



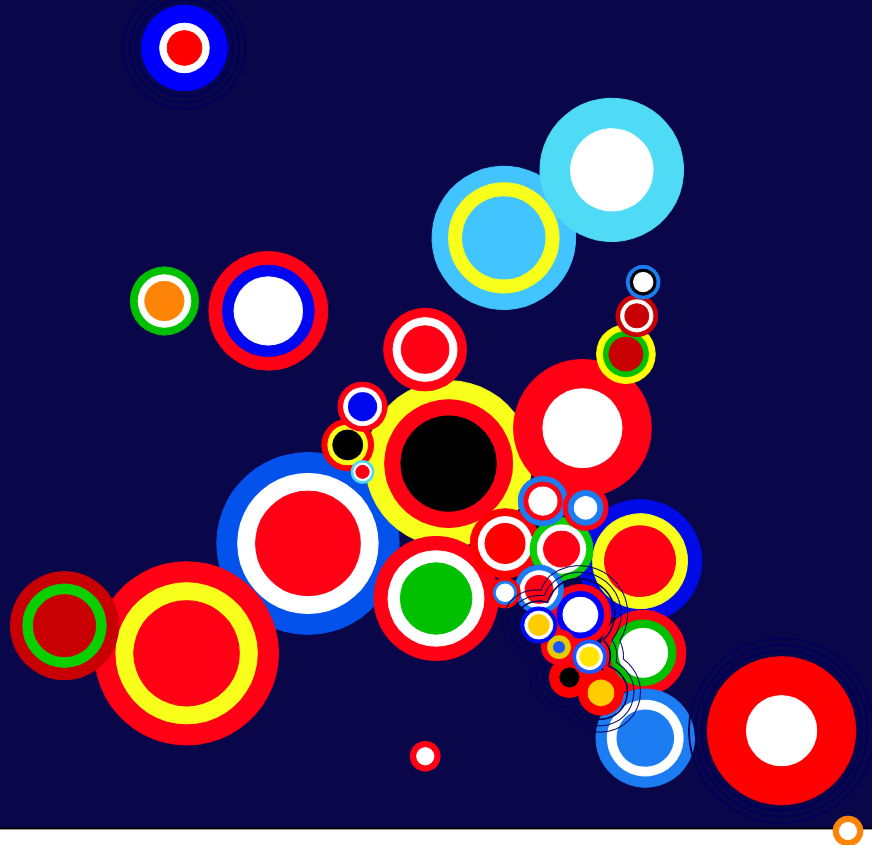
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General Neighbourhood and Enlargement
Negotiations DG NEAR

D – WESTERN BALKANS

D.5 – WESTERN BALKANS REGIONAL COOPERATION AND
PROGRAMMES

IPA
MULTI-COUNTRY PROGRAMMES:
ACTIVITY REPORT:
JULY - DECEMBER 2016



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CONTACT

For any comments or suggestions on this Activity Report, notably on the length of the documents and details provided, please contact us by sending an e-mail to the following general inbox: NEAR-D5@ec.europa.eu.

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.

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
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 Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
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 Committee for Truth and Reconciliation
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: DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

1.1 SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (SIGMA)

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2015, IPA 2014/031-603
Project title:	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) in the Western Balkans and Turkey
EU contribution:	EUR 18.00 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with OECD
Contract reference:	CN 2015/360-644
Duration of activities:	01/07/2015 – 30/06/2018
Links:	http://www.sigmaweb.org
Contact :	Alberto Costa, alberto.costa@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 the EU *acquis*. areas of intervention are: (1) Strategic framework of PAR, (2) Policy development and co-ordination, (3) Civil service and human resource management, (4) Accountability, (5) Services delivery, (6) Public financial management (PFM) including public procurement (PP) and external audit.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

In all the beneficiary countries, SIGMA contributed to an enhanced functioning of public administration and development of capacities in line with the Principles of Public Administration. SIGMA has notably provided support with: (a) improving public consultation practices, reviewing and drafting commentary on the Code of Administrative Procedures and initiation of the Regulatory Impact Assessment reform in Albania; (b) developing of concept papers for laws on salaries, civil service, organisation of public administration and administrative disputes, the Better Regulation

Strategy and the Strategy for Improving Policy Planning and Coordination in Kosovo^{*}; (c) improving managerial accountability in Montenegro and Serbia; (d) further implementing internal control practices and regulations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey; (e) strengthening capacity of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey; (f) drafting amendments to the PP law and developing the public-private partnerships and concessions chapter of the PP Strategy as well as the competency model for senior civil servants in Montenegro; (g) drafting commentary on the draft PP Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina; (h) improving the quality of reports on the implementation of the PAR Strategy in Serbia; (i) the preparation of the PFM Strategy in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; (l) developing indicators for measuring outcome of the PFM Strategy and improving the monitoring of sector strategies in Albania; (m) developing indicators for the PAR Strategy in Montenegro; (n) developing the PAR and PFM Strategic Framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In addition, SIGMA also continued to work on SIGMA analytical papers which provide the beneficiaries with guidance on: (a) good practices, methodologies and tools for public procurement; and (b) co-operation between Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) and parliamentary committees. Moreover SIGMA reviewed the PAR monitoring framework used for the SIGMA regular assessments and has started the preparation of the 2017 assessment. Finally, SIGMA participated in and contributed to the policy dialogue on PAR in Kosovo, providing technical support to the policy discussions.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- The 4th Regional Conference on Public Internal Financial Control (September, Montenegro).
- A regional roundtable on the independence of SAIs (September, Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- A regional conference for SAIs in the partner countries, a seminar for the Chambers of the Turkish Court of Accounts on formulating audit opinions and a seminar for procurement specialists on the new Concessions Directive (September-November, Turkey).
- A seminar on the Principles of Public Administration and the main public administration reform challenges of Serbia for civil society organisations (December, Serbia).
- Specific analyses on PAR data gaps for all EU Enlargement countries.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The main activities planned for next semester include the following:

- A full assessment measuring progress against the Principles of Public Administration in all Enlargement countries since the 2015 Baseline Measurement.
- A comparative study on the functioning of the centres of government in the EU Enlargement countries on the basis of the SIGMA Baseline Measurement reports.

* In the following text, in its entirety, this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

- Publication of SIGMA Papers, including Papers on public procurement framework agreements, the selection of economic operators, and on relations between Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) and parliamentary committees.

SIGMA will also continue to provide country-specific assistance to strengthen the functioning of public administration in all the beneficiary countries.

1.2 PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Strengthening Accountability and the Fiduciary Environment (SAFE TF)

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2010/022-028 and IPA 2015/031-609
Project title:	Strengthening Accountability and the Fiduciary Environment (SAFE), EU Single-Donor Trust Fund
EU contribution:	EUR 1.00 million + EUR 3.00 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Administration Agreement with the World Bank
Contract reference:	CN 2011/258-142 and CN 2016/369-168
Duration of activities:	21/12/2010 – 20/04/2019
Links :	www.worldbank.org/
Contact :	Rodolfo Lazarich Gener, rodolfo.lazarich-gener@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The overall objective of this Trust Fund is to improve the status of public financial management (PFM) in participating beneficiary countries in a systematic way through: a) improving understanding of PFM status in target beneficiaries; b) supporting design, implementation and management of PFM, taking account of governments' and donors' PFM objectives and the intended mid- to long-term impact; and c) developing knowledge and experience on PFM reform to strengthen reform effectiveness and focus development partner support.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

The following projects were under implementation, most of them in the inception phase:

Regional: Enhancing Public Spending, Transparency and Performance

Albania: PEFA 2016/17

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Enhancing the Implementation of Public Procurement in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Regional: Strengthening Financial Management Functions of Line Ministries

Regional: Internal Audit Training of Trainers Program (IA ToT)

Regional: Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny in Western Balkans Countries

Turkey: Deepening the Implementation of Public Sector Internal Audit Reforms

Kosovo: Strengthening Office of the Auditor General capacities in carrying out Value for Money audits of procurement, compliance audit and procurement post reviews for MDBs

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Regional: Enhancing Public Spending, Transparency and Performance

- e-Procurement Forum final report.

Regional: Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny in Western Balkans Countries

- Platform designed to bring together committee clerks and Parliamentary Budget Office officials.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Albania: PEFA 2016/17

- Training on the new PEFA methodology February 2017
- Draft PEFA Assessment report available for peer reviewing in June-July 2017.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Enhancing the Implementation of Public Procurement in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- Technical assistance for the Development of e-procurement performance indicators and governance red flags; the upgrading of the e-procurement system with new e-procurement tools and functionalities; and for harmonization of e-procurement with e-archiving and e-appeals.

Regional: Strengthening Financial Management Functions of Line Ministries

- Risk Management Guidelines customised and revised
- Workshops to line ministries' officials on risk management in March

Regional: Internal Audit Training of Trainers Program (IA ToT)

- Establishing the IA ToT Community of Practice and developing the programme outline

Regional: Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny in Western Balkans Countries

- Surfacing and distilling regional practice and global knowledge
- Development of a toolkit/ knowledge product;

Turkey: Deepening the Implementation of Public Sector Internal Audit Reforms

- Survey among the internal audit units assessing the level of implementation of reforms (existing regulations and guidance materials, most challenging work areas of internal auditors, level of involvement of high level managers, etc)
- Study tour 10 senior internal auditors and the Internal Audit Coordination Board (IACB) representatives to the UK

Kosovo: Strengthening Office of the Auditor General capacities in carrying out Value for Money audits of procurement, compliance audit and procurement post reviews for MDBs

- Recruitment of the consultant services to review and analyse PEFA results, review the procurement position in Kosovo and analyse existing laws and regulations that impact on a compliance audit of Procurement and Non Procurement activity.

Strengthening Economic Governance and Public Financial Management

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014 / 031-603
Project title:	Strengthening Economic Governance and Public Financial Management
EU contribution:	EUR 8.00 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	PAGODA with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
Contract reference:	CN 2015/358-797
Duration of activities:	09/06/2015 – 08/06/2018
Links:	www.imf.org
Contact :	Rodolfo Lazrich Gener, rodolfo.lazarich-gener@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 PFM reform programmes.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Public Financial Management

Albania: Assessing fiscal risks, criteria for dealing with stalled projects, public investment selection and appraisal procedures.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Review of PFM reform strategies of the entities.

Montenegro: Support to the debt strategy implementation, cash and debt management.

Serbia: Support to the implementation of some PFM reforms and follow-up work with treasury including arrears problem.

Regional: A workshop to Minister of Finance officials on improving public investment management.

Revenue Administration

Albania: VAT refund and debt collection, compliance risk management - risk analysis, assistance on arrears collection.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Technical assistance to improve audit efficiency of tax administration.

Kosovo: Support to the merger process of tax and customs administrations.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Review of large taxpayer offices, TA Reform planning.

Montenegro: Arrears management, cleansing the taxpayer register and filing enforcement, compliance risk management, reform progress assessment.

Serbia: Management info system, review of large taxpayer offices, establishment of a Taxpayer Service Department within the Serbian Tax Administration.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

The following technical assistance reports, describe the advice provided to the beneficiaries:

Public Financial Management

- Albania: Fiscal Risk Management and Oversight of State-Owned Enterprises and Local Governments; Public Investment Management Follow up.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Review of PFM reform strategies
- Montenegro: Medium-Term Debt Strategy
- Serbia: Roadmap to Accrual Accounting

Revenue Administration

- Albania: Tax Administration Debt Management
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Improving Performance in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Tax Administration; Improving Risk Profiling System; Improving Performance in the Indirect Taxation Authority.
- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Diagnostic of the Public Revenue Office's Tax Audit Program; Improving Governance and Reform Management in the Public Revenue Office
- Kosovo: Merger of Tax and Customs. Project Management
- Montenegro: Managing a Reform Agenda and Implementing a Tax Compliance Risk Management Plan; Delivering Assistance on Cleansing the Taxpayer Register; Strengthening Debt Collection and Reducing the Stock of Tax Arrears
- Serbia: Tax Administration Diagnostic Assessment Tool (TADAT); Revenue Administration Modernization: Implementing a Risk Management Unit.

The technical assistance provided during different expert missions has supported the implementation of the PFM reform programmes and has contributed to improved public finances management, including revenue administration, and.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Indicative Action Plan June 2016 – April 2017

Public Financial Management

Regional	Public Investment Management and PPPs Frameworks workshop
Albania	Advice and follow up recommendations related to the implementation of the PFM reform strategy; fiscal transparency evaluation, strengthening the medium-term budget framework, credibility of budget forecasting, and fiscal risk monitoring; and analysis and public investment management.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Review medium-term frameworks and budget preparation practices at the State and entity levels, and provide guidance on changes needed to support the reduction of fiscal deficits and initiating fiscal consolidation. Assist the authorities at State and entity levels to prepare appropriate PFM reform programs and develop consensus over the content of the Bosnia-wide PFM strategy. Provide support to further strengthen fiscal reporting and fiscal risk management and analysis.
Kosovo	Follow up on public investment management assessment recommendations. Provide advice on strengthening the credibility of the budget and the medium-term expenditure framework
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Provide advice on the analysis and management of fiscal risks. strengthening expenditure controls, particularly those related to the management of multi-year contracts linked to public investment projects
Montenegro	Provide advice on establishing spending reviews and other budgetary techniques to help identify sustainable consolidation measures to support debt reduction. Follow up support in developing the debt reduction strategy for 2017-2019. Provide a gap analysis against IPSAS accrual
Serbia	Provide support to the review and follow up of PFM reforms, notably the establishment of the reform monitoring framework and donor consultation mechanisms. Provide strategic support to the implementation of the road map towards accrual accounting. Support in improving the coverage and content of general government fiscal reporting using FMIS. Strengthening the framework and procedures for managing multi-year commitments

Revenue Administration

Regional	
Albania	Performance assessment of tax administration using the TADAT methodology; and VAT gap analysis. Assist with implementing the new organisation structures. Tax arrears management and compliance risk management
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Performance assessment of the RS and Bosnia and Herzegovina tax administrations using the TADAT methodology. Supporting the implementation of modern compliance risk management. Strengthen the analytical and strategic capacity in the area of risk management. Implementation of a new VAT and excise IT system
Kosovo	Provide guidance on the Tax and Customs administration merger
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Performance assessment of tax administration using the TADAT methodology. Assisting with designing and implementing a tax administration reform strategy. Improving disputes resolution, strengthening audit, and supporting other priorities. Improving compliance risk management.
Montenegro	Undertaking diagnostic review of certain tax administration components and providing advice on the way forward in reform efforts taking into account the findings of the TADAT. Strategic management and governance, core business processes, and compliance management. VAT filing and payment compliance; register cleansing and maintenance; arrears management; large taxpayer administration.
Serbia	Providing advice on the way forward in reforming the tax administration, following the TADAT. Supporting the implementation of new organisation structures and modern compliance methodology. Supporting the new risk management unit. Supporting efforts to strengthen tax arrears management. Supporting other relevant tax administration efforts to improve compliance risk management.

1.3 REGIONAL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (RESPA)

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA II 2015/031-609
Project title:	Support to the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) in its efforts to contribute to the Public Administration Reform under the EU integration process in the Western Balkans
EU contribution:	EUR 3.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant contract
Contract reference:	CN 2016/373-854
Duration of activities:	01/07/2016 – 01/07/2018
Links:	http://www.respaweb.eu
Contact :	Inma Perez-Rocha, perez-rocha.maria-inmaculada@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The principal aim of ReSPA is to help improve regional cooperation among the Western Balkans public administrations on three pillars: European Integration, Public Administration Reform and Governance for Growth; to strengthen administrative capacities as required by the European integration process; and to develop human resource capacities.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Following the overall ReSPA strategic approach, the implemented activities are directly linked to at least one of the three pillars. During the reporting period, in total more than 500 participants attended 35 training activities devoted to legal harmonisation with the EU *acquis*, management of EU sector budget support programmes, and meetings of regional working groups on various PAR topics such as public private partnership, e-government, public procurement, quality management in public administration, general administrative procedures and administrative justice, better regulation, human resources management and development, public internal financial control. All these activities have taken place either at ReSPA in Montenegro or in other ReSPA member countries.

ReSPA organised in Podgorica, Montenegro its 9th Annual conference on 15-16 November 2016 with 160 participants devoted to the topic 'Optimisation of Public Administrations in Western Balkans'. ReSPA organised other regional conferences on the following topics: Managing the Implementation of PAR strategies (in ReSPA in Montenegro), Better Regulation and Competitiveness (in Belgrade, Serbia), and on Administrative Justice (in Podgorica, Montenegro). In order to enable discussion at these conferences, ReSPA timely prepared regional comparative studies and analytical papers with baseline analyses.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

During the reporting period ReSPA developed the following comparative studies/ analytical papers:

- Comparative Study on Optimisation of Public Administration in Western Balkans;
- Analytical Paper on Management of Implementation of PAR Strategies;
- Regional Comparative Study on Better Regulation and Competitiveness.

All documents are available on the ReSPA web site: <http://www.respaweb.eu/11/library#respa-publications-2016-7>

ReSPA activities contributed to better cooperation among public administrations in Western Balkans and enhanced regional dialogue on specific topics within public administration reform processes and European integration.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Following ReSPA Work Programme 2016-17, ReSPA will continue with already started activities devoted to support the technical secretariats of National Investment Commissions, training on translation of EU *acquis*, EU budget support, as well as on specific topics within the human resources management area such as coaching and secondment. All regionally established working groups composed of public officials and civil servants will continue their work on different areas of PAR.

ReSPA will also develop a baseline study on quality management in public administration and services.

1.4 STATISTICAL COOPERATION

Support for Improvement in Statistics

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2014/032-064
Project title:	Statistical cooperation for the Western Balkans and Turkey
EU contribution:	EUR 8 million (of which 7.8 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 5.3 million Grant to MONSTAT, Montenegro, EUR 0.54 million Grant to State Statistical Office of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, EUR 0.64 million Grant to Statistical Office of Serbia, EUR 0.75 million Grant to Turkish Statistical Institute, EUR 0.56 million
Duration of activities:	Service contract 01/11/2015 – 30/09/2017 Grants 01/10/2015 – 31/08/2017
Links:	http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/our-partners/cooperation
Contact:	Torbioern Carlquist, Torbioern.Carlquist@ec.europa.eu Bernd Wild, bernd.wild@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The overall objective is to prepare the statistical authorities in the beneficiaries 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.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Under the service contract the first progress meeting took place mid-July 2016.

Statisticians from all the enlargement countries attended Eurostat working groups and training courses in a wide number of statistical fields. International experts provided advice to statisticians in the beneficiaries, either in workshops common for the whole region, or directly in the premises of each statistical office through expert missions. A total of 20 statisticians from all beneficiaries were on IPA traineeships in Eurostat and in statistical offices in selected EU Member States from September to December 2016. Beneficiaries of the grants continue the work in the pilot projects.

Six workshops were organised for statisticians from the enlargement countries, such as workshops on price statistics, crime statistics, adult education survey, short term statistics, crop statistics, and quality management in statistics.

The IPA 2015 MBP project on statistical cooperation was contracted with one service contract and four grant agreements (same countries as in IPA 2014) signed in November-December 2016. The total amount is EUR 15.8 million, of which EUR 9.8 million for the service contract. Implementation will start on 1 April 2017 (service contract) and 1 July 2017 (grants).

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Mission reports of experts show that statisticians in the region continue to learn more about the EU standards in statistics. Activity reports from around 300 participants from the 3 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo) under the service contract 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 (Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey), which are benefitting from a grant, also took part in these activities and described their experiences in mission reports.

Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia submitted interim grant reports beginning of December 2016. The remaining two countries benefitting from a grant asked for the postponement in submitting the interim reports and requests for further pre-financing (Turkey and Montenegro). The submitted reports were still being checked by Eurostat at the end of 2016.

Documentation of statistical sources and methods continued.

Data delivery compatible with common standards has increased over the reporting period.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Under the service contract the draft version of the second progress report is due mid-February 2017 and the second progress meeting is planned before the end of February 2017.

Many 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 24 different pilot projects.

A total of 14 statisticians from beneficiaries are planned to be on traineeships in Eurostat and in statistical offices in selected EU Member States from January to June 2017.

The inception phase for the forthcoming service contract under IPA 2015 MBP will start in the second quarter of 2017.

1.5 CUSTOMS AND TAXATION

Programme reference:	European Integration Facility under Multi-beneficiary programme for the year 2015 (2015/031-609), Action 5
Project title:	SEED Maintenance and Development
EU contribution:	EUR 898,160.00
Beneficiary region:	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Serbia
Type of contract:	Service Contract
Contract reference:	2016/374-941
Duration of activities:	22/07/2016 – 21/07/2018
Links:	http://www.eu-seed.net/
Contact :	gabriel.blanc@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The main aims of this project are:

- to continue with the support for the maintenance of the current SEED and INES+ infrastructures;
- to extend and improve application in the customs field, especially in terms of trade facilitation and law enforcement;
- to do the technical and organisational preparation of inspection agencies and other relevant authorities, in view of the future implementation of the SEED+ System.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

SEED Presentations delivered at:

- CEFTA's 10th Anniversary Conference, organised in Sarajevo on 6th September 2016;
- World Bank's TFA Workshop, organized in Belgrade on 16th November 2016.

With support of the EULEX, bilateral SEED technical meeting organised between Kosovo and Serbian Customs representatives at the Common Crossing Point Merdare.

Preparatory works related to the collection of data and identification of needs for future implementation of SEED+ (extension of SEED to non-customs administrations).

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

An entirely new SEED server infrastructure was installed in Skopje, as well as a new SEED module which allows the Customs Administration of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to register entry of consignments under Simplified Procedure regime at the border crossings with Albania, along with accompanying data matching algorithm.

New SEED Archive application, with much improved performances, deployed at all 6 SEED servers in the Region.

Systematic solution for SEED interconnectivity for the Common Transit Movements at the BCP Presevo (RS) – Tabanovce (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) has been implemented and will be used for all other BCPs in the Region (when other Beneficiaries join the Common Transit Convention).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Finalisation of site visits to all relevant Governmental Authorities in Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo, as well as, producing of the comprehensive Report on needs assessment for the SEED+.

Finalisation of Feasibility Studies for extension of the SEED.

Finalisation of development of the ATA module and other improvements required from Beneficiary Administrations by using of the new SEED technological platform.

The first SEED Workshop for Customs Beneficiaries and enhanced Steering Committee Meeting where representatives of technical inspections should participate and where needs assessment Report prepared by the experts shall be adopted and approved.

CHAPTER 2: RULE OF LAW AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

In the area Rule of Law, the beneficiaries need in particular to join forces and cooperate to fight organised crime. This involves strengthening cooperation with international law enforcement organisations operating in criminal justice, police investigations and witness protection. IPA assistance in this area also encompasses transitional justice. The respect of human rights - including those of minorities – is a core European value enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. In the enlargement perspective, the protection of minorities and vulnerable groups effectively means complying with the Copenhagen political criteria. The EU has also identified policy areas and priorities relevant to the field of social inclusion in its enlargement strategy, e.g. the Regional Housing Programme.

2.1 FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	International Cooperation in Criminal Justice: the Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans
EU contribution:	EUR 5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with GIZ GmbH, in partnership with Center for International Legal Cooperation (CILC) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Contract reference:	CN 2014/350-650
Duration of activities :	19/11/2014 – 18/10/2017
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

To strengthen the operational capacity and capabilities of the Public/State Prosecutors' Offices in the beneficiaries, to prosecute and investigate serious and trans-border organised crime, including linked cases of illicit trafficking destined to the EU, in particular trafficking in firearms, drugs and human beings.

To prepare the beneficiaries for gradually applying the main provisions of the European Arrest Warrant.

To intensify the strategic and operational cooperation between the members of th Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans and the relevant European institutions in particular EUROJUST and EJNI.

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

In the reporting period, the project intensified its support to the beneficiaries in running cross-border cases. This support varied from advice about the drafting or processing of Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) requests, to facilitating contacts, organizing coordination meetings, technical advice, and financing of translations of evidence. In a number of cases, this support was rendered jointly with the IPA 2013 police project.

Furthermore, the training on various issues related to fighting organized crime and cross-border cooperation continued at a national level. Examples of such trainings are a JIT training in Kosovo, asset recovery and off-shore banking training in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, MLA training in Serbia and data protection and integrity training in Montenegro. At a regional level, a training for EUROJUST Contact Points was organized at the EUROJUST Headquarter in The Hague in the first week of July. In September, the second EJM Tools Correspondents meeting to discuss the input to the EJM website and the further development of the website of the Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans took place, followed by a regional EJM Contact Point meeting in October. The officially appointed EJM Contact Points also attended the EJM Plenary in Bratislava in November 2016. Finally, during the reporting period internships for prosecutors were organized: for two Albanian prosecutors in Cologne in July 2016, for two Kosovar prosecutors in Celle and Hannover in December 2016, for one Macedonian prosecutor in Sofia in October 2016, and for one Macedonian prosecutor in Frankfurt in October 2016

OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2016)

- Prosecutors, police and associates were trained on various topics related to fighting organized crime and cross-border cooperation in Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia;
- Website of Prosecutors' Network of Western Balkans further developed and input provided to EJM website;
- Many regional and sub-regional cross-border organized crime cases further supported. In the reporting period this resulted in 336 arrests, numerous weapons confiscated, 1,18 mln EURO confiscated, 845 kg of various drugs confiscated and several organized crime networks dismantled;
- Two meetings of Tools Correspondents organized;
- EJM Contact Points participated at the EJM plenary meeting in Bratislava in November;
- Hardware procured for Macedonian Ministry of Justice, necessary to run the LURIS system;
- 4 Internships organized for in total 2 Albanian, 2 Kosovar and 2 Macedonian in Germany and Bulgaria.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continued support to (regional) cross-border organized crime investigations (operational meetings, advice to MLA, translations, etc.);
- Internships for prosecutors in Germany, Netherlands and other EU MS will be continued;
- EUROJUST National members's working visits to Western Balkans;
- Tools Correspondents' meeting;
- Installation of 'LURIS' in Ministry of Justice of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- EJM Plenary meeting in Malta;
- Further development of the website of the Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans;
- Different national trainings on confiscation, MLA and language courses.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Fight against organised crime and corruption: international cooperation in criminal justice in the Western Balkans
EU contribution:	EUR 5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Delegation Agreement with the Italian Ministry of the Interior, Public Security Department
Contract reference:	CN 2014/341-116
Duration of activities:	12/07/2014 – 11/07/2017
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

To improve international law enforcement strategic and operational cooperation among beneficiaries as well as between beneficiaries, EU Member States and EU/regional/international law enforcement organisations, through the support of international investigations and prosecutions, the promotion of secured exchange of information and intelligence, the use of modern communication technology and data protection mechanisms aligned to EU standards.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

1 investigation, among those financed by the project, was awarded as the best investigations carried out in the first half of 2016 on the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre platform.

An assessment was done in the fields of exchange of information (Bosnia and).

Cooperation with EULEX, INTERPOL and OSCE was established.

- 22 transnational investigations proposed by Beneficiaries supported;
- 2 joint investigation teams supported. The Vanilla/Cube operation had a huge media response;
- 2 Crossborder coordination meetings in Vienna e Saint Petersburg;
- 1 workshop in Rome (Italy) at Direzione Nazionale Antimafia e Antiterrorismo for members of the Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina about system –exchange of information;
- 1 workshop in Rome (Italy) at “Scuola di Polizia Economica-Finanzaria” for experts from police units of beneficiaries about international cooperation on organised crime and money laundering ;
- 1 workshop in Tirana (Albania) about stolen vehicles;
- 1 workshop in Prevalle (Albania) on JITs.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Several investigative meetings between Beneficiaries and MS Law Enforcement Agencies;
- Donation of equipment worth of EUR 60,000 to Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Vehicle Identification Manual printed and presented to representative of police agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro;
- Several police and custom officers trained;
- Consortium Agreement with Croatia signed;
- 46 persons arrested, weapons, drugs, technology seized as result of supporting the investigations.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Follow-up on the selected investigations;
- Identification of regional criminal threats;
- Exercise on special investigative techniques;
- Continuation of support to bilateral and regional cases;
- Supporting skill development and acquisition of equipment by the Forensic Agencies.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2015/031-609.07
Project title:	Cooperation in Criminal Justice: Strengthening Witness Protection in the Fight against Organised Crime, Terrorism and Corruption (WINPRO III)
EU contribution:	EUR 5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Delegation agreement with Northern Ireland Co-operation Overseas (NI-CO)
Contract reference:	CN 2015/370-989
Duration of activities:	24/12/2015 – 23/12/2018
Links:	http://www.nico.org.uk
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to increase the number of witnesses of crime coming forward to denounce and report criminal acts and to collaborate with justice to get the perpetrators convicted. These witnesses (and also victims) need to be assured that their lives and livelihood are duly protected and secured throughout the region and abroad.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

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

- 1st Steering Committee Meeting took place on 11 October 2016 in Sarajevo, followed by a Regional Conference on 12 October 2016. It was attended by many senior officials from Police, Prosecution services, Courts and Prisons from the BCs across the region.
- Balkan Network Meeting took place in Kosovo (20-21 September 2016).
- Further work on legislation and public relations was carried out in Serbia.
- Support provided to the beneficiary delegates attending international events organised by Europol in London and ICC in The Hague (September 2016),
- Upon requests from the prosecution services – witness assessment courses for newly appointed prosecutors were organised in Skopje (September 2016) and Sarajevo (November 2016) as well as for other stakeholders e.g. investigators (Pristina, October 2016).
- Further work on bespoke witness protection data management software was carried out in Pristina and Skopje (November 2016) followed by a regional workshop on IT and internet security for witness protection, held in Sarajevo on 15-17 November 2016.
- Threat and Risk assessment course was organised for prosecutors and prison staff in Montenegro (5-9 December 2016).
- Further work on Human Resources management was carried out in Serbia and Montenegro (12-16 December 2016).

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- International relations within the region and between BCs Witness Protection Units and EU Member States strengthened, including better co-operation with Europol and ICC.
- Improved understanding of Witness Protection programmes, in particular witness assessment issues as well as related threat and risks, by prosecutors and other relevant stakeholders across the region.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- The work on Human Resources management will continue across the region.
- Judicial conference on WP related issues will be organised in February 2017.
- University accredited introductory WP course for new members of staff will be organised in March 2017.
- Work will commence on appropriate targeting/ identification of witnesses by prosecution and police at the early stages of investigations to bring more witnesses into the programme.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Strengthening National Integrity Systems in the Western Balkans and Turkey, and tracking developments of anti-corruption efforts
EU contribution:	EUR 1.71 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement with Transparency International
Contract reference:	CN 2014/339-583
Duration of activities:	01/05/2014 – 30/04/2017
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The implementing partner will carry out an institutional ‘health check’ in the Western Balkans and Turkey on the readiness of the countries to address corruption threats. This will be undertaken in form of the so-called National Integrity Systems (NIS) assessments, a methodology already tested in around 100 countries worldwide. In addition, a monitoring mechanism will be developed to track developments in each country in their fight against corruption.

ACTIVITIES (JULY– DECEMBER 2016)

- Transparency Serbia organised a regional workshop “Abuse of public resources for political campaigns” on 12 July 2016. The workshop enabled fruitful discussion and

sharing of experiences among participants on key problems in financing political parties, prevention of abuse of public resources for the purpose of election campaign and practice of public official's promotional activities during the campaign. The workshop gathered representatives from state bodies, CSOs and academia from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Turkey, but also representatives of Serbian Anti-corruption Agency, State Audit Institution, Commissioner for Information, political parties, non-governmental organizations, media and representatives of international organizations (OSCE Mission to Serbia, EC Delegation in Serbia) embassies and other stakeholders.

- A high-level conference organized by Transparency International Secretariat and dedicated to the launch of the National Integrity Systems Assessment Report in Albania took place on 8 September 2016. Around 60 participants attended the conference. The event was widely covered by the media. 170 copies of the report in Albanian and English were disseminated to main stakeholders and state institutions.
- MANS launched the National Integrity Systems report for Montenegro in August 2016. The report was used as a basis for strengthening advocacy in the following selected areas: Public procurement, political party financing, and the role of the State Election Commission in the parliamentary elections.
- The regional report "National Integrity Systems in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Priorities for Reform" had been developed and launched on 10 November 2016 in Brussels. It compares the findings of seven National Integrity System assessments implemented by Transparency International chapters and partners in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey between 2014 and 2015. 54 participants gathered at the launch event.
- Advocacy efforts at the national level were carried out by all partners throughout the reporting period. Advocacy highlights include the following activities: On 7 December 2016, Transparency International Bosnia and Herzegovina launched a policy paper titled "Management practices in the Civil Service in Bosnia and Herzegovina". Transparency International Kosovo presented an Anti-Corruption Documentary to high school and college students in Pristina and Prizren in December 2016. MANS accomplished that around 50% of recommendations have been incorporated in the draft Law on Public Procurement Administration. Transparency International Macedonia published a policy paper titled "State Election Commission - competencies and capacities for developing and effective maintenance of voter lists".

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Understanding of corruption risks by relevant stakeholders is improved;
 - Comprehensive anti-corruption assessments published and launched in Montenegro and Albania;

- Six policy papers focussing on particular areas where reform is most needed or achievable produced and four have been published;
- Regional cooperation and exchange of anti-corruption experience among stakeholders across countries is enhanced.
 - One regional workshops was organised in Serbia;
- Commitment and engagement of decision-makers to address identified corruption risks is increased
 - While the systematic monitoring of the uptake of recommendations of National Integrity Assessments will only commence in 2017, project partners based in Kosovo, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina already reported the implementation of a set of recommendations (eight, two, two and three recommendations respectively).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Data collection and trend analysis for the anti-corruption tracking mechanism in all beneficiary countries.
- Continued implementation of targeted national advocacy activities in line with the NIS assessment conducted in all beneficiary countries.
- Regional workshop on integrity of the business sector to be held in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in March 2017.
- Regional workshop on integrity of parliamentary work to take place in Montenegro in April 2017.
- Regional Conference on anti-corruption trends and innovation to be held in June 2017.
- Project Evaluation meeting to take place in June 2017

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:	01/01/2016 – 30/06/2019
Links:	ww.coe.int/cybercrime
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Action aims to assure that the Enlargement countries 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 (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

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

- 4 advisory missions and workshops on online fraud and other cybercrime reporting mechanisms in Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania with the aim at gathering specific information regarding online fraud and other types of cybercrime reporting in the project countries.
- Participation of the project team representative in UNODC-Council of Europe Expert Meeting: Cryptocurrencies Investigation Course. The purpose was to discuss existing and future initiatives regarding investigation courses related to cryptocurrencies and the Darknet.
- Support in participation of cybercrime investigators and specialised prosecutors from IPA region in the RISE-Finland 2016 event.
- Support in participation of cybercrime investigators and specialised prosecutors from IPA region at INTERPOL-Europol annual conference "Solutions for Attribution". The conference brought together representatives from law enforcement, private sector, academia and international organisations from across the world to enhance cooperation on cybercrime and discuss today's threats and trends, share best practice and explore the latest solutions with a view to enhancing the global response to cybercrime.
- Regional workshop on judicial training curricula on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds was organised in cooperation members of the Judicial Training Academies, judges, prosecutors and financial investigators from IPA region that aimed at reviewing the current state of judicial training curricula on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online proceeds in each project country/area.

