

Project Fiche – IPA centralised programmes

Regional Programme for Social Security Coordination and Social Protection reforms in South East Europe

1. Basic information

- 1.1 CRIS Number:** 2007/019-279
- 1.2 Title:** Regional Programme for Social Security Coordination and Social Protection reforms in South-East Europe
- 1.3 ELARG Statistical code:** 06.19 – Social policy and employment
- 1.4 Location:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia including Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244) and Turkey

Implementing arrangements:

- 1.5 Contracting Authority (EC):** European Community represented by the Commission of the European Communities on behalf of the beneficiary countries¹.
- 1.6 Implementing Agency:** N.A.
- 1.7 Beneficiary:** High level officials of administrations, civil servants, managers of social institutions and social partners, non-governmental social policy actors of the beneficiary countries.

Financing:

- 1.8 Overall cost (VAT excluded):** €2.222 million
- 1.9 EU contribution:** € million
- 1.10 Final date for contracting:** 30/11/2008
- 1.11 Final date for execution of contracts:** 30/11/2010
- 1.12 Final date for disbursements:** 30/11/2011

2. Overall Objective and Project Purpose

2.1 Overall Objective:

The overall objective is to enhance the coordination of the social security systems and to facilitate the institutional, legislative and administrative reforms in the field of social policy.

2.2 Project purpose:

- To streamline and strengthen processes of coordination of national plans for strategic reform in order to gradually align to European standards and reflects the joint objectives of access/adequacy and sustainability of social protection systems;

¹ "Beneficiary countries" includes Kosovo in the whole document

- To support the development of the legislative framework for implementing the revised social security policies;
- To modernise coordination techniques in line with the coordination principles developed by the Council of Europe and the EU (i.e. Convention on Social Security, EU regulations 1408/71 and 574/72);
- To facilitate the equal access to social security rights in general and more specifically in relation to the cost compensation schemes (health care, child benefits and social assistance);
- To improve the access to social protection for all vulnerable groups, especially for the displaced persons who do not have recognised refugee status;
- To set out the basis for removal of existing impediments to cross border payment of health care costs;
- To support the development of specific coordination techniques between regional social security systems in federal States;
- To improve the know-how of middle and upper level civil servants for the delivery of cross-border social welfare;
- To improve the capacity by targeted training for specialised professions in the field of social security and cross border social security.

2.3 Link with AP/NPAA/EP/ SAA:

Accession Partnerships:

- *Croatia*: "Reinforce administrative structures for coordination of social security schemes" is one of the Medium-Term priorities under Free movement of Workers.

- *the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*: "Develop sufficient administrative capacity to implement the Community rules on the coordination of social security schemes" is one of the Medium-Term priorities under Free movement of Workers.

- *Turkey*: "Further develop social protection, notably by consolidating the reform of the social security and pension system with a view to financial sustainability, while strengthening the social safety net" is one of the Medium-Term priorities under Social Policy and Employment.

European Partnerships:

- *Albania*: "to take measures to improve social protection systems and to combat social exclusion" is one of the Short-term priorities under the economic requirements.

- *Bosnia & Herzegovina*: no specific mention to the development of the coordination of the social security schemes, but one of the key priorities is "to implement a comprehensive action plan for public administration reform."

- *Serbia*: "Further develop and implement the reform of the pension system and continue the reform of the health insurance system" is one of the Short-term priorities under the economic requirements

2.4 Link with MIPD:

The Social Security Coordination Programme is described in details in the Multi-Beneficiary MIPD under the priority "Public Administration".

3. Description of project**3.1 Background and justification:**

The efforts of all beneficiary countries to reform their social systems and competent institutions are hampered by a number of common severe handicaps, although the individual performance of each country is different.

It should be acknowledged that the beneficiary countries have engaged in a serious commitment to reform their social set up and services. Moreover they showed a willingness to intensify the regional cooperation for the facilitation of cross-border payments at the occasion of the 1st Ministerial Conference held in Zagreb in March 2006.

However, more support is needed to develop appropriate and effective policy plans to improve the social sector.

Particular attention has to be paid to improve social security legislation, creating a sustainable funding system and the definition of clear criteria to provide social assistance, with an effort to homogenise the standards of assistance throughout the region.

Moreover, social support networks and social institutions are in urgent need of upgrading their capacity in terms of human resources, equipment and infrastructures.

In addition to their individual national efforts, partner countries would benefit from a regional approach to develop labour market and social security policies.

