parliamentary communities in the Western Balkans as to the principles that should guide the relationship between stakeholders.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Albania - Public Financial Management Technical Assistance: Support to the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) in preparing a first PPP monitoring report and contracting authorities in applying the monitoring framework for their PPPs. Upon adoption of the draft subnational solvency guideline by the government, the team will monitor implementation of the guideline and provide technical support.

Kosovo - Strengthening Cash Planning and Execution: The team and an international expert will support the Kosovo Treasury/Ministry of Finance to (i) identify the technical requirements for the customization of the integrated cash management module; (ii) launch the procurement procedures to implement an integrated module within the Kosovo financial management information system (KFMIS) for cash planning and budget allocations; (iii) draft regulations and procedures on cash planning and budget allocations in consultation with the Kosovo Treasury and stakeholders.

Kosovo - Strengthening Office of the Auditor General capacities in procurement audits: Finalize audit reports on Value for Money audits and continue mentoring auditors. Conduct the final training courses for IT auditors and staff on IT audits and security-related subjects. Organize a round table discussion covering performance audits and civil society communication.

Montenegro PEFA 2019: Final draft to be shared for peer review with the Ministry of Finance, the PEFA Secretariat, the Western Balkans and the EU by September 2019. The final delivery of the report is planned for September 30, 2019. Dissemination and publishing of the report are scheduled for November 2019.

Serbia - Supporting implementation of Public Investment Management reforms: Completion of a report on specifications for the PIM information system and a report on PIM capacity assessment. Additional bylaws and rulebooks pertaining to the new PIM decree are set to be finalized within the coming months.

Regional - Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny of Internal Audits in Western Balkans Countries: Annual NPC Conference in Podgorica, Montenegro (November 2019). The event will bring together NPC leadership as well as technical staff to update the individual jurisdiction Action Plans drafted during the Tirana Seminar on May 2019 and identify potential just-in-time support for some countries that would help their complete implementation.

1.5 STATISTICAL COOPERATION

Support for Improvement in Statistics

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Programme, IPA 2015/031-898 |
| Project title: | Statistical cooperation with the Western Balkans and Turkey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 16 million (of which 15.8 million contracted) |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Service contract and grants to 4 national statistical offices |
| Contract reference: | Service contract with GOPA Consultants, EUR 9.8 m Grant to Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT), EUR 1.34 m Grant to State Statistical Office (SSO) of North Macedonia, EUR 1.73 m Grant to Statistical Office of Serbia, EUR 1.50 m Grant to Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), EUR 1.38 m |
| Duration of activities: | Service contract 01/04/2017 – 31/10/2019 Grants to 4 statistical offices 01/07/2017 – 31/10/2019 |
| Links: | http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/our-partners/cooperation |
| Contact : | Torbioern CARLQUIST, Torbioern.Carlquist@ec.europa.eu |

Statistical cooperation with the Western Balkans and Turkey

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Programme, IPA 2017/039-873 |
| Project title: | Statistical cooperation with the Western Balkans and Turkey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 14 million (of which 13.4 million contracted) |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Service contract and grants to 4 national statistical offices |
| Contract reference: | Service contract with GOPA Consultants, EUR 7.5 m Grant to Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT), EUR 1.32 m Grant to State Statistical Office (SSO) of North Macedonia, EUR 1.55 m Grant to Statistical Office of Serbia, EUR 1.48 m |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | Grant to Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), EUR 1.29 m Grant to IMF, EUR 0.20 m |
| Duration of activities: | Service contract 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2021 Grants to 4 statistical offices 01/05/2019 – 31/10/2021 Grant to IMF 03/12/2018 – 02/06/2021 |
| Links: | http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/our-partners/cooperation |
| Contact : | Torbioern Carlquist, Torbioern.Carlquist@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective is to prepare the statistical authorities in the partner countries for future EU membership by aligning their present statistical methodologies and practices with the EU acquis in statistics and integrating them into the European Statistical System (ESS).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- 1) Regular activities were financed from the service contract under **IPA 2015** such as participation in working group meetings, expert missions to the partner countries, study visits to EU Member States (MS), training events. A total of 31 pilot projects on various statistical topics are implemented. The second narrative report was approved and the corresponding payment made. Draft versions of the third narrative report were submitted and revised. Third progress meeting was held.

Eighteen traineeships were financed from IPA 2015 service contract from January to June 2019. Of these, 9 were hosted by Eurostat and nine by National Statistical Institutes (NSIs).

The four grant countries (Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey) have been implementing activities under their respective IPA 2015 grants during the period. These activities are implementation of the statistical projects, participation in working group meetings, study visits to EU MS, training events, etc.

- 2) The service contract under **IPA 2017** has commenced with a general kick-off meeting, a coordination workshop with Eurostat, NSIs and the contractor, as well as individual kick-off meetings with experts in 25 statistical projects. It was agreed to adjust time tables for implementation in many statistical projects. Implementation started with the first workshop and the traineeships.

Implementation of four IPA 2017 grants started in May 2019.

As part of its IPA 2017 grant, IMF organised a workshop in Montenegro on the topic of external sector statistics. NSIs and Central Banks as well as some Customs departments from the 7 partner countries met and discussed standards in the fields of balance of payment statistics and trade statistics.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Mission reports of experts show that statisticians in the partner countries continue to learn more about the EU standards in statistics.

Activity reports from participants representing the 3 statistical systems supported under the service contract (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo) who participated in working group meetings at Eurostat, in pilot project workshops, training courses and study visits organised by the contractor. The participants from the countries benefitting from a grant (Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey) also took part in these activities and described their experiences in mission reports.

Documentation of statistical sources and methods continued.

Data delivery compatible with common standards has continued from partner countries to Eurostat.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Regular activities to support the statistical offices in the candidate countries and potential candidates are financed in parallel from the IPA 2015 and IPA 2017 service contract and grants. IPA 2015 implementation will finish in 2019.

- 1) Under the **IPA 2015** MBP service contract, the final version of the third narrative report and corresponding invoice are due. The draft version of the fourth and final narrative reports will be submitted and fourth and final meetings will be held. An addendum to the contract to allow a short extension of two months will be discussed.

Under the IPA 2015 MBP grants, the final pilot project reports and deliverables are due in August-October 2019.

Various types of activities will take place: participation in Eurostat working groups and workshops, training events, expert missions to the national statistical offices, study visits, beneficiaries' work in different areas of statistics under the different statistical projects.

- 2) Under the **IPA 2017** MBP service contract, the inception report will be commented upon.

A total of 18 statisticians from partner countries are planned to participate in traineeships at Eurostat and in statistical offices in selected EU Member States from September to December 2019, with financing from IPA 2017. Planning for traineeships in the first semester of 2020 has started. The period of traineeship will be shortened to just under three months on an experimental basis.

- 3) It is planned to initiate the work of a **task force**, comprising Eurostat and all 7 NSIs, for drafting a strategy on statistical cooperation for the period 2021-2027.

1.6 WESTERN BALKANS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA 2019 |
| Project title: | |
| EU contribution: | EUR 1.75 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Duration of activities: | 15/09/2018 – 31/12/2019 |
| Links: | https://www.western-balkans-alumni.eu/ |
| Contact : | Albert Sesé BALLART, Albert.SESE-BALLART@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The aim of the Western Balkans Alumni Association is to establish a strong union of alumni coming from the Western Balkans countries in order to advocate for modernization and improve the quality of higher education in the region. In addition to ease collaboration and exchange between the six countries and empower young people of the Western Balkans on their academic and career development towards successful employment and support the overall process towards the EU.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The main two types of activities are the Internal Meetings and WBAA projects realized by the volunteers.

In 2019 WBAA started with an extraordinary Board Meeting in Tirana, Albania (14th March 2019) as a back-to-back Meeting with the first General Assembly of WBAA in Tirana Albania (15-16th March 2019). The board meeting was hosted at the House of Europe with 12 Participants plus representatives of the House of Europe and the EUD of Bosnia & Herzegovina. 170 participants joined the first General Assembly.

Later in the year the first WBAA Skill training (Topics were Project Management and Social Media Management) for 30 participants in Belgrade took place, followed to the next Board Meeting which was connected with the 8th Ministerial Meeting (02-04th June, 2019) in Belgrade, Serbia.

End of June (28-30th June) we had the first WBAA Team Meeting in Skopje, North Macedonia where 4 internal teams were split into working groups. 24 members came together and in addition, we had a meeting of the National Agency. The 4 working groups were Communication & IT, Academic and Career Development, Projects and the Research Team, which elaborated together with the HIS (Institute for Advanced Studies) the questionnaire for the development of the new WBAA survey. Supplementary to these meetings for the members, we also started to implement WBAA projects organized by the members and volunteers. WBAA projects are projects where the members can apply for funding to realize projects that support the visibility and outreach of WBAA. Projects realized are divided into four main types:

- Events for Erasmus+ and WBAA promotion,
- Training sessions for volunteers and WBAA members (capacity building, career development, project or entrepreneurship skills, etc.),
- Other outreach projects providing knowledge exchange and networking opportunities,
- Strengthening Higher Education Quality

The first realized project was in February in Serbia and the second realized projects happened in June 2019 (North Macedonia).

General information of the projects are presented in the following charts.

| Project Title | Applicants Chapter | type of focus | Dates |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Alumni Contact Seminar | Serbia | National | February 2019 |
| WBAA Entrepreneurs | North Macedonia | National | June 2019 |

In addition, WBAA also participated in several conferences of other ERAMUS+ Alumni Organisations, such as ESAA and EMA to establish stronger networks in the Higher Education and within the other Alumni Organisations so that synergies can be used in the future and create a bigger impact. As well as on the annual conference of the EU Scheme for young professionals in Tirana, Albania (13-14 May 2019).

WBAA participated with members at the conference "How to respond to the European aspirations of young people in the Western Balkans" 28 -29 May 2019 in Bucharest, Romania. The conference is organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, within the framework of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union as well as on the conference

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- WBAA Board Meeting Tirana, Albania; 14.03.2019

Regional Board Meeting in connection to the first General Assembly

Outputs: Update of current situation of WBAA and common understanding. Final preparation of General Assembly.

- WBAA General Assembly Tirana, Albania; 15-16.03.2019

First General Assembly of WBAA,

Outputs: Presentation of current state to members and plans for 2019. First meeting of new the WBAA Teams and election of Head of Team plus Deputies. WBAA teams also discussed relevant topics for each team and started to prepare first steps. E.g with 2 Experts of the IHS (Institute of Advanced Studies, Vienna, Austria) the WBAA Research Team Meeting analysed concrete points and topics for the planned survey. Production of an Image Video and 18 video testimonies.

- WBAA Skill Training Belgrade, Serbia; 31.05-01.06.2019

First WBAA Skill Training with 30 participants. 2 experienced external Trainers realized workshops with the topics Project Management and Social Media Management. A Networking Dinner with current Regional Board completed the skill training.

Outputs: Project management – participants are better informed on project management skills and created 4 concrete project ideas for WBAA.

Social Media management – Participants analysed all social media tools of WBAA and developed an input paper for the respective WBAA Team and Board.

- WBAA Board Meeting and Ministerial Meeting Belgrade, Serbia; 02-04.06.2019

Regional Board Meeting with 12 Participants plus 5 Head of WBAA Teams on the second day.

Outputs: Adaptation of Statutes and planning of the next 6 months, such as the first wave of WBAA projects and membership increase. Needs to increase impact of WBAA Teams and preparation of active participation on the eighth Ministerial Meeting.

Active participation on the eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training with participation of WBAA.

Outputs:

- Presentation of WBAA during the 8th Ministerial Meeting to all relevant stakeholders;
- Working Breakfast with representatives from the WB6 Ministries of Education;
- Meeting with the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Mr. Tibor Navracsics, including the Director for Innovation, International Cooperation and Sport at Directorate-General (DG) Education, Youth, Sport and Culture in the European Commission, Ms. Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva and the Minister of Education, Sports and Youth of the Republic of Albania, Ms. Besa Shahini.

- WBAA Team Meeting Skopje, North Macedonia; 28-30.06.2019

First WBAA Team Meeting with 24 participants and 4 Teams present: Research, Projects, Academic and Career Development, Communication and IT.

Outputs: Evaluation of developments within each team and concrete to-dos for next months. Teams received a better overview on their roles and responsibilities. Networking between teams was increased.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

WBAA will be present with three members at the Western Balkans Summit Poznan, 4-5 July 2019. This is the 6th summit of the Berlin Process (a diplomatic initiative linked to the future enlargement of the EU to the Western Balkans which started in 2014 with a series of Member States willing to cooperate further with the region). The focus of this year's summit is on economy, connectivity, security and civil society and it comprised three Ministerials, a leaders' meeting as well as a business, civil society and youth forums.

For the next semester we have planned also the second WBAA Team Meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina as a back-to-back event with the next regional board meeting.

The next semester will also be dominated by organized WBAA projects within the Western Balkans Region.

| Project Title | Applicants Chapter | type of focus | Dates |
|--|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| WBAA team-training project! | Albania | National | August 2019 |
| Student fair | Bosnia and Herzegovina | National | October 2019 |
| Building Youth Power in MNE | North Macedonia | National | Ongoing |
| Presenting WBAA to Kosovo alumni and Higher Education stakeholders | Kosovo | National | October 2019 |
| Run for Erasmus | Bosnia and Herzegovina | National | 6th October |
| Erasmus+ Ambassadors | Serbia | National | 12 - 13th October |
| Soft me up | Bosnia and Herzegovina | National | 5th - 6th October |
| Erasmus in Gradačac | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Local | 16.-17 August 2019 |

| | | | |
|--|------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| Internationalisation and Mobility Conference | Serbia | National | 18-19 October or 25-26 October |
| Future Western Balkans Entrepreneurs (WBAApreneurs) | Serbia | Regional | 13-15 September |
| Creating sustainable transfer of knowledge for building novel ideas for critical environmental issues of the Western Balkan countries. | North Macedonia | Regional | tbc |
| Innovative start-ups -Brain gain, not brain drain | Serbia | Local | 18. - 19. September |
| Include to diversity | Kosovo | National | 19-20 October and 26-27 October 2019. |
| Photography exhibit No borders generation | Serbia | National | 15-21 October |
| Internship fair | North Macedonia | National | first week of October |
| Social entrepreneurship through the prism of Erasmus + | North Macedonia | National | tbc |
| Bridging the gap between academia and industry through industrial boards and updated curricula | Kosovo | Local | End of September |
| The magic of creating successful project proposals | North Macedonia | Regional | Last weekend of September |
| Training sessions in communication development and WBAA promotion | Albania | Regional | 14th-15th September |
| Let's Talk about Internationalization | Serbia | National | 15 October |
| Exhibition plus - | Bosnia and Herzegovina | National | tbc |
| Learning and encouraging students from technical sciences to participate in European exchange programs | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Regional | 3-4. October 2019 |

Currently we are having an open call available for members to apply for budget to implement their project concepts until the end of 2019.

Another activity that will be finished until the end of the semester is the development of the WBAA survey.

CHAPTER 2: RULE OF LAW AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

2.1 FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION

Ending impunity for grand corruption in the Western Balkans and Turkey

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme IPA/2018/040-113 |
| Project title: | Ending impunity for grand corruption in the Western Balkans and Turkey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 1.111.109 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant Agreements with Transparency International (TI) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/401-061 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/11/2018 – 31/12/2020 |
| Contact: | Eleonora SCONCI, Eleonora.SCONCI@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the improved good governance in the Western Balkans and Turkey. It tackles corruption as an entry point to addressing state capture. The project seeks to improve transparency and accountability of the judiciary and democratic law-making. It looks at tailor-made laws that enable and maintain state capture and ensure a better understanding of grand corruption cases and its effects in the society. Based on the research findings, project partners will use illustrative case studies and launch innovative advocacy initiatives. This on-going work builds on a previous IPA funded action.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Transparency International Secretariat (TI-S) brought together project partners for a **first kick off meeting** in Berlin on 24-25 January 2019. The partners agreed on the selection criteria for the grand corruption cases and tailor-made laws to include in the database. The definition of the grand corruption cases and tailor-made laws, as well as on the timeline for data collection were agreed. In addition, the partners also decided on the structure and functionality of the online searchable database of the gathered corruption cases. There was also a discussion on the regional advocacy approach as well as safety, risks, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. The partners received administrative and financial training to ensure smooth project implementation and high-quality financial reporting.

- The project partners initiated **desk research and collection of grand corruption cases and tailor-made laws** following specific criteria. Cases and laws collected so far are under review. A plan for fact checking and defamation check of the cases has been set in place.
- TI-S started creating the **design of the searchable online database** of grand corruption cases and tailor-made laws.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Project partners defined the research methodology, including a working definition of grand corruption and tailor-made laws;
- Sixty corruption cases and thirteen tailor-made laws were collected and reviewed by June 2019;
- Project partners acquired knowledge and skills for smooth implementation of the action, including for financial reporting, and monitoring and evaluation of the project.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Project partners will continue **collecting cases of grand corruption and tailor made-laws**, conduct defamation and fact check, in order to prepare the cases for publication in the database. TI-S will provide continuous support to partners; in the research process, it will provide detailed feedback on collected cases and laws, and will ensure that the data goes through the necessary checks to ensure its reliability.
- TI-S will organise a **project meeting in Belgrade** on 24-26 September 2019 to discuss the research process and findings, the launch of the database, and define advocacy strategy and communication tools.
- Preparation for the publication of an **online searchable database of grand corruption cases** and tailor-made laws is to be completed and launched next February 2020, on the new TI-S website. The database will provide structured information for journalists, CSOs, academics, public officials, citizens and the broader public from the region on grand corruption crimes and tailor-made laws.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Action Programme, IPA/2018/040-113 |
| Project title: | Supporting Domestic Accountability for War Crimes and Informing Affected Communities about the Recent Past |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant Agreement |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/403-513 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2020 |
| Links: | http://www.irmct.org/en |
| Contact: | Catherine DENIS, Catherine.DENIS@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to contribute to reconciliation and good neighbourly relations and strengthening the rule of law in the Western Balkans region. Through, reducing the backlog of war crimes cases at the domestic level (Component A); and increasing public awareness and understanding of the crimes committed during the conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991 (Component B).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Component A: Domestic War Crimes Accountability Program

Direct Case Assistance Program

- The Office of the Prosecutor (“OTP”) received a larger-than-expected volume of Direct Case Assistance requests. The OTP conducted searches of its evidence collection, reviewed internal work product, analysed evidence of crimes and potential suspects and prepared information for requesting authorities. It transmitted information and relevant evidence to domestic war crimes prosecutor’s offices. It hosted 2 visits by domestic prosecutors.

Category II bis Program

- The OTP identified its first crime base for the Category II *bis* program. It conducted an extensive review of ICTY prosecutions, including judicially-confirmed factual findings on the crimes and those responsible. It commenced in-depth searches of its evidence collection and a review of its internal work product. The OTP prepared an initial list of relevant suspects, and began a detailed factual and legal analysis as the foundation for the dossier to be handed over.

Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program

- In light of the significant number of Direct Case Assistance requests received, the OTP prioritized responding to those requests, in the course of which the OTP has provided peer-to-peer mentoring on legal issues. The OTP accordingly temporarily delayed initiation of the online forum.

Component B: Affected Communities Information Program

- Twelve (12) meetings with key stakeholders organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia to establish cooperation with partners and associates from the region on project-related activities.
- Developed concept for a series of media outreach and social media campaigns marking the anniversaries of key crimes, including the types of content, visual identity, production process and distribution channels.
- Established cooperation with history teachers' associations in the five target countries; began developing the workshop content.
- Established cooperation with six universities in the region. Developed concept for the series of inter-university video lectures'.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Component A: Domestic War Crimes Accountability Program

Direct Case Assistance Program

- Nine requests for Assistance received, 2,410 documents (56,797 pages) provided to the domestic prosecuting authorities.
- Two visits of the prosecutors dealing with cases regarding DCA, with discussion providing direct expert assistance regarding investigation of those cases.

Component B: Affected Communities Information Program

- Joint activities agreed to be implemented with more than 60 stakeholders from the region; increased visibility of the project among the main stakeholder groups in the targeted countries.
- Created a network of six law faculties from the region, which will participate in a series of joint lectures entitled 'International Law and Facts Established before the ICTY'.
- Created a network of five national associations of high school teachers whose members will be trained in use of the ICTY's/IRMCT's archival material.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Component A: Domestic War Crimes Accountability Program

Direct Case Assistance Program

- Continue to provide assistance to prosecutors' offices.

Category II bis Program

- Commencement of transfer of Category II *bis* cases.

Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program

- Initiation of the online forum expected.

Component B: Affected Communities Information Program

- Production of content for eight social media campaigns, including videos, designed social media posts, media information packages etc.
- Deliver three interactive video lectures to law students from 6 universities in the region.
- Hold four workshops on use of the ICTY/IRMCT archive for high-school history teachers in four targeted countries.
- Presentations and training on the use of the ICTY/IRMCT archives to be held for participants of the: WARM Human Rights Festival and Sarajevo Film Festival in Bosnia and Hercegovina; School of Transitional Justice in Prizren, Kosovo; and UNDP seminar on media reporting on war crimes trials for journalists from the region, to be held in Belgrade, Serbia.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Action Programme, IPA/2018/041-591 |
| Project title: | Joint EU and MICT OTP Training project for National Prosecutors and Young Professionals from the former Yugoslavia |
| EU contribution: | EUR 0.2 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant Agreement |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/404-574 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2019 |
| Links: | http://www.irmct.org/en |
| Contact: | Catherine DENIS, Catherine.DENIS@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of this action is to strengthen the capacity of judicial authorities in the countries of the former Yugoslavia to effectively investigate and prosecute war crimes. National prosecutors for domestic war crimes cases and young professionals with a legal or other relevant background participate in the Action.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Visiting National Prosecutors

- Visiting National Prosecutor from Serbia continued activities and completed his professional visit at the Office of the Prosecutor on 30 June 2019.
- Visiting National Prosecutor from Bosnia and Herzegovina started his participation in the Project as of 1 February 2019.
- The Office of the Prosecutor (“OTP”) supported the Visiting National Prosecutors from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia during searches for investigative material, which was used in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

Visiting Young Professionals component

- This component of the Project was inactive in this period.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Visiting National Prosecutors component

- 73 Requests for Assistance completed. 9,512 documents (111,540 pages) and 14 audio/video material provided to the domestic prosecuting authorities.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Visiting National Prosecutor from Serbia will arrive and start activities as of 1 September 2019.

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | IPA Multi-Country Programme 2014/031-603 |
| Project title: | Measuring and assessing organized crime in the Western Balkans: Supporting evidence-based policy making (MACRO) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement for a pillar assessed organisation United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Research and Trends Analysis Branch |
| Contract reference: | CN 2015/358-127 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/04/2016 – 31/12/2019 |
| Links: | https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/toc.html |
| Contact : | Olivia DEBAVEYE, olivia.debaveye@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to implement a statistical framework for quantifying and analysing organised crime in the Western Balkans, to establish mechanisms to monitor it and to produce an evidence-based analytical report on Organised Crime (OC) in the Western Balkans. The statistical framework will include various components, such as criminal activities perpetrated by Organised Crime groups, the response by the criminal justice system and on ways of operating.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- From January-March 2019, a second statistical data collection took place under the project. Participants continued to enter the data identified by the data availability assessment into the MACRO online data platform (<https://macro-wb.un.org>). UNODC organised three training sessions for each project beneficiary, as well as continuous technical support to the users from national institutions.
- In the first quarter of 2019, teams of local interviewers in each beneficiary were implemented in-depth semi-structured interviews regarding organised crime groups activities, modus operandi and emerging threats, with four main target groups: prisoners convicted of crimes most commonly associated with organized crime, victims of trafficking, smuggled migrants and expert practitioners. Interviews took place in twenty three prisons, eight migrants centres and three shelters for victims of human trafficking as well as with law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, customs officials, academics and investigative journalists.
- In May 2019, the third Advisory Committee meeting was held in Vienna, Austria. The meeting focused on discussing the findings and results of both quantitative and qualitative data collection, as well as next steps for the final regional report and the second regional capacity building training.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- In July 2019, a Research Brief was published entitled Measuring Organized Crime: Assessment of Data in the Western Balkans, which discusses how availability of data can elucidate important factors about countries' capacities to measure patterns and trends of organised crime and finally, present some practical solutions to improve the availability of this data.
- The online data repository holds over 7000 observations on organized crime activities, enablers, state response and the illicit economy. This volume of information regarding organized crime has never been collected before and provides many opportunities for analysis.

- Over 250 interviews were conducted.. In June 2019, an analytical report on the interviews was completed which detailed the main themes described by the interviewed populations.
- The Advisory Committee meeting were very positive. Participants were pleased with the findings of data collection and expressed enthusiasm and optimism for the results of the project.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- An Expert Group meeting with participants from international organizations, academia and civil society in the field of organised crime met to discuss the first draft of the final regional report of the project in July 2019.
- In September 2019, the second regional training will be delivered to national criminal justice practitioners to increase the availability and quality of organised crime data in the project beneficiaries.
- Finally, in November 2019, the final regional report on Measuring and Assessing Organised Crime in the Western Balkans will be launched. It will describe the trends and patterns observed through the quantitative and qualitative data as well as provide evidence-based policy advice to support developments in the rule of law and the accession process in the beneficiary countries and territories.

Balkans Act Now (BAN - phase III)

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Europe Aid/154870/DH/ACT/Multi |
| Project title: | Balkans Act Now (BAN - phase III) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 965'117,64 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement |
| Contract reference: | 2017/394348 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2021 |
| Links: | http://www.astra.rs |
| Contact : | Emma ASCIUTTI, emma.asciutti@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The main objective of the cation is to support the Western Balkan region in its EU accession negotiation processes; whereby beneficiaries need to respond to the judicial reform and fight against organized crime, specifically human trafficking. Based on enhancing and strengthening regional cooperation, improving capacities and influence of the civil society organisations (CSO) in debating and monitoring on human rights and rule of law.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Monitoring tool Working groups, aiming to develop specific Monitoring tool national indicators with institutional/independent national experts, are established.
- All co-applicants have prepared tenders for local grass root civil society organisations' sub-granting in the total value of 50'000 EUR
- Through 10 capacity-building and 5 advocacy skills trainings, capacities and skills of over 50 local grass root organisations and of another 60 CSOs activists in the region, for monitoring, identification of victims, compensation, sustainable services etc have been increased.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Monitoring Tool Working groups, consisted of over 60 members - institutional/independent/CSO experts from police, social welfare, judiciary, prosecution, in each co-applicants' country are developing specific multisectorial indicators. Indicators will be a base for the first consolidated pilot national reports on the Western Balkans Human Rights Trafficking situation and respect of victim's rights, which will be presented at Regional Conference, in December 2019, in Belgrade. In the same time, all co-applicants intensified activities on collecting and analysing data regarding victims, needed for Monitoring Tool pilot national reports preparation.
- Tenders for sub-granting of local grass root civil society organisations' have been prepared for launching in all co-applicants countries. 12 CSOs will be supported with 2'500 – 5'000 EUR (in total with 50'000 EUR) with the aim to enable the active participation of local grass root CSOs in: monitoring the processes and cases; prevention; collection of complementary and supplementary data for monitoring tool reports and as a contribution to Monitoring tool working groups; overview of local (municipal/community) services provided to the victims and cooperation of CSO organization in mechanism. Results will be published latest by the end of September, with projects' implementation period from Oct 2019 – Feb 2020.

- Tenders for capacity building and advocacy trainings have been launched and finalised. Over 50 local grass root organisations and another 60 CSOs activists in the region have participated in more than 15 trainings, aiming to increase their management and advocacy skills on mainly compensation for victims and full respect of victims' rights. Participants learnt on how to analyse a focus issue, set goals and objectives, decide on audiences (primary and secondary), create messages that are focused and far reaching, build alliances, choose communication tools, improve protocol changes in judiciary for victims of crime and implementation of these change etc. The second round of trainings will take place from July until October 2019.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Selection of sub-grantees and implementation of selected projects.
- Finalisation of Monitoring Tool specific national indicators and preparation of 5 comparative Monitoring Tool Pilot national reports.
- Organisation of Regional Conference in early December 2019

Civil Society for Good Governance and Anticorruption in Southeast Europe: Capacity Building for Monitoring, Advocacy and Awareness Raising (SELDI)

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | IPA Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2016-2017 (2016-038-960, 2017-038-931) |
| Project title: | Civil Society for Good Governance and Anticorruption in Southeast Europe: Capacity Building for Monitoring, Advocacy and Awareness Raising (SELDI) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 1.135.257 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement with the North Macedonian Center for International Cooperation |
| Contract reference: | 2018/394-123 EuropeAid/154870/DH/ACT/Multi |
| Duration of activities: | 10/05/2018 - 09/05/2022 |
| Links: | http://seldi.net/home/ , www.mccic.mk |
| Contact : | Eleonora SCONCI Eleonora.Sconci@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to enhance the impact of civil society in public decision-making and reform processes in the Western Balkans in the area of good governance and anti-corruption through evidence-based advocacy, watchdog and policy monitoring, and dialogue with the Governments.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- The Centers for Civic Initiatives (CCI) published Restricted Call for Proposals for the Small Grants Programme at the beginning of February with respective deadline on 4th March 2019. There were 28 concept notes submitted and 14 organisations were invited to submit full applications;
- The Evaluation Committee established for the Small Grants Programme finalized the evaluation of full applications and pre-selected for the award of grants 6 organizations from 6 different Western Balkans countries in May 2019; the grant contracts with the selected organizations were signed in June 2019, whereas the implementation start date is expected as of 1st September 2019;
- A Methodological and Practical Training on “Corruption and State Capture Monitoring, Advocacy and Impact in a World of Hybrid Threats”, that took place in Sarajevo on 12th June 2019. The training aimed to inspire CSOs and grassroots organisations to engage in anti-corruption initiatives, instruct them on how to apply corruption and state capture monitoring methodologies, and encourage them to collaborate among themselves and with the public institutions in order to achieve positive impact over the national and regional policies;
- The core partners from the six beneficiaries conducted selection procedures for engaging survey agencies that implemented the Corruption Monitoring System - population survey with face-to-face interviews.
- All core partners from the six beneficiaries started implementing the MACPI State Capture Survey, based on Lime Survey software solution. The fieldwork was completed in two countries, while for the others, it was agreed that fieldwork will continue at least until September 2019 for securing a larger sample (at least 50 experts);
- Institute Alternativa and ZastoNE, with the support of all other partner organisations finalized the first Thematic Policy Brief, that covers the establishment and functioning of the anticorruption agencies in the region;
- The beneficiary partners prepared and distributed the five editions of SELDI Newsletter (#42 - #46).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Six grant contracts;
- Two technical reports;
- Thematic Policy Brief Institutional Setup and Efficiency of the Anti-Corruption Agencies in the Western Balkan Countries;
- Five editions of SELDI Newsletter (#42 - #46).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Preparation of the second Thematic Policy Brief covering Chapter 1 of the Regional Anticorruption Report Corruption and state capture levels in South East Europe;
- Finalizing the MACPI State Capture Survey;
- Preparing first draft of the Regional Anticorruption Report;
- Organisation of 2nd annual partners' coordination meetings and 3rd Steering Committee meeting;
- Organisation of the First Regional Policy Forum (tentatively scheduled for December 2019, in Skopje);
- Preparing and distributing SELDI newsletters;
- Dissemination of activities for increased communication and visibility.

Support for the Implementation of a Regional Justice Survey

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| Programme reference: | MPC under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2015, IPA 2014/031-603 |
| Project title: | Support the Implementation of a Regional Justice Survey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 0.8 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Administration agreement with the World Bank |
| Contract reference: | IPA/2018/402-958 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2019 – 30/06/2020 |
| Links: | www.worldbank.org |
| Contact : | Eleonora SCONCI Eleonora.Sconci@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective is to inform justice policy dialogue through the generation, analysis and dissemination of survey data on justice system performance in the Western Balkans. Through gathering experience-based and perception-based data from a range of stakeholder groups in the justice sector, these surveys can help policy makers and policy influencers to enhance their awareness and understanding of the justice system, its way of operating and the impact of justice reforms.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- A team of experts was mobilised to work on the implementation of Regional Justice Survey in the Western Balkans. The team consists of experienced survey experts, lawyers and public sector specialist who already were involved in implementing judicial surveys.
- In cooperation with the European Commission (DG JUST), master questionnaires for each target groups (judges, prosecutors, court administration, lawyers, citizens, business sector) were finalised and the survey methodology prepared.
- The project team organised missions to the Western Balkans between March-June 2019 to present the project's purpose and methodology to key judicial stakeholders and to ensure their commitment during filed work and data collection process. A mission to Montenegro was organised in March, to Bosnia and Herzegovina in April and to North Macedonia early June 2019. Meetings with Serbian judicial stakeholders were organized in May 2019. Due to the political situation in Albania, the mission was postponed for September 2019. The mission to Kosovo is scheduled for early July 2019. In addition to the introductory meetings, the World Bank team organised workshops in the region with judges, prosecutors, lawyers and business sector representatives to discuss country specific issues that should be included in the questionnaires.
- For the fieldwork, an experienced survey company for data collection and preliminary statistical analysis will be contracted. The contract will be signed by mid-July 2019.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- **Master questionnaires** for each target groups (citizens – with and without court experience, business representatives – with and without court experience, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, court administration) that will be used in all beneficiaries were prepared. Questionnaires were discussed with experts from DG JUST to ensure that surveys will provide information relevant for EU integration process, especially in the area of independence, integrity and quality of the justice system.

- A **Survey methodology** that will be used by survey company in the data collection process and fieldwork was prepared. Survey methodology provides relevant information on the purpose of the survey, guide for interviewers for each questionnaire and question.
- A Terms of Reference for tender and other tender documents to ensure that the selected company has the relevant experience and resources in each beneficiary to implement fieldwork was prepared.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- A presentation of the survey to key judicial stakeholders and workshops for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and business sector representatives is planned for September 2019 in Albania.
- The Survey company is being contracted and the implementation is expected to start by mid-July 2019.
- Implementation of the fieldwork preparations will take place from July until September 2019. These require trainings for each country team (fieldwork manager, survey manager, national lawyer) to ensure a unified approach.
- Fieldwork, is expected to start in October until early December 2019, including collection of filled questionnaires from judges, prosecutors and court administration; face to face interviews with citizens and business sector.
- First preliminary results should be available and presented to the public by the end of December. With limited number of topics per beneficiary.

Targeting crime proceeds on the internet in South Eastern Europe and Turkey (iPROCEEDS)

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| Programme reference: | Multi-country Programme, IPA 2014/031-603 |
| Project title: | Project iPROCEEDS - Cooperation on Cybercrime under the Instrument of Pre-accession (IPA): Project on targeting crime proceeds on the Internet in South-eastern Europe and Turkey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement for a pillar assessed organisation with the Council of Europe |
| Contract reference: | CN 2015/367-971 |
| Duration of activities: | 01 January 2016 – 31 December 2019 |

Links: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cybercrime/iproceeds>

Contact : Olivia DEBAVEYE, Olivia.DEBAVEYE@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The main objective of the action is, that the beneficiaries will comply with relevant standards regarding cybercrime and crime proceeds including the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime (CETS 185)* and the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (CETS 198)[†] of the Council of Europe (CoE). Both treaties and the related assessment or monitoring mechanisms are most relevant for countries covered by this Action. In fact, the beneficiaries are expected to comply with the *EU acquis* and relevant Council of Europe conventions and standards.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Assessment mission (March 2019) to support the on-going reform in Serbia of the national criminal law and criminal procedure law related to cybercrime and electronic evidence in line with the Budapest Convention and European Union standards.
- Specialised trainings for law enforcement authorities: European Cybercrime Training and Education Group (ECTEG) Training on Network Investigations was organised in cooperation with the Romania Police Academy, in Romania, in February 2019. Kick-off meeting to update the ECTEG Training on Darkweb and virtual currencies investigations was organised in cooperation with Southeast European Law Enforcement Center - SELEC in March 2019 in Romania, which aimed at the update the Training course materials under in the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats Operational Action Plan - EMPACT OAP 2019. Free Forensic Tools for the Law Enforcement Community (FREETOOL) Showcase Workshop was organised in cooperation with the University College Dublin – Center for Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Investigation and SELEC in Romania, in May 2019. Cybercrime investigators and digital forensics experts saw live demonstrations of the tools in action and had the opportunity to directly interact with their developers.
- Three simulation exercises on cybercrime and financial investigations were organised in Albania (March 2019), Serbia (April 2019) and Turkey (May 2019). Cybercrime and

* Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia and Turkey are Parties. The Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) assesses implementation of this treaty (www.coe.int/tcy).

[†] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia and Turkey are Parties. These States are monitored by MONEYVAL (www.coe.int/moneyval).

financial investigators, digital forensics specialists, prosecutors and money laundering analysts from the Financial Investigation Units (FIUs) undertook investigations on the Darknet, virtual currencies and cooperated in the framework of Joint Investigations Teams - JITs.

- National delivery of the judicial Introductory Training Courses on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds in Kosovo (February 2019), Montenegro (March 2019 and 15-16 April 2019), Bosnia and Herzegovina (April 2019), Albania (March 2019 and May 2019 and June) and Turkey (May 2019). Around 100 judges, prosecutors, legal associates and candidates increased their skills and knowledge required to fulfil their respective roles and functions in cases of cybercrime, electronic evidence and search, seizure and confiscation of online crime proceeds. The course enabled participants to gain knowledge on cybercrime trends and threats, technology, electronic evidence, financial investigations of cybercrime proceeds, including the relevant substantive and procedural laws, money laundering typologies related to the online environment, as well as channels and avenues of international co-operation which can be taken in the search, seizure and confiscation of online crime proceeds.
- Training of trainers (ToT) on delivery the basic training module on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds for judges and prosecutors (for North Macedonia and Turkey) was held in North Macedonia, in April 2019. As a result a new pool of national trainers on cybercrime and electronic evidence was established in North Macedonia (5) and Turkey (4).
- 6th Meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) was held in March 2019 in Bucharest, Romania. The progress done during September 2018-March 2019 was presented to the members of the PSC; the Workplan for April 2019 - March 2020 was discussed in details and approved by the members of the PSC.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Increased compliance of national legislation on cybercrime and electronic evidence in line with European standards to better address the challenges related to the technological evolution and the fast-changing pace of the modus operandi of cybercrime.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of investigators, prosecutors and FIUs on the latest cybercrime trends and threats, tools and investigative techniques to fight cybercrime as well as improved detection and mitigation techniques.
- Improved interagency and international cooperation between investigators, digital forensic experts, prosecutors and FIUs through simulation exercise that required exchange of information, close coordination and cooperation in investigation of cybercrime and criminal proceeds, application of digital forensics skills, detection and

handling suspicious financial transactions and money laundering, and recovering data through international cooperation channels.

- Sustainable Judicial Training programmes on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds through creation of the pool of national trainers, integration of the new modules in the curricula of training institutions and piloting the trainings in project countries/areas.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- First International Meeting of the national trainers on cybercrime and electronic evidence. 10-12 July 2019, Strasbourg, France.
- Underground Economy Conference 2019, 3-6 September 2019, Strasbourg, France.
- Regional training on Undercover Online Investigations in cooperation with SELEC, 17-20 September 2019, Bucharest, Romania.
- International Joint Conference on Internet Investigations in cooperation with EUROJUST, 30 September - 1 October 2019, The Hague, The Netherlands.
- Meeting of the 24/7 Contact Points under Budapest Convention (at the Europol HQ), 8 October 2019, The Hague, Netherlands.
- INTERPOL-Europol Annual Cybercrime Conference (at the Europol HQ), 9-11 October 2019 in Hague, Netherlands.
- Regional training on Open Source Intelligence, 21-25 October 2019, Bucharest, Romania.
- Introductory training courses on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds October 2019, in North Macedonia and Serbia.
- 7 domestic workshops to review progress in all project areas (14 October 2019 in Serbia, 15 October 2019 in Montenegro, 17 October 2019 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 19 November 2019 in Albania, 21 November 2019 in North Macedonia, 26 November 2019 Kosovo: 28 November 2019 in Turkey.
- INTERPOL Eurasian Working Group on Cybercrime for Heads of Units. (location to be confirmed by INTERPOL) 5-7 November 2019.
- Participation in the 22nd Plenary of the T-CY and Octopus Conference, 18-22 November 2019, Strasbourg, France.
- Support participation in long-distance master programme (Winter examination) and Graduation Ceremony, December 2019, UCD, Dublin, Ireland.
- Pilot ECTEG Training on Dark Web and Virtual Currencies in cooperation with SELEC 3-7 December 2019, Bucharest, Romania.
- Closing Conference: evaluation of progress made and the way forward on 12-13 December 2019.

