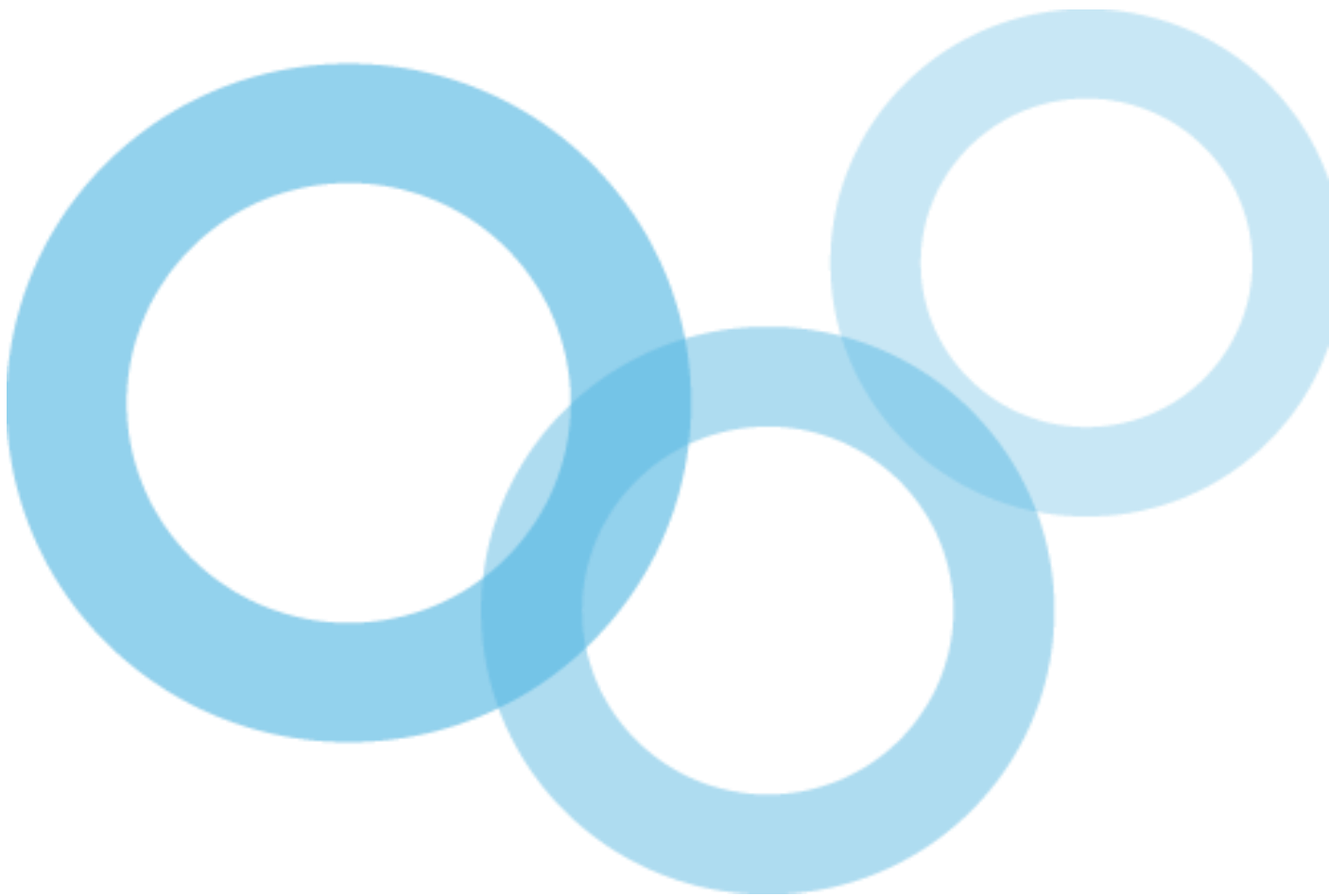




**IPA MULTI-COUNTRY PROGRAMMES
ACTIVITY REPORT
JANUARY – JUNE 2018**



D.5 WESTERN BALKANS REGIONAL COOPERATION AND PROGRAMMES

*Neighbourhood and
Enlargement
Negotiations*

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

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(FE)	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 Yugoslavia
IFC	International Finance Cooperation
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFICO	International Financial Institution Coordination Office
ILECU	International Law Enforcement Coordination Units
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPF	Infrastructure Projects Facility
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards

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

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

RECOM	Regional Coalition for the establishment of a Regional Commission for Establishing the Facts about War Crimes and Other Gross Violations of Human Rights Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia
REEP	Regional Energy Efficiency Programme
REG	Regional
REACH	Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals
RENA	Regional Environmental Network for Accession
ReSPA	Regional school of public administration
RHP	Regional Housing Programme
RIPA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAI	Supreme Audit Institution
SBA	Small Business Act
SBS	Small Business Support Programme
SC	Steering Committee
SEE	South East Europe
SEECCL	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

CHAPTER 1: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

1.1 SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (SIGMA)

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
Project title:	<i>Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) in the Western Balkans and Turkey</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 18 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:	www.sigmaweb.org
Contact:	Damien RUGGERI, Damien.RUGGERI@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

SIGMA supports public administration reform (PAR) in the Western Balkans and Turkey by assisting with strengthening of legal frameworks, administrative capacities and processes for sound implementation of national policies and the EU *acquis*. Areas of intervention are the core areas of PAR: strategic framework of PAR, policy development and co-ordination, civil service and human resource management, accountability, service delivery, public financial management (PFM).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Six high-level seminars to discuss the findings of SIGMA 2017 assessment monitoring reports against the Principles of Public Administration and the way forward were organised in the six Western Balkan countries. A presentation on the same topic was delivered during an externally-organised conference in Turkey.
- Two ministerial-level seminars on reform packages and on managerial accountability were organised in Kosovo* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Eleven concept papers, analyses and studies were prepared in the areas of: medium-term work programming, optimisation of public sector employment, civil service, administrative law and procedures, administrative judiciary, organisation of administration, public procurement, and AFCOS (Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia).

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo's declaration of independence.

- Six guidelines, templates or manuals were prepared to facilitate the work on: strategy planning, development and monitoring; preparation of reports on monitoring of PFM reforms; registries of state administration bodies; central purchasing; internal control quality reviews (Albania, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia).
- Fifty-five advisory and written commentaries were delivered on: PAR and PFM strategies and action plans; Sector Budget Support indicators; indicator passports; medium-term strategy reviews implementation and annual reports; strategic planning; regulatory improvement; external and internal audit; civil service law and practice; public internal financial control policies, laws and practice; service delivery; adoption of ESA2010, fiscal forecasting and reporting; organisation of public administration and public procurement systems.
- Fifty-one workshops or seminars were organised or supported on: the improvement of strategic planning, government work monitoring and policy evaluation; improvement of the medium-term budgetary framework (MTBF) planning; improving internal control and accountability; improving the organisation of the centre of government; improving civil service law and practice; improving service delivery; increasing the efficiency of the administrative judiciary; improving policy making and regulatory impact analysis (RIA); strengthening public procurement systems and supreme audit institutions (SAI).
- SIGMA Commentary on the Code of Administrative Procedures of Albania was published in Albanian and English and two public events were organised.
- SIGMA Paper No. 55 *Analysis of the Professionalisation of the Senior Civil Service and the Way Forward for the Western Balkans* was published, translated and disseminated during five bilateral workshops (in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia) and presented at the Regional Conference on Senior Civil Service and Managerial Accountability, which was held at ReSPA in Montenegro in May.
- SIGMA Paper on Managerial Accountability was drafted and presented at the regional conference at ReSPA in Montenegro in May.
- SIGMA contributed to the public procurement chapter of the *SME Policy Index – Western Balkan and Turkey 2019 – Assessing the Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe*.
- The Eighth IPA Regional Conference on Public Procurement took place in Montenegro in June.
- Support was provided to three PAR Special Groups (Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia) and one mid-term discussion on the implementation of conclusions of the PAR Special Group (Montenegro).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2018)

- Established monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems for PAR and PFM; new regulatory framework in sector strategic planning (Kosovo, Serbia).