^{*} Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are Parties. Turkey has not yet ratified it. The Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) assesses implementation of this treaty (www.coe.int/tcy).

[†] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are Parties. These States are monitored by MONEYVAL (www.coe.int/moneyval). Turkey has signed it.

- International Meeting on Cooperation with Multinational Service Providers aiming at facilitating discussion through a dialogue between the multinational services providers and the law enforcement agencies of the IPA region by focusing on various aspects of public-private cooperation in cybercrime and electronic evidence, such as providers' policies for data processing and law enforcement cooperation and other topics with the aim at improving such cooperation.
- Finalisation of a Tender Board special procurement procedure for selecting a long-distance master programme in cybercrime investigation and computer forensics for up to 14 law enforcement officers from the project countries/areas.
- T-CY/Octopus Conference on cooperation against cybercrime (Workshop 8 - Targeting proceeds from crime online). Workshop 8 of the conference was led by iPROCEEDS and focused on sharing experience and good practices on inter-agency cooperation and public-private cooperation targeting crime proceeds online, including training programmes in this field.
- Regional Workshop on Reporting Mechanisms: International Good Practices was attended by representatives of prosecutors, cybercrime, financial intelligence and financial investigators units as well as by representatives of Ombudsperson's offices, CERTs, Banks Association and Internet Service Providers from the region.
- Four workshops on inter-agency and international cooperation for search, seizure and confiscation of online crime proceeds in Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia aiming at giving a clear picture to participants on how to combine financial and cybercrime investigations at domestic level and in international cooperation and which are the fora for such cooperation.
- Regional workshop on Money Laundering Risks related to New Technologies, which addressed the ML/FT risks associated with New Payment Methods, such as prepaid cards, mobile payments, Internet-based payment services, as well as virtual currencies and stimulated discussion on implementing the risk-based AML/CFT regulations in this area.
- Second Project Steering Committee Meeting focused on drawing conclusions about the first 12 months of the project and on presenting and agreeing on the steps ahead for 2017, including approval of the Calendar of activities for 2017.

OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2016)

- Assessment of the reporting systems of cybercrime in the project countries and preliminary recommendations for the reform of the system, with the aim of improving inter-agency and private-public cooperation in exchanging cybercrime-related information were made available to the national project teams.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of investigators and prosecutors on the latest cybercrime trends and threats, tools and investigative techniques to fight cybercrime as well as improved detection and mitigation techniques.

- Enhanced capacity of the investigators on how to detect, identify, and collect intelligence and evidences in order to prosecute cybercrime and better cooperation among law enforcement officials worldwide.
- Agreement was reached on the structure of the basic and advanced modules on cybercrime, electronic evidence and search, seizure and confiscation of online crime proceeds that is to be developed / updated under the project and steps were defined to be taken in each project country/area in view of introducing these modules into the training curricula.
- Enhanced capacity of investigators and prosecutors to engage with multinational ISPs to gather evidence in criminal investigations and raised awareness on the delegates of tools such as the Council of Europe Octopus Community for enhancing public-private cooperation.
- Preparation of structured and documented procedures (domestic protocols) for inter-agency and international sharing of information and evidence that are auditable, simple and applied by cybercrime unit, financial investigation unit, FIU and Prosecution service in the search, seizure and confiscation of online crime proceeds.
- Understanding of the ML/TF risks associated with the NPMs and virtual currencies has been enhanced and knowledge related to the risk-based AML/CFT regulations and other risk mitigating measures as well as to the challenges related to the FIU powers to postpone suspicious transactions and domestic cooperation has been increased.
- The Project Workplan and Calendar of activities for 2017 was approved.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Review and validation of the Initial Situation Report by project team members
- Support participation in training activities and relevant meetings
- Online platform for legislation and court rulings: continuous update of country wikis for South-eastern Europe in the Octopus Community regarding legislation and jurisprudence.
- Workshop on online financial fraud and credit card fraud (Serbia)
- Support in participation in long-distance master programme (14 participants)
- Seven country visits to assess the national regulatory framework for obtaining and using electronic evidence in criminal proceedings (for all project countries/areas)
- Design of case simulation exercises on cybercrime and financial investigations
- Design of case simulation exercises on cybercrime and financial investigations (for each project country/area)
- Seven country visits to assess the guidelines to prevent and detect/identify online crime proceeds (in all project country/area)
- Translation of the training modules on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds

- Advisory mission and workshop for the setting up or improvement of reporting mechanisms (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Advice and workshop on the preparation of interagency cooperation protocols (Turkey)
- Advice and workshop on domestic protocols for international sharing of intelligence and evidence (Turkey)
- Advice and workshop on the preparation of interagency cooperation protocols (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Advice and workshop on domestic protocols for international sharing of intelligence and evidence (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Advisory mission and workshop for the setting up or improvement of reporting mechanisms (“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”)
- Regional training on virtual currencies and the dark web (EMPACT)
- Regional workshop on introductory training module on cybercrime and financial investigations for cybercrime, financial investigation units, FIUs and specialised prosecutors
- Development of an introductory training module on cybercrime and financial investigations for cybercrime, financial investigation units, FIUs and specialised prosecutors
- Advisory mission and workshop for the setting up or improvement of reporting mechanisms (Turkey)
- Advice and workshop on the preparation of interagency cooperation protocols (Albania)
- Advice and workshop on domestic protocols for international sharing of intelligence and evidence (Albania)
- Meeting to support existing public/private initiatives or establish such mechanisms at domestic level (Serbia).

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2015/358-127
Project title:	Measuring and assessing organised crime in the Western Balkans: supporting evidence-based policy making
EU contribution:	EUR 2 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant contract with UNODC
Contract reference:	CN 2015/358-127
Duration of activities:	01/04/2016 – 01/04/2019
Links:	www.unodc.org/brussels/en/organised-crime-western-balkans.html
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project will contribute to the strengthening of the rule of law through the fight against organised crime in the beneficiary jurisdictions by addressing the challenges with respect to

enhancing the understanding of the nature and evolution of organised crime. Specifically, the project will develop and implement a statistical framework for quantifying and analysing organised crime in the Western Balkans and to establish mechanisms to monitor it and produce an evidence-based analytical report.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

During this reporting period, the activities of the project centred on setting up the structures needed to develop the indicators for the statistical framework and carry out the research for the project.

The following activities have taken place:

- Statistical assistant on board as part of the UNODC project management team;
- Final proposals received and evaluations performed for the recruitment of the research partner to assist in the development of a statistical and analytical framework and to produce the analytical report;
- Four national project officers recruited in the region to liaise and assist the nominated focal points in every day project activities and steering of the national technical groups;
- First advisory committee meeting held. The meeting was attended by the nominated focal points from the beneficiary countries and territories, international experts and the European Commission, in addition to staff from UNODC. The advisory committee will guide the project and provide technical expertise for the development of the statistical framework and report;
- National technical groups (NTGs) established in each country and territory. The NTGs will provide expert advice and information on aspects of organised crime, be able to identify and provide relevant data sources, and participate in data collection activities.

OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2016)

- Focal points briefed during the first advisory committee meeting. Project explained in detailed as well as required activities for the next six months and their participation in data collection;
- Focal points introduced to the national programme officers assisting in each country and territory for the management of the activities and preparation of the first national technical group;
- All UNODC team on board, including national project officers to guide the development of the first draft of the statistical framework;
- Work plan for the project discussed and developed with the advisory committee as well as timeline for the activities planned in the next six months.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Research partner to be on board end of February;
- Literature and legislative review conducted to build the statistical framework and identify various definitions and activities that are classified as organised crime;
- Online project management platform up and running for sharing of information, documents and comments as well as timelines and relevant information to all stakeholders in the project;
- First National technical group meeting held in each country. The first meeting will present the project and outline the purpose of the group to all members and relevant agencies in charge of collecting data on organised crime;
- Data availability assessment performed in each country to serve as background of the development of the framework and identification of capacity building opportunities. Background report for each country on data availability, legislations in place and policies guided towards fighting organised crime;
- Data repository template to be developed and tested for first data collection run.

2.2 TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2016/373-757.
Project title:	Strengthening Regional News Exchange from the International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC)
EU contribution:	EUR 0.1 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with SENSE News Agency
Contract reference:	CN 2016/373-757
Duration of activities:	01/07/2016 – 31/12/2016
Links:	www.sense-agency.com
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

To inform the public on the work and mission of the ICTY, and to raise public support for cooperation with the ICTY and the domestic prosecution of war crimes.

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

- During the reporting period SENSE has continued coverage and audio-visual recordings of the presentation of defence case at Ratko Mladic trial, including the

presentation of final arguments of parties that marked the ending the General Mladic's trial. Trial judgement is expected in 2017. SENSE also covered the appellate proceedings in Karadzic, Seselj and Prlic and others cases, as well as the preparations of the retrial in Stanistic & Simatovic case that is expected to start before the judges of Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT) in the first half of 2017. Closely followed were developments in contempt of court indictments against three officials of the Serbian Radical Party, as well as all other judicial activities of the ICTY/MICT;

- With its daily reports and weekly TV programs, SENSE is the only news agency bringing to the region regular and reliable information on trials for war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and the work of the ICTY. [SENSE website](#) is a reference for international justice and human rights “watchers”, journalists, lawyers, academics, diplomats and general public.
- The aim of SENSE multimedia presentations, exhibitions and interactive narratives is to show how the crimes committed during the war in the former Yugoslavia 1991 - 1995 were investigated, reconstructed and prosecuted by the ICTY. During the reporting period SENSE produced and [promoted](#) its third Interactive Narrative (IN) [Targeting History and Memory](#) and set for the production fourth one that will present how the crimes committed in Kosovo in 1999 were investigated and prosecuted at the ICTY.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Around 150 daily reports and analysis in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian and English on one ongoing trial at the ICTY (Mladic), and other Tribunal's proceedings (retrial, appellate and contempt of the court proceedings);
- Production of 10 weekly TV updates entitled “TV Tribunal”, on trials and other developments at the ICTY . (720 in total since March 2000)
- SENSE has successfully launched its latest interactive narrative, Targeting History and Memory, in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo, Podgorica and Pristina. The events were hosted by the [The Humanitarian Law Center](#), in Belgrade, [Documenta](#) - Center for Dealing with the Past, in Zagreb, the [Museum of History of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), in Sarajevo, [Center for Civic Education in Podgorica](#) and [The Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo](#) in Pristina.
- Continued digitalisation of SENSE audio-visual trial archive;

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Reporting on the remaining trial, retrials, contempt cases, appellate proceedings and judgments at the ICTY; transfer of the archive, equipment and the activities to the SENSE Transitional Justice Center in Pula, Croatia; Production and launch of the ICTY Kosovo Trials Interactive narrative; further activities on the creation of network of local Documentation Centers all over the Western Balkans region.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2016/374-687
Project title:	ICTY Outreach Programme 2016-2017 – International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
EU contribution:	EUR 0.4 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with ICTY
Contract reference:	CN 2016/374-687
Duration of activities:	01/04/2016 – 31/03/2017
Links:	http://www.icty.org/en/outreach/home
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

To strengthen the Tribunal’s legacy as its mandate draws to a close and to ensure that people across the region of the former Yugoslavia have access to, understand and foster its legacy.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Organised a launch of the publication ‘15 years of Outreach at the ICTY’ in The Hague;
- Organised the English language premiere screening of the documentary ‘Crimes before the ICTY: Višegrad’ in The Hague;
- Continued implementation of the fourth cycle of the ‘Youth Outreach’ project;
- Organised university lectures about the ICTY and transitional justice in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro;
- Organised essay writing competitions for both high school and university students in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro;
- Continued production of the documentary ‘Crimes before the ICTY: Torture’: preparations, development, filming and archive footage selection;
- Initiated work on two additional video features: ‘Crimes before the ICTY: Srebrenica’ and a feature about the ICTY and its legacy;
- Created a series of seven multimedia, legacy related features to be promoted through Facebook and Twitter during 2017.
- Ensured further broadcast of Outreach documentaries on regional TV networks and on UN TV;
- Signed the MoU on the establishment of the Information Centre in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and continued negotiations on the establishment of the Information Centre in Srebrenica/Potočari, Bosnia and Herzegovina;

- Organised visits to the ICTY for students and professionals from around the world, including the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

- Held seven lectures at universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, which were attended by more than 275 students;
- Held a training on how to deliver high school presentations about the ICTY to five high school teachers from Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Held a 'train-the trainer' workshop in Zagreb for 14 activists of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR), an NGO in Croatia;
- Held two regional essay writing competitions, one for high school students and one for university students, which received a total of 133 entries by students from nearly 100 schools and universities from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro;
- Tens of thousands of citizens viewed the ICTY Outreach documentaries broadcast by local and regional TV networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia;
- Special features on the ICTY's Social Media channels were viewed over 30,000 times. Followers continued to increase steadily, with an average of 200 new followers per month on Facebook and Twitter (total over 1,200 new followers during reporting period).
- MoU signed on the establishment of the Information Centers in Sarajevo between the ICTY and the City of Sarajevo outlining the terms and conditions for the establishment of the Centre. The MoU exchange ceremony was held in the City Hall of Sarajevo at the end of November.
- Around 3,000 individuals visited the ICTY and received briefings on the work of the Tribunal and attended trials.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Planning and implementing activities related to the "ICTY Legacy Dialogues" initiative.
- Organising a large conference on the ICTY Legacy in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in June 2017, as part of the "ICTY Legacy Dialogues" initiative.
- Organisation of a four-day workshop for history teachers from the former Yugoslavia, in cooperation with 'Euroclio', to form a group of history teachers/educational authors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. The group will collaborate to devise an approach and methodology for responsible history education by utilising material available in the ICTY archive. The workshop will be held in The Hague in January;
- Completion of the documentary 'Crimes before the ICTY: Torture' and organisation of the public screenings in the region of the former Yugoslavia;
- Continue work on the production of the two features: 'Crimes before the ICTY: Srebrenica' and a documentary about 25 years of the ICTY and its legacy;

- English language premiere screening of the documentary ‘Dubrovnik and Crimes against Cultural Heritage’ in The Hague;
- Further broadcast of Outreach documentaries on regional TV networks and on UN TV;
- Organisation of visits to the ICTY for students and professionals from around the world, including the countries of the former Yugoslavia.
- Planning, initiating and fundraising for the final cycle of the “Youth Outreach” project that will focus on training local actors in the countries of the former Yugoslavia to deliver presentations about the work of the ICTY.

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
Project title:	Joint EU and ICTY Training project for National Prosecutors and Young Professionals from the Former Yugoslavia
EU contribution:	EUR 0.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement with United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY)
Contract reference:	CN 2015/ 357-561
Duration of activities:	01/04/2015 – 31/12/2016
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The objective is to strengthen the capacity of countries of the former Yugoslavia to effectively investigate and prosecute war crimes. Beneficiaries are the national prosecutors for domestic war crime cases and young professionals with a legal or other relevant background participate in the Action.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Final financial report for the previous Action submitted to the European Commission.
- Prosecutor submitted a request for continuation of the Action for the period 2017-2018.
- Interim financial and narrative report as well as request for pre-financing for the current Action submitted to the European Commission.
- Prosecutor submitted a request for no-cost extension of the current Action until 31 May 2017.
- EU Commission approved the request for no-cost extension of the current Action.

Visiting National Prosecutors

- Visiting National Prosecutors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia continue their work in the OTP.

- The OTP supported the Visiting National Prosecutors during searches for investigative material which will be used in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes in their respective countries.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2016)

Visiting National Prosecutors component

- 87 Requests for Assistance received.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Current Liaison Prosecutors will finish their participation in the Action on 31 December 2017.
- Activities regarding the continuation of Action for the period 2017-2018 will continue.
- New participants in the Action will arrive.

2.3 HUMAN RIGHTS AND MINORITY PROTECTION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2011/022-964
Project title:	Promoting Human rights and minority protection in South East Europe
EU contribution:	EUR 3.6 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement with the Council of Europe (CoE)
Contract reference:	CN 2011/277-251
Duration of activities:	29/11/2011 – 28/12/2016
Contact :	Emma Ascitti, emma.ascitti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

To improve access to rights for minorities in line with European minority protection standards and in particular the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the European Charter for Minority Languages (ECRML).

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

- Seven “Open day events” organized by the municipalities that developed small projects declared as elements of replicable good practice to present their success stories to peer municipalities on the national and regional level;
- Seven “Policy meetings” organized in all beneficiaries with the relevant authorities and key stakeholders on beneficiary to discuss the results of the small grant scheme and ways to replicate the results on national and regional level;
- Regional TV report produced and promoted as a part of the promotion of good practices and raising awareness and visibility of minority inclusion in the region;

- A campaign on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) with relevant content and messages organized during period October – December 2016;
- A Regional capacity building workshop modelled to reflect the experiences from the small grant implementation and focused on providing links to the project drafting based on the CoE monitoring mechanisms for more than 100 representatives of all municipalities that participated in the small grant scheme was held in July 2016;
- A round table on theme “The need for amendments of the Law on protection of rights of national minority members in Bosnia and Herzegovina” for all relevant representatives of national minorities and all level of authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina was held in October 2016;
- An expert opinion on Draft Law for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons Belonging to Communities who are less than 20% of the Total Population of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia shared with relevant authorities;
- Two round tables organised with civil society, national and international experts dealing with human rights and minorities followed by an international conference on launching of the draft Law on minorities in Albania.
- Fifth Steering Committee meeting organized in Strasbourg, France.
- The Publication with decontextualised elements of good practice finalised and translated to relevant local languages spoken in SEE in November 2016;
- The Project’s final survey is completed and available for download on the Project’s website.
- Closing Regional Conference of the Project held from 16-17 November 2016 in Tirana, Albania.

OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

- More than 350 civil servants from all over the region travelled to visit seven Open Day events organized by the selected municipalities.
- The Project secretariat forwarded summary of key recommendations and advice on the way to replicate and promote the outputs of the small grant scheme to relevant authorities on policy level that came as a result of seven “Policy meetings” with representatives of all beneficiaries of the small grant scheme and the members of the Steering Committee and the EUD on beneficiary level.
- The Centre for Southeast European Studies of the University of Graz compiled a Publication of elements of good practice developed through the Project’s small grant scheme. The Publication is translated to local languages and widely distributed in the region.
- More than 100 civil servants from 7 beneficiaries that participated in the Regional capacity building workshop for civil servants to plan, implement and monitor/evaluate small-scale projects significantly increased awareness and knowledge of existing minority protection mechanisms and ways to utilize it on the grassroots level during implementation of small projects.

- The Steering Committee approved the Project’s action plan and discussed the results of the Final Regional Report prepared based on the results of the baseline study during the fifth Steering Committee meeting.
- The final survey of the impact of the small grants on the lives of national minorities living in 35 municipalities’ beneficiaries of the small grant scheme of the Project (Final Regional Report) had been completed and the results shared with the relevant stakeholders in the field.
- The first analysis of the need for amendments of the Law on protection of rights of national minority members prepared by representatives of national minority associations, Bosnia and Herzegovina governments and Ministry of Human rights and refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Analysis of the “Draft Law for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons Belonging to Communities who are less than 20% of the Total Population of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Action plan of implementation of Law for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons Belonging to Communities who are less than 20% of the Total Population of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia prepared and shared with relevant authorities.
- The law on minorities in Albania drafted in accordance with the recommendations of the last Resolution of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is ready to be submitted to Parliament.
- As a result of the campaign on social media (Facebook, twitter and Instagram), relevant content and messages were served to more than 12 million people in SEE region and the weekly reach prove that over 1.5 million people received the Project messages on their social media platforms.
- Focused visibility of the cause promoted through specialised communication channels (Minority News in Serbia, TV articles in regional and local TV stations).
- A regional TV report that outlines the results of the Project in the region is available through the official YouTube channel of the Council of Europe. The file is shared with key regional film festivals to be broadcasted in specialised film selections (human rights films).
- The comparative analysis of the recommendations that came as results of the actions in the small grant scheme was presented to more than 130 beneficiaries and the key stakeholders from the region during the Closing Regional Conference of the Project.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The Project officially ended its activities on 28 December 2016.

2.4 ROMA INTEGRATION

Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme 2014
Project title:	Roma Integration 2020
EU contribution:	EUR 0.8 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement with RCC
Contract reference:	CN 2014/369-226
Duration of activities:	01/01/2016 – 31/12/2018
Links:	
Contact :	Maria Esposito, maria.esposito@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Roma Integration 2020 project contributes to reducing the socio-economic gap between the Roma and non-Roma population in the Western Balkans and Turkey and to strengthening the institutional obligations of governments to incorporate and deliver specific Roma integration goals in mainstream policy developments. In line with this, Roma Integration 2020 aims to assist national governments to integrate Roma specific policy measures into: (1) mainstream socio-economic policies and public service delivery; (2) national budget planning and service delivery processes.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

The Roma Integration 2020 Action Team organized five public dialogue fora in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Pristina, Skopje and Podgorica during October-November 2016. These fora provided for discussions on national policies and priorities on Roma integration, budget proposals for 2017, including sources of funding for the proposed measures, and discussions on relevant mainstream socio-economic policies to be used for advancing Roma integration. The public dialogue fora mirror the EU National Roma Platforms and involve a wide range of stakeholders relevant for Roma integration.

The Action Team organized the first Task Force meeting of the Roma Integration 2020 in November 2016. This meeting gathered all National Roma Contact Points, two civil society representatives and representatives from the European Commission, the Regional Cooperation Council, the Open Society Foundations. The Task Force serves to steer the project within the general political processes relevant for Roma integration in the region.

The Action Team also organised the first regional workshop on "Monitoring and Reporting on Roma integration policies". The workshop gathered around 80 participants from the enlargement region, including the National Roma contact points, and representatives of line ministries dealing with education, employment, housing, health, civil registration, finance and state statistical offices; as well as Roma civil society representatives. The workshop focused on acquainting participants with the

methodology and application of the annual reporting template (to be used by the participating economies) and exchanging good practices in data collection and reporting.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Policy recommendation paper based on the discussions of the Public Dialogue Forum in Serbia for the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma 2016 – 2025;
- Facilitated the drafting of local action plans on Roma integration for six municipalities in Serbia for 2017 with concrete budget proposal and monitoring indicators;
- Facilitated the drafting of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Action Plan on Roma for 2017-2018 in the areas of employment, health and housing;
- Facilitated the drafting of the Montenegro Action Plan on Roma and Egyptians for 2017 with monitoring indicators and budget proposal;
- Policy recommendation paper based on the discussions of the Public Dialogue Forum in Kosovo for the Strategy on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians for 2017-2021;
- Facilitated the drafting of new rules of procedure for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's National Coordination Body on Roma, the Roma Information Centres and the Roma Health Mediators;
- Adopted the rules of procedure of the Task Force on Roma Integration 2020; the calendar of activities for 2017 and the reporting template on Roma integration to be used by the participating economies on an annual basis;
- Introduced 80 participants (out of which 70 are government representatives) to the reporting template on Roma integration, including the type of data and information needed.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Conducting consultation meetings in the period January-March 2017 and participating at relevant inter-ministerial coordination meetings on Roma Integration in each participating economy;
- Coordinating, gathering and analysing the 2016 progress reports received from each participating economy;
- Organizing Public Dialogue Fora in each of the participating economies in May and June 2017. These fora will serve for presenting the 2016 progress reports of the beneficiaries and discussing priority measures and budgeting for 2018;
- Organizing a regional workshop on national budget planning for Roma integration in March 2017.

2.5 REGIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programmes, IPA 2011/023-537, IPA 2012/024-133 and 2013/024-134
Project title:	Regional Housing Programme (RHP)
EU contribution:	Contributions to the RHP Fund: EUR 150 million
Beneficiary region:	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreements with CEB, UNHCR
Contract reference:	CN 2012/297-405; CN 2013/314-991; CN 2012/307-562; CN 2013/325-468 and CN 2013/325-470; CN 2015/369-230
Duration of activities:	end dates: 22/04/2014 (CN 2012/297-405) 30/11/2017 (CN 2013/314-991; CN 2012/307-562; CN 2013/325-468 and CN 2013/325-470) 31/12/2018 (CN 2015/369-230)
Contact :	Emma Ascitti, Emma.ASCIUTTI@ext.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 from the armed conflict in the 1990s in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. The RHP contributes to a resolution of the protracted displacement situation in the four Partner Countries (PCs). It does so by providing durable and sustainable housing solutions, with full respect for the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons still in need and of the mutual obligation of the signatories to closely cooperate and synchronise their activities. The durable housing solutions are based on voluntary return and reintegration, or local integration.

The programme is financed mainly through donor contributions by the international community. A multi-donor Trust Mechanism (the "RHP Fund"), managed by the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), provides grants to Country Housing Projects (CHPs). UNHCR and OSCE are responsible for monitoring the beneficiary selection process and sustainability issues.

Until end-December 2016, donors pledged in total EUR 234 million to the RHP. European Commission disbursed to the RHP 123 million.

Funds committed to the RHP Fund will be spent on reconstruction of destroyed and damaged houses, purchase of village houses, construction of multi-apartment buildings, buying of flats or building of pre-fabricated houses. The European Commission has in addition contributed EUR 26.9 million for technical assistance and direct support to the Partner Countries.

One of RHP's cornerstones is its regional nature: from exchanging information so that the most vulnerable beneficiaries could be selected to sharing best practices to speed up implementation, the RHP has strengthened neighbourly relations and enticed the Partner

Countries to cooperate and build trust with each other. The countries themselves highly value the regional cooperation that has been developed thanks to RHP.

Another important aspect is the RHP's contribution to empowering the municipalities involved in RHP implementation: several hundreds of municipalities throughout the four Partner Countries have an active role in RHP housing project implementation. Furthermore, the Partner Countries, as project implementers, have developed a strong ownership of the RHP.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Until December 2016, the Assembly of Donors approved 22 sub-projects which aim to provide durable housing solutions for some 7 900 beneficiary families. This equals to 29% of the originally estimated overall figure of beneficiaries in need. The total approved grant requests amounted to EUR 155.2 million. EUR 141.2 million had been contracted between the CEB and the Partner Countries and EUR 53.6 million disbursed in favour of the latter.

During the reporting period the implementation of the RHP picked up speed, with an increasing amount of tender dossiers launched and several new construction sites opened.

In addition to several promotional events at local level, the following major RHP-related events took place in the period July-December 2016, in the presence of international stakeholders:

- 20 July, Belgrade, Serbia: SRB3 - signature of works contract of 235 apartments in Ovca9
- September, Belgrade, Serbia: SRB3 - inauguration of construction works in Ovca
- 5 October, Serbia: site visit with RHP Donors (EU and U.S.) to meet three RHP beneficiary families
- 2 November, Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina: BiH3 - launch of construction of an apartment building in Prijedor
- 22 November, Belgrade, Serbia: signing of contracts with 53 municipalities that are implementing RHP projects
- 16 December, Belgrade, Serbia: inauguration of RHP Photo Exhibition "A New Home" at Impact Hub gallery.

In addition, several smaller-scale signing ceremonies were organised during the period.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- By the end of December 2016, the number of housing solutions delivered in all 4 PCs reached 1 000, with Serbia accounting for 70% of all the deliveries.
- The construction works of new multi-apartment buildings are on-going on in all Partner Countries on 16 sites; delivery of building material packages, installation of pre-fabricated houses, reconstruction of houses and purchase of flats and village houses is on-going in all Partner Countries.
- At end 2016, the contracts signed by Partner Countries with contractors/service providers/suppliers amounted to around EUR 43 million. Costs incurred by the Partner Countries amounted to close to EUR 20 million.

- Hundreds of municipalities throughout the region are involved in RHP implementation: in Serbia alone, 117 out of 165 local self governments implement RHP projects in their territories.
- Grant schemes in Serbia have resulted in the selection of around 90 municipalities who are currently tendering building materials and/or village house purchases, under PIU supervision.
- Cross-border beneficiary data verification is advancing well in all Partner Countries. In Serbia and Croatia, more than half of the initially identified workload has been completed, while Bosnia and Herzegovina has timely addressed all verification requests received from Serbia and Croatia.
- To increase RHP's visibility, communication activities were further intensified in the second half of 2016. The visibility events organised managed to generate positive media coverage in local press. In September 2016, the Croatian national television's (HRT) show "Prizma" focussed on RHP with several interlocutors present. Several short films and publications were prepared. The RHP Fund Assembly of Donors and the RHP Steering Committee meetings took place in Paris on 1 December 2016. A redesigned RHP website was launched in December 2016, allowing for more interactive content to be promoted. RHP LinkedIn profile was set up. All promotional material is available at the RHP website (www.regionalhousingprogramme.org) and at the CEB RHP Secretariat. RHP films are also available at the RHP YouTube channel.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- In addition to the already delivered 1 000 housing units, the Partner Countries' objective is to deliver some 3 300 additional housing units in 2017. Project implementation will remain priority during the next semester.
- The sheer number of applications that need to be verified indicate that in some instances, further checks will have to continue in Serbia and Croatia in Q1 and Q2 2017. In Croatia alone, further 7 000 applications from Serbia need to be cross checked. In Serbia, the biggest bulk of administrative checks remains to be done for the 3 250 applications from Croatia. 210 household visits requested by Croatia still need to be performed.
- Around 15 visibility events are scheduled in the four countries, most of which to inaugurate housing deliveries or to celebrate completion of construction works. Several events to mark the start of works and signing of contracts with constructors are also scheduled.
- RHP visibility will continue to be enforced in the Partner Countries and beyond, in particular through intensifying contacts with and presence in local/regional media. Some short films will be prepared, as well as a number of publications.
- Meetings in the 1st semester of 2017:

Regional Coordination Forum, Montenegro: 1 February 2017

Technical Committee & Regional Coordination Forum, Bosnia and Herzegovina: 26-27 April 2017

Assembly of Donors and Steering Committee, Serbia: 28-29 June 2017.

2.6 MIGRATION

Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme, IPA 2014/031-603.07
Project title:	Regional Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management in the Western Balkans and Turkey, Component 1 (Frontex-led)
EU contribution:	EUR 5.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant agreement with FRONTEX and partners
Contract reference:	CN 2016/369697
Duration of activities:	01/01/2016 – 31/12/2018
Contact :	Emma Ascitti, emma.ascitti@ext.ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The “Regional Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management in the Western Balkans and Turkey” is a European Union-funded multi-country programme aiming to provide a comprehensive and holistic regional approach to effective and protection-sensitive migration management systems in the framework of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) and as part of the EU accession processes of the Programme’s beneficiary countries.

The programme is focused on the introduction and sharing of EU standards and best practices on migration management. It aims to support the target countries in developing a protection-sensitive response to mixed migration flows by strengthening their identification, registration, referral, asylum systems and return mechanisms, in line with EU policies.

The beneficiary institutions are the national authorities of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro and Turkey, responsible for border management and asylum.

*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.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

In the second half of 2016, Frontex organized six regional courses in Combatting trafficking in human beings (two trainings), Detection of falsified documents (two trainings), Identification and screening of nationality, and Interviewing techniques. The two trainings organized on the Detection of falsified documents took place in the Frontex Partnership Academy in the Netherlands, whereas the remaining trainings were hosted by Montenegro.

All logistics of the courses have been organized by IOM, also representatives of UNHCR attended all trainings.

During the second half of 2016, EASO organized several activities, including the regional seminar on identification of persons with special needs (including the presentation of the IPSN tool), regional training course on interview techniques and a regional training on country of origin information.

EASO has also been active in preparing a national Roadmap, in cooperation with the national authorities, to identify and address the needs of the authorities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in relation to international protection. The work towards establishing a national Roadmap has also started in Serbia.

Six meetings of the National Steering Committee Meetings took place in all 6 Western Balkan countries in November and December 2016, jointly for the Component 1 and 2 of this programme. The NSC meetings gathered the representatives of the national authorities responsible for border management and asylum of each country as well as the representatives of Frontex, EASO, IOM, UNHCR and EU Delegations/ EU Office. This was the first round of the meetings organized in each WB country to allow for better communication and coordination.

The first meeting of the Advisory Group was held in Brussels in December 2016.

OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

Six regional courses in Combatting trafficking in human beings (two trainings), Detection of falsified documents (two trainings), Identification and screening of nationality, and Interviewing techniques were organized.

A regional seminar on identification of persons with special needs (including the presentation of the IPSN tool) , a regional training course on interview techniques and a regional training on country of origin information were organized.

Six meetings of the National Steering Committee Meetings took place in all 6 Western Balkan countries in November and December 2016, jointly for the Component 1 and 2 of this programme.

The first meeting of the Advisory Group was held in Brussels in December 2016.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

A follow up on the Frontex regional trainings will be organized in the 1st half of 2017, namely for THB and detection of falsified documents. Subsequently, translation workshops will be organized. Regarding registration, Frontex is in the process of identifying top level experts from EU member states, who will start with the mapping of the registration mechanisms in the spring 2017. They will visit all six Western Balkan countries in order to make a mapping of registration procedures, and evaluate with each country their existing mechanisms and procedures, and make recommendations. With regards to non-voluntary return, a regional training for escort multipliers will be held in 1st half of 2017.

Two regional trainings (train- the-trainers) will be organized by EASO. The first half of the year will be dedicated to Module for managers, where each country will nominate a person of a higher level to participate. In that sense, support from the management can be established and an element of network can be put in place between the managers. The second regional training (train- the-trainers), Interviewing Vulnerable Persons will take place in the second part of the year. In addition, EASO will work towards the national roll-out of training in Interviewing Techniques in the six Western Balkan countries, subject to approval of the European Commission.

The EASO work to establish roadmaps will be finalised in 2017. If this proves successful (Roadmaps with Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are foreseen), the gathered experiences will be discussed and evaluated at a regional level.

Programme reference:	IPA Multi-beneficiary Programme 2014/031-603.08/MC/migration CN 2015/369-495
Project title:	Regional support to Protection-sensitives migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey component 2 (International Organization for Migration-IOM)
EU contribution:	EUR 2.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant contract with IOM
Contract reference:	CN 2016/369495
Duration of activities:	23/12/2015 – 22/12/2018
Contact :	Emma Ascitti, emma.ascitti@ext.ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to develop and operationalize a comprehensive migration management system in the seven IPA beneficiary countries, in line with EU standards. The specific objectives aim 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 return mechanism in the beneficiary countries.

OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2016)

1. Progress on establishing national structures on AVRR
 - A gap analysis on AVR has been completed and findings presented at the AVR workshop in Belgrade 22-23 November
 - Workshop on AVR held in November where the GAP analysis has been presented and validated
 - Also, a regional SOP has been produced which outlines the main principles and procedure of AVR.
2. Following consultations among project partners and partner countries, work on Data collection and information exchange on migration and asylum has continued.
 - A ToR for the assessment has been produced and expert contracted
 - An experience data management expert has started to look into structural improvements on data collection and info exchange. The focus of the assessment will be on type of data which is being collected, data definitions and exchange as well as produce recommendations.
3. In the second half of 2016, IOM assisted Frontex with logistics in organizing six regional courses in Combatting trafficking in human beings (two trainings), Detection of falsified documents (two trainings), Identification and screening of nationality, and Interviewing techniques in Montenegro and in the Netherlands

- 4. IOM logistically supported the six meetings of the National Steering Committee Meetings took place in all 6 Western Balkan countries in November and December 2016, jointly for the Component 1 and 2 of this programme.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- National SOP’s on AVR will be developed based on the regional SOP in regional and national events.
- A validation workshop is envisaged in February to present the findings and plan further actions on data collection and information exchange on migration and asylum
- IOM will further the action on establishing a roster of translators. Proposals based on best practices from EU countries will be developed in the first half of the year, and a consultation with the rest of the partners will follow.
- Coordination with MARRI on mapping of language needs in the WB region and existing progress
- Following the consultations with DG NEAR, MARRI member states as well as MARRI, the findings of the MARRI gap analysis will be addressed.
- Substantive involvement in the mainstreaming training curricula through translation workshops, will be the focus of IOM’s activities in 2017. This will be done on a regional level but taking into consideration the needs of different countries.
- In cooperation with EASO IOM will work on transposing identification and screening procedures to national systems as well as country of origin information.
- In cooperation with EASO and UNHCR, work on furthering referral system into national systems by developing regional SoP (template) for protection sensitive operating mechanism and well as follow up activities on Countries of Origin information

2.7 HORIZONTAL FACILITY

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 milion
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	
Contract reference:	CN 2016/374-543
Duration of activities:	24/05/2016-23/05/2019
Contact :	Emma Asciutti, emma.asciutti@ext.ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

To support country-tailored reform process in the areas of rule of law, democracy and human rights with the aim for Council of Europe South-East Europe (SEE) member states/IPA beneficiaries to comply with European standards.

The European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey (hereafter: the HF) focuses on three themes: 1) ensuring justice, 2) fighting corruption, economic crime and organised crime and 3) combating discrimination and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups. It will follow a complementary two-fold approach, with technical co-operation to assist beneficiaries in achieving increased compliance with European standards and an Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism, which forsee the provision of Council of Europe legislative expertise and policy advice in response to requests from the beneficiaries.

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

Technical co-operation: During the reporting period, the Council of Europe undertook inception visits to the Beneficiaries and undertook extensive consultations with the beneficiary institutions and respective EUDs in order to finalise the Tri Annual Plans of Actions (hereinafter TAPAs). It also completed the recruitment and training of project staff.

More than 120 activities were carried out during the reporting period, which included:

- An HF launching event in Podgorica on 24 November, focusing on the six Actions to be implemented in Montenegro;
- 17 meetings of the Action-specific Steering Committees, to discuss workplans and timetables;
- 25 conferences (within the three themes), including a regional conference in Montenegro aimed at facilitating judicial dialogue between constitutional court judges;
- Several working group meetings to draft legal amendments and by-laws and define training programmes, for example for the training of prison staff in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to define the police oversight mechanism in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and proposed amendments to the Law on Political Parties and the Electoral Code in Albania;
- Extensive expert and other assessment visits *inter alia* relating to the census in Bosnia and Herzegovina (led by the International Monitoring Operation), judicial system in Kosovo (using CEPEJ's 'key judicial indicators'), in-service police training in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, prison healthcare in Kosovo, legal framework on asset declaration in Albania, integrity of the higher education system in Kosovo (base-line study), needs assessment of the National Implementation Team for the National Action Plan on LGBTi issues in Albania and regarding the relevance of the recommendations of the previous Efficiency of Justice project in Albania.
- Completion of a training of trainers (ToT) programme for eight trainers, which will deliver future trainings for the Ombudsperson's institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina on handling anti-discrimination complaints.

Expertise co-ordination mechanism (ECM): Four requests for expertise were received (three from Albania and one from Bosnia and Herzegovina), which were subsequently referred to the Venice Commission.

Communication and visibility: The communication and visibility guidelines were prepared by the HF co-ordination team and cleared by DG NEAR. The Council of Europe undertook various measures to ensure coherent and well-coordinated messaging, including:

- The design of an HF graphic line, which provides for each theme under the HF to be clearly identifiable by its own colour;
- The design, printing and distribution to six Council of Europe field/programme offices of HF visual identity materials (the transversal component), including an information leaflet on the HF programme in general;
- The launch of the HF website and social media accounts;

- The launch of the restricted part of the HF website as means to share information with the EU Delegations in the field and EU staff in Brussels

OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2016)

Technical co-operation:

- The HF successfully completed its inception phase for which an inception report was submitted to DG NEAR on 21 October 2016;
- 27 inception visits to six beneficiaries were completed, to discuss the logical frameworks and draft workplans with the beneficiary institutions, the EUDs and other stakeholders, which led to the finalisation of the Tri-Annual Plans of Action (TAPAs) for the six beneficiaries;
- The six finalised TAPAs were translated into 32 Action-specific workplans and budgets, which have been endorsed by the relevant authorities (and local EUDs/EUO) at the beneficiary level;
- Implementation started on 26 out of 32 Actions, and eight launching events were held (including a well-covered joint EU/Council of Europe launch of all HF Actions in Montenegro) along with 17 Steering Committee meetings;
- Following the provision of training to more than 30 project staff working on the Horizontal Facility in Council of Europe field and programme offices, staff started using the new Council of Europe project management methodology, advancing the overall implementation of the HF;
- Recommendations on the law on political parties and electoral code in Albania have been provided under the Action on Fighting Economic Crime;
- An offender management programme to facilitate their integration into society has been developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina under Action on Prisons and Police;
- The development of a baseline study on corruption in education was started in Montenegro, which was combined with the TAIEX peer review, under the Action on Strengthening Integrity and Fighting Corruption in Higher Education;
- A short-term Action to support the International Monitoring Operation in the final assessment of the census process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was successfully completed.

The implementation of the HF was affected by elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in December 2016 and to a lesser extent in Montenegro in October 2016, leading to the postponement of a number of activities.

Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism:

The ECM started delivering results, with three out of the four requests leading to the adoption of *amicus curiae* briefs by the Venice Commission:

- At its plenary session on 14-15 October 2016, the Venice Commission adopted an [amicus curiae brief](#) on the Law on Treatment of Property and Finalisation of the Process of Compensation of Property, in response to a request from the Constitutional Court of Albania.
- At its plenary session on 14-15 October 2016, the Venice Commission adopted an [amicus curiae brief](#) on the method of election to the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in response to a request from the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- At its plenary session on 9-10 December 2016, the Venice Commission adopted an [amicus curiae brief](#) on the law on the transitional re-evaluation (or 'vetting') of judges and prosecutors in Albania, in response to a request from the Constitutional Court of Albania.

Communication and visibility:

- During the reporting period, the HF website published 50 news items and had an average of 1,026 visitors a month, with a monthly average of 3,085 actions on the site; and the Facebook page received 93 likes, with the most popular post reaching 653 users.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

A detailed Action specific list of key activities planned for the forthcoming period is available on the calendar of the Activities under the [restricted](#) part of the HF website.

Summary of the key activities in the forthcoming period:

- The start of the remaining six Actions under the HF programme;
- The first electronic newsletter for the overall HF programme (to be issued mid February 2017);
- The joint launch of the HF programme in Serbia planned for 2 March 2017 in Belgrade;
- Organisation of the HF Beneficiary-level Steering Committees in each of the Beneficiaries (planned for April – June 2017);
- Organisation of the HF Steering Board (tentatively planned for the end of June 2017).

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). Private Sector Support Facilities established under the Crisis Response Package are also included.

3.1. WESTERN BALKAN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION FACILITY

Programme reference :	Multi-beneficiary Programmes for the years 2011-2013, IPA 2011/021-964; IPA 2012/022-966 and IPA 2013/024-091; IPA 2015/031-609
Project title:	Western Balkan Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WB EDIF)
EU contribution:	EUR 69.7 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution agreements (CA) with OECD (TA) CA and DGA with European Investment Fund (EIF)-coordination CA with EIF (Guarantee Facility) Delegation agreement with EIF (ENEF) Delegation agreement with EIF (ENIF)
Contract reference:	CA with World Bank (Support to TA) 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
Duration of activities:	05/12/2012 – 30/11/2025/; CN 2016/380-963
Links:	www.wbedif.eu
Contact :	Aleksandra, Kostova, aleksandra.kostova@ec.europa.eu

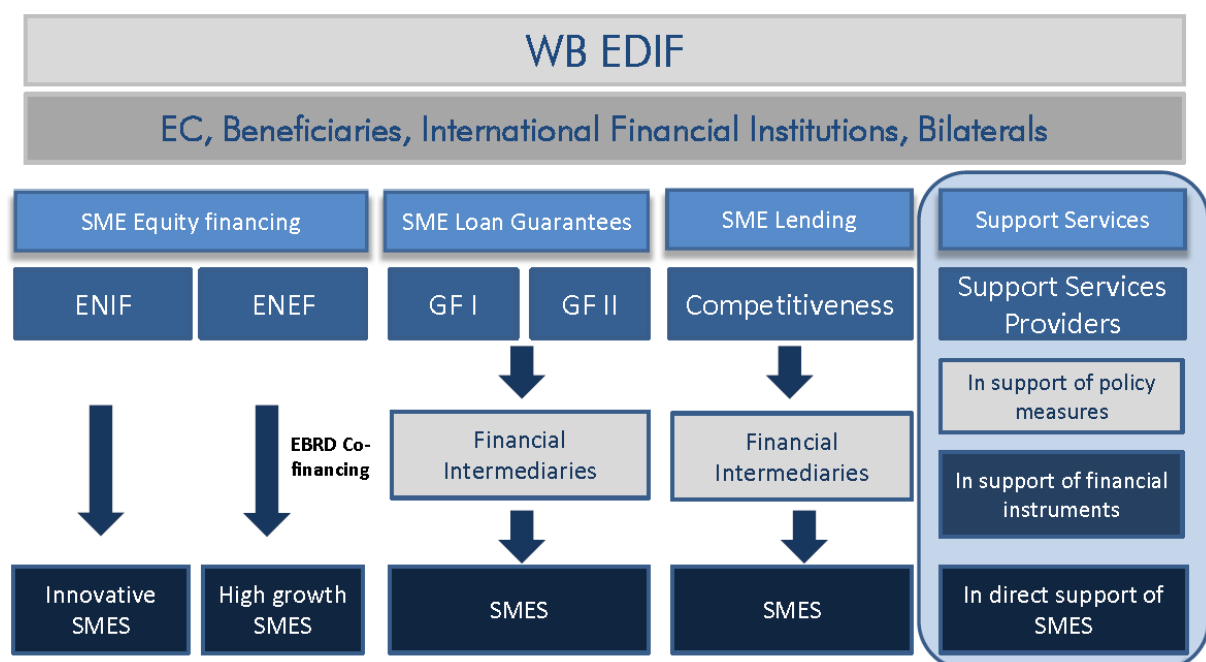
PURPOSE

EDIF promotes emergence and growth of innovative and high-potential companies and creation of a regional Venture Capital market.

Coordinated by EIF, EDIF is implemented in close cooperation between the governments of the Western Balkans, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). IFIs, international organisations and bilateral donors active in the region, such as Italy, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), Deutsche Investitions und Entwicklungsgesellschaft, OECD, World Bank and others participate in order to streamline the Western Balkan private sector development efforts, providing for:

- early-to-development stages equity financing in innovative SMEs through the Enterprise Innovation Fund (ENIF);
- development and expansion capital to established high-potential SMEs through the Enterprise Expansion Fund (ENEF) to be implemented alongside the EBRD Local Enterprise Facility;
- improved access to bank lending and lower costs of borrowing by providing SME loan portfolio guarantees to financial intermediaries under a regional Guarantee Facility (GF), under which also a Youth Employment leg is being incorporated for funding allocation in 2017;
- support to beneficiary governments in implementation of priority reforms to create favourable regulatory environment for innovative and high-potential SMEs, as well as direct support to SMEs through the Support Services Facility.

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)



Platform level: The Platform Advisory Group (PAG) met on 14 December in London (hosted by the EBRD).

ENIF: Following a first closing in September 2015, ENIF held its second closing on 8 April 2016, thereby reaching its goal target of EUR 40m fund size. ENIF's first investments took place in February 2016 and by the end of the year 8 deals had been signed (out of over 200 screened proposals).

ENEF: The investment portfolio includes 7 companies. The second phase of the first ENEF investment has begun with the second tranche of EUR 1.75m having been disbursed on 30 November 2016, following the successful completion of the first phase of the project. Projects signed in 2015 are outperforming the business plan. In 2016, more than 160 companies were met with for possible new deals, building a promising base for future ENEF activity. Key sectors continue to include export-oriented manufacturing, food processing, retail, automotive supply chain producers, services and IT, particularly more niche segments.

Guarantee Facility: On the basis of the call for Expression of Interest (March 2016) five agreements were signed by the end of 2016 with the following banks: CKB Montenegro (EUR 20m); ProCredit Kosovo (EUR 35m); ProCredit former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (EUR 10m); ProCredit Serbia (EUR 25m), Raiffeisen Albania (EUR 17m). There is a potential with regards to a diversification of

future funding under this instrument, both in the form of a national window component with Serbia as well as a thematic component with Youth Employment focus.

Support Services: an ex-ante Study for Financial Instruments in Serbia was conducted, related to capacity building workshops on the topic. All activities under this pillar were delivering satisfactory results and were timely implemented. Some have reached their final stage and new activities are under preparation.

In terms of communication and visibility some improvements were made to the Platform' website in order to launch an interactive map, PAG members log-in area etc. Various events were also used for the purpose of the general promotion of WBEDIF.

OUTPUTS

Platform level: EDIF governance arrangements are being well consolidated. Enough experience has also been gathered to draw lessons for the future operations and streamlining of EDIF.

ENIF: 8 operations have been signed in 2016 in a range of countries and sectors.

ENEF: 2 additional operations have been signed in 2016, as well as an adjustment of the Fund documentation to allow for senior debt transactions which is expected to speed up the investment pace.

Guarantee Facility: All 5 FI agreements were signed in Q4 2016 under the GF II allocation of EUR 17.5m. negotiations also progressed with regards to the Serbia national window and an initiative targeting youth employment under the Guarantee Facility.

Support Services: New activities are being designed for the SBA Assessment 2016-2019. The REPARIS programme organised a Follow-up on the Ministerial Conference in Vienna.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Platform level

The next PAG meeting is indicatively scheduled for June 2017 (location tbc). A PAG Working Group meeting is expected to take place approximately 5 weeks prior in conjunction with the Support Services Working Party (SUPWP). The Platform Coordinator PAG annual report H1 2016 will also be prepared for this meeting.

2017 is expected to bring a clear focus into communications and visibility for the Platform, now at cruising speed and in its 5th year of operations.

As of January 1 2017 the new extension of the Platform Coordination Agreement with EIF is in place, now with the important travel budget for the PAG members.

ENIF and ENEF will focus on their investment pace. Some ENEF operations are at advanced stages of assessment and expected to be signed in early 2017. The WB beneficiary investors shall be requested to finalise and invest the necessary amounts to ENIF as originally foreseen.

A youth component as well as a Serbian national window is under design for the Guarantee facility II.

Steps are undertaken between the EC and EBRD to incorporate a new Competitiveness-oriented, lending product under the WBEDIF Platform.

Regarding the Technical Assistance- a Study on IP and Intangibles in SMEs in the Western Balkans and the Feasibility Study for Regional Centres of Excellence are expected to be finalised for the June 2017

PAG meeting. OECD is planning to hold a capacity building workshop, followed by a high level conference on Fostering Investment for Competitiveness in South East Europe. This will be followed by country assessment launch events in the 7 countries, followed by assessment through questionnaires starting in late 2017. The World Bank will follow-up on the Investment Readiness Programme by continuing support to selected SMEs in their growth phase. The REPARIS programme in 2017 will prepare a Senior Officials' Workshop in Vienna.

3.2 EUROPEAN FUND FOR SOUTHEAST EUROPE (EFSE)

Programme reference:	CARDS 2006/018-264 and Multi-beneficiary Programme IPA 2007/019-344, IPA 2008/020-300, IPA 2009/021-373 and IPA 2013/024-091, IPA 2015/031-609
Project title:	European Fund for Southeast Europe (EFSE)
EU contribution:	EUR 85.1 million
Beneficiary region:	14 countries including Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution agreements with the European Investment Fund (EIF)
Contract reference:	CN 2006/124-240; CN 2008/154-338, CN 2009/201-622, CN 2009/222-012, CN 2011/268-296, 2016/381-821
Duration of activities:	04/08/2006 – 31/12/2023
Links:	http://www.efse.lu/
Contact :	Aleksandra Kostova, aleksandra.kostova@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

EFSE extends loans to selected financial institutions in the region of Southeast Europe (at present 44 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 include commercial banks, microfinance banks, microcredit organisations and non-bank financial institutions.

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

By 30 June 2016, the outstanding investment portfolio in the EFSE amounted to EUR 898.2 million, thereof EUR 535.8 million in the Western Balkans and Turkey*. During H2 2016, EFSE signed 22 investments totalling EUR 235.4 million, of which EUR 132.9 million with 12 Partner Lending Institutions (PLIs) were in the Western Balkans and Turkey. This brings the total number of PLIs with active investments to 72 and an outstanding investment portfolio by 31 December 2016 of EUR 924.1 million – EUR 523.6 million in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

In terms of the sub-loan portfolio, by 30 September 2016, the outstanding sub-loan portfolio amounted to EUR 956.7 million, including EUR 538.1 million in the Western Balkans and Turkey. This

* Includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

translates into an on-lending rate of 113%* for the total Fund and 100% for the Western Balkans and Turkey by 30 September 2016.

More than 820,000 sub-loans have therefore been financed since EFSE's inception, accounting for EUR 5.6 bn in lending, with a clear focus on microloans below EUR 20k.

On the TA side, the EFSE Development Facility is managing 51 ongoing projects in the Western Balkan region and Turkey with a total volume of EUR 3.7 million. For example, in Turkey, the EFSE DF is supporting a mid-sized commercial bank in Agriculture Finance to reach out to small holder farmers. Moreover, the EFSE DF has successfully conducted various events to support young start-ups and foster entrepreneurship. This includes for example the Fincluders startup competition held for fintech companies in Berlin, a business mentorship program for 30 start-ups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a cooperation with a foundation for young social entrepreneurs in the region.

Following the successful raising of IFI and private investor funding during 2016, the Fund has been well funded in H2 2016, including estimated 17% Notes from private investors as of 31 December 2016. This was also enabled by the Fund's strong performance also in the Western Balkan region and Turkey. Overall, the Fund's performance remains very solid with continuously low impairment levels, very good financial performance, and continued leveraging the Fund's C Shares.

OUTPUTS

EFSE investment portfolio figures as at end Q4 2016*	
1. Total Invested Portfolio (Q4 2016 figures)	EUR 924.00 million
2. Number of current Partner Lending Institutions (Q4 2016 figures)	72
4. Type of Partner Lending Institution (Q4 2016 figures)	70% Commercial Banks, 13% Micro-finance Institutions, 17% Non-Bank Financial Institutions
EFSE sub-loan figures as at end Q3 2016*	
5. Active End Borrowers (Q3 2016 figures)	167,450
6. Reached End Borrowers since inception (Q3 2016 figures)	824,291
7. Average sub-loan outstanding (Q3 2016 figures)	EUR 5.713
8. Disbursed sub-loans since inception (Q3 2016 figures)	EUR 5.6 billion

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

* It is possible that the overall on-lending rate is greater than 100%. This can be the case because of the Fund's investment into subordinated debt for a part of the investment portfolio. Due to its leverage capacity, the Fund has higher on-lending requirements than 100% for subordinated debt investments.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

An intensive monitoring regime for the Fund's investments in Turkey continues to be in place and up to now, the Fund's investments in Turkey are all performing according to schedule. Against the background of those turbulences and the overall high degree of volatility in the operating environment, including the continued economic stagnation and low-price environment in Southeast European countries and the political and economic crises in the ENR region, significant investment management efforts will be required for reaching the Fund's portfolio goals for 2017. The threefold objective to achieve development impact, good financial performance, and prudent credit and concentration risk forms the basis of the Fund's strategy in 2017. In addition, the Fund strives to work on selective innovation initiatives in the areas of local currency investments, geographical focus, and entrepreneurship.

The focus of the Development Facility in 2017 is on scaling up the entrepreneurship development projects in the various countries and further promoting Agriculture Finance. For example, in Kosovo, the continued cooperation with a local innovation centre will provide the next stage of support for start ups to facilitate access to finance. In Serbia, the collaboration with a bank will target social entrepreneurs with the aim to strengthen their market capacity. At the regional level, a round table on cooperative development will be organised to improve the understanding of the financial sector about cooperatives and their role in Agriculture Finance. All projects are strongly advancing EFSE's mission of promoting responsible financial sector development in partner countries and ensuring sustainable access to finance for MSEs and low-income households.

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). Private Sector Support Facilities established under the Crisis Response Package are also included.

3.3 CRISIS RESPONSE PACKAGE

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2009/021-373
Project title:	Private Sector Support Facility for Turkey - Crisis Response Package
EU contribution:	EUR 22.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with EBRD
Contract reference:	CN 2009/228-868
Duration of activities:	18/12/2009 – 30/11/2021
Links:	http://www.turseff.org ; http://www.midseff.com ; http://www.msmeturkey.com
Contact :	Carlo Coppola, carlo.coppola@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The EU/EBRD programme "Turkey Private Sector Support Facility" (PSSF) assists economic actors in Turkey through loans, grants and technical assistance (TA) in increasing their competitiveness in products and services to face the challenges of the economic and financial crisis in the short and long term. To this end, it provides necessary financial and human resources as well as technical skills.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

The EBRD requested an official amendment to the CA to: a) reallocate funds from MSME Window to EE and SBS Windows; b) expand the scope of EE products; c) remove role of independent Verification Consultant from EE Window.

A steering Committee meeting was held on 21 November 2016, to present the activities of the last 12 months and the proposal for the amendment of the agreement. Despite this amendment is of an exclusive operational nature, the Turkish Treasury was not in a position of providing a formal approval, and preferred to have an internal consultation. As a follow up of the conclusions of the meeting, the EBRD shared with the Treasury all the relevant documentation in order to provide all the clarifications needed, and met the relevant interlocutors in the Treasury.

MSME Finance Window – Activities included agronomic data collection for the new agricultural season; expansion of a number of agricultural products recorded in TARDES; and delivery of new TARDES lending modules. In addition a field study was conducted with 796 producers during June-September 2016 to assess agricultural finance conditions in Turkey.

Energy Efficiency Window - The first phase of TurSEFF was successfully finalised in early 2013 and no further activities were undertaken. The preparation and financing of sub-projects continued under MidSEFF.

Small Business Support (SBS) - Since the inception of the Programme, 18 EGP projects were started under EU PSSF for Turkey. Out of these, 13 projects were completed, 1 project is ongoing and 4 projects were cancelled. The total number of BAS projects implemented is 167 (1 cancelled), of which 1 is ongoing and 1 is completed, the rest have undergone one year after completion evaluation.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

MSME Finance Window – *MSME Finance Window* –TARDES tool is increasing its penetration in the agricultural sector. Between July 2016 and September 2016, 143,701 agricultural loan applications of 6 user banks had been evaluated through TARDES and TRY 3,572 million (EUR 1,141 million) had been approved. As the fourth phase of the programme do not include trainings to partner financial institutions, no bankers were trained in the reporting period. As of December 2016, agronomic data collection (tech-cards) for more than 4,000 products produced by around 1,200 farmers had been undertaken for the current production season. The data is used to update TARDES after analysis and refinings of TA experts.

Energy Efficiency Window - MidSEFF funds are now effectively fully allocated to PFIs. Five new projects were requested for assessment in the second half of 2016 - all for solar power plants.

Small Business Support (SBS) - through Grow Your Consulting Business trainings, 25 local consultants were trained in Management Consulting Essentials and 27 local consultants were trained in Marketing and Selling Consultancy Services.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

MSME Finance Window – TC interventions will continue to focus on assisting KKB in marketing and promoting the activities of TARDES as well as on ensuring financial stability. Follow up and close co-operation with interested and potential user banks will also continue to be actively pursued. The agri-scoring tool will be updated continuously and the market research on small farmers and agricultural producers will be finalized and results disseminated. *Marketing and visibility* – The previously planned international agricultural conference is being scheduled for 12 April 2017 in close cooperation with Isbank and KKB. The previously planned TV show on a national TV channel (e.g. Bloomberg HT) is now being planned for February 2017.

Energy Efficiency Window - continuation of development of MidSEFF sub-projects from non-mainstream renewable technologies. The MidSEFF Project Consultant will work towards allocation of all MidSEFF funds. It will also continue to monitor the implementation of active MidSEFF projects. EBRD has submitted an official request for budget reallocation from MSME Window to EE and SBS windows to provide additional TA. For the EE window this will be used for an extension of TurSEFF (TurSEFF III), which will include (subject to EU approval) resource efficiency investments.

SBS – No further BAS projects are planned under the Facility. A re-allocation of funds in the amount of EUR 200,000 from the MSME Finance Window was requested to implement additional EGP projects.

Concerning the request of amendment of the Contribution Agreement, once the Turkish Treasury will approve the modifications proposed, the amendment will be treated, in principle in Q1 2017.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2009/021-373
Project title:	SME Recovery Support Loan for Turkey – Crisis Response Package
EU contribution:	EUR 30.00 million
Beneficiary region:	Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with EIB
Contract reference:	CN2009/228-929
Duration of activities:	22/12/2009 -21/12/2017
Links:	http://www.eib.org/projects/pipeline/2009/20090580.htm http://www.eib.org/projects/press/2010/2010-131-eib-provides-EUR-150-million-innovative-recovery-support-loan-to-smes-in-turkey.htm
Contact :	Carlo Coppola, carlo.coppola@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the SME Recovery Support Loan is to mitigate the crisis impact for SMEs and contribute to the development of the Turkish economy and employment sector. The main objective is to support SMEs with concrete productive investments by providing access to attractive and longer-dated debt financing.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

The SME Recovery Support Loan is combined with an EIB loan for SMEs (together, the Facility) and fully disbursed to the two selected financial intermediaries since April 2011.

- Halkbank: their share of the Facility (EUR 74.82 million) is fully allocated to 148 SMEs since the end of 2011. The average size of allocation is EUR 0.51 million.
- Akbank: their share of the Facility (EUR 74.82 million) is fully allocated to 89 SMEs since the end of June 2012. The average size of allocation is EUR 0.8 million.

Main activities in the period July-December 2016:

A Steering Committee meeting was held on 21 November 2016, to present the activities implemented in the last 12 months and present the proposal for a second round of loans, which was approved.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

The impact of the Facility on employment is substantial, with an estimated total number of more than 4,000 jobs created. The Facility was very well received by the SMEs that found it extremely convenient (affordable interest rate); it was disbursed in a record time.

As the Facility is fully disbursed and fully allocated since the end of H1 2012, the financial intermediaries now only report to the EIB on payment defaults, which were consistently at a low level (<0.5% in volume terms).

The EIB loan and the EU contribution were fully repaid by the end of April 2016. Because of the depreciation of the TRY during the implementation of the Facility, the amount of the EU contribution available for a second round is around 62 million TRY (18-20 million EUR at today's exchange rate). There is also an amount of earned interest (some EUR 50.000) which as per Contribution Agreement Art 7(3) shall be assigned to the Action in case of a second round and eventually reimbursed to the Commission with the other unexpended amounts (as per Article 5).

Concerning the possibility to launch a second round of loans with the repaid EU funds and additional EIB money, the requests for disbursement received in the course of 2015 clearly demonstrate an existing appetite for similar instruments, quite evident in the West of the country and in the big cities, while in the East the demand is mainly in TRY and for smaller loans.

The second round of loans will have some differences compared to the first one. Firstly given the reduced amount of money (for the depreciation of the TRY) only one intermediary bank will participate in the activities. In addition, a geographical concentration in the poorest regions of East and South East of the country will be applied. It is foreseen to maintain the original structure of the Facility: interest free loan provided by the EU contribution combined with an EIB loan for SMEs. Features of the second round under discussions are: geographical concentration in less economic

advantage regions in Turkey, TRY lending, proceeding with one Intermediary Bank given the reduced EU contribution available following the Turkish Lira depreciation.

In order to have enough time to provide all the necessary information to DG NEAR and design the second round of loans, an extension of the contribution agreement between the EIB and the European Union until 21 December 2017 was adopted.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Because of the political developments in Turkey during 2016 and the high priority on the refugees' agenda, it was not possible to finalise and approve the second round during 2016 as initially planned.

At the moment, the "ex-ante assessment for a financial instrument to be considered under the facility for refugees in Turkey" only takes into consideration the situation in the 9 provinces prioritised in the context of the facility. It is clear that many more evidences need to be presented to DG NEAR in order to justify a second round of loans (existence of a market failure, appetite of the intermediary bank and final beneficiaries, etc...).

The expected activities in 2017 are as follows:

- Q12017 – Finalisation of the Detailed Proposal including testing with the intermediary bank, approval of the relevant EIB governing bodies, approval of the SC (by email) and signature of the second round amendment to the Contribution Agreement.
- Q22017 – Subject to the approval of the EIB decision-making bodies, signature of the new contracts with HalkBank and deployment of funds.

3.4 OECD SUPPORT TO ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

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:	1 April 2016 – 30 September 2019
Links:	
Contact :	Gabriela Negut, gabriela.negut@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 (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Economic Reform Programmes: The ERP Diagnostic Tool and ERP Prioritisation Tool were finalised and shared with the ERP co-ordinators. The OECD team co-organised five in-country workshops and ten capacity-building seminars with ERP co-ordinators and/or line ministries to support the ERP 2017-2019 preparation process, as well as participated in four EC ERP support missions. Three analytical documents were prepared for the ERP co-ordinator of Serbia (energy soft measures, transport soft measures, key performance indicators). The OECD team reviewed several versions of chapter 4 of the ERP 2017-19 of the six Western Balkan countries and provided written feedback and suggestions. A regional study on special economic zones (SEZ) was prepared by the OECD and the draft shared with DG NEAR.

Competitiveness Outlook: All the assessment frameworks for the 2017/2018 cycle were developed and finalised, the project was launched with key regional stakeholders through a training seminar of the project's Country Co-ordinators in Paris and through six in-country launch assessment meetings. The assessment phase is now in process.

SBA Assessment: The new approach to be adopted under the SBA assessment cycle 2016-19 was introduced to the SBA co-ordinators in a meeting held in Paris. The main changes in the methodology of the SME Policy Index, as well as the new supporting activities are presented to the stakeholders and partner organisations. The first regional policy dialogue on access to finance was also organised in Paris under the scope of supporting activities.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Economic Reform Programmes: The ERP Tools helped the ERP co-ordinator and line ministries to prepare the diagnostic section of the ERP 2017-19 and to prioritise measures. The kick-off events raised awareness of the ERP inside the government and among the public. The capacity-building seminars allowed an in-depth reflection and discussion on specific priority areas and measures with line-ministries. The analytical documents were used by the Serbian ERP co-ordinator to prioritise the soft measures for the ERP 2017-19 and refine their key performance indicators. The written remarks and suggestions on the drafts provided by the OECD team benefitted the ERP co-ordinators to further develop and

improve their ERP 2017-19. The regional study on SEZs formed the basis for a consecutive assessment on the impact of zones on the SEE economies, co-ordinated by DG NEAR.

Competitiveness Outlook: 17 assessment frameworks were produced, which will enable governments to assess policies across 17 areas key to competitiveness.

SBA Assessment: The first regional policy dialogue helped the SBA co-ordinators increase their understanding of alternative financing instruments which could complement traditional bank lending

in fostering SMEs access to finance. In that regard, they acquired specific knowledge of policies that promote the growth of leasing and factoring, as well as venture capital.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Economic Reform Programmes: Existing tools will be updated based on the feedback of the countries. A new tool to help the ERP co-ordinators in monitoring the progress in the implementation of reform measures will be developed. Two regional workshops will be organised to exchange good practices and build further capacity of government institutions. An ERP preparation calendar will be developed in cooperation with DG NEAR with deadlines to receive support. The SEZ report will be discussed during a regional conference in April in Paris.

Competitiveness Outlook: The assessment phase will be completed and the reconciliation phase launched. A co-ordination meeting and training seminar will be organised in Paris to prepare the Country Co-ordinators for the reconciliation phase. Reconciliation meetings will be held across the six beneficiary economies. The reconciliation phase will result in 204 completed assessment frameworks (government and independent assessments).

SBA Assessment: The SME Policy Index methodology will be revised by refining scope and assessment framework of certain dimensions. To this end, consultative meetings with partners and stakeholders in the region will be held. In addition, a pilot capacity building event will be organised focusing on one of the SME Policy Index areas in which the Western Balkan economies and Turkey scored poorly during the previous assessment phase.

3.5 HUMAN CAPITAL

Programme Reference:	Multi-Beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Developing the entrepreneurial society in Western Balkans and Turkey – Support to the South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECEL)
EU contribution:	EUR 2.55 million and EUR 0.85 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant contract with SEECEL
Contract reference:	CN 2013/316-501; CN 2013/334-013
Duration of activities:	01/05/2013 – 31/12/2016; 01/01/2014 – 31/12/2016
Links:	www.seecel.hr
Contact :	Katja de Sadeleer, katja.de-sadeleer@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

To further work on a systematic approach to development of the entrepreneurially literate societies across the region and to support alignment of national policies with EU recommendations and policy essentials related to lifelong entrepreneurial learning, as well as to further develop the lifelong entrepreneurial learning system in line with the Human Capital Dimension of the SBA for Europe.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Developments in entrepreneurial learning (EL) as a key competence for the following ISCED levels of education: 1,2,3,5 and 6 and Teacher Training Authorities (TTA):

- Finalising implementation of pilot activities at all ISCED levels and TTA institutions: 95 pilot schools (ISCED 1-3), 15 pilot universities (ISCED 5-6) and 6 TTAs. Developed EL instrument was tested in the pilot schools and EL instruments for ISCED 1/2, 3 and 5/6 were published. Peer learning visits: 788 teachers, school managers and pupils benefited from another national or international experience of the SEECEL's ISCED 1, ISCED 2 or ISCED 3 pilot institutions.
- Organisation of final project conference *SEECEL Entrepreneurial Camp* in October 2016 in Šibenik, Croatia, with 430 participants.
- SEECEL video on the positive impact of SEECEL's work developed.