3.2 Assessment of project impact, catalytic effect, sustainability and cross border impact:

Impact assessment conducted in February 2007

A report was produced by the Council of Europe in February 2007 about the effective impact of activities organised within the 1st phase of the Programme.

Every activity has been screened to identify their real impact and the cascade effect of their implementation on the beneficiaries. Although it is too early to measure the effect of the programme on the target groups, the one on the beneficiaries is already identifiable. The summer schools have already proved their effectiveness by providing an "academic" impact which enable civil servants and workers from social institutions to get a solid knowledge about the challenges of the coordination of social security schemes.

Beyond the pure training component, the summer schools have established a network of specialists working in the same field in different countries of the region. Such horizontal contacts had ceased as a consequence of the recent troubles and most of the communications between institutions had been interrupted. The re-establishment of such a network is of the utmost importance as large numbers of cases related to social security coordination have been left unsolved in the absence of a strong cooperation between the relevant institutions.

3.3 Results and measurable indicators:

- National platforms for social policies are functioning;
- Plans for strategic reform in the social protection system are developed and approved;
- The legislative framework is improved;
- Legislative & institutional modifications are suggested to the coordination principles in the beneficiary countries;
- Social security rights for the vulnerable groups (better access to rights, specific treatment of displaced persons, identification of health, family benefits...) have improved;
- Barriers for cross border reimbursement of social security costs have decreased;
- The legislative and institutional framework regarding the coordination of social security systems have been modified and improved;
- Training materials have been improved;
- Number of trained civil servants in the field of coordination of social policies;
- Bilateral and multi lateral social protection agreements are signed.

3.4 Activities:

All activities will be implemented by means of one Contribution Agreement concluded with the Council of Europe. The organisation will make available a co-financing of €222.000 (10% of the eligible project costs).

Two types of activities are foreseen to improve the institutional capacity by targeted training for specialised professions in the field of social security and cross border social security: summer schools, national training events and study tours.

Summer Schools

This activity is one of the main components of the Programme. The target group is broad and includes civil servants, managers of social institutions, social partners, politicians and NGOs staff. A 2 weeks intensive course during summer time is foreseen and it will focus on social policy and social security as a whole. Each country can send no more than 5 participants.

National Training Events

These training sessions aim at providing know-how for middle and upper level civil servants in the field of delivery of cross border social welfare. The following topics are an example of the types of training which will be delivered to the civil servants:

- Perspectives on social security coordination;
- Personal scope and principles of social security coordination;
- Principles of applicable legislation;
- Pension benefits;
- Unemployment benefits;
- Health care benefits;
- Social security coordination.

Besides these 2 activities, other types of actions will aim at improving the legislative and institutional framework regarding the coordination of regional social security systems:

National reports

These reports are prepared by the experts and present a brief overview of the present and the expected future state of social security in the beneficiary countries. Most of the countries

situations have been reviewed during the 1st phase of the Programme. It is expected to update these reports and to undertake the same study for Turkey in the second phase. These reports are especially useful for social workers and civil servants dealing with legal migrant workers.

Experts Meetings

Specific studies are undertaken by experts to advise their governments on important problems and issues of social sector reform. Strategic memoranda are written to identify each country's main problems and issues in the field of social sector reform, as well as a single strategic memorandum to identify (i) goals of social policy reform valid throughout the region and (ii) common activities to be pursued by the beneficiary countries towards those goals.

Website

A website of the Programme has been created as a source of information about activities and achievements of the Programme, and to provide an easy access to relevant legislation, international conventions etc.

As this instrument is recognised by the authorities as a reference tool for the civil servants, it is foreseen to maintain it in this second phase of the programme and to envisage an exit strategy, in order to enable this website to remain active after the end of the project.

Speaking Days

To address the problem of an insufficient cooperation between institutions from the Western Balkans, without which many cases involving more than one country cannot be solved, the best practice of "Speaking Days" between 2 countries was adopted during the 1st phase of the Programme.

This practice entails that:

- in local newspapers it is advertised that people with unresolved social security claims involving the 2 participating countries are invited to register and, on a certain date, to put their case forward for review, discussion and, if possible, solution.
- on the appointed day, a number of small teams of specialists from both participating countries are constituted to work, in parallel to each other, to receive claimants and to review and resolve their claims.

Ministerial Conferences

The 1st Ministerial Conference took place in Zagreb in March 2006. During the meeting, all the Ministers of Labour or Health of the Western Balkans signed the so-called Zagreb Declaration, expressing:

- the regional need for further institutional, legislative and administrative reforms in the field of social policy,
- the hope that the European Institutions will continue to support this reform process,
- the participating countries' will to enhance cooperation between them by updating their legislation as well as their coordination practices.