Balkan Tender Watch

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| Programme reference: | EuropeAid/154870/DH/ACT/Multi |
| Project title: | Balkan Tender Watch |
| EU contribution: | EUR 966,349.80 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans (Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina) |
| Type of contract: | Grant Contract with Open Society Foundation Serbia |
| Contract reference: | 2017/393-763 |
| Duration of activities: | 20/12/2017 – 20/12/2021 |
| Links: | http://www.balkantenderwatch.eu |
| Contact : | Eleonora SCONCI, Eleonora.Sconci@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the project is to increase the civil society impact on anti-corruption policies and practices during the public procurement (PP) cycle in the Western Balkans, utilizing the EU integration as a transformative agenda. The project aims to stimulate the local governments to introduce reforms that will enable establishing accountable PP systems aligned with the EU rules and to build alliances with public authorities.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Baseline preparatory preliminary research was conducted by the coalition members on access to information related to public procurement in the Western Balkan;
- In-depth research of public procurement cases on national public procurement portals that are suitable and corresponding to the established research criteria was conducted;
- Coalition workshop was organised in order to determine the monitoring sample for the analysis - coalition members presented the results of baseline preparatory research and discussed relevant areas and public procurement cases;
- Monitoring and collection of documents relevant for the analysis was prepared;
- Selection of 50 grassroots organizations from beneficiaries to receive training on public procurement monitoring based on the BTW Coalition methodology was identified;
- Advocacy campaign and engagement in wide consultations and dialogue were undertaken.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- A series of interrelated monitoring activities were implemented, following the development and finalization of the benchmarking tool; from the preparatory research of the availability of the information and documents needed for the monitoring; searching relevant databases (national public procurement portals) and selection of public procurement cases to be analysed. BTW Coalition members selected the monitoring sample based on the criteria set in the methodology and determined 23 different types of public procurements of goods, services and works to be monitored in each beneficiary and criteria for selection of contracting authorities. In order to obtain relevant documents, more than 200 requests for free access to information were submitted. Some of the initial replies by the authorities indicate a risk that some of the information would not be obtained or will require application of additional procedures.
- A group of over 50 organizations to be trained to apply the BTW monitoring methodology was selected based on the open call. Interest of the organizations to participate in the program was significantly higher than expected. The BTW Coalition members agreed to provide training to all organisations that qualify according to the selection criteria (e.g. 21 organization will be trained in Bosnia and Herzegovina instead of 10).
- The BTW Coalition members invested efforts to advocate for the improvements of the public procurement systems (legislation and practice) throughout the region. The BTW Coalition representatives participated in the Poznan Summit within the Berlin Process and preparatory events in Warsaw and capitals of the region. Corruption in public procurement has been elevated as one of the leading sources of corruption in the Western Balkans. Ideas to establish a monitoring of implementation of anti-corruption pledges taken at the London Summit were discussed and plans put forward. In addition, the Open Society Foundations approved additional funds (200.000 EUR) for the application of the Balkan Tender Watch methodology in health and education sectors and for spreading these activities to Albania that was not covered by the original project. BTW Coalition members participated in a number of other meetings (including consultations on the Country Reports in each of the 5 beneficiaries).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- In-depth monitoring by applying produced benchmarking tool on documents obtained through FOI requests will be undertaken;

- Workshops for 50 grassroots organizations (candidates for sub-grants) will be organised – dedicated to empower them to use the benchmarking tool;
- Ranking exercise and preparation of the comparative evaluation report – with coalition meeting in Skopje;
- Comparative Evaluation Report (CER) on the corruption vulnerable spots within public procurement systems with concrete findings from the conducted analyses and recommendations for improvement of the national systems will be prepared;
- One policy and one media brief (per beneficiary) addressing the most important findings will be prepared;
- National roundtables and regional conference to present monitoring results and recommendations will take place;
- Providing sub-grants to selected grassroots organizations through restrictive call for proposals will be undertaken;
- Advocacy for improving the performance of anti-corruption mechanisms in public procurement will take place;
- Coalition experience-sharing visit to Brussels will take place.

2.2 ROMA INTEGRATION

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| Programme reference: | Multi-country Action Programme IPA 2016/037-900 |
| Project title: | ROMACTED – Promoting good governance and Roma Empowerment at local level |
| EU contribution: | EUR 3 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant Agreement with the Council of Europe |
| Contract reference: | CN 2017/384-651 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/05/2017 – 30/04/2020 |
| Contact: | Kristina VUJIC, kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

To build up political will and sustained policy engagement of local authorities to enhance democratic local governance, build up capacity and stimulate the empowerment of local Roma communities; contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring of plans and projects concerning them. The project targets 50 municipalities (local administrations, elected representatives and officials) and Roma communities in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2019)

The main activities held between June and December 2018 were the following:

The main activities held between JAN June and December 2018 were the following:

- First ROMACTED Advisory Group Meeting and monitoring mission to North Macedonia, 4 and 5 February, Skopje, Veles and Strumica, North Macedonia
- ROMACTED Monitoring Mission to Serbia, 7 and 8 February, Belgrade and Odžaci, Serbia
- Workshop and training for ROMACTED facilitators and teams in Turkey, 1 and 2 March, Istanbul, Turkey
- Regional Meeting of ROMACTED Project officers and Focal Points and regional coordination meetings with DGNEAR and international partners, 19 -21 March, Brussels, Belgium
- Second ROMACTED Advisory Group Meeting in Albania and monitoring visits, 24 and 25 April, Tirana, Vlore, Roskovec, Albania
- First ROMACTED Advisory Group Meeting, 30 May, Belgrade, Serbia
- First ROMACTED Advisory Group Meeting in Montenegro and monitoring visits, 15 and 16 May, Podgorica and Bjello Polje, Montenegro
- Second ROMACTED Regional Steering Committee Meeting and Regional Seminar with REF, 18 and 19 June, Skopje, North Macedonia
- First ROMACTED Advisory Group Meeting in Kosovo and monitoring visits, 27 and 28 June, Pristina, Obolic and Gracanica, Kosovo

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

The main outputs of this period were:

- 61 municipal contact points for ROMACTED were appointed by mayors, 61 MoU signed, 75 CAGs actively operating at local level. Albania (7 Institutional Working groups - IWGs, 7 Municipal Task forces - MTGs), Bosnia and Herzegovina (10 MTGs), Kosovo (8 IWGs, 8 MTGs), Montenegro (7 IWGs), North Macedonia (12 IWGs, 12 MTGs), Serbia (11 IWGs, 2 MTGs) and Turkey (3 IWG).
- Local interventions with the communities and with the local administrations running at good pace in most of the beneficiaries: Municipality capacity assessments were carried out, identification of priorities and negotiation with local authorities, coaching of municipality staff, expertise and resource and/or revision of Local Action plans and, in

most of the beneficiaries, also with the ministry responsible for the implementation of the Roma Integration strategy;

- Municipality capacity assessments carried out in all the beneficiaries. Teams reported that municipal staff lacks expertise in project proposal writing and accessing funds, while funding opportunities are identified in all beneficiaries: Two extensive assessments being finalised, Kosovo and Montenegro.
- Overall, the results achieved so far are satisfactory and give good perspective ROMACTED is in STEP 2 and in some beneficiaries STEP 3, this is the period to implement the foreseen small grants scheme, as integral part of the ROMACTED methodology.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

For the period July to December 2019:

- Implementation of the Small Grant Scheme in 48 Municipalities (Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia)
- Youth Summer University in Serbia and Bosnia and Hercegovina.
- Women’s Political Participation Seminar in North Macedonia.
- Second Advisory Group meeting in Montenegro and monitoring missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Second Meetings of National Advisory Group in Montenegro
- CAG Meetings and training sessions in the participating municipalities together with continuous community mobilisation throughout the semester;
- Meetings of the municipal Institutional Working Groups/Task Forces in participating localities throughout the semester;
- Capacity-building and provision of technical advice/support to local authority and municipal staff throughout the semester;
- Meetings of local support teams;
- Coordination meetings with national stakeholders and projects in relevant related fields;
- Meeting of Focal Points and Project officers, Istanbul (TBC);

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Action Programme for the year 2018, IPA 2018/040-113 |
| Project title: | Roma Integration 2020 |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2.0 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant Agreement with RCC |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/400-736 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2021 |
| Links: | http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/home |
| Contact : | Kristina VUJIC, kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The Roma Integration 2020 (RI2020) contributes to reducing the socio-economic gap between the Roma and non-Roma population in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The action is assisting governments in reaching concrete targets in the areas of education, employment, housing and health. The action further focuses on the areas of civil registration, gender equality and fight against discrimination. The governments are supported as part of their national reforms and the EU integration efforts.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY- JUNE 2019)

The RI2020 facilitated the preparation of the “Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process” that was endorsed at the Western Balkans Summit in Poznan, Poland.

The RI2020 prepared six Roma Integration Roadmaps 2019-2021, for each of the Western Balkans economies. The Roadmaps stipulate: objectives in employment and housing compliant with the Declaration objectives, pathways for reaching the objectives, and related technical assistance that will be provided by the RI2020.

The RI2020 provided six capacity building trainings on the application of the Guidelines for Roma Responsive Budgeting. The annual budgets’ preparation (for the 2020 budgets) support activities have commenced.

The RI2020 supported the Western Balkans participants in the preparation of 2018 annual reports on their implementation of Roma integration policies. The RI2020 also initiated mapping of metadata on the housing situation of Roma and preparation of methodology for data mapping (based on available data).

The RI2020 organised two National Platform meetings in Tirana and in Podgorica.

The RI2020 co-organised the [Regional Conference “Decade of Roma Inclusion: Legacy, Lessons Learned, Best Practices and What to Do Next”](#). The conference addressed key challenges in Roma integration in the thematic priorities and how to tackle them.

The National Roma Contact Points were supported to participate in the EU Roma Week and the Romanian EU Presidency event on the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

Visibility and media dissemination activities were ongoing, through the project [website](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY- JUNE 2019)

- Two policy recommendation papers based on the discussions of the National Platforms on Roma Integration in Tirana and Podgorica on the implementation of the Roma integration Action Plans in 2018, the Roma Seminar operational conclusions as well as the measures to be prioritized and budgeted for 2020;
- Report from the Regional Conference “Legacies of the Roma Decade”;
- Coordinated and analysed the 2018 monitoring reports of the governments;
- Organized six capacity building trainings on Roma responsive budgeting;
- Provided inputs to twenty IPA proposals;
- Supported the endorsement of the regional declaration on Roma integration and EU accession.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- National Platform meetings on Roma Integration in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Skopje, Ankara and Pristina (September/October 2019).
- Regional conference on mapping of illegal settlements where Roma live and effective ways to deal with legalization (November 2019).
- Regional conference on mainstreaming Roma integration policy and how to make use of ongoing sector reforms (December 2019).
- Fourth RI2020 Task Force meeting (December 2019).
- Support the participation of NRCs at the EU Platform for Roma Inclusion in Brussels
- Technical assistance for support in employment and housing (according to the roadmaps) to at least two economies

Programme reference: Multi-country Action Programme, IPA 2016/ 037-900

Project title: Supporting the Effective Reintegration of Roma Returnees in the Western Balkans

EU contribution: EUR 1.25 million

Beneficiary region: Western Balkans and Turkey

Type of contract: Grant Agreement with the World Bank

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Contract reference: | CN 2017/384-989 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/04/2017 - 01/07/2019 |
| Contact: | Kristina VUJIC, kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

While migration from the Western Balkans to member states of the European Union remains substantial, several European states have decided to return migrants to their countries of origin. Data estimates suggest a substantial number of return migrants belong to the Roma minority. The World Bank is developing identify evidence based relevant policy responses and implementation pathways for the effective reintegration of returnees in the Western Balkans – with a focus on Roma returnees - based on their reintegration experiences.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY- JUNE 2019)

Implementation of the technical assistance activities, where the following activities were implemented:

- Supporting governments in developing evidence-based Reintegration Strategies and Action Plans: three countries were supported in drafting new strategies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia) and support was provided to North Macedonia to update their strategy; 3 governments received additional support with developing robust readmission action plans (Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia)
- Supporting Governments with the management and monitoring & evaluation of Returnees and Returnee Programs through development of Management Information Systems (MIS): three MIS were developed under this activity in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro
- 3 livelihood pilot projects along cooperative social enterprise lines were supported in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Montenegro and North Macedonia

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The following outputs were produced:

- new readmission strategies for Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, and inputs for an updated strategy for Albania.
- the software architecture of three ‘management information systems’ on returnees, for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro
- A report on “Addressing Mental Health Risks among Minority Children: Evidence from the Western Balkans and Reflections on Policy Pathways”.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Developing the software architecture for management information systems in North Macedonia and Serbia

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | IPA II Annual Multi-Country Action Programme 2017 |
| Project title: | Increased education opportunities for Roma students and Roma youth in Western Balkans and Turkey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 3 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement with Roma Education Fund (REF) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/396-125 |
| Duration of activities: | 10/04/2018 – 09/07/2021 |
| Links: | https://www.romaeducationfund.org/news/ref/news-and-events/ref-and-eu-dg-near-partner-roma-education-western-balkans-and-turkey |
| Contact : | Kristina VUJIC, kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The EU Regional Action for Roma Education: Increased Education Opportunities for Roma Students and Roma Youth in the Western Balkans and Turkey seeks to reduce the gap between Roma and non-Roma in participation and completion of quality education through gender-sensitive programming, to improve Roma students' transition between education and employment and to promote durable systemic change and desegregation of education systems.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JULY 2019)

- Expanding access to quality education early childhood education (ECD): Five country trainings on parenting skills and International Development & Early Learning Assessment (IDELA). REF Toy Library Guidelines provided to IPOs. Regular monitoring of children's attendance as well as work with parents, kindergartens and relevant institutions. Parental clubs' meetings. Parents' Club guidelines for facilitators and parents published.
- Increasing performance and employability of Roma secondary (SEC) and tertiary (TER) students: Calls for scholarships published, national selection committees established, scholarships disbursed, calls for mentors and tutors published and

mentoring and tutoring support provided. Organized meetings with potential employers, info sessions for employment opportunities as well as professional orientation, trainings on improving employability skills as well as facilitated internships.

- Contributing to policy development and regional knowledge exchange and communication: Advocacy meetings in all countries with national and local stakeholders, five national policy events, Western Balkans Regional Seminar “Roma youth: from Education to Employment”

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JULY 2019)

- Early childhood education: Enrolled over 380 children in preschool education; Established five toy libraries with 259 registered users and 14 parental clubs with over 270 parents participating; Trained 19 local facilitators on the parenting and 25 local enumerators on collecting International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) data from the field;
- Secondary and tertiary education and transition to employment: Provided 429 secondary and 76 tertiary education scholarships; Supported 390 secondary and 50 university students with mentorship and tutorship; Improved soft skills to over 200 secondary school and university students; Facilitated internships for 83 secondary and 34 tertiary education beneficiaries; Created employment networks in the project countries;
- Policy development/regional knowledge exchange: Five country specific policy recommendations agreed as well as on regional level; Shared experiences and lessons-learned from education and employment policy reforms in project countries and discussed core challenges for closing the equity gaps for Roma children and smooth transition from education to employment; Identified opportunities in advocacy efforts for shaping policies; Agreed actions to advance internships and employment opportunities; Signed memorandums of understandings with local, national and international employers.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Early childhood education: Enrolment in kindergarten, toy libraries, empowerment of parents, country trainings for kindergarten staff, purchasing educational materials and equipment, processing IDELA data;
- Primary education: Enrolment of children in first grade of primary school, regional training of trainers for mentoring and tutoring, followed by country trainings on mentoring and tutoring, providing tutoring support to pupils;
- Secondary and tertiary education and transition to employment: Call for Scholarships, outreach activities, mentoring and tutoring, country trainings on

mentoring and tutoring of secondary school students, trainings on soft skills, info sessions for students and with companies, visits to the partnering employers, and facilitating internship opportunities;

- Policy development/regional knowledge exchange: Advocacy and employment meetings; National round-tables organised by IPOs; Memorandums of understanding signed;

2.3 REGIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME (RHP)

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programmes: IPA 2018/040-113, IPA 2017/039-402 , IPA 2014/031-603, IPA 2014/024-133, IPA 2014/024-134, IPA 2012/023-537 |
| Project title: | Regional Housing Programme |
| EU contribution: | EUR 234 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Contribution and Delegation Agreements with Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) and UNHCR, grant contract with Igman Initiative |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/402-988, CN 2017/394-290, CN 2017/394-876, CN 2017/394-875, CN 2015/369-230, CN2013/325-470, CN2013/325-468, CN 2013/314-991, CN 2012/297-405, CN 2012/307-562, CN 2012/305-516 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/07/2015 – 30/06/2021 |
| Links: | www.regionalhousingprogramme.org |
| Contact : | Daniel Hurtado Dominguez daniel.hurtado-dominguez@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The Regional Housing Programme (RHP) addresses in a regional framework the housing needs of the most vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP) from the armed conflicts in the 1990s in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. The European Union is the biggest donor to this multi-donor financed programme (over 80%), having committed EUR 234 million that should benefit an estimated 11 600 most vulnerable refugee or IDP families.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Continuation of beneficiary selection, construction/purchase and handing-over of housing solutions (apartments, houses, residences for the elderly, building materials), capacity building, communication and visibility.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

RHP figures as at end June 2019 (cumulative):

- 15 000 people rehoused.
- 4 905 housing solutions handed over.
- Over 200 municipalities involved in the implementation, in all four Partner Countries.
- Over 100 Personnel involved in RHP implementation benefit from continuous on-the job training.
- 1 8500 central and local government staff received formal training.
- Over 130 local companies engaged for provision of services, supplies and works.
- Intensive Cooperation between the four Partner Countries and improved neighbourly relations.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Over 1 400 additional housing solutions will be delivered during the semester.

There will also be a strong focus on monitoring, reinforcing sustainability, as well as visibility.

2.4 MIGRATION

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Action Programme, IPA 2014/031-603 |
| Project title: | Regional support to protection-sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey (component 1) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 5.5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2015/369-697 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2016 – 30/06/2019 |
| Contact : | Emma ASCIUTTI, emma.asciutti@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The main objective of the project is to support the Western Balkan beneficiaries in developing a protection-sensitive response to mixed migration flows. In order to, strengthen their systems for identification, registration, and referral, as well as asylum procedures and return mechanisms, aligning them with EU policies. The project consists of five interventions.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- The Phase I was concluded in June 2019. A number of steering and coordinating meetings took place between the project partners and seven beneficiaries. The closing conference combined with the Regional Steering Committee meeting took place in Belgrade in May. Both events provided an interactive platform for the partners and all relevant stakeholders to take stock of 2016-2019 project achievements and to discuss lessons learnt, to be taken into consideration during Phase II.
- A study visit on migration management system in order to present procedures and best practices in one of the EU Member States (Poland). The study visit was as a concluding activity of Phase I activity plan in the area of training. Practical aspects of managing the EU external land border were presented and procedures concerning irregular migrants were discussed.. All the beneficiaries highlighted that a study visit was the most efficient way to compare and contrast their national solutions against EU acquis. Comments and remarks exchanged will serve as a basis for further Phase II planning.
- A Feasibility Study entitled “*Assessment of the IT and communication infrastructure to support the Identification and Registration process of mixed migration flows in the IPA II Western Balkan Beneficiaries*” was developed. The Feasibility Study aimed at identifying the existing gaps and development needs in terms of IT infrastructure, procedures and legal basis needed for future integration of the relevant national databases with the existing EU information Systems (EURODAC, VIS, SIS II). The Feasibility Study has been developed, involving field visits and extensive consultations with the authorities of the Western Balkan Beneficiaries. The results of the Feasibility Study will allow for a more in-depth assessment under project Phase II, where the preparation of a technical document thoroughly indicating the way forward, is foreseen. The main added-value, of the Feasibility Study and its follow-up is identification of the technical needs for the potential creation of a Regional Pre-EURODAC System in the Western Balkans, allowing for a more comprehensive registration of mixed migration flows in the region. Discussions on the format of this potential platform are ongoing and the results of the Feasibility Study will be presented to the Western Balkan Beneficiaries in the second half of 2019.

- Activities relate to referral systems and establishment of EU compatible systems for persons in need of international protections continued. This period also concluded the implementation of the two Roadmaps to support asylum and reception systems in line with EU practices.. Within the framework of the Roadmap with Serbia, activities aiming at enhancing the actual understanding and knowledge on EU asylum and reception legislation and were implementation (Study visit to Poland and participation to network on reception as observer). Serbia was also supported, in initial steps of development of a monitoring and evaluation system of the legislation on asylum and temporary protection.
- As regards the other Roadmap put in place with North Macedonia, on-the-job coaching with North Macedonia in the Vizbegovo center was organised that provided recommendations to strengthen further the functioning of the centre and the knowledge of its staff. A support was provided in the development and finalisation of two Standard Operating Procedures on the registration and examination procedures for applicants for international protection in North Macedonia. Finally, a dissemination of the Access to the Asylum Procedure, Personal Interview, and Evidence Assessment tools tools were translated into local languages. (
- The two Roadmaps were concluded by a regional meeting for countries benefiting from a Roadmap (Serbia and North Macedonia) or who will benefit from one (Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina) with the participation of EU+ experts. It allowed exchanges of good practices, lessons learnt and identification of initial priorities for the new Roadmaps.
- At regional level, an Analysis of the Migration Asylum Regional Refugee Initiative (MARRI) was prepared; in order to foresee how regional functions related to trainings on asylum that will be followed up in Phase II.
- Regular capacity building activities for Phase I in the area of non-voluntary return were finalised in 2018.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- More efficient identification of irregular migrants and asylum seekers supported and EU best practices presented;
- Feasibility Study delivered allowing for a clear overview of the existing gaps and needs at the technical, procedural and legal levels concerning the registration of mixed migration flows in the six Western Balkan Beneficiaries (in view of future integration with the existing EU-Information Systems);
- The implementation of the training activities finalised with the transposition process continued by the Beneficiaries.

- Recommendations and tools on how to further strengthen the North Macedonian Vizbegovo reception centre in line with EU best practices were produced, shared and discussed (EASO's complementary funds);
- EASO tools (Access to the Asylum Procedure, Personal Interview, Evidence Assessment) distributed to case workers and 1st contact officials in North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (EASO's complementary funds);
- Serbian officials' knowledge regarding admissibility procedures were deepened (EASO's complementary funds);
- Technical assistance provided for the development and finalisation of two Standard Operating Procedures on the registration and examination procedures for applicants for international protection in North Macedonia (EASO's complementary funds);
- Knowledge of the Serbian Asylum Commission (second-instance body) improved;
- Knowledge and skills on reception of asylum seekers of Serbian reception officials strengthened through their participation to the EASO reception network;
- Needs assessment carried out in all Western Balkans administrations on the potential role of MARRI on training on asylum at regional level;
- Development of an Action Plan for the development of a monitoring and evaluation system of the legislation on asylum that outlines the required steps and measures in order to put in place a well-functioning system.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- The continuation of capacity building to the IPA II Beneficiaries is ensured by Phase II initiated in July 2019 for the next 24 months.

Phase II further develops a comprehensive and holistic regional approach to mixed migration flows with a protection-sensitive focus, complementing national efforts, and providing a mixture of horizontal and regional support activities in the areas identified as requiring further support. Based on the achievements of Phase I, the IPA II Beneficiaries will be in a position to advance towards achieving inter-operability with EU practices and standards while bridging existing gaps in their current capacities.

- Throughout Phase II implementation, all Project Partners will work closely with the IPA II Beneficiaries to ensure the synergy of capacity building actions between three sister projects.

Phase II, at the level of a regional programme will be implemented through three contracts:

- Contract 1, focusing on identification, registration and referral.

- Contract 2, focusing on further enhancement of data collection and information sharing, strengthening the framework and creating more resilient local communities, where social cohesion is improved;
- Contract 3, focusing on strengthening asylum and reception systems in line with EU acquis and EU best practices.

Regional support to Protection-sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey component 2

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | IPA 2014/031-603.08/MC/migration CN 2015/369-495 |
| Project title: | Regional support to Protection-sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey component 2 (International Organization for Migration-IOM) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2,500,000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement |
| Contract reference: | CN 2016/369495 |
| Duration of activities: | 23/12/2015 – 24/06/2019 |
| Contact : | Emma ASCIUTTI, emma.asciutti@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to develop and operationalize a comprehensive migration management system in seven Western Balkan beneficiary countries, in line with EU standards. It's aim is to facilitate and strengthen some of the key areas of a migration management system, focusing on enhancing the exchange of non-personal information in the region, and contribute to establishment of assisted voluntary mechanism in the beneficiary countries.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Further enhancement of data collection activities related to migration statistics in the Western Balkans and use of developed templates and data sharing platform on migration statistics.
- Supporting the national roll out of the Regional Remote Interpretation Service, a platform developed jointly by beneficiary and the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) to be used by the Asylum departments in the Western Balkans.

- Supporting the national roll out of the beneficiary developed curriculum for cultural mediation in countries who work directly with migrants.
- Supporting the border police in the national roll out of the translation mobile application to be used by the border police who have first contact with the migrants upon entry to the territory.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Supporting the development of data collection related to migration statistics allows the six Western Balkan beneficiaries to easily exchange migration data which is compatible with EU Regulation and eventually allows direct comparison of data and trends at a regional level, as well as align national systems with the EU in relation to migration statistics.
- The development of the Regional Remote Interpretation Service ensures support for the Asylum departments of national administrations in the Western Balkans when conducting interviews with migrants that are done in extra regional language interpreters.
- The development of the curriculum for cultural mediation ensures effective communication between migrants and migration management authorities across the Western Balkans.
- The translation mobile application will provide systematic access to basic translation and interpretation solutions via a digital solution for the border police departments in the Western Balkans.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Organizing two regional workshops for social workers with a view of migration context, including gap analysis with a specific focus on gender.
- Providing assistance in voluntary return and reintegration while delivering interpretation and cultural mediation services to migrants and organizing two round tables
- Carry out a gender sensitive assessment to identify legal gaps with recommendations and organize three national meetings to discuss the assessment findings.

Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2016-2017 - Iris networking – CSOs for protection sensitive migration management

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | EuropeAid/154870/DH/ACT/Multi-5 Consolidating Regional Thematic Networks of Civil Society Organisations |
| Project title: | IRIS NETWORKing - CSOs for protection sensitive migration |
| EU contribution: | EUR 16.5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant Contract |
| Contract reference: | CN 2017/394311 |
| Duration of activities: | 20/12/2017 – 20/04/2021 |
| Links: | iris-see.eu |
| Contact : | Jelena Anđelić, IRIS NETWORKing Project Manager |

PURPOSE

The main objective of the project is to contribute to the improvement of service delivery and policy framework related to the migration in the Western Balkans.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Pillar I – Capacity Building of CSOs in Western Balkans –

- The second Regional Social Academy was organized in Tirana (Albania) from May 27 – 30, 2019. There were 16 participants from 5 beneficiary countries, who increased their knowledge and skills relevant for achieving financial sustainability through social entrepreneurship – different governing models, financing, sustainability, measuring social impact, etc.
- Field visits to social enterprises in Tirana provided practical knowledge and examples. Through a Call for Small Grants Scheme, aimed at increasing capacities of 25 organisations were selected out of 32 applications received by May 31, 2019. Grants cover topics such as: human rights of migrants and provision of legal aid, prevention of illegal migration of youth from Albania, assistance to returnees to Albania, protection of children and youth as well and victims, protection of migrants and refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina, social inclusion of migrants in Montenegro, social inclusion of Roma children in North Macedonia, protection of LGBTI migrants in Serbia, etc.

- Assistance to obtain licenses for provision of social services (fulfilment of quality standards) and mentoring in overall strategic development_is being provided to 23 members selected through a Call for Proposals. It will enable deliver better quality and higher number of services. Mentoring is progressing according to plan and will be completed by the end of 2019.
- EU Traineeship Programme_was realized in EU based CSOs engaged with migration management for 7 staff members; each traineeship lasted one month during which the participants were able to increase their knowledge and skills in working with migrants and learn about best practices in EU based CSOs. Additionally, the programme started the cooperation between IRIS Network and The Future of the Welfare State in the Western Balkans, a network of Regional Think Thanks in the area of social policy, merging think thanks and practitioners from IRIS Network. Such asset, will build capacities for monitoring social service provisions and exchange good practices in SEE, leading to innovative recommendations on how to implement existing practices.

Pillar II - Policy influencing on migration management in Wester Balkan –

- A GAP Assessment is in the pipeline to assess migration management policies in beneficiary countries and then provide recommendations and directions of future advocacy initiatives by our network in the future.
- Country Shadow Reports are in the preparation process, based on findings from EU Country Reports for SEE Countries published at the end of May 2019. Regional Shadow Report, will also be issued. CSR provide a comprehensive overview of Chapter 19 – Social Policy and Employment and Chapter 24 – Justice, Freedom and Security, which are the focus areas of the project.
- Pillar III – Raising awareness – the cation partners/network is promoting tolerance and intercultural dialogue between dwellers and migrants, through regular posts on social media and information equally distributed through various channel. Awareness raising campaign also includes sensitising local communities and public administration, as well as through support to local organizations members on how to engage in intercultural dialogue in their local communities.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Social Regional Academy – participants have increased their knowledge during the second annual academy event;
- Small –Grants Scheme awarded to members in 5 Western Balkans countries;

- Mentoring - IRIS members receiving assistance and mentoring;
- EU Traineeship Programme - 7 organisations increased capacity for provision of social services to migrants;
- Raising awareness – citizens and migrants in local communities have increased knowledge and understanding on the importance of intercultural dialogue.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Planned activities supporting capacity building, policy influencing and raising awareness: presentation of GAP Assessment, Country and Regional Shadow Reports to relevant stakeholders from Western Balkans; monitoring and capacity building of Small Grants Facility grantees; mentoring process and EU Traineeship Programme finalisation; organisation and implementation of Balkan Media Caravan; preparation of 10 Peer Review Reports.

2.5 HORIZONTAL FACILITY

European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey - Phase I

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2015/031-60 |
| Project title: | European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 20 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement with the Council of Europe |
| Contract reference: | CN 2016/374-543 |
| Duration of activities: | 24/05/2016 - 23/05/2019 |
| Links: | https://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/horizontal-facility/home?desktop=true |
| Contact : | Emma ASCIUTTI, emma.asciutti@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The main objective of the Horizontal Facility (HF) isto support the beneficiary-tailored reform processes in the areas of rule of law, democracy and human rights with the aim of advancing compliance with European standards in the Western Balkans region. It provides programmatic support to beneficiaries in addressing the recommendations of Council of

Europe monitoring bodies in the areas of justice, fight against corruption, organised crime and economic crime, anti-discrimination and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, linked with relevant EU accession priorities.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Between 1 January 2019 and 23 May 2019, more than 130 activities were implemented under the **technical co-operation** component of the programme. In this reporting period, the implementation of all ongoing HF Actions was completed.

Ensuring Justice, approximately 95 activities were carried out in 4 different sectors:

- **Prisons and Police:** A training programme on combating ill-treatment and integration of prisoners into society for police and prison staff was completed and an impact assessment in the Sokolac Forensic Psychiatric Hospital in Bosnia and Herzegovina carried out to evaluate the effect of trainings on patients. In Kosovo a training strategy for inspections was presented for public consultations. In Montenegro the Action on rights of sentenced and detained persons ended in January 2019, with the purchase of rehabilitation equipment for the patients in the psychiatric hospital in Dobrota thus improving the conditions for their occupational therapy. In North Macedonia, newly developed screening and risk assessment tools for radicalised inmates in Idrizovo and Stip prisons were successfully piloted. Work also continued to support the establishment of the independent external oversight mechanism over the police work in line with previously amended legislative provisions. Two new offenders' behaviour programmes were piloted in selected prisons in Serbia and their results were presented to prison governors and civil society. A pre-release course for prisoners serving more than 5 years of imprisonment was also completed.
- **Human Rights:** A comprehensive commentary on the Law on Property restitution/compensation was developed in Albania and 80 staff of the Agency for the Treatment of Property trained on its implementation. A course on women's rights was also developed in close co-operation with a local NGO. Approximately 50 prosecutors were trained in Serbia on better handling criminal cases requiring co-operation with other countries, through the implementation of the HELP course. A regional conference was organised in Montenegro on "The obligation to execute decisions of the European Court of Human Rights" gathering representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, which provided a platform for participants to discuss how to give effect to the judgments of the ECtHR.
- **Justice:** in Albania a report was finalised on court security, as well as a training needs assessment for the School of Magistrates and a Guide on the implementation of CEPEJ tools. To implement recommendations from the satisfaction survey for court users carried out in 2018 in Kosovo, information materials were developed to explain how to access the Basic Court in Pristina with public transportation.

- Legal Co-operation: a training curriculum was prepared in Montenegro for presidents of courts and judges as part of support to the Judicial Training centre. Trainings were also delivered on the Code of Ethics. In North Macedonia an assessment of the draft law on the Free Legal Aid was produced concluding that the text generally complied with the international standards and good practices.

Fighting Corruption and Economic Crime - a provisional count indicates that 17 activities have been carried out in reporting period resulting with outputs in the following 2 sectors:

- Economic Crime: In Albania curricula were developed for the National School of Magistrate and the Academy of Security on countering the financing of terrorism and training provided. In North Macedonia assistance was provided to the private and public sector in the preparation of the sectorial reports on vulnerabilities in combating money-laundering and terrorist financing. In Montenegro capacity building was provided on financing of political parties, on the basis of the related Guidelines. Furthermore, support was provided to the preparation of by-laws to the law on international restrictive measures and a legal opinion on the planned institutional reforms announced in January.
- Corruption in Education: in Montenegro workshops were organised on the newly adopted Law on Academic Integrity for students at different stages of bachelor studies, and a final conference of the Action organised in Podgorica on 15 May. In Serbia public debates and forums were organised in the universities of Belgrade, Novi Pazar and Kragujevac on academic ethics and integrity.

Under theme III – Promoting discrimination and the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, - approximately 18 activities have been carried out:

- Democratic School Culture/ Extremism and Bullying in the Education System: In Albania and Serbia an impact study and evaluation respectively were completed assessing the effectiveness of the interventions, and results of the Actions were presented in the final conferences held in March 2019. In Bosnia and Herzegovina a policy roadmap was prepared for fighting segregation in schools, based on the findings of the assessment study.
- Trafficking in Human Beings: ECtHR's judgment, Rantsev v. Cyprus and Russia as well as the Guide on Article 4 of the ECHR were translated into the North Macedonian and Serbian languages to sensitize legal professionals on the ECtHR interpretation of the prohibition of slavery and forced labour- including the trafficking in human beings, legal remedy and related State obligations. In Serbia further work was done to improve the framework for effective access to compensation for victims of trafficking, and in North Macedonia indicators were developed for education professionals on trafficking in children for the purpose of labour exploitation and shared with a group of school directors and teachers from the municipality of Centre Skopje.

- National minorities: in Albania the analysis on the compatibility of Albanian legislation and practice with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was presented to authorities in May. In Serbia guidelines for appropriate presentation of national minorities in an educational content were finalised and presented to relevant stakeholders, and an analysis of existing education models of minority language education. Awareness-raising round tables were organised in five municipalities of Serbia on the official use of minority languages and administrative texts of local governments, in co-operation with the Ministry of local self-government, the Secretariat for legislation and the Protector of citizens. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the state budget for the national minorities, recommendations as well as the expert opinion were discussed by the Minority Coordination Group. A documentary film on the national minorities has also been finalised, with the aim to promote the results of the Action, and shown subsequently at the prestigious Sarajevo film festival (August).

At the coordination level:

- The third round of Beneficiary Steering Committee Meetings took place between February and April 2019 in the 6 Beneficiaries. Lessons learned in this process have been processed by the Council of Europe.
- The Regional Closing Conference of the first phase of the Horizontal Facility was organised in Tirana on 3 April 2019. It gathered 119 participants from the Western Balkans and Turkey, including the representatives of beneficiary institutions, National IPA Coordinating institutions, NGOs, experts, journalists, as well as the EU and the Council of Europe. The conference provided an important platform for the exchange of best practices and lessons learned during the three years of implementation of the programme. In view of the many trans-boundary topics covered by the programme and similar challenges faced by the Beneficiaries, an enhanced regional co-operation was viewed as essential for the future. Participants highlighted the importance of sustainability.
- The final Steering Board took place via videoconference on 23 May 2018. . The meeting gave an important opportunity to take stock of the closing of the Horizontal Facility and plan future collaboration.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

1. Under the technical co-operation component, 27 actions were active in 6 Beneficiaries, resulting in the following key outputs in the 3 thematic areas:

Ensuring Justice, fourteen Actions were tailored to support national reforms in six Beneficiaries.

- In the area of prison and police, the normative framework was further strengthened with the parliamentary adoption of the new Law on the Execution of Sanctions in North Macedonia in May 2019. The capacities of new or existing standards of participants were further strengthened.
- Human rights and the judiciary, in Albania efforts to harmonise interpretation of new legislation on property restitution/compensation (the Law 133/2015) were supported through a comprehensive commentary on the law. In Montenegro concrete amendments to the Constitutional Law were proposed and discussed with the highest courts. Recommendations were also made to ensure proper implementation of the newly adopted legislation on administrative procedures, and the legislation on domestic violence and violence against women. Improved training for the judiciary has been achieved in Serbia through new curricula, design of training programmes and development of evaluation methodology. In Albania a newly developed course on women's rights has been integrated in the curricula of human rights training at Tirana University. Furthermore, a basis has been provided for improved case management and enforcement of final decisions on property compensation and restitution through an assessment of the current practices by the Agency for the Treatment of Property in Albania.
- In the area of efficiency and quality of justice, the efficiency of judicial reform was improved in Albania through the report on court security in Albania, the training needs assessment for the School of Magistrates and the Guide on the implementation. In Kosovo a sustainable data collection process that will assess the functioning of the judicial system is a step closer to being achieved with the appointment of two coordinators as recommended by the Action. Improved access of court users to online information on the court in Pristina (the biggest court in Kosovo) has been achieved in line with the guidelines on the organisation and accessibility of court premises. A Functional Review and the Sector Strategy of the Rule of Law Sector currently being undertaken by the authorities.
- To improve the independence and accountability of justice in Montenegro achievements were made in strengthening capacities of judges and prosecutors to handle ethical questions in line with European standards through training, court coaching and a regional seminar. In North Macedonia new legislation on free legal aid. Monitoring and communication about free legal aid services has been enhanced, with new checklists to monitor legal aid provisions and training on their use. In addition, the Ministry of Justice endorsed a communication strategy and action plan on free legal aid developed together with non-governmental organisations. An assessment of the Action in Serbia, which ended in February 2019, found that knowledge and skills were effectively transferred to judges and prosecutors, and that there is also evidence of more frequent use of the mechanisms in place to protect the independence of magistrates.