Small Business Act (SBA) Assessment Methodology:

- SEECEL participated in seven national dissemination events to present the results of the SBA process and of SEECEL's SBA peer learning process. The events were organised by the OECD in cooperation with national authorities from each country. SEECEL attended a meeting in Paris of the SBA partners along with SBA coordinators from the Western Balkans and Turkey to discuss the role of SEECEL in the next round of SBA assessment in 2018. Publication of SBA results for region (*SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2016*), available online.
- SEECEL publication on success of SBA human capital dimensions methodology (*Building Capacities: Entrepreneurial Learning and SME Skills*), followed by dissemination of both publications through national stakeholder events in each country of South East Europe and Turkey.

Other related activities:

Comprehensive external evaluation of the SEECEL activities under Grant Contracts 2013/316-501 and 2013/334-013 conducted at the SEE level.

The SEECP Ministerial Meeting (entitled *SME Competitiveness and Growth – Zagreb Charter on Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning*) was organised in December 2016 and hosted jointly by the Croatian Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Ministry of foreign and European affairs, the Croatian Chamber of Economy (CCE) and SEECEL. The Ministerial Meeting was attended and addressed by Commissioner Bieńkowska (DG GROW).

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- 95 pilot schools (ISCED 1: 32; ISCED 2: 32; ISCED 3: 31), 15 pilot universities and six TTAs implemented entrepreneurship as a key competence instrument; teachers (ISCED 1, 2 and 3) have developed and applied 245 teacher development plans and 881 lessons plans in all subjects; pilot institutions developed and submitted 94 peer learning visit plans and 94 peer learning visit reports; more than 150 peer visits were realised with 790 participants (teachers and school management representatives and students).
- SEECEL's forum CoP (Community of Practice) remained an active platform for sharing knowledge, achievements, good practices, announcements and innovative ideas (with over 900 active experts from all over the world).
- Four publications and online newsletter of the Entrepreneurial Learning Student Club (ELSC) were published and disseminated by SEECEL.
- Seven dissemination events for SBA results publications held in the Western Balkans and Turkey.
- Final project conference *SEECEL Entrepreneurial Camp* in October 2016 in Šibenik, Croatia, with 430 participants from all SEECEL countries was organised and SEECEL video was finalised in December 2016.
- External evaluation report produced and disseminated.
- *SEECIP Ministerial Meeting* (entitled *SME Competitiveness and Growth – Zagreb Charter on Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning*) was held in December 2016 in Zagreb, Croatia.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

N/A

3.6 TRADE

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
Project title:	Support to CEFTA Secretariat 2016-17
EU contribution:	EUR 282,623.00
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Moldova
Type of contract:	Operating grant with the CEFTA Secretariat
Contract reference:	CN 2016/368-970
Duration of activities:	01/04/2016 – 31/03/2017
Links:	http://cefta.int/
Contact:	gabriel.blanc@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 (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

The CEFTA Secretariat assisted the CEFTA Parties in the implementation of priorities outlined in the 2016 Work Programme and facilitated the organisation of approximately 22 planned meetings of the CEFTA Structures, including Negotiation Rounds on Additional Protocols on Liberalisation of Trade in Services, and legal scrubbing sessions for the Additional Protocols on Trade facilitation and on Liberalisation of Trade in Services.

Regarding the elimination of non-tariff barriers, the CEFTA Committee of Trade Facilitation took over the lists of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) identified with the help of private sector under the guidance of UNCTAD and ITC. That list has turned into a monitoring tool to follow-up the elimination process of those identified NTBs.

In the area of trade in services, two negotiating rounds were held, 21-22 September and on 6 December, both in Podgorica, supported by the legal scrubbing session on 14 November in Brussels. The technical part of the negotiations on the draft Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services and its Annexes have been finalised successfully in line with the conclusions of the Paris Summit of 4 July 2016. A tender for a study on the Improvement of Regulatory Cooperation in CEFTA was published at the end of October and the successful tenderer selected in early December. Key deliveries of the Study are a review of existing agreements as well as proposals on concrete arrangements of intra-regional cooperation.

In the area of trade in services statistics, FATS and FDI statistics, one meeting was held (on 28 October, Podgorica), where review of quality and availability of data was identified, CEFTA MIS Datasets developed and the regional indices for monitoring commitments in the area of trade in services and investment agreed.

In the area of movement of professionals and skilled labour, one meeting of the WG on recognition of professional qualifications was held on 15 December in Tirana. It dealt with the initiative to open the negotiations on Mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) in 4 prioritised professions namely: medical doctors, dentists, civil engineers and architects; it also considered options on establishment of the database on mobility of professionals across the Region. A Workshop preceded the meeting (held on 21-22 November, Zagreb), aimed at building joint base of knowledge and understanding of (1) procedures of recognition of professional qualifications and (2) conducting negotiations in a multilateral setting.

In the area of investment, one meeting of the WG on Investment Policy and Promotion was held on 17 and 18 November in Geneva. It discussed the relevant chapters of the first regional Investment Policy Review conducted together with RCC and UNCTAD: FDI specific legal framework, international investment agreements, business facilitation, tax regime, labour policy and skills, competition regime. Back to back to this meeting, a series of bilateral meetings took place between representatives of the investment promotion agencies. In addition, the CEFTA Secretariat is preparing the first CEFTA Investment Report on FDI trends in the region, expected to be published in the third quarter of 2017.

The final draft of Ministerial Decision to set up the CEFTA Secretariat Procurement Rules and Programming Procedures was endorsed by the CEFTA Parties. The adoption of the Ministerial Decision was postponed to the Joint Committee meeting scheduled for February 2017.

The CEFTA Secretariat visibility campaign was concluded successfully. As part of this campaign, the CEFTA Secretariat website was updated and modernised. A CEFTA Barometer has been prepared in order to measure the public opinion regarding the implementation of CEFTA. A brochure was prepared to identify the most widespread mistakes among the public regarding CEFTA. Answers to those “myths” were provided through that brochure, called CEFTA Myths and Facts. An award

competition was organised for the CEFTA Academia in cooperation with the London School of Economics. The awards to the winning articles were delivered during the CEFTA Week in December 2016. Country level visibility and outreach conferences were organised in five CEFTA Parties to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of CEFTA.

The CEFTA Secretariat organised a workshop on CEFTA dispute settlement mechanism with the participation of the WTO Legal Department, and the Advisory Centre for WTO Law (ACWL). In the workshop, the legal opinion prepared by the CEFTA legal counsel on the possible ways to strengthen the CEFTA Dispute Settlement Mechanism was discussed by the CEFTA Parties.

Furthermore, an ad-hoc meeting with the European Commission, and EFTA States was organised for CEFTA Parties to discuss the inclusion of CEFTA Decision on Full Cumulation and Duty Drawback in Appendix II of the Pan euro med Convention on the cumulation of rules of origin (PEM).

The CEFTA Secretariat assisted Albania and Serbia to do follow-up of the concept of regional economic area, the idea of which was initiated by their Prime Ministers. An instruction was given by the CEFTA Joint Committee to the Secretariat to propose a consolidated agenda and action plan for facilitating region economic integration in CEFTA.

Finally, the CEFTA Secretariat contributed to the organisation of several capacity building activities, including workshops with the World Bank on trade facilitation and CEFTA Chambers' visit to Brussels.

OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

- Additional Protocol 5 is ready for the adoption by the Joint Committee.
- Monitoring of NTBs identified by the private sector and validated by the CEFTA Parties in cooperation with UNCTAD and ITC started;
- Draft texts of the Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services and its Annexes were finalised;
- CEFTA MIS Datasets for trade in services statistics, FATS and FDI statistics developed and regional indices for monitoring commitments in trade in services and investment in CEFTA2006 and SEE2020 Strategy agreed.
- Agreement on two selected sectors (health and construction) and four professions (doctors, dentists, architects and civil engineers) for potential MRAs is reached.
- The CEFTA Procurement Rules and CEFTA Programming Procedures are ready for the adoption of CEFTA Joint Committee as Ministerial Decisions ;
- The CEFTA Visibility Campaign and the new CEFTA Website concluded by the launch of new website, CEFTA Academia Competition, Five Outreach Events, Brochures on CEFTA Barometer and CEFTA Myths and Facts ;
- CEFTA Decision on Full Cumulation and Duty Drawback was put on the agenda of PEM Joint Committee of the approval of PEM Contracting Parties.
- 1 Workshop on Dispute Settlement was organised and 2 Workshops and 1 Study visit were supported.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The CEFTA Secretariat will keep providing technical and administrative support to the Chair in Office for the implementation of the Chairmanship Programme 2017 and will continue assisting the CEFTA Parties in the organisation of all the regular meetings of the CEFTA structures and in conducting negotiations.

In particular, the CEFTA Secretariat will mainly provide support on the following areas:

- 1) Consolidation of the agendas of Trade Facilitation, Liberalisation of Trade in Services, and Free Movement of Experts and preparation of an Action Plan with the aim to deepen the regional economic integration in CEFTA
- 2) Adopting CEFTA Additional Protocol on Trade Facilitation by February 2017
- 3) Elaborating the implementing provisions of Mutual Recognition of Border Documents and Authorised Economic Operator Programmes as foreseen by the Additional Protocol on Trade Facilitation
- 4) Encouraging CEFTA Parties to conclude signing the Memoranda of Understanding between Customs Authorities and other Competent Authorities of CEFTA Parties involved in the clearance of goods.
- 5) Preparing a List of Early Actions to be undertaken by the CEFTA Parties in the context of Additional Protocol on Trade Facilitation before it enters into force
- 6) Encouraging CEFTA Parties to proceed with necessary domestic procedures with the aim of adopting the Additional Protocol on Trade in Services and its annexes no later than end of April 2017
- 7) Encouraging CEFTA Parties to support the successful functioning of the CEFTA Secretariat System on Reporting Data on Trade in Services and FDI
- 8) Continue working to create conditions for recognition of professional qualifications in sectors and professions of mutual interest with the aim of opening negotiations by mid-2017.
- 9) Starting the application of full cumulation and duty drawback in CEFTA trade once the derogation to CEFTA rules is granted by the PEM Convention Joint Committee
- 10) Encouraging to coordinate the positions of CEFTA Parties in the revision exercise of the PEM Convention and to undertake the concerted actions to propose the modifications of the bi-lateral free trade agreements with the EU, EFTA States, and Turkey to include full cumulation and duty drawback.
- 11) Continue discussing the possibilities to launch negotiations for an Additional Protocol on Dispute Settlement to regulate the legal and procedural aspects of the implementation of CEFTA Dispute Settlement
- 12) Exploring possibilities to create funding mechanisms from the savings recorded in the contributions of CEFTA Parties to finance the arbitration mechanism for the resolution of bi-lateral trade disputes between CEFTA Parties

CHAPTER 4: TRANSPORT AND ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE, NUCLEAR SAFETY

One of the priorities for IPA assistance is to help Beneficiaries to overcome the economic and financial crisis and to prepare for sound recovery by jointly working 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 energy efficiency and renewable energy. Under the Municipal Window of the Infrastructure Projects Facility, grant co-financing is provided for investment projects in the fields of environment (water supply, wastewater collection and treatment), energy (district heating) and transport (urban transport). Close coordination with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) is essential.

4.1 WESTERN BALKANS INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK (WBIF)

The Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) was created 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 for strategic investments. It pools resources from the European Commission's Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) with those of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), 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 overall coordination of assistance. The WBIF seeks to maximise the impact of grant financing by using it to leverage lending by IFIs on priority strategic investments identified by the Western Balkan beneficiaries.

Since its launch seven years ago, the WBIF has developed a pipeline of priority investments in the accession countries valued at approximately EUR 13.9 billion. To date, a total of 220 technical assistance and investment grants have been awarded to 137 projects for a cumulative value of EUR 632 million. These grants are used for project preparation, implementation and co-financing of investments in infrastructure for which financial support is provided by the partner IFIs - EIB, EBRD, CEB as well as KfW, with the World Bank as an associated IFI.

Either the IFIs or the European Commission implement the grant assignments. For the implementation of the EU grants, the Commission has awarded technical assistance contracts under the Infrastructure Project Facility (IPF), has signed contribution agreements with the IFIs for implementation of the Municipal Window and contribution arrangements with the WBIF Joint Fund Managers (EBRD&EIB) for the co-financing of connectivity projects.

The European Commission is the largest contributor to the WBIF and has channelled a total of around EUR 500 million in grants to the WBIF. Out of this, more than half –260 million– has gone to finance traditional Technical Assistance.

Between 2008 and 2016 bilateral donors have in total contributed more than EUR 49 million to the EWBJF and the partner IFIs have set aside EUR 10 million each in grant contributions. Grants provided to the WBIF from bilateral donors and from the IFIs are implemented directly by the IFIs through various technical assistance assignments.

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 be provided with the required financing for its implementation,
- 2 - to pool different sources of funding (IFIs, the EC and bilateral donors) and work out an appropriate blend of grants and loans for various actions,
- 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 socio-economic priorities are accession-driven and relate to the alignment of the 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 priorities is a result of consultation with the other relevant DGs (Environment, Climate change, Move, Energy, Regional Policy, Economic and Financial Affairs) and ensures coordination with their activities in the region.

ACTIVITIES

Programme reference:	Multi-Country Action Programme for Connectivity 2015-2016 IPA 2015/038-055 & 2016/038-727
Project title:	Co-financing of Connectivity Projects in the Western Balkans
EU contribution:	EUR 138,1 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution Arrangement with respect to the European Western Balkans Joint Fund under the Western Balkans Investment Framework
Contract reference:	CN 2016/375-830 & 2016/375-855
Duration of activities:	16/06/2016 – 31/12/2024
Link:	www.wbif.eu/
Contact :	Marcin Brauhoff, marcin.brauhoff@ec.europa.eu

Key issues under the WBIF work programme for the second half of 2016 included in particular the 16th call for proposals for WBIF technical assistance support, the identification and approval of 3 mature projects for co-financing under the connectivity agenda, the activation of the WBIF revised founding documents, the signing of the 1st Contribution Arrangement with the Joint Fund co-managers for co-financing of 7 connectivity projects

approved in 2015, the upgrading of the WBIF website and Management and Information System (MIS).

In June 2016, the call for project proposals – Round 16 – was launched and overall 11 applications were received. The Project Financiers' Group (PFG) met in November 2016 in Pristina to assess the grant applications.

The 15th Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the WBIF took place in London on 15 December 2016 and was hosted by the EBRD. Based on the recommendations from the PFG, the SC approved 5 WBIF technical assistance grants for a total of approximately EUR 10.6 million.

The 15th SC also approved EUR 98 million EU grant co-financing for 3 regional railway projects which were submitted by beneficiaries in response to the first call for investment grants. The grant support will mobilise investments in excess of EUR 200 million in order to build and / or rehabilitate more than 150 km of railway track, and create more than 2,000 new jobs on the immediate term. The SC endorsed the European Union contribution of EUR 50 million to energy efficiency measures which will be implemented by the Regional Energy Efficiency Programme for the Western Balkans and the Green for Growth Fund. The investment grants as well as the support for the energy efficiency measures are part of the Connectivity Agenda package for 2016, as endorsed by the 4 July 2016 WB6 Summit in Paris.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The indicative work programme for the first part of 2017 includes the launch of Round 17 for technical assistance grants (deadline for applications is 28 February 2017) and the screening & assessment of Round 2 for co-financing of investment grants (deadline for applications is 31 December 2016).

Regarding technical assistance grants, and due to the limitation of available funds, priority will be given to applications for high priority projects and/or unblocking existing projects. Regarding investment grants, all four sectors are eligible for co-financing, the approval of environment and social sector projects being subject to availability of funds from bilateral donors since IPA funds should be allocated to connectivity projects only.

The next PFG will be held in Brussels in May 2017. The next SC meeting will take place in June 2017 in Stockholm and will be hosted by the Swedish government.

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4.2 HORIZONTAL SUPPORT TO IFI COORDINATION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091& IPA 2015/031-609
Project title:	Horizontal Support to Coordination with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) – IFI Coordination Office
EU contribution:	EUR 7.76 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Service contract with Mott MacDonald Limited
Contract reference:	CN 2014/340-622 & 2016/372-315
Duration of activities:	01/04/2014 – 31/01/2018
Link:	www.wbif.eu/
Contact :	Nadejda Mecheva, nadejda.mecheva@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The IFI Coordination Office 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 IFI Coordination Office provides a range of technical, management and communication services to support coordination among all WBIF stakeholders. It delivers analytical and operational services regarding EC, IFI and bilateral donors cooperation in the main WBIF sectors to facilitate better programming and planning of assistance including investments.

The Office supports WBIF structures, particularly the WBIF Secretariat and the WBIF SC, and has developed a range of WBIF related communication activities including the WBIF website and MIS.

ACTIVITIES (JULY– DECEMBER 2016)

- Preparation and follow-up of the WBIF Project Financiers' Group and Steering Committee meetings.
- Input regarding the finalisation and adoption of the revised WBIF founding documents and contractual arrangements with IFIs.
- Support in the identification of mature connectivity infrastructure projects to be financed from IPA 2016 Multi-Country envelope.
- Assistance to the beneficiary countries with the implementation of the new WBIF methodology, the setting-up of National Investment Committees (NICs) and the preparation of Single Project Pipelines.
- Support in updating of the Grant Application Form for blending facilities (GAF).
- Development of the GAF and Guidelines for technical assistance grants

OUTPUTS (JULY– DECEMBER 2016)

- Support the Beneficiaries in the GAF preparation process / connectivity projects to be financed under IPA 2016.
- Support the Beneficiaries with their applications for call for project proposals Round 16.
- Support for the development of Single Sector Project Pipeline (SSPP) for the Competition and Business Development sector in Albania.
- Maintenance and updating of the WBIF website and MIS.
- Drafting and submission of Terms of Reference for IPF4.
- Delivery of the bi-annual Monitoring Report November 2016, bi-monthly reports of active WBIF projects.
- Preparation and production an Energy Efficiency Brochure.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Support the preparation and organisation of WBIF related meetings, in particular the 16th WBIF Steering Committee in June 2017.
- Screening of applications from call for TA project proposals Round 17; support in the launch and screening of applications from call for co-investment grants Round 2.
- Finalisation of the WBIF Vademecum.
- Maintenance of the WBIF website, update of databases of investment and IPA flows, development of additional modules.
- Preparation and production of the WBIF 2016 Annual report.
- Focus on visibility & communication activities.

4.3 WBIF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS FACILITIES (IPF)

Programme reference	: Multi-beneficiary programmes, IPA 2011/022-964, IPA 2012/022-966
Project title:	Infrastructure Projects Facility 3 – Technical Assistance Window
EU contribution:	EUR 22.422 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Service contract with Mott MacDonald Limited
Contract reference:	CN 2012/293-208; CN 2013/331-494
Duration of activities:	20/06/2012 – 19/06/2018
Links:	www.wbif.eu
Contact:	Élodie LOPPE, elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu

Programme reference	: Multi-country programme IPA II 2014/031-603
Project title:	Support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework projects – Infrastructure Project Facility (extension IPF 4 and IPF 5)
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:	Élodie LOPPÉ, elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu

Programme reference	: Multi-country programme IPA II 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:	22/11/2016 – 31/12/2021
Links:	www.wbif.eu
Contact:	Élodie LOPPÉ, elodie.loppe@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 transport, environment, energy and social 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 however also 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.

To date, five IPFs have been deployed. The European Commission has been managing directly the first three Facilities. However, 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 IPF 4 and further Facilities.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

IPF 3 has been assigned a total of 26 technical assistance grants, using fully its resources. IPF 3 portfolio is well advanced and, though the end date of their activities is currently foreseen for mid-2018, their tasks should be mostly completed mid-2017. In addition to the implementation of WBIF TA grants, IPF 3 is also developing the regional hydro master-plan for the Western Balkans.

IPF 4 has been assigned the implementation of 17 technical assistance grants. Difficulties in initiating activities for some grants however resulted in changes in their portfolio in the last months of 2016. Their activities are in full swing and the current end date of activities is end 2018.

IPF 5 started their activities in July and are currently implementing five projects.

The EIB pursued the tender for IPF 6 in the second semester of 2016.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Support to Beneficiaries with the preparation and implementation of priority infrastructure projects in the transport, environment, energy and social sectors within the WBIF.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Assignments of grants to IPF 4 and IPF 5 using fully their resources
- Continuation of the implementation of technical assistance grants by IPF 3, IPF 4 and IPF 5
- Contracting and initiation of activities for IPF 6

4.4 MUNICIPAL WINDOW

Programme reference:	Annual Programme 2008 II for Kosovo, IPA 2008/020-454
Project title:	Municipal Window of the Infrastructure Project Facility – Kosovo Window
EU contribution:	EUR 25.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Kosovo
Type of contract:	Delegation Agreement to KfW
Contract reference:	CN 2009/221-084
Duration of activities:	11/12/2009 – 31/12/2016
Contact:	Élodie LOPPE, elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

- The project covers the following:
- Water and sanitation Pristina: rehabilitation of the water distribution, rehabilitation of the water treatment plant Badovc, replacement of parts of the sewerage network and protection of the water resources,
- Pristina district heating: rehabilitation and upgrade of the existing heating network, construction of a cogeneration facility in the thermal power plant Kosovo B and its connection to Pristina district heating system.

ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2016)

The water and sanitation sub-project suffered substantial delays starting with the signature and ratification of the Loan and Financing Agreements and continuing during implementation in particular due to poor construction site management by the contractors; unforeseeable findings on site implying additional drilling or changes to the pipes route in the course of the project. Activities were nevertheless finalised by the end of 2016, end date for the activities.

The Pristina district heating sub-project also experienced major delays and difficulties. Partly due to Termokos cash flow problems, following lengthy negotiations regarding the guarantee of a secured heat supply to Termokos and partly due to a substantial cost increase following a change in technology, resulting in the need to secure additional funding. Works on the first turbine were completed in November 2014 with the immediate result that the winter 2014-2015 was the first time a 24-hour service was provided. Works on the second turbine were completed during spring 2015 and testing was performed end of 2015. The system is now fully operational and fuel oil is not needed anymore, resulting in substantial savings allowing Termokos to reach financial sustainability and improving considerably the quality of the air.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Completion of construction works; Initiation of project closure.

4.5 JASPERS

Programme reference	: Multi-country programme IPA 2015/031-609
Project title:	JASPERS IPA II
EU contribution:	EUR 4.00 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Specific Grant Agreement with the EIB
Contract reference:	CN 2016/368-304
Duration of activities:	01/01/2016 – 31/12/2018
Links:	www.jaspers-europa-info.org
Contact:	Élodie LOPPE, elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

JASPERS is a technical assistance partnership between the European Commission, the EIB and the EBRD, created to support the new Member States which joined the EU to access EU Structural Funds. Originally, the beneficiaries were the Member States who joined the EU in 2004, 2007 and 2013, as well as Greece. With the new Framework Partnership Agreement signed in 2014 with DG REGIO, all 28 Member States are now eligible. Besides, JASPERS is now also supporting the countries eligible for the Cohesion Funds in the context of the Connecting Europe Facility.

Since 2013, JASPERS has expanded its services to three pre-accession countries, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. In view of the positive experience in these countries for the preparation of high quality infrastructure investments, it was decided to extend the opportunity of JASPERS' support to all IPA II beneficiaries from the 1st of January 2016.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

JASPERS contributes to bring high quality major infrastructure projects to maturity by offering support to develop, manage and review the quality of the projects, making them eligible for IPA II financing. In addition, JASPERS offers assistance to the beneficiaries for the preparation of their sector strategies and projects pipelines for IPA II financing, to improve programming and subsequently the timing and quality of the projects.

JASPERS has continued in Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the activities initiated under their previous agreement with DG REGIO (activities in Serbia are falling under a separate agreement between JASPERS and the EUD). They have also initiated their activities in the other IPA II beneficiaries with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Support to Beneficiaries with the preparation and implementation of priority transport, environment and energy infrastructure projects.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

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

4.6 ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN FOR GROWTH

Programme reference:	IPA 2007/019-340
Project title:	Horizontal programme on the Energy Efficiency Finance Facility (EEFF)
EU contribution:	EUR 34.7 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreements with EIB, EBRD, CEB/KfW
Contract reference:	CN 2008/163-442 (EIB); 163-440 (EBRD); 163-444 (CEB/KfW)
Duration of activities:	28/11/2008 – 31/12/2016
Contact :	Davor Kunc, davor.kunc@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

This programme is to assist beneficiaries promote investments in energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE) generation to improve energy performance of the building and industry sectors, thereby contributing to energy savings and reduction of CO2 emissions. This is achieved through the provision of financing to commercial banks in the region to increase their portfolios in EE and RE projects for on-lending to final borrowers. The IFI credit lines under the programme are combined with IPA grants in the form of financial incentives both to partner banks (PB) and end-borrowers to facilitate investments.

ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

EIB: The Turkish component of the EIB credit line counts 29 sub-projects for a total grant amount of EUR 6.2 million. At the end of December 2016, all the sub-projects were positively verified and had grants disbursed to them. The Croatian component is fully allocated to nine sub-projects for a total grant amount of EUR 3.3 million. As at the end of December 2016, all the sub-projects were positively verified and had grants disbursed to them. Under both components, most sub-projects concern RE investments.

As at 31 December 2016, EIB had disbursed EUR 9.5 million of grants to verified sub-projects including EUR 8.0 million of investment incentives to the sub-project promoters.

CEB/KfW: The KfW credit lines (partly refinanced by CEB) in Serbia were fully implemented at the end of December 2016. UniCredit Serbia and ProCredit Serbia showed great commitment to placing the credit lines. KfW closely monitored the progress of the Programme and stayed in frequent exchange with the partner banks to promote disbursements and pipeline development.

During the reporting period, the partner banks signed five new loans to end borrowers. 22 IPA grant payments were disbursed to end clients. Since the start of the programme, a total of 50 sub-projects have been financed by the two partner banks and a total of 47 IPA grant payments have been disbursed to end clients. The overall grant amount disbursed to end borrowers and partner banks was EUR 7.36 million.

EBRD: The EBRD credit line of EUR 60 million is fully allocated through 8 Participating Banks – three banks in Serbia for EUR 33 million, two in Bosnia and Herzegovina for EUR 15 million and three in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for EUR 12 million. The EUR 60 million credit line has been fully disbursed to Participating Banks (PBs).

By 31 December 2016, the PBs have on lent more than EUR 59.9 million (or 99.9% of the credit line) in energy efficiency and renewable energy loans. The number of signed sub-projects has reached 135 (supported by 137 sub-loans) for a cumulative sub-loan portfolio of over EUR 59.9 million. Corresponding incentive payments to sub-borrowers amounting to EUR 9,413,603.76 million have been committed by 31 December 2016. The portfolio of signed sub-projects will achieve combined expected annual energy savings of 483,679.01 MWh per annum and abatement of 161,703 metric tons of CO2 equivalent per annum.

In order to facilitate successful verification of the sub-projects under the facility, further time extensions have been issued to both consultants in H2-2016 due to project completion delays experienced on the Sub-borrowers side, linked to issuance of operating permits for two sub-projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the phased implementation of the final project signed under Halkbank Macedonia. During H1 2016, one of the sub-projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina was not granted the relevant operating permit. The sub-project remains in the PBs portfolio as it was deemed eligible and was implemented but will not be verified and no sub-borrower incentive will be paid. The

final two sub-projects were completed and verified in Q3/Q4 2016. EUR 64,785.10 was paid out in Sub-borrower investment incentives.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

ElB: As the Facility expired on 31/12/2016, the remaining activities within the Facility are limited to the closure process.

CEB/KfW: ProCredit Bank has fully placed the credit line with the end borrowers. For UniCredit Bank, the consultants will continue to verify the remaining projects in the portfolio and will assist the partner banks in further pipeline development. The full loan amount is expected to be disbursed until the end of 2016.

EBRD: Project Consultant has submitted the draft Final report and is awaiting EBRD review and approval. Final invoices from the PC and VC to be submitted and processed for payment for Facility closure. Final report to be drafted and submitted by end of H1 2017.

Programme reference:	Management of Participation in the Green for Growth Fund (GGF)	
Project title:	Green for Growth Fund (GGF)	
EU contribution (IPA only):	EUR 38.6 million (shares), 10.8 million (technical assistance)	
Beneficiary region:	13 countries including Western Balkans	
Type of contract:	Delegation (Trusteeship) Agreements with the European Investment Fund (EIF)	
Contract reference:	2016/381-814	Previous contracts: 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:	http://www.ggf.lu	
Contact:	Davor Kunc, Davor.kunc@ec.europa.eu	

PURPOSE

The mission of the Fund is to contribute in the form of a public-private partnership with a layered risk/return structure, enhancing energy efficiency (EE) and fostering renewable energies (RE) in the Southeast Europe region including Turkey, and in the European Neighbourhood Regions East and South, predominantly through the provision of dedicated financing to businesses and households via partnering with financial institutions and direct financing.

GGF objectives are broadening the financing base of EE and RE investments in the target regions, increase awareness of EE and small RE products among companies and private households, contribute to broadening and deepening the financial sector servicing those development needs as well as to Harmonize and coordinate donor initiatives. GGF aims at achieving 20% energy savings and/or 20% CO2 savings across the energy efficiency portfolio and promote the use of renewable energy sources.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

On 28 December 2016, the European Commission and the European Investment Fund (EIF) signed a new Delegation Agreement, for administration of IPA participation in the GGF (including its Technical

Assistance Facility). This new trusteeship agreement continues the 2009-2016 cooperation between the Commission and the Fund, and expires end 2023.

As of December 2016, the Fund had active investments in 15 target markets and 41 Partner Institutions. GGF continued to build-up a diversified portfolio and increased impact by transferring best practices across a broad spectrum of Partner Institutions.

Furthermore, with the approved expansion into six countries in the European Southern Neighbourhood Region (Middle East and North Africa) earlier in the year, the Fund has already begun to sign investments in Egypt and Tunisia, and expects to deliver added levels of environmental impact, while increasingly diversifying its portfolio in terms of Partner Institutions and countries. The Fund has laid the ground for a solid 2017 investment portfolio build-up.

During second half of 2016, the GGF signed and/or disbursed 11 investments with financial institutions totaling EUR 81.7 million, among others in Serbia, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and, significantly, the first investment in Kosovo.

GGF continued to build upon the strong momentum of the previous year, increasing the environmental impact of the Fund through considerable on-lending and outreach. GGF's cumulative sub-loan portfolio reached EUR 406.1 million by the end of Q3.

On the funding side, EUR 34 million new capital was obtained from three private investors, whereby private capital now accounts for 17% of the total. The Fund was active in TA as well, with 26 projects for a total budget of EUR 1,027,856 approved during the second half of 2016. The current funding of the GGF TAF amounts to EUR 12.9 million. As the majority of this funding is already allocated to existing or planned projects, the TA Facility is actively seeking additional donations to secure its activities for the future, whereby EUR 5.8m will be finalised with DG NEAR for allocation to the WB6..

The Fund continues to actively attend industry events, and to participate in the Energy Communities Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy coordination group meetings.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

GGF figures as at end Q3/Q4 (aggregate for the region of Southeast Europe):

1. Total Invested Portfolio (Q4): EUR 243.9 million.
2. Number of active Partner Institutions (Q4): 23.
3. Number of target countries (Q4): 8.
4. No asset impairments have been accorded.
5. Measures financed (Q3): 31% buildings, 27% improvement in processes, process related equipment, 23% use of RE for commercial energy generation, 8% energy service and supply business, 6% agri-equipment, 2% use of RE by households and businesses, 3% Others.
6. Sectors financed (Q3): Households 30%; Services 29%; Manufacturing 25%; Commercial 8%; Agriculture 6%; Other 3%.
7. CO2 Savings / CO2 Reduction (Q3): 381,183 tCO₂/yr / 51%.
8. Energy Savings (Q3): 1,477,215/ 49%.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The Fund will enter the first half of 2017 with a strong pipeline in Southeast Europe, with investments under consideration in Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Kosovo. The Fund is seeking additional capital to further leverage the investments of the donors and is in active discussions with several potential private and public investors. At the same time,

additional funding, particularly for C Shares and TA is being sought, given GGF’s growing portfolio and expanding activities. In 2017 GGF will explore the broadening of the Fund to pursue diversification in new sectors, including “nexus” sectors that are related to energy but which also provide additional climate change mitigation/adaptation benefits (e.g. water, resource efficiency).

The GGF TA Facility will continue to support the GGF investments particularly in Serbia, Turkey, and Kosovo over the next months with several projects supporting the EE and RE lending activities of the Partner Institutions. In 2017, it is planned to support a number of initiatives to facilitate further investments with ‘deep dive’ studies to identify untapped market potential and to implement an increasing number of TA project with focus on developing and enhancing the EE/RE finance capacity of new or potential PIs. At the same time, the TA Facility continues to focus on development impact, through portfolio screening and data mining to ensure the Fund is maximising the impact of its portfolio’s investments.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2012/022-966
Project title:	Regional Energy Efficiency Programme for the Western Balkans
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 :	Davor Kunc, Davor.kunc@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.

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

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

Theme 1 ESCO Support

ESCO legislative work (policy dialogue)

In Serbia several remaining legislative barriers were raised with the legislature, including VAT and the procurement law.

ESCO project preparation work

Project preparation support is on-going in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the remaining countries no tangible, viable projects have been identified but support would be available.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue

All major deliverables under REEP were substantively completed in the period. The consultants however made themselves available to assist beneficiaries in some limited areas to assist implementation, such as, addressing queries raised in the formal legislative adoption process, and adapting and using software previously delivered. A last set of technical assistance activities were also discussed with relevant beneficiaries (primarily, Serbia) to further support decisions and inform design issues in relation to a potential EEO scheme.

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

- The Project Consultant (PC) assessed a total of 21 projects during the period
- In the period 10 verification site visits were conducted and 54 Verification reports issued in total by the Verification Consultant (VC)
- 7 New Case Studies have been developed/uploaded on the website
- 5 Public events were held: 2 in Croatia, 1 in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 1 in Serbia and 1 in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility:

There were no new projects approved and/or signed during the second half of 2016. The main reasons for that included the limited available headroom and the strategic preference to use it for less popular technologies in countries that have not seen much development of renewables. It is worth pointing out that a potential regional ESCO project was also identified during the period and some work was carried on analysing and structuring it. In addition to these business development activities, further work was done on verifying the completion of projects and making the incentive payments.

At the end of the reporting period, the pipeline of potential projects, included one biogas project in Serbia, and a regional ESCO project. These are taking shape and it should be possible to have them approved in the first half of 2017.

During the period, the completion of one project (a biogas project in Serbia) was verified. The incentive payment of EUR 0.30 million will not be provided, as the project received another grant from UNDP and it was agreed that in such a case the incentive payment from the EBRD will not be due. The verification of another projects was also underway.

OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

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

Theme 1 ESCO Support

ESCO legislative work (policy dialogue)

In Serbia several legal documents interpretations and clarification notes were drafted, discussed with the legislature and municipalities and then shared with the legislature for review.

ESCO project preparation work

Significant progress has been made on the basis of the prepared ESCO energy performance contracting (EnPC) contract templates:

Croatia

- tender documentation for 6 additional street lighting projects were completed and provided to the respective municipalities.

- 2 additional street lighting tenders were published and selection process is on-going.

Serbia

- Tender documentation for 3 additional street lighting projects were completed and provided to the respective municipalities.
- 1 street lighting tender was published.
- The 2 contracted street lighting projects were being implemented though completion seems to have slipped into early 2017.
- The preparation of the ESCO street lighting project in Belgrade is progressing and publication of the tender early coming year is foreseen.
- Project preparation in the second biggest city Novi Sad has started.
- 3 public building owners indicated their interest in ESCO Energy Supply Contracting biomass projects. Follow up in early 2017 is planned.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Due to procedural reasons the tender for the biomass heat supply project was stopped. There is still interest to proceed which would require retendering, due to the mentioned procedural reason.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue:

All assignments under this theme are now largely complete.

In the EPBD Domain, headline outputs delivered to relevant countries cover final regulations and policy recommendations covering implementing minimum energy performance standards, national calculation methodologies, energy performance certification, the regular inspection of heating and air-conditioning systems, and delivery and training in EPBD implementation software. Primary Laws prepared by REEP have now been adopted by the Parliaments in Kosovo and Albania.

In the Procurement domain, all planned outputs have been completed: finalisation of procurement rulebook and guidelines and delivery of associated training and capacity building for Montenegro and Serbia (no guidelines were provided in Serbia); both countries' regulations have been adopted.

The NEEAP in Albania has been approved by the government.

Draft regulations for EEO schemes in Montenegro and Croatia are completed and delivered but await adoption due to prior changes required to primary legislation and political considerations. Support for the adoption process is ongoing in both countries. Support is also ongoing for Serbia in assisting development of its Article 7 notification.

Window 2 Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

EUR 92 million funding to PFIs is fully allocated of which EUR 86.6 million has been on-lent to finance eligible sub-projects.

By the end of 2016, 261 sub-projects have been approved and loans signed for a cumulative total of EUR 67,226,518 million. Of those, 11 were signed in H2 2016 for EUR 2,370,305. million

53 sub-projects were successfully verified by the Verification Consultant in H2-2016. To date EUR 3,031,034.55 million has been paid in investment incentives to sub-borrowers, of which EUR 1,211,104.04 million was paid in H2 2016. To date the total (equivalent) primary energy savings is 462,200 (MWh/y), with CO2 emissions saving of 109,108 (tonnes/y).

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

As at the end of 2016, the EBRD had approved six projects under the second phase of the WeBSEDF: four small hydropower plant projects in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, a biomass project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a biogas project in Serbia. The amount of finance provided is EUR 28.1 million. Their implementation will add 24.3 MW of electricity generation capacity, with annual production of 241.7 GWh and will lead to estimated CO₂e emission reductions of 331,427 tonnes a year. Of these six projects, three have been completed and one is expected to be verified as completed in early 2017 (after some delays to the original schedule). In total, they will qualify for up to EUR 1.76 million worth of incentive payments.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

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

Theme 1 ESCO Support

ESCO legislative work (policy dialogue)

In Serbia the formal adoption of the prepared Energy Supply Contracting (ESC) contract template is planned. In addition, legislative support regarding several legal elements will be provided, as these were identified to further enable energy efficiency investments (most notably VAT and the procurement law).

Additional policy/legislative support might be provided on an ad-hoc basis, as several countries have indicated interest and need for support.

ESCO (project preparation work)

In Croatia and Serbia it is planned to continue preparing street lighting tenders, support tendering, contracting and implementation. In Croatia it is planned to complete street lighting projects worth EUR 10.00 million with direct REEP support, while additional projects have indirectly benefited from prepared contract and tender documentation. Most noteworthy are the street lighting ESCO projects in Belgrade and Novi Sad, the two largest cities in Serbia. In addition it is planned to initiate water supply and tendering 3 identified energy supply contracting projects in public buildings. In Bosnia and Herzegovina it is planned to retender the stopped tender process for the PPP based Energy Supply Contracting biomass district heating project and revive the tender for ESCO project in the cantonal hospital.

In the remaining countries ad-hoc support is available, with the currently most likely country being Kosovo.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue

The aim for the next 6 months for each Domain is as follows:

1. EPBD Domain – completed;
2. Procurement Domain – completed;
3. Domain relating to NEEAP implementation –complete delivery of final EEO/Article 7 support to Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Window 2 Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

- Continuation of project assessments and sub-loan signings by PC/PFIs.
- Continuous update of the website with monthly graphical presentations, statistics, achievements and case studies.

- *gBank relationship managers to continue marketing activities and continue with marketing / awareness raising activities in all four countries.*

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

During the first half of 2017, efforts will be made to progress with the approval of the projects in the pipeline, as well as on verifying the completion of the remaining unverified projects. In particular, it will be important to manage to structure the ESCO project in the pipeline, so that it leads to a successful financing structure, which can then be replicated with other similar ESCOs.

4.7 RADIATION PROTECTION

Programme reference:	Horizontal programme on nuclear safety and radiation protection, IPA 2008/020-350
Project title:	Support to the Vinca Institute Nuclear Decommissioning programme (VIND part II)
EU contribution:	EUR 3.2 million
Beneficiary :	Serbia
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement with the IAEA
Contract reference:	CN 2010/235-591
Duration of activities:	23/07/2010 – 22/09/2016
Contact :	Nadejda Mecheva, nadejda.mecheva@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

This project includes 5 sub-projects/activities:

- Conditioning and secure storage of disused sealed radioactive sources in Serbia;
- Decommissioning of the degraded waste storage hangar No. 1;
- Radioactivity survey;
- Characterisation and conditioning of radioactive waste, and strengthening of radiation safety capabilities and infrastructure.

ACTIVITIES (JULY– DECEMBER 2016)

This project is currently under implementation after the successful tendering and contracting of all remaining activities by the IAEA. The successful contractor is working on the ground and a very smooth cooperation is reported by both the IAEA and the relevant national authorities involved in this project.

This contribution agreement ended on 22 September 2016. The Commission has rejected the request for a further extension of the implementation period. In light of this, the concerned parties (COM, IAEA, Serbia) have held a series of meetings. The outcome of these meetings was that the IPA contribution will expire and that DG DEVCO will consider financing the continuation action in the future. Further coordination between IAEA, Serbia and DG DEVCO will be needed in order to reach final decision on the possible continuation of financing through EU funds.

Programme reference :	Horizontal Programme on Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection (Montenegro centralised part), IPA 2011/023-388
Project title:	Strengthening Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety in Montenegro through capability upgrading of the technical support institution (CETI)
EU contribution:	EUR 0.3 million
Beneficiary region :	Montenegro
Type of contract :	Supply contract
Contract reference:	2015/356-441
Duration of activities :	25/05/2015 - 17/09/2015 (possible extension needed)
Contact :	Nadejda Mecheva, nadejda.mecheva@ec.europa.eu

The purpose of the project is to upgrade CETI's performance and capabilities in the following five major areas of radiation protection: monitoring of the radioactivity in the environment, including response to radiological/nuclear emergency situations; management of low and medium radioactive waste, storage and transportation of radioactive materials; professional, patient and public exposure control.

The project entails providing adequate pieces of equipment, staff training and expert assistance.

As a result it is expected that Montenegro complies with international (IAEA and EU) norms in the respective fields.

ACTIVITIES (JULY– DECEMBER 2016)

The delivery of the equipment under this project was effectuated in July 2016. However, the EUD in Podgorica when revireing the delivery and before signing the Provisionary Acceptance Certificate reported a series of deficiencies. The contractor responded positively and the additional equipment was delivered in October 2016. The contract will therefore be finalised.

Programme reference:	Horizontal programme on nuclear safety and radiation protection, IPA 2011/023-384
Project title :	Further enhancement of the technical capacity of nuclear regulatory bodies in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia)
EU contribution:	EUR 2.7 million
Beneficiary region :	Western Balkans
Type of contract :	Service contract
Contract reference:	2015/362-673
Duration of activities :	25/06/2015 - 24/06/2018
Contact :	Nadejda Mecheva, nadejda.mecheva@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

This regional project will aim at enhancing the technical capacity of the regulatory bodies of the beneficiary countries in the field of nuclear safety and radiation protection is fully compliant with the MIPD's objectives.

ACTIVITIES

The activities of the project are now in progress. Task 2 – transposition of the EU acquis and task 3 development of regulatory procedures are underway.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Continuation of activities as per programme.

CHAPTER 5: ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

5.1 ECRAN

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2015, IPA 2014/031-603
Project title:	Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN)
EU contribution:	EUR 5.00 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service contract to Hulla & Co. Human Dynamics KG
Contract reference:	ENV.E1/2013/22.02.07.01/660224
Duration of activities:	October 2013 – October 2016
Links:	http://www.ecranetwork.org
Contact :	Madalina Ivanica, madalina.ivanica@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project aims at enhancing regional cooperation in the Western Balkans and Turkey in the field of environment and climate change.

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

The following key capacity building events or workshop were completed during the reporting period:

Environment Working Groups:

- Strategic Planning and Investments: nothing to report. All activities finalised in the previous reporting period.
- Water Management: The economics of climate change adaptation measures under Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive and ICZM (Turkey); Eutrophication reduction measures under MSFD, WFD, UWWTD and Nitrates Directive (Bosnia and Herzegovina); Water Framework Directive Drina Program of Measures (Albania); Workshop on Actions toward the “WFD good status” - results, case studies and challenges (Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- Environmental Assessments: Regional Workshop on linkages between Appropriate Assessment and SEA/EIA (Turkey); Regional training with focus on hydropower and wind

energy development (Croatia); Regional training workshop on SEA in spatial planning (Albania); Regional Training on SEA/EIA in industrial sector and the 3rd Training of Trainers (ToT) session (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

- Air Quality: nothing to report. All activities finalised in the previous reporting period.
- Waste Management: National Roundtable on Cost recovery and CBA in Waste Sector in Kosovo.
- Nature Protection: Expert mission on Natura 2000 network assessment in Serbia and Albania; Regional workshop on Implementation of EU Timber Regulation (Croatia); Expert mission on Natura 2000 network assessment in Kosovo.
- IED / Chemicals: Final closing event in Turkey.

Climate Action Working Groups:

- Climate Policy Development and Building Climate Awareness: High level dialogue – Post Paris/COP 21, NDC implementation in Croatia; Hands-on mission in Albania – Climate Legislation Review; Hands-on Mission to Montenegro – Modelling HAM scenario.
- GHG Inventory Systems and the EU Monitoring Mechanism Regulation: National systems workshop in Montenegro.
- Emissions Trading: Modelling support mission in Albania; ETS technical mission – Accreditation training in Serbia; Climate acquis training- Cars vans training (Albania); Workshop on modelling and INDCs (implementation steps) (Albania); Hands-on mission to Serbia on Modelling HAM scenario; Regional CRF sectors (2 - 6) Training (Croatia); Workshop on verification of greenhouse gas emissions (Serbia); Operators training in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Adaptation: Step D Workshop in Montenegro; Final ECRAN Adapt Conference (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

Cross-cutting activity for both environment and climate components:

- Final Steering Committee meeting on 28 September in Brussels.
- Enforcement and compliance (ECENA): Sub-regional course common inspection Serbia, External Country assessments/IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI) in Turkey and Serbia; Joint workshop ECENA and Waste WG on waste/TFS (Turkey); Sub-regional course common inspection in Kosovo; National expert mission on implementation of the Integrated Risk Assessment Method (IRAM)/easy Tools in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The project capacity building activities are implemented in cooperation with the TAIEX facility.

OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

- Improved regional cooperation between competent authorities;
- Improved quality of transposition and implementation of the EU environmental and climate acquis;

- Improved skills in relation to enforcement of the legislation;
- Enhanced cross-border cooperation in relation to environmental and climate policies, legislation and investments

5.2 FLOOD RESPONSE

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-093
Project title:	Prevention, preparedness and response to floods in the Western Balkans and Turkey - Lot 1
EU contribution:	EUR 2.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant
Contract reference:	ECHO SUB/2014/692292
Duration of activities:	01/01/2015 – 31/12/2016
Links:	http://ipafloods.ipacivilprotection.eu/
Contact:	Biljana Zuber, biljana.zuber@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

To increase Beneficiaries' capacity to ensure proper flood risk management at national, regional and EU levels. Specific objectives:

- to increase Beneficiaries' capability to develop effective national civil protection systems and collaborate in a coherent manner in dealing with floods at regional/European level (prevention, preparedness and response). Developing multinational civil protection modules - flood rescue using boats (FRB);
- to support Beneficiaries in becoming better prepared to cope with the challenges posed by approximation to/implementation of the EU Floods Directive.

ACTIVITIES (JULY- DECEMBER 2016)

- 8-9 September, 3rd planning conference for the IPA Floods exercise in Croatia
- Regional exercise IPA Floods in Croatia, 17-21 October
- 2 trainings for operational staff of the multinational FRB modules, from 19 to 23 September in Struga (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and from 26 to 30 September in Podgorica (Montenegro).

OUTPUTS (JULY- DECEMBER 2016)

- Developed and trained multinational FRB modules.
- Roadmap for implementation of the EU Floods Directive for each beneficiary
- Newsletter No 6 was produced.

LO 1 Programme has finished in December 2016.

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, IPA II 2014/037-853
Project title:	Prevention, preparedness and response to floods in the Western Balkans and Turkey - Lot 2
EU contribution:	EUR 4.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant
Contract reference:	ECHO SUB/2014/ 707177
Duration of activities:	22/07/2015 – 21/01/2018
Links:	http://ipafloods.ipacivilprotection.eu/
Contact:	Biljana Zuber, biljana.zuber@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

To increase Beneficiaries' capability to develop effective national civil protection systems and collaborate in a coherent manner in dealing with floods at regional/European level (prevention, preparedness and response). Capacity building for flood preparedness and response through establishment of multinational Civil Protection Modules for flood response – High Capacity Pumping (HCP) and Flood Containment (FC).

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- 13-15 December 2016 in Split (Croatia) 3rd Working Group meeting on the finalisation of national SOPs and SOPs of Multi-national Civil Protection Modules' for *High Capacity Pumping (HCP)* and *Flood Containment (FC)*.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Concepts for composition of the national and multinational HCP and FC modules were developed.
- Procurement for additional equipment for HCP and FC modules has been launched on 30 September.
- Newsletter no 6 was produced.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- 3rd IPA FLOODS Steering Group Meeting on 24th January 2017 in Skopje (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) (postponed, it was planned in December 2016).
- 1st planning conference for the regional exercise in 2017 (postponed, planned in December 2016).
- 2 Operational trainings for HCP and FC modules.

CHAPTER 6: CIVIL SOCIETY

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 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (TACSO)

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility Programme 2011 - 2013, IPA 2012/023-324; IPA 2013/024-081
Project title:	Technical Assistance to the Civil Society Organisations (TACSO)
EU contribution:	EUR 10.6 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service contract with SIPU International AB,
Contract reference:	2013/325-596, 2013/325-603
Duration of activities:	01/09/2013 – 30/08/2017 (extended to 30/10/2017)
Links: Web site:	http://tacso.org/
Database:	http://tacso.org/cso-db-res/reg/
Forum:	http://forum.tacso.org/
Facebook:	http://www.facebook.com/TACSO2
LinkedIn:	http://www.linkedin.com/company/tacso?trk=fc_badge
YouTube:	http://www.youtube.com/user/tascotube#p/u
Twitter:	https://twitter.com/#!/TACSO1
Contact:	Karl Giacinti, karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

TACSO gives support to beneficiary Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) by increasing their capacity, improving their democratic role and by promoting networks of CSOs across regional borders, thus contributing to the changes at the level of organisational and institutional/enabling environment development of the CSOs, improvement of the CSO visibility, better quality of CSO project funded by the EU, ensuring sustainability of provision of TACSO service.

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

During the reporting period TACSO focused on strengthening capacities of the TACSO selected Resource Centres (RCs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

TACSO organised four training sessions, part of a series in the capacity building programme organized for the selected RCs in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey. With the objective to contribute to the institutionalization of TACSO services in the RCs, to support the organizational development of the selected RCs, and too enrich portfolio of its services to civil society organisations (CSOs). Topics that were covered through the trainings were: Training of Trainers; Strategic Plans and Strategic Thinking and Management; Organisational Development; Partnership Building and Stakeholder Analysis.

TACSO also has completed national monitoring reports for EU Guidelines as well as TACSO Needs Assessment Reports (NARs). The NARs were presented to/ endorsed by relevant stakeholders, notably Local Advisory Groups.

Major events with the regional dimension encompassed:

- Regional Workshop: Communication Fusion for CSOs which focused on communication tools that can assist in developing and improving CSOs' communication activities, this event was a culmination of TACSO's support to CSOs in their communication efforts. The event was organised in Tirana (9-10 November 2016).
- Regional events that TACSO through P2P organised contributing to networking, partnership building, and exchange of experiences:
 - Climate change and CSOs in action Conference, organised in Belgrade, Serbia (28 – 29 September 2016)
 - FPA Closing Event, organised in Skopje, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (10-11 Nov 2016)
 - Roma Youth Empowerment event, organised in Bratislava, Slovakia (9-11 Oct 2016)
 - The Role of Policy Analysts and Investigative Journalists in Safeguarding Democracy, organised in Zadar, Croatia (17-21 Oct 2016).

TACSO Albania

Organization of national training programs on Project Cycle Management for CSOs Networks with participation by 27 CSO representatives from 10 Networks from various regions of Albania. Organization of three "Help Desk" days with CSOs of Korça, Gjirokastra and Vlora Regions. 69 CSO representatives were introduced to IPSOS survey (findings related to the capacities of the CSOs and some issues concerning the enabling environment) and were involved on the discussions regarding visibility, funding and sustainability issues for the third sector. Coaching the preparation of Strategic Planning Document for 2017-2020 for environmental and rural development Network "Alliance of Albanian Alps". The National Conference "Boosting toward an enabling environment for Civil Society Organizations in Albania" (December 2016) with 117 representatives from CSOs, public institutions, National Council for Civil Society and donor institutions. TACSO Albania facilitated conducting of the survey on Mid-term Review of Indicative Strategy Paper for Albania 2014-2020, launched by EU Delegation to Albania.

TACSO Bosnia and Herzegovina

P2P Conference „Partnership of Local Stakeholders for Development and Employment“ was held in Mostar in July, was attended by 61 participants. Training "PCM, Project Planning based on logical framework approach and development of corresponding budget-case study" was held in Brcko in September, attended by 19 CSO (37 participants) who all developed logical frameworks for their CSO and corresponding draft budget for the identified projects ideas. As P2P follow up activities TACSO BH organized five events: Conference "Role and importance of LEDnet network in the process of local economic development and creating a better business environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina" in October with 36 participants, and four workshops focusing on Corporate Social Responsibility. Workshops were held in four cities with 82 participants in total.

TACSO the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

TACSO Macedonian Office organised a series of capacity building activities (basic CSO management training, follow-up workshop for strategic planning of CSOs and individual mentorship of CSOs for

preparing strategic plans). Within the capacity building activities, two workshops were implemented on internet presence of CSOs. Further on, capacity building activities were offered to 10 national networks selected at open call. In November, the conference “The potential of state funding for the sustainability of CSOs” was held. The aim of the conference was to enable the participants to learn about the comparative experiences from the region and Europe; to provide space for discussion about the situations and challenges in the country; and to give recommendations for the necessary reforms.

TACSO Serbia

TACSO Serbia and Resource Centre led by Civic Initiatives continued to provide technical assistance to CSOs through Help desk services. This relate to organizational development, project and financial management, fundraising and networking and was provided to 121 representatives of 76 CSOs. The 3rd Annual Conference #PRacka gathered 51 CSO representatives, while basic training on communication strategy and CSOs visibility gathered 29 CSOs and CSOs Fair “Citizens in actions” promoted the activism and work of 17 CSOs from Western Serbia.

The topic of Quality Assurance System for CSOs has been launched national wide trough consultative process with more than 200 CSOs included. The public debate on the 2nd Action plan for Open Government Partnership in Serbia was held with more than 70 CSOs included, while two consultative meetings with 36 relevant CSOs have been held in order to encourage CSOs efforts for urgent adoption of new Law on volunteering. P2P National Conference "Fundamental rights, policies and practice - EU standards" was held as a follow up of 2014 "Fundamental rights, non-discrimination and the protection of vulnerable groups, including LGBTI". Conference gathered 26 CSOs engaged in monitoring of negotiation chapters 23 and 24.

TACSO Turkey

Total of 22 events (10 information and consultation, three (3) policy dialogue, one work visit and eight (8) capacity development events) were organised, with 388 participants from CSOs, donors, public officials and other stakeholders in the reporting period. TACSO provided 45 help desk supports with RC to CSOs along formal activities.

TACSO Montenegro

The second CSO fair was organised aiming to present CSOs from northern part of Montenegro, who are less visible and are lacking wider public recognition. The CSOs and their activities were presented to the wider public, the activity was followed by a large number of media outlets and visited by over 500 citizens.

TACSO Kosovo

In November-December 2016, TACSO supported CiviKos Platform in holding six consultation meetings with CSOs on a national level with the aim to increase the quality of contribution from CSOs in the process of implementing the Strategy for cooperation with civil society. There were in total 100 participants/CSO members in these meetings, including also ethnic minority CSOs. During September –December, TACSO Kosovo office supported EUoK in conducting the annual monitoring of Operational Grants in Kosovo. The aim of this assignment was to assess the needs of CSOs and their performance subject of the renewal decision for 2017. LAG meeting on October 2016 with the focus on TACSO and KCSF TA activities as well as on the status of implementation of the Government Strategy for Civil Society.

OUTPUTS (IN THE PERIOD JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

In November, over 100 representatives from civil society organisations (CSOs) and the European Union (EU) institutions gathered for the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPAs) Closing Event in Skopje. The aim of the event was to discuss issue concerning general development of the civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey and to generate some concrete self-reflective recommendations for further improvements concerning CSOs and CSO networks, but focusing on needed internal changes - values, strategic approaches, relevance, constituencies, public image and other issues. Furthermore, the event had extensive media coverage in order to promote the EU support to the regional networks in WBT, as well as to promote work and achievements of the CSOs after the four-years long EU support.

Also in November, 50 CSO representatives gathered in Tirana for the Regional Workshop: Communication Fusion for CSOs which focused on communication tools that can assist in developing and improving CSOs' communication activities, this event was a culmination of TACSO's support to CSOs in their communication efforts.

TACSO went through the process of finalising monitoring reports, so called traffic lights, for the EU Guidelines, as well as the process of completing the Needs Assessment Reports, and they are available on TACSO web site.

TACSO Turkey assisted 86 CSOs to improve their capacities for Legal Compliance via trainings which enabled collection of qualitative data for problems related to legal and financial framework for CSOs in Turkey. The activities also promoted CSO help Desk for legal support to CSOs that are operating under Statement of Emergency. A civic monitoring initiative to monitor implementation of Roma Inclusion Strategy was established, the CSO alliance for monitoring the right to peaceful assembly in Turkey was extended and ODFED developed its advocacy action plan for implementation of government strategy on Autism; which was actually decided so by Government at the end of December 2016 with official recognition of CSOs' efforts. CSO information and consultation meetings with 89 participants from different sectors enabled documenting expectations and needs of CSOs from EU for EU supports for Turkey under State of emergency adding more insight to efforts carried out with EU Ministry and related CSOs to improve participatory programming of IPA Civil Society Sub Sector actions.

P2P Conference „Partnership of Local Stakeholders for Development and Employment“ in Bosnia and Herzegovina resulted in a set of standards and criteria necessary for the professional services of CSOs in the area of adult education; recommendations made in areas of employment, social inclusion and adult education for further strengthening the role of CSOs in the process of formal and non-formal education and and its role among other key actors in development of employment programmes.

As P2P follow up activities TACSO Bosnia and Herzegovina organized five events: Conference “Role and importance of LEDnet network in the process of local economic development and creating a better business environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina” with main output a functional model in which the CSOs mobilize all other key stakeholders in the local community for development, creation, implementation and monitoring of development polices and creation of better business environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina; four workshops with focus on Corporate Social Responsibility resulted in further explorations of CSOs in the area of its sustainability reflecting individual and corporate philanthropy, social entrepreneurship, business activities and public - private partnership as well cross-cutting issues as standardization of services and introduction of a quality assurance system in order to ensure conditions for adequate CSO positioning.

TACSO Montenegro conducted the Analysis of the Effects of Implementation of the Strategy for Development of NGOs 2014-2016, which was adopted by the Government. The new draft Strategy

for Development of NGOs 2017- 2020 is prepared and will be sent to the Montenegrin Government for adoption.

Thanks to TACSO Albania 59 CSO representatives increased their capacities in developing qualitative project proposals under the Call for Proposal “Civil Society Countering Violent Extremism”, launched by EUD in Albania within the frame of the National Grant Scheme of IPA/CSF 2014-2015. CSO and donor representatives, individuals and activists working with CSOs are provided with the Guide on Legal Treatment for NPOs in Albania, which enables clear and practical guidance on legal and fiscal procedures on the establishment, operation and termination of activity for non-profit organizations in Albania. 44 CSOs provided their inputs in undertaking the first step for developing a consolidated document of Indicative Strategy Paper for Albania 2014-2020.

TACSO Serbia, Delegation of EU to Serbia OSCE mission to Serbia jointly organized Serbian follow-up to the SPEAK UP! 3 Conference ‘Towards New Media Policy’ and gathered close to 200 state, CSOs, academia, media and media experts to contribute to drafting the new Serbia Media Strategy.

TACSO Serbia supported structured dialog between National Convention on the EU (NCEU) and Negotiating Team for Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union. The workshop outputs were improvement of specific procedures and ways of communication between the Government and CSOs in the process of negotiations with the EU is seen and step forward in effective works of NCEU mechanism.

TACSO Serbia also produced two guiding manuals for CSOs have produced the Digital Media Tool Kit that provides CSOs with instructions, templates and information relevant for dealing with digital and traditional media; Manual on financial and administrative management of CSOs with the purpose to set minimum standards in the fields of finances and give instructions on how to implement them. As an output of TACSO Serbia continuous assistance to rural women’s activism, Vojvodina Women’s Rural Network is established by core of 14 rural organizations.

TACSO Kosovo supported consultation workshops where CiviKos Platform presented the Report on Strategy Implementation. This report is a summary of monitoring the implementation of the Government Strategy prepared by the Secretariat of the CiviKos Platform based on parallel/shadow monitoring done by CiviKos for the implementation of the Government Strategy.

TACSO Macedonian Office supported selected 10 networks which prepared first draft of their action plans for improving the operation of their networks. Eleven CSOs prepared first drafts of the strategic plans for their organisation under the mentorship of the TACSO project. Web-site and social media presence review with recommendations for improvement provided to 30 CSOs. Individual support for improving CSOs’ media coverage of their events and activities was provided to 12 CSOs.

In the reporting period TACSO Offices issued a number of Newsletters in English and other languages of the region.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

TACSO will continue to work closely with the Resource Centers on their further organizational development and strengthening through the series of capacity building sessions (Monitoring and Evaluation; Human Resources Management and Financial Sustainability). Regional Office will organise regional regional follow up Conference: Public Administration Reform in March in cooperation with Transparency International and Follow up event: CSR and Philanthropy in April. Furthermore, the TACSO Regional Office will commence with the process of monitoring of the EU Media Guidelines.

TACSO Turkey will with RC organize six (6) legal compliance, three (3) Digital Empowerment and three (3) EU Project trainings and provide help desk and direct assistance including legal issues to CSOs. A guideline on How to Quality Assurance of CSOs, an updated information manual on PADOR, EU Logical framework, Prospect will be produced. Also, database and catalogue on civil networks/platforms in Turkey will be produced. TACSO and RC will support at least five (5) policy dialogue events of CSO networks and CSOs' joint actions in the form of thematic workshops. TACSO will support information and consultation events for EU issues and EU programming for support of civil society via several events. TACSO will monitor and report for EU Guidelines monitoring for 2016-2017 to be added to Turkey Needs Assessment Report, reporting on the period of Statement of Emergency and its impact on civil society.

TACSO Montenegro will organise public debates with the CSOs on draft of the new Strategy for Development of NGO 2017-2020 in three regions (Podgorica, Bijelo Polje, and Budva).

TACSO Albania will conduct the 2nd Capacity Building Program for CSOs Networks on the topics of Public and Media relations for CSOs, Organizational Development and Management and Project Cycle management. TACSO Albania will also advocate for drafting and concluding a pilot Cooperation Program between Civil Society and Local Government in three districts of Albania, and will follow up with representatives of Ministry of Finance and National Council for Civil Society of recommendations provided at the National Conference "Boasting a better on Enabling Environment for Civil Society organizations in Albania".

TACSO Bosnia and Herzegovina will organise a conference „Civil Society participation in responding to the EU Questionnaire for Bosnia and Herzegovina" (January 2017) with support of EU Del to answer the increased participation of CSOs in BH in responding to the EU Questionnaire and related processes.

TACSO Serbia will focus on promotion of QAS in CSO work and establishing functional self-regulatory system. Promotion of the OGP concept in Serbia will be continued, particularly among local CSOs, networks and local self-governments. Also, focus will be kept on facilitation dialogue between state and CSOs in the area of CSOs inclusion in EU accession negotiation process. TACSO focus will also be kept on CSOs as social services providers, social entrepreneurship, adoption new Law on Volunteering and transparent distribution of state funds for CSOs.

TACSO Macedonian Office will organise a P2P Conference "The role of CSOs and other actors in Cross-border cooperation programmes – practices and solutions", in February. This office will provide individual mentorship support to 10 networks for finalising their action plans (January – February 2017).

Capacity building programme by national offices in the next period will consist of trainings and workshops that will be in some cases followed by mentorship and coaching support. Focus areas will be transparency and communication with particular focus on use of social media for advocacy and lobbying purposes.

Events planned are listed in the [Calendar](#) of events.

6.2 FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

	<i>First phase:</i>
Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility Programme and Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2011/022-965, IPA 2011/022-964
Project title:	CSF, Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)
EU contribution:	EUR 11.2 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	18 Grants
Duration of activities:	01/12/2012 – 30/11/2014
	<i>Second phase:</i>
Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility Programme IPA 2013/024-081
Project title:	CSF, Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs)
EU contribution:	EUR 8.9 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	18 Grants
Duration of activities:	01/12/2014 – 30/11/2016
Links:	http://www.tacso.org/news/awarded/fpa/Default.aspx?id=9533
Contacts	Maria Esposito, maria.esposito@ec.europa.eu Olga-Elena Fimin, olga-elena.fimin@ec.europa.eu Karl Giacinti, karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) come under the second strand of the CSF mentioned above. They provide long-term support to 18 thematic networks of CSOs organised at regional level. The FPAs were concluded following a call for proposals for up to 48 months but subject to review after 24 months.

The global objective of the FPAs is to bring together Western Balkans, Turkey and EU based CSOs into operational partnerships to deliver their own specific objectives and at the same time the collective aim to support 'a dynamic civil society actively participating in public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law and with capacity to influence policy and decision making processes.

The specific objective of the Programme is for: 'Greater commitment and capacity of civil society organisation (CSO) networks to give citizens a voice and to influence public sector reform processes through analysis, monitoring and advocacy, etc.

ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST SEMESTER

A thorough mid-term review of the 18 FPAs was finalized in autumn 2014 and new contracts were subsequently signed with all the FPAs for the second phase of activity.

A short presentation of the main results achieved and new activities planned for each of the project is provided in the following section. The 18 projects are divided in 3 thematic areas:

1. GOVERNANCE
2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND RECONCILIATION
3. ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY

1. GOVERNANCE

Civil society coalitions built up within the project Advocacy for Open Government (2014/351- 527 continuation of 2012/306-656) continued to work with officials tasked with implementing Action Plans within the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Project partners published policy studies to maintain the presence and visibility of OGP issues in national policy debates. Nine webinars were held for representatives of civil society and civil servants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, and Montenegro. Partners gathered data for a scorecard system that measures and compares levels of governmental transparency in the six project countries, and they began work on national reports analyzing the data. Several public discussions were held in connection with the project. Three subgrants were awarded to NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Kosovo that are working on projects to boost public participation in policymaking at the municipal level and to educate civil servants on implementation of OGP principles in city governments.

The project “Towards Efficient Public Procurement Mechanisms in the EU (potential) Candidate Countries (2014/351-493 continuation of 2012/306/161)” is managed by the Balkantenderwatch coalition (BTW) which consists of six organizations from five countries. During the reporting period the Guidelines for monitoring and oversight of public procurement purposefulness was prepared, printed and widely discussed at round tables and conferences. Nine round tables were organised in Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia aiming at presenting key findings from case studies analysis and promoting the basic principles of purposefulness in public procurements – Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. Also, the Guidelines for monitoring and oversight of public procurement purposefulness was broadly debated at the conference held in Belgrade on 17th November 2016. An update of the comparative analysis of legal and institutional framework for public procurement was done for the year 2016. Shadow reports on the chapter 5 – public procurement are prepared for each of the WB countries as well as comparative shadow report for the year 2016. Apart from this, 52 case studies on purposefulness of particular public procurements were completed within this reporting period so that 100 case studies in total are prepared as it was initially planned. The shadow reports, the Guidelines and case studies were presented at the regional conference held on 12th December in Sarajevo attended by 81 participants from all WB countries.

During the period the [SELDI initiative](#) (2014/351-414 continuation of 2012/307-476) released its flagship 2016 Regional Anti-corruption Report [Shadow Power: Assessment of Corruption and Hidden Economy in Southeast Europe](#).

The report was presented at [national events](#) in the region, the SELDI [Second Regional Anti-Corruption Policy Forum: Countering Corruption and State Capture in Southeast Europe](#) in Skopje, at the international conference [The Russian Economic Footprint in Central and Eastern Europe: Addressing Strategic Vulnerabilities in Hybrid Warfare](#) in Sofia, as well as in the European Parliament at a round table, hosted by Ms Monica Macovei, MEP: [The Anti-Corruption Agenda for Southeast](#)

[Europe after the 2016 Enlargement Package: How to Break the State Capture Deadlock and Make Enlargement Deliver Again?.](#)

SELDI partners prepared for their future work by elaborating and publishing the [Civil Society Strategy and Joint Strategic Programme for Good Governance and Anti-Corruption in SEE 2020.](#)

SELDI has informed policy-makers, civil society and the media on the [corruption and hidden economy dynamics in nine SEE countries between 2014 and 2016](#), based on victimization survey data and desktop research. SELDI partners established anti-corruption collaboration with 31 governmental institutions and 66 CSOs. SELDI also collaborates with UNODC, UNDP, OECD, TI, RACVIAC, the Regional Anticorruption Initiative (RAI), Western Balkans OGP Dialogue, the SEE Change Net Foundation, Partnership for Transparency Fund, and YUCOM, a Serbian Human Rights Lawyers CSO. The SELDI Secretariat was selected by UNODC as their SEE partner, supporting the establishment of a new *Anti-Corruption South-eastern Europe Regional Platform*.