The success of this Conference led to the organisation of a second one which will take place in October 2007 in Tirana, where the same Ministers will take stock of progress achieved and will further commit to the enhancement of coordination between the countries.

It is foreseen to use this Ministerial Conference as an instrument which will be part of the activities of the Programme and will enable the countries to go always further in their commitment for a better coordination of the social security systems. The second phase of the

Programme will include Turkey and this country has already informed the Council of Europe of their wish to participate in this type of exercise.

3.5 Conditionality and sequencing:

- Governments willing to pursue and commit themselves to the reforms in the social sector;
- Willingness of authorities to support the development of the legislative framework for the social security and social policies as a priority.

3.6 Linked activities:

Regional projects are also implemented in the field of social inclusion for the refugees and the displaced persons as well as for the Roma and the marginalised groups:

- CARDS 2006 project for the Refugee return and the provision of legal assistance to the displaced persons implemented by UNHCR
- CARDS 2006 project for the Roma and the marginalised groups (call for proposals in the pipeline).

3.7 Lessons learned:

Two monitoring missions have been undertaken for the first phase of the Programme. The findings of the two monitoring reports will be taken into consideration for the design of the second phase of the programme.

- The first monitoring report (August 2006) was very sceptical regarding the progress of the 1st phase of the programme. It gave some recommendations to reshape the project which was deemed too ambitious.

- Some measures were taken to readjust the activities and the objectives of the project. The second monitoring report (April 2007) was more positive and recognises that the project has established the initial stages of a functional network of mid level servants, with increased awareness and capacity.

It also stated that *"the project started too early to capitalise on partner countries goodwill and policies to coordinate social policy. However, with a focused, long-term approach, the follow-up project should achieve meaningful impact by 2010, and help deliver cross-border social welfare rights to thousands of beneficiaries"*.

One of the main recommendations of the second monitoring report was the necessity of a second phase for the programme and to avoid a gap between the current project and the subsequent project.

4. Indicative Budget (amounts in €):

Activities	TOTAL COST	SOURCES OF FUNDING										
		EU CONTRIBUTION				NATIONAL PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION				PRIVATE		
		Total	% *	IB	INV	Total	% *	Central	Regional	IFIs	Total	% *
Activity 1												
contract 1	2,222,000	2,000,000	90								222,000	10
TOTAL	2,222,000	2,000,000	90								222,000	10

Amounts net of VAT

* expressed in % of the Total Cost

5. Indicative Implementation Schedule (periods broken down per quarter):

Contracts	Start of tendering	Signature of contract	Project Completion
Contract 1	N.A.	December 2007	December 2010

6. Cross cutting issues

6.1 Equal Opportunity

The principle of equal opportunities should be taken into account when evaluating the quality of the project proposal. Specific attention will be paid to this dimension when determining who will benefit from summer school activities and training events.

While implementing the project activities and, to the extent applicable, the Council of Europe will try to assure that gender disaggregated data will be made available to carry out an analysis of the social and economic impact of the actions undertaken.

6.2 Environment

N.A.

6.3 Minorities

Rights of minorities will be taken into account when evaluating the quality of the project proposed. Specific attention will be paid to this dimension, especially since vulnerable groups (refugees, displaced persons, trafficked persons, Roma, national minorities...) are the main target beneficiaries of the project.

ANNEXES

- 1- Log frame in Standard Format
- 2- Amounts contracted and disbursed per Quarter over the full duration of Programme
- 3 - Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents:
 - Reference list of relevant laws and regulations
 - Reference to AP /NPAA / EP / SAA
 - Reference to MIPD

ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR PROJECT FICHE	REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL SECURITY COORDINATION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION REFORMS IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia including Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244) and Turkey)	
	Contracting Period expires: 30/11/2008	Disbursement period expires: 30/11/2011
	Total Budget: €2.222 million	IPA Budget: €2.0 million