Fight against corruption, organised crime and economic crime - five Actions to fight corruption and organised crime were implemented

- In the fight against corruption, significant advances were made in Albania to advance the legal framework on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing when the draft Law on the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets incorporated the majority of the recommendations made by the Action on Economic Crime. Ahead of the forthcoming municipal elections in June 2019 authorities were supported to put in place a beneficial ownership register in line with the EU Anti-money Laundering Directive, strengthening the transparency of political parties and election campaign financing. Improvements in the asset declaration system were achieved when the Action equipped the High Inspectorate on the Declaration and Audit of Assets with new hardware which will contribute to increasing citizens' scrutiny and confidence in institutions. Capacities of the Academy of Security and the National School of Magistrates were enhanced to deliver quality and continuous training to fight money-laundering through new Anti-money laundering curricula and a pool of national trainers established able to transmit knowledge to their peers. In Montenegro the normative framework was further strengthened through support for the preparation of by-laws to the law on international restrictive measures and provided a legal opinion on the planned institutional reforms announced in January 2019. Furthermore, a set of guidelines for the good conduct of local councillors was developed and presented to 21 municipalities. In North Macedonia advances were made in collecting and analysing data and cross-border co-operation to better combat money-laundering and terrorist financing, and proposals made for a revised national AML/CFT risk assessment.
- To strengthen integrity and combat corruption in higher education, in Serbia increased awareness and knowledge of students and general public about academic ethics and integrity achieved through a series of public debates and forums throughout the country. Previously prepared training courses on academic integrity, ethics, transparency and anti-corruptions mechanisms was officially endorsed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and disseminated among all universities. Similarly, in Montenegro awareness of students and other key stakeholders was raised on the newly adopted Law on Academic Integrity.

Theme III – Anti-discrimination and the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups - 8 Actions supported Beneficiaries in various segments of anti-discrimination.

- Three actions on combating discrimination in schools completed in the reporting period. The policy roadmap to fight segregation in schools was endorsed by the action Advisory Board and handed over to the Ministry of Civil Affairs for further adoption by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- To prevent and combat trafficking in human beings in North Macedonia, the role of labour inspectors in preventing and combating Trafficking in human beings (THB) was acknowledged in the newly revised Special Operational Procedures (SOPs) on treatment

of trafficking victims, which foresees their inclusion in the mobile teams in suspected cases of THB for the purpose of labour exploitation. As a practical outcome approximately 140 labour inspectors were included in police raids since the launch of the HF Action according to information provided by the Labour Inspectorate. A group of school directors and teachers from the municipality of Centre Skopje increased their knowledge on indicators to identify children trafficked for the purpose of labour exploitation through specialised training. In Serbia, the main outcome is the training of more than 50% of labour inspectors (137 out of total 240 labour inspectors) who have received basic knowledge on detection, identification, referral and assistance to victims of THB. Also 22 lawyers from different regions of Serbia were trained on the basis of case examples (3 domestic cases), in which compensation for victims of trafficking was claimed and granted.

- To strengthen protection of national minorities in Albania the completed analysis on compatibility of Albanian legislation and practice with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) and with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) found that the Republic of Albania fulfills the requirements for the ratification of the ECRML. In Bosnia and Herzegovina an assessment of the legal framework on the protection of persons belonging to national minorities emphasised the role of media in the promotion of the rights of national minorities, and the need for a more comprehensive mapping of media needs of national minorities. In addition, based on the expert opinion, Minority Coordination Group (MCG) members agreed that Councils of national minorities will request their respective ministries for separate budget lines to finance national minority projects. In Serbia, an assessment study on the implementation of the Action Plan for the realisation of rights of national minorities and related recommendations was prepared and presented to national stakeholders in March 2019. Furthermore, as a follow-up to the amended Law on National Councils of National Minorities, standardised decision models and templates for establishing financial plans, financial reports and quarterly reports were developed and made available to the National Councils of National Minorities.
2. Through the Expertise Coordination Mechanism (ECM) two new requests were approved, while work has been ongoing especially though support provided in North Macedonia:
- A previously received request from the Ministry of Culture on Legal expertise and expert advice on the Law on Electronic Media was approved in January and subsequently implemented. In January 2019 a request for legal expertise and expert advice on the draft Law on Media and the draft Law on the National Public Broadcasting Radio and Television of Montenegro was also received. The expertise was provided by the Media and Internet Division of the Council of Europe. After reviewing the law on electronic media in March 2019 (now renamed to the law on Audio-visual Media Services), a

working group supported by the Council of Europe began drafting a new media law in order to integrate comments raised in the above legal opinion.

- Work in the reporting period continued in supporting North Macedonia in reforming the judiciary through legislative advice and capacity-building. Firstly, the ECM was used to provide written legal opinions on selected themes. This includes the Venice Commission's follow-up opinion on the draft law on the Judicial Council adopted in March 2019, produced upon a request by the Prime Minister. The opinion concluded that most of the provisions of the draft law were in line with international standards and, if interpreted and implemented in good faith, can ensure the independence and efficiency of the judiciary. Secondly, ECM was also used to provide coaching support in harmonising the domestic case law and ensuring the transparency of the Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils.

3. Transversal issues:

- To strengthen gender mainstreaming a pilot gender analysis was undertaken for the sector relating to detained and sentenced persons in Serbia which assesses the situation of men and women in the sector and proposes recommendations to better mainstream gender in future activities. This unprecedented activity is considered to be a good practice and it is hoped that it will be extended to other HF Actions in HF Phase II. In Albania a course on women's rights was developed and integrated in the curricula of human rights training at Tirana University. In Kosovo the assessment of judicial services also collected sex disaggregated data, while the action on prisons and police achieved that 35% of all trainers are women despite being only 15% of the police force. In North Macedonia training on free legal aid included awareness about gender issues and the special needs of vulnerable groups. As part of the action to combating ill-treatment and lengthy judicial and administrative proceedings in Montenegro proposals were made for improving guarantees and conditions for women and minors in prisons. Furthermore, recommendations were made to ensure proper implementation of the legislation on domestic violence and violence against women.
- Special efforts were made to increase civil society participation in the third round of Beneficiary Steering Committee Meetings. In implementation of actions, the Action Against Economic Crime in Albania was characterised by the strong involvement of the private sector and civil society organisations, in particular on issues of political party financing, money-laundering and election campaign monitoring. This enabled to extend the sustainability beyond key Beneficiaries by raising capacities across sectors. The process to improve the hardware for the electronic asset declarations system engaged authorities, civil society organisations and the media in roundtables to collect comments on the new system to ensure it responds to their needs. Also in Albania the course on women's rights that has been integrated in the curricula of human rights training at Tirana University was a product of close co-operation with an Albanian NGO, The Centre

for Legal Civic Initiatives. In North Macedonia training to the Regional Offices on handling applications for free legal aid was also shared with civil society organisations and attorneys. Furthermore, the communication strategy and action plan on free legal aid developed together with non-governmental organisations (including the centre for social work and the association of municipalities) were endorsed by the Ministry of Justice. In Montenegro work with civil society resulted in proposals for improving guarantees and conditions for women and minors in prisons. In Serbia non-governmental organisations played an important role in the process to increase capacities of authorities to apply the requirements under the European Convention on Human Rights. The work to improve the framework for effective access to compensation for victims of trafficking is being implemented in co-operation with the NGO Astra. The results of piloting of new offenders' behaviour programmes in selected prisons in Serbia were presented to prison governors and members of civil society. Finally, an evaluation of the action on democratic culture in schools highlighted the role of CSOs as of particular added value in empowering children from ethnic background.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

On 23 May 2019 the first Phase of the Horizontal Facility came to an end. As the programme drew to an end, upon the request of the European Union it was decided that an evaluation of the entire programme would be undertaken. The Evaluation, which is ongoing, will evaluate the Horizontal Facility Phase I and aims to provide recommendations also for Phase II. It covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia. Turkey should be covered in the forward-looking part of the assignment. The evaluation will assess: performance (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, impact, sustainability and added value) of the support provided through the Horizontal Facility. Also, the outcomes of the Horizontal Facility, and to what extent they have impacted the reforming processes in the WBs toward European standards; the degree to which gender has been mainstreamed by the Horizontal Facility and provide conclusions and in-depth recommendations on how to further improve the performance of the Horizontal Facility with a view to the Phase II. The evaluation is expected to end on 15 October.

The Annual Report of the third year of the Horizontal Facility was prepared in July 2019, whereas the final report of the programme will be finalised by 23 November 2019.

European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey – Phase II

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|-----------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2019/406-962 |
| Project title: | European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey – Phase II |
| EU contribution: | EUR 35 million |

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement with the Council of Europe |
| Contract reference: | CN 2019/406-962 |
| Duration of activities: | 24/05/2019 - 23/05/2022 |
| Links: | https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/horizontal-facility/home?desktop=true |
| Contact : | Emma ASCIUTTI, emma.asciutti@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The main objective of the Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey (Horizontal Facility II) 2019-2022 is to support beneficiary-tailored reform processes in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy. It provides programmatic support to beneficiaries in the Western Balkans and Turkey in addressing the recommendations of Council of Europe monitoring bodies in the areas of justice, fight against corruption, organised crime and economic crime, anti-discrimination and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, and freedom of expression and media, linked where relevant with EU accession priorities.

| Theme | BENEFICIARY | | | | | | | Regional | TOTAL |
|---|-------------|------------------------|---------|------------|-----------------|--------|--------|----------|-------|
| | Albania | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Kosovo* | Montenegro | North Macedonia | Serbia | Turkey | | |
| Theme I: Ensuring Justice | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 20 |
| Theme II: Fighting Corruption, Economic Crime and Organised Crime | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1* | 4 |

* Only regional action which includes Turkey.

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|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Theme III: Promoting Anti- Discrimina tion and Protection of the Rights of Vulnerable Groups | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 15 |
| Theme IV: Freedom of Expression and Media | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| TOTAL | 6 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 46 |

The programme builds upon the results and progress achieved under the first phase of the programme, implemented in the period 2016-2019, and the majority of the interventions are a continuation of these actions, which have been re-prioritised in line with the state of play of enlargement negotiations of the European Union. Phase II also incorporates new elements including the Theme: freedom of expression and information which was previously covered by the EU/CoE Joint Programme “Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe” - JUFREX and includes beneficiary-specific interventions for Turkey. In addition, a stronger regional dimension is incorporated, both within beneficiary specific interventions and through specific regional actions. Regional interventions aim at increasing regional co-operation, sharing of good practices, and at supporting networking and peer-to-peer exchanges.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The Horizontal Facility II programme began operating on 23 May 2019 with 37 beneficiary specific actions in 7 beneficiaries, and 9 regional actions under the technical cooperation component of the programme. The 46 actions are distributed, across the beneficiaries and themes in the following way:

- A study visit was organised in Strasbourg in May 2019 for representatives of the new High Judicial Council, Courts and the School of Magistrates of Albania on ‘case flow and court administration’. Best examples of good practices were shared on the administration of the courts and managing cases in the context of the modernisation of the judiciary with electronic systems in France. The delegation also met with the Council of Europe Head of the Justice and Legal Cooperation Department and the

Secretariat of the CEPEJ to address priority issues of the reform in Albania in light of the on-going work of the CEPEJ. Beneficiaries from Albania also had the opportunity to learn from the Frankfurt Appeal Court (Oberlandesgericht) and Higher Regional Court relating to time management in courts, an activity organised in cooperation with the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE).

- A representative of Albania, Maksim QOKU, Deputy Chairperson of the High Judicial Council participated in the 32nd plenary meeting of the Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) held in Strasbourg in June 2019.
- A steering committee meeting was held under Theme III: Promoting Anti-Discrimination and Protection of the Rights of Vulnerable Groups. The first meeting of the Steering Committee of the HFII Action on Promotion of Diversity and Equality took place on 27 June 2019 in Belgrade.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

4. Through the Expertise Coordination Mechanism (ECM) two new requests were approved:
 - The Speaker of the Parliament of Albania requested the Opinion of the Venice Commission on the draft law on the "Finalisation of the transitional processes of property in the Republic of Albania". The draft law intends to provide mechanisms for the consolidation of property rights on immovable properties, aiming to guarantee the legal certainty in all transactions related to immovable properties. In view of the importance, complexity and sensitivity of the property issues in Albania, the expert opinion of the Venice Commission has been considered particularly useful in order to ensure that the draft law is in line with European standards, in particular the case-law of the ECtHR. The Opinion is to be submitted to the October 2019 plenary session of the Venice Commission for adoption.
 - The Prime Minister of North Macedonia requested the Opinion of the Venice Commission on the Law on the use of languages and the alternative of its Article 8. The Law on the use of languages regulates legal issues regarding the use of minority languages by and in communication with the central and local authorities. It constitutes an important step in the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the constitutional provisions regarding minority rights. The Opinion is to be discussed and adopted at the October 2019 plenary session of the Venice Commission.
5. Transversal issues are integrated into the actions. All activities under the Horizontal Facility II are conducted with a human rights approach, incorporating principles of

gender equality – in line with the Gender Equality Strategy of the Council of Europe and based on the Gender mainstreaming toolkit for co-operation projects - as well as non-discrimination, equality and inclusive participation, focusing on vulnerable groups and minorities. Based on a positive experience with a gender analysis of the sector concerning detained and sentenced persons which was prepared in Serbia under the Horizontal Facility in May 2019, several new gender analyses are being planned to be undertaken in all Beneficiaries and in every Thematic area over the coming months. Co-operation with civil society organisations is ensured in accordance with the Council of Europe’s Guidelines on Civil Society Organisations’ participation in Council of Europe co-operation activities and in line with the European Commission Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- The he HF II inception period will finish for on 23 September 2019 and an Inception report will be prepared. Three actions will start after the end of the inception period, namely the Action on Strengthening the human rights protection of asylum seekers, migrants and victims of human trafficking in Turkey, the Action on Fostering a comprehensive institutional response to violence against women and domestic violence in Turkey and the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) in the Western Balkans.
- A Regional Launch event will take place in Skopje on 9 October 2019. It will bring together Horizontal Facility II beneficiary institutions form the 7 beneficiaries, as well as European Union and Council of Europe representatives, members of the international community, civil society organisations and selected experts. The event will offer the opportunity to look into the benefits of the programme to citizens while exchanging views on its reinforced regional dimension as well as the ownership of actions by the Beneficiaries.

2.6 SUPPORT TO THE FOLLOW-UP OF ELECTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE WB / BRANDING “SUPPORT TO ELECTIONS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS”

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| Programme reference: | IPA II Annual Multi-Country Action Programme 2016 |
| Project title: | Support to the follow-up of electoral recommendations in the Western Balkans (Support to Elections in the Western Balkans) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 1 400 000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia), as well as Kosovo |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement with ODIHR |
| Contract reference: | CN 2017/386/276 |

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Duration of activities: | 26/06/2017 – 26/06/2020 |
| Links: | www.osce.org/odihr/support-to-elections-in-western-balkans |
| Contact : | Eleonora SCONCI, Eleonora.Sconci@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The objective of the project is for OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to support institutions and civil society in their efforts to follow up on election observation recommendations in areas related to election management, voter registration and the role and work of the media during election campaigns.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Six in-depth visits (out of 36 to date), and participation in 5 workshops (out of 17) took place;
- Topical workshops were organized in Warsaw (the regional event Electoral Participation of Roma included 46 participants, of whom 23 were women) and at the event Electoral Participation of Person with Disabilities included 70 participants, of whom 36 were women) in Skopje;
- The project undertook the mid-term review visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia;
- An additional 4 ODIHR handbooks were translated into six languages and published online;
- Cooperation related initiatives took place with 27 CSOs, 8 ministries, 9 local institutions, 3 parliaments, 6 embassies, 5 central election management bodies, 6 OSCE field operations, and 10 international organizations and their local offices. ODIHR met with 169 local counterparts (44% of whom were women);
- As per the project outline, the activities were at times placed on hold in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and North Macedonia due to ongoing elections or finalization and presentation of observation reports.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- ODIHR planned with the Central Election Commission of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** the development of a curriculum for the training of lower-level election commissions and a definition of hate and other prohibited forms of speech in media coverage during elections;
- ODIHR supported 2 regional workshops on Enhancing the Efficiency and Performance of Polling Station Committees through the Municipal Election Commissions, organized by

the OSCE Mission in Pristina; also via the Mission, ODIHR offered a review of different election results management systems;

- ODIHR supported the Secretariat of the Committee for the Reform of Electoral Legislation in **Montenegro** on its planning activities;
- In **North Macedonia**, ODIHR organized with the OSCE Mission the national conference on Electoral Participation of Persons with Disabilities and supported the workshop on Use of New Technologies in Elections organized by the State Election Commission and IFES;
- In **Serbia** ODIHR provided the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government informal comments on the amendments to the 2012 Instructions for the Implementation of the Law on the Unified Voters' List;
- Following the publication of ODIHR election observation reports, the recommendations database (www.paragraph25.odihr.pl) was updated; 2 news were published in ODIHR website.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- The mid-term review visit in **Albania** after the publication and presentation of the ODIHR observation report for the 2019 local elections is envisioned; ODIHR will continue supporting the Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee on Electoral Reform.
- The Central Election Commission of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** will be supported in developing a curriculum for training lower-level election commissions and a definition of hate speech in media coverage during elections. The Agency for Identification Documents, Registers and Data Exchange will also receive support to identify methods to increase transparency of the voter registration process. A possible review of the draft laws on media ownership and advertising as well as the draft regulation on the financing of public broadcasters will be coordinated with the Ministry of Transportation and Communications.
- In **Montenegro** ODIHR will undertake the mid-term review visit in July 2019 and continue supporting the Parliamentary Committee for the Reform of Electoral Legislation as well as the State Election Commission efforts for increasing its transparency. Furthermore, ODIHR will support the Ministry of Interior in increasing the public confidence in the voter lists and will offer the authorities an expert review of draft amendments to the Laws on Public Broadcaster, on Media and on Audio-visual Media;
- ODIHR will undertake the mid-term review visit in **North Macedonia** in September, after the presentation of ODIHR observation report for the 2019 presidential election. ODIHR will co-operate with the OSCE Mission to Skopje for a gender audit of the State Election Commission, in a follow up workshop on the electoral participation of persons with disabilities, and in the review process of the Electoral Code;

- In **Serbia** ODIHR will support the working group on electoral reform established by the prime-minister, review the Law on Central Registry adopted in 2019, support the Republican Electoral Commission for developing curricula for training modules for lower election commissions and considering the creation of an election management IT architecture; lastly a workshop with members of parliament on gender will be organised;
- **Regional:** ODIHR will organize a regional conference Addressing Electoral Recommendations from a Gender Perspective in Sarajevo in 10/2019; a handbook on Observing and Promoting the Electoral Participation of Persons with Disabilities in formats for persons with visual impairments and other disabilities will be prepared.

2.7 SECURITY

Pilot Project deployment of Liaison Officers in the Western Balkans

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA 2017/039-402 |
| Project title: | Pilot Project deployment of Liaison Officers in the Western Balkans |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans i.p. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement for a pillar assessed organisation with the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/395-549 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/04/2018 – 31/03/2021 |
| Contact : | Olivia DEBAVEYE, olivia.Debaveye@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to counter serious crime and terrorism by contributing to better information exchange, and linking investigations in the EU with investigations in hosting Third States, ensuring that relevant data is available by posting a EUROPOL Liaison officer (ELOs) in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Finalisation of the legal provisions (accreditation and visa arrangements) for the ELO to AL before his deployment

- Monitoring the status of signature and ratification of the Liaison agreement in Serbia
- Request for changes and extension of the Pilot Project on Europol liaison officers in the Western Balkans
- Organisation of an IRU familiarisation workshop for the Western Balkans which took place at Europol HQ
- Selection of the Liaison Officer to Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Several fact finding missions carried out by the ELOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina (6), Albania (2) and Serbia (6)
- Regular meetings between the ELO to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU DEL in Sarajevo on the state of play in terms of the Joint Contact Point
- Initial assessment on obstacles for further cooperation in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia
- ELO Albania, Serbia & Bosnia and Herzegovina participation in various Europol's meetings : EMPACT meetings, operational meetings, experts' meeting and meetings with liaison officers at Europol
- ELO Albania, Serbia & Bosnia and Herzegovina participation in various CEPOL, OSCE, GIZ Project, PAMECA V project, UNODC, ICITAP meetings, courses, workshop, trainings, seminars in order to promote EUROPOL and to deliver awareness sessions about EUROPOL products and services
- ELO Albania and Serbia participation at the EU Liaison officers Western Balkans regional security conference (DG HOME)
- The ELO Albania and Serbia prepared initial country reports for the future base line assessment

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Physical deployment of the ELO to Tirana in June 2019
- Official opening of the office in Tirana in July 2019 with the Europol ED
- Visibility and communication activities after the deployment of ELO in Tirana
- After the deployment in AL, beginning of the strategic and operational cooperation/support
- Signature of the Liaison agreement between Europol and Serbia
- Extension of the project till 31 March 2021

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Ratification of the agreement by the Serbian Parliament
- Accreditation of the Europol Liaison Officer's to Serbia
- Recruitment of a new ELO to Serbia
- Provide training to the new ELO to Serbia

- Physical deployment of the ELO to Belgrade
- Organisation of a meeting between the HoD EU delegation in Serbia and the Head of Cabinet of Europol
- Organisation of a study visit of the Bosnia and Herzegovina LEA operating Siena to EUROPOL
- Update HENU's of the latest state of play
- Redrafting of the visibility and communication plan re the deployment of ELOs.
- Visibility and communication activities are foreseen after the deployment of ELO in Belgrade, possible ED presence
- Conduct a baseline Evaluation of Europol's cooperation with the hosting countries
- Enhancing further opportunities for strategic and operational cooperation in accordance with existing cooperation agreements in the hosting countries, depending on MS and hosting countries' needs.

Serious organised crimes investigations

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-Country Action Programme 2017 - Support to the Western Balkan Integrative Internal Security Governance |
| Project title: | Countering Serious Crime in the Western Balkans |
| EU contribution: | EUR 13 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Delegation Agreement |
| Contract reference: | IPA/2017/390-963 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2019 |
| Contact : | Olivia DEBAVEYE, Olivia.Debaveye@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to raise the effectiveness of and the cooperation among regional and national institutions in fighting serious and organised crime. Cooperation among investigation institutions of the countries, of the region and of the EU is crucial to improve overall security. Therefore, the project supports the conclusion and realization of cooperation agreements and enhance the use of communication means to better investigate serious and organised crime across borders.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- From January until June 2019 **64** (pre-) investigations, in particular on drug trafficking, money laundering and smuggling of migrants have been supported (total since January 2018: 146)
- “Joint Action Days Western Balkans” Debriefing Meeting on Firearms in Sarajevo in cooperation with European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats - EMPACT (Guardia Civil)
- Two Operational Trilateral meetings between Directors of Border Police of Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro to the Joint Police Cooperation Centre in Plav and of “Skanderbeg” Group between Heads of Counter-Terrorism of Kosovo, Albania and Italy in Rome
- Support to the Southeast European Police Chiefs Association (SEPCA) workshop to discuss the Western Balkans Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment - SOCTA methodology
- Regional conference on combatting trafficking of cultural heritage in Munich
- Two regional meetings on mutual legal assistance and EJM contact points
- Working visits of North Macedonian and Montenegrin Liaison Prosecutors to EUROJUST, visit of EUROJUST Vice-President to Serbia and meetings between Albanian Working Group on Eurojust Cooperation Agreement and EUROJUST representatives

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Arrest of 31 individuals (smuggling of firearms and drugs throughout the EU)
- Convictions in Albania (drug trafficking) and North Macedonia (production and trafficking of drugs, terrorism) and indictments filed in Montenegro (smuggling of migrants)
- SEA GATE operation “STOLEN BOATS”: 14 stolen boats and 2 outboard engines for a total value of 1.087.000 Euro seized, 20 persons arrested, 16 investigations started
- Establishment of another JIT between Albania and Italy
- Draft Laws on International Legal/Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters ready in Kosovo*, North Macedonia and Montenegro
- The knowledge and the capacities for ca. 587 prosecutors or police officers increased
- Signing of MoUs between Public Prosecutor’s Office of Serbia, Greece, North Macedonian and Italian Anti-Mafia Prosecution

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Firearms: Regional meeting on ballistic exchange in Sarajevo (12-13 September 2019:) and regional study visit on firearms to France (end of September 2019)
- Support to legislative changes on the Laws on Mutual Legal Assistance in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro/Judicial Cooperation in Serbia
- “NEXUS” project: strengthening the information exchange between the Western Balkans six and EU
- Trainings on nature protection and waste management, in executing cross-border crime-targeted activities, on undercover investigations, PCC SEE awareness raising
- Eurojust Agreement with Serbia expected to be signed in November 2019

Support to Anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Programme, IPA 2017/039-402 |
| Project title: | Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (XCEU60) – Building Regional Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism Capacity in South Eastern Europe |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2.5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement for a pillar assessed organisation with UNODC |
| Contract reference: | IPA/2017/393-994 |
| Duration of activities: | 23/12/2017 – 31/03/2020 |
| Links: | https://www.unodc.org/southeasterneurope/ https://www.unodc.org/brussels/en/aml_cft.html |
| Contact : | olivia.debaveye@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of this action is twofold: (i) Organized crime and terrorism threats are degraded due to addressed jurisdictions’ enhanced ability to detect, deter and prosecute money laundering, financing of terrorism, including foreign terrorist fighters, and (ii) Regional threats of transnational organized crime and terrorism are reduced due to addressed jurisdictions’ enhanced ability for interagency and international cooperation on anti-money laundering, combating terrorism financing and asset recovery.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- In March 2019, a technical coordination meeting of 12 national project focal points from six Western Balkan jurisdictions to discuss the project results to date and introduce the workplan for 2019 for the participants' feedback and endorsement at the UNODC HQ in Vienna, Austria.
- In February-April, six national trainings on financial investigations for the law enforcement and judiciary officers in each Western Balkan jurisdictions were conducted. In total, 124 participants received the training in this Phase.
- In May-June, organisation of two national trainings on financial investigations for the law enforcement and judiciary officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. The training was delivered 100% by the group of national trainers. In total, 48 experts participated in the training.
- In March and June 2019, two study visits for the high-ranking delegations were organised from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia to France and Spain to study the best practices, exchange experiences and enhance bilateral operational cooperation on financial and criminal investigations. In total, 20 officials participated in these events.
- Two quarterly e-newsletters for the project, were issued to reflect the activities conducted in the framework of this project and the project results, and to outline the upcoming activities and the feedback from the participants regarding the delivery of the programme.
- In January-February, an Independent Evaluation Section (IES), together with the four independent evaluation team members, finalised the independent formative In-Depth Evaluation of the Western Balkans Counter-Serious Crime Initiative in the context of the Integrative Internal Security Governance mechanism including the European Union action: "Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) Multi-Country Action Programme 2017 - Support to the Western Balkan Integrative Internal Security Governance".
- In February-March, in line with the utilisation-focus of this innovative evaluation, a dedicated online workshop aimed at facilitating the preparation of the evaluation follow-up plan and the management response was conducted. In March-June 2019, a report, a 2-page Evaluation Brief, and a dedicated web story were published on websites. The results, were also presented in various other fora.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- The participants exchanged the lessons learned and coordination during the project and agreed on the way forward contributing to a mutual and coherent direction in order to improve programmatic efforts on the ground.

- During the third phase, the national trainers applied the knowledge gained in the two previous series of trainings and delivered this training to 124 participants at a 50% rate, the other 50% being co-delivered by the experts.
- The fifth phase of the was initiated and delivered 100% by the national trainers to 48 participants bringing the total number of trained officers in the Western Balkans to 299 experts so far who enhanced their knowledge and skills on how to conduct financial investigations for any serious, money laundering and organised crime matters.
- As a result of the study visits, the operational exchange of information and collaboration between the law enforcement authorities in the Western Balkans and the European Union was reinforced. Especially, in the areas of anti-money laundering and terrorism financing, drugs and arms trafficking, corruption and tax fraud, crypto-currencies, and financial investigations at the outset of serious and organised crime investigations and other criminal and money laundering cases.
- The visibility and communication of project was enhanced.
- The report was finalised with close engagement of all key stakeholders, and the results of this innovative evaluation were presented at the 3rd Board Meeting in February 2019 in Skopje, North Macedonia. During this high-level event, the Ministers for Interior/Security of the Western Balkan jurisdictions provided their full support for the implementation of the recommendations.
- Based on the highly consultative process with all stakeholders, a utilisation-focused evaluation process and engaging process for the management response was concluded.
- The evaluation results were disseminated to a wide audience consisting of national, regional and international stakeholders.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER (JULY-DECEMBER 2019)

Financial Investigations Component

- Four trainings on financial investigations with a 100% delivery by the national trainers to be conducted
- Four study visits of delegations from Western Balkans under UNSCR 1244 to one of the EU Member States to be organized
- One Technical Coordination Meeting of National Project Focal Points to be held in September 2019 UNODC e-Learning web-platform and corresponding e-learning modules to be finalized by the end of 2019.
- The project video to be completed, approved and distributed, and two e-project newsletters to be issued. The roll-out of the fourth and sixth phases on quality assurance trainings based on the institutionalized national curricula on financial investigation are implemented.

2.8 PARTICIPATION IN EJTN TRAINING ACTIVITIES

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2017/393-779 |
| Project title: | Participation in EJTN activities |
| EU contribution: | EUR 300.000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement with European Judicial Training Network EJTN |
| Contract reference: | 2017/393-779 |
| Duration of activities: | 20/12/2017 – 19/12/2020 |
| Links: | http://www.ejtn.eu |
| Contact : | Eleonora SCONCI, Eleonora.SCONCI@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the project is to increase the capacities of the judges, prosecutors, trainees and trainers from the Western Balkans by giving them access to EJTN trainings in line with EU acquis requirements. Such activities are also attended by peers of EU Member States.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Judges, prosecutors and trainees from the Western Balkans were invited to attend seminars in the following fields of law: Linguistic, Criminal, Civil; Administrative, Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Judicial Training Methods. In addition, targeted participants were also invited to take part to EJTN's Exchange Programme for judicial authorities (AIAKOS, General Group, Trainers).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- 71 participants from Western Balkan participated in EJTN activities. There has been a very large increase in the number of participants. The participation in the first half of 2019 was in fact higher than the participation rate for the entire 2018.
- EJTN Seminars were attended by 49 participants Exchange Programme for judicial authorities: only 1 participant from Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Initial Training activities attended by 21 participants: 9 participants attended the AIAKOS Programme for future and newly appointed judges and prosecutors; 12

participants attended the THEMIS Competition for future EU magistrates undergoing entry level training

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The EJTN will invite participants from the Western Balkans to take part in numerous activities among which are the following:

Preliminary Ruling Procedure

- Administrative and Procedure law – 2
- Service of documents and taking of evidence abroad
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- The European Investigation Order in Practice
- Economic Crimes: asset recovery and confiscation in the EU
- Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters: Practical Case-Based simulation in the fight against THB and sexual exploitation
- Victims' Rights in the EU
- Freedom of Speech
- ECtHR – EJTN training on Human Rights for EU judicial trainers ECtHR
- Human Rights and Access to Justice in the EU -2 CoE
- Cultural Diversity in the Courtroom – judges in Europe facing new challenges
- Legal language training in cooperation in competition
- Legal language training in cooperation in human rights' EU law
- Training on the job
- Judgecraft
- Personal Leadership
- 2-3 December 2019 Judgecraft

Exchange Programme: 2-week exchanges in the courts/prosecution offices of the EU Member States; trainers' exchanges and the AIAKOS Programme will also be organised.

2.9 FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION

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|-----------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-Country Programme, IPA 2017/393-268 |
| Project title: | Financial Investigation In-Service Training Programme, Western Balkans 2017-2019 |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2.5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | PA Grant to the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training |

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|--------------------------------|---|
| | (CEPOL) |
| Contract reference: | 393-268 |
| Duration of activities: | 21 December 2017 – 31 March 2020 |
| Links: | https://www.cepola.europa.eu/ |
| Contact : | Olivia DEBAVEYE, olivia.debaveye@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The main objective of the project is to develop and sustain the institutional capacity of the law enforcement agencies of the beneficiary through training in order to prevent, investigate and prosecute transnational organised crime and financing terrorism in the context of the effective use of financing investigations.

It also centres on supporting the creation of sustainable professional networks building upon practical exchange of professional experience across the region and with the EU Member States.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Multidisciplinary approach and invitation of law enforcement and judicial professionals together in addressing competency development of rule of law officials, implementing five residential training courses was organised. Amongst these courses, two joint regional and three national trainings were dedicated to facilitate networking and exchange of practices between Western Balkans and EU MS officials. Overall, 160 law enforcement officials participated in residential trainings. The training portfolio focused on financial investigations in the context of cyber-crime, money laundering and terrorism financing, trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling, organised criminal groups and challenges of gathering evidence and multiagency cooperation.
- Following the methodology of the Erasmus inspired CEPOL Exchange Programme, a call for nomination was published in January 2019 with subsequent matching procedure in March 2019. The Agency received in total 119 applications, 82 from the Western Balkans and 37 from the EU countries. By the end of the procedure, 40 nominees from Western Balkans and EU were pre-matched. The exchanges are being implemented across 2019. During the first half of the year, 39 Western Balkan and EU participants travelled to their counterparts. With Europol engagement in the Exchange Programme, a crucial novelty was introduced which may directly increase cooperation between CEPOL and Western Balkans. Besides, 8 Western Balkan participants participated in regular CEPOL residential courses covering fighting terrorism and terrorism financing, as well as cash collectors in money laundering.

- Four tailor-made online webinars were delivered on different topics related to national trainings, where 98 participants attended them.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- In the course of the training activities, competencies were developed on various issues related to financial investigations; including knowledge on relevant legal instruments, good practices and lessons learned. Furthermore, the participants witnessed the benefits of interagency and international cooperation, both in the EU and in the region.
- The regional trainings and the exchange programme also considerably contributed to the promotion of active and sustainable networking between the law enforcement personnel, prosecutors and judiciary officials across Western Balkan region and with the EU Member States.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Between July and December 2019 the project will deliver four regional training courses covering money laundering in connection with crypto currencies, financial investigation related to corruption and mock trial trainings.
- The organisation of exchanges will be continued, as well as enabling Western Balkan participants to take part in regular CEPOL residential courses related to financial investigation, for minimum 45 participants in total.
- One webinar will be delivered related to national training in an additional country.

2.10 PREVENTION AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Support to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) in the Western Balkans (WB)

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA II, IPA II 2016 / 039-858 |
| Project title: | Support to Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) in the Western Balkans |
| EU contribution: | EUR 3 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant Contract |

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Contract reference: | CN 2017/386-831 (Addendum 1 in force as of 19/03/2019) |
| Duration of activities: | 03/04/2017- 02/04/2020 |
| Links: | http://www.wb-iisg.com |
| Contact : | Olivia DEBAVEYE, olivia.debaveye@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The main objective of the action is to contribute towards efficient capacity-building and improved policymaking on Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) in the Western Balkans. In addition, the Action efficiently utilizes the concept of the 'Integrative Internal Security Governance' (IISG) in the Western Balkans in order to achieve greater sustainability, alignment, coordination and inclusiveness of the Action's outputs as well as overall reform and EU-Western Balkan cooperation in this policy field.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- The Regional Network of National P-CVE Coordinators (RNNC) focused on main challenges identified in the region for 2019 – countering online radicalisation and responding returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) and their family members. They called for further capacity-building actions, while the RNNC would remain the regional body supporting the integrated and balanced approach supported by WBCTi/IISG. EC familiarised the RNNC with the state-of-play in the implementation of the EU-WB Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism (Oct 2018).
- The EU Radicalisation Awareness Network provided an extensive contribution, and disseminated knowledge products through the IISG platform.
- A visit of the National P-CVE Coordinators to Europol IRU was held in May, identifying next steps to improve cooperation with Internet Referral Unit (IRU).
- The operational network was reconvened in May – the Counter-Terrorism Initiative (CTI) Network, also focusing on handling cases of returnees and returning FTFs, involving prosecutors from the region. The regional operational intelligence effort Aquila concluded and its results were submitted to the operatives, who addressed follow-up actions at national level.
- The preparation of the P-CVE e-learning module for Western Balkans region continued with the engagement of an external expert during the first quality assessment phase.

- The IISG ministerial Board in February reached an agreement on the launch of an interim reflection phase of the IISG process. A new draft IISG Terms of Reference document was produced.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- The beneficiaries identify the main challenges in the region to be addressed in an integrated and balanced manner in 2019; a needs assessment was executed at the level of RNNC;
- One meeting of regional operatives' network executed involving police and prosecution;
- EU RAN CoE's expertise on current challenges in field of P-CVE transferred; further contacts established with Beneficiaries' authorities;
- EU RAN CoE's knowledge products relating to dealing with rFTFs and reintegration reached Beneficiary authorities in local languages;
- Thorough familiarisation and next steps outlined in terms of using Europol IRU's tools;
- Next steps politically agreed in the development of the IISG process; interim reflection phase commenced;
- One analysis of set of operational cases on rFTFs in Western Balkans analysed by police-prosecution.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- 4th IISG Board Meeting, November, Skopje,, on margins of EU-WB JHA Forum (DCAF);
- CTI Network Meeting, November 2019 (DCAF);
- 3 sets of national coordination meetings on P-CVE (P-CVE stakeholders and donors) – Sarajevo, Podgorica, Tirana (August – December) (DCAF).
- Delivery and launch of P-CVE e-learning module after obtaining user experience (DCAF);
- 3 P-CVE trainings – “LIVE” Youth Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia (OSCE);
- Production of two #UnitedCVE videos (OSCE);
- 6 national workshops in Skopje and Pristina for youth (IOM);
- 1 regional study on capacities of Western Balkans countries for dealing with rFTFS and their family members (UNDP); 1 workshop on referral mechanisms in Pristina - UNDP.

Creation of P/CVE CSO Hub

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Programme, IPA 2017/038-961 |
| Project title: | Communities First: Creation of a civil society hub to address violent extremism – from prevention to reintegration |
| EU contribution: | EUR 910.350 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement with Forum mladi i neformalna edukacija - Forum MNE |
| Contract reference: | CN 2017/393-759 |
| Duration of activities: | 06/03/2018 – 05/03/2021 |
| Links: | http://www.forum-mne.com |
| Contact: | Olivia DEBAVEYE, olivia.debaveye@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective is to develop a Western Balkans Civil Society Hub to empower civil society organizations (CSOs) to be more effective and accountable actors and to improve their capacity to implement projects and dialogue with governments, influencing policy and decision-making processes as it relates to preventing and countering violent extremism that leads to terrorism.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Regional and national mapping reports were widely distributed and promoted in the region. The reports are available at: <http://www.forum-mne.com/en/civil-society-in-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-in-the-western-balkans-2/>;
- Six national workshops/working groups were held throughout the Western Balkan region (one in each of the beneficiaries participating in the project);
- Training of trainers was prepared and delivered for twelve trainers from the Western Balkans;
- Enabled regular consultations between co-applicants and international experts;
- The third partners meeting held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Finalised communication and media strategy;

- National capacity building programs for civil society organisations in the Western Balkans drafted;
- Inputs for design and launch of a Western Balkans P/CVE Online Portal provided.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Cooperation among CSOs at national level, as well as regional initiated and continuously enhanced;
- Twelve trainers from the Western Balkans improved skills and knowledge and are able to provide quality P/CVE trainings;
- Cooperation and collaboration among experts and trainers at regional level established;
- Established connections with relevant national and international experts which enabled consortium members to benefit from the best practices and lessons learned;

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- The focus of the activities, will be on the implementation of national capacity building programs. A total of forty-two trainings will be organised in the six beneficiaries, with twenty participants per training. The trainers developed country specific training programs which will address the current needs of CSOs. . Forum MNE and its partners will provide support to trainers and will be in charge for mobilisation of participants and logistics. Trainings will be followed by a regional grant scheme.
- The implementation of national workshops/working groups will continue throughout the Western Balkans, as well as the development of the regional P/CVE portal.
- The partners will maintain regular online consultations and the fourth partners' meeting will be organised in Kosovo.

In order to achieve maximum visibility, an open call for engaging a PR/marketing agency will be launched. The PR Agency will implement marketing and communication plan. The agency will have to have access to media in all six beneficiaries participating in the project.

CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Support in the area of private sector development and investments aims to provide access to finance, raise regional competitiveness, increase competence of human capital, attract investments, facilitate trade and establish a business climate conducive to the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

3.1 STRENGTHENING LINE MINISTRIES' CAPACITIES TO ASSESS FISCAL IMPLICATIONS OF STRUCTURAL REFORMS UNDER THE ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAMMES (ERP)

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-Country Annual Action Programme 2018 (DN 2018/040-113) |
| Project title: | Strengthening the Line Ministries' Capacities to assess Fiscal Implications of Structural Reforms |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2.5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Direct Grant |
| Contract reference: | 2018/402-502 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2022 |
| Link: | https://www.cef-see.org/fisr |
| Contact: | Vasyl Zubaka, Vasyl.ZUBAKA@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

Contribute to enhancing beneficiaries' capabilities to submit ERP proposals and their budgets, do the necessary expenditure analysis and fiscal planning of envisaged structural reforms, improve coordination between the Ministry of Finance and line ministries, and to exchange good practices among peers across the beneficiary region and beyond.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

To launch the Project, a regional policy dialogue was organized, involving four ministers and nine deputy/assistant ministers of beneficiary countries and the European Commission actively in the three discussion rounds, acknowledging the role of ERPs within the frame of European economic governance and in the context of the EU accession agenda, linking structural reforms to competitiveness and fulfilling the economic criteria for EU Accession, and reviewing their integration into the national budget frameworks.

In line with the EU Visibility Guidelines for External Actions, project-specific visibility guidelines have been developed, and applied in a range of visibility initiatives, in particular launching a project website, designing and disseminating a project brochure, capturing digital value creation stories through interviews, sharing impressions of learning events via social media, and editing and promoting a project video (available at www.cef-see.org/fisr).

To support the implementation of the project and help capturing learning needs and opportunities, a Project Steering Committee was established, involving the National ERP Coordinators of beneficiary countries, the European Commission, and the CEF. To co-design and co-deliver project activities and knowledge products (methodological guidance, case studies, event concepts and outlines, etc.), an Expert Advisory Group and a Network of Regional Experts in Structural Reforms have been established.

The main knowledge product generated has been a Costing Guidance with concrete examples, which is in line with the European Commission's wider ERP guidance and referred therein; it has since been also translated into local languages. An initial round of interactive workshops has been delivered in the seven beneficiary countries to promote this Costing Guidance through providing methodological training, illustrating costing of concrete reform examples, and discussing challenges observed in costing structural reforms.

To promote peer-to-peer learning across the region, six interactive workshops have been organized knowledge sharing on a range of complementary topics that reinforce the achievement of the Project's objectives.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The capacities of line ministries for fiscal impact assessment of structural reforms were strengthened through:

- Improved understanding of the concept of economic governance, competitiveness, structural reforms and their integration into the national budget frameworks;
- Aligned approach towards costing of structural reforms, based on common [Methodological Guidelines for Costing Structural Reforms](#) translated in all local languages;
- Enhanced costing skills and understanding of costing examples;
- Identified specific challenges in costing of the structural reforms in each of beneficiary countries through country notes;
- Improved access to relevant learning resources, peers and other knowledge providers in the wider area of financing and costing of specific structural reforms.

Establishing a network of international and regional experts in measuring fiscal implications of structural reforms has:

- Strengthened skills for training delivery of public officials from ERP teams, who delivered training sessions to line ministry officials in their respective country;
- Enabled active involvement of beneficiaries in the co-design of Methodological Guidelines for Costing Structural Reforms, and alignment of delivered learning initiatives with the Project’s objectives and beneficiaries needs.

Further development of the Line Ministries Portal as online platform for regional knowledge exchange among line ministry officials has:

- Supported the peer learning across the beneficiary region (and beyond);
- Permitted the sharing of relevant learning resources;
- Promoted the sharing of digital stories on each implemented event,,
- Enabled better visibility of Project activities and the partners and donor(s) involved.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The following activities are envisaged to be implemented in the next semester:

- 1 Regional blended learning initiative: Program and Performance Budgeting
- 1 Regional workshop: Financing and Accounting of IPA Projects
- 7 In-country workshops in each beneficiary country: Knowledge Sharing on Costing of Structural Reforms: ERP for the period of 2020-2022
- 1 Comprehensive review of the Risk Register with country sections
- 7 country case studies/examples on various aspects of structural reforms
- 7 value-creation stories covering project activities

3.2 EUROPEAN FUND FOR SOUTHEAST EUROPE (EFSE)

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | IPA 2015 / 031-609 - Multi-country Action Programme for 2015, and CARDS 2006/018-264 and Multi-beneficiary Programme IPA 2007/019-344, IPA 2008/020-300, IPA 2009/021-373, IPA 2010/022-028 |
| Project title: | European Fund for Southeast Europe (EFSE) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 87.6 million <i>(nominal value of C-shares subscribed in the Western Balkans)</i> |
| Beneficiary region: | 14 countries including Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Delegation (Trusteeship) Agreement with the European Investment Fund (EIF) (and previous Contribution agreements) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2016/381-821 Previous CN 2006/124-240; CN 2008/154-338, CN 2009/201-622, CN 2009/222-012, CN 2011/268-296) |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Duration of activities: | 04/08/2006 – 31/12/2023 |
| Links: | www.efse.lu |
| Contact : | Roberto Estellés, roberto.ESTELLES-COLOM@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

EFSE extends loans to selected financial institutions in Southeast Europe (as of 30 June 2019 37 loans to financial institutions in the IPA Region), including the European Eastern Neighbourhood Region, for on-lending to micro and small enterprises and low-income private households with limited access to financial services. EFSE's Partner Lending Institutions (PLI) include commercial banks, microfinance banks, microcredit organisations and non-bank financial institutions.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

By 30 June 2019, the outstanding investment portfolio in the EFSE amounted to EUR 913.6 million with 67 PLI, thereof EUR 419.6 million with 37 PLIs in the Western Balkans and Turkey. During H1 2019 EFSE signed 17 investments totalling EUR 93.7 million, of which EUR 32.0 million with 5 PLI were in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

In terms of sub-loan portfolio, by 30 June 2019, the outstanding sub-loan portfolio amounted to EUR 880.9 million, including EUR 443.2 million in the Western Balkans and Turkey. This translates into an on-lending rate of 96% for the total Fund and 106% for the Western Balkans and Turkey by 30 June 2019. Almost 983,200 sub-loans have been financed since EFSE's inception, accounting for EUR 7.3 billion in lending, with a clear focus on microloans below EUR 20,000.

In addition, the EFSE Development Facility ("DF") implements 52 TA projects in the Western Balkan region and Turkey, with a total volume of EUR 6.9 million. Teaming up with external partners, such as the NLB Bank in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EFSE DF established the Entrepreneurship Academy that offers training for professional business development and consulting services for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Furthermore, the DF is piloting an early stage finance facility with Smart Kolektiv in Serbia that provides recoverable grants to early-growth social enterprises. As part of its Responsible Finance Agenda, the DF assists the Central Bank in Kosovo to roll out a business plan for its Financial Literacy Centre. To promote Financial Technology and Digitalisation, the DF conducted workshops on strategies to make use of Fintech in partnership with the Association of Montenegrin Banks. As part of the Core Capacity Building for PLIs, the EFSE DF has launched the SME Sales Excellence Academy in partnership with Raiffeisen Bank in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is an innovative training programme to ensure relevant and demand-oriented financing services for SMEs and their business owners.

The Fund was well funded in H1 2019 and has mobilized EUR 48.7 million of new subscriptions from the EU, bringing public investor shares to 44% as of 30 June 2019, compared to 21% private sector funding*. The subscription of a EUR 43.7 million EU contribution to L-Shares in February stated the successful implementation of the “EU4Business – EU Local Currency Partnership Initiative”. This new subscription strengthens the EFSE stakeholder’s commitment to foster local currency lending in the Neighbourhood region and follows a first funding earmarked for local currency lending secured in Q3 2018 with the conversion of EUR 12 million BMZ C-Shares to L-Shares. First local currency disbursements of EUR 26.4 million have been realized since then. Overall, the Fund's performance remains very solid with a good risk profile, very good financial performance and continued leveraging of the Fund's C-Shares. The Fund continues to receive high visibility resulting from various initiatives and activities beyond mere investments, such as social business incubation, financial literacy or Fintech projects.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

| EFSE investment portfolio figures as at end Q2 2019* | |
|---|---|
| 1. Total Invested Portfolio (Q2 2019 figures) | EUR 913.6 million |
| 2. Number of current Partner Lending Institutions (Q2 2019 figures) | 67 |
| 3. Type of Partner Lending Institution (Q2 2019 figures) | 66% Commercial Banks, 15% Micro-finance Institutions, 19% Non-Bank Financial Institutions |
| EFSE sub-loan figures as at end Q2 2019* | |
| 4. Active End Borrowers (Q2 2019 figures) | 132,793 |
| 5. Reached End Borrowers since inception (Q2 2019 figures) | 983,200 |
| 6. Average sub-loan amount outstanding (Q2 2019 figures) | EUR 6,633.74 |
| 7. Disbursed sub-loans since inception (Q2 2019 figures) | EUR 7.3 billion |

* Figures shown are aggregate for both, the region of Southeast Europe and the European Eastern Neighbourhood Region

* the remaining 35% is subscribed by IFIs

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The Fund's investment pipeline for H2 2019 appears sound and is most likely exceeding the Fund's business plan target of EUR 932 million at year-end. After the subscription of L-Shares for the Neighbourhood East in Q1 2019, the partnership for local currency lending is expected to pick up pace in H2 2019. Potential local currency transactions in Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia and Belarus are already considered in the investment pipeline until year-end.

In the second half of 2019, the EFSE DF will scale up its initiative for regional cooperation under its Entrepreneurship Academy to facilitate the exchange of good practices and to leverage available resources, for example through the Regional Impact Forum for Social Enterprise that supports organisations in the Western Balkan region. Financial Technology remains an important crosscutting topic in different areas of the DF's work: To strengthen the understanding and knowledge of financial sector partners, the EFSE DF will conduct trainings on Fintech and Regtech (also known as regulatory technology)* to Central Banks and financial sector associations, such as the Association of Montenegrin Banks. As part of its measures for Core Capacity Building of PLIs, the EFSE DF will continue supporting a range of individual TA projects with EFSE PLIs, among them, projects for the digitization of client services and business processes.

With regard to activities in Turkey, no new investments have been pursued so far and the Fund's strategy for Turkey is currently under discussion with the idea of potentially investing in strong Turkish PLIs in order to prevent a further deleveraging of the Fund's national exposure.

3.3 PLATFORM FOR SME FINANCING AND SUPPORT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programmes, IPA 2011/021-964; IPA 2012/022-966; IPA 2013/024-091; IPA 2015/031-609; IPA 2016/039-919; 2017/039-402; 2018/040-113 |
| Project title: | Western Balkan Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WB EDIF) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 170.3 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Contribution agreements (CA) with OECD and World Bank Group; CA and Delegation Agreements (DGA) with the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the European Bank for |

* Regtech is the management of regulatory processes within the financial industry through technology. The main functions of regtech include regulatory monitoring, reporting, and compliance. It helps businesses comply with regulations efficiently and less expensively.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Administrative Arrangement (JRC) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2012/295-825; CN 2012/306-154; CN 2012/306-653; CN 2013/319-472; CN 2012/306-667; CN 2013/333-444; CN 2013/318-776; CN 2013/331-504 ; CN 2014/334-654 05/12/2012 – 30/11/2025/; CN 2016/380-963; CN 2017/393-451; 2017/394-450; 2018/393-321; 2019/407-277 |
| Duration of activities: | 05/12/2012 – 21/12/2028 |
| Links: | www.wbedif.eu |
| Contact : | Aleksandra Kostova, alexandra.kostova@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

WBEDIF is a joint initiative of the EU, together with EIB, EIF, EBRD, World Bank, OECD as well as other investing FIs such as KfW, OeEB, DEG, Italy, and the Western Balkans Economies themselves. The Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum recently joined the platform as well. Through the combined efforts, expertise and skillsets of the partners WB EDIF aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the SMEs across the region. The facility is both improving access to finance and providing advisory services for boosting the entrepreneurial capacity and the business ecosystem, while also trying to bring research closer to industry.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Enterprise Innovation Fund: ENIF has by today invested in 22 companies, out of which 12 are start-ups and 10 seed capital investments for a total of EUR 19.4m. ENIF is looking for innovative and potentially fast growing companies and organising a number of pitching events, workshops and trainings to scout for the projects. The fund is now preparing to fundraise for a second round.
- Enterprise Expansion Fund: ENEF has so far directly invested EUR 22+ million in 12 companies across 6 economies of ENEF Region. Another EUR 22+ million have been invested by the EBRD in parallel in these companies, bringing the total Investment to EUR 44+ million, with more than 1,000 jobs created. The EBRD organised a number of one-to-one meetings, small-scale local events and bigger national events, including the EBRD's Annual meeting in Sarajevo in May. Discussions for a second round of the Fund have already been initiated.
- Guarantee Facility: under the newly launched Guarantee Facility Serbia the EIF has selected 5 banks, most of which have started their lending activities in early 2019. Under the Guarantee Facility - Youth Employment the Call for Expression of Interest

has been launched in March and 8 banks have expressed their interest to support youth employment.

- Competitiveness Programme: The Competitiveness programme is ongoing, EUR 70 million of credit lines have been dedicated to partner financial institutions for on-lending to ca. 280 SMEs in support of investments that lead to improvement of their overall competitiveness. As of today almost 100 % of the WB EDIF funding is already earmarked for projects which are at an advanced / signing stage. The EBRD has submitted a proposal for replenishment of the instrument.
- Advice for Small Businesses (EBRD): Phase I of regional ASB expires in December 2019 and will smoothly transit to a second phase with EUR 15 million replenishment under IPA 2019. Under WB EDIF more than 576 advisory projects have been implemented so far. A total of 31 market development activities have been implemented so far - 19 trainings for consultants with over 255 local experts as trainees and 12 workshops/sector development activities involving over 350 SMEs in total. Promotional videos on 4 clients were produced.
- SBA Assessment 2016-19: “*SME Policy Index 2019: Western Balkans and Turkey*” was released and presented during the WB EDIF Sarajevo event in May 2019 followed by a series of national launch events.
- EU-REPARIS (World Bank): Phase I of EU REPARIS expires in December 2019 and will smoothly transit to a second phase with EUR 5 million replenishment under IPA 2019. A number of events took place, e.g. Ministerial Conference on “Financial Information as a Catalyst for Integration”, several regional events and meetings; EU REPARIS senior officials and a Five module Audit Training of Trainers. Regional accounting education benchmarking and a study on Serbia was prepared as well as number of case studies and learning materials.
- Investment Readiness/ VC Eco-system (World Bank): Phase I of the VCIR programme expires in December 2019 and Phase II was launched in December 2018. From VCIR I: Capital Markets reform agenda in Albania and North Macedonia was prepared and from VCIR II the preparation of Pioneers of the Balkans 2 is going on.
- Platform communication and visibility activities: a number of communication activities and new materials have been prepared on the platform level, such as: the new EDIF Annual Report 2018, WB EDIF Success Stories booklet with a number of new case studies, a WB EDIF quick factsheet brochure, a new WB EDIF video; number of social media activities around the Western Balkans Summit in Poznan. WB EDIF SME Forum was organised in May 2019, in Sarajevo.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Access to finance for SMEs: good absorption for the guarantee facility as well as healthy uptake of the equity instruments, WB EDIF's financial outreach to SMEs is always increasing, including the latest lending programme.

Reach of Support Services: through its complementary soft measures, WB EDIF has reached multiple stakeholders.

Platform visibility and communication: increased visibility achieved via a number of outreach activities, including the [WB EDIF Annual Report 2018](#), the new WB EDIF brochure [From nest to sky](#) and the updated [WB EDIF Success Stories booklet](#) including a number of case studies and a new WB EDIF video.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

ENIF: Pace of activities is now well established for ENIF and this is expected to continue also in the next semester. Following the success of the event which South Central Ventures organized in Dubrovnik in October 2017 and 2018, SCV will continue with this best practice and organize an event targeted at providing networking and further collaborative opportunities between investee companies and investors also in 2019.

ENEF: Overall, ENEF remains well on track. ENEF will launch short videos for investee companies, which will give an overview of each company, the ENEF investment, and the entrepreneur's view of the value creation experience related to the ENEF investment.

Guarantee Facility: Under the WB EDIF GF Youth the selection of the banks will take place in the next semester.

Competitiveness Programme: releasing of success stories: photo, video and/or other multi-media material for wide distribution. Social media: continuous promotion on social media, mainly through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, of success stories and major announcements.

Platform Coordination: communication activities will continue in the next semester, regularly updating the events and news on the website and distributing the newly created marketing material at relevant occasion.

The ongoing Support Services activities will proceed, including the Prospective Analysis of the SME Sector in the Western Balkans led by the EIB. Advisory for Small Businesses and the REPARIS programme will continue under the extension. New activity will be launched- a proof of Concept scheme to bring research closer to industry (with JRC and a service provider).

3.4 OECD-SUPPORT TO ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | 2016/373-821 |
| Project title: | OECD Support to Economic Competitiveness in South East Europe |
| EU contribution: | EUR 10.7 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Contribution agreement with OECD |
| Contract reference: | CN 2016 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/04/2016 – 30/09/2019 |
| Contact : | Youssef Tadros, Youssef.tadros@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

Assist the Western Balkan and Turkish economies in reinforcing their economic competitiveness and growth by identifying policies for enhanced competitiveness and long-term growth and by building capacity to further develop and implement these policies.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Economic Reform Programmes: The OECD provided last comments to the final draft ERPs 2019-2021, which governments then adopted and submitted to the EC on 31 January 2019. To close this ERP cycle, the OECD prepared a report for the EC in February, assessing the ERPs 2019-2021 as well as the evolution of the ERP process throughout the past five years. The OECD participated in several ERP events (e.g. annual Regional Meeting of ERP Co-ordinators, 19-20 June, Brussels; ERP seminar organised by CEF, 27 February, Ljubljana) to share lessons learnt and how the three ERP support instruments - *Diagnostic, Prioritisation and Monitoring Tool* - can help SEE economies along the way.

Competitiveness Outlook: Following the release of the Competitiveness Outlook and the corresponding launch meetings to present the results, further analytical work and fine-tuning of the methodology was performed based on the lessons learnt. In particular the assessment grids, the chapter relevance and structure were reviewed in depth. For that purpose feedback was collected across OECD Directorates and from stakeholders in the region. In addition, the results of several thematic chapters of the Competitiveness Outlook were presented in relevant thematic events and conferences.

SBA Assessment: The content review of the SME Policy Index was completed successfully with strong involvement of a wide range of stakeholders including, but not limited to,

ministries, chambers of commerce and EU delegations in the Western Balkans and Turkey. After a thorough editing process, the publication was finalised – its country profiles published separately for the first time. The publication was launched on May 9th in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WB-EDIF) SME Forum in co-operation with the EBRD and ETF. The OECD team subsequently organised three launch meetings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and North Macedonia, where they presented the key economy-specific findings and recommendations of the SME Policy Index to local policymakers and relevant stakeholders. The OECD developed also two promotional tools, an animated video and a pocketbook.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Economic Reform Programmes: As the OECD will not provide further ERP related support, its participation in ERP related events deemed useful to ensure continued knowledge exchange. Its assessment report formulates suggestions moving forward with the process.

Competitiveness Outlook: Based on the findings of its cross-cutting policy assessment, the OECD provided written input EC's annual progress reports in the Western Balkans.

SBA Assessment: The regional launch event along with the in-country launch meetings enabled the OECD to present the findings to a large and diverse group of policy makers and stakeholders. The composition of each event produced dynamic, informative dialogues that enhanced the impact and visibility of the SME Policy Index and its findings. Ministers and high-level representatives ensured political commitment to the policy recommendations' implementation. Moreover, promotional materials enhanced the outreach efforts by enabling a wider audience to directly engage with the contents of the SME Policy Index and gain a clearer understanding of the EU-funded work in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

SBA Assessment: In the second half 2019, the SBA Assessment team will continue to organise six more launch events in Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. Additionally, the SME Policy Index will be promoted at all relevant regional and national events. To ensure the translation of SME Policy Index recommendations into actual policy, the OECD will continue to collaborate with the government officials to support them in the planning and implementation of SME policy reforms stemming from the SME Policy Index assessment.

Competitiveness Outlook and Economic Reform Programmes: The OECD will organise a regional seminar to take stock and share lessons learnt of the Competitiveness Outlook and to reflect how to best leverage OECD policy analysis and recommendations for domestic and regional reform agendas, in particular for the Economic Reform Programmes.

3.5 TRADE - SUPPORT TO FACILITATION OF TRADE BETWEEN CEFTA PARTIES

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2018 |
| Project title: | Support to CEFTA Secretariat 2018-2019 |
| EU contribution: | EUR 200,000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Moldova |
| Type of contract: | Operating grant with the CEFTA Secretariat |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/399-060 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/08/2018 – 31/07/2019 |
| Links: | http://www.cefta.int/ |
| Contact: | Nanna Matsson, Nanna.Matsson@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective is to enhance economic development through supporting liberalisation and facilitation of intra-regional trade in the context of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). The Project supports the operation of the CEFTA Secretariat, which provides technical and administrative support to the CEFTA Structures (Chair in Office – CiO, the CEFTA Joint Committee – JC, the CEFTA Subcommittees, CEFTA Working Groups and CEFTA Committee for Trade Facilitation).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

A study visit of the 2019 chairmanship took place in February 2019. All chairs of Committees and subcommittees along with the technical experts attended the meetings with the European Union (EU). The priorities for 2019 were defined. The promotion of the Chairmanship was done in February in Brussels.

The CEFTA Secretariat assisted the Parties in the implementation of priorities outlined in the 2019 Work Programme and facilitated the organisation of programmed meetings of the CEFTA Structures. The CEFTA Secretariat also assisted the Parties with the MAP implementation.

The Secretariat was staffed towards the end of the reporting period. The main bulk of work was supported by Seconded National Experts in association with the Director. The new staff members consist of a Communication and Coordination Expert, a Senior Trade facilitation Expert, and a Senior Services Expert. The publication of the vacancy for the position of Financial Officer had to be relaunched due to the lack of adequate candidates.

The adoption of the Staffing Selection Report and the 2019 budget were adopted in the 14th Joint Committee session held on 18 April 2019.

Regarding Additional Protocol (AP) 5 on Trade Facilitation, during the reporting period, six out of the seven CEFTA Parties have Completed parliamentary ratification procedures as required by the Protocol. The ratification of the 7th Party is expected.

The Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) Decision was agreed upon and is ready for adoption. The duty drawback and full cumulation rules in accordance with Decision 3/2015 were elaborated and they entered into force on 1 July 2019. Work on Risk Management has progressed and the timeframe for its implementation was adopted at the Steering Committee (SC) for Customs and Rules of Origin. The SC for Customs and Rules of Origin had an extraordinary meeting related to the implementation of full cumulation and duty drawback. The Regional Convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin (PEM Convention) was held in Brussels with a preparatory meeting in the CEFTA Secretariat. The ad-hoc meeting in Skopje in April on the Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Certificate was agreed upon and discussions were initiated on fruits and vegetables, where Albania and North Macedonia were selected as pilot countries for four products.

The meeting of the Customs Contact Point (CCP) was held in April and it was concluded that Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services (AP6) is to be prepared for adoption. The CEFTA Secretariat participated in the negotiations for the recognition of Professional Qualifications. Talks started on the selection of sectors for regulatory cooperation in the CEFTA region and will continue in the next reporting period.

In the framework of the Additional Protocol 7 on Dispute Settlement (AP7) the draft text of the agreement was sent to the Parties in order to start the internal procedure for initiating negotiations. Six out of seven Parties have completed the procedure.

In June 2019, the Memorandum of Understanding with the German development agency (GIZ) and the Western Balkans 6 Chambers Investment Forum (WB6 CIF) was by the CEFTA Secretariat improving the working relations with the private sector.

The meeting of the Transport Community has lead to the cooperation that is envisaged and stated in the operational conclusions of the Transport Facilitation Committee and will continue in the next period.

Due to the fact that most of the activities during the reporting period focused on the Poznan Priorities, most of the other activities have been moved to the next period. Besides that, the Secretariat has participated in numerous workshops organised by the GIZ, International Finance Cooperation (IFC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Trade Organisation (WTO), and other conferences where its presence was needed. Meetings of the Multi-Annual Action Plan (MAP) Coordinators and the Sherpas were attended by CEFTA Staff.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

- Ratification of the AP5 is done in six out of the seven CEFTA Parties.
- AEO Validation Decision is agreed upon and pending adoption.

- CEFTA ad-hoc working group on certificates has reached an agreement on the phytosanitary certificate.
- The AP6 was agreed by all Parties and the internal procedure for its adoption has started.
- Full cumulation and duty drawback started in the CEFTA region on 1 July 2019.
- The MoU with WB6 CIF and GiZ was signed.
- The sector for mutual recognition of certificates was selected and the pilot on fruits and vegetables was agreed upon.
- The first wave of the recruitment procedure is completed and the new staff is operational.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT PERIOD (MONTH OF JULY)

- 1) As the project finalised in July 2019, only a few activities have been left for implementation. For the remaining period, the following activities were envisaged for July:
- 2) Participation in the Poznan Summit (4-5 July 2019).
- 3) Preparation of a possible extension of the Operational Grant.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2018 |
| Project title: | Systematic Exchange of Electronic Data (SEED +) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 5,300,000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Moldova |
| Type of contract: | Action Grant with the CEFTA Secretariat and Italian Customs and Monopoly Agency |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/403-296 |
| Duration of activities: | 21/12/2018 – 21/12/2022 |
| Links: | http://www.cefta.int/ |
| Contact: | Nanna Matsson, Nanna.Matsson@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective is to enhance trade facilitation and regional economic integration in the Western Balkans (WB) based on the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). The purpose of this actions is to develop and implement the SEED+ system, which will enable the electronic exchange of trade documents in the Western Balkans in line with the provisions and actions agreed in the CEFTA Additional Protocol 5 on Trade Facilitation (AP5). In particular, the project supports upgrading and further development of the current SEED system that is established within the CEFTA Parties (Western Balkans 6 Parties). The main

components of the project are related to: Legal, IT, and the internal strengthening of the CEFTA Secretariat.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

The activities in this project are in the early stages and most of the activities in this period relate to its operationalisation. The kick-off meeting was held on 12 January 2019, where the project's key components and the implementation plan were presented.

Based on the implementation plan, the CEFTA Secretariat started the recruitment procedure of a Project Manager and the Italian Customs Agency started the procedure for the selection of its experts. The procedures were completed and the selected Project Manager and the Key Expert will start engaging in the next reporting period.

In the same period, the Partnership Agreement between the CEFTA Secretariat and Italian Customs was negotiated and it is expected to be signed in the next period.

At the same time, the procedure was started for the procurement of the company for the implementation of the internal restructuring of the Secretariat. Deloitte was selected and the Inception report was prepared and submitted at the end of June 2019.

The work was carried out by the CEFTA Secretariat staff and National Seconded Experts. The participation in meetings and the promotion of the SEED+ was done within the framework of several CEFTA meetings and within the work of regional initiatives. Among other initiatives, during the implementation period of the project, the SPS Certificate was agreed upon (fields needed for electronic exchange).

Of priority in the next period is the implementation of recommendations presented by Deloitte in their Inception Report and the publishing of the tender for the selection of a consultant for the evaluation of IT Tenders. Moreover, during the official CEFTA meetings, discussions focused on the harmonisation of certificates and the assessment of the missing legislation - including the soft one (MoUs)

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

- The kick off meeting was held
- The procedures for the selection of a project manager and key experts were completed
- The Partnership Agreement was negotiated
- The procurement for the implementation of the internal restructuring of the Secretariat was completed, and the inception report was presented
- The SPS Certificate was agreed upon.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT REPORTING PERIOD (JULY - DECEMBER 2019)

- 4) In the upcoming period it is expected to reach significant progress in all areas of the

project, namely:

- 5) The selected Office Manager and Key Experts are in operation.
- 6) Participation of the Key Experts in the CEFTA Steering Committees and in the work with competent authorities on legislative improvements.
- 7) Participation of the Key Expert in the ad-hoc working groups for the harmonisation of the certificates.
- 8) Preparation and selection of an evaluator for future IT tenders.
- 9) Implementation of the recommendations presented in the Deloitte Inception Report for the internal restructuring of the Secretariat.
- 10) Preparation of the Terms of Reference for the IT tenders.
- 11) Development of cooperation with other relevant regional initiatives, e.g., Transport Community.
- 12) Ensuring the maintainance of the SEED project until the full operationalisation of the SEED+.

3.6 COMPETITIVENESS

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | 2016 / 037-900 Multi-country Action Programme for 2016 |
| Project title: | Administration Agreement between the European Commission and the International Finance Corporation concerning the Western Balkans Regional Investment Policy and Promotion |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2.5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Single Trust Fund with the International Finance Corporation |
| Contract reference: | CN-2016/379-787 |
| Duration of activities: | 18/04/2017 – 31/12/2020 |
| Contact : | Nanna MATSSON, nanna.matsson@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective is to, as part of the overall Western Balkans Regional Investment Policy and Promotion (WBIPP) Program and the Multiannual Action Plan for the Regional Economic Area (MAP REA), contribute to greater convergence of regional investment policies in the Western Balkans and greater alignment with the relevant EU and international standards.

This will improve the attractiveness of the region for foreign investors (extra- and intra-regional) and ultimately lead to increased investment.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

In line with the priorities and objectives outlined in MAP REA, the project focused its activities during the current reporting period on: (A) initiating its support to the implementation of the economy-level investment reform action plans (IRAPs) that have been formally adopted by each of the WB6 economies in the meantime; and on (B) formalizing the regional investment reform agenda (RIRA) through an appropriate regional instrument.

(A) Following the adoption of the six economy-level investment reform action plans, the project delivered practical and hands-on technical support, for example: a comprehensive mapping and benchmarking of investor entry procedures; an assessment of existing investor grievance management approaches in the region; an assessment of the current legal base for investment. The analysis is providing a solid platform for reforms to align the current investment policy framework in the region with EU standards and practices. The project has also assisted with developing a monitoring and reporting framework to enable the economies of the region to systematically track and report progress with RIRA implementation.

(B) With the development of an options report and draft regional investment policy statement to formalise the regional investment reform agenda (RIRA), the project has contributed to the completion of another major milestone from MAP REA in the current period.

In parallel, the project also continued to engage the investment promotion agencies (IPAs) of the region in preparations for the upcoming investment promotion outreach campaigns to select European target markets.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

The specific outputs delivered as a result of the activities outlined above include:

- A comprehensive assessment of the WB6 current legal base for investment, including the domestic legal framework as well as international investment agreements (IIAs).
- A comprehensive mapping and benchmarking of investor entry procedures across the WB6, identifying main similarities and differences, and outlining main recommendations for potential alignment.
- An assessment of existing investor grievance management approaches in the region, including the development of blue-prints for effective investor grievance

management mechanisms tailored to the specific needs of those economies that have requested support with this activity, i.e. Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.

- A detailed mapping of incentives related data and initiated the compilation of comprehensive inventories of incentives offered to investors in those economies that have requested support with this activity, i.e. Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia.
- A monitoring and reporting framework that will enable the economies of the region to systematically track and report progress with RIRA implementation.
- A report outlining five different options for formalizing the regional investment reform agenda (RIRA) through an appropriate legal instrument.
- Capacity building activities for the Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) of the region in light of the planned upcoming investor outreach activities.
- The project continued its support to the preparations of investor outreach activities for the WB6 economies.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

In the upcoming reporting period the project will continue to support the economies of the region with the implementation of the investment policy reforms outlined in the six IRAPs. In addition, the project will launch the implementation of investor outreach campaigns in targeted EU markets. Further, the project will continue to support the monitoring and reporting for RIRA implementation in cooperation with RCC, and will contribute to the development of regionally acceptable standards for negotiating international investment agreements in the region.

Specifically, the above will entail:

- Continuing with the regular monitoring and reporting of progress with RIRA implementation on regional level, including the collection of results achieved during CY 2019.
- Supporting the formulation of regional standards for IIA negotiations.
- Providing technical assistance to the WB6 economies with the implementation of investment policy reforms as per the workplan and timeline outlined by the respective IRAPs and /or update the IRAPs accordingly through the consultations with the relevant counterparts in each economy.
- Implementing a follow-up training course on core promotion and facilitation capabilities for IPA staff from the region, building on the initial training module provided in the current reporting period.
- Completing the development of value propositions and marketing materials, and finalizing the target market and -firms selection for each of the six economies.
- Launching investor outreach activities in select EU target markets for all prepared economies.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Europe Aid/151895/DH/ACT/Multi |
| Project title: | Support to Facilitation of Trade between CEFTA Parties |
| EU contribution: | EUR 3.00 million |
| Beneficiary region: | CEFTA signatory parties |
| Type of contract: | PA Grant Agreement with Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the International Trade Centre (ITC) |
| Contract reference: | 2016/383-050 |
| Duration of activities: | http://cefta.int/trade-facilitation/ |
| Contact : | Nanna MATSSON, Nanna.Matsson@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the project is to improve capacities of the public and private sector in the CEFTA Parties to address the obstacles to deeper trade integration in the CEFTA region. This goal will be pursued by supporting the implementation of the CEFTA Additional Protocol 5 on Trade Facilitation.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JULY 2019)

In the reporting period the following key activities were carried out:

- A regional Risk Management workshop for Customs to validate the common risk profiles was organised in February 2019. Twenty-six (26) Risk Profiles were produced based on a CEFTA Risk Profile Format agreed among all the parties. The commitment and engagement from all CEFTA parties has been vital in the creation of more profiles than the twenty originally planned.
- After significant research and expert engagement during the last year, the Business Process Analyses (BPA) were presented to the national authorities in the CEFTA Parties. The BPA's show in a detailed manner the export and import procedures of each country and identified possible bottlenecks and redundant procedures. The local authorities have provided their inputs and opinions to the reports, based on which the reports were updated. The regional report is currently being prepared to be presented to the CEFTA structures in September 2019.
- Mutual recognition of border documents has been identified as one of the most harmful barriers to trade in the CEFTA region. This is of particular significance when dealing with perishable products. For that reason, the project focused on fruits and vegetables while supporting the CEFTA Parties to develop a framework to address the barrier and

establish a protocol for the mutual recognition of procedures and documents in conformity with EU requirements and in support of the implementation of the CEFTA Additional Protocol 5 (AP5), Article 24. In order to be able to propose options and potential approaches for establishing the protocol, a one-week assessment mission was carried out by the project team and 2 international experts, focusing in a first step on two CEFTA parties, namely Albania and North Macedonia, as selected at the CEFTA meeting of 25 March in Skopje. The products selected at the same meeting for inclusion in the assessment were apple, tomato, cucumber and eggplant. The findings of the missions were presented and discussed with respective SPS and Customs authorities at a workshop held in Tirana in June 2019.

- The Regional Business Advisory Groups (RBAG) in both vegetables, and iron and steel sectors have participated in study tours on advocacy in May and June 2019. The RBAG vegetables group visited Brussels and held several meetings with business associations, as well as the EU institutions, including the European Commission (DG SANTE, DG TRADE, DG AGRI) and the European Parliament. The RBAG metals group visited Dusseldorf and held several meetings with business associations and private companies in the metal sector industry. The aim of the study tours was to show the best practice of the most prominent vegetable and metal sector associations in Europe in presenting their positions to the decision makers and voicing their opinions on the issues they see as the most important.
- The RBAG members, with the support of experts and project team, produced a policy paper outlining the positions of both the vegetables, and iron and steel sector on the most trade distortive barriers in the region of Western Balkans countries. The position paper will be distributed and discussed with the national and regional bodies in order to support further reforms for facilitating trade from the private sector's perspective.
- In July 2019, the Risk Management (RM) group assembled again in order to discuss the experiences after the two-month piloting of joint risk profiles. The pilot programme lasted from 1 April to 20 June 2019. The group assessed the work and discussed the lessons learned from the experience of using the earlier developed risk profiles. The group agreed to focus on four risk areas that are areas of common interest where coordinated actions are most needed. The focus of the RM group in the upcoming period will be to strengthen through enhanced cooperation and coordination between the customs authorities to respond adequately to risks that tend to transcend national borders.
- Based on the outcomes of the assessment mission on border document challenges to Albania and North Macedonia, in July 2019, discussion of an initial proposal for facilitating trade in fruits and vegetables in support to implementation of the Article 24 of the AP5 took place during a regional workshop, attended by the SPS/plant health and customs agencies. The proposal discussed aims to move towards a system-wide monitoring and control approach to plant protection and food safety rather than

strengthening the issuing and cross recognition of certificates and lab tests at the border. This is the approach that is now taken by the European Community through the new Official Control Regulation 2017/625 which will become fully operational in December 2019. The approach taken is to foster a culture of compliance with risk-based controls without imposing unnecessary burdens on the authorities that are responsible for undertaking official controls or on the food and feed business operators that are subject to these controls.

- Regular communication and dissemination activities delivered regularly through the project website and newsletters.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JULY 2019)

- Twenty-six (26) Risk Profiles for Customs were produced based in a CEFTA Risk Profile Format agreed among all the parties. Ten Risk profiles were implemented in the national IT systems in the timeframe April 1 - June 20, 2019.
- Five out of six national Business Process Analyses (BPA) were presented to national bodies in the Western Balkans CEFTA Parties, showing in details all the import and export procedures for each country, as well as the bottlenecks present within those procedures.
- The RBAG groups on vegetables and metals have improved their knowledge and capacities regarding the communication with political decision makers.
- RBAG position paper on the most important issues that businesses are facing while trading in the region produced and ready for further discussion with the national and regional decision-makers.
- The proposal for facilitating trade of fruits and vegetables in the region was presented to the decision makers and discussed in details with them during two workshops.
- During a Risk Management workshop, the group has developed four priority areas for common risk profiles for CEFTA. Likewise, one of the main challenges was identified and further steps agreed on overcoming the issue of exchanging data, as one of the most important prerequisites for establishing common risk management framework in the CEFTA region.
- The project website is regularly updated and a newsletter prepared and distributed to all stakeholders involved or interested in the project.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Regional Business Process Analysis (BPA) report will be discussed in September with relevant CEFTA structure to agree on the regional recommendations for harmonizing the trade-related procedures and documents between CEFTA Parties.

- A common list of minimum data submission requirements for traders is being prepared and will be discussed with partners in October 2019.
- Study visit of SPS and Customs Administration officers of CEFTA Parties to Latvia will be organized in order to enable the respective agencies to learn and understand from the experiences of Latvia's administration the border management cooperation and integrated risk management practices.
- Regional Business Advisory Group (RBAG) vegetables and metals meetings will be organized in September and October 2019 in order to discuss the communication plan to reach relevant policy makers and support in advocating for changes in legislation and implementation at national and regional levels.
- A regional Risk Management workshop will be organized in October 2019 in order to look beyond the Pilot Programme and discuss the importance and benefits of Common Risk Management Framework and Strategy to be developed for the CEFTA Parties.
- 4th Pilot validation of AEO programme will be conducted in October 2019 in Montenegro to pilot the agreed procedure for mutual recognition of national AEO programmes in the CEFTA framework.
- The closing event of the project is envisaged to take place in February 2020, as an extension of the project until February 2020, is under evaluation. The final event will gather all project partners and aims at presenting the main results achieved over the course of the project.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | IPA Multi-Country Programme – decision MCP2017/39-402 |
| Project title: | Triple P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy and Pilots |
| EU contribution: | EUR 5,000,000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia) |
| Type of contract: | Grant to the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) |
| Contract reference: | 2017/392-591 |
| Duration of activities: | 19/12/2017 – 19/12/2020 |
| Links: | https://www.rcc.int/tourism |
| Contact : | Laurent GUIRKINGER, Laurent.GUIRKINGER@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The objective of the Tourism in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) Promotion, Policy and Pilots (Triple P) project is to contribute to the economic growth and competitiveness of the

Western Balkans region. It aims to do so through the consolidation of a fragmented tourism offer in the Western Balkans and the development of internationally competitive regional tourism routes and offers, which would attract more international tourists, lengthen their stay in the region, increase revenues and contribute to the increase of employment in the industry, as well as in the overall economy of the region.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

- Regional public-private dialogue maintained, with 9th Tourism Expert Group (TEG) meeting held on 19-20 June 2019.
- Product development for regional tourism routes continued with focus on definition of management models and structure, and marketing. For Via Dinarica, the regional coordination process continues, 2nd regional coordination meeting held on 25-26 May 2019.
- Promotion at international trade fairs of the Western Balkans regional routes undertaken, accompanied by targeted outreach by exposure in renowned publications.
- Policy assessment focusing on the areas endorsed by TEG: ease of border crossing, workforce skills and mobility, data quality and statistics, and sustainable tourism in Western Balkans.
- The implementation activities of the 12 grants of the 1st Call for Proposals finalised in June. The 2nd Call for Proposals announced on 10 June 2019.

OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2018)

- **Maintained regional cooperation public-private dialogue (RCC Tourism Expert Group - TEG)**
 - 9th TEG meeting held in June 2019, along with in-between consultations;
- **Activity 1 – Product Development and Promotion**
 - Western Balkans Crossroads of Civilisations: priority list of 40 sites identified and endorsed, main themes of the route developed, business model and marketing strategy under development;
 - Balkan Monumental Trail: Art and Design of the WWII Monuments: priority list of 40 sites identified and endorsed with one main and two supporting itineraries;
 - Illyricum Trail – integrated with the CoE certified European cultural route Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (RER-DWR), confirmed eligibility for 8 sites, Illyricum Trail announced and introductory info available on RED-DWR web site (<http://romanemperorsroute.org/illyricum-trail/>);
 - Via Dinarica: national consultations held in 4 economies, 2nd regional coordination meeting held with nomination of 4 CLO candidates: Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. Continued placement of regional routes on <https://www.outdooractive.com>

- Western Balkans as travel destination promoted at/through:
 - Fiets and Wandelbeurs (Utrecht, The Netherlands), outreach 25,000 visitors, 500 exhibitors, participation delivered through a regional stand and a presentation of the Via Dinarica and Trans Dinarica held on 2 March 2019;
 - ITB (Berlin, Germany), outreach 160,000 visitors, 110,000 trade visitors, 10,000 exhibitors from 180 countries; participation delivered through a joint regional stand and three presentations: regional cultural routes, Via Dinarica, and adventure and cultural routes development in WB.
 - Bike Festival (Garda, Italy), specialised biking industry event 45,000 cycling audience from 30 countries; participation delivered through a regional stand.
 - Market outreach towards travel media – journalists and editor of key travel media outlets launched, resulting in total of 3 articles (Lonely Planet);

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- **Product Development:** Business and management models and 3 years marketing strategy and immediate action plan to be completed for 3 regional routes (WB Crossroads of Civilisations, Balkan Monumental Trail and Via Dinarica).
- **Promotion:** Promotion of regional routes to the regional audience through a social media campaign and preparation of intense promotion in international markets to be delivered at international fairs and familiarization trips (FAM) with international tour operators and media. The selection of FAM attendees and specialised events is driven by marketing strategies currently finalised.
- **Policy:** National consultations will be held to review recommendations from the current assessment and launch development of solutions.
- **Pilots:** The 2nd Call for Grant Proposals will be completed and grants awarded by October 2019; 3rd Call for Proposals will be announced by November 2019.
- **Other**
 - 10th TEG meeting will take place in December 2019
 - Continue cooperation with European Institute for Cultural Routes and their Routes4U project, EU Strategies for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and Danube Region (EUSDR).

CHAPTER 4: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

One of the priorities of the Credible European Union Perspective for the Western Balkans is to work with the Beneficiaries on increasing competitiveness and investments in infrastructure. Interventions in this sector have the ultimate goal of supporting the modernisation of their economies, also with a view to promote transport and energy networks, energy efficiency and renewable energy as well as environment and social infrastructure. Close coordination with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) is essential, and the EU's technical assistance and investment grants are instrumental for the projects to materialise.

4.1 WESTERN BALKANS INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK (WBIF)

The Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) was established in 2009 as a regional tool for EU enlargement. It supports socio-economic development and EU accession across the Western Balkans through the provision of financing and technical assistance to strategic investments. It pools resources from the European Commission's Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) with those of the involved Financial Institutions (FIs), bilateral donors and the governments of the Western Balkans.

The WBIF increases the region's capacity to finance crucial infrastructure and priority investments in line with accession priorities and enhances the overall coordination of assistance. The WBIF seeks to maximise the impact of grant financing by using it to leverage lending by the involved Financial Institutions to priority strategic investments as identified by the Western Balkan beneficiaries. Since its launch, the WBIF has developed a pipeline of priority investments of approximately EUR 19.4 billion. A grand total of 313 technical assistance (TA) and investment grants (INV) with a cumulative value of EUR 1.04 billion have been awarded to 189 investment projects.

The grants are used for project preparation, implementation, and co-financing of infrastructure investments for which financial support is provided by the partner organisations – AFD, CEB, EBRD, EIB, KfW and the World Bank Group. The grant assignments are implemented by the Lead FIs or the European Commission. The implementation of EU grants is carried out either under Commission awarded TA contracts - the Infrastructure Project Facility (IPF) or under Contribution Arrangements with the European Western Balkans Joint Fund (EWBJF) which is managed by EBRD and EIB. For the co-financing of connectivity projects, the lead FI is implementing projects under Contribution Arrangements with the EWBJF. The European Commission is the largest contributor to the WBIF with a total of EUR 1.02 billion channelled through the WBIF. Some EUR 649 million has been allocated for the co-financing of investments in the energy, transport and

environment sectors under the Connectivity Agenda and the Municipal Window. Between 2009 and 2018, bilateral donors have contributed almost EUR 85 million to the EWBIF.

PURPOSE

The WBIF has three objectives: 1. To create a one-stop-shop, where a request for project support can be presented, screened, assessed, and, eventually, provided with the required financing for its implementation; 2. to pool different sources of funding (FIs, EC and bilateral donors) and work out an appropriate blend of grants and loans for various actions; and 3. to strengthen the strategic and policy coordination of actions by multiple donors and investors that addresses the socio-economic priorities for the region. These socioeconomic priorities are accession-driven and relate to the alignment of the WB6 candidate countries and potential candidates with the EU acquis. WBIF activities are supported by the EC-financed IFI Coordination Office – see below for a more detailed description of its activities. The identification of priority projects is a result of consultations with other relevant DGs (Environment, Climate Action, Connect, Move, Energy, Regional Policy, Economic and Financial Affairs) thus ensuring coordination with their activities in the region.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2019)

Activities during the first half of 2019 included the assessment and approval of TA Round 21, the approval of a EUR 2.2 million investment grant for Gradacac Water Supply Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the assessment of Investment Round 04. 20 TA projects were approved during the Steering Committee meeting in June in Berlin and 8 investment projects were endorsed at Western Balkans Summit in July in Poznan. Since WBIF was established in 2009, it has awarded more than EUR 1 billion of which EUR 301 million in TA grants, EUR 680 million in investment grants and EUR 60 million for financing facilities (REEP/REEP Plus and WB EDIF). The spring Project Financiers' Group meeting was held in Tirana in May 2019, and the summer Steering Committee meeting took place in Berlin in June 2019.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

In 2019, the WBIF is celebrating its 10-year anniversary with increased communication and visibility activities highlighting results achieved through videos, a photo exhibition and publication of feature stories on the web, as well as updated written material. The indicative work programme for the second half of 2019 includes the assessment and approval of TA call Round 22 (digital sector only) and the approval of projects from Investment Round 4. The expansion of the WBIF to include the concept of the “reinforced WBIF umbrella” and the recommendations for “WBIF 2.0” will be tabled for approval at the next Steering Committee meeting in London in December. On a strategic level, the aim is that in the future EU policy aspects will drive stronger the investment decisions, in particular linked to the Economic

Reform Programme (ERP) process, Regional Economic Area (REA) and connectivity reform measures. On the instrument level, the governance structures of the different tools supporting investments in the Western Balkans are being streamlined and to the extent possible managed by a reinforced central WBIF Secretariat. The next PFG meeting will be held in Brussels in November 2019. The next Steering Committee meeting will be hosted by EBRD in London in December 2019.

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4.2 WBIF CONNECTIVITY INVESTMENT GRANTS

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2015-2016 (DN 2015/038-055 and 2016/038-727) |
| Project title: | Contribution Arrangement with respect to the European Western Balkans Joint Fund under the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 144 900 000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Contribution Arrangement with the European Western Balkans Joint Fund managers (EBRD and EIB) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2016/375-830, CN 2016/375-855 and CN 2016/380-342 |
| Duration of activities: | 16.06.2016 – 31.12.2024 |
| Links: | www.wbif.eu |
| Contact: | Judit Andrea GYORI, judit.gyori@ec.europa.eu |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2016 part II (DN 2016/039-401) |
| Project title: | <i>Contribution Arrangement with respect to the European Western Balkans Joint Fund under the Western Balkans Investment Framework</i> |
| EU contribution: | EUR 145 500 000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Contribution Arrangement with the European Western Balkans Joint Fund managers (EBRD and EIB) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2017/390-295 |
| Duration of activities: | 04.12.2017 – 31.12.2025 |
| Links: | www.wbif.eu |
| Contact: | Judit Andrea GYORI, judit.gyori@ec.europa.eu |

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2017-2018 (DN 2018/039-876 and 2018/040-650) |
| Project title: | <i>Contribution Arrangement with respect to the European Western Balkans Joint Fund under the Western Balkans Investment Framework</i> |
| EU contribution: | EUR 104 873 460 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Contribution Arrangement with the European Western Balkans Joint Fund managers (EBRD and EIB) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/397-087 and 2018/397-088 |
| Duration of activities: | 14.05.2018 – 31.12.2026 |
| Links: | www.wbif.eu |
| Contact: | Judit Andrea GYORI, judit.gyori@ec.europa.eu |

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2018-2019 (DN 2018/040-818 and 2019/041-590) |
| Project title: | <i>Contribution Arrangement with respect to the European Western Balkans Joint Fund under the Western Balkans Investment Framework</i> |
| EU contribution: | EUR 182 353 460 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Contribution Arrangement with the European Western Balkans Joint Fund managers (EBRD and EIB) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2019/406-639 and 2019/406-641 |
| Duration of activities: | 28.05.2018 – 28.11.2027 |
| Links: | www.wbif.eu |
| Contact: | Judit Andrea GYORI, judit.gyori@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The WBIF connectivity investment grants contribute to improving connectivity within the Western Balkans, as well as between Western Balkans and the European Union, and serve as a driver for economic growth, jobs and new investments in the region. The Western Balkans has made the Connectivity Agenda one of its highest priorities, with a special emphasis on the preparation and financing of major regional infrastructure investment projects. In this context in 2015, the European Commission set aside up to EUR 1 billion in grants, from the

EU Pre-Accession Instrument for connectivity investment projects in transport and energy sectors for the 2014-2020 period. The WBIF connectivity grants support the development of infrastructure networks in the Western Balkans not only through technical assistance aimed at project preparation, but most importantly through the financing of a share of the actual investment costs.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- The connectivity investment grants are approved on an annual basis by the WBIF Steering Committee. For the time being, the Steering Committee held four investment rounds (while round 5 is ongoing) and approved eight grants in December 2015 (“round 0”), three grants in December 2016 (“round 1”), two grants in December 2017 (“round 2”) and 9 grants in December 2018 (“round 3”).
- Projects included in the 5th Connectivity package and presented under the round 4 are expected to be approved by the next Steering Committee of the WBIF in December 2019. The round was launched in summer 2018, the screening and assessment of the applications took place in the first half of 2019. The 5th Connectivity package was endorsed at the Poznan Summit in early July 2019 and includes 6 transport projects and 2 energy investment projects with an overall EU grant value of EUR 180 million.
- In total, up to July 2019 with the endorsement of the 5th Connectivity package in Poznan, the EU has committed over EUR 880 million EU funding for 39 connectivity projects (3 financed from bilateral funds). These projects are expected to leverage investments with a total cost exceeding EUR 3.16 bn.
- Up to June 2019, construction works started on 6 connectivity projects (2 energy and 4 transport projects).
- The design is completed for 17 projects, while the works tenders, including for design and build contracts, were launched for 19 projects up to June of 2019.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Initiation/continuation of construction activities in IPA II beneficiaries, construction works ongoing on 6 projects (2 energy connectivity projects and 4 transport projects).
- Start of the construction of works in June 2019 on the project Mediterranean Corridor: Bosnia and Herzegovina – Croatia CVC Road Interconnection, Johovac Interchange – Rudanka Interchange.
- Contribution arrangement signed with the Fund managers of the European Western Balkans Joint Fund to finance the projects included in the 4th Connectivity package in May 2019. Preparation of the Decision of IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2019-2020 is ongoing with expected adoption by the Commission in November 2019.
- Construction works on the connection of the downstream bridge over the Sava River on Corridor Vc near Svilaj were successfully completed at the end of February. The new

cross-border bridge is part of the extension of the Mediterranean Corridor in the region and connects Bosnia and Herzegovina with Croatia at Svilaj on the Sava River.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Approval of the projects under round 4 endorsed in Poznan by the WBIF Steering Committee in December 2019
- Preparations for the screening and assessment of the Round 5 projects expected to be politically endorsed at the Western Balkans Summit in 2020.
- Commencement of works on 12 new connectivity projects (10 transport projects, 2 energy projects).
- Expected partial completion of the first connectivity project, Mediterranean Corridor (CVc): Bosnia and Herzegovina – Croatia Road interconnection, Svilaj – Odzak and Svilaj Bridge. The completion of the component on border crossing facilities is foreseen for Q2 2020.
- Decision on the revised structure of the WBIF and processes with view to strategic and financial expansion also foreseen in the Western Balkan Strategy.

4.3 HORIZONTAL SUPPORT TO IFI COORDINATION (IFICO)

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | IPA II Multi-country Action Programme for 2017 - part NEAR (DN 2017/039-402) |
| Project title: | Horizontal support to coordination with International Financial Institutions and bilateral donors in the Western Balkans (i.e. IFICO3) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 4.52 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Service contract with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/395-656 |
| Duration of activities: | 27.02.2018 – 26.02.2020 |
| Link: | www.wbif.eu |
| Contact: | ANTONIO GARCÍA SUÁREZ, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The IFI Coordination Office (IFICO) refers to the consultancy service contract awarded by DG NEAR aiming to ensure better coordination and cooperation between the beneficiaries, the EC, the IFIs and bilateral donors. The IFICO provides a range of technical, management and communication services to support coordination among all WBIF stakeholders. It delivers

analytical and operational services to the EC, IFIs and bilateral donors in the main WBIF sectors (Digital, Energy, Environment, Social, Transport) to facilitate better programming and planning of assistance including investments.

IFICO supports the WBIF structures, particularly the WBIF Secretariat and the WBIF Steering Committee, and has developed a range of WBIF related communication activities including the WBIF website and a management information system (MIS).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Overall support to the WBIF Secretariat.
- Support to the WBIF Secretariat in the organisation and follow-up of the WBIF Project Financiers' Group meeting in May in Tirana and the Steering Committee meeting in June in Berlin.
- Support to the EC in the screening and assessment of TA Round 21 and finalisation of INV Round 4.
- Support to beneficiaries for the preparation of grant applications for TA Round 21.
- Drafting of Terms of References for approved TA projects and a brief for the Bosnia and Herzegovina Gradacac investment project.
- Drafting and implementation of the Communication and Visibility Plan 2019, including the dedicated 10 year's anniversary action plan.
- Production of WBIF 10 years' video clip, photo exhibition and promotional material;
- Assistance to beneficiaries to enhance the functioning of the NIC framework and improve the quality of the SPPs.
- Update of WBIF project portfolio funding needs assessment (highlighting sectoral needs), update of the Youth Education Sector Study and a number of short strategy and discussion papers pertaining to the establishment of operationalisation of the WBIF 2.0 working group.
- Support to WBIF stakeholders with the organisation of visibility events for WBIF projects and preparation of communication and visibility materials (brochures, WBIF folder and roll-up, notebooks, and sub-sector video clips).
- Design of the upgraded WBIF website.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Supported preparation, organisation and follow-up of WBIF related meetings, in particular the Project Financiers Group meeting in Tirana and the WBIF Steering

Committee meeting in Berlin. Minutes of meetings, agendas, power-point presentations were drafted and finalised.

- Supported the EC and the WBIF Secretariat in the screening process for applications from TA Round 21 and preparation of INV Round 4.
- Submitted the updated Funding Needs Analysis, the updated Youth Education Sector Study and a NIC status report.
- Maintained and further developed the WBIF MIS.
- Designed and switched to new WBIF website.
- Drafted and submitted 10 Terms of Reference and 4 another Terms of References for approval.
- Delivered the semi-annual WBIF Monitoring Report (May 2019) and bi-monthly reports of active WBIF IPF-implemented projects.
- Finalised the WBIF Communication and Visibility Guidelines.
- Produced communication materials including country and sector brochures, WBIF folder and roll-up, notebooks, the Annual Report 2018 was finalised, printed and disseminated.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuation of support to the WBIF and its stakeholders.

4.4 WBIF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS FACILITIES (IPF)

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | IPA I Multi-beneficiary Programmes 2011 (DN 2011/022-964) and 2012 (DN2012/022-966) |
| Programme reference: | IPA II Multi-country Programme 2014 (DN 2014/031-603) |
| Project title: | Support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework projects – Infrastructure Project Facility (extension IPF4 and IPF5) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 35.54 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Specific Grant Agreement with the European Investment Bank |
| Contract reference: | CN 2015/368-253 |
| Duration of activities: | 17.12.2015 – 31.12.2020 |
| Links: | www.wbif.eu |

Contact : Antonio GARCÍA SUÁREZ, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu

Programme reference: IPA II Multi-country Programme 2015 (DN 2015/031-609)
Project title: Support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework projects – Infrastructure Project Facility 2015 (IPF 6)
EU contribution: EUR 26.12 million
Beneficiary region: Western Balkans
Type of contract: Specific Grant Agreement with the European Investment Bank
Contract reference: CN 2016/379-644
Duration of activities: 23.11.2016 – 31.12.2021
Links: www.wbif.eu
Contact : ANTONIO GARCÍA SUÁREZ, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu

Programme reference: IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2016 part II (DN 2016/039-401)
Project title: Support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework projects – Infrastructure Project Facility 2016 (IPF7)
EU contribution: EUR 36 million
Beneficiary region: Western Balkans
Type of contract: Specific Grant Agreement with the European Investment Bank
Contract reference: CN 2017/388-401
Duration of activities: 13.09.2017 – 31.12.2022
Links: www.wbif.eu
Contact : Antonio GARCÍA SUÁREZ, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu

Programme reference: IPA II Multi-country Programme 2018 (DN 2018/040-113)
Project title: EU Support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework – Infrastructure Project Facilities – IPF 8 and IPF 9

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| EU contribution: | EUR 50 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Specific Grant Agreement with the European Investment Bank |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/402-850 |
| Duration of activities: | 19.12.2018 – 31.12.2025 |
| Links: | www.wbif.eu |
| Contact : | Antonio GARCÍA SUÁREZ, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The Infrastructure Projects Facilities (IPFs) are consultancy services contracts implementing the Western Balkans Infrastructure Framework (WBIF) technical assistance grants for priority infrastructure projects in the Digital, Energy, Environment, Social and Transport sectors.

Technical assistance is most largely requested for pre-feasibility studies, general designs, feasibility studies, preliminary designs, financing plans, cost-benefit analysis, tariffs plans, environmental impact assessments, detailed designs, etc., that is to say for the preparation of project documentation. Technical assistance may also occasionally be provided during the implementation phase, for the preparation of tender dossiers and for the supervision of works, providing therefore support throughout the project cycle. In some exceptional cases, IPFs may be asked to provide ad-hoc advisory and technical assistance, for example for regional sector development studies.

To date, eight IPFs have been deployed. The European Commission has been managing directly the first three facilities, which have all come to an end. To ensure the implementation of WBIF technical assistance grants in the most efficient manner while minimising the administrative weight on the European Commission, it was decided that the EIB would manage the facilities from IPF4 onwards.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY–JUNE 2019)

IPF5 has currently 16 assigned sub-projects (i.e. TA grants), including updating the Connectivity Networks Gap Analysis, which was allocated during the reporting period. An ad-hoc advisory TA for DG NEAR, which comprised a regional renewable energy study finished in early 2019 following a workshop. One terms of reference have been completed during the reporting period. While none of the sub-projects have yet been finalised, five are anticipated for completion in the next reporting period. Two transport sub-projects will extend beyond the IPF5 contract end of 30 June 2020 and preparations have therefore been made to request an extension of six months.

IPF6 has currently 14 assigned sub-projects, all of them ongoing: 9 in the Transport sector, 2 in the Energy sector (out of which one with a regional dimension), 2 in the Environment sector and 1 in the Social sector. One Transport sub-project and one social sub-project (both in Kosovo) have been substantially completed. The remaining 12 sub-projects are at various stages of implementation and all are programmed to be completed by IPF6’s closure date of 28 February 2021.

IPF 7 has currently 20 assigned sub-projects, out of which 16 are ongoing: 12 in the Transport sector, 2 in the Environment sector and 2 in the Energy sector (both with a regional dimension). Five to six additional sub-projects might be assigned to IPF7. In addition, IPF 7 has also performed 3 ad-hoc services during this reporting period. Furthermore, IPF7 successfully organised an ESIA workshop with EBRD and all other IPFs in June.

IPF8 started on 3 June 2019 and already got 2 sub-projects assigned: 1 sub-project in the Environment sector in Kosovo and the very first Digital sub-project, which is located in Albania. Up to 12 additional sub-projects might be assigned to IPF7 as soon as the TOR have been completed.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY–JUNE 2019)

- 3 ad-hoc services completed
- 1 workshop organised

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuation of the implementation of TA grants (i.e. sub-projects) in the IPA II Western Balkans beneficiaries.

4.5 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CONNECTIVITY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS (CONNECTA)

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | IPA II Multi-country Action Programme for Connectivity 2015-2016 Part I (DN 2015/038-055) and IPA II Multi-country Programme 2018 - PART NEAR (DN 2018/040-113) |
| Project title: | Technical Assistance to Connectivity in the Western Balkans (CONNECTA) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 17.03 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Service contract |
| Contract reference: | CN 2016/382-382 and 2018/402-907 |

Duration of activities: 19.12.2016 – 31.12.2022

Contact : Antonio GARCÍA SUÁREZ, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The CONNECTA facility:

- contributes to the preparation of high priority Transport and Energy Connectivity infrastructure projects, ensuring their technical and economic viability, in order to bring them to maturity for investment co-financing, and;
- provides support for the preparation and implementation of short and medium-term regional connectivity reform measures (CRMs) in the Transport sector, such as road and rail maintenance schemes, rail reform, road safety or Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

In the context of lengthy project preparation processes, it contributes to a shorter and more flexible mobilisation of technical assistance by filling gaps in project preparation and/or accelerating project cycles for key transport and energy projects. This results in a more rapid completion of the project documentation, increasing the number of projects mature enough for investment co-financing.

Thus, CONNECTA boosts the Connectivity Agenda and supports the development of Transport and Energy interconnections within the Western Balkans and between this region and neighbouring EU Member States. It also supports the indicative extension of the Trans-European Transport network (TEN-T) core corridors to the Western Balkans and the alignment with the relevant EU policies of TEN-T standards.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY–JUNE 2019)

To date, CONNECTA has been assigned a total of 14 sub-projects spread over all of the Western Balkan and covering both transport and energy. Two sub-projects were completed in this reporting period. One of these sub-projects was implemented in close cooperation with SEETO and its aim is to assist in the improvement of the border crossings in the whole region. The other completed sub-project is a study of the building stock in the region and its aim is to assist stakeholders in the process leading to improved public building energy efficiency. There are four on-going sub-projects, three of which are in the Transport sector. Two of these relate to transport infrastructure assignments in North Macedonia, one on a border crossing, the other on road safety guardrails. The remaining ongoing Transport sub-project is a road safety audit on a highway section in Serbia. The technical fields of all three sub-projects match the priorities of the Connectivity Agenda. The remaining sub-project is an energy assignment, which started in this reporting period. Its focus is to prepare missing

elements of the feasibility study and the whole detailed design for a new gas interconnector between North Macedonia and Greece.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY–JUNE 2019)

- 2 sub-projects completed

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Completion of the two road safety sub-projects, one in North Macedonia and the other in Serbia. Commencement of two new energy sub-projects, the first, a preliminary design and tender documentation for the new gas interconnector between Bosnia and Croatia and the second sub-project is the preparation of tender documentation for a new gas interconnector between Serbia and Bulgaria. It is also expected that discussions will continue with the Transport Community Treaty Secretariat for new regional assignments on road safety and border crossings. These new assignments may start towards the end of the next reporting period to end of December 2019.

4.6 JOINT ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT PROJECTS IN EUROPEAN REGIONS (JASPERS)

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | IPA II Multi-country Programme 2015 (DN 2015/031-609) and Multi-country Programme 2016 (DN 2016/037-900) |
| Project title: | JASPERS IPA II |
| EU contribution: | EUR 5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Specific Grant Agreement with the EIB |
| Contract reference: | CN 2016/368-304 and CN 2017/390-198 |
| Duration of activities: | 01.01.2016 – 31.12.2020 |
| Links: | http://jaspers.eib.org/ |
| Contact : | Antonio GARCÍA SUÁREZ, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

JASPERS is a technical assistance partnership between the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB), which provides independent advice to beneficiary countries to help prepare high quality major projects to be co-financed through the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund. Besides, JASPERS is now also

supporting the countries eligible for Cohesion Funds in the context of the Connecting Europe Facility. Since 2013, JASPERS has been expanding its services to the IPA countries (initially to North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, since 2016 to all IPA countries including Turkey).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY–JUNE 2019)

JASPERS' main role is to contribute to enhancing the quality of infrastructure projects to investment maturity, in line with requirements associated with IPA II financing. It supports beneficiaries in scoping and supervising the work of consultants tasked with the preparation of the necessary project documentation. In addition, JASPERS offers assistance to beneficiaries for the preparation of their sector strategies and project pipelines, to improve programming and to foster institutional capacity.

During the first half of 2019, JASPERS continued to offer its services to all IPA countries. As of 30 June 2019, JASPERS had 29 active assignments (12 in the Republic of North Macedonia, 10 in Montenegro, 3 each in Albania and Turkey, and 1 in Kosovo). Following a fact finding mission to Albania in October 2018, three new JASPERS assignments were identified and started during the reporting period, including JASPERS' first assignment in the broadband sector under the present IPA mandate. Also in the reporting period, JASPERS started its first assignment in the health sector under the present IPA mandate, namely in Kosovo. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are now clear indications that the JASPERS Working Arrangements will be signed during the summer months of 2019 and a first assignment (workshop on project preparation) is under discussion.

A Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) - undertaken in the first half of 2019 - compiled evidence that on the whole JASPERS work in the IPA countries has been strongly relevant and was carried out both efficiently and effectively, helping beneficiaries to prepare, finance and implement infrastructure projects in line with EU policy. The ROM report also confirmed that there remains a clear need for JASPERS-type of advisory and capacity building support, which cannot be sourced from the commercial consultancy market, to which it is highly complementary.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY–JUNE 2019)

- 3 assignments in Turkey completed
- 14 missions, sometimes with more than one JASPERS staff (6 in Albania, 6 in Montenegro, 2 in the Republic of North Macedonia)
- Active participation in the 27th WBIF Project Financiers Group meeting in May 2019 in Tirana/Albania

N.B. These figures do not include the activities in Serbia, implemented through a grant agreement between JASPERS and the EUD in Belgrade.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuation of the implementation of technical assistance in IPA II beneficiaries.

4.7 ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN FOR GROWTH FUND (GGF)

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | IPA 2015 / 031-609 - Multi-country Action Programme for 2015 |
| Project title: | <i>Green for Growth Fund, Southeast Europe (GGF)</i> |
| EU contribution (IPA only) | EUR 58.6 million - Shares, EUR 10.8 million - Technical Assistance (TA) |
| Beneficiary region: | 19 countries including Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Delegation (Trusteeship) Agreement with the European Investment Fund (EIF) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2016/381-814. Previous CN 2009/228-008; 2009/228-006; 2011/267-146; 2010/257-202; 2010/257-202 |
| Duration of activities: | 17/12/2009 - 31/12/2023 |
| Links: | www.ggf.lu |
| Contact: | Anna SOLTYSIK, Anna.SOLTYSIK@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The GGF is a public-private partnership that provides refinancing to financial institutions (FIs) to enhance their participation in the energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE) sectors and makes direct investments in EE/RE projects in Southeast Europe (SEE), ENR-East and ENR-South. The complementary GGF TA Facility supports the Fund in reducing energy consumption and CO² emissions through capacity building with FIs/projects and awareness raising.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2019)

GGF continued to build-up a diversified portfolio and increased impact by transferring best practices across a broad spectrum of Partner Institutions (PIs). During first half of 2019, the GGF signed and/or disbursed 8 new investments (partially subsequent tranches of previous investments) to financial institutions and direct investments, amounting to EUR 45.2 million. In SEE, these new investments were related to three microfinance institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the amount of EUR 3.5 million, two microfinance institutions in Kosovo in the amount of EUR 3.0 million and two subsequent disbursements to the two wind projects in Serbia in the amount of EUR 1.9 million. In addition, the Investment Committee approved a

EUR 20.0 million EE/RE credit line to a large bank in Serbia, and a EUR 1.5 million EE facility to a microfinance institution in Montenegro, both to be disbursed in H2 2019.

GGF continued to build upon its strong momentum, increasing the environmental impact of the Fund through considerable on-lending and outreach. GGF's cumulative sub-loan portfolio reached EUR 670.8 million in SEE and EUR 927.8 million in total by the end of Q2.

On the funding side during 1H2019, the Fund subscribed the EUR 8 million ENR-East C Shares from the EC (via KfW), for which the delegation agreement between the Neighbourhood Investment Facility and KfW for the C Share investment and a EUR 2 million TA contribution for the ENR-East was signed back in 2018.

ENR-South C Shares totalling EUR 4 million from CAMENA were subscribed in March 2019 and significantly strengthened the first loss buffer for the European Neighbourhood Region. In addition, EUR 10 million ENR-South C Shares (plus EUR 3 million TA) from EC (via KfW as trustee) were approved at the Neighbourhood Investment Platform Board Meeting on 21 June, and are expected to be contracted by year end.

The Fund is in advanced discussions to roll-over EUR 101.2 million in capital from the Fund's initial investors into A and B Shares (KfW, EIB, EBRD and IFC), with IFC signaling interest to top-up their total investment in A Shares by EUR 25 million by end of the year. A further EUR 25 million A Share top-up investment from OeEB was signed in August, 2019.

The TA Facility had 109 projects under management with a budget of EUR 5.7 million as per 2Q2019. The current funding of the TA Facility will benefit from the planned execution of the extension of the EC Donation Addendum until end of 2021 (earmarked for projects in ENR-East). Furthermore, a EUR 2 million EC donation for ENR-East was subscribed in 1H2019.

With these contributions, and the approved EUR 3 million donation to the ENR-South region, the TA Facility is sufficiently funded in the near-term. However, to ensure availability of funding across all of its regions, the Facility will continue to seek further funding, particularly for the MENA region.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2019)

GGF figures as at end Q2 (aggregate for the region of SEE):

- Total cumulative investment portfolio since inception: EUR 472.8 million.
- Number of active Partner Institutions: 28.
- Number of active target countries: 8.
- CO₂ Savings / CO₂ Reduction: 513,245 tons of CO₂/year (59%).
- Energy Savings: 1,849,166 MWh/year (57%).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The Fund will enter 2H2019 with a strong approved pipeline of EUR 132.1m, with investments under consideration, in particular in North Macedonia, Kosovo, Turkey, Ukraine, Tunisia and Egypt.

To further leverage the investments of the donors the Fund is seeking additional capital and is in active discussions with several potential private and public investors.

The Fund will continue exploring the potential of investments which complement energy savings and/or CO₂ reductions by achieving measurable impact in water, waste and resource efficiency (“nexus investments”) in 2019. In addition, following shareholder approval of the implementation of L Shares in 2018, the Fund intensified fund raising efforts with potential investors, including the EC and BMZ, with contracting of the first L Shares foreseen still in 2019.

4.8 REGIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS (REEP)

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference : | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2012/022-966 |
| Project title: | Regional Energy Efficiency Programme for the Western Balkans - REEP |
| EU contribution: | EUR 20.0 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Contribution agreement with EBRD |
| Contract reference: | CN2013/311-406 |
| Duration of activities: | 24/06/2013 – 31/12/2019 |
| Links: | http://: www.wb-reep.org |
| Contact : | Anna SOLTYSIK, Anna.SOLTYSIK@ec.europa.eu Wolfgang SCHLAEGER, wolfgang.schlaeger@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall aim is to establish a sustainable market for energy efficient financing of private and public sector. It will enable the public sector to take leadership in energy efficiency investments and facilitate access to medium and long-term credits for municipalities needed to implement infrastructure investments and improve the investment climate for business development.

Window 1 - Public Sector Energy Efficiency, Policy Dialogue, Institutional Capacity Building and Business Development Programme

Theme 1 ESCO Support

ESCO legislative work (policy dialogue)

This work has been completed, ESCO contract templates for street lighting and building projects have been shared with the legislatures of all Western Balkan countries. As a follow up activity, REEP supported the legislatures in Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia to review the ESCO contract templates. The legislature of North Macedonia in particular is now considering using the ESCO contract templates as a rulebook under the to-be-adopted energy efficiency law.

ESCO project preparation work

Project preparation is progressing in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue:

No REEP policy activities in this reporting period. All REEP policy deliverables (28 in total) were completed and submitted to the beneficiaries by December 2016. All of them have been adopted or officially accepted by the national authorities, except 4 regulations transposing EPBD in North Macedonia. These have been delayed due to the ongoing reform of the energy legislation in the country, which includes the drafting of a new primary law on energy efficiency (assistance provided under REEP).

Window 2 (part of the WebSEFF programme) – Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

During the reporting period, a pipeline of over EUR 7.68 million in sub-loans has been generated for the new Banca Intesa loan, of which EUR 4.78 million has been signed as of June 2019. The programme also continued to support two existing PFIs – one with sub-projects still under implementation and one with projects at verification stage. During the reporting period a total of 43 projects were assessed and 12 projects were verified (9 on-site and 3 desk-based). The Facility has been marketed through participation in several external events organised by other institutions/donor agencies and IFIs in Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Zlatibo. WebSEFF was also presented at the Energy and Investment Days conference in Novi Sad which had over 100 visitors and where dozens of bilateral meetings took place. Working relations were established with the Chamber of Commerce of Vojvodina for the purpose of organizing a presentation for private companies on the scope and benefits of WebSEFF II facility.

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

During the period, the assignment supporting the technical and environmental assessment of a 32.4 MW wind farm project in Kosovo was completed, using TC funding of around EUR 50,000. Note that this project is considered under the REEP Plus agreement due to its large investment size, which makes it ineligible under the earlier REEP. The loan agreement for the project was signed in June. There were no specific other projects identified for support under Window 3 during the period, but the team is exploring a potential intervention in relation to facilitating auction-based solar PV projects in Kosovo.

Window 4 Direct Lending to Municipalities

Following signing of the Energy Efficient Refurbishment of Zenica Hospital as the first transaction under this Window in June 2018, the focus was on ratification of financing agreements and preparation of tender documents. After the Council of Ministers approved the proposal of the Decision to ratify both the Loan Agreement and Grant Agreement in November 2018, further steps in the ratification process have been delayed due to general elections and the process of formation of the government. The ratification for both LA and GA is now in procedure. Tender documentation has been prepared and was under review during the reporting period.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY- JUNE 2019)

Window 1 Public Sector Energy Efficiency, Policy Dialogue, Institutional Capacity Building and Business Development Programme

Theme 1 ESCO Support

Window 1 - Policy Dialogue and ESCO development

Theme 1 ESCO Support: The activities are funded under REEP.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue: In this reporting period, the following deliverables were completed and submitted to the beneficiaries:

- Albania EPBD: final drafts of NCM, MEPS, and EPC regulations; auxiliary technical and guidance documents.
- Albania EED: draft amendments to the EE Law.
- Bosnia and Hercegovina: updated Policy Options and updated climate and HVAC databases; updated version of SBEM software.
- North Macedonia: Final draft Energy Efficiency Law, ready for government submission; auxiliary documents in preparation of adoption, such as Regulatory Impact Assessment and concordance tables
- Kosovo BRS: work plan report; kick-off workshop in Pristina on 20 May 2019.
- Montenegro: Ad-hoc expert support for the finalization of Montenegro's 4th NEEAP.

- Serbia (EED): Final draft notification for Article 7, including derivation of Article 7 target for Serbia and summary of Serbia's policy mix to achieve required savings.
- Serbia (EPBD): activity base final draft; refined inputs for cost-optimality analysis (incl. definition of reference buildings, compilation of EE measures and packages). Interim result were presented to the Ministry and TWG at a workshop in Belgrade on 25 March 2019.

Window 2 (part of the WB GEF programme) – Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

The Facility now totals EUR 53.5 million in PFI loans to 13 PFIs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia and Albania. During H1 2019, the 11 active PFIs signed a total of 592 sub-loans with a combined value of EUR 2.92 million. In addition, EUR 795,213 of incentives payments were disbursed to sub-borrowers with successfully verified sub-projects.

To date, a total of EUR 9.89 million has been signed in 1827 sub-loans, and EUR 1,428,397 has been disbursed as incentives to sub-borrowers. As of end of June 2019 the total (equivalent) primary energy savings is 8,943 (MWh/y), with GHG emissions saving of 3,159 (tonnes/y).

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

The wind-farm project in Kosovo supported with TC funding under this programme was approved and the loan agreement signed in the first half of 2019.

Window 4 Direct Lending to Municipalities

Reviewed tender documentation for the Zenica Hospital Project.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Window 1 - Policy Dialogue and ESCO development

Theme 1 ESCO Support

The activities are funded under REEP.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue

Implementation of the current assignments will continue in the next semester as per the respective Terms of Reference, including:

- Albania: EPBD hand-over workshop in H2'2019
- Albania: workshop to finalise draft amendments, final draft, and support through public consultation.
- Bosnia and Hercegovina: Finalisation of all assignments.
- North Macedonia: Following EE Law adoption, discussions with beneficiary on follow-up assistance for secondary regulations (focus on EPBD transposition).
- Kosovo BRS: draft BRS and workshop with beneficiary.
- Kosovo Article 7: EEO high-level design, review of alternative measures, and draft Notification.

- Montenegro: Support for NEEAP 2019-2021, as well as potential additional work on Ecodesign.
- Serbia EPBD: finalisation of NCM and draft regulatory amendments.
- Planning of local/regional awareness-raising event on the energy efficiency policy work.

Window 2 (part of the WB GEFF programme) – Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

In the next semester, EBRD will continue discussions with PFIs in Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia and Albania with the aim of signing the remaining EUR 31.5 million in financing by end of 2019.

The team will prepare new country-wide Marketing Strategies for Bosnia and Hercegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia. Direct communication and meetings with vendors will be planned across all markets, and the team will focus on populating Technology Selectors in Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo.

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

During the second half of 2019, EBRD will continue efforts to identify additional potential projects for financing and develop a pipeline of suitable projects.

Window 4 Direct Lending to Municipalities

- Tender for the Zenica Hospital Project is expected to be launched in H2 2019.
- EBRD has identified a project in Montenegro for which project appraisal is expected to advance in H2 2019.

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

One project will be verified with the incentive payment of EUR 380,000 payable in the first half of 2019. During the period, efforts will also be made to identify and approve to 1-2 additional projects to fully utilise the remaining EUR 24 million available under the WeBSEDF (EUR 15 million for ESCO projects and EUR 9 million for non-ESCO projects).

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference : | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2016/039-858 |
| Project title: | Regional Energy Efficiency Programme for the Western Balkans – REEP Plus |
| EU contribution: | EUR 30 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Contribution Arrangement with the WBIF Joint Fund |
| Contract reference: | CN 2017/383-636 |
| Duration of activities: | 21/06/2017 – 21/06/2021 |
| Links: | http://www.wb-reep.org ; https://ebrdgeff.com/ |
| Contact : | Anna SOLTYSIK, Anna.SOLTYSIK@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The REEP Plus programme builds on of the success of REEP in its aim to establish a sustainable market for energy efficient financing of private and public sector in the Western Balkans. REEP Plus will allow for the continuation of ongoing activities, scale up investments in sustainable energy opportunities, and expand the scope of support with focus on energy efficiency in buildings and the residential sector.