During the reporting period, “SIGN for Sustainability” (2014/351- 410 continuation of 2012/306-172) published the survey about the use of the existing tax incentives in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and created policy recommendations that they discussed through several consultative events and presented to relevant decision-makers in these countries. Within the next period, Trag and Mozaik foundation will advocate for their adoption. In addition to their [Standards for fundraising](#), SIGN network published the Manual for their implementation that should assist CSOs in attaining these standards and help them monitor and evaluate their impact. The Manual was promoted in a series of events and, thus far, they have been signed by 202 CSOs across the region. In November, partners held their regional conference “Philanthropy and Civil Society: Acting for Common good” that served as an opportunity for SIGN to showcase its work but also announce its upcoming plans and offer a working platform for all the stakeholders interested in working towards these goals in the future.

Since the period from July to December was the last phase of four-year Triple A for Citizens project, (2014/351-417 continuation of 2012/306-166) the focus was on finalising the project activities and construct sustainable outcomes of the project. Local partners continued advocacy campaigns through national conferences (Montenegro 18/07/2016, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 22/09/2016, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sarajevo 29/09/2016, Mostar 16/11/2016). Based on the advocacy roadmaps prepared by the partners in Western Balkan and Turkey the [Advocacy Roadmaps in Western Balkans and Turkey Synthesis Report](#) published. An online platform for self-evaluation tool that is built on the Triple A Network Quality Standards has been launched (<http://selfassessment.tripleacitizens.eu>). On 29 and 30 November 2016 an international conference organized as the closing event of the Triple A project and the launch of Triple A for citizens Network, during the event the [video](#) created in order to exhibit the Triple A services in Western Balkans and Turkey screened.

South East European Media Observatory: Building Capacities and Coalitions for Monitoring Media Integrity and Advancing Media Reforms (2014/351-607 continuation of 2012/306-658) Alternative models for independent media funding and the lessons learned from the state-media financial relations were discussed at two public events in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in November 2016, based on the SEE Media Observatory’s policy papers and recommendations. The events gathered relevant speakers from each country particularly from the

regulatory and anti-corruption bodies, but also guests from the region to allow comparative perspective.

Comparative overview of funding and governing models of public service broadcasting in nine countries of South East Europe, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia, was compiled by the SEE Media Observatory research team. It has been distributed to relevant actors aiming to inform and support current media reform initiatives in several countries in the region.

The SEE Media Observatory has contributed to the media reform debates and processes in the South East European countries with an idea of media integrity as a guiding principle for addressing the problems in media systems in the region, delivering at the same time to the media community and decision makers a body of knowledge (facts and analyses) about patterns of corruption in all parts of the countries' media systems and a pool of concrete proposals how they should be reformed. It has managed to connect in the pro-media integrity debates and concrete actions beside civil society also investigative journalists and independent state bodies, such as anti-corruption bodies.

Within the project Balkan Civil Society Acquis – Strengthening the Advocacy and Monitoring Potential and Capacities of CSOs (2014/351-412 continuation of 2012/306-577). After the extensive monitoring of the operating environment for CSOs in Enlargement countries through the jointly developed Monitoring Matrix, the new [Regional Report for 2014](#) was published. Presentations of national reports took place in 8 Enlargement countries by BCSDN members throughout spring complementing the first cycle of EC Progress Report consultations. The Regional Report was presented at the [17th April workshop in Tirana](#) and at the European Parliament to MEPs and other key EU stakeholders, at the [4th June Brussels debate](#) “Norms over Forms: Empowering Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey” hosted by Ms. Ulrike Lunacek - Vice-President of the EP. Advocacy on specific issues identified also commenced. In Albania, meetings with relevant ministries took place for presentation of the social procurement policy paper. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, presentation of the state of affairs on the [Implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society \(2012-2017\) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#) for the period June 2012 to December 2014 was organized to prompt its slow implementation. In parallel, the project has focused on building a new sustainable platform for monitoring and communicating findings with an internal group of experts that will introduce easy-to-use back and platform as of 2015 monitoring process. BCSDN has been monitoring EU's support to civil society in Western Balkans through the IPA CSF instrument. This year, a policy brief outlines how the EU assistance was used, the trends in implementation, the use of the IPA Cross-Border Instrument by CSOs, and provides a comparison of state funding in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The brief is available in English, Macedonian, Albanian and Serbian [here](#). Through an open call of the Balkan Public Policy Fund (SBPPF) 12 organizations received grants from BCSDN members on developing targeted policy and advocacy papers on key enabling environment issues in their countries, thus building a collaborative tools and civil society advocacy platforms. By end of 2015, the focused research of the study on economic value of the civil society will be published to shed first light on the size and main economic parameters of the sector in Enlargement countries alongside the regular monitoring process and development of Government self-assessment tool on the state of enabling environment will be launched. (www.balkancsd.net www.monitoringmatrix.net)

2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND RECONCILIATION

The Balkans ACT (Against Crime of Trafficking) Now! (2014/351-406 continuation of 2012/306-193) In the final months of the Action, the partners focused on completing all started activities and preparing advocacy strategies for the upcoming months. In the area of monitoring national anti-trafficking policies, national reports for Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro were finalized and distributed to all relevant stakeholders, national and international. The Monitoring Handbook as a monitoring methodology was finalized, as well as software that should facilitate monitoring process, were completed and promoted on the occasion of December 2 – International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. The tool will be promoted among practitioners in Europe in the coming year and the results of the first monitoring exercise will be used for the second cycle of GRETA monitoring in all countries involved. As for access to compensation, model laws on compensation for victims of violent crimes (or amendments to such laws) were finalized and presented to judicial professionals and decision-makers at a series of roundtables, alongside the compensation fund feasibility studies, strategic litigation reports, and other policy proposals produced within the Action. On the occasion of October 18 – European Anti Trafficking Day, a small advocacy campaign was launched targeting decision- and policy-makers in all partner countries and at EU level; the campaign was made in cooperation with a broad La Strada network and relevant European anti-trafficking CSOs.

Main outputs are: National anti-trafficking policies and national reports for Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; Monitoring Handbook with monitoring software; Model laws on compensation for victims of violent crimes (or amendments to such laws); Compensation fund feasibility studies, strategic litigation reports, and other policy proposals.

Improving the provision of Social Service Delivery in South Eastern Europe through the empowerment of national and regional Civil Society networks (2014/351-393 continuation of 2012/306-530). Two major outcomes of the IRIS Network within the scope of the project are: Raised the quality of social service provision and; strengthened role of the network in influencing the social policies in the SEE region.

Quality of social services provided by the CSOs in SEE have grown through adequate Licensing & Standardization, Training and Small Grants programs, thus making CSOs more accountable partner in the social service delivery (SSD) sector. IRIS Network established strong partnerships with the relevant decision makers and institutions representing and is actively involved in many aspects of the policy development, changing legislation and consulting processes. Within the advocacy campaign, representatives of the IRIS network positioned themselves as members of the various coordinating bodies and councils who are influencing social protection sphere at the national and local levels.

Six national innovative Case Studies have been developed, promoting inventive and sustainable solutions based on a social investment approach. The implementation of the services, engaged more than 500 social workers, physiologists, doctors and other professionals of social and health protection sectors, personal assistants and volunteers on regional level. A European round table

discussion was organized in Brussels where participants (IRIS Network members, EU Parliament representatives, other international CSO and Networks) expressed their views toward existing social challenges in SEE including the consequences of slowed EU Enlargement process and ongoing migrant crisis. Conclusions of the assessment of the social inclusion, human rights and the situation of CSOs social service providers is published in the Annual monitoring reports for the each of the IPA partner country in SEE.

Coordinated efforts - toward new European standards in protection of women from gender based violence (2014/351-409 continuation of 2012/306-568). Successful advocacy efforts for the harmonization of laws with the standards of the Council of Europe [Convention](#) on Violence against Women have resulted in: in Serbia, [AWC](#) amendments to new [Law](#) on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and changes of the [Criminal](#) Code were adopted; an [initiative FUŽ](#) for new criminal offenses was adopted in the Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and proposal for establishing crisis centres for victims of sexual violence was [supported](#); in Slovenia, amendments to the [Family Violence Prevention Act](#) were adopted, accepting many suggestions given by NGOs. Within the campaign, [Association SOS](#) Help-line prepared *Handbook for Media*. In Serbia, the application [#NeTolerišem](#) has been seen by 1,242.884 social media followers and at least 200.000 persons on the website or YouTube channel, and number of [signatures of support](#) was increased. Croatian Prime Minister [announced](#) that the Croatian Government will as soon as possible start the process of ratification of Convention. Ms Dubravka Šimonović, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences, and Prof Feride Acar, President of the GREVIO expert group of the Council of Europe delivered their speeches at the [Conference in Belgrade](#). The joint [regional conference](#) was organized by the UN agencies and Women's Safe House in Podgorica (Montenegro). The project „Coordinated efforts” was [awarded](#) for its contribution to the changes in the region, at the FPAs Closing Conference.

Partnership to Ensure Reform of Supports in Other Nations - PERSON (2014/351-686 continuation of 2012/306-649). During the last few months of the project all partners focused on completing the final few actions. The main ones were: The Albanian partner held a combined advocacy workshop with their closing seminar in Tirana Albania in late October 2016 to highlight the achievements over the last two years. Some partners attended the final FPA conference organised by the EC in November 2016. The final face-to-face meeting took place with limited partners in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in November 2014.

The project partners continued to create awareness, advocate and capacity build nationally and within their regions. All partners continued to hold monthly meeting with the main topic of sustainability and plans for the next steps.

Corporate Social Responsibility for All - CSR for ALL Project (2012/306-569 and 2014/351-680). The CSR for ALL Project fulfilled all its obligations within the project lifespan. All partners completed their activities and obtained their expected the outputs. Despite the unexpected circumstances that came about within the lead country which were beyond the control of the project implementation, there was only a short delay in the execution of the final activities without any significant affects. Within the last 6 months period of the Project, there was also a Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) of the

Project. The ROM pointed out several points regarding the implementation which were also communicated to all Partners. The Project Partners are in the process of drafting the Final Report to present to the European Commission while also taking into consideration the mentioned remarks. The Partners will also draft a sustainability plan annexed to the final report with further commitments to sustain the achievements via various activities.

Partnership for Reconciliation through Early Childhood Education and Development in Europe – PRECEDE (2014/351-609 continuation of 2012/306-585). Within PRECEDE, two Regional Manuals for local CSOs and other stakeholders (preschools, informal networks and groups) were finalised: Manual for Action Research and Manual for Monitoring the activities and work in general. Regional Manifesto for Peace-building with Young Children was developed and is currently distributed to various national political parties, government bodies and parliaments for signature. National Toolkits for preschool teachers for work with young children and their parents were being developed and National Training Modules were accredited in the countries where it was possible. The Sub-granting programme was implemented in all six partner countries to advocate for respect for diversity from early years.

Citizens' Network for Peace, Reconciliation and Human Security (2014/351-549 continuation of 2012/307-468). During the reportin period, Claim Network organized the advocacy mission to Brussels and a Regional NGO Network Forum in Sofia. NGO representatives across the region attended the Forum. As a result of the event, the partners of the Claim Network launched a network call along with attendance of the participants of the Forum. After the Forum a side event was organized to extend advocacy activities of the project in UN World Humanitarian Summit. A final conference on human security will be organized, propably in Istanbul beginning 2017. The project duration has been extended due to the difficult political situation in Turkey.

3. ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY

Advocacy NGOs networks for sustainable use of energy and natural resources in the Western Balkans and Turkey – ETNAR (2014/ 351-683 continuation of 2012/306-573). In July, 38 representatives from 23 CSOs from South East Europe, Turkey and the EU have gathered at the “Solar Academy” on the Island of Šolta, Croatia to discuss cooperation on environmental protection and sustainable societies. SEENET, a regional network of environmental CSOs that work on energy, transport and natural resources issues has accepted 5 new members, which now, in total, 29 organisations. At the same place, also in July, we have organised Balkan Youth Climate Movement meeting with 54 young people participating. The meeting was discussing the post Paris climate policies, the concepts of fair shares and climate justice, developed by Friends of the Earth International (FOEI) and linking climate and refuge crisis. Inspired by the meeting, a new environmental youth group has been formed in Serbia and we expect more cooperation and self-organisation of young people in the field of the environment in the future. In October, a seminar on coal and sustainable energy has been organised in Kosova. We have supported multinational, cross border campaign against Oil drilling in Adriatic Sea has been supported. Project partner, Center for Environment has become the full member of the FoEI.

In the last months of the ESSEDRA project (2014/351 continuation of 2012/307-143), the partnership focused on finalising the guide on "Minimum food hygiene and food safety conditions for small producers" serving as guidance and training to producers on hygiene. The partnership further worked so to fulfil the completion of the grassroots activities, included the launching of the Slow Food Planet Bosnia mobile application developed by Okusi Hercegovinu. From the 22nd to the 26th of September, the partnership participated at the 2016 edition of Terra Madre – Salone del Gusto, the biggest world event dedicated to artisan food production and sustainability, held every 2 years in Turin. The International Market hosted 15 stands dedicated to showcasing Terra Madre food communities and Presidia products from the Balkans and Turkey, including producers representing all grassroots projects developed by the action. An ad hoc conference named "Save Biodiversity in the Balkans" was held during the event, and served to outline the major findings and impact of the ESSEDRA action, and the state of play of the Terra Madre Balkans network. In addition, the conference explored possible new fields of action for the partnership and the network. Furthermore, Mutfak Dostlari Dernegi held its national event named ALE – Anadolu Lezzetleri Enventari, on the 26-28 of November, dedicated to endangered food products and communities of Anatolia.

The ENV.net project - Development of the ENV.net in Western Balkans and Turkey: giving citizens a voice to influence the environmental process reforms for closer EU integration (2014/351-610) in the past six months continued to improve the dialogue with the national authorities, local media, CSOs and EU institutions to keep them informed about the results of the monitoring exercise on three important categories of the environmental acquis: water quality, horizontal legislation and climate change. The results are available in the [ENV.net monitoring matrix web-platform](#). For the same purpose, a toolkit on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the ENV.net first policy paper have been developed. Furthermore, the ENV.net Partners organised simultaneous events to spread key messages and raise awareness in the occasion of the World Water Day and the World Environment Day by strengthening also the cooperation with media. In the meanwhile, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Montenegro came on board and are providing a precious contribution to the ENV.net work in a regional perspective. To know more, visit the [ENV.net blog](#)

South East Europe Sustainable Energy Policy (SEE SEP) Program (2014/351-623 continuation of 2012 / 307 – 460). From July to December 2016, SEE SEP focused its activities on the two final policy products, towards the completion of the project. The Red Flag Report on Energy Poverty, titled [Energy Poverty in South East Europe: Surviving the Cold](#), was launched in October 2016, through a workshop in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with members of SEE SEP partner CSOs and journalists coming from 7 SEE SEP countries. By connecting CSO members with journalists, we managed to create a synergy where journalists learned more about energy poverty, but also helped the CSO members to form media strategies when it comes to promoting the issues of energy poverty in their respective countries. The majority of journalists reported on the topic afterwards in their countries. The report was also successfully presented in October 2016 at the Parliamentary Plenum of Energy Community that was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with parliamentarians from Energy Community Member States. In November 2016, SEE SEP presented the second Watch Dog Report titled [Sustainable energy: How far has SEE come in the last five years? South East Europe Energy Watchdog Report 2016](#), providing an overview of the energy situation in SEE SEP countries compared to EU. With these two activities, SEE SEP was finalized end of November 2016.

6.3 OPERATING GRANTS

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility Programme and Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-605
Project title:	CSF, Operating grants
EU contribution:	EUR 1.48 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grants
Duration of activities:	01/01/2016 – 31/12/2016
Contacts:	Maria Esposito, maria.esposito@ec.europa.eu Olga-Elena Fimin, olga-elena.fimin@ec.europa.eu Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

Operating grants contribute to the general expenses of operating an organization whose overall mission and objectives correspond to the policy priorities of the European Commission. The current operating grants provide structural support to 10 regional partnerships of CSOs working on topics such as youth policies, social dialogue, rule of law, promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and LGBTI persons. The operating grants were concluded in 2014 following a call for proposals for a period of 12 months with the possibility of extension for up to 48 months. In October 2016 an evaluation took place and resulted in the extension of support for one more year to all 10 regional CSO partnerships.

Regional CSO platform advocating social innovation under employment policies that guarantees security for youth at risks – YOU SEE! Platform (2015/368-862 continuation of 2014/351-917). The project is designed to create a CSO platform enabling regional response to challenges stemming from the implementation of socio-economic policy reforms affecting youth. During project implementation, the YOU SEE platform produced a Regional Green paper on the Deinstitutionalization of social services provision in the field of employment. It also organized an workshop on “Methodology for testing social innovation“, held in November 2016 in Kosovo. Workshops about social innovations and design thinking were implemented in all partner countries. Stakeholders (CSOs, representatives of institutions in the field of education policy, employment, social care, local government) shared information on how social innovations can be developed through deinstitutionalization of service provision in the areas of employment, especially for specific groups at risk of social exclusion. During the second part of 2016, social innovation was tested in Montenegro, based on good practice examples collected through chronicles in the previous year. A regional policy brief on “Mechanisms and tools for youth employment” with solutions and recommendations was prepared. In order to secure broader society consensus, stakeholder dialog meetings were organized in each partner country to consult the views of the public, civil and private

sector. The on-line platform was updated and widely used. Future activities to be implemented in 2017 are: publication of a Regional policy paper on the "Application of international practice of social innovation development in active labour market measures policy reform", preparation of draft legislative proposals for traineeships (working engagement of young people without employment contract), publication of a progress reports on the active labour market measure policies in WB countries and Turkey, and organization of consultative regional partner meetings on policy analysis and of a regional meeting for exchange of good practice among social innovation beneficiaries.

Regional Youth Exchange Association (2015/371-378 continuation of 2014/351-845). The regional network of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) with offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia contributed to the establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) on 4 July 2016 at the Western Balkans Summit held in Paris. On this occasion, in cooperation with the Franco-German Youth Office and the Center for Balkan Cooperation Loja, YIHR organized one session during the "Connecting Youth – Western Balkans Youth Conference" where the initiative for establishing RYCO was presented to more than 150 young people coming from all around Europe. This session was attended by six ministers from the Western Balkans in charge of youth policies. At the same time, YIHR participated in the organization of three parallel seminars for future beneficiaries of the RYCO that took place in Belgrade (with participants from Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina), Podgorica (with participants from Montenegro and Kosovo) and Tirana (with participants from Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). These young people got the opportunity to discuss topics relevant to the future RYCO activities: the role of youth in reconciliation processes in the Balkans, regional cooperation in the Western Balkans and the European Union and personal experiences of young people participating in youth exchanges. YIHR was also present at the RYCO Boost Conference held in Tirana on 7-9 December and followed by the first meeting of the RYCO Governing Board. In the second half of 2016 YIHR organized six regional pilot exchange programs that gathered young people from the Western Balkans at various seminars related to the protection of human rights or dealing with the past war, as well as at regional cultural events such as the Sarajevo Film Festival and Dokufest in Prizren. Aiming at raising awareness about the importance of the RYCO initiative, YIHR organized a number of street actions and presentations at universities in five different countries.

Young With A Voice (2015/371-191 continuation of 2014/351-938). During the second year of the project implementation, in the period July - December 2016, the work programme was focused on the promotion of the Child Protection Index (CPI) as a monitoring tool and on the implementation of CPI-based advocacy campaigns in each project country. After the CPI methodology and indicators' framework was refined during the first half of 2016, it was subsequently presented to CSOs, professionals and other relevant stakeholders in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia. Furthermore, the CPI was promoted by ChildPact at the European level, while at national levels it was promoted among wider public through the engagement of narrative journalists in each country, who developed comprehensive stories based on in-depth analysis of CPI results for their representative country. Moreover, national evidence-based advocacy campaigns, designed and adjusted to the unique national contexts on the basis of specific findings from the CPI, were implemented in each project country. The implementation of the action has supported, equipped and strengthened national networks and CSOs' that are working for and with children in their

capacities for analysis, monitoring and implementation of evidence-based advocacy, enabling them to influence social reforms and give a voice to young people that risk social and economic marginalization.

Balkan regional platform for youth participation and dialogue (2015/371-185 continuation of 2014/351-922). The project aims to contribute to structuring regional thematic cooperation and coordination between civil society and public authorities in Western Balkan countries in view of improving the environment for youth activism and participation, in particular of young people with fewer opportunities. A regional co-operation platform connecting youth groups from across the region promoting active citizenship and participation in the reform process towards the EU integration was created (<http://www.aldabalkan-youth.eu>). Moreover, the partnership strategy was adopted and the Balkan Regional Network for Local Democracy, composed of eight Local Democracy Agencies with their host cities, was established. A Regional Youth Forum was also organized in Mostar in November 2016 and the research results presented and policy recommendations on youth mobility adopted: *Towards the culture of regional dialogue and youth participation in the Balkans*. My City Youth City, Local Youth Fund and Youth Taking Over Day programmes were implemented in eight LDAs host cities.

Together for Equality: Advancing Human Rights of LGBTI people in Western Balkans and Turkey (2015/371-462 continuation of 2014/351-960). During July-December 2016, the LGBTI Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Turkey (ERA) expanded its membership from twenty-five to forty member organizations, including CSOs from Croatia and Slovenia. It finalized the Organizational Capacity Assessment reports for thirty members and a Regional Capacity Assessment Report. In partnership with the World Bank, Ipsos Strategic Marketing and the Williams Institute, it also started the implementation of the research project "Socio-economic dimensions of LGBTI exclusion". The research project will replicate the 2012 LGBT Survey from the Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) of the European Union, will conduct a Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) of LGBTI people in Serbia, which will be compared to the SILC survey conducted earlier among the general population in the country, and will conduct three mystery shopping experiments which will compare differences in the treatment of LGBTI and non-LGBTI persons in different sectors. The findings of the survey will be published by mid-2017 and will constitute ERA's biggest advocacy and awareness-raising resource for the LGBTI movement in the Western Balkans region. Moreover, two major events were organized during this period. First, ERA's Regional Annual Conference was held in Pristina, Kosovo, on 6-8 October. Attended by more than 150 representatives from governments, international community, LGBTI movement, media, donor community, allies etc., it focused on assessing the challenges related to rule of law and policy influencing. The second activity was a Regional Capacity Building Workshop on Public Campaigning that provided a common framework related to mobilization, persuasion and visibility to 25 LGBTI activists from the Western Balkans and Turkey region. ERA also launched the One Stop Shop, the biggest online resource center for the WB&T region and attended up to 30 regional and international advocacy, lobby, capacity building and awareness-raising activities providing support, expertise and increasing visibility of the regional movement.

Strengthening NGO capacity and promoting public health and human rights oriented drug policy in South Eastern Europe" (2015/ 371-158 continuation of 2014/351-836). After the regional meeting in

Thessaloniki, the project focused on the improvement of contacts and policy dialogue with state authorities in South East Europe. Meetings have been organized in Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The purpose was to meet with the authorities responsible for drug policies, as well as with the institutions, services and organisations which are involved in implementing them, such as organisations dealing with harm reduction, treatment and rehabilitation programmes. The Drug Policy Network in South East Europe (DPNSEE) had the opportunity to present itself and explore possibilities of co-operation. The meetings had a positive impact for the membership of DPNSEE and were a good start for regular contacts with the responsible authorities. The visit to Turkey organised in co-operation with the Turkish Green Crescent was a good first experience to exploring possibilities of co-operation with NGOs in that country. The contacts established should develop further in the near future. The enlargement of the membership has taken place with the acceptance of nine new organisations as members of DPNSEE. The total number at the moment is 19 members, which is a positive development. At the first annual General Assembly, held in November 2016, a new board was elected and a code of conduct was adopted. Moreover, the harm reduction project was evaluated and the new plan of action on this issue was adopted. Activities on drug law reform took place in Kosovo, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. A regional quarterly Newsletter has been published regularly.

Balkans Independent Disability Framework - BIDF (2015/371-187 continuation of 2014/351-920). With this project, ACED and its partners, CIL in Serbia, UPCG in Montenegro, Polio Plus in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the newly registered regional network BIDF, will assist associations dedicated to the fulfilment of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities (PWDs) to establish disability focal points and to undertake policy and legislative advocacy, public education campaigns and other related activities at national and regional level. Upon completion of the analysis of the National Disability Strategies, conducted by the BIDF National Focus Groups, and preparation of the analytical quality reports with findings and recommendations for each national strategy in four project countries, the project was dedicated to increasing public awareness about the rights of people with disabilities and establishing the channels of communication with relevant government ministries' in charge for implementation of the Disability Strategies. Nine promotional round tables were organized in the region, gathering a total of 235 BIDF network members and government representatives in view of presenting the Strategy analysis and making policy recommendations. During the reporting period, ACED and the project partners have completed the annual process of institutional capacity development of BIDF network members in 4 project countries, organizing a total of 16 basic and advanced trainings for 380 representatives of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (APWDs), their Unions and agencies active in the field of disability. At the end of 2016, project partners have also organized a BIDF General Assembly meeting with strategy development round table, adopting the implementation report for the year 2016 and confirming the BIDF operational plan for the year 2017. For promotional purposes a two quarterly bulletins and a series of press conferences were organized to convey information to BIDF membership and the general public.

Stronger Social Dialog in Western Balkans Countries - SSD WBC (2015/371-444 continuation of 2014/351-846). The project aims at strengthening the capacity of social partners in participating

countries to contribute to the national and regional development of social dialogue and the harmonization with EU regulations (in Serbia, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania). It is implemented by the Montenegrin Employers Federation (coordinator) and its partners: the Association of Employers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, BusinessAlbania, the Business Confederation of Republic of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Serbian Association of Employers, the Union of Employers' Associations of Republika Srpska. In the period of July to December 2016, the project partners implemented a national debate in each country. These panel discussions were a great opportunity to share knowledge about the importance of improving occupational safety and health (OSH) standards in each country. Moreover, the project partners prepared, published and disseminated a joint publication on the subject of social dialogue and occupational safety and health (OSH). They also prepared promo videos for social dialogue which will be the main tool for raising awareness about the importance of social dialogue. As a result of the project, more than 100 persons per country, representing employer's organizations, trade unions and Government, enhanced their cooperation on social dialog at EU, national and local level.

European Integration and the social dimension: strengthening regional cooperation of trade unions in the Balkans (2015/371-495 continuation of 2014/351-847). The programme deals with institutional capacity building, expertise & knowledge building within trade union organisations in the Former Yugoslavia. It aims at promoting experience exchange in the main areas of trade union activities, policies and internal reform processes, in order to empower them as strong actors in society and as recognized partners in the social dialogue. The reform of trade unions and their adaptation to the real economy is a key objective of the project, taking into account experiences from the trade unions in the EU. The regional Trade Union network "Solidarnost" is working on its political visibility in the region of the Western Balkans. Safety representation is central to any workplace health policy, although in most WB countries and European countries large numbers of workers have no such representation. In this context, the Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Working Group is striving to achieve higher OHS levels which requires the establishment of cooperation between employers, workers and their unions, including occupational medicine, industrial hygiene, toxicology, engineering, ergonomics, psychology and other scientific fields. A comparative analysis of OHS levels was also conducted and resulted in the creation of national country profiles. Another thematic working group related to IT, media and communication has established profound linkage with regional media associations which tackle safety and protection of media workers. A joint regional campaign against precarious work particularly in the area of media is on the way. There were also changes in the leadership of TUC Nezavisnost at the last Congress in November after 25 years and the future of the trade union movement in the Balkans has gotten a better perspective. In the coming period the project will focus on involving young trade unionists in ensuring workers representation at company level and the need to find a common approach with regard to EU standards. The inclusion and mobilization of young people is one of the main issues of the project. The young trade unionists are preparing a contribution to the Youth Exchange Foundation, established by the last Western Balkan Summit in Paris. Improving social dialogue and strengthening relations between employers' associations will be the focus of the forthcoming project period with the objective of a joint social partners' strategy on the national and regional level. For further information please see: www.onthewaytoeu.net

Western Balkans Pulse for Police Integrity and Trust - POINTPULSE (2015/371-144 continuation of 2014/351-850). The project seeks to contribute to increased trust and confidence in the law enforcement agencies in the Western Balkans by fighting corruption and promoting integrity of the police, through activities of the regional civilian oversight network POINTPULSE. Launched in January 2015, the POINTPULSE comprises seven civil society organizations: Analytica, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Serbia, Centre for Security Studies, Institute Alternative, Institute for Democracy and Mediation from Albania and Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS). In the past six months, POINTPULSE conducted research on police integrity in the Western Balkans and presented the results simultaneously in public events in all of the region’s capitals. The research contains comprehensive, in-depth assessments of police integrity and will be a continuation of the baseline studies produced last year. Moreover, BIRN produced a TV documentary movie on the relation of media and police in the Western Balkans whose premiere was held at the final conference “Security Challenges as a Link between the Citizens and Institutions”. The Network’s website continues to be regularly updated with analyses and opinion pieces on issues relevant to police integrity. The POINTPULSE is active on Facebook and Twitter.

6.4 LONG-TERM GRANTS

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2014-2015 (allocation 2014) - IPA 2014/031-605
Project title:	CSF, Support to regional thematic networks of Civil Society Organisations – Long-term Grants
EU contribution:	EUR 15.8 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	16 Grants
Duration of activities:	December 2015 – December 2019
Contacts:	Maria Esposito, maria.esposito@ec.europa.eu Olga-Elena Fimin, olga-elena.fimin@ec.europa.eu Karl Giacinti, karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The 16 Long-term grants were awarded after a Call for proposals launched under the Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2014-2015 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.

About 20% of each project budget will be used to provide financial support to CSOs external to the beneficiary network, with the purpose of reaching out to, and building capacities of, grass-root and other types of non-governmental local organisations.

ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST SEMESTER AND PLANNED FOR THE NEXT

The 16 action grants have completed their inception phase in the first six months of 2016. Activities carried out in the period January – June 2016, as well as the planned activities for the next semester are briefly presented in the following section. The 18 projects are divided in 3 thematic areas:

1. RULE OF LAW, GOVERNANCE AND MEDIA FREEDOM
2. SOCIAL INCLUSION, MIGRATION AND RECONCILIATION
3. SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A thorough mid-term review of the 18 FPAs was finalized in autumn 2014 and new contracts were subsequently signed with all the FPAs for the second phase of activities.

1. RULE OF LAW, GOVERNANCE AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Western Balkan's Regional Platform for advocating media freedom and journalists' safety (2015/369-846) aims at empowering journalist associations to be effective and accountable actors in advocating application of EU standards of media freedom and integrity in Western Balkan region. Activities so far include production of a research methodology based on a set of adopted indicators of media freedoms and safety of journalists. We are currently producing national reports, while Head Research is drafting a regional report. At the same time an external expert assessed capacity of each partner, with a focus on implementation of project goals and produced assessment reports and training needs analysis. Production of a regional Online Platform that will feature all information relevant to journalists' safety and media freedoms is under way and will be launched at the regional conference. Most importantly, as a part of Network establishment and adoption of its strategic plan, partners have developed internal mechanisms for early warning and prevention of violation of journalist' human rights and freedom of media that should be fully operational by the end of September. In the coming months partners will organize national reports and regional report presentation, two capacity building trainings (based on expert's report) and start production of own strategic plans that include minimum of two key advocacy goals relevant to the project. One advocacy trip to Brussels, to meet decision makers and influencers is planned.

Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform - WeBER (2015/370-038). As the Project began in January, the inception phase was used to establish project structures and mechanisms, as well as to successfully communicate information about the Action and its goals and objectives to the targeted stakeholders (local/national CSOs and authorities, important regional and EU level stakeholders within the public administration reform (PAR) area). Additionally, the Project Visibility and Communication Plan and a set of visibility materials were developed within this phase. Next semester activities are: improving the capacities of Western Balkan CSOs and creating venues for dialogue with their respective governments (Constitution of regional PAR Platform), enabling CSOs to gather evidence for PAR dialogue (PAR Monitor Methodology development), establishing National Civil Society PAR Working Groups and implementing the Communication Strategy for CSO participation in PAR, including a website with multimedia presentations on Principles of Public Administration (SIGMA/OECD).

Accountability, Technology and Institutional Openness Network in the South East Europe region - ACTION SEE (2015/370-251) aims at enhancing the involvement of civil society and media organisations in the creation of public opinion, policymaking and participation in the decision-making

mechanisms. During the first 6 months of the ACTION SEE project implementation, Action partners refined the methodology for the Regional Openness Index (ROI). Metamorphosis and project partners—Why Not, CDT, CRTA, MJAFT, Open Data Kosovo and Westminster Foundation—promoted the project through media launch and inception events held in all the participating countries. Project team conducted assessment and mapping of relevant actors and initiatives in all of the action countries: the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania. In order to assess how media cover rule of law and good governance related topics, besides the input from stakeholders and discussion from inception events, an online survey was conducted where 657 citizens and 56 experts of all of the Action countries participated. In order to raise public awareness about the concept of good governance and issues of media reporting and institution's transparency, fight against corruption, project team produced a series of analytical articles in Balkan languages and English, which were then republished by various media. The second half of the first year of project implementation started with a partners' meeting in Skopje July 20-21, focused on refining the Index Methodology. The research process for the ROI will continue in September, and by the end of the year a defined list of institutions will be examined for their compliance to the standards of good governance according to the established indicators list. Another upcoming activity is publishing of an open call for small grants, enabling support for good governance advocacy activities by a wide network of CSOs from the region.

CSOs as equal partners in monitoring public finance (2014 /031-605) project in the first months of 2016 has conducted a needs assessment and a 3 days capacity building/ training event back to back with a networking event in Belgrade. An additional needs assessment has been conducted for preparing a tailor-made coaching plans for 7 IPA countries partners. Our representatives have attended different EU events: LTGs Kick-off Conference, Role of Civil Society in PAR, EU Standards and Practices and a Meeting of Bosnia and Herzegovina partners. In the next months second project meeting with a capacity building event planned for November 2016 in Sarajevo and publication of 7 short country based macro analysis. Also we will finalize our communication and dissemination plan, fine-tune our advocacy plan, prepare terms of reference for 4 analyses and 7 individual support plans.