- Increased quality of MTBF inputs and Action Plan for PAR Strategy; RIA formally introduced in policy making; commentary on the Code of Administrative Procedures delivered; SAI Strategic Development Plan for 2018-2020 developed (Albania).
- New PAR strategic framework sent for adoption; a strategic choices paper prepared for SAI BiH management; improved quality of the Budget Framework Paper (Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- PAR Action Plan sent to the Government and annual PAR report produced; Action Plan for Rationalisation of Agencies adopted; internal control quality reviews implemented (Kosovo).
- Initialised process of creation of top management service; first draft of public internal financial control (PIFC) Policy Paper delivered to EC (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).
- Indicator passports of the PFM Reform Programme adopted; optimisation plan of public sector employment and report on the implementation of the PFM Reform Programme adopted by the Government; first draft of the Law on State Administration prepared (Montenegro).
- Improved understanding of managerial accountability (Serbia).
- Capacity building of the Court of Accounts and Ombudsman institution (Turkey).
- Initiated work on the registry of state administration bodies (Serbia) and the registry developed and finalised (Kosovo).
- Increased awareness on further profesionalisation of senior civil service and managerial accountability among the countries in the region.
- Better understanding about the implementation and practical application of the 2014 EU public procurement legal framework among the countries in the region.
- SIGMA's PAR Information System (PAR.IS) enables the use of different indicator frameworks in parallel and complies with the EU General Data Protection Regulation.
- Updated Principles of Public Administration and Methodological Framework translated into all languages.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Under the new Action Plans (2018-2019) SIGMA will continue to provide country-specific assistance to strengthen the functioning of the public administration in all the beneficiaries. Publication of several studies and papers (in the areas of strategic planning, public financial management and public procurement) is planned for the second half of 2018.

1.2 PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Strengthening Accountability and the Fiduciary Environment (SAFE TF)

Programme reference: Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2015/031-609

Project title:	<i>Strengthening Accountability and the Fiduciary Environment (SAFE), EU Single-Donor Trust Fund</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 3 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Administration Agreement with the World Bank
Contract reference:	IPA 2015/031-609
Duration of activities:	21/04/2016 to 30/06/2020
Links:	www.worldbank.org/
Contact :	Javier Casasnovas, Javier.Casasnovas-Bernad@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

Albania - PEFA 2016/17 (completed): A dissemination workshop and an additional event to assist the Government with update of the PFM strategy were conducted.

Kosovo - Strengthening Office of the Auditor General capacities in carrying out value for money audits of procurement, compliance audit and procurement post reviews: Terms of Reference were finalised, qualified international experts were identified and were prepared.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Enhancing the Implementation of Public Procurement (inception stage): Upgrading of the system with new e-procurement tools and functionalities; Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) certification and training of officials from the Public Procurement Bureau.

Turkey - Deepening the Implementation of Public Sector Internal Audit Reforms (ongoing): Interviews with heads of selected public administrations were conducted; a revised analytical study on implementation of Public Sector Internal Audit reforms was finalised.

Regional - Internal Audit Training of Trainers Program (ongoing): A workshop on updates to international standard frameworks and a workshop including practical case studies on the simulated internal audit scenarios were conducted. Country teams presented information on their in-country replication activities of the programme.

Regional - Strengthening Financial Management Functions of Line Ministries (ongoing): The CEF visited beneficiaries to launch the project; a workshop on Managing Health Care Costs and Financing and a training on budget submissions of line ministries were organised.

Regional - Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny in Western Balkans Countries (completed): Network of Parliamentary Committees (NPC) legislative scrutiny Performance Framework finalised with input from the NPC Board. Incorporated endorsed NPC Performance Framework into the final NPC Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny knowledge product.

Albania - Public Financial Management Technical Assistance: Inception stage

Kosovo Strengthening Cash Planning and Execution: Inception stage

Montenegro PEFA 2019: Inception stage

Serbia - Supporting implementation of Public Investment Management reforms: Inception stage

Turkey - Enhancing the Impact of the Turkish Court of Accounts on Good Public Governance: Inception stage

Regional - Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny of Internal Audits in Western Balkans Countries: Inception stage

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

Albania - PEFA 2016/17: Input to PFM reform strategy and action plans in priority areas based on PEFA findings. PEFA assessment report was published in English and Albanian.