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2018)

Window 1 - Policy Dialogue and ESCO development

Theme 1 ESCO Support: The activities are funded under REEP.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue: Ten policy assignments have been under implementation in this reporting period. The call-off contracts of six assignments were extended, as a result of new tasks that had to be added to the existing scope of work.

Window 2 (part of the WB GEF programme) – Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

Three Loan Agreements with PFIs were signed in this period for a total of EUR 14 million, as follows:

- UniCredit Bank, Serbia – EUR 5 million (07 September 2018)
- Fondi Besa, Albania – EUR 3 million (12 September 2018)
- Union Bank, Albania – EUR 6 million (07 November 2018)

EBRD focused its efforts on supporting PFIs in sub-loan disbursement as well as verification of sub-projects this period, as eleven of the thirteen PFIs are now actively signing sub-loans for residential projects under the Facility. A well-attended launch event was organised in Belgrade (26 September) to mark the start of GEF activities in Serbia. Kick-off meetings were held with Union Bank Albania and UniCredit Bank Serbia in early July. The Facility was also promoted at several key events within the regions – for example the Green Festival in Prishtina (along with PFI TEB), the Climate Diplomacy Village in Belgrade, the Energy Expo & Forum 2018 in Tirana and the Third International Conference on Energetics in Skopje. Two information and vendor events were held with Sparkasse North Macedonia (Skopje and Strumica), two vendor workshops were held in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo and Banja Luka) and one in Kosovo (Peja). A significant amount of time was spent meeting with vendors and producers to develop the Technology Selectors. Finally, the GEF website for Albania was launched in October to promote the Facility and the two new PFIs.

Window 2 (KfW part of the REEP plus programme) – Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

Four Loan Agreements with PFIs were signed in this period for a total of EUR 51 million, as follows:

- Erste Bank, Serbia – EUR 15 million (21 December 2017)
- MFI Partner, Bosnia and Herzegovina– EUR 1 million (28 December 2017)
- Raiffeisen Leasing, Serbia– EUR 15 million (14 December 2018)
- UniCredit, Serbia– EUR 20 million (17 December 2018)

After informing the partner financing institutions in the region about the incentive scheme provided through the REEP plus program for EE loans to SME and municipalities, the demand for EE loans in combination with grants for end borrowers was exceeding the availability of grant funds available (5 million EUR) for loans provided by KfW. KfW therefore chose to limit the grant funds to beneficiaries to 10% of the investment (loan) amount. This allows for a larger number of investments and end beneficiaries to receive support by the program. The demand for EE loans being higher and not being able to complement these loans with grant funds under the REEP plus program, the German Government decided to make additional grant funds available to meet the immediate demand in the market. Therefore, KfW was able to sign one additional loan agreement in Serbia:

- Credit Agricole, Serbia– EUR 10 million (17 December 2018)

This loan Agreement is complemented by grant funds for end-borrowers (10% of investments) from the German budget under the same conditions as under the REEP plus program.

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

During the period, funding of up to EUR 50,000 was allocated to a TC project for the technical and environmental due diligence of a wind farm project in Kosovo. The project consultant has now begun work and is expected to complete the project assessment in Q1 2019. Note that this project is considered under the REEP Plus agreement due to its large investment size, which makes it ineligible under the earlier REEP.

Window 4 Direct Lending to Municipalities

Following signing of the Energy Efficient Refurbishment of Zenica Hospital as the first transaction under this Window in June 2018, the focus in this reporting period was on (i) ratification of the grant and loan agreements by respective government and parliamentary bodies, and (ii) preparation of tender documentation, which has been completed and is currently under review. Discussions on another project in Montenegro also commenced in H2 2018.

OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2018)

Window 1 - Policy Dialogue and ESCO development

Theme 1 ESCO Support: The activities are funded under REEP.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue: In this reporting period, the following deliverables were completed and submitted to the beneficiaries:

- Albania EPBD – activity database, cost-optimal analysis for residential buildings, EPC draft regulation.
- Albania EED – diagnostic review. Deliverables were presented at a workshop in Tirana on 20 November 2018.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina – Work Plan report and Policy Options Report were presented and discussed at a workshop with the beneficiary in Banja Luka on 13 December 2018 and activity database, construction database, updates to the energy calculation software required to support implementation of the EPBD. Deliverables were presented and discussed with the beneficiary on 12 December 2018.
- North Macedonia – Draft Energy Efficiency Law was published for public consultation; Additional deliverables included (i) Regulatory Impact Assessment; (ii) summary of comments received during the public consultation.
- Kosovo – Three regulations supported by REEP Plus were adopted in December 2018: (i) Regulation (MESP) no. 02/18 on national calculation methodology for integrated energy performance of buildings ([link](#)); (ii) Regulation MESP no.03/18 of the procedures on energy performance certification of building ([link](#)); (iii) Regulation MESP no. 04/18 for minimum requirements for the energy performance of buildings ([link](#)).
- Montenegro - the project delivered finalised space heater and water heater ecodesign rulebooks, conducted a market assessment of transformers, updated draft regulation on transformers, a RAC excel tool, and conducted a market inspection workshop.
- Serbia (EED) – Draft framework notification for Article 7, including derivation of Article 7 target for Serbia and summary of Serbia’s policy mix to achieve required savings.
- Serbia (EPBD) – Draft NCM, activity base, definition of reference buildings, compilation of EE measures and packages were delivered to the beneficiary. First round of feedback from Ministry and TWG has been received and is integrated in the subsequent draft reviews.
- A regional activity involving preparing policy guidelines for Energy Efficiency Obligation schemes was finalised. The policy guidelines were released in October 2018 and are a tool to distil international best-practice into a clear and consistent framework for designing and identifying suitable interventions to address barriers/gaps in EEO schemes (existing or planned).

Window 2 (part of the WB GEFF programme) – Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

The Facility now totals EUR 53.5 million in PFI loans to 13 PFIs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia and Albania. During H2 2018, the 11 active PFIs signed a

total of 663 sub-loans with a combined value of EUR 3.25 million. In addition, EUR 581,657 of incentives payments were disbursed to sub-borrowers with successfully verified sub-projects.

To date, a total of EUR 5.82 million has been signed in 1,100 sub-loans, and EUR 633,183 has been disbursed as incentives to sub-borrowers. As of end of December 2018 the total (equivalent) primary energy savings is 20,490 (MWh/y), with GHG emissions saving of 5,691 (tonnes/y).

Window 2 (KfW part of the REEP plus programme) – Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

Out of the loan agreements signed in an amount totaling 50 million EUR with 4 PFIs, the loan agreements signed in 2017 are completely disbursed to the PFIs. The bank in Serbia has disbursed 0,5 million EUR to end borrowers so far to various SME. The primary energy savings of these investments are calculated at over 550 MWh/a. CO₂ savings amount to 136 t/a.

The MFI in Bosnia and Herzegovina has disbursed over 0,1 million EUR to MSME which lead to primary energy savings of over 280 MWh/a. CO₂ savings amount to 900 t/a.

The banks which signed the loan agreements end of 2018 are in the process of building up a portfolio. All banks are or will be assisted by consultants which are financed out of German budget funds.

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

The wind-farm project in Kosovo supported with TC funding under this programme is still in the process of evaluation and structuring. The EBRD loan is likely to be extended in the first half of 2019.

Window 4 Direct Lending to Municipalities

Completed tender documentation for the Zenica Hospital Project.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Window 1 - Policy Dialogue and ESCO development

Theme 1 ESCO Support

The activities are funded under REEP.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue

Implementation of the current assignments will continue in the next semester as per the respective Terms of Reference, including:

- Albania: EPBD regulations to be finalised.
- Finalisation of EPBD support for Bosnia and Herzegovina, both in Federation and Republika Srpska.

- North Macedonia: Supplementary activities to facilitate the process of government adoption of the Energy Efficiency Law; discussions with beneficiary on follow-up activities for relevant secondary regulations.
- Kosovo: Implementation of EPBD regulations adopted in H2 2018. Potential activity related to recently adopted EE Law (related to Article 7 of EED).
- Montenegro: Support for NEEAP 2019-2021, as well as additional work on Ecodesign.
- Serbia EED: Final stage of activities related to EED Article 7 notification.
- Serbia EPBD: Delivery of cost-optimality analysis and draft regulatory amendments.
- The REEP Plus team, in discussion with beneficiaries, has developed a tentative list of policy assignments to be initiated in 2019. These will be kicked off, pending progress in adoption of REEP deliverables and status of the ongoing assignments.
- Planning of local/regional awareness-raising event on the energy efficiency policy work.

Window 2 (part of the WB GEFF programme) – Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

In the next semester, EBRD will continue discussions with PFIs in Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania with the aim of signing the remaining EUR 31.5 million in financing by end of 2019. A launch event for Albania is planned for March 2019, and the team will also prepare a country-wide Marketing Strategy and vendor events to help promote the Facility within the region. Training and development of marketing strategies will be prioritised for the new-to-join PFIs. Finally, the Technology Selectors for Albania is expected to launch in March 2019.

Window 2 (KfW part of the REEP plus programme) – Sustainable Energy Credit

For the banks who signed loan agreements end of 2018 KfW will tender the consultant services in the first quarter of 2019 to provide the banks with support in the implementation of the credit lines. A launch event for all banks who are participating in this programme in Serbia is planned for the first or second quarter 2019.

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

During the first half of 2019, it is expected that EBRD will extend its first loan to the wind-farm project and will continue efforts to identify additional potential projects for financing and develop a pipeline of suitable projects.

Window 4 Direct Lending to Municipalities

- Tender for the Zenica Hospital Project is expected to be launched in Q1 2019.
- EBRD will continue to market the products eligible to public authorities and to identify projects for funding under this window.

CHAPTER 5 : ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

5.1 ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME FOR ACCESSION (EPPA)

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Programme, IPA II 2017/039-874 |
| Project title: | <i>EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession (EPPA) in Western Balkans and Turkey</i> |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2.246.300 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Service contract |
| Contract reference: | No 22.020401/2018/794021/SER/ENV.F.2 |
| Duration of activities: | February 2019-February 2022 |
| Links: | https://eppanetwork.eu/ |
| Contact : | Madalina IVANICA, Madalina.IVANICA@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the programme is to strengthen the implementation of the EU environmental acquis in the Western Balkans and Turkey in areas relevant for addressing trans-boundary environmental issues. The purpose of the project is to assist the European Commission in providing the Secretariat of the EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession (EPPA).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The project kick-off meeting took place on February 14th, 2019 in Brussels. The technical work started on mid-April.

The beneficiaries have nominated the national focal points and the working group coordinators.

The 1st Steering Committee meeting took place on June 25th in Brussels.

Air Quality Working Group – An expert mission to Albania was organized to help the country estimate the air emission pollutants from the main sources in the sectors of energy, agriculture and waste. In addition, the same mission prepared and applied excel based calculation tools, including linkage to reporting tables, and corrected notation keys in reporting templates.

EU Strategies Working Sub-group - The project established cooperation protocols with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). In addition, the participation of two participants (one from Montenegro and one from Serbia) in the eighth annual forum of the EUSDR, June 27-28th, 2019, was financial supported.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

1. Established project governance (technical and administrative)
2. Establishment of the project's Steering Committee
3. Participation of Serbia and Montenegro in the EUSDR annual forum
4. Improved reporting and capacities for reporting of air quality data in Albania

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

1. National consultation on waste management and preparation of the follow-up reports of main waste management needs and priorities in each beneficiary.
2. Review of draft waste policy documents (strategies or action plans).
3. Organization of one regional workshop on the issue of managing marine litter, September 11-12th, 2019.
4. Organization of a regional workshop on the synergy in the implementation of MSFD and WFD, October 15-16th, 2019.
5. Organization of a national workshop on the implementation of Marine Strategy Framework Directive for Montenegro, December 5-6th, 2019.
6. Organization of one regional workshop on the issue of the ambient air quality directive, September 24-25th, 2019.
7. Organization of one regional workshop on the issue of Industrial Emissions Directive, November 19-20th, 2019.
8. Research for 4 studies on nature issues: green infrastructure, establishment of Marine Protected Areas in the Adriatic, illegal logging, and legal procedures in place for timber trade.
9. Organization of a regional conference on biodiversity, November 19th, 2019.
10. Compliance checking of draft legislation as requested by the beneficiaries and/or the European Commission: Serbian draft Law on water intended for human consumption, with the requirements of the Council Directive 98/83/EC, Directive 2003/40/EC and the Directive 2009/54/EC.
11. Involvement of CSOs in project events.

5.2 DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Programme, IPA II 2015/038-052 |
| Project title: | <i>Disaster Risk Assessment and Mapping</i> |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2 999 250 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Procurement |
| Contract reference: | ECHO SER/2016/740641 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/12/2016 - 01/12/2019 |
| Links: | http://www.ipadram.eu/ |
| Contact : | Biljana ZUBER, biljana.zuber@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The main objective of the action is to improve beneficiary countries' national systems for disaster loss data collection (DLD), risk assessment and mapping, and alignment with and integration into the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

ACTIVITIES (DECEMBER 2018 – JUNE 2019)

- Advisory missions and technical workshops on disaster loss data, risk assessments, Electronic Regional Risk Atlas and Disaster Information Management System (Desinventar) in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.
- Regional workshop on gender and disaster risk reduction in March in Stockholm, Sweden
- Regional workshop on sustainability in March in Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Exchange of Experts:
 - from Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia on disaster risk reduction platform and risk assessment, December 2018 to Savona, Italy;
 - from Bosnia and Herzegovina on adoption and implementation of the Desinventar platform, January 2019 to Savonna, Italy
 - from Serbia on training the trainers on Desinventar in March 2019, Savonna, Italy
- Participation at the meeting of the Directors General for civil protection of the Union for Mediterranean, organised by DG ECHO in Barcelona February 2019
- Regional workshop on the Electronic regional Risk Atlas in June in Rome, Italy
- 5th Steering Committee meeting in June in Rome, Italy.

OUTPUTS (DECEMBER 2018-JUNE 2019)

- Desinventar system is in place and has been updated to Desinventar Sendai in Albania, Kosovo and Serbia

- Technical guidelines for Disaster risk assessment have been developed for Turkey
- Re-evaluation of the national risk assessments in Albania and Kosovo was done.
- Improvements related to the harmonisation of disaster risk assessment methodologies in Bosnia and Hercegovina.
- Montenegro and Turkey have established a national working group to develop a roadmap for the national disaster risk assessment.
- Electronic Regional Risk Atlas (ERRA) was developed and is under optimisation.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Training of operators for using the Electronic Regional Risk Atlas (ERRA) in September/October 2019.
- Advisory missions for revision of Technical guidance and risk scenarios to Bosnia and Hercegovina, Turkey, North Macedonia and Montenegro.
- Regional seismic risk working group meeting in September 2019.
- Evaluation validation & learning workshop in November.
- 18th and 19th of November final conference in Brussels.
- 19th of November final steering committee meeting.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Programme, IPA II 2017/039-402 |
| Project title: | Western Balkans Disaster Risk Management Programme |
| EU contribution: | EUR 3 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Trust Fund |
| Contract reference: | IPA/2018/397-264 |
| Duration of activities: | 16/07/2018 – 31/12/2021 |
| Links: | https://understandrisk.org/event/urbalkans2018/ |
| Contact : | Mojca KRISPER FIGUEROA, Mojca.KRISPER-FIGUEROA@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The main objective of the Western Balkans Disaster Risk Management Program is to build the capacity of selected beneficiaries in the Western Balkans region. By improving disaster risk informed decision-making at regional level, strengthen national capacity for the prioritization of risk-informed investments, and improve regional and national capacity to conduct post-disaster needs assessments and formulate resilient recovery frameworks.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- In line, with the program's work plan, activities mainly focused on enhancing regional cooperation for understanding and sharing risk information.
- Establishing a regional data sharing framework has started.
- An initial survey of the river basins in the region, covering availability of data, current use being made of models for forecasting purposes, and needs for improvement and extending of model coverage, has been initiated.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- A data assessment activity has been proposed, for the selected transboundary river catchment(s). The rationale for selecting a river catchment relates to the demand from beneficiary countries to collaborate on early warning for weather related events.
- Selection criteria for transboundary river basins have been developed. There were eleven proposals from beneficiary countries on the selection of river catchments for the pilot phase, and a survey has been initiated on the relevant data issues, complemented by a more focused data assessment. The Vrbas river, Sava river and the Vardar river were selected.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Assessment of the availability of required data in selected river catchment(s) for setting up and operating a pilot operational flood forecasting system. This will include assessment of real-time meteorological and hydrological observations, historical precipitation and temperature observations, high resolution numerical weather prediction and quantitative precipitation estimation products, and satellite data including snow cover, snow water equivalent, soil moisture and soil temperature.
- Development of recommendations for improving data availability to address priority needs for achieving more reliable results from hydrological models.
- Drafting of a data policy agreement between all the program country participants addressing differences between the existing official data policies and the required additional data

CHAPTER 6: CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA

The overall objective of this support is to strengthen civil society organisations and their role in the political as well as the European integration process of the IPA beneficiaries. This should result in an improved dialogue on legislation and policies between governments and civil society as well as the strengthening of social partnerships underpinning reforms.

This support is mainly being delivered through the Civil Society Facility (CSF) and will ultimately result in a more civil society-friendly environment, a consolidation of the democratic process and good governance.

Media freedom and freedom of expression are also seen as important in this context. In 2014 DG Enlargement has developed two sets of guidelines aiming to support the civil society and media sectors in the region through an inclusive and participative approach with contributions from all relevant stakeholders, CSOs, journalists' and media professional organisations of the region.

"The Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries, 2014-2020" complemented by a result framework with clear objectives and indicators to be monitored in the years to come have been finalised and constituted a reference document for the MCSP 2014-2020.

The "Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries, 2014-2020" that are built on the policy vision as set out in the Conclusions of the Speak-up! Conferences were finalised in March 2014.

Link to the guidelines:

http://www.tacso.org/documents/otherdoc/?id=9887&template_id=73&langTag=en-US

Civil Society Facility

The CSF is a single facility for the benefit of the whole of the Western Balkan region and Turkey. It is a single programme but financed and implemented separately by the multi-beneficiary IPA programme and the various national IPA programmes.

The CSF consists of three strands of activities which aim at strengthening Western Balkan and Turkish civil society's commitment and involvement in the transformative process in view of their eventual integration into the EU:

- Support/technical assistance (TACSO) for local civic initiatives and capacity building, thereby enforcing the role of civil society at national level;
- Actions to build partnerships and develop networks between CSOs, businesses, trade unions and other beneficiary social partners and their counterparts in the EU to promote transfers of knowledge and experience. The main instruments

(implementation modalities) of the action at regional level are the Framework Partnerships Agreements (FPAs), functional to create long-term CSOs coalition building and re-granting schemes for smaller organization;

A "People 2 People" (P2P) programme to bring a variety of organisations in the ELARG region into contact with EU institutions and European-level counterparts. These include CSO representatives, human rights and minority defence activists, NGOs dealing with *acquis*-related subjects, journalists, young politicians and trade union leaders. TACSO has taken over the management of the third strand, the P2P programme applying a demand driven approach.

6.1 ACTION GRANTS

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Civil Society Facility and Media Programme, IPA 2016/038-960 and IPA 2017 / 038-961 |
| Project title: | Support to regional thematic networks of Civil Society Organisations – Long-term Grants |
| EU contribution: | EUR ca. 16 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | 17 Grants |
| Duration of activities: | January 2018 – December 2021 |
| Contacts: | Maria ESPOSITO maria.esposito@ec.europa.eu Jlenia DESTITO jlenia.destito@ec.europa.eu Kristina VUJIC kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu Victor DRAGUTAN victor.dragutan@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The 17 Long-term grants, involving 118 CSOs, were awarded after a Call for proposals launched under the Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2016-2017 to provide support to regional thematic networks of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), fostering regular networking at regional and EU level, facilitating the exchange of knowledge, skills and connections, and increasing and widening their impact in campaigning and advocacy.

The CSOs networks supported in this framework are active in a number of sectors identified as relevant for the region. The final aim is to strengthen their capacities to advocate and effectively dialogue with Governments in order to influence policy and decision making processes, and to produce lasting change in the society.

The European Union, Innovation & Media Partnerships for Action, Collaboration and Transformation in the Western Balkans - EU-IMPACT-WB (2017/394-404) During the reporting period, CREATE Foundation and its partners have made significant advances in the implementation of the EU-IMPACT-WB project. The focus of the consortium partners was a)

establishment of the Social Innovation Hubs across the region, b) production of the regional platform for social innovators and young entrepreneurs who possess business process outsourcing capabilities, c) production of the e-learning platform, d) GAP Assessment and capacity building for young social innovators and entrepreneurs, d) significant progress was made in development of the methodology for public advertisement and issuance of the business grants and e) a list of universities at regional and international level it is being produced contributing significantly in the content development of e-learning platform. Finally a comprehensive video was produced providing a snapshot information about the EU-IMPACT-WB project and its expected results. In following months, the project will focus on assisting the regional partners to establish the social innovation hubs while overcoming their challenges for premises to accommodate the hubs. The capacity building/training programme for young social innovators and entrepreneurs will be developed and initiated. A call for business support/grants will be advertised publically.

WeB4YES – Western Balkan Civil Society Organization for Youth Employment Support (2017/394-387). The Project addresses the challenges of insufficient cooperation among the civil society actors and public authorities in Western Balkan in policy processes regarding youth unemployment. Starting from January to July 2019 the following activities were implemented. The capacity building trainings for policy development and policy advocacy in the field of youth employment were organized for small scale CSOs dedicated to working with youth, and particularly targeting the problem of youth unemployment and entrepreneurship. Trainings were organized in Belgrade, Podgorica, Pristina, Sarajevo, Skopje and Tirana, including in total 90 participants/CSOs. Open Call for Sub-granting Scheme was announced with the aim to improve effectiveness of the CSOs in Western Balkans in undertaking initiatives for improving youth employment and entrepreneurship policies, and also to implement the youth employment supporting activities at the local level. Info sessions dedicated to the WeB4YES Open call were held in all Western Balkans counties and were attended by 217 CSO's representatives. Within an Open Call, 125 project proposals in total have been submitted from all parts of the Western Balkans, out of which the Interregional Commission selected [18 projects](#) for the financial support, based upon the predefined technical and program related criteria. Moreover, during the reporting period policy dialogue activities were continued, and advocacy campaigns at the national level, based on the developed policy recommendations, were built upon to include: improving legal framework for internships as well as career guidance system in Serbia; adopting Law on Youth that contains articles on youth employment in Albania; financing youth led entrepreneurship initiatives from the budget of local self-governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina; improving the conditions four youth led start-ups in North Macedonia; and improving the framework for active labor market measures and traineeships in Montenegro.

Regional Youth Compact for Europe (2018/395-387) The Project aims to empower CSOs, particularly youth organizations, in the Western Balkans and Turkey to effectively participate in policy design and monitoring EU integration process.

Starting from January to June 2019 through Project Management Team meeting the capacities of the RYCE network and BNLD (Balkan Network for Local Democracy) were strengthened. A base for future monitoring of government in introducing reforms and its cooperation with CSOs was constructed through the Comparative Study “Civil Society Involvement in Monitoring EU Accession and EU Integration Processes in the WB”. The 9 local multistakeholders platforms initiated a dialogue between local government, CSOs and youth. Through the Western Balkans Politeia School and the Workshop for Regional Youth Working Group 50 youths were empowered to monitor public policies on a local level and upgraded their knowledge of the EU integration process. Annual Conference and Regional Thematic Network Forum were the key events for networking and building synergies.

The Time is Now: Consolidating Regional Efforts for Advancing LGBTI Rights and Equality in the Western Balkans and Turkey 2017/394-394. The project aims to advocate and improve protection of human rights of LGBTI people by promoting and supporting a dynamic and influential LGBTI movement, playing an active role in public debates and that has capacities to influence policy and decision making processes. Within the reporting period ERA - a number of activities in the areas of advocacy, regional networking and capacity development were implemented. Two regional advocacy trainings for representatives of LGBTI organizations were held in Belgrade on financial management, internal governance and organizational development. A meeting of the Regional LGBTI Intergovernmental Platform was organised in Skopje, with over 100 participants. Partner organizations continued their work to raise awareness, provide direct support to members, and empower through consultation and community building. Mapping and recording of cases of violence and discrimination towards LGBTI people continued. In Serbia, due to the newly adopted Law on Free Legal Aid, activities are now focusing on legal affairs in the field of discrimination and of legal gender recognition. In June 2019, the Skopje Pride Weekend festival took place, which raised big interest, public debate, and attracted a very large audience. In the framework of the first Pride preparatory activities, the project was active in the process of drafting new amendments introducing legal gender recognition.

SIGN Up for Impact (2018/395-435). In the reporting period, SIGN Up for Impact partners made significant progress in the field of advocacy. Trag Foundation from Serbia started developing the *Manual for implementation of existing tax incentives for legal entities* together with the Tax Authorities, FIQ from Kosovo was intensively involved in the implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society 2019-2021 and is developing the new Draft Law on Philanthropy and fAKT from Montenegro has prepared the amendments to the Personal Income Tax Law and Corporate Income Tax Law that were planned to enter the parliamentary procedure in July 2019. Partners also

published their national Public Opinion Surveys on Philanthropy. The surveys served as a basis for a regional comparative analysis, and for training sessions on local resource mobilisation for the grass root organisations selected to participate in the Sustainability Academy program. In the reporting period, Trag and Mozaik held National Awards for Philanthropy and recorded a total of 220 media announcement dedicated to these events.

ENV.Net Factoring the Environmental Portfolio for Western Balkans and Turkey in the EU Policy Agenda (2017/394-372). The project is aimed at factoring the environmental portfolio for the Western Balkans and Turkey in the EU policy agenda. During the first half of 2019, the project focused its efforts on: a) Assessment of transposition and enforcement level of each national environmental legislation that fall under chapter 27 and partially under chapter 15; b) Supporting 19 local CSOs throughout the region via a sub-grant programme; c) Conducting various campaigns at local and national level regarding river pollution, climate change, circular economy, deforestation ect.; d) Producing monthly newsletters with updates on the most pressuring environmental issues in the region, and designing a series of infographics on the Circular Economy concept. For the second half of 2019, the focus will be on organising the 2nd regional conference on Circular Economy in Tirana, Albania, delivering E-Learning Courses through the ENV.Net platform and updating the monitoring matrix with recent findings from the environmental legislation realm.

GEAR – Green Economy for Advanced Region (2017/394-354). Implemented by FORS Montenegro, SMART Kolektiv, the Centre for Development and Support, EDEN Centre and Eko-Svest and the Association Slap, the project aims to increase the activities and impact of CSOs from the region on environmental protection. During the reporting period the main activities included capacity building of CSOs through training on *Participation in Decision Making* and *Monitoring of Public Policies*, a study visit to Croatia and to successful green enterprises, the finalisation of the Calls for proposals for local CSOs, and an awareness raising campaign including publications, media activities, round tables, etc. In the following period, the partners will work mainly on awarding and supervising the sub-grants, on continuing the capacity building programme and the awareness raising campaign with the aim to promote green economy and the role of civil society organisations.

NAGE – Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy (2018/395-379). NAGE is implemented by an alliance of six rural development networks from the Western Balkans and one from EU, all acting jointly through the Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN). The project aims to enhance the policy and decision-making impact of BRDN members in the agricultural and rural policy reform processes, by advocating for and advancing environmental protection and the green economy concept. During the reporting period, in order to strengthen the grassroots CSOs' capacities, two Training of Trainers (ToT) Toolkits were prepared and ToT sessions on *Advocacy, lobbying, networking* and *Green economy* were organized. The trained trainers distributed the gained knowledge to national grassroots CSOs through 6 national training sessions in the targeted IPA beneficiaries. Public

awareness green entrepreneurship caravans were organised, achieving major communication outreach through project promotional materials, as well as traditional and social media coverage. In the coming period, the project will continue to spread the acquired knowledge to national grassroots organisations through national training sessions on *Financial Management and Funding Diversification* and *Green Economy and Entrepreneurship* in each targeted IPA Beneficiary. The project will in addition develop a detailed programme methodology for sub-granting of green entrepreneurship projects, and announce the call for applications.

Empowering CSOs in Combatting Discrimination and Furthering Women’s Labour Rights (2018/394-402). Project partners, together with relevant institutions, publicly launched six country-specific research reports on gender-based discrimination and labour, and finalised a regional comparative report (available at <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GBD-Labour-WB.pdf>). Partners drafted a Regional Advocacy Strategy during their Strategic Planning Retreat. They met stakeholders to raise awareness, prepared policy papers and advocated for needed legal amendments. Legal aid was provided for women reporting gender-based discrimination at work. Using research findings, some partners co-organised demonstrations on Labour Day and Women’s Day. Upcoming activities: launch an open call and provide grants to CSOs who will partner in implementing research recommendations; organise an awareness campaign; and continue advocacy for report recommendations.

6.2 LONG- TERM GRANTS

Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas (2015/370-371). The project partners’ representatives participated in the event “The networX meeting”, organised by the Directorate General for Agriculture of the European Commission on 11 and 12 April 2019. The event brought together more than 400 stakeholders from all over Europe and was a great opportunity for representatives of these networks to present their work at the Ideas Marketplace, where the 41 booths showed the breadth of networking across the EU and with neighbouring countries. In September 2019, the 3rd Rural Policy Forum (RPF) will be organised by the project, in cooperation with the Visegrad International Fund. Themes of the RPF are: Economic activities of youth in rural areas; Role of CSOs in supporting youth in rural areas; What are the needs of youth from rural areas and how can community answer to the needs; Youth activism. More information about the project is available at <http://balkan-noborder.com/>.

Sustainable agriculture for sustainable Balkans: Strengthening advocacy capacities of CSOs and developing policies in the Western Balkans (2015/370-487). The project aims to strengthen capacities for sustainability, networking and advocacy of CSOs working on sustainable agriculture in the Western Balkans. During the period January – June 2019, monitoring of results achieved by the projects supported within our Grant & Training

Programme has been conducted, in an effort to learn what changes these projects produces at national and local level. At the same time, as part of the project Regional Working Platform, national and international experts, representatives of relevant ministries and CSOs from the region have been developing an analysis on the state and perspectives of biodiversity conservation in agricultural landscapes in the Western Balkans.

CO-SEED - Civil society acts for environmentally sound socio-economic development (2015/371-198). During the last two months of implementation, all project activities were concluded and reported on. Capacity building activities were completed together with beneficiary CSOs, with significant improvements on policy and advocacy achievements. Policy recommendations were submitted for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) regulations in each IPA beneficiary. The partnership has made continuous efforts to promote stakeholders' engagement in the revision of regulatory frameworks. Beneficiary CSOs completed their projects in line with the foreseen timeline, and contributed to the overall achievements of the CO-SEED project. Thanks to continuous engagement with media and to the two media workshops organised, considerable progress was observed in the quality and quantity of media coverage of EIA and SEA processes. The project activities ended in February and the narrative and financial reports were submitted to the European Commission. More information is available at <http://co-seed.eu>.

Smart Start - Sustaining civil society impact through social entrepreneurship and innovations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Turkey (2015/369-433). Smart Start has ended during the reporting period, namely on April 16, 2019. In the reporting period five final conferences were organised in Sarajevo, Podgorica, Belgrade, Istanbul and Skopje, where more than 380 participants presented and discussed the extraordinary success of this project (over 1000 hours of training provided, over 200 mentors deployed in the the Western Balkans and Turkey, 100 organizations participating in the program, 330.000 euros re-distributed to 60 CSOs and their social enterprises). All 50 grants given to social entrepreneurs and CSOs were successfully closed, while all supported organisations and enterprises continue working with strengthened capacities and with new partnerships established. The final evaluation of the Smart Start project was conducted by external experts, concluding that this project achieved and sometimes overachieved its expected results.

SOCIETIES - Support of CSOs in Empowering Technical skills, Inclusion of people with disabilities and EU standards in South East Europe (2015/370-229). In the reporting period, the project focussed on finalising activities according to the project timeframe. The organisation of the seventh training module, final monitoring visits together with the completion of sub-granted projects marked the first six months of 2019. Furthermore, the work of five Working groups materialised in the *Recommendations for improving the social*

inclusion of people with disabilities and persons with mental disorders. In the form of national Policy Papers, the recommendations were presented at National forums. The forums were organised with the aim of discussing the recommendations produced and presenting sub-grantees’ best practices to ensure social inclusion. The CSOs capacity-building programme had important outcomes in terms of establishing new project partnerships within the SOCIETIES network.

Social inclusion, Migration, Reconciliation

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2014 – 2015, Support to regional thematic networks of Civil Society Organisations |
| Project title: | Divided Past – Joint Future |
| EU contribution: | EUR 897.790,54 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement |
| Contract reference: | CN 2015/370-393 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2016 – 31/12/2019 |
| Links: | http://www.jointfuture.org |
| Contact : | Jugoslav Jevdic, jugoslav.jevdjic@okcbl.org |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action, is to get governments recognizing Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as an important societal factor with strong capacity to implement the peace building and reconciliation agenda in the Western Balkans and Turkey. This action aims specifically at strengthening CSOs regional cooperation and capacities.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

1. Three-day regional social innovation lab to test the manual “CSO cross-stakeholder approach in advocacy and non-formal education for peace dialogue and reconciliation in Western Balkans and Turkey”.
2. Five-day regional training for national trainers to promote cross-stakeholders’ approach in their domestic system.
3. Seven two-day domestic trainings on of the implementation of cross-stakeholders’ approach.

4. The finalisation of the nineteen projects supported by the sub-granting scheme in the IPA beneficiaries, as well as the regular monitoring of corresponding activities.
5. The opening of the second Call for proposals, the selection and the start of the 13 projects within the sub-granting scheme in the IPA beneficiaries.
6. Seven national advocacy campaigns in targeted countries.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Successful test of the Manual for cross-stakeholders' approach; additional upgrades were made to the Manual on basis of the inputs identified during the RSIL.

Fourteen participants (2 per IPA beneficiary) trained for planning and implementation of the national trainings on the cross-stakeholders' approach in their countries.

- National training courses on the cross-stakeholders' approach to build capacities of the representatives of different sectors on cross-stakeholders' approach in peacebuilding.
- Following the 2nd Call for proposals, 13 projects were selected out of 24 project proposals. Their respective implementation has started as of 1 June 2019. Out of the previous Call, 17 projects are successfully completed, 2 are still on-going.
- A larger public in IPA beneficiaries are informed on the project, its activities and its results, including the importance of peace building process for stability and prosperity.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- The regular monitoring and finalisation of the implementation of thirteen selected projects in 2019 within the 2nd Call for Proposals.
- The selection and starting of the job shadowing projects in area of the peace building.
- The preparation and implementation of the consultative meetings with business sector in the IPA beneficiaries.
- The preparation and implementation of the seven national advocacy campaigns in the IPA beneficiaries.
- The preparation and implementation of the 2-days Final Conference.

6.3. REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS (RELOAD)

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Civil Society Facility and Media Programme IPA 2016/038-960 |
| Project title: | Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans - ReLOaD |
| EU contribution: | EUR 8.5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement (for pillar assessed organisations) with UNDP |
| Contract reference: | 2016/382-867 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/02/2017 – 31/01/2020 |
| Links: | http://www.ba.undp.org/content/bosnia_and_herzegovina/en/home/operations/projects/poverty_reduction/regional-programme-on-local-democracy-in-the-western-balkans--re.html |
| Contact: | Maria ESPOSITO, maria.esposito@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

ReLOaD aims to strengthen partnerships between local governments (LGs) and civil society (CS) by scaling-up a successful model of transparent and project-based funding of CSOs. The Western Balkans, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, invest significant efforts to mainstream the EU accession agenda within their socio-political contexts. Supporting these efforts, ReLOaD will expand LG/CS relations facilitating dialogue among them, and improve quality of CSOs' services by focusing on needs of 50 LGs, and supporting implementation of 200 CSOs' projects for the benefit of 38,000 people.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Activities carried out during the reporting period were:

- Awareness raising and familiarisation of partner LGs with the *Methodology for CSO funds disbursement* continued, and accompanying tools leading to preparation of adoption of new regulatory framework at local level were prepared and shared. The ReLOaD model was further showcased through the organisation of public calls for CSOs in all six Western Balkans IPA beneficiaries;
- The last analysis of existing funding practices related to CSO funding was performed in the Municipality of Kuršumlija (total 53 analyses performed in partner local

communities). Training for municipal staff in Kuršumlija was also provided and completed.

- A second round of calls for CSOs was initiated in partner municipalities and cities with new measures introduced (increase of public calls length from 4-6 weeks, increase of duration of PCM training, joint mentoring sessions for CSOs and detailed feedback to unsuccessful CSOs).
 - 41 Public calls for CSOs executed
 - Priority areas for the public calls jointly defined by CSOs and citizens in each locality
 - PCM training and three mentoring sessions held as part of each public call for CSOs
 - 141 CSO projects selected within the reporting period responding to the needs of local population in partner municipalities (Total number of CSO projects since the start of the Action - 260)
 - In total - 30,000 citizens benefiting from the awarded grassroots CSO projects.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina specific activities (6.1) – Pilots for citizens' forums were designed and implemented with the purpose of increasing civic participation and community engagement. Five forums were established and forum meetings in local communities were held to define priorities for community engagement and volunteer actions.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina specific activity (6.1) – ReLOaD initiated the preparation of Hackathon, an event that promotes collaboration of a tech community and key stakeholders in local communities around the issue of citizens' participation at local level. The aim is to develop prototype(s) of technology solution(s) related to strengthening local democracy and citizens' participation in decision-making processes in local communities.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Partner local governments learnt in practice how to set up and maintain transparent processes for public calls to award CSOs, and prepared individual calls for CSOs using the Methodology
- Grassroot CSOs increased their knowledge in project cycle management to better respond to requirements of public calls for CSOs
- Partner municipalities increased transparency and accountability and improved relationship with civil society
- CSO projects addressing needs of local population were supported, and provided direct services to the citizens in partner municipalities

- Pilots were launched for citizen forums for improved civic participation in local communities, and for forward-looking IT solutions (hackaton) related to improvement of civic engagement and local decision making

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Execution of a second round of public calls for CSOs in partner municipalities including training and mentoring for CSOs
- Continuation of awareness-raising and familiarisation of LGs leadership and staff as well as of CSOs on the *Methodology for CSO Fund Disbursement* and its benefits – institutionalisation of the Methodology in partner municipalities and cities
- Setting up of a financing mechanism in line with national legislations (i.e. specific municipal budget lines) to fund CSO activities within each participating municipality
- Implementation of CSO projects in targeted localities
- Monitoring of CSO projects in targeted localities and constant on the job support to CSOs to improve their project implementation capacities
- Facilitation of knowledge-sharing, advocacy and communication and cross-country thematic networking via knowledge platform
- Organisation of a regional conference with the purpose of exchanging practices, experiences and lessons learned from the region and the EU. Partner local governments, ministries in charge of civil society and other key stakeholders will take part in the conference, which will focus on enhancing transparency and accountability.

6.4. MEDIA

Building Trust in Media in South East Europe and Turkey

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | The Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the years 2014-2015, allocation 2014 (2014/ 031-605) |
| Project title: | Building Trust in Media in South East Europe and Turkey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 1,5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | PAGODA with UNESCO |
| Contract reference: | 2015/367802 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2016 – 31/05/2019 |
| Contact : | Victor DRAGUTAN, Victor.DRAGUTAN@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The project Building Trust in Media in South East Europe and Turkey aimed to strengthen freedom of expression, access to information, and free, independent and pluralistic media in South East Europe and Turkey. The activities focused on strengthening media self-regulation in the region, on increasing media good governance and on developing Media and Information Literacy (MIL). The implementation started in January 2016.