2. SOCIAL INCLUSION, MIGRATION, RECONCILIATION

SE Europe Transnational CSO Coalition for Women and Child Protection Against Human Trafficking and Gender-based Violence - STOP (2015/370-114) project aims at fostering networking of CSOs to facilitate exchange of knowledge and skills while increasing their campaigning and advocacy skills related to illegal migration and its consequences such as human trafficking and gender based violence while transiting across SEE. The project has successfully gone through the Inception phase. Project teams were deployed in all five respective partner organizations. Coordination mechanisms was established and first activities implemented and outputs produced. These were mainly connected to the production of the baseline studies. Namely the Gender-based violence (GBV) in the region study, Human trafficking (HT) in the region and Legislative framework pertinent to GBV and HT in the region were completed, whilst the last one measuring the Public opinion on GBV and HT presence in the society will be completed during the next semester. During the next semester it is foreseen to complete the research on public opinion baseline; the kick-off and promotion of the #WinkForHelpsign - winkforhelp.org and the starting of round table discussions based on findings from the baseline studies in all five project countries.

Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey (2015-370-300). The project aims to set up a supporting facilitating structure for (pro)Roma civil society to actively participate in the local and national policy and decision making process. During the inception phase (January – June 2016) the project overall strategy was fine-tuned with the participation of the whole

partnership. This process was kick-started during a meeting of the core team (RAA and ERGO) in January, to set up the management strategy, develop the internal procedures for cooperation, make sure that all EU requirements for reporting and accountability are met and to prepare the Regional Coalition meeting that took place in April. To ensure consistency with the aims of the programme, the core team assisted national coordinators in preparing annual plans including capacity building for the CSOs that will join the national coalitions (sub-granting) and that will be involved in the monitoring and advocacy activities, and the ground elements to develop advocacy plans. Sub-granting guidelines were prepared for the partners to manage the grant schemes in each concerned IPA beneficiary. An online monitoring tool www.romareact.org was elaborated to assess the performance of municipalities regarding Roma integration and will be piloted from October till December 2016. During the upcoming Regional Working Meeting (September 25th-28th) stock-taking of the progress the partners made and discussion on the monitoring tool. The ERGO Network Annual Meeting will take place in November and will give the opportunity to showcase the work done within the project. The template for the Shadow Reports is expected to be ready by end of the year.

SOCIETIES - Support Of CSOs In Empowering Technical skills, Inclusion of people with disabilities and EU standards in South east europe (2015/370-229). The project has the overall objective to improve the capacities of CSOs in South East Europe (SEE) in managing social inclusion processes and in promoting social inclusion policies, through an efficient dialogue with Public Authorities during the decision-making processes. During the first 6 months of project implementation a comprehensive mapping process was initiated and implemented in all countries covered by the project. As a result, a database with information on 169 CSOs has been created. At the same time, a first analysis of the public welfare systems in the fields of Disability and Mental Health in IPA beneficiaries was carried out focusing on the current situation (services provided, existing laws and good practices among public institutions). During the second half of 2016, main activities will be Regional Conference that will be held in Belgrade on September 21st -22nd, which will also mark the kick-off event for the start of working groups on social inclusion in each country. The working groups activity will be supported by national anti-stigma campaigns during October and December. Also, the process of sub-contracting will be initiated in December.

Taking action on social inclusion of older people (2015/370-287). The project aims at strengthening networks of civil society organisations from the Western Balkans in order to improve social inclusion of older people in local communities and the society at large across the region. The project partners (Albanian Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, Osmijeh NGO, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonian Red Cross and Humanost NGO from the Former Yugoslav Republic of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Red Cross of Montenegro as well as the Austrian Red Cross) met at a kick off meeting on 9-11 March in Belgrade. The meeting was a good opportunity to discuss the activities to be implemented during the first year of the project, to draft detailed plans for the next quarter, as well as to strengthen the partners' capacities of data collection for efficient advocacy. In the ensuing months a monitoring plan and a communication and visibility plan were developed through the joint efforts of the Red Cross of Serbia and the Austrian Red Cross with inputs provided by all the project partners. In addition, a first newsletter covering the first quarter of the project implementation was launched. Analyses of the national contexts were also conducted and the assessment reports identified policy gaps in each of the countries taking into account the necessary harmonisation with the EU acquis as well as gaps in the implementation of existing policies. The exercise also analysed the capacities of civil society organisations through questionnaires and structured interviews, looking into the gaps and opportunities for development and synergies. The reports provided recommendations to serve as basis for subsequent strategic planning of each of the national networks. The resulting plans outlined the values, goals, vision and mission of the networks, defined the priorities in the next four years, (re-)examined and set structural rules and procedures to

galvanise the work of the networks, improve the efficiency of their coordination and decision-making and further develop their capacities for communication, visibility and public advocacy.

Increasing capacities and strengthening the role of regional CSOs for improving labour conditions and labour dialogue with public institutions (2015/370-380). The overall objective is to promote an enabling environment for dialogue between regional CSOs and public institutions for improving labour conditions. In February 2016, the BALcanOSH.net officially started the project preparation period with a meeting of all project partners and associate partners in Skopje. The idea was to provide each of the interested parties with an equal understanding of the project activities as well as to ensure full commitment in the elaboration of the Project Strategy and Action Plan. The Strategy and Action plan were finalized at the end of July 2016 and were discussed at a Kick-off meeting in MOSHA's premises at the end of August. For transparent management of the project, a Steering Committee was established. Moreover, the Coordinator MOSHA has assisted each of the project partner organizations in setting up a unique methodology to share, download and upload needed project information internally as well as externally by creating a shared cloud folder, specific video tutorials, instructions on how to start individual, national, project-related social media profiles, as well a project web page. Emphasis was also put on building each organizations' capabilities in relation to financial management and project administration. Among the outputs produced, the most important ones are: communication plan between key project partners from different geographical areas:

- a project Communication Strategy;
- one interactive regional web site - www.project-balcanosh.net
- Individual social media profiles created and launched (Facebook, Tweeter, G+);
- BALcanOSH.net Kick off meeting about the project activities and
- Forming Steering Committee.

The main activities planned for the next semester are: (i) off-line and on-line media campaign for promotion of regional CSOs collaborating on safety and health at work and labour conditions; (ii) organization of 5 initial meetings with members of CSOs and public institutions in each IPA beneficiary country, on the basis of the planned timeframe.

Youth Banks Hub for Western Balkans and Turkey (2015/370-394). The project "Youth Bank Hub for Western Balkan and Turkey" is designed to create a coordinated network of organizations focusing on fostering youth participation in decision-making processes. As the network, the Hub will continuously monitor the various mechanisms for youth inclusion and advocate for greater and more effective youth participation. The first six months of implementation of the project provided the opportunity to set up the rules and mechanisms for further development of the network itself and its activities. Shortly after being established, the "YBHWBT network" initiated the process of monitoring youth participation in the targeted countries. The methodology developed for that purpose includes a Youth Participation Index, a tool suitable for evaluating the overall level of social, political and economic inclusion of youth as well as for making comparisons between countries. The first analysis based on the Youth Participation Index is expected to be presented in the next reporting period.

ARYSE - At-Risk Youth Social Empowerment (2015/370-628). During the first half of 2016 the project team has focused on three major aspects: 1) Networking in the Western Balkans; 2) Network Founding Conference and 3) Regional research on the state of youth at risk of social exclusion. 1) Juventas (Montenegro) as leading partner started the networking process in March 2016 when memoranda of partnership were signed with: Arsis (Albania), Labyrinth (Kosovo), Margina (Bosnia and Herzegovina), HOPS (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and Prevent (Serbia). A memorandum was also signed with SHL (Germany), as consultative partner. All partners have more

than a decade long experience in social protection and social services delivery to different persons in risk of social exclusion and are generally leading organisations in this field in their own countries. 2) The Network Founding Conference was held in late May in Montenegro. During the conference, the members developed the Network's vision, mission, goals, strategic and advocacy plan and discussed other important structural issues. At the same time, the Network logo was chosen and it was decided that the Network's website, currently project-based, will be used in the future as a resource platform and will have special areas in the mother tongue of participating countries. 3) In early June, the network members started the preparatory phase for the Regional Research on the State of Youth at risk of social exclusion in the Western Balkans and the data collection began in the middle of the month. The activities planned for the second half of 2016 are: 1) data collection for research, 2) international training on Policy Paper and Policy Brief development, 3) drafting of six national policy papers, 4) one regional Policy Paper development, 5) national and regional promotion of policy papers, 6) Advocacy. Based on the research findings, ARYSEN is going to develop activities for 2017.

Divided Past - Joint Future (2015/370-393). The project aims for CSOs to be recognised by governments as an important societal factor with strong capacity to implement the peace building and reconciliation Agenda in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The activities conducted under this project during the period January - June 2016 involved: a) identification and analysis of the stakeholders; b) partnership building and major Kick off partner meeting in Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina) on March 22 - 23; c) baseline study on perception of public, civil, private sector as well as citizens towards peace building and reconciliation process in Western Balkans and Turkey. Expected results/activities planned for the next six months are: a) compiling the Baseline regional research report of comparative data findings from 6 Western Balkan countries and Turkey and promoting it; b) desk research on different sustainable reconciliation models; c) creation and promotion of an online resource platform.

3. SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas (2015/370-371). The project is managed by coalition of six national rural development networks from the Balkans, one CSO from Turkey and two rural development networks from the EU. The main objective of the project is to stimulate an enabling legal and financial environment for civil society, as well as to empower civil society to be effective and accountable independent actors. The project aims to improve CSO capacity to dialogue with Governments influencing policy and decision making processes in sustainable development of rural communities and holding them accountable for their performance towards citizens and society at large. In the period January – July 2016 (inception phase) the inception report was prepared through consultation process with key stakeholders and partners in all 7 IPA beneficiaries. In August 2016, 14 trainers were trained on policy analysis and advocacy. In the coming period the trainers will organise and hold 2 national training courses in the region, involving and targeting 210 CSO activists. Models and tools of direct cooperation, advocacy and dialogue of CSOs with governments will be defined, in order to influence policy making and produce concrete change. A 4-day thematic CSO Networks gathering will be organised in Voskopoje (Albania) and will see the participation of networks from the region and from EU countries with relevant experience.

Smart Start - Sustaining civil society impact through social entrepreneurship and innovations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey (2015/369-433). The project aims to help create an enabling environment for social entrepreneurship of civil society organizations (CSOs) and to improve their sustainability, financial viability and social impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. During the inception phase (January – June 2016), the project management, coordination and financial reporting procedures have been established and shared,

and the project promotional materials and visibility guidelines have been designed. The project activities were promoted and more than 400.000 online users were reached. During the first semester of 2016, the first project partnership meeting was held, and an online organizational entrepreneurship capacity assessment (OECA) tool was developed by experts from Serbia, Croatia and Turkey. The project website development has started, and a Call for Application was published. More than 270 CSOs have applied submitting business plans in order to receive, if selected, start-up funds and capacity buildign to implement their interpreneurship ideas. In the second semester 2016, the project partners will conduct the evaluation of the received applications and select 100 organizations from five countries to go through the OECA assessment and receive tailor made capacity building. The selected organisations will thus develop the skills needed for developing social entrepreneurship and implement their proposal. Regional research regarding financial stability and social entrepreneurship will be conducted.

Sustainable agriculture for sustainable Balkans: Strengthening advocacy capacities of CSOs and developing policies in the Western Balkans (2015/370-487). The project aims to improve sustainability and capacities of advocacy and regional networking of CSOs working on sustainable agriculture Western Balkans. During the first six months of 2016 the project implemented the activities foreseen for its inception phase. Coordination meetings of project partners were held, researche on CSO capacities and public attitude towards civil society were carried out, a stakeholder analysis was conducted. Meetings with stakeholders were organised. Based on results of these activities, Working and Communication plans were developed as basis for the implementation of the project activities related to the CSO advocacy capacities and to research and advocacy in action. In the period July – December 2016 a number of advocacy and internal governance capacity building activities will be implemented. Training on advocacy, internal governance and sustainable agriculture is part of a three-component Grant & Training Programme for CSOs, that will be completed by coaching for project proposal development and by a grant award scheme for advocacy projects focussing on sustainable agriculture.

Civil society Acts for Environmentally Sound Socio-Economic Sevelpoment - CO-SEED (2015/371-198). The project aims at promoting a more sustainable management of natural resources in the target region through more participatory and transparent decision-making processes involving civil society organisations which are recognized as crucial stakeholders. During February-June 2016, the establishment of the project structure was completed and the Inception Workshop held. A detailed project workplan was designed and Partnership Agreements were concluded among the project implementing partners. A monitoring plan was created and agreed to monitor the project achievements and measure progress towards its objectives. A monthly financial management reporting was introduced and the communication plan of the project was prepared. During the period July – December 2016, the Grant Award Programme will be designed and lauched, and applications will be evaluated leading to the award of at least 15 grants to applicant CSOs. One regional networking meeting and two capacity building workshops will be held with the CSOs supported in the framework of the sub-granting scheme. Stakeholder analysis and in-depth analysis of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes will be conducted in each IPA beneficiary. The design of the project logo, leaflet and website will be completed, and promotional kits will be prepared.

6.5 MEDIA

Programme reference:	The Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the years 2014-2015, allocation 2015 (2015/037-653)
Project title:	JUFEX - Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe
EU contribution:	EUR 2.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	PAGODA with CoE
Contract reference:	CN 2016/372-924
Duration of activities:	20/04/2016 – 19/04/2019
Contact:	Karl Giacinti, karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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 (regulators 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 CoE and European standards.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Inception phase has been finalised, including the recruitment of the project team, 6 national assessment reports and strategy papers, plus a common general one, have been shared and agreed with main beneficiaries (Judicial Academies) and other partners (Bar Associations, Regulatory Authorities and Associations of Journalists). On this basis, 6 national work plans have been developed and agreed with beneficiaries and negotiations for sub-grant agreements for their implementation have progressed.

Two major regional events took place in the reporting period, namely: the first regional conference of Media Regulatory Authorities on “European standards and best practices on hate speech and protection of minors” in Montenegro on 7-8 July; and Launch conference and first regional conference of the Judiciary in Sarajevo on 13-14 October.

Several events and trainings took place at national level targeting Regulatory Authorities (Best Practices in Drafting Strategies, Policies, and Bylaws), Press Councils (Media Self-Regulation—Fulfilling a Mandate of Balancing Freedom and Responsibility) and media actors (Training with media actors on whistleblowing, leaks and media's right to report).

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

The Handbook on Freedom of Expression, originally developed for a previous EU/CoE JP in Turkey, has been translated in the 6 project languages and it has been tailored to national legislation and

case law by national experts. Moreover, 2 fully new modules have been developed on: (i) Protection of whistle-blowers; (ii) Good administration of justice (including authority and impartiality of the judiciary; freedom of expression of judges; freedom of expression of lawyers inside and outside of courtroom; reporting on court proceedings; presumption of innocence; disclosure of confidential information). This material has been considered extremely helpful by all partners, who fully endorsed it and requested to publish it as their official training material.

Most of the partners have included (or are going to do so), the upcoming Training of trainers and consequent cascade trainings in their official training programme.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Second regional conference of the Judiciary and first annual Steering Committee to take place in Tirana, Albania on 25-26 April. 5 HELP online courses to be made available in 5 local languages. Six 4-day Trainings of trainers with HELP methodology to be provided in each project country/location addressing selected judges, prosecutors and lawyers. Several activities addressing legal professionals, media actors, and regulatory authorities and freedom of expression related issues, including online content. Joint publication of the six Regulatory Authorities on Hate Speech to be developed. Pilot publication “Dictionary of Media and Judicial Terms” to be developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Programme reference:	The Civil Society Facility Programme 2011-2013 (Amend 1 - allocation for 2013), IPA 2013/024-081
Project title:	Regional EU award scheme for investigative journalism in Western Balkans and Turkey
EU contribution:	EUR 0.45 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement
Contract reference:	CN 2014/350-133
Duration of activities:	11/10/2014 – 10/10/2017
Contact:	Karl Giacinti, karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The regional scheme of EU awards for investigative journalism in Western Balkans and Turkey aims at celebrating and promoting outstanding achievements of investigative journalists and improving the visibility of quality investigative journalism in the region by rewarding the investigative journalistic works published in 2014, 2015 and 2016, selected by independent juries through national contests.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Seven separate EU award contests were organised in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey based on joint criteria and procedures. Independent juries appointed by EU Delegations selected three investigative stories for the award in each country, including the best stories by young journalists. In total, 247 nominations were processed in seven countries, 52 more than in 2015. Seven award ceremonies were organised to deliver awards and celebrate the winners.

Several initiatives were organised in the past six months to promote the winners of 2016 edition and the award scheme.

Six young investigative journalists, winners of the special category of the 2016 EU award for investigative journalism in six countries of the Western Balkans received a special invitation and attended the Western Balkans Youth Conference “Connecting the Youth”, taking place in Paris on 4 July 2016, in the margins of the Western Balkans Summit and the context of the Berlin Process.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

24 investigative stories were awarded in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. The awarded stories covered a wide range of topics: from petroleum concessions, shady business deals and mismanaging of public resources such as funding or police force, to life threats faced by Roma, femicide and child abuse in imprisonment.

Altogether 35 journalists were awarded; in many cases more than one journalist contributed to the awarded story. Among winning journalists, 13 were female and 22 male. BIRN was featured prominently – 13 of its journalists took home 5 awards, including the awards in Albania, Serbia (2 awards), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo. Winning journalists received a total of EUR 75,000.. Individual prizes ranged between EUR 3,000 and EUR 5,000 .Hundreds of people, mainly students of journalism and media studies from 5 Western Balkan countries, have learned more about principles and importance of investigative journalism in their countries through 7 post-award events organised to promote investigative journalism and the 2016 EU award winners. Almost 20 EU award winners took part in the interactions with citizens and students.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Launch and promotion of the 2017 contests for the EU award for the best investigative stories published in 2016 in the countries of Western Balkans and Turkey. Administration of the national contests and administrative support to independent juries in the selection procedures. Announcement of the winners and organisation of award ceremonies in seven countries. Promotion of the winners through post-award activities.

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:	CN 2015/367-802
Duration of activities:	01/01/2016 – 31/12/2018
Contact:	Karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project Building Trust in Media in South East Europe and Turkey aims to strengthen freedom of expression, access to information, and free, independent and pluralistic media, ensuring that

journalists and media organizations in South East Europe and Turkey are key drivers for democratic, sustainable and peaceful development in the region. Its implementation started in January 2016.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Activities aimed to strengthen media self-regulation, to increase media good governance and Media Information Literacy are under way in all countries covered by the project (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244). Following key activities were held between July and December 2016:

- The press councils in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) organized various capacity-building activities and awareness-raising activities as defined in their work plan and ranging from public debates on TV, a study-visit, consultations with media owners or the launching of an [online media ethics school](#)
- Representatives of press councils from South East Europe and Turkey took part in the Annual meeting of the [Alliance of Independent Press Councils in Europe](#) in Stockholm, on 6 and 7 October 2016
- The second meeting of the Labour Rights Expert Group (LAREG) of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) with participants from South East Europe and Turkey took place on 26 October 2016 in Zagreb. It was followed by a [Training of Trainers](#) on Labour Rights issues in Tirana, Albania on 19 December 2016
- The School of Journalism and Public Relations (SJPR) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia mapped all universities, media organizations and associations operating across the region and involved in training of journalists. The analysis of their journalism curricula is under way
- The Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) conducted [2 seminars about media good governance](#) to perform media internal audits in Belgrade, on 18 October 2016 and Pristina on 21 October 2016
- A pre-Consultation Debate on "Media and Information Literacy as a Tool to Build Trust in the Media" was organized in Belgrade on 13 October 2016. A research analysis to draft the Background Document of National MIL Policies and Strategies in Albania was conducted during September, October and November 2016
- National consultations on Media Information Literacy have started in Serbia and Albania, mapping the stakeholders and research in the field
- On 23 November 2016, MEC launched the version in Serbian language of UNESCO MIL CLICKS, a social media strategy aiming to increase public demand for quality media and information and empowering of citizens through [media and information literacy \(MIL\)](#)

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Increased visibility and capacity of press councils in SEE and increased connections between representatives of press councils from the whole region (including Turkey and Albania) through participation in international and regional events
- Media Ethical Audits introduced in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) with Koha Ditore, Zeri (press and television), Kosovo 2.0 (press and online portal), Insider (online portal) and in Serbia with N1 TV (Television), Vreme (Press), FONET (Newsagency), NIN and Newsweek (Press), Prva TV (private TV)

- Launching of the Coalition of Information and Media Users in South East Europe (CIMU SEE)
- New trainers instructed on journalists labour rights in South East Europe and Turkey

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Publication of an in-dept assessment of the journalistic curricula in South East Europe and Turkey
- Organization of the third LAREG + meeting in Brussels
- Organization of a regional training seminar for press councils in Belgrade
- Launching of media ethical audits consultations in two additional countries of South East Europe and Turkey
- Consultation debates on Media and Information Literacy in Albania and Serbia in January and February 2017.

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility Programme, IPA 2012/023-324
Project title:	Civic Response to Clientelism in Media – MEDIA CIRCLE
EU contribution:	EUR 0.55 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement
Contract reference:	CN 2013/332-758
Duration of activities:	30/11/2013 – 29/11/2017
Links:	http://www.fairpress.eu/
Contact:	Karl Giacinti, kkarl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

Aim of the project is to establish independent, sustainable, multi-layered, cross-country mechanisms for active media policy monitoring, advocacy and emergency response in South East Europe.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Implementation of detailed regional advocacy action plan
- Repeating the country-specific research for the second measurement of Media Clientelism Index and writing country-specific and regional reports
- Second measurement of Media Clientelism Index presented in six countries (Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Romania)
- Country specific reporting on the state of media clientelism and politicisation through Fairpress portal (continuously)

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Detailed plan for regional advocacy activities implemented
- Second measurement of the Media Clientelism Index presented in 6 SEE countries (Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Romania)
- Report summarizing the main findings of the Media Clientelism Index 2016 for all countries published
- Twitter campaign “Clean news, clean politics, clean people” launched in all countries in the project
- Public Hearing in the European Parliament on the topic of media clientelism agreed upon

- Six nongovernmental grassroots organisations subgranted for the advocacy activities
- 244 analytical articles written and published on national languages of the countries participating in the project
- 113 analytical articles written and published on central portal in English
- 538 media related articles republished from other media outlets
- 19 uncut interviews published
- 101.165 Fairpress.eu sessions; 149.757 Fairpress.eu pageviews; 69.312 Fairpress.eu users; 19.103 Fairpress.eu Facebook Page likes; 805.648 people reached on Facebook

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Advocacy activities
- Public Hearing in the European Parliament
- Repeating the country-specific research for the new measurement of Media Clientelism Index

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility Programme, IPA 2012/023-324
Project title:	South-East European Partnership for Media Development
EU contribution:	EUR 0.6 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement
Contract reference:	CN 2013/332-771
Duration of activities:	30/11/2013 – 29/11/2017
Links:	http://www.seenpm.org/south-east-european-partnership-for-media-development/ http://www.cji.ro/?p=5268
Contact:	Karl Giacinti, karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE:

To support the development of independent and accountable media in the Western Balkans The focus is on creating the capacity of media organisations in Western Balkans to influence the policies regarding employment conditions and education needs of the journalists in 5 IPA countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Conducting the second wave of research – Media Literacy and Education
- Launching of the national reports on Media Literacy in the five countries in the project, during workshops that discussed them and suggested recommendations
- Organizing training events on Media Literacy in all the five countries in the project
- The third wave of FoE reports. The topic is Parochial Journalism - How big is our world? (topic chosen to meet the pressing issues of the media) To be launched in January 2017
- Advocacy campaigns at national level (Serbia: Parliamentary intervention on media literacy; Albania; Romania: independence of PBS, freedom of the Internet; media standards)
- Project management. Holding the fourth Steering Committee meeting (October 2016, Sarajevo). Field visits to all partners (monitoring)

- Communication of the program in the participant countries and to possible partners or donors. Posts on SEENPM website/ FB page
- Participation in the global advocacy for freedom of expression (IFEX campaigns, IFEX board meeting) and in the Global Forum for Media Development

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- 5 country reports on Media Literacy
- 5 national workshops to discuss the reports (attended by media specialists, policy makers, academics)

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER:

- Organizing the regional conference on Media Literacy and Education. (March, Skopje).
- Preparation of the fourth and fifth wave of FoE reports. Topics selected: Fake News; The media in election times
- Communication and visibility of the project
- Project management. The fifth Steering Committee meeting to take place in Skopje (March); Internal evaluation

6.6 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2014-2015 (allocation 2014) - IPA 2014/031-605
Project title:	Protecting children from violence and promoting social inclusion of children with disabilities in Western Balkans and Turkey
EU contribution:	EUR 5,00 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement with UNICEF
Contract reference:	2015/368-251
Duration of activities:	36 months
Links:	
Contact:	Maria Esposito, maria.esposito@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project aims to promote human rights and to make public services for children-victims of violence and children with disabilities more effective and inclusive. For this, the project seeks to empower civil society to better monitor realisation of children's rights, to promote inclusive and innovative services, increase public awareness and support for the protection of children from violence and social inclusion of children with disabilities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

In the reporting period, the main activities for all participating countries related to the identification and selection of key civil society partner organisations for each component/activity of the project. The work has also started on legislative revision to ensure that the protection of children from violence is part of national legislation. Local level response on violence against children (VAC) is underway through development of Child Friendly Guidelines on prevention of VAC and their

introduction to public service providers in five municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. School safety networks are being established at all elementary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and capacity development on inclusion of children with disabilities (CwD) is being provided for teachers from targeted schools with high CwD attendance in three municipalities. Assessment of functioning of Operational Multidisciplinary Teams (OMTs) for protection from family violence and VAC is done in Montenegro. Twelve new municipalities have been selected in Serbia for the establishment of multidisciplinary teams on VAC response. For data-related activities, including on introduction of common indicators on VAC: existing data and indicators on VAC have been assessed and reviewed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; indicators on violence have been developed and submitted to the Ministry of Social Welfare for approval and integration into the Information System in Montenegro. Situation Analysis (SitAn) on CwD is ongoing in Bosnia and Herzegovina (final stage), while in Kosovo field work is about to start.

On monitoring and reporting: in Montenegro CSO partners identified to potentially form a Network on VAC; in Turkey, detailed planning of various interventions took place with ICC (International Children's Centre) to work with Ombudsman's office and Parliament.

To contribute to public support for protection and social inclusion of vulnerable children, design of the KAP survey and nationwide campaign and awareness-raising on VAC has been completed in Bosnia and Herzegovina; extensive preparatory work was carried out in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to start a nationwide campaign on inclusion and participation of CwD and positive parenting. To raise high visibility of the project and contribute to better understanding on child rights among various stakeholders, an EU-UNICEF Child Right Toolkit launch and training took were organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina in close collaboration between UNICEF and EUD in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Within the regional partnership with EDF (European Disability Forum), EDF activities mainly focused on bridging with their member and partner DPOs (Disabled Persons Organisations). Seven missions were conducted to identify CSO/DPO capacity gaps. Selection criteria were defined to select CSOs/DPOs for certain project activities. Opening workshops on the role of DPOs in the project were organised in Serbia and Kosovo; in Montenegro the opening workshop was combined with a Seminar on the preparation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) alternative report.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Thirty-five CSO partners have been identified/selected in the countries so far, eight of which are DPOs. CSO/DPO selection process has been done in close collaboration with EDF and EUDs, and the roles and responsibilities of implementing partners have been identified. As a result of country-wide mapping exercise on existing CSOs and DPOs working on the issues of CwD and/or social inclusion of CwD in Turkey, the most active CSOs/DPOs were brought together to the meeting (up to 50 organisations) to discuss the opportunity to form a network, and participate in SitAn on CwD. A Federal Strategy for Persons with Disabilities has been developed, and is currently being budgeted before adoption in Bosnia and Herzegovina; inter-sectoral ECD Programme for the period 2016-2020 was developed and adopted by the Government of Republika Srpska; teachers from targeted schools with high CwD attendance in three municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina became aware of key priorities for inclusion of CwD. National network of VAC CSOs has been established for the time being informally, led by the CSO Juventas in Montenegro; key interventions for enhancing the capacity of the existing CSO Partnership Network on evidence generation have been defined by ICC in Turkey; six DPOs were selected to lead various aspects of nationwide campaign on inclusion and participation of CwD, and positive parenting campaign component, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Up to 100 representatives of government, NGOs working on children's rights issues and VAC, DPOs,

development agencies and children received practical tools and information on the rights of children through EU-UNICEF Child Rights Toolkit launching and training event in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through the baseline on capacity gaps for DPOs developed in each IPA beneficiary, EDF identified key areas for capacity building of DPOs. EDF's opening workshops in three IPA beneficiaries created a platform of debate among national decision makers and DPOs on legislation and policies for inclusion of CwD, contributing to the development of synergies for new models and approaches on child disability in the Region.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

It is planned to finalise the process of identification and selection of remaining CSOs/DPOs. VAC-related legislative recommendations and amendments, as well as incorporation of VAC-related concluding CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) recommendations into the legislative action plans will be on-going.

A whole range of capacity building activities will be implemented for practitioners (health, education, and social welfare) and CSOs/DPOs on application of guidelines and protocols on VAC, use of data on VAC and CwD, and independent monitoring and reporting of violence against children and social exclusion of children with disabilities. Through this, CSOs will be better equipped to engage in policy dialogue and advocacy to respond to VAC issues and social exclusion of CwDs at different levels through campaigns, involvement in creation of policies and decision making process, reporting cases of child rights violations as well as advocating with the governments to implement existing legislation. Support will be provided for Operational Multidisciplinary Teams on VAC in Montenegro, and multi-disciplinary teams on VAC response will be introduced in 12 new municipalities in Serbia. SitAns on CwD will be finalised in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo), whereas SitAn in Serbia and Turkey will continue. KAP surveys and nationwide campaigns on VAC and social inclusion of CwDs (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) will be continued. Upcoming opening workshops by EDF are scheduled for January/February 2017 in Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania. EDF will also provide constant tailored support (combining ad-hoc trainings and technical assistance) to DPOs and coalitions of DPOs in selected countries for the preparation of their shadow reports on the CRPD.

CHAPTER 7: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

7.1 TEMPUS AND ERASMUS+ 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
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans (except Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
Type of contract:	The programmes are implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
Links:	http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus; http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-2-cooperation-for-innovation-and-exchange-good-practices/capacity-0_en
Contact :	Katja de Sadeleer, katja.de-sadeleer@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Tempus programme and 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 (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

A coordination meeting of all National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) and international contact points (ICPs) was organised in Brussels to discuss the implementation of Tempus and Erasmus+.

Tempus activities consisted mainly in monitoring closed and on-going Tempus projects (a total of 12 Tempus projects were monitored by the NEOs and EACEA staff in the Western Balkans during this period). 13 projects were closed. Approximately 36 Tempus projects are still operating in the Western Balkans.

As far as Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) action is concerned, the 18 grant agreements for the 18 CBHE projects involving institutions from the Western Balkans selected under

the 2nd Call for proposals were signed, the pre-financings were carried out and all projects started their implementation as foreseen on 15 October.

The third Call for proposals was published with a deadline in February 2017. A broad information campaign in order to disseminate the opportunities under this call took place in the Partner and Programme Countries. A total of 14 on-going Erasmus+ CBHE projects in the Western Balkans were monitored during this period by the NEOs and EACEA staff.

Three major events addressing the network of Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) were implemented: A seminar in Warsaw, Poland, in September on "Qualifications frameworks: What are they, how do they work, what is their impact?", a seminar in Lviv, Ukraine, in October on "The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in practice – implications for HEIs and higher education systems" and the annual HERE conference in Barcelona, Spain, in December on "HEREs and their mission – implementing higher education reform".

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

The new elements introduced in the 2016 field monitoring strategy, such as risk based monitoring and performance assessment based on indicators, as well as the two new types of monitoring events, institutional visits and thematic cluster meeting in Partner Countries, were implemented smoothly in the Western Balkans and are providing good results.

The finalised study 'Achievements of Tempus IV Projects in Improving Student Services in Higher Education Institutions in the Western Balkans' was presented to National Agencies in their meeting in December. It is available on-line. The findings of this study have proven very useful and will be fed into the final evaluation of Tempus IV and the mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ CBHE.

The HEREs activities were highly successful and provided an excellent opportunity for discussion and exchange of practice. Participants reported on the high quality of the events and the interest of the topics for the modernisation process in their countries.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

During the first semester of 2017, the main activity will be related to the selection process of the applications submitted under the Erasmus+ CBHE (selection procedure to be completed by summer 2017).

A meeting of the selected project coordinators under the third Call will be organised in January 2017 in Brussels in order to brief new grant holders on the contractual requirements and implementation modalities of their projects (notably the financial rules). Back to back to this event, EACEA will organise a coordination meeting of NEOs in the Partner Countries.

A Thematic Cluster meeting on 'Impact and Sustainability of curriculum reform projects' will be organised during the first semester 2017 with the aim to address the challenges in the sustainability and impact of curricula developed or adapted in the context of a Tempus IV, Alfa, Edulink or CBHE projects and to identify the most valuable lessons learned from these projects.

In addition, the procedure to provide financial support to the NEOs and to the HERE network for the period 2017-2020 will be launched during the first half of the year.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013, IPA 2013/935
Project title:	Erasmus Mundus Action 1 and Action 2
EU contribution:	Action 1: EUR 8.0 million – 2015 and 2016: n/a Action 2: EUR 12.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Erasmus Mundus Action 1: (2014) Western Balkans (except Croatia) and Turkey Erasmus Mundus Action 2: Western Balkans
Type of contract:	The programme is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
Links:	http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-1-learning-mobility-individuals/erasmus-mundus-joint-master-degrees_en http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/action2_en.php
Contact :	Katja de Sadeleer, katja.de-sadeleer@ec.europa.eu Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency EACEA-EPLUS-JMD@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Erasmus Mundus programme's objective is to promote European higher education, to help improve and enhance the career prospects of students and to promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries, in accordance with EU external policy objectives, in order to contribute to the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Erasmus Mundus Action 1

The 27 newly selected Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMD) under the call for proposals EAC/A04/2015 started their preparatory year. The coordinators' kick-off meeting took place in November 2016. The EMJMDs selected in 2014 and 2015, as well as the running Erasmus Mundus Master Courses (EMMCs) and Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates (EMJDs), started their 2016 cohort during fall.

An invitation to apply for scholarships/fellowships was sent in October 2016 to the 30 on-going EMMCs and 8 EMJDs selected under the former Action 1 of Erasmus Mundus. The 2017 Erasmus+ EMJMD call for proposals was published on 20 October 2016 (deadline for submission of proposals is 16 February 2017). It is expected to select around 35 new EMJMD projects for a total amount of EUR 90.484.232 million.

The Erasmus+ 2017 EMJMD call for proposals was presented by EACEA and EAC in the framework of Info-days organised by the National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) and Erasmus+ National Agencies.