Turkey - Deepening the Implementation of Public Sector Internal Audit Reforms: Increased awareness of strengths and weaknesses of the Turkey's Internal Audit System and of good international practices. The Internal Audit Coordination Board (IACB) intends to revise their strategy paper taking into consideration the survey results.

Regional - Internal Audit Training of Trainers Program: The Internal Audit Training of Trainers Regional Community of Practice was established. Enhanced knowledge and capacity of public sector auditors to deliver high-quality internal audit training.

Regional - Strengthening Financial Management Functions of Line Ministries: Line ministries web portal established. PFM knowledge and experience exchange enhanced among officials working at ministries of finance and line ministries in South East Europe.

Regional - Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny in Western Balkans Countries: Consensus reached on the principles to be included in a NPC Performance Framework. The primary challenges for effective financial oversight in NPC jurisdictions were identified.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Kosovo - Strengthening Office of the Auditor General capacities: The National Audit Office will launch implementation of project activities: Value for Money on Procurement and Review & analyses of key documents and for Compliance Audit.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Enhancing the Implementation of Public Procurement: Development of performance indicators and governance red flags in e-procurement; development of a strategy for implementation of low value procurement such as e-marketplace and e-catalogue; possible upgrade of the e-procurement system based on findings of harmonisation of e-procurement with e-archiving and e-appeals.

Turkey - Deepening the Implementation of Public Sector Internal Audit Reforms: A knowledge sharing workshop for internal auditors will be organised and will include a discussion on the survey results and a strategy.

Regional - Internal Audit Training of Trainers Program: Development and delivery of post event survey and collecting input for development of a regional Good Practice Note.

Regional - Strengthening Financial Management Functions of Line Ministries: Country visits to all IPA countries. Voices from the region (video collection of participants' impressions): video material to be edited and finalized.

1.3 REGIONAL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (RESPA)

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA II 2015/031-609
Project title:	<i>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</i>
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 – 10/12/2018
Links:	http://www.respaweb.eu
Contact :	Inma Perez-Rocha, perez-rocha.maria-inmaculada@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The main aim is to support ReSPA with improving regional cooperation among the Western Balkan public administrations according to the pillars of 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 (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

During the reporting period, ReSPA organised 32 activities (with 655 participants) funded by the EC grant. A summary of some of mentioned activities carried out is described below:

- ReSPA and OECD/SIGMA Regional Conference on Managerial Accountability and Professionalisation of Senior Civil Service for Better Performance and Accountability;
- ReSPA Panel at UN Public Service Forum on “Transforming Governance to Realise the Sustainable Development”;
- ReSPA Panel at the 26th NISPAcee Annual Conference;
- Regional Conference on Case-Law of the European Court of Human Rights Applicable in Administrative Disputes;
- Regional Conference on Unlocking Benefits of Public Participation in decision-making;
- Ministerial Conference on Good Governance in the Western Balkans;
- Two regional meetings of ReSPA National Coordinators;
- Regional Conference on Measuring Gender Equality in Western Balkans, covering also issues related to Gender Equality in Public Administration;
- Regional Working Groups Meetings on various thematic areas;
- Training on Legal Alignment – Negotiation Chapters 11 (Agriculture and Rural Development) and 12 (Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary);
- Development of Regional Comparative Studies, Methodologies and Guidelines;

- Various activities for supporting PAR in ReSPA Members through In-country support mechanisms

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Published Methodological Guide for Costing of Government Strategies;
- Published Regional Comparative Study on Better Regulation;
- In-country support for implementation PAR priorities in the ReSPA Members:
 - Support to preparation of a Law on Public Internal Financial Control in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
 - Support to a preparation of a Law on State administration in Montenegro;
 - Support to preparation of a Plan for Optimisation of Public Administration in Montenegro;
 - Support with harmonisation of *SPECIAL PROCEDURES WITH THE NEW GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE LAW IN* the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- Adoption of policy recommendations at the Ministerial conference on Good Governance in the Western Balkans regarding the involvement of the Ministries of Finance in the strategic planning process for better financial sustainability of policies.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Finalisation of a ReSPA Strategy for 2019-2024 (to be adopted by the Governing Board at the Ministerial level in November 2018);
- Finalisation of a comparative regional study on public service delivery;
- ReSPA Governing Board on Ministerial level meeting (12 November, Brussels)
- ReSPA Annual Conference (13-14 November, Brussels);
- A regional conference on gender equality in public administration (September, Tirana);
- A regional conference on programming of IPA II and beyond (18-19 October, Brussels);
- An EU budget support conference (20-21 September, Belgrade);
- A PAR network meeting in October in Sarajevo (BiH);
- A Seasonal School devoted to EU Accession Negotiation Chapter 23 and 24 (1-6 July at ReSPA);
- A baseline analysis on performance appraisal in the Western Balkans (to be finalised in September);
- A baseline analysis with recommendations for increasing transparency in public procurement, to be finalised in October.