ACTIVITIES

Activities aimed to strengthen media self-regulation, to increase media good governance and Media Information Literacy (MIL) are under way in all countries covered by the project (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Kosovo). The following key activities took place between January and May 2019:

- Representatives of all press and media councils of the target countries took part in a Regional Master Class in Belgrade from 8 to 10 February 2019. The meeting focused on the relation and intersection of self-regulation and law and welcomed 12 prosecutors and judges from the Council of Europe's JUFREX project.
- Press and media councils from the region organized various capacity-building activities and awareness-raising activities as defined in their work plan. Among others, exchange visits, training seminars for staff and a conference in Istanbul on 7 March 2019, which gathered more than 80 participants on the new digital ethical challenges for journalism in Turkey.
- A LAREG + Training of Trainers on journalists labour rights in Kosovo with the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) on 2,3 April 2019.
- In-house seminars on media good governance, in Turkey notably together with the Ethical Journalism network and a regional conference on media good governance and ethical audits was in Belgrade, Serbia on 22 March 2019.
- 3 MIL adaptation workshops for teachers in Kosovo in March and May 2019 and piloting of an adapted MIL curriculum in one primary school in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Continuation of the MilClicks online campaign.

OUTPUTS

- Increased visibility and capacity of press councils in SEE and increased connections between representatives of press councils from the whole region through participation in international and regional events.
- Publication of a report on best practices for media self-regulation in the digital age.
- The First Charter of Journalists Labour Rights officially launched at a press conference on 12 February 2019 at the UNS Press Center in Belgrade.

- Around 30 media outlets joining a regional coalition of media outlets agreeing to the idea of media Ethical Audits and increased transparency in media. The coalition officially launched in Belgrade on 22 March 2019 as the “Balkan Network of Trusted Media”.
- Strengthened social media strategy and educational content disseminated on MIL to build trust in media.
- Increased engagement of stakeholders on MIL. For instance, a workshop organized in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) in May 2019 to push the MIL agenda forward and attended by the Deputy-Minister of Education, Science and Technology, the Chairman of the Media Parliamentary Commission, the Independent Commission of Media, both private and public universities and other stakeholders. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, in January 2019, signing of a Declaration of Importance of MIL by more than 45 local stakeholders. In Serbia, an Intergovernmental Working Group (IGW) on MIL coordinated by Ministry of Culture and Information established.
- Visibility brochures and materials produced and disseminated about the overall impact of the Project.

Technical Assistance to Public Service Media in the Western Balkans

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2016-2017 |
| Project title: | Technical Assistance to Public Service Media in the Western Balkans |
| EU contribution: | EUR 1.5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Service Contract with IFJ |
| Contract reference: | EuropeAid/135382/DH/SER/MULTI |
| Duration of activities: | 01/02/2018 – 31/07/2020 |
| Contact : | Victor DRAGUTAN, Victor.DRAGUTAN@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The project aims to contribute to the reform and professional development of Public Service Media (PSM) in the Western Balkans to produce increasingly pluralistic, independent and accountable content. Key components are: introducing the European model of PSM funding and governance, assistance in building broadcasters’ internal capacities and support for content development.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Organized five round table discussions on the report “Financing of Public Service Media in the Western Balkans”.
- Study visits were organised to ORF, Austria and RTV Slovenia for 36 delegates.
- Two regional workshops on codes of conduct, ethical guidelines and complaints mechanism were held.
- Five national workshops were held to provide coaching in developing and implementing national editorial guidelines
- Three national workshops on newsroom integration were carried out.
- Three action plans on newsroom integration and multi-platform production and distribution were drawn up and agreed.
- Visits to six broadcasters were organised to develop management reforms needs assessments.
- Five webinars and 25 half-day meetings were organised for coaching for investigative journalists in research, preparation and production.
- Three national workshops on preparing and producing pilot formats for children’s and youth programmes were carried out.
- Coaching in establishing regional archive platforms carried out with five broadcasters
- Organised a regional workshop for journalists working on children’s and youth programmes was organised.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

- Updated regional report “Financing of Public Service Media in the Western Balkans” presented at 5 national round-table discussions and regional PSM Funding Conference to 53 delegates from six countries.
- Project stakeholders from six countries have endorsed and agreed on Common Funding Principles for the Western Balkans paper providing pathway to develop new funding models.
- Management reforms needs assessments have been produced and approved for six public broadcasters.
- More than 290 public media stakeholders engaged in debates and activities to develop steps for strengthening independence of PSM through reformed financing models and improved governance structures.
- More than 90 media professionals from 6 national public broadcasters got involved in developing pilot formats for investigative, children’s and youth programmes and in producing trailers and programmes.
- Nine investigative stories aired on 3 PSM. Eight further stories in production.

- 25 journalists coached in preparing and producing pilot formats for children’s and youth programmes and identified 36 trailers to be produced across six PSMs.
- 151 hours of content prepared for regional platform for exchange of digitised archive material.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- National PSM debate on funding modalities and a round-table on governance and regulation to be organised in North Macedonia.
- Practical guidelines for the implementation of the common PSM funding principles will be developed.
- Regional meeting on funding to be organised for 40 stakeholders from 6 countries.
- Six national coaching workshops on developing and implementing a complaints mechanism will be organised in six countries.
- Three national workshops on creating integrated newsrooms will be held.
- Three national action plans for integrated newsrooms will be developed and agreed.
- Visits to three national broadcasters to present road map for management reforms will be carried out and coaching will be provided.
- Six half-day meetings and two webinar coaching sessions in investigative journalism will be organised. Three two-day national workshops will be organised for coaching in preparing and producing children and youth programme pilot formats.
- Online coaching sessions will be held to progress development of establishing regional platform for regional archive exchange platform.

The project is run by a consortium led by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) together with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), the Eurovision News Exchange for South East Europe (ERNO) and the Austrian Public Broadcaster (ORF).

Support to independent media and civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2016-2017 |
| Project title: | Support to independent media and civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 6 000 000 (95%) |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant contract with the European Endowment for Democracy |
| Contract reference: | 2017/394-375 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2021 |

Links:

<https://www.democracyendowment.eu>

Contact :

Victor DRAGUTAN, Victor.DRAGUTAN@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose of the action is to enable a continued pluralistic, independent civil society and media environment, as well as high quality journalism in the Western Balkan countries and Turkey. It will be achieved through flexible re-granting that fills the gap not covered by available EU and other donor funding - in terms of actors (individuals, start-ups, etc), type of support (core, emergency) or themes (not covered by current programmes).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Online EED grant giving facility available to the applicants from the Western Balkans improved: <https://www.democracyendowment.eu/support/>
- Organised outreach missions to Western Balkans countries and Turkey;
- Established pool of regional/field experts and country consultants for Western Balkans: 8 Programme Country Consultants for Western Balkans and Turkey and 1 Grants Country Consultant for Turkey provided support to potential applicants and grantees;
- Continuous assessment of received applications, contracting, review of reports and monitoring;
- Ongoing management of 70 grants awarded since the beginning of the grant (Turkey – 31, Serbia – 10, Bosnia and Herzegovina 7, North Macedonia – 6, Montenegro – 6, Kosovo – 5, Albania – 4, Western Balkans Region - 1);
- Continuous hands-on coaching and mentoring provided to applicants and grantees;
- Promotion, networking and coordination with donors and stakeholders in the region and international level.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Potential applicants in all Western Balkan countries and Turkey are well informed about EED funding opportunities;
- 318 applications from Western Balkans and Turkey received since the beginning of the project (177 in 2019);
- 70 grant contracts were awarded from EC grant with total 5,4 million euro allocated (approx. 2,7 million in Western Balkans and 2,7 million in Turkey);
- The awarded initiatives focus on the following main areas:

- Support to independent media and innovative media products that promote high ethical standards and quality journalism thus supporting critical thinking;
- Empowerment of independent media outlets (including up-to-date technologies, new ways of reaching audiences and generating income, etc.), as a key to safeguarding media freedom in the region;
- Support to journalist associations in promotion of safety of journalists;
- Support to democratic initiatives that return to the core of citizens' activism, approaching issues in innovative, thematic, inter-sectoral and multi-disciplinary ways;
- Grass-roots initiatives and voluntarism; and
- Emergency and bridge funding to rights-based civil society actors in crisis due their political environment.
- Coordination with EU Delegations, EC services and other donors and stakeholders in the beneficiary countries maintained.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Ongoing grant portfolio management (assessment of received applications, contracting, review of reports, monitoring);
- Providing coaching, mentoring and technical assistance to applicants and grantees;
- Targeted outreach activities to inform potential new applicants about EED grant-giving scheme (missions, participation at events);
- Networking and coordination with donors and stakeholders in the region and international level;
- Supporting grantees in networking at country, regional and EU level.
- Organising Strategic Reflection Meeting for Turkey and Western Balkans

Balkan Transitional Justice Initiative

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | EuropeAid/154870/DH/ACT/Multi |
| Project title: | Balkan Transitional Justice Initiative |
| EU contribution: | EUR 883,810 |
| Beneficiary region: | Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia |
| Type of contract: | Grant contract with BIRN |
| Contract reference: | 2017/393-744 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2020 |
| Links: | www.balkaninsight.com/balkan-transitional-justice-home |

Contact :Victor DRAGUTAN, Victor.dragutan@ec.europa.eu**PURPOSE**

The overall objective of the project is to increase public knowledge and awareness about transitional justice processes and their impact on reconciliation and intercultural dialogue in post-conflict societies such as Western Balkan countries. It also aims to engage civil society actors and journalists in the promotion of more effective transitional justice strategies.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) regional team of journalists extensively covered ongoing war crime trials before both national courts and remaining trials before the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, being the only media in the region that monitors and reports from trials on regular basis. Besides war crimes trials, BIRN journalists also reported about other important transitional justice topics in the region – including developments around Kosovo Specialist Chambers, politics of memory, reparations and legal reform.
- BIRN Bosnia and Herzegovina produced episodes of TV Justice, a monthly 30-minute programme about key transitional justice issues in the country.
- BIRN published stories written by journalists from the Western Balkans who received grants to produce in-depth stories on transitional justice issues in the region.
- Impunity Watch worked on writing and editing of the report about gender policies in the Western Balkans and desk research for the second report about prevention and transitional justice.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- BIRN team produced [346 articles in English language](#) and all of them were translated to BCHS, Albanian and North Macedonian languages. BIRN also had a [live blog](#) while the UN court in The Hague delivered its final verdict in the Radovan Karadzic case. BIRN reporting was extensively quoted in national and international media – from local BLIC, to regional N1 and international New York Times. Prior to the verdict, BIRN has compiled all its reports on the Karadzic case into a downloadable [e-book](#). The total number of international, regional and local republications was over 2000. All articles were extensively shared on BTJ [Twitter](#) and Facebook pages on [BCMS](#), [North Macedonian](#), [Albanian](#) and [English](#).
- Two TV Justice episodes were produced and published on both English and BCMS by BIRN Bosnia and Herzegovina. TV Justice was aired by two public broadcasters,

Federalna TV and BHT 1 and ten local stations. Published are: [Opsada Sarajeva – organizovana kampanja bez direktnih počinilaca](#); [How Perpetrators of Deadly Attacks Remain Unprosecuted](#); [Odjeci ratnih zločina pri formiranju rezervnog sastava policije](#) and [Bosnian Serb Plan for New Police Force Revives Wartime Fears](#).

- BIRN team published two out of 10 stories written by local journalists from other media outlets who received grants to produce one in-depth story on transitional justice issues in the region. Both stories were originally published in English and then translated to BCMS, Albanian and North Macedonian languages. The stories are: [‘White Armband Day’ Highlights Bosnia’s Post-War Divisions](#) written by Katarina Panic and [Abandoned by the State: Bosnia’s Wartime Torture Victims](#) written by Mirsad Bajtarevic.
- BIRN team updated [Last Despatches](#) series about journalists killed during the 1990s with five new profiles.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- BIRN will continue to report on war crime trials and transitional justice topics.
- War Crime Verdicts Map will be updated, upgraded, published and promoted.
- BIRN will publish remaining 8 out of 10 grantees’ stories.
- BIRN team will organise the Regional training for journalists and study trip to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals and Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor Office for Kosovo in The Hague.
- Policy paper on gender and transitional justice, written by Impunity Watch, will be finalised, published and promoted. Research for the second policy paper on prevention and transitional justice will also be conducted.
- BIRN will publish the second multimedia investigation.

Strengthening Quality News and Independent Journalism in the Western Balkans and Turkey

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | EuropeAid/160680/DH/ACT/Multi |
| Project title: | Strengthening Quality News and Independent Journalism in the Western Balkans and Turkey |
| EU contribution: | EUR 1,998,126.00 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant contract |
| Contract reference: | CN IPA 2018/403-819 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2021 |
| Links: | www.euwbmedia.com |
| Contact : | Victor DRAGUTAN, Victor.dragutan@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

BIRN HUB and its partners are implementing project aiming to contribute to the promotion of free and professional media and providing structural support to media freedom and integrity by enhancing media trust among citizens and creating a safe environment for journalists to produce independent news content through trainings, mentoring, technical and financial support, publishing and recognizing best examples of quality journalism.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- A series of structured interviews, extensive desk research and assessment were conducted to map existing training programs aimed for investigative journalists and their needs in the region. The aim was to identify all existing training courses and their impact in the Western Balkans region in order to provide a baseline for a new regional training for investigative journalism. In addition, the assessment was needed to determine missing areas that needs to be covered but also to provide new tools and skills to journalists that are tailor made and specific for the region.
- The EU Award scheme for investigative journalism for best investigative stories for 2018 was published. The call for application and the guidelines were developed for the applicants as well as for the jury. The call was published in 7 languages for each country, after which the applications will be shortlisted by consortium partners and sent to independent jury members for evaluation.
- Two trainings of trainers were organized in Serbia and Albania with twofold aim: trainings are aimed at strengthening the capacity of journalists to act as professional trainers and implement their own workshops for younger colleagues and secondly to enhance their editorial standards focusing on quality news and investigative journalism. Through these trainings' journalist were focused on developing teaching methodology in terms of curricula design, delivering the course and measuring the effectiveness and the impact of the training.
- Journalists from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo Montenegro received mentoring and financial support to produce stories related to environment, education, social welfare and maternity benefits. They also had field trip to Denmark and Finland to research on good practices and how those examples could be transferred to Western Balkans countries.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- A curriculum for regional training on investigative journalism was developed by CEU. The course focuses on providing skills on the latest investigative reporting techniques, research methods, conducting and presenting region-specific cross-border investigations with focus on integrating technology/multimedia approach for investigative research, documentation, internal organization, (multimedia) storytelling and data visualization.
- A total of 23 senior editors and journalists from Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania have been introduced to the training methodology. Their understanding on designing and presentation of the training curriculum has been improved. They possess skills to develop their own methodology and curricula and organize their own trainings.
- A total of eight stories were published – six were aired on Bosnian public broadcaster BHT1 and two on Serbian public broadcaster RTS. The stories focused on [reproduction rights and fertility challenges](#), environment and [air pollution](#) and workers' rights. The stories initiated public discussion about reproductive rights in Serbia and possible legislative changes.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- EU Awards for Investigative Journalism for 2018 to be held in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey in August, September and October.
- Three trainings of trainers were planned for senior journalists. First module training for journalists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, and two second module trainings for journalists from Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania.
- One offline regional training on investigative journalism to be held.
- Curriculum development for the national trainings to be developed.
- Ten more stories to be published by the public broadcasters in the region.
- Call for cross-border investigative stories to be launched.

Media for Citizens - Citizens for Media; Building capacities of CSOs to advance Media and Information Literacy in Western Balkans

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2016-2017 |
| Project title: | Media for Citizens - Citizens for Media; Building capacities of CSOs to advance Media and Information Literacy in Western Balkans |

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|--------------------------------|---|
| EU contribution: | EUR 955,362 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant contract |
| Contract reference: | 2017/394-130 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/02/2018 – 01/02/2021 |
| Links: | http://seenpm.org/category/mccm/ |
| Contact : | Victor DRAGUTAN, Victor.DRAGUTAN@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

Seven media development organizations in the Western Balkans have joined forces to build capacities of CSOs to advance media and information literacy (MIL) in the region through research based advocacy and networking, capacity building actions, public campaigns and supporting CSOs in taking active role in developing and promoting MIL policies and practices in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

Research and informed advocacy; 6 research publications explaining the current state of MIL policies and practices in each country and elaborating in more detail different aspects of MIL development, depending on the priorities in each country (Media and Information Literacy in the Western Balkans: Unrealized Emancipatory Potential; The Role of Public Institutions in Media and Information Literacy Development in Albania; Media and Information Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Numerous Civil Society Initiatives and Lack of Public Policies; Experiences and perspectives of media and information literacy in the educational system of Montenegro; Strengthening the role of the North Macedonian public service broadcaster MRT in promoting media literacy: Experiences and new opportunities in implementing media and information literacy in primary and secondary schools in Serbia) published, distributed and promoted in five beneficiary countries, reaching thousands.

Facilitating national multi stakeholder coalitions; project partners are supporting the work of inter-disciplinary national MIL coalitions with over 80 members in five countries in pursue of country specific MIL advancements mainly in domain of sustainable changes of education systems. National advocacy campaigns are implemented in all countries featuring meetings with stakeholders, policy research and development, media campaigns.

Capacity building and networking for CSOs at regional and local level; Trainings on media and information literacy for grassroot CSOs are held in 4 countries engaging 55 local civil society organisations active in the field of media and education development. Trainings are delivered relying on a regional pool of experts build through project capacity building

component. Set of learning resources developed and promoted to enable knowledge transfer and MIL promotion among grassroots CSOs.

First cycle of sub-granting scheme administered on regional level; 150 applications received, assessed by five national election committees. 20 MIL initiatives proposed and developed by grassroots CSOs launched in five countries. 5 info sessions on MIL sub-granting scheme held across the region.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

Distribution and promotion of research findings on MIL policies and practices in each beneficiary country enabled increase in knowledge among stakeholders about different aspects of MIL development, enabling informed advocacy and better coordination and synergies with other actions in MIL domain.

The joint work of state institutions, CSOs, public and private media, library and academia representatives continue to enable understanding of the media and information literacy concept, harmonisation of objectives and activities of ongoing initiatives and determination of country level priorities in terms of MIL policy development. Resulting national MIL advocacy campaigns, Declaration of Media and Information Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina was signed by 41 representatives of media and education institutions, academia and CSOs defining strategic goals in MIL domain. In North Macedonia the Government expressed interest to put the main focus on introduction of MIL in the education system. In Montenegro, mutual understanding that media literacy could be introduced as a cross-curricular topic in a number of different subjects was agreed upon among national MIL coalition members, with support expressed by the state level Bureau for Education.

Capacities of 55 locally based CSOs across the region have been raised to enable understanding of MIL, media freedom and media integrity. Trainings have provided them with knowledge on media and information literacy and have provided opportunity to think about all the ways the groups they serve can benefit from increased media literacy skills and how they can help them in that process.

150 grassroots CSOs engaged in designing projects in domain of MIL in response to sub-granting scheme, demonstrating raising interest and capacities of civil society to engage in MIL promotion and enhancement. 20 projects were selected for funding and launched, beginning their implementation in the field of MIL resource development to be used by pre-school teachers, youth, students and elderly population; fake news and disinformation recognizing and debunking, inciting critical analysis of media content among young people, promoting ethical principles in journalism, production and distribution of educative video MIL content targeting youth, promoting gender literacy in media, developing software

solutions to help users distinguish between accurate and fake information, enhancing visual literacy, etc.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Activities to continue the support of national stakeholder groups/coalitions pursuing the identified MIL policy priorities, implementing advocacy campaigns and improving MIL related practices in relevant fields, primarily in media and education.
- Implementing public campaign based on participation of media and education workers to increase understanding of citizens about the media and information literacy and its’ importance for safeguarding media freedom and freedom of expression.
- Supporting engagement of media community in teaching MIL in schools across the region – 100 events in 5 countries
- Continue with capacity building of local CSOs in promoting MIL – 10 educative events in the region
- Launching and administering second call for applications under the sub-granting scheme
- Development and distribution of learning resources on MIL

JUFREX - Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2014-2015, allocation 2015 (2015/037-653) |
| Project title: | JUFREX - Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2,500,000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | PAGODA with CoE |
| Contract reference: | CN 2016/372-924 |
| Duration of activities: | 20/04/2016 – 31/05/2019 |
| Links: | https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/promoting-freedom-of-expression-in-south-east-europe |
| Contact : | Victor DRAGUTANAscitti, Victor.dragutan@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The objective of the programme is to promote freedom of expression and freedom of the media in line with CoE standards, with a specific focus on the Judiciary. The programme comprises one major component, namely the judiciary, and two additional components (media regulatory authorities and media actors) relating to the interconnected segments, which are of significant importance for freedom of expression and exercise of human rights, in line with European standards. The programme is implemented through activities both at regional and national level in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Component 1 – Legal professionals: The sixth and last regional conference of certified trainers, including judges, lawyers and prosecutors was organised in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 4-5 April 2019 and it included a Moot Court exercise. The conference represented also the closing event of the programme and gathered representatives of the other two components, who shared their experience and results achieved in the course of the last three years. The closing Steering Committee was held back-to-back with the event and provided feedback for the way forward. During the semester, also a study visit for lawyers from all countries to the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe took place in April 2019; a publication “Protecting the right to freedom of expression under the European convention on human rights” has been published in Montenegrin as well as some selected ECHR judgements. All 14 grant agreements with Academies of Judges and Prosecutors and Bar Associations in all countries have been concluded and reported upon, both financially and narratively. Each partners conducted a final survey among participants to assess the progress made so far.

Component 2 – Regulatory Authorities: The regional publication on “[Media regulatory authorities and protection of minors](#)” has been finalised and published as well as translated and distributed in all local languages. It has also been presented to the EPRA meeting together with the publication “Comparative Study on Media literacy” requested by the Serbia regulator. At national level, expertise has been provided on several occasions to the respective agencies upon request, such as the legal expertise provided to the Albanian Media Authority on the new “anti-defamation” package and the impact on their competences or the Media Literacy Policy Paper requested by the North Macedonian Media Regulatory Agency.

Component 3 – Media actors: All 9 grant agreements with Press Councils, Associations of Journalists and other Media NGOs have been concluded and reported upon financially and narratively, including carrying out a final survey to assess the final results. Some publications on media freedom were translated on local languages and disseminated. The “Lexicon of

Judiciary and Media Terms” has been developed and published in Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia following the pilot example of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Component 1 – Legal professionals: All National Training Institutions have integrated the training curriculum on freedom of expression developed under JUFREX in their regular training programme also for the years to come, which ensures the sustainability of the results. A number of judgements from domestic courts have been delivered on freedom of expression issues, where the reference to the European Court of Human Rights case law has been made explicit as well as the adoption of its reasoning, including the three – step test, etc. All partners carried out successfully the grant agreements and reported enthusiastic feedback on results achieved and change in the mind-set of the judiciary on freedom of expression matter, which materialised in several court decisions.

Component 2 – Regulatory Authorities: The regional activities steered the direction for the national ones, focusing on improvement of capacities and efficiency of regulatory authorities in the region on topic such as hate speech, protection of minors, media literacy, co-regulation, etc. This effort led to the reinforcement of Media regulatory authority's staff through understanding of specific and/or technical topics relevant for their work, in line with European standards. The regional publications produced have had positive feedback in the media environment.

Component 3 – Media actors: The inter-professional seminars have resulted in the establishment of a stronger dialogue between different professional categories (magistrates, journalists and employees of the regulators) traditionally characterised by a certain animosity.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The programme ended in May 2019 and its follow-up started under the framework of the Horizontal Facility II on 24 May 2019.

6.5 ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES AND TURKEY

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Project title: | Ending violence against women in the Western Balkan Countries and Turkey: Implementing Norms, Changing Minds |
| EU contribution: | EUR 5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Type of contract: | Grant Agreement (for pillar assessed organisations) with UN Women |
| Contract reference: | 2017/380-469 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/02/2017 – 31/01/2020 |
| Links: | http://eca.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/regional-programme-in-the-western-balkans-and-turkey |

PURPOSE

The three-year programme ‘Implementing Norms, Changing Minds’ aims to end gender-based discrimination and violence against women in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Turkey, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged groups of women. To achieve this goal, the programme strengthens civil society (women’s rights organisations in particular) to advocate for an enabling and effective implementation of normative frameworks; to transform gender-discriminatory stereotypes, perceptions and beliefs; and to empower women and girls who have experienced discrimination or violence (including those from disadvantaged groups) to advocate for and use available, accessible and quality services.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

With a view to **strengthen the voice and agency of women’s organisations in advocating for the adoption and implementation of laws and policies** in line with CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention, a total of 180 CSOs and CSO networks were supported to engage in monitoring and reporting on CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention. Specifically, in Albania, the Monitoring Network on Gender-Based Violence presented the main findings of its shadow report for the Universal Period Review (UPR) during the UPR pre-session in Geneva, and members of the network prepared and submitted a Beijing+25 alternative report. In North Macedonia, the Helsinki Committee submitted a Communication to the CEDAW Committee in Geneva, using mechanisms under the Optional Protocol, for a case of discrimination and denial of primary health services to two Roma women. In Serbia, the CSO Women Space completed and submitted shadow reports to GREVIO and the CEDAW Committee on the specific position of Roma women and girls in Serbia. Another Serbian partner, SOS Network Vojvodina, submitted a presented an overall comprehensive CEDAW shadow report at the 72nd CEDAW Committee session in Geneva. At regional level, 20 CSOs from across the region were trained on monitoring and reporting on the Istanbul Convention, and the CSO Bibija Roma Women’s Center completed 4 national reports on the situation of Roma women.

With an aim to **change discriminatory gender stereotypes through the programme's GenderLab initiative**, 33 participants from all 7 IPA beneficiaries were trained on applying the 10-step Communication for Behaviour Change (COMBI) methodology to reduce violence against women (VAW). In Albania, Women Forum Elbasan held community forums with 178 participants on gender equality and gender stereotypes. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10 workshops with primary school students were held in 6 schools to discuss gender roles. In Montenegro, NGO NOVA held a workshop with women's rights activists to historicise and publicise the Montenegrin women's rights movement. In Serbia, a pilot training with 13 media houses and 16 journalists was held to reduce stereotypes in media reporting on VAW. In Turkey over 550 fathers participated in father groups to improve their communication skills within the family and increase their involvement in hands-on childcare.

Activities were also conducted with a view to **improve general and specialist services for victims of VAW, as well as victims' access to those services**. In Albania, training sessions were held with 14 police officers, 92 healthcare providers, and 116 teachers regarding their legal responsibilities and the role of their respective institutions in ending VAW. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 119 service providers were trained on multi-sectoral cooperation in responding to cases of domestic violence. In Kosovo, more than 220 specialist support services providers were trained on the use of first standardised online database for tracking cases of VAW and domestic violence. In North Macedonia, National Roma Centrum conducted 12 trainings on prevention and protection mechanisms in case of discrimination and violence, reaching 156 Roma community members. In Montenegro, NGO SOS Podgorica provided legal and psychosocial support to 53 women victims of violence, and SOS Niksic held 93 yoga and self-defense courses for residents of their domestic violence shelter. In Turkey, 3 meetings were organized with 60 muhtars (elected local headmen) to inform them about the rights of refugee women and discuss the problems refugee women are facing in their localities. At regional level, the CSO Imkaan developed 3 policy briefs that examine the importance of services and support designed to meet the specific needs of minority women and girls facing violence and discrimination, as mandated by the Istanbul Convention.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, due to the programme's engagement of 6 community mediators in 3 Roma communities, 376 individuals were provided with assistance and guidance in exercising their rights and engaging with public institutions. In **Kosovo**, as a result of ongoing collaboration between Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) and the Ombudsperson Institution (OI), the OI appointed a responsible person for addressing concerns related to institutional failures to address cases of VAW. In **North Macedonia**, specialist service providers now have a software system for unified data collection on cases of VAW, prepared by the National Council for Gender Equality. In **Serbia**, the CEDAW Committee fully integrated 45 of the SOS Network Vojvodina recommendations into the Concluding Observations issued to Serbia

following the review of the country's Fourth periodic report. At the **regional** level, key baseline data along with analyses on public attitudes and perceptions of gender equality and VAW were published for 6 IPA beneficiaries.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

In the second half of 2019, the programme's focus will include:

- Holding the Second Annual Regional Forum for the Promotion of the Istanbul Convention, to be held in Tirana on 9-10 October, with the participation of more than 130 representatives of national governments, regional institutions, and civil society;
- Holding a regional conference in Belgrade to launch the Regional report on discrimination of Roma women in the area of healthcare, child marriages and support and protection in cases of domestic violence;
- Holding six round- tables "Good Practices, Obstacles and Shortcomings in the System of Protection of Women and Girls from Violence" to present the findings of the research "Is justice failing women survivors of violence? - Action-oriented recommendations for effective prevention, protection and prosecution in the Western Balkans and Turkey" in all IPA beneficiaries.

CHAPTER 7: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

7.1 CAPACITY BUILDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION (CBHE)

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | IPA 2011/SI2.596555; IPA 2012/SI2.615827; IPA 2013/SI2.645034; IPA 2014/SI2.691984; IPA 2015/D45.B1515.000567; IPA 2016/D45.B1616.001476 |
| Project title: | Tempus: Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies; Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) |
| EU contribution: | IPA 2011/SI2.596555, EUR 15.3 million IPA 2012/SI2.615827, EUR 14.9 million IPA 2013/SI2.645034, EUR 11.7 million IPA 2014/SI2.691984, EUR 10.07 million IPA 2015/ D45.B1515.000567, EUR 13.2 million IPA 2016/ D45.B1616.001476, EUR 13.5 million IPA 2017/D45. B1717.001712, EUR 10.3 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans (except North Macedonia) |
| Type of contract: | The programmes are implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) |
| Links: | https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/capacity-building-higher-education-2019_en |

PURPOSE ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) facilitate the reform of higher education institutions by upgrading the quality and management of academic institutions, in line with changing political, social and economic needs and through voluntary convergence with higher education reform developments in the EU Member States.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The CBHE Grantholder's meeting has been successfully organised on 28-29 January 2019 at the Management Centre Europe in Brussels with a participation of 438 representatives of projects, National Erasmus+ Offices, International Contact Points, EU Delegations, European Commission (EAC and DEVCO) and EACEA. In total, 70 nationalities have been represented*.

* See list of attendance in Annex

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

20 proposals are selected for an EU funding under Call for proposals EACEA/A03/2018. The distribution of the Western Balkans regional budget shows a fair share for each partner country reflecting the size of the respective higher education sectors: 10 for Albania, 8 for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 9 for Montenegro, 10 for Kosovo.

The change of status of Serbia from Partner Country to Programme Country in 2019 selection has substantially impacted the Western Balkan region scenario: 49% less applications were submitted and the presence of Serbian partners were extremely limited (1% of the total number of applications involving R1).

The overall quality of the proposals has slightly decreased in relation to the previous years. The issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro related to the accreditation of study programmes have impacted on the overall 2019 selection and reduced the percentage of Curriculum Development type of projects: 20% in comparison to the 60% of the 2018 selection. Western Balkans Countries confirm their willingness and readiness to coordinate CBHE projects in the 2019 selection and 60% of the proposals proposed for funding are coordinated by institutions located in the Partner Countries. This is in line with previous years selections. The Ministries of Education in each of the 4 Countries showed a concrete interest in participating in projects. In fact 20% of the proposals proposed for funding are Structural Projects: one per partner Country. A limited range of new topics can be seen within the 20 proposals proposed for funding: For Joint Projects: Natural stones industry, Maritime education, Conservation and restauration of cultural heritage; Aquatic bio assessment – ecology. For Structural Projects: reforming foreign languages and introducing dual education. These are all linked to the actual economic development of the Countries.

Institutional Evaluation Programme publishes the Montenegro system review report : EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) evaluated nine Montenegrin higher education institutions in 2018. Based on the individual evaluation reports, IEP published in December a system review report, which examines common issues and challenges amongst the nine institutions and proposes recommendations to the institutions and national authorities.

The report notes that Montenegro has initiated impressive reforms of its higher education system in recent years, but emphasises the need to go further to reach the goals of the process, mainly by reforming institutional governance.

The 2018 coordinated evaluations were part of the "Higher Education and Research for Innovation and Competitiveness" (HERIC) project, implemented by the Government of Montenegro. In the context of the same project, IEP evaluated the Montenegrin institutions in 2014, the later evaluations being a follow-up of that exercise.

IEP is an independent external quality assurance agency, which currently has carried out 430 initial and follow-up evaluations of diverse higher education institutions in Europe and worldwide. More information about IEP can be found on the official website <https://www.iep-qa.org/>

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

NEO /ICP meeting will be held in November and will focus mainly on networking , results achieved and assessment of needs per each country.

A western Balkan regional cluster will be held late October in Albania. It will gather representatives from all selected projects 2015-2018 and it will focus on the impact of Erasmus+ Capacity Building Higher Education on the Higher education institutions and systems.

7.2 ERASMUS MUNDUS JOINT MASTER DEGREES

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/935, and IPA II (2014-2020) |
| Project title: | Erasmus Mundus Action 1 and Action 2, Erasmus+ Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMD) |
| EU contribution: | Action 1: EUR 8.0 million Action 2: EUR 12.0 million EMJMD: EUR 5.0 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Erasmus Mundus Action 1: Western Balkans and Turkey Erasmus Mundus Action 2: Western Balkans EMJMD: Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | The programme is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) |
| Links: | https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/2007-2013/erasmus-mundus-programme_en https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-1-learning-mobility-individuals/erasmus-mundus-joint-master-degrees_en |
| Contact : | Karolina BUZALJKO, karolina.buzaljko@ec.europa.eu Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, |

PURPOSE

The Erasmus Mundus programme's objectives were to Foster excellence, innovation, and internationalisation in HEIs, boost the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and support the EU's external action in the field of higher education, thus contributing to the sustainable development of third countries. The programme has been discontinued in 2014 to be included in the Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020) under Key Action 1, Learning Mobility of Individuals, as Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMDs).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Erasmus Mundus Action 1 and EMJMDs

Action 1 of the former Erasmus Mundus programme supports high quality joint master courses and doctoral programmes which are run by consortia of European and third country higher education institutions (HEIs). The action mainly fosters cooperation between HEIs and academic staff in Europe and third countries with a view of creating poles of excellence and providing highly trained human resources. The joint programmes must involve mobility between institutions of the consortium and lead to the award of recognised joint, double or multiple degrees. Students/doctoral candidates are awarded Erasmus Mundus scholarships/fellowships. The EMJMD action under Erasmus+ follows the same principles and pursue the same objectives.

Erasmus Mundus Action 2

Under Action 2, the Erasmus Mundus Partnerships bring together HEIs from Europe on the one hand and those from a particular region in the world on the other, to manage mobility flows between the two regions for a range of academic levels – undergraduate, master, doctorate, post-doctorate – and for academic staff. The partnerships allow sharing of best practice and exploring further opportunities for cooperation between European and Western Balkan HEIs through bilateral agreements and other measures. This action has been discontinued in 2014. The last two projects involving the Western Balkans came to an end in January 2019. Therefore there is no on-going activity anymore.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

Erasmus Mundus Action 1

The analysis of the final reports of the Erasmus Mundus Master programmes (EMMC) that had been awarded scholarships for students from the Western Balkans and Turkey (student intake 2014) has shown that 162 students have benefited from this scheme.

The Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates (EMJD) selected under the former Erasmus Mundus programme have run their intakes, partly funded by IPA funds for what concerns the Western Balkans and Turkey. In particular, 12 EMJDs whose intake started in the second semester of 2014 have awarded 13 fellowships to excellent doctoral candidates from Western Balkans and Turkey, who have successfully completed their studies in the second semester 2018. All the concerned EMJDs submitted their final reports.

Erasmus Mundus Action 2

The very last two projects involving the Western Balkans came to an end in January 2019. The final reports have been received and are currently being assessed. The partnerships enhanced regional cooperation between the participating universities from Western Balkans and strengthened academic links between Europe and the targeted region, also in view of future cooperation under Erasmus+.

EMJMDs

IPA II (EUR 5 Mio) funds were allocated to 32 EMJMDs selected in 2019 (out of 44) in the form of 106 scholarships for students coming from the Western Balkans. The scholarships (average value of 47.000 EUR each) will be awarded to the students directly by the consortia running the EMJMDs in the course of four consecutive master intakes. Most of the master programmes will start their first intake in August-September 2020.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Erasmus Mundus Action 1

No running projects anymore.

Erasmus Mundus Action 2

No running projects anymore.

EMJMDs

Kick-off meeting of the 44 EMJMDs selected in 2019 on 16-17 October. Only 8 of them will start their first intake in August-September 2019 (and 7 out of these 8 have received IPA II funds for the award of scholarships), while the other 36 will implement a preparatory year and then start their intakes in August-September 2020. The first technical report on implementation is expected by the end of December 2019.

7.3 INTERNATIONAL CREDIT MOBILITY (ICM) UNDER THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/935, and IPA II (2014-2020) |
|-----------------------------|---|

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Project title: | International Credit Mobility to cooperate with the Western Balkans |
| EU contribution: | EUR 18 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Programme Countries vs 4 Partner Countries from the Western Balkans (AL, ME, BA, XK) |
| Type of contract: | The programme is implemented by the different National Agencies in each of the Programme Countries |
| Links: | https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/erasmus-international-credit-mobility_en |
| Contact : | Albert Sesé BALLART, Albert.SESE-BALLART@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

International Credit Mobility (ICM) supports the mobility of individuals enrolled or employed at a higher education institution (HEI), from a Programme Country to a Partner Country or vice versa. The traineeship or study period abroad must be part of a student's study programme to complete a degree.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The action comprises four kinds of possible activities:

Student mobility for studies, open to short cycle, first cycle (Bachelor or equivalent) or second cycle (Master or equivalent) students, as well as third cycle doctoral candidates. The mobility period can last from 3 months (or one academic term) to 12 months.

Student mobility for traineeships, open from call 2018 to short cycle, first cycle (Bachelor or equivalent) or second cycle (Master or equivalent) students, as well as third cycle doctoral candidates. The mobility period can last from 2 to 12 months. See dedicated section on 'Traineeships'.

Staff mobility for teaching for academic staff and (from call 2018) for invited staff from non-academic organisations to teach at a partner higher education institution (HEI) abroad. The mobility period can last from 5 days to 2 months.

Staff mobility for training for teaching and non-teaching staff in the form of training events abroad (excluding conferences), job shadowing, observation periods and/or training at a partner HEI. The mobility period can last from 5 days to 2 months. This activity also supports the mobility of staff from Partner Country HEIs to train at a non-academic organisation located in a Programme Country.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The 2019 call was launched in October 2018 with a deadline on 5 February 2019.

The overall budget for the action was around € 188 million for the 2019 call. 18% of these funds are allocated to the Western Balkans through IPA (31.4 m EUR) with an additional 3.5 m EUR which have been added thanks to the New Strategy Published in February 2018.

After the deadline, the Higher Education Institutions from Programme Countries presented applications to work with the Western Balkans for a total value of 55 m EUR which would imply a total number of requested mobilities of 17.529 coming to and from the region in only one academic year as shown in the table below.

| Budget Envelope | Partner Country | Activity | Applications 2019 | Requested Grant 2019 (EUR) | Requested Participants 2019 |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Western Balkans | Albania | Learner | 225 | € 11.029.815 | 2.256 |
| Western Balkans | Albania | Traineeships | 60 | € 1.338.460 | 406 |
| Western Balkans | Albania | Staff | 447 | € 6.591.443 | 3.405 |
| Western Balkans | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Learner | 235 | € 13.408.875 | 2.696 |
| Western Balkans | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Traineeships | 45 | € 858.381 | 278 |
| Western Balkans | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Staff | 457 | € 7.012.546 | 3.671 |
| Western Balkans | Kosovo | Learner | 112 | € 4.498.754 | 917 |
| Western Balkans | Kosovo | Traineeships | 29 | € 732.098 | 209 |
| Western Balkans | Kosovo | Staff | 239 | € 2.636.731 | 1.378 |
| Western Balkans | Montenegro | Learner | 113 | € 4.156.232 | 854 |
| Western Balkans | Montenegro | Traineeships | 19 | € 297.754 | 90 |
| Western Balkans | Montenegro | Staff | 230 | € 2.537.096 | 1.369 |

Thanks to ICM, 1.313 projects for bilateral partnerships that organise mobility for over 27.000 students, researchers and staff have been approved since 2015.