A coordination meeting of all National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) and international contact points (ICPs) was organised in Brussels to discuss the implementation of Erasmus+ in September 2016. Workshops on "How to improve the diversity of Erasmus+ beneficiaries" and "How to improve the quality of Erasmus+ projects" were organised. A special session on "under-represented programme

countries in EMJMD" was held in order to respond to some ICPs concerns about the limited participation and low success rate of several EU Countries to the programme.

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. They assure visibility of the Programme in the region, allowing sharing of best practices and exploring further opportunities for cooperation between European and Western Balkan HEIs through bilateral agreements and other measures. In July 2016, ten Action 2 projects were still active in Western Balkans.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Erasmus Mundus Action 1

As a result of the 2016 selections, around 2.370 students will be awarded with an Erasmus Mundus scholarship/fellowship. Student scholarship applicants from the Western Balkans region will compete with others from all over the world to be among the awardees. The promotional campaign for the 2017 EMJMDs call raised a lot of interest and participation. The results will be assessed against the number of EMJMD project proposals submitted by the deadline of 16 February 2017. The success of the workshop on "How to improve the quality of Erasmus+ projects" resulted in the organisation in other E+ programme countries of specific workshops focusing on competitive proposals writing.

Erasmus Mundus Action 2

Between September and November 2016, three partnerships selected in 2012 submitted their final report. These projects financed 804 mobility flows for students and staff (610 non-EU and 194 EU). The assessment of the final reports shows that 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+.

Furthermore, the publication "Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Scholarship Holders' Impact Survey: Results" was finalised in October 2016. The document draws from the analysis of the results of the Action 2 scholarship holders' survey carried out in 2014, which includes grantees from Western Balkans. For the first time the publication provides in-depth analysis of the impact of the Action 2 mobility schemes on individuals.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Erasmus Mundus Action 1

The 30 on-going Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses and eight on-going Joint Doctorates will submit their applications for scholarships/fellowships on 28 February 2017, and Grant Award Decision is expected by May 2017. Also, the EMJMDs selected in 2014, 2015 and 2016 will implement their student selection exercises for their on-going cohorts (autumn 2017). The selection of new EMJMDs in 2017 under this year's open call for proposals will be completed by July 2017.

As part of the Action 2 valorisation strategy, a conference will be organised on 8-9 February 2017 to discuss the outcomes of the EMA2 action with coordinators, partner HEIs, students, experts and EU representatives. The debate will also draw conclusions on the results of two online surveys launched in 2014 and 2016 targeting the EMA2 scholarship holders and HEIs respectively. The aim of the event

will be to identify the main areas of achievements of the action, the challenges and lessons learned and to discuss future perspectives of the international dimension of higher education of Erasmus+ under higher education. The conclusions of the conference will feed into a publication.

7.3 YOUTH IN ACTION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2014, IPA 2014/S12.692592.09
Project title:	Erasmus+ Youth in Action – Western Balkans Youth Window
EU contribution:	EUR 3.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	The programme is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
Contact :	Katja de Sadeleer, katja.de-sadeleer@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The European Union shares with the Western Balkans ambitious objectives for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth with a view to delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Investing in human and social capital is an essential condition to achieve those growth targets.

The Western Balkans Youth Window reinforces the levels of participation of the Western Balkans in Erasmus+ by:

- Increasing the number of Erasmus+ non-formal learning projects involving the participation of organisations and participants – especially young people and youth workers – from the Western Balkans;
- Allowing organisations from the Western Balkans to be project coordinators and apply directly for an EU grant within the framework of Erasmus+.

Projects aim at capacity building in the field of youth at international level. More specifically, they have the aim to:

- Promote strategic cooperation between youth organisations and public authorities;
- Foster cooperation between youth organisations and organisations in the education and training fields as well as with representatives of the business and labour market;
- Raise the capacities of youth councils, youth platforms and local, regional and national authorities dealing with youth in Western Balkan countries.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

A plan of monitoring visits for funded Western Balkan Youth Window projects was established by EACEA. Eight organisations in Serbia were visited.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

The 2nd deadline of 2016 for the Western Balkan Youth Window managed at centralised level under the Erasmus+ Programme - Key-Action 2, Capacity Building in the field of youth - was on 1 July 2016.

Organisations from Western Balkan countries submitted 188 applications with a total grant request of EUR 11,800,000.00 (average grant request EUR 63,000.00). Serbian organisations submitted almost 53% (100) of the applications. 36 applications were submitted by organisations based in Albania, 21 by Bosnia and Herzegovina, 16 by Montenegrin organisations and 15 by Kosovo.

The Evaluation Committee proposed to fund a total number of 20 projects representing a total grant request of EUR 1,128,123.79. Among the organisations funded there are: 12 beneficiaries from Serbia, 1 from Albania, 3 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2 from Montenegro and 1 from Kosovo.

Selection results were published in November 2016. The establishment of grant agreements was finalized in December 2016 and the launch of pre-financing payments started in December 2016.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

In 2017, there will be one deadline (i.e. the 8 of March 2017) to submit proposals under the Western Balkan Youth Window managed at centralised level (Erasmus+ Programme – Key-Action 2 - Capacity Building in the field of youth 2017).

The call was published in November 2016 and an information campaign will be launched to inform properly interested potential applicants.

7.4 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 Organisation (ILO)
Contract reference:	VS/2016/0054 (RCC) and VS/2016/0002 (ILO)
Duration of activities:	01/03/2016 – 28/02/2019 (RCC) 01/04/2016 – 31/03/2019 (ILO)
Contact :	Kiril Kiryakov, kiril.kiryakov@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 (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Two regional meetings (Becici, Montenegro, and Belgrade, Serbia) focused on strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Councils (ESC) in tripartite social dialogue and economic governance process. The first two ESC peer reviews for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were carried out in December.

The first ESAP regional meeting of Public Employment Services (PES) took place in Belgrade, Serbia. PES officials discussed a new framework for bench-learning regarding their performance

management and measurement practices based on the identical process driven by the EU-level PES network.

A workshop on the content and technical design of the online Employment and Social Affairs Platforms Platform was organized in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the participation of ILO International Training Centre.

The demand driven technical assistance instrument of the ESAP project has been launched.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Comprehensive framework for ESC peer reviews validated.
- In depth national and comparative analysis of employment policies and targeted analysis of active labour market policies (ALMP) based on the EUROSTAT methodology conducted. The analysis provides an overview of policy gaps, catalogue of the ALMPs and a set of recommendations for their improvement.
- Regional analysis of existing performance management tools in PES offices in the WB economies conducted. A bench-learning methodology for PES including a set of comparable indicators and enablers developed and agreed with the national stakeholders.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Annual high-level regional meeting of labour inspectorates, 5-6 April, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: The meeting will discuss and validate the sector(s) and topics to be covered by a joint regional labour inspectorate campaign.
- A peer review exercise of the functioning of the ESCs: Tirana, Albania (16 – 18 January), Belgrade, Serbia (24 – 26 January), Pristina, Kosovo (7-9 February) and Podgorica, Montenegro (21 -23 February).
- Implement the bench-learning exercise for Public Employment Services by conducting a first round of data collection for quantitative benchmarking and identifying context-adjusted valid performance outcomes.
- Launch the online Employment and Social Affairs Platform.
- Launch a structured process of peer reviews of employment policies and ALMPs among Ministries of Labour and Social Policies aimed at addressing the identified gaps and following up on the recommendations provided in the analytical reports to be finalised in January 2017.

7.5 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Programme reference:	Preparatory actions for preserving and restoring cultural heritage in conflict areas in the Western Balkans for 2012, CARDS 2012/023-867
EU contribution:	EUR 3.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Single works contracts; Evaluation: Service Framework contract
Contract reference:	n/a
Duration of activities:	till 08/11/2018
Contact:	Olga-Elena Fimin, olga-elena.fimin@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

Rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites affected by war-related actions, contribution to a sustainable development of sites of valuable cultural objects, fostering inter-cultural dialogue, reconciliation, raising the awareness of cultural diversity in the Western Balkans among the population and eventually support to economic development.

The following three projects were selected:

- Rehabilitation of the Franciscan Monastery in Bač, Serbia;
- Reconstruction of the Kastel Fortress, "Cultural centre with auxiliary services", Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Rehabilitation of the Monastery of St. Mary for museum use and landscaping of the archaeological site of Apollonia, Fier, Albania.

The works were implemented in line with the working programme and no delays are expected.

During this period an addendum for additional works is approved for an amount of EUR 75,619.90.

The main purpose of the addendum was the rehabilitation of four monuments/buildings which were judged to be in critical structural state, with cracked and/or inclined walls.

Works are planned to be completed by January 2017, followed by one year Defects Liability Period.

ACTIVITIES

- Contract for works at the Franciscan Monastery in Bač was signed on 30 March 2016 for the amount of EUR 685,468.96.
- Works on Reconstruction of the Kastel fortress, "Cultural Centre with auxiliary services" started on 11 May 2015 and was completed in March 2016 with issuing Provisional Acceptance Certificate. The guarantee period will last for 12 months e.g. March 2017. Supervision contract signed with SAFEGE BOSNIA KONSALTING INZINJERING PROJEKTOVANJE DOO SARAJEVO (Bosnia and Herzegovina) on 26 September 2014. Contract Value EUR 98,000. Works Contract signed with PRIVREDNO DRUSTVO ZA IZGRADNJU, OBNAVLJANJE I REKONSTRUKCIJU GRADEVINSKIH OBJEKATA KOTO DOO (Serbia) on 24 March 2015. Contract Value EUR 948,108.31.
- As for the rehabilitation of the Monastery of St. Mary and landscaping in Apollonia Park, the works and supervision contracts, both started on 5 January 2016, for a duration of 2 years (including 1 Year Defect Liability Period). The ongoing works are in line with the working programme and no delays are expected.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Continuation of works.

CHAPTER 8 : OTHER HORIZONTAL ACTIONS

8.1 EU AGENCIES

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
Project title:	Preparatory measures for the participation of candidates and potential candidates in EU Agencies
EU contribution:	EUR 4.46 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant contracts
Contract reference:	11 contracts signed in 2015
Duration of activities:	Q32015 – Q1 2018
Contact:	Agnieszka Iwanowska-Biel, agnieszka.iwanowska-biel@ec.europa.eu

List of Agencies, duration of activities and total amounts:

CRIS	Agency	Duration	Amount (EUR million)
360-343	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions	30/06/2015 – 29/09/2016	0.3
361-042	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control	30/06/2015-29/06/2017	0.35
362-071	European Institute for Gender Equality	30/06/2015 – 31/12/2017	0.2
361-490	European Aviation Safety Agency	01/07/2015 – 30/06/2017	0.5
361-979	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction	01/07/2015 – 30/06/2017	0.6
361-049	European Chemicals Agency	01/09/2015 – 28/02/2018	0.3
361-733	European Food Safety Authority	02/10/2015 - 30/11/2017	0.6
364-928	European Maritime Safety Agency	24/10/2015 - 23/04/2018	0.3
367-495	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work	01/12/2015 – 30/11/2017	0.41
368-133	European Railway Agency	01/01/2016-31/12/2017	0.3
367-323	European Environment Agency	01/02/2016-31/01/2018	0.6

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. EC 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 (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

The Agencies carry out preparatory measures comprising interactive working sessions, trainings and workshops, aiming at capacity building, transfer of knowledge and development of skills that should lead to the creation of the necessary administrative structures, compliance of the national legislation with the EU *acquis*, application of the standardised methodologies in the field of expertise of respective agencies, or establishment of effective networks. Activities also cover preparation and translation of documents and implementation of surveys. Given the large number of contracts, a comprehensive presentation of each project would go beyond the scope of this report. Therefore only some examples are presented which do not indicate an order of priority.

EMCDDA

The EMCDDA has launched several activities which will generate new data on the extent of drug problem and responses in the Western Balkan region. The first national General Population Surveys are launched in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Montenegro. The EMCDDA protocol on drug seizures was introduced to the beneficiaries, and data collection on illicit drug seizures is in progress. A seminar on the implementation of the European drug treatment facility survey (EDTFS) took place as well. The beneficiaries started updating their national drug summaries. In all countries, but Montenegro, the seminars on monitoring new psychoactive substances (NPS) were held. EMCDDA provided support to enhance visibility of the recent European School Survey on Alcohol and Drugs (ESPAD) which were carried out in Albania, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; ensured attendance of the experts from interested countries in the EU Expert meetings and the Reitox Week. A project coordination meeting took place in September.

ECDC

All seven IPA beneficiary countries integrated in ECDC Epidemic Intelligence Information System (EPIS) platforms and in the European Surveillance System (except Bosnia and Herzegovina) to report national surveillance data on selected diseases/health issues according to ECDC standards and requirements.

In addition, 31 experts from Western Balkan countries and Turkey participated in five ECDC technical discussions on Legionnaires Disease surveillance, public health microbiology, epidemic intelligence and threat detection, Point Prevalence Survey of healthcare associated infections and antimicrobial use in acute care hospitals (HAI PPS).

EASA

Highly specialised workshops with regard to Aerodrome, Occurrence Reporting and Safety Management were delivered for the experts of the countries in strengthening the civil aviation oversight capacity. On-site support sessions were conducted in the area of organisational structure of the aviation oversight system in the countries. Several on-the-job (OJT) training sessions were conducted with the support of mature civil aviation oversight authorities of the EU covering a long

range of the aviation safety spectrum. The Seventh EASA Pan-European Partner Countries Workshop (EASA-PANEP VII) brought together aviation professionals from the agency and the countries and allowed participants to get updated on the latest developments with regards to the regulation of drones in Europe, rulemaking cooperation and SMS implementation in the EASA system. The second Steering Committee Meeting was an additional event, organised within the reporting period.

EMSA

Three training sessions were organised and delivered at EMSA's premises, covering training of seafarers, the safe management and operation of ships and implementation of the maritime labour convention. Furthermore, three tailor-made training sessions were delivered in three of the IPA beneficiaries' countries. These trainings focused, respectively, on port reception facilities, port state control and flag state implementation.

Officials from the IPA beneficiaries participated in five events normally organised for participants from EU Member States, dealing with surveillance systems for maritime pollution detection and assessment.

ERA

The following activities were accomplished: Meeting with IPA beneficiary countries on harmonization of National Rules (28.09); Participation of experts of IPA beneficiaries to the 42nd Plenary meeting of the Network of National Safety Authorities on (27-28.09); Railway Accident Investigation Practical Training for accident investigation experts of NIBs of IPA countries between (18.10 and 20.10); Study visit to Albania with focus on EU railway legislation and harmonisation of national rules of Albania with EU requirements (10.11); Participation of experts of IPA beneficiaries to the 32nd plenary meeting of the Network of NIBs on (17.11).

EIGE

The regional workshop on the Gender Equality Index and the Gender Statistics Database in May served as an impulse for several IPA countries to intensify work on their national Gender Equality Indices according to the EU-28 methodology. EIGE continued to provide support to this work, including facilitation of contacts with Eurostat and access to its methodologies, and early data access to Eurofound's newest European Working Conditions Survey.

IPA country participants also participated in several events, most notably, Workshop on Gender Statistics co-organized by the UN Economic Commission for Europe and EIGE, and an EIGE's conference "Gender equality and sport: towards a level playing field for women". The Institute also kept regional stakeholders informed about significant developments at EIGE.

EUROFOUND

Interviews in Albania, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey started on 1st of September. The target number of interviews (sample size) is 1,000 for each country but Turkey (2,000). Conflicts in Turkey have led to some adaptation of the sampling plan; some sampling points had to be replaced due to safety risks for interviewers.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

EMCDDA

The EMCDDA Drug Seizure protocol is available in national languages of the Western Balkans. National experts attending a training seminar enhanced their knowledge on how drugs seizures are being monitored. Albania, Kosovo and Serbia had submitted data on drug seizures by end of 2016. The methodological package on implementation of the EDTFS is available in national languages as well, and the activity plans for the interested countries to implement the survey are drafted.

The beneficiary representatives are better informed about NPS monitoring, and activities to further consolidate their national early warning systems were agreed upon.

The video to promote 2015 ESPAD is available in the national languages of AL, ME and MK, while the 2015 ESPAD study report for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is available in the national languages of AL, MK and in English (also in printed copies).

ECDC

Six participating countries in TESSy pilot on selected disease surveillance (all except Bosnia and Herzegovina) for the first time were invited to upload their 2015 national surveillance data to TESSy on the selected diseases as per ECDC reporting schedule and protocols. This pilot serves as an opportunity for countries to submit data that meets the standards of EU/EEA member states as per EU acquis.

Through the Observer NMFP, countries were invited to pilot ECDC EU Laboratory Capability Monitoring System (EULabCap) for monitoring key public health microbiology capabilities and capacity for EU surveillance and epidemic preparedness. Countries that sent their indicators to ECDC will have a valuable opportunity to identify and address areas for action where public health microbiology needs further strengthening in the country.

EASA

Activities undertaken have helped the beneficiaries to strengthen and to acquire new skills and knowledge on aviation safety with particular focus on EU rules and requirements as well as to establish well-functioning and sustainable oversight systems.

EMSA

The implemented activities have enabled the participants from the beneficiary countries to strengthen their administrative capacity and organisation capability needed for the implementation and enforcement of international and EU maritime law. Furthermore, the in-country training for port state control inspectors from Montenegro helped deepen the knowledge and understanding of the procedures of the Paris MoU, thus bringing the country closer to meeting the requirements for membership in the Memorandum.

ERA

All beneficiaries, save for the representatives of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, are involved in the EU railway networks of experts and officials and have better understanding of EU policies, legislation and requirements. Awareness of IPA beneficiary experts of EU methodology for accident investigation and institutional building is raised. Beneficiaries have received better understanding of the newly adopted 4th Railway package. The Agency has paved the way to prepare the big project of notification of National safety and technical rules of the beneficiaries in the near future of the IPA Project.

EIGE

Continued work on the Gender Equality Indices for IPA countries resulted in seven national draft roadmaps produced by EIGE and shared with IPA country national statistical offices. These reports provide a clear snapshot of where a particular country is regarding its potential to produce a national Gender Equality Index and what are the next steps to achieve this. Several countries provided feedback on the draft roadmaps and now possess a final roadmap document to be shared with other national and international partners.

IPA country representatives also participated in several events, most notably, the 5th meeting of IPA country gender equality institutions representatives, EU conference on Mainstreaming gender

equality into academic and research organisations, and Experts consultation meeting on the measurement framework of violence against women in the EU.

EUROFOUND

The target number of interviews was achieved in all countries. Data related to the Candidate Countries have been included in the final report published in November 2017. Overall, the survey finds, structural inequalities and differences in terms of gender, employment status and occupation are still significant. In the last 10 years, there has been limited progress in some aspect of job quality. Going beyond the objective measures of job quality, the report also looks at workers' own assessment of their working lives. It finds associations between the different dimensions of job quality and factors such as engagement, financial security, the development of skills and competences, health and well-being, the reconciliation of work and private life, and the sustainability of work.

The information of Candidate Countries has also become available on an interactive data visualisation tool that can be used to visualise, explore and compare EU and country data on working conditions, quality of work and work–life balance.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

EMCDDA

The first national General Population Surveys will be carried out in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Montenegro. We will continue assist Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro to collect drug seizure data. The implementation of the EDTFS in the interested countries will continue. All these activities will result in reports, which will be made available by the end of the action. The national drug summaries will be finalised and made available on the EMCDDA website.

The follow up activities are planned to consolidate national EWS systems.

When relevant, the beneficiaries will be invited to attend the EU Expert meetings.

The Closing meeting of the project will take place on 28 June.

ECDC

Representatives from Western Balkans and Turkey will be invited to participate in technical discussions of ECDC meetings of food- and waterborne diseases network (jointly with EFSA), TB surveillance network and TB reference laboratory network, National Focal Points on Microbiology, Threat Detection, Preparedness, European EVD network, etc. ECDC EPIS-FWD hands-on training session will be organised specifically for users from EU enlargement countries.

ECDC teams will continue monitoring countries' progress, capacities and compliance to use EPIS-FWD and EPIS-ELDSNet and to report national surveillance data according to ECDC standards and requirements

EASA

Continuation of aviation oversight related on-site and on-the-job support activities. This includes the area of organisational structure of the aviation oversight system in the countries, as well as the safety management system and compliance monitoring. The closing Steering Committee Meeting will be the last event organised by this project.

EMSA

EMSA will continue to organise and deliver trainings focusing on the implementation and enforcement of key EU maritime legislation, both of a general nature and more specialized trainings such as on ballast water management and core skills for accident investigators. In-country training is foreseen to take place in Serbia within this period. Beneficiaries may be offered access to the e-learning modules that EMSA is currently producing.

ERA

Train driver training in Finland, Meeting of all IPA beneficiary countries on National Rules, Light monitoring assessment visits of IPA countries, Participation of beneficiary countries' experts in the Networks of National Safety Authorities and National Investigation Bodies of the EU.

Note: Political situation in Turkey might obstruct the planning for the next semester. The Agency is tackling this Project risk. The participants of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia do not participate in project meetings. The Agency will officially communicate with the government of the former Yugoslav Republic Macedonia.

EIGE

The main activity is the launch of the Gender Equality Index for Montenegro and significant advancement of work on Indices for several other IPA countries – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania. Cooperation with one gender/women's studies centre in the IPA region will also be initiated to include it in the network of partners of EIGE's Resource and Documentation centre. Coverage of IPA countries in EIGE's Gender Statistics Database will further improve. EIGE will organise several events, e.g. a networking and capacity building workshop for EU Delegations Gender Focal Points in the IPA region and a substantive seminar for IPA country representatives.

EUROFOUND

Activities concluded with the publication of the report.

8.2 REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title :	Contribution to the activities of the RCC Secretariat with a focus on South East European 2020 Strategy
EU contribution:	EUR 7.15 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement with RCC
Contract reference:	CN 2014/352-550
Duration of activities:	01/01/2015 – 31/12/2016
Links:	http://www.rcc.int/
Contact :	Agnieszka Iwanowska-Biel, agnieszka.iwanowska-biel@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to provide financial assistance to the functioning of the RCC Secretariat and contribution to the activities of the RCC in 2015, as foreseen in its 2014 -2016 Strategy and Work Programme, in particular implementing the SEE 2020 strategy.

ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2016)

Under the *Skills and Mobility* flagship, the Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (15 December 2016, Tirana) reached a tentative agreement based on their preliminary positions to open negotiations in both health and construction sector for all four prioritized professions (Doctors of Medicine, Dentists, Architects and Civil Engineers), thus moving forward the process of preparing the negotiations of the multilateral mutual recognition agreement of professional qualifications. Based on the agreement made an official Note to the Governments to open the negotiations on four multilateral agreements on recognition of professional qualifications for Doctors of Medicine, Dentists, Architects and Civil Engineers will be drafted and agreed upon in the first quarter of 2017.

Under the *Connectivity* flagship, analytical work continued on RCC-supported comprehensive analysis of road ancillary infrastructure along TEN-T Core extension in WB and the pre-feasibility study investigating the prospects of introducing electronic Border Queuing Management System on the extended TEN-T Road Core Corridors in WB. Furthermore, the Study on developing *economic corridors* scoped the existing investments and industries, intra-regional industrial and trade linkages and complementarities, and services' integration along SEE corridor routes. Finally, RCC, SEETO and JSPAI co-organized Conference on Air Transport Connectivity to address the challenges of weak intra-regional air connectivity and the future development prospects of the air transport sector in the region. In the *environment dimension*, the Regional Working Group on Environment had a regular meeting to fulfill the commitments agreed by the WB6 Ministers and articulated through the Podgorica Declaration. Related to the *energy dimension*, RCC, in cooperation with EnC Secretariat, initiated a regional dialogue with the Ministries in charge of energy and Ministries in charge of transport, aiming at improving the sustainable use of energy in the transport sector. Under the *digital society dimension*, activities continued on the regional roaming and broadband initiatives, as part of the overall efforts for digital transformation of WB. Comprehensive consultation and validation process was launched on the findings of the first regional legal and market impact assessment of the roaming agreement. Given the voiced interest from EaP countries to investigate the possibilities to conclude a similar regional roaming, RCC facilitated a process of best-practices exchange. In the framework of the broadband initiative, RCC, in cooperation with EC services, supported the regional coordination on the broadband reform structural measures (to be included in ERPs 2017-2019) and on the upcoming World Bank-financed Balkans Digital Highway study.

Under the Competitiveness Flagship, the activities were focused on: development of the regional investment reform agenda through the Joint Working Group on Investment (finalized the draft of the regional action programme pertaining to investment reforms, and revived the discussion on the forthcoming development of the study on regional investment policy review); initiating joint work on regional industrial policy with the first meeting of the Working Group on Industrial Policy; and sectoral work, particularly in tourism, where agreement was reached to establish an SEE electronic tourism platform in cooperation with the USAID. The meetings of the respective working groups were held during the reporting period in each of the indicated areas.

OUTPUTS (JULY– DECEMBER 2016)

Main outputs during the reporting period include:

- An agreement based on preliminary positions to open negotiations in health and construction sector for all four prioritized professions
- Roaming Market Impact Assessment study produced
- Analysis of Road Ancillary Infrastructure along TEN-T Core Extension in WB developed
- Pre-feasibility study investigating the prospects of introducing electronic Border Queuing Management System produced
- Study on developing economic corridors developed
- Draft regional action programme on investment reforms prepared and agreed
- SEE electronic tourism platform agreed by the Tourism Expert Group.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Key activities planned for the next semester include:

- Note to the Governments to open the negotiations on four multilateral agreements on recognition of professional qualifications for Doctors of Medicine, Dentists, Architects and Civil Engineers will be drafted and agreed upon in the first quarter of 2017.
- Finalization, validation and follow up to the findings and recommendations of the analytical studies produced during the last semester of 2016 in the framework of the Connectivity flagship
- Development of the regional investment policy review together with UNCTAD; implementation of the electronic system for issuing construction permits; setting the standards for business friendliness certification of municipalities across the region; and initiation of discussion on legal instruments for formalization of the investment reform agenda in the region;

8.3 CROSS-BORDER INSTITUTION BUILDING - CBIB+ PHASE II

Programme reference:	Multi-Country Action Programme 2014/031-603
Project title:	Cross-border Institution Building - CBIB+ Phase II
EU contribution:	EUR 2.00 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Service contract with GIZ International Services (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH)
Contract reference:	CN 2015/368-298
Duration of activities:	01/12/2015 – 30/11/2018
Links:	www.cbibplus.eu
Contact :	Jlenia Destito, jlenia.destito@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

This project aims at enhancing regional coordination and harmonisation of approaches, as well as promoting a culture of best practices and sharing of experience in the field of cross-border cooperation (CBC) at intra-Western Balkans. It also supports a smooth transition from the IPA to the IPA II programmes in CBC, particularly in those countries operating under indirect management.

ACTIVITIES (JULY 2016 – DECEMBER 2016)

- Coordination of a technical working group in charge of the full revision and upgrading of the manual of procedures for the Joint Technical Secretariats (JTSs) under IPA II CBC programmes.
- Support to the Operating Structures in Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in developing their bilateral 2016-2020 IPA II CBC programme.
- First steps for conducting an ex-post monitoring for all IPA CBC programmes, as well as laying the groundwork for the establishment of an adequate monitoring system for IPA II CBC programmes.
- Continuous support to the programme management structures and grant beneficiaries.
- Preparation of several notes and guides supporting the Operating Structures.
- Preparation and continuous use of several communication tools (project newsletter, social media pages and flashnews).
- Publication of a contest package on EU-funded prizes for CBC research papers in the WB.

OUTPUTS (JULY 2016 – DECEMBER 2016)

- Final version of the JTS manual of procedures under IPA II CBC programmes.
- Final draft of the 2016-2020 IPA II CBC programme Serbia – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Ex-post monitoring questionnaires (for successful and for unsuccessful applicants).
- Reinforced capacity of the OSs' and JTSs' staff to manage service contracts and of grant beneficiaries to implement project.
- Several notes and guides for the OSs.
- Seven monthly newsletters dispatched (6 regular and season greetings).
- First issue of project newsletter 'Yellow&Blue' prepared and ready for printing.
- Publication of the contest package on EU-funded prizes for CBC research papers in the WB.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Organisation of the fourth CBC regional consultative forum in February 2017 in Belgrade.
- Development of a methodology for systematic result/impact measurement for improving the overall quality of the programmes, their impact, effectiveness and visibility.
- Reviewing the findings and outputs of the overall evaluation of IPA CBC programmes and preparation of a guidance report to improve technical and operational aspects, as well as processes in CBC programmes.
- Organisation of different training events for programme structures and grant beneficiaries in line with the requests received from key stakeholders.
- Circulation of regular monthly flash news and preparation of the second issue of the newsletter 'Yellow&Blue' under this phase of CBIB+.

- Delivery of a training module to improve regular relations between the OSs and media.
- Evaluation of the research papers submitted under the prize contest and subsequent award of prizes.

8.4 FOSTERING REGIONAL COOPERATION

Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme for 2014 - part NEAR
Project title:	Fostering regional cooperation and balanced territorial development of Western Balkan (WB) countries in the process towards EU integration – Support to the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-East Europe
EU contribution:	EUR 1.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-East Europe
Contract reference:	CN 2015/359-331
Duration of activities:	02/06/2015 – 31/05/2017
Links:	http://www.seerural.org/
Contact :	Jlenia Destito, Jlenia.DESTITO@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project aims at fostering regional cooperation among institutions and stakeholders in the agriculture and food sector, as well as to facilitate the process of balanced territorial development of the Western Balkan countries in the progression towards EU integration.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Two high-level meetings and forums related to agriculture and rural development, and two SWG assembly sessions.
- 8 Stakeholder Group (SHG) meetings in the cross-border regions “Drina - Tara”, “Drina - Sava”, “Prespa” and “Shara”.
- Project management units (PMU’s) in the cross-border regions “Drina - Tara”, “Drina - Sava”, “Prespa”, “Sharra” supported local stakeholders by facilitating the process of preparation of 10 project applications under different calls for proposals.
- 13 “People to People” (P2P) events.
- Launch of the 2nd ABD Grant and signature of small projects and investments amounting to EUR 211.000 in the cross-border regions “Drina-Tara”, “Drina-Sava”, “Prespa” and “Sharra”. Launch of an additional call for the cross-border regions “Prespa” and “Sharra”, amounting to EUR 120.000.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Political statements and policy recommendations prepared and disseminated are contributing to the dialogue on the EU approximation process of the Western Balkan countries.

- Increased assistance and enhanced partnership and networking among the relevant stakeholders in the “Drina-Tara”, “Drina-Sava”, “Prespa” and “Sharra” cross-border regions have strengthened the regional cooperation in the field of agriculture and rural development.
- People-to-People actions in all four cross-border regions contributed to promotion of the cultural, traditional, natural heritage, as well cooperation and economic development of the cross-border regions.
- A finalised baseline analysis and strategic planning with focus on economic development for the cross border regions “Pcinja - Krajishte”, “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”, “Neretva - Krsh”.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Organisation of SWG assembly session, different working group meetings and conferences related to agriculture and rural development.
- Organisation of P2P events, meetings and capacity building measures.
- Support to the stakeholders by the PMU’s staff for the preparation of quality project proposals under different calls for proposals in the cross-border regions.
- Follow-up activities such as SHG meetings, P2P events, cooperation and networking exercises for “Pcinja – Krajishte”, “Prokletije – Bjeshket e Nemuna”, “Neretva – Krsh” cross-border regions.

8.5 MONITORING

Programme reference:	Support Measure – Monitoring Programme
Project title:	Multi-country Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) - Western Balkans & Turkey
EU contribution:	EUR 3.48 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service Contract with Particip GmbH
Contract reference:	2015/361-031
Duration of activities:	03/6/2015 – 02/06/2017
Contact :	Petra Schlueter, petra.schlueter@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The contract provides an external independent Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) service for national IPA programmes and the multi-beneficiary programmes in the Western Balkans region. The purpose of ROM is to support the results monitoring activities of programmes and projects by the Operational Managers in the EU Delegations and at EC Headquarters. The ROM reviews are conducted in accordance with the ROM Handbook.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

The project is implementing the 2016 ROM Review Workplan covering the period from May 2016 to April 2017. A total of 79 ROM missions were made in the semester covering problematic, innovative, or not visited programmes or allocations where specialist sector knowledge is required.

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

Each of the 79 missions delivered a draft ROM Report in a standard format which includes conclusions and recommendations. The reports addressed performance issues in Albania (12), Bosnia and Herzegovina (6), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (15), Kosovo (10) Montenegro (9), Serbia (9) and Regional programmes (18). The report outcomes are a contribution to the overall results monitoring of IPA programmes by the Operational Managers (OMs) and support to interim decisions and actions taken by the OMs to improve the outcomes achieved by the programmes.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The 2016 ROM Review Workplan has identified 156 candidate ROM Review missions to be made up to April 2017. Approximately 60 ROM Reviews are expected to be made in the next semester, which includes the first missions under the 2017 ROM WBT Workplan.

8.6 EVALUATION OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme 2015 under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II), DG NEAR part, IPA 2015/031-609
Project title:	Evaluation of regional organisations in the Western Balkans
EU contribution:	EUR 0.295 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Specific Contract under Framework Contract with Particip GmbH
Contract reference:	CN 2016/377-819
Duration of activities:	02/11/2016 – 30/06/2017
Contact:	Agnieszka Iwanowska-Biel, agnieszka.iwanowska-biel@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an overall independent assessment of the regional organisations and fora in the Western Balkans and the role they play in the regional integration and accession perspective including recommendations on possible streamlining.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Kick-off meeting
- Inception phase - desk research
- Setting out the detailed design of the evaluation, including all aspects of methodology, and consultation strategy - drafting Inception Report

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Inception Report submitted

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Desk and field phase - missions in the countries/region: data collection, analysis and preparation of the desk report/ mapping of regional organisations and their scope;
- Synthesis phase – assessment, recommendations – drafting Final Report and Executive Summary

8.7 VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Enhancing the regional dimension of the pre-accession assistance by the improved visibility of IPA Multi-country projects
EU contribution:	EUR 0.357 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Specific Contract under Framework Contract with JCP Srl
Contract reference:	CN 2014/350-489
Duration of activities:	01/12/2014 – 31/05/2017
Contact:	Agnieszka Iwanowska-Biel, agnieszka.iwanowska-biel@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The global objective is to increase the visibility of the IPA MB Programme as part of overall IPA visibility and communication campaigns run by the Information and Communication unit of DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations for the visibility of EU pre-accession funds.

It focuses on producing success stories, identifying synergies between programmes and projects, drafting communication guidelines and providing training seminars on their use, and providing support and advice to staff on communication policy and events.

ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- Drafting and editing of success stories (16)
- Desk research and interviews for further success stories (10)
- Drafting Guidelines for multi-country project visibility

OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2016)

- 16 success stories submitted
- Draft Guidelines prepared

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Draft, edit and submit final success stories (10)
- Translation of stories with final approval (30)
- Finalisation of Guidelines
- Training sessions for beneficiaries and Task Managers on use of Guidelines