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
To enhance the coordination of the social security systems and to facilitate the institutional, legislative and administrative reforms in the field of social policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved regional cooperation in the social sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation forms ▪ Minutes of the steering committee meetings ▪ Progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governments willing to pursue and commit themselves to the reforms in the social sector; ▪ Governments willing to engage in regional cooperation with regard to social policies and social security coordination
PROJECT PURPOSE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To improve the know-how of middle and upper level civil servants for the delivery of cross-border social welfare; ▪ To streamline and strengthen processes of coordination of national plans for strategic reform in order to gradually align to European standards; ▪ To support the development of the legislative framework for implementing the revised social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Functioning national platforms for social policies; ▪ Developed and approved plans for strategic reform in the social protection system; ▪ Draft Law elaborated by governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minutes & reports of the national platforms meetings; ▪ Evaluation forms. ▪ Draft of blueprints, legislative initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government's commitment to engage in the reform process and adapt correspondingly the institutional framework; ▪ Willingness of social partners to engage in regional cooperation; ▪ Willingness of authorities to support the development of the legislative framework for the social security and

<p>security policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To modernise coordination techniques in line with the coordination principles developed by the Council of Europe and the EU (i.e. Convention on Social Security, EU regulations 1408/71 and 574/72) ▪ To facilitate the equal access to social security rights in general and more specifically in relation to the cost compensation schemes (health care, child benefits and social assistance); ▪ To improve the access to social protection for all vulnerable groups, especially for the displaced persons who have not recognised refugee status; ▪ To set out the basis for removal of existing impediments to cross border payment of health care costs; ▪ To support the development of specific coordination techniques between regional social security systems in federal States; ▪ To improve the capacity by targeted training for specialised professions in the field of social security and cross border social security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suggested legislative & institutional modifications to the coordination principles in the beneficiary countries. ▪ Draft law elaborated by government concerning social security rights for the vulnerable groups (better access to rights, specific treatment of displaced persons, identification of health, family benefits...) ▪ End of barriers for cross border reimbursement of social security costs ▪ Modified and improved legislative and institutional framework regarding the coordination of regional social security systems ▪ Trained officials and administrators in the field of social security ▪ Developed training materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislative drafts; ▪ Progress reports ▪ Evaluation forms ▪ Progress reports ▪ Progress reports ▪ Draft of blueprints ▪ Progress reports ▪ Legislative initiatives ▪ Analytical reports ▪ Evaluation forms of the training programmes ▪ Training materials 	<p>social policies as a priority</p>
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved know-how of middle and upper level civil servants for the delivery of cross border social welfare / Improved institutional capacity for quality development and proficiency in the social sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of trained civil servants in the field of coordination of social policies; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bilateral agreements ▪ Progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government's commitment to reform social policies and relevant institutional framework and engage in regional cooperation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced cooperation on the reform and viability of the social sector by coordinating and monitoring social policies; ▪ Improved cross border cooperation in the field of social protection; ▪ Modernisation of the current co-ordination techniques used across the countries in the region in line with the co-ordination principles developed by the Council of Europe and the EU (i.e. Convention on Social Security, EU Regulations 1408/71 and 574/72), with a special attention for the persons working and/or staying temporary abroad. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signature of bilateral and multi lateral social protection agreements 		
ACTIVITIES	MEANS	COSTS	ASSUMPTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summer Schools ▪ SISP website ▪ Organisation of "Speaking Days" to solve individual cases of social security claimants involving 2 or more countries in the region. ▪ Glossaries ▪ Organisation of Ministerial Conferences aiming at the establishment of a regional legislative framework ▪ National Training Events ▪ National reports ▪ Study Tours 	<p>Contribution Agreement with the Council of Europe under joint management</p>	<p>€2.0 million</p>	

ANNEX 2: Indicative amounts (in €) contracted and disbursed by quarter for the project

Contracted	4th 2007	1st 2008			
Social Institutions Support Programme	2.000.000				
Cumulated	2,000,000				
Disbursed	4th 2007	1st 2008	3rd 2009	1st 2010	3rd 2011
Social Institutions Support Programme	0	600,000	500,000	700,000	200,000
Cumulated	0	600,000	1,100,000	1,800,000	2,000,000

Annex 3: Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents:

- Multi-Beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2007/2009), SEC(2007)749 of 29.05.2007;
- Council decision of 23/01/2006 (2006/35/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey;
- Council decision of 20/02/2006 (2006/145/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Croatia and repealing Decision 2004/648/EC;
- Council decision of 30/01/2006 (2006/57/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and repealing Decision 2004/518/EC;
- Council decision of 30/01/2006 (2006/55/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina and repealing Decision 2004/515/EC;
- Council decision of 30/01/2006 (2006/54/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania and repealing Decision 2004/519/EC;
- Council decision of 30/01/2006 (2006/56/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo as defined by the UNSCR 1244 of 10/06/1999, and repealing Decision 2004/520/EC;