The results of the 2019 selection will be unveiled in September 2019, but initial data shows that the number will increase to 593 projects with more than 10.200 new participants awarded.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Publication of the results in September and start of the actual mobilities as of October 2019.

Launch of the 2020 call in October 2019 with deadline in February 2020.

7.4 ERASMUS+ CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-603 |
| Project title: | Erasmus+ Capacity building in the field of youth – Western Balkans |
| EU contribution: | EUR 3 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) implements the programme |
| Contract reference: | |
| Duration of activities: | between 9 and 24 months |
| Links: | https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-2-cooperation-for-innovation-and-exchange-good-practices/capacity_en |
| Contact : | Lene MEJER, lene.mejer@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

Capacity-building projects in the field of youth cover a range of activities that encourage cooperation between organisations active in youth, education, training and other socio-economic sectors in Programme and Partner Countries from different regions of the world. The objectives of these projects are to improve the quality and recognition of youth-work, non-formal learning and volunteering in Partner Countries and foster synergies with education systems and the labour market, reinforce non-formal learning mobility schemes and programmes, and promote transnational non-formal learning mobility. Further, the projects aim to promote strategic cooperation between youth organisations and public authorities and raise the capacities of youth councils, youth platforms and local, regional and national authorities dealing with youth in Western Balkan countries.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

The deadline for the 2019 selection - Western Balkan Youth Window managed at centralised level under the Erasmus+ Programme – Key-Action 2, Capacity Building in the field of youth - was on 24 January 2019. The selection procedure, including evaluation of all applications by both external experts and members of the Evaluation Committee was closed with the signature of the Award decision on 08/08/2019 and the sending of the notification letters on 09/08/2019.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

In total, **104 eligible** applications were submitted this year. Among coordinators, all eligible Western Balkan countries are covered: 47 applicants are based in Albania, 31 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 14 in Montenegro and 15 in Kos. 1 application from Serbia was considered ineligible; in fact as of 2019 Serbia became an Erasmus+ Non EU Programme Country and therefore is ineligible as applicant within the Western Balkan region.

The budget for 2019, EUR 3 million, allowed funding 32 projects with an average grant size of EUR 91.598,94.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The contracting phase is ongoing and will be closed as soon as possible in the next months.

The Call for proposal 2020 is planned to be published in October 2019 with a deadline for submission fixed for the beginning of February.

Coordinators' meeting for the projects selected in 2019 and INFO day dedicated to the potential applicants to the 2020 call are foreseen before the end of the year. Both will be on-line events.

7.5 EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2015, IPA 2015/038-054.11 |
| Project title: | Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 3 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant Agreements with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) |
| Contract reference: | VS/2016/0054 (RCC) and VS/2016/0002 (ILO) |
| Duration of activities: | 01/03/2016 – 31/10/2019 (RCC) 01/04/2016 – 31/10/2019 (ILO) |
| Contact : | Christiane WESTPHAL, christiane.westphal@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform is to assist the Western Balkan countries with the employment and social policy reforms in their pre-accession process. The action will help improve the regional cooperation in employment and social policy-making, labour market governance, working conditions and social dialogue.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

ILO

- Training of Labour Inspectors in Republika Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina, February 2019);
- High-level Regional Meeting of Labour Inspectorates (Albania, March 2019);
- Meeting of the Network of Agencies for Amicable Settlement of Labour Disputes (North Macedonia, May 2019);
- CEELEX Community of Practice – meetings at ESAP online Platform (January and May 2019);
- Update of ESAP platform and Case database (January – June 2019).

RCC

- 5 national workshops on undeclared work organized in 5 Western Balkan capitals (Belgrade, Podgorica, Prishtina, Sarajevo and Skopje);
- 1 regional peer review workshop on on-the-job training programmes (Albania, January 2019);
- Analysis of the information technology system of the employment agencies in the Western Balkans in line with EURES requirements;
- Technical assistance to national activities based on requests by national institutions.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

ILO

- Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation among Labour Inspectorates in the Western Balkans signed, establishing the Network of Labour Inspectorates;
- 34 labour inspectors of the Labour inspectorate in Bosnia and Herzegovina - Serbia have been upskilled in the field of Occupational Safety and Health;
- Labour Inspectorates in Albania and Montenegro upgraded their tools for carrying out inspections in the construction sector;
- Six diagnosis (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) on the state of play of non-standard forms of employment produced by the CEELEX members to feed in a regional comparative working paper to be published on ESAP platform by the end of the project;
- ESAP virtual platform regularly updated and maintained;
- Multi-language feature of the regional case database on ESAP platform developed and used by the Network of Agencies for Amicable Settlement of Labour Disputes (ASLD) for the purpose of peer-learning and exchange of knowledge; the number of cases uploaded by the Agencies increased by 30 per cent.
- Agreement on joint regional guidelines for the application of mediation as method for amicable settlement of labour disputes reached with the Network of ASLD.

RCC

- Key national stakeholders (Ministries of Labour, Finance, Labour Inspectorates, Tax Authorities) familiarized with the holistic approach to tackling undeclared work, based on the recommendations of ESAP reports;
- Improved understanding of the design, implementation and monitoring of on-the-job-training programmes, and identification of current good practices and areas for improvement;
- A gap analysis of the PES information technology systems and recommendations for systems' improvement produced.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

ILO

- High-level regional meeting of Economic and Social Councils on Fostering Social Dialogue (September 2019);
- Annual update of CEELEX and working paper on “Non-standard Forms of Employment in CEE countries – a comparative overview” finalized (September – October 2019);
- National CEELEX promotion events (October 2019);
- Translation of ESAP website navigation titles and CEELEX database titles into the languages of the region (October 2019);
- Co-organization of sub-regional Conference “Application of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in the Western Balkan countries” (October 2019);
- Procurement of IT equipment and upgrade of software used by Montenegrin Labour Inspectorate as a follow-up measure of the implemented Labour Inspection Campaign (September – October 2019).

RCC

- Regional workshop on activation and employment support policies and programmes, (September 2019);
- Co-organization of the management and expert meetings of the Center of Public Employment Services of SEE countries (October 2019);
- Regional conference on tackling undeclared work in the Western Balkans through structured regional cooperation (October 2019).

7.6 TRENDS ON MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE STUDY (TIMSS)

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Program reference: | IPA Multi-Country Programme 2017/040-009 |
| Project title: | Participation of the Western Balkan countries to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study – TIMSS 2019 |
| EU contribution: | EUR 1,498,597 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grand Contract with International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) |
| Contract reference: | TIMSS EAC/S07/2017 |
| Duration of activities: | 2017 – 2020 |
| Contact: | Albert Sesé BALLART, Albert.SESE-BALLART@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

TIMSS 2019 reports on the overall achievement at the end of the primary education against international benchmarks. This is done by major content domains (mathematics and science), as well as by cognitive domains. Like the previous TIMSS assessments, the study will collect detailed information about curricula, curricula implementation, instructional practices, school resources, and other context information.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2019)

The key activities during the period of January – June 2019 were the data collection of TIMSS 2019, scoring activities and data submission.

A training for International Quality Control Monitors (IQCMs) was held January 21-22, 2019 in Amsterdam and trained individuals for every TIMSS northern hemisphere country (including the experts from Western Balkan countries) for the expected quality assurance tasks.

The 6th meeting of the TIMSS 2019 National Research Coordinators (NRCs) was held March 10-15, 2019 in Limassol, Cyprus. The meeting was mainly devoted to scoring training for the TIMSS 2019 constructed-response items. In addition, the draft Encyclopaedia outline and draft Curriculum Questionnaire were reviewed. Each Western Balkan country was represented at this key training.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY 2019)

On January 17, IEA Hamburg released the online Survey Activities Questionnaire to NRCs.

On March 21, the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Centre posted final scoring guides and training materials for data collection.

On April 25, the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Centre posted the final Encyclopaedia outline, Curriculum Questionnaire and TCMA spreadsheets for NRCs.

By April 30, Translation and Layout Verification was completed for all countries.

All northern hemisphere countries collected TIMSS data between March and May 2019. The data collection within the Western Balkan countries has happened in line with the plan.

IQCMs went into the field, monitored data collection activities on a national level and reported their findings to the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center. In addition, National Quality Control Monitors, which were appointed by the NRCs, monitored the data collection on a national level.

In June 2019 TIMSS northern hemisphere countries started submitting data to IEA Hamburg.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Countries will continue submitting data to IEA Hamburg (completion by September 2019).
- A regional TIMSS 2019 meeting for Western Balkan countries will be held September 16-17, 2019 in Brač, Croatia. The purpose of this meeting is to review the instrument preparation, data collection and scoring operations. In addition, the planned regional report “Dinaric Perspectives on TIMSS 2019” will be discussed. The goal is to establish a timeline and decide on the content and data analysis options.
- Countries will submit Encyclopaedia chapters to the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Centre starting from October 2019.
- By October 17, countries need to respond to the Survey Activities Questionnaire.
- By October 30, countries need to respond to the Curriculum Questionnaire and complete the TCMA spreadsheets.
- The 7th NRC meeting will be held December 8-13, 2019 in Agadir, Morocco. The meeting will be devoted mainly to reviewing draft outlines and exhibits for the TIMSS 2019 International Mathematics and Science Reports.

7.7 PILOT VET MOBILITY SCHEME FOR THE ENLARGEMENT COUNTRIES

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA for the year 2018 |
| Project title: | Pilot VET mobility scheme for the Enlargement countries (Western Balkans 6 + Turkey) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Cross-delegated to EAC. |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/ + Call for proposals – EAC/S34/2018 |
| Duration of activities: | The maximum duration of the selected project is 42 months. |
| Links: | https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/funding-opportunities/vet-mobility-pilot-2019_en |
| Contact : | Albert Sesé BALLART, Albert.SESE-BALLART@ec.europa.eu Funct. Mailbox, EAC-VET-MOBILITY-SCHEME@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

Erasmus+ offers training, learning and mobility opportunities for VET learners and staff, but this is not open to the international dimension of the programme. Partners in the Western Balkans and Turkey are asking for an international opening of the VET actions under Erasmus+, to benefit from the rich experience that has been accumulated under Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes.

The project will fund learners and staff mobility as well as management costs for the selected consortia of VET providers.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Promotion campaign, January – April 2019

06/02 – Approval of the Decision authorising the use of lump sums, unit costs and flat-rate financing for this action - Implementing Decisions C(2018) 5074 and C(2018) 7378

14/02 – Translations of the Call ready

27/02 - Call for proposals published on 27 February EAC/S34/2018

28/03 & 4/04 - 2 webinars for potential applicants (first for National agencies and the second for the general public):

28/04: Deadline for applications

19/06: Official Appointment of the Evaluation Committee (composed by EAC, NEAR, DEVCO, EMPL) Ref. Ares(2019)3896880.

25/06: Appointment of 5 external experts by the Evaluation Committee

30/06: Online briefing for the external experts

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

12 applications were received in response to the call.

The admissibility and eligibility of proposals in relation to the pre-announced requirements was checked after the submission deadline.

All 12 were submitted using the official application form and within the deadline (28 May 2019 12:00 CET Brussels time).

Their exclusion criteria was verified on the basis of the signature on the Declaration on Honour, submitted as part of the application package and stating that the Applicant Organisation does not fall under any of the exclusion criteria listed in the Declaration on Honour.

All 12 proposals met the admissibility/exclusion criteria and also the eligibility criteria having respected the requirements insofar as eligible participating organisations, applicant requirements and number of participating organisations are concerned. The overall nature of the activities proposed were also eligible. 12 proposals were therefore sent to the experts for assessment of the award criteria as of the first week of July.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

July - August - Selection of the consortia of VET providers. The different proposals will be evaluated by external experts in VET together with the rest of the Evaluation Committee members.

August – September – Financial Capacity checks

End September – publication of the Award Decision

October – Contracting

7.8 REGIONAL CSO ACTIVISM FOR REGIONAL RECONCILIATION IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA - IN SUPPORT OF RECOM

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | IPA Multi-Country Programme 2017/038-961 |
| Project title: | Regional CSO Activism for Regional Reconciliation in the Former Yugoslavia - In Support of RECOM |
| EU contribution: | EUR 920.00,00 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement |
| Contract reference: | CN 2017/394-747 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/03/2018-28/02/2021 |
| Links: | http://recom.link/ |
| Contact : | Catherine DENIS, Catherine.DENIS@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to promote the establishment of a Regional Commission for the facts about war crimes and other serious human rights violations committed in the former Yugoslavia (so-called "RECOM"). This action is supported by the Coalition for RECOM, which brings together about 2,050 civil society organizations from post-Yugoslav countries. In 2011, 580 000 citizens signed a petition for the establishment of an inter-State commission with the task of naming all war victims and the circumstances of their deaths / disappearances. RECOM is conceived as a victim-centred, truth-seeking body. It will contribute to curb the negative public perception of the other victims, to stimulate solidarity, and bring closer opposing positions of the same events.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

1. Establishing an individual human losses and detention sites record of the Yugoslav wars
 - Defining instructions for additional investigation into 1,092 victims killed or missing in Kosovo, during the period from January 1999 to December 2000, in the municipalities of Djakovica, Prizren, Priština and Uroševac. Mapping detention sites in 10 municipalities in Bosnia-and-Herzegovina.
 - Investigations and gathering of documents regarding victims killed or missing during the war in Croatia.

2. Engaging civil society and the broader public in a regional reconciliation and commemoration initiative.

Launch of a call for projects encouraging reconciliation in region. A total of 57 projects were submitted.

3. Political advocacy and support for the establishment of RECOM

Members of the Coalition for RECOM conducted advocacy activities in support of the establishment of RECOM as a regional instrument that directly contributes to reconciliation.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

1. Results on the data gathered

- Following the newly adopted instructions, HLCK and HLC researchers took statements from 983 family members/witnesses. These statements allowed the identification of personal data and circumstances of death/disappearance of 837 victims who were killed or went missing in connection with the war in Kosovo, in the municipalities of Djakovica, Prizren, Pristina and Urosevac.
- Based on the additional research, the first narratives regarding the fate of 297 victims was drafted. The narratives regarding 331 victims who were killed or went missing in connection with the war in Kosovo, in the municipalities of Djakovica, Prizren, Pristina and Urosevac were also finalized.
- Based on the rulings of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the Court of Bosnia-and-Herzegovina, as well as one field researches, the narratives were drafted regarding 74 detention sites, including 64 final versions thereof. The investigation showed that 15 detention sites listed in the records of associations of former camp inmates as camps were not used for the detainment of soldiers and civilians.
- The dossiers on 152 victims killed in Croatia were completed, on the basis of the statements of 156 family members, death certificates as well as other sources. The personal information regarding 340 missing persons and victims was completed on the basis of court documents and publications of statements of family members of missing persons.

2. Strengthening the civic society network for reconciliation.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Three debates on memorialization and memory practices will be organized in the targeted IPA beneficiaries.

The Coalition will continue investigations regarding the human losses and detention sites to gather material that could be handed over to RECOM, once established. The results of these investigations will be publicly presented on Human Rights Day, on 10 December 2019.

CHAPTER 8: OTHER HORIZONTAL ACTIONS

8.1 EU AGENCIES

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | IPA 2016/037-900, 2018/040-113 |
| Project title: | Preparatory measures for the participation of candidates and potential candidates in EU Agencies |
| EU contribution: | |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant contracts |
| Contract reference: | 1 contract signed in 2016, 10 contracts signed in 2017, 3 contracts signed in 2018 |
| Duration of activities: | Q4 2016 – Q3 2021 |
| Contact: | Jutta POMOELL-SEGUROLA jutta.pomoell-segurola@ec.europa.eu |

List of Agencies, duration of activities and total amounts:

| CN | Agency | Duration | Amount in EUR |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 2016/377-705 | European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) | 12/10/2016 – 11/01/2019 | 350.000 |
| 2018/402-940 | European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) | 12/01/2019 – 11/07/2021 | 550.000 |
| 2017/386-267 | European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) | 19/08/2017 – 18/08/2019 | 310.000 |
| 2017/389-613 | European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) | 01.09.2017 – 30.11.2018 | 200.000 |
| 2018/402-854 | European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) | 01/01/2019 – 30/06/2021 | 550.000 |
| 2017/386-560 | European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) | 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2019 | 290.000 |
| 2017/386-550 | European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) | 01/07/2017 – 30/06/2019 | 340.000 |
| 2017/390- | European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) | 01/03/2018 | 180.000 |

| | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|---------|
| 067 | | – 28/02/2019 | |
| 2018/403-813 | European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) | 01/04/2019 – 31/03/2021 | 450.000 |
| 2017/388-568 | European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) | 01/12/2017 – 31/05/2019 | 320.000 |
| 2017/391-240 | European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) | 01/05/2018 – 30/04/2020 | 200.000 |
| 2017/390-035 | European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) | 01/12/2017 – 30/11/2019 | 290.000 |
| 2017/391-230 | European Railway Agency (ERA) | 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2019 | 200.000 |
| 2017/391-249 | European Environment Agency (EEA) | 01/02/2018 – 31/01/2020 | 320.000 |

PURPOSE

The programme supports EU Agencies to carry out preparatory measures with Beneficiaries and stakeholders to ensure that Beneficiaries are able to participate effectively in the activities of EU Agencies as they implement important parts of the EU *acquis*.

Activities are designed to help beneficiaries understand the function and operations of EU Agencies, and more importantly, their role within them. EU support also permits IPA II beneficiaries to involve other relevant national stakeholders in their activities in ways similar to those of EU Member States. This support mainly consists of advice on organisational matters, staff training and participation in stakeholder meetings.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

EIGE

- EIGE has organised several events to which IPA beneficiaries participated (Meeting on Gender Budgeting; Experts' Forum, Civil Society Meeting).
- EIGE has attended several events in IPA beneficiaries (Enhancement of Participatory Democracy in Turkey: Monitoring Gender Equality in Ankara, Turkey; Workshop on Gender Violence in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Regional Conference on Gender Sensitive Parliaments in Skopje, North Macedonia; Regional Conference on the Well-being Survey for the Western Balkans in Vienna, Austria).
- In April, EIGE has launched a Request for Service for data collection for the Women and Men in Decision Making database in IPA beneficiaries and data collection started.

- In May, EIGE has organised 9th Regional Coordination Meeting for the EU candidate countries and potential candidates in Istanbul, Turkey. The meeting was attended by the project's national focal points from gender equality machineries, statistical officers, gender focal points from EU Delegations/Office, civil society and international community, including DG NEAR.
- Two national trainings on the development of the Gender Equality Index have been organised for Albania and Turkey. Key beneficiaries of the training were National Statistical Offices.
- Throughout the reporting period, EIGE has continued its work for editing the collected 15 good practices from the Western Balkans and Turkey.

EMSA

The activities kicked off with the newly developed one-week training programme for Flag State Inspectors, a highly interactive training where participants received deepened knowledge and insight about performing inspections on board ships.

A workshop was arranged at EMSA on the implementation in the Mediterranean countries of the new requirements for Sulphur emissions, where riparian Enlargement countries were invited together with relevant countries from EU MS, from the SAFEMED countries and other important stakeholders. A follow-up event was later held at the premises of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in London, where representatives continued discussions, including the possible designation of a sulphur emission control area in the Mediterranean Sea.

The three enlargement countries participating in CleanSeaNet, the European Union's satellite-based oil spill monitoring and vessel detection service, joined a CleanSeaNet User Group meeting at EMSA.

New distance learning courses were added to the Maritime Knowledge Centre that the countries had access to since the previous year. The countries were more actively encouraged to use EMSA's tools through for example the requirement to undergo certain distance learning courses before attending a classroom training, and some trainings included exercises in RuleCheck, which is a decision-making tool for port and flag state officers.

PSCO's from Montenegro participated in three events arranged by the Paris MoU. In addition, PSCO's officers from Turkey were invited to a seminar of the Mediterranean MoU, arranged at EMSA in Lisbon.

ERA

The workshop on Railway Safety Culture 12-14th of February 2019 in Belgrade / Serbia had been attended by more than 40 experts from the 7 IPA partners. In close co-ordination with

the National Investigation Bodies (NIB) network meetings 22nd and 23rd of May 2019 in Valenciennes ERA organised a workshop on NIB peer reviews. The workshop had been supported by NIB experts from Romania, Norway and Portugal aiming to prepare a first NIB peer review in the Western Balkan region 22-24th of October 2019 in Belgrade / Serbia.

ERA organised together with the Directorate General of Railway Regulation of Turkey a workshop on “Cleaning up of national rules” on the 27th of June in Istanbul.

Other activities:

- To support the development of setting up of the NIB ERA experts carried out an audit 15th and 16th of May 2019 of the NIB Bosnia & Herzegovina.
- ERA organised together with the Railway Inspection Directorate of Albania a workshop to promote best practises in NIB rail accident investigations 14th of April 2019 for about 15 experts in Durres / Albania.
- IPA members of Serbia as well as of Albania nominated for the secondment / traineeship starting in September 2019 2 trainees.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2019)

EIGE

- Cooperation with the Western Balkans and Turkey progressed as expected and exceeded expectations in some cases. EIGE has maintained good working relationship with the institutions responsible for advancing on gender equality and statistical offices, as well as regular liaison with EU Delegations/Office and the international community.
- Civil society, the media, and academia have been better informed about EIGE’s work in the region
- All project beneficiaries are included into the Women and Men in Decision Making database, and have taken concrete steps towards the production of their national Gender Equality Index.
- EIGE’s publications and other tangible outputs have been regularly shared with key partners in each IPA beneficiary via stakeholders’ mailing lists.

EMSA

The implemented activities have enabled beneficiary countries to strengthen their administrative capacity and organisation capability needed for the implementation and enforcement of international and EU maritime legislation.

EMSA’s tool RuleCheck assists in the harmonised implementation of legislation. The access to the Maritime Knowledge Center and its distance learning training modules enables a larger number of officers to be trained on the many areas included in the catalogue, in a cost-efficient manner.

The participation of the enlargement countries to meetings or trainings usually organised for Member States, such as the CleanSeaNet meeting, allows participants to share experiences and to use the systems in the most efficient way.

The participation of Port State Control officers from Montenegro to the Paris MoU events was a way to assist the country to move closer to meeting the requirements for membership in the Memorandum. The support of Port State Control officers from Turkey to attend a seminar of the Mediterranean MoU has enabled them to enhance knowledge of the relevant procedures.

ERA

The participation of experts from the Western Balkans and Turkey at the “Railway Safety culture Workshop” 12th to 14th of February 2019, Belgrade, Serbia provided a better understanding on the importance of Railway Safety Culture and its contribution to the well-functioning of a Safety Management System and safe rail operation. It also provided a good basis for the envisaged IPA summit 2019 13-14th of November in Belgrade/ Serbia.

With the intention to inform experts of the Western Balkans and Turkey about experiences of National Investigation Bodies (NIB) on peer reviews ERA invited experts and representatives from NIBs of the Western Balkans to the NIB Peer review workshop 21st of May followed by a NIB network meeting 22-23rd of May in Valenciennes. The workshop provided helpful information about the purpose and procedure to follow to carry out such peer review, aiming to share current practises between experts of Western Balkans and European NIBs in future peer reviews.

16th of October in Budapest experts of NSAs and Ministries of Transport (MoTs) of the region agreed to “clean up” / align national rules for railway of their states with European regulations via a taskforce. The first meeting of the taskforce took place 27th of June 2019 in Istanbul provided IPA experts from NSAs and MoT a better knowledge about the work currently done by ERA in the field of cleaning up of national rules, facilitating the exchange of experiences between experts of the region and the way forward.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR JULY – DECEMBER 2019

EIGE

- IPA beneficiaries will be invited to attend the EIGE’s Gender Equality Index launch for EU Member States on October 15th.
- The 10th EIGE Regional Coordination Meeting will take place on October 16th in Brussels.
- Data collection for the Women and Men in Decision Making database in IPA beneficiaries is expected to be finalised by end of November 2019.

- EIGE is planning to have Gender Equality Index Launch events in two IPA beneficiaries: North Macedonia and Albania.

EMSA

The Several trainings have been planned to be delivered at EMSA premises during the second half of the year, including topics such as the Human Element, Fishing Vessel Safety, Monitoring of Recognised Organisation and ISM Auditing Techniques. In addition, two in-country trainings will be held in Turkey, the first on Ship and Port Facility Security, the second dealing with pollution response, to be delivered in cooperation with REMPEC.

A regional training will be hosted in Montenegro, where enlargement countries will learn more about the Directive on Sulphur Emissions. The training will include a visit to a ship to take a fuel sample and then to have it analysed at a laboratory, to give participants practical experience and understanding of the sampling procedure.

EMSA will take part as an observer when Montenegro undergoes the IMO Audit in November 2019. EMSA already conducted a Preparatory IMO Audit in Montenegro in December 2018 to support the country's possibility to successfully pass the audit. EMSA's participation in the real audit will enable the development of suitable follow-up actions.

The possible provision of images from CleanSeaNet to Bosnia and Herzegovina will be explored during the period.

ERA

The 2nd half of 2019 will see the 2nd meeting of the taskforce on "cleaning up" / alignment of national rules for railways of the IPA beneficiaries with EU and regulations of the International Organisation of Railway Transport (OTIF) on the 24/25th of September in Durres as well as the start of "peer review" activities of NIBs of the Western Balkan region 22-24th of October in Belgrade / Serbia. It envisages further to improve communication and experience exchange between experts in the field of signalling via a specific IPA workshop and participation at the CCRCC 2019 conference, the bi-annual conference on ETCS (European Train Control System) and its worldwide application. 13/14th of November will see the signing of the European railway safety culture declaration by Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of railway companies and railway administrations of the region.

Visibility of the actions will be supported further by developing brochures but also a video on IPA activities carried out by ERA during recent years, focussing on the results achieved in 2018 – 2019.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Programme, IPA 2016/037-900 and 2018/040-113 |
| Project title: | Preparatory measures of future participation of candidate countries and potential candidates in the work of the European Chemicals Agency |
| EU contribution: | total EUR 630,000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant contract 2017, Contribution agreement 2018 |
| Contract reference: | 2017/390-067 and 2018/403-813 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/03/2018-30/08/2019, 01/03/2019-28/02/2021 |
| Links: | www.echa.europa.eu |
| Contact : | Jenny HOLMQVIST, international@echa.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to provide capacity building activities on EU chemical legislation (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals, **REACH**; Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Chemicals, **CLP**; Biocidal Products Regulation, **BPR**; Prior Informed Consent Regulation, **PIC**) in the Western Balkans..

The work has been carried out through two projects;

Activities undertaken have target national competent authorities and related institutions responsible for the management of chemicals in the seven beneficiaries.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- The on-going project continued to focus on capacity building activities in form of dedicated events or training.

The second project, starting in parallel in March 2019 enabled the launch of an in-depth study of the status and needs of the candidate countries more advanced in the practical implementation of the EU chemicals acquis, namely Montenegro and Serbia. The assessment will not only reflect the steps needed to achieve a full harmonisation, but also identify existing limitations in competencies and governmental infrastructure deemed required.

These projects have given the possibility for the beneficiaries to take part in several European level events related to chemical management. In particular, there has been targeted study visits, as well as one event specifically dedicated to the observers.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- **ECHA conference** took place with 15 experts from Western Balkans and Turkey. The conference covered the current and future priorities in EU chemicals legislation after the final REACH registration deadline. This deadline concerned importers to, and manufacturers in the EU of low volume chemicals. Practical advice, hands-on training, one-to-one sessions and discussions and networking were also on the agenda.
- **Helsinki Chemical Forum** was held with 15 experts from Western Balkans and Turkey. This annual international event covered the following topics in 2019: Best risk management options to regulate Substances of Very High Concerns (SVHCs), ways forward for doing risk assessment of groups of chemicals instead of individual substances, performance of different chemical management systems, plastics and circular economy as well as data on chemicals.
- **Montenegro and Serbia visit to ECHA Helpdesk** for 5 experts. The visit gave an insight into the work of ECHA Helpdesk at a practical level and allowed the beneficiaries, to share experience with Finish national desk.
- **14th Steering Group meeting and regulatory workshops were held:** 7 experts from the Western Balkans and Turkey participated. The programme focused on updating the ECHA current issues: REACH review, evaluation, applications for authorisation of substances where the risk cannot be adequately controlled, restrictions of the use of chemicals on the EU market as well as discussion on the potential effects of the UK withdrawal. There was also more in-depth workshops on CLP and BPR.
- **Mission to Montenegro and Serbia:** In the new project, an in-depth analysis will be carried out. The advisory missions to these two candidate countries were held in January 2019. In view to the preliminary map the country specific situation and liaise with the key local actors to ensure smooth cooperation ref. to the forthcoming study.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- The beneficiaries will be given the opportunity to participate in two EU level events (Biocides Stakeholders Day and Forum Open Session). ECHA will also use the time during these event to organise a meeting for discussion on future activities which aims at seeking their support for prioritisation of activities as well as confirming identified needs and synergies between the countries.
- The contract for the in-depth study was awarded in August 2019, and the first kick-off meeting and discussions with the contractor have been held. The contractor has started the work during the course of autumn 2019 and the contract is foreseen to last for a total of 18 months.

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme reference: | Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2015, IPA 2014/031-603 |
| Project title: | Stepwise integration of the IPA beneficiaries in the activities of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the Reitox Network |
| EU contribution: | EUR 340 000 |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans |
| Type of contract: | Grant Contract – External Actions of the European Union |
| Contract reference: | CN 2015/360-644 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/07/2017 - 30/06/2019 |
| Links: | http://www.emcdda.europa.eu |
| Contact : | Olivia DEBAVEYE olivia.debaveye@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the project is to support the EU candidate and potential candidate countries in aligning their drug-related data collection, analysis and reporting system with those applied in the European Union and in their preparation for their future participation in the activities of the EMCDDA and the Reitox Network.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- The third and last Project Steering Committee took place in Brussels on 14 February, at which representatives from the European Commission, Permanent missions from the Beneficiary countries and national correspondents participated.
- A training on communication issues was organised in April 2019, focusing on how to improve skills in formulation of drug-related messages within the partner institutions. The audience was composed by eight health and communication professionals representing the correspondents and their hosting institutions..
- A ‘hands-on’ training on data collection and reporting on drug seizures for beneficiaries law enforcement agencies (police and customs primarily) was organised in Lisbon in May 2019 and was attended by representatives of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia.
- National experts from all beneficiary countries attended the EU expert meeting on the ‘Prevalence and patterns of drug use among the general population’ key indicator

in May 2019. A satellite meeting was organised to discuss a common approach in presenting the General Population Survey results in Western Balkans.

- In June 2019, a final wrap-up meeting of the project was organised, jointly with the representatives of the Romanian National Anti-Drug Agency in Bucharest. The objective of the meeting was to mark the closure of the project, to review its results, as well as to present the forthcoming upcoming project and gathering imputes from the beneficiaries on potential future. The wrap-up meeting was followed by the official launch of the EMCDDA 2019 European Drug Report; also attended by the BC representatives.
- The National Early Warning System (NEWS) representative from Serbia attended the 19th Annual Meeting of the Reitox Early Warning System Network in June 2019.
- The EMCDDA participated in the conference on 'Challenges and Perspectives in the field of addiction prevention in Bosnia and Herzegovina' in Sarajevo in June 2019 – the conference was organised with the support of the Ministry of civil affairs, Ministry of human rights and refugees and Ministry of security. It was attended by 150 prevention professionals, teachers and university teachers.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Beneficiaries law enforcement experts are better informed about methodology and tools for collecting country-level drug seizure data; and should be able to carry out the next national data collection exercise (period 2018-2019).
- A first practical plan and a better common understanding on how to present the General Population Survey results in the concerned Beneficiary countries
- Serbia has a better overview of the current situation in Europe in relation to new psychoactive substances and recent developments at national and European level. Availability and presentation of the first national population survey results in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Inception phase of the next project including the recruitment of project staff and the work plan.
- Preparation of an extended technical proposal, in order to extend the aforementioned signed contract by one year.
- Attendance of selected national experts at: 1/ EU expert meetings in Lisbon (October and November); 2/ the Lisbon Addictions conference (October) and the 3/ the Extended Reitox Week meeting (November).
- Preparation of the next project on-site kick-off meetings in selected BC.

8.2 REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-country Action Programme for 2016, IPA 2016/380-471 |
| Project title: | Enhancing mobility, connectivity and competitiveness in South East Europe – Support to Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) |
| EU contribution: | EUR 7.5 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans and Turkey |
| Type of contract: | Grant agreement with RCC |
| Contract reference: | CN 2016/380-471 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2017 – 31/12/2019 |
| Links: | www.rcc.int |
| Contact: | Laurent GUIRKINGER (laurent.guirkinger@ec.europa.eu) |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the project is to support the creation of a dynamic regional investment space in Western Balkans.; to increase mobility of professionals, researchers and the highly skilled and the integration in the European Research Area; reduce roaming charges, support the Information Communication Technologies ICT interoperability and digital integration of the region, and enhance cross-border cooperation among judiciaries.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- South East European 2020 Governing Board meeting; Balkan Barometer 2019 launched; 8th meeting of Monitoring committee to review annual progress targets; Regular coordination meetings of Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area structures; 11th Coordination Board of all active regional organisations in Western Balkans;
- Meetings on Regional Investment Reform Agenda and Financial Markets diversification; Capacity building workshops on Investor-State Dispute Settlement , Image Building and Investment Generation;
- Series of regional meetings on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications, Recognition of Academic Qualifications, Research, Innovation and Open Science; Capacity building training on utilization of Joint Information System for recognition of qualifications; Workshop on Mapping available Research Infrastructure in the region;
- Regular Roaming Policy coordination meetings; Co-organisation of Western Balkans Digital Summit and preparatory Steering Committee meetings; Regional networking and

capacity building meetings among the regional Computer Security Incident Response Teams aimed at improved cyber resilience in the region; First meeting of EU-Western Balkans regulatory dialogue on electronic communications; Spectrum policy coordination meeting and capacity building support for relevant bodies;

- Operational meeting of the Regional Working Group on Environment;
- Board meetings and high-level South East Europe Cooperation Process Chairmanship-in-Office consultations; Cooperation and joint work in security field;
- Extended communication and visibility in conventional and social media, with the aim of promoting regional cooperation and the results, including the benefits of the EU integration.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Annual Implementation Report on South East Europe 2020 progress for 2019 endorsed; Barometer 2019 Surveys and Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area Annual report prepared and disseminated; Regional Economic Area-related inputs to Western Balkans Summit Conclusions in Poznan prepared; Next year's priorities for establishing regional economic area defined;
- Proposed regional investment instrument, based on regional investment standards; Analysis of financial markets development of Western Balkans reviewed; Improved capacities of national administration on investment arbitration process;
- Prepared Declaration to support the automatic recognition of Higher Education Qualifications; Developed Joint Information System to enable mutual exchange of information on qualifications and recognition procedures among education institutions; Regional dialogue supported to put forward in a Joint Statement the key points of relevance and shared concerns for the region on the Horizon Europe proposal; Raised administrative capacities to map existing research facilities, labs, instruments and related services (i.e. Research Infrastructure), with a prospective view to conclude regional protocols and ensure open access;
- Regional roaming agreement with substantial roaming charges reductions signed and entered into force; High-level regional dialogue on digital transformation maintained Regional dialogue on cyber security ensured, along with capacity building for relevant authorities; Interoperability and spectrum coordination regional dialogue launched, with a view to address cross-border challenges and regionally coordinate positions;
- Common standards in the area of judicial training and better judicial practice developed;
- South East Europe Cooperation Process Parliamentary cooperation enhanced; Focus on preventing and countering violent extremism maintained;
- Online and offline visibility revamped; New promotional campaigns rolled out.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Launch of South East European 2020 annual monitoring cycle; Initiation of regional dialogue on defining the post-2020 strategic framework; Coordination meetings with structures;
- Technical workshops on Investor-State Dispute Settlement, Investment Promotion Agencies and capital markets; Meetings of regional platforms on Financial Markets, Investments and Industrial Policy;
- Regional conference on Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education; Regional conference on Open Science, Open Innovation and Open Research Infrastructure;
- Comparative analysis on harmonization levels for electronic Identification, Authentication and Trust Services;
- Regional Environment Ministerial meeting; Regional digital and environmental sustainability study, as an input to evidence-based policy making in environment;
- Working synergy to support to Integrative Internal Security Governance;
- Meeting on Justice and high-level regional on good governance;
- Conducting tailored communication and awareness-raising activities.

8.3 CROSS-BORDER INSTITUTION BUILDING - CBIB+ PHASE III

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Programme reference: | Multi-Country Action Programme 2017/039-402 |
| Project title: | Cross-border Institution Building - CBIB+ Phase III |
| EU contribution: | EUR 2 million |
| Beneficiary region: | Western Balkans (WBs) |
| Type of contract: | Service contract with GIZ International Services (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH) |
| Contract reference: | CN 2018/403-501 |
| Duration of activities: | 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2021 |
| Links: | www.cbibplus.eu |
| Contact : | Laurent GUIRKINGER, Laurent.GUIRKINGER@ec.europa.eu |

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to enhance regional coordination and harmonisation of approaches and mechanisms in the field of cross-border cooperation (CBC) at intra-Western Balkans borders, by promoting a culture of best practices and sharing of experience. It also

aspires to improve the technical capacity of management structures, as well as the quality of project operations.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Kick-off meetings and stakeholders' consultations organised, needs assessment – strategic orientation conducted and contract reporting obligations met;
- Two technical working groups from the previous phase continued their activities: 'Performance management – impact assessment' and 'programme management by national authorities'. An outline for starting three more working groups was drafted; 1) on programme management, 2) on the post-2020 generation of the Cross Border Cooperation programmes, and 3) on projects monitoring.
- Documents with a regional harmonisation purpose of the Cross Border Cooperation Programmes in Western Balkans were developed (e.g. templates for procuring technical assistance, advice on assessing the quality of applications for grants, a brief on how to reuse the results achieved by projects and programmes)
- Seven training events were delivered: for assessors in a competition for grants under one bilateral programme, for applicants in a second phase of the competition for grants under the same programme. Two events were organised on project design and formulation for potential applicants under a competition for grants under the programme – and two on preparation of the applications for using technical assistance.
- Ad-hoc assistance provided to the project clients upon request (e.g. preparation of annual implementation reports, management of technical assistance, preparation of an application for the use of technical assistance under a different type of contract, etc.)
- Regular reporting of grant beneficiaries via the regional monitoring system for the CBC programmes. The team supervised the process and provided advice to grantees and programme managers. In addition, the documents to open a competition to technically improve the monitoring system, were drafted.
- The communication and visibility strategy was prepared, as well as the 2019 annual communication work plan.
- Ongoing use of communication tools available from the previous phase of the project such as the project website, social media pages and flash news. In parallel, a new project website is being created, to serve as the main source of information on the CBC programmes in the Western Balkans.
- Continuing cooperation with Interact, the technical assistance of the territorial cooperation at EU level, and its database of projects;

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

- Technical capacity of the programme managers strengthened thanks to the provision of training and advice.
- Improved accountability of the CBC programmes through the regular use of the monitoring system.

- The establishment of an electronic tool for the use of lessons learnt was initiated (concept paper drafted, eight surveys conducted, monitoring system in use, etc.).
- Enhanced visibility and promotion of the CBC programmes and their achievements was undertaken (communication and visibility strategy, monthly flash news, website, Facebook, promotion of programmes and the project during an international event held in Poland, etc.).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Two regional CBC events: a workshop for programme technical managers and the regional conference for policy managers in September and November will take place. The workshop 'EU beyond billboards – how EU-funded cooperation is changing people's lives' jointly organised with Interact under the European Week of Regions and Cities will be taking place in October in Brussels;
- Facilitating the work of the technical working groups and providing the necessary technical inputs;
- Provision of demand-driven technical assistance to the stakeholders;
- Regular update and further improvement of the regional monitoring system;
- Progress with the establishment of the electronic tool for the use of lessons learnt;
- Constant promotion the programmes: upgraded website, monthly flash news, updated electronic tools, publication of the first issue under this contract of the project's newsletter.