1.4 STATISTICAL COOPERATION

Support for Improvement in Statistics

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, <i>IPA 2014/032-064</i>
Project title:	<i>Statistical cooperation for the Western Balkans and Turkey</i>
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 m Grant to Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT), EUR 0.54 m Grant to State Statistical Office (SSO) of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, EUR 0.64 m Grant to Statistical Office of Serbia, EUR 0.75 m Grant to Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), EUR 0.56 m
Duration of activities:	Service contract 01/11/2015 – 31/12/2017 (extended) 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 Hillen Francke, Hillen.Francke@ec.europa.eu

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

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The final deliverables from the IPA 2014 service contract were being collected and analysed.

Regular activities were financed from the service contract under IPA 2015 such as participation in working group meetings, expert missions to the partner countries, study visits to EU MS, training events. The final version of the first narrative and the financial reports were submitted in July 2018.

Twenty-three traineeships were financed from IPA 2015 (service contract and grants) from January to June 2018.

The final reports for all four IPA 2014 grants were submitted to Eurostat in October - November 2017 and approved by Eurostat.

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

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

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

Activity reports from participants representing the 3 statistical systems supported under the service contract (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo) who participated in working group meetings at Eurostat, in pilot project workshops, training courses and study visits organised by the contractor. The participants from the countries (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.

Documentation of statistical sources and methods continued.

Data delivery compatible with common standards has continued from partner countries to Eurostat. A novelty under IPA 2015 is that peer reviews of the statistical systems in the enlargement countries are financed from IPA. Peer reviews were conducted in Kosovo, Serbia and Albania.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The final version of the final report and the financial report of IPA 2014 service contract are expected. The remaining final payments (or recoveries) for the IPA 2014 grants will be made. Regular activities are financed from the IPA 2015 service contract and grants.

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 31 different pilot projects.

A total of 27 statisticians from partner countries are planned to participate in traineeships at Eurostat and in statistical offices in selected EU Member States from September to December 2018. A peer review of the statistical system in Montenegro is planned for October/November 2018.

During the 4th quarter of 2018, Eurostat will sign grant agreements with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey under the next statistical cooperation programme, IPA 2017 MBP. A grant agreement with IMF as well as a service contract, also under IPA 2017 MBP, are planned to be signed before the end of 2018.

1.5 SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Programme reference:	IPA Multi-country programme 2016/037-900
Project title:	<i>Regional cooperation and networking in the field of agriculture, rural and economic development of cross-border areas</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 500,000.00
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement with Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group
Contract reference:	CN 2017/390-538
Duration of activities:	14/12/2017 – 15/12/2018
Links:	www.seerural.org
Contact :	Jlenia Destito, jlenia.destito@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project is implemented on behalf of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG RRD) in South-East Europe. The principal aim of the action is to foster regional cooperation among institutions and stakeholders in the field of agricultural and rural development along with facilitation of the process of a balanced territorial development of the Western Balkan countries on the path towards EU integration.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- 14 Stakeholder meetings (SHG) meetings were organized (2 meetings per cross-border region). More than 500 stakeholders from public and private sector, as well as civil society participated during the SHG meetings;
- The first call for proposal was launched in the cross-border regions “Drina-Sava”, “Drina-Tara”, “Prespa” and “Sharra” between January and February 2015. In March

2018 the second call was launched in the cross-border regions “Prokletije-Bjeshket e Nemuna”, “Pchinja-Krajishte” and “Krsh”.

- In April and May 2018 capacity building workshops were organized in all cross-border regions. The focus of the capacity building events was on value chains and clustering (agriculture and tourism) to improve local competitiveness and exposure to the regional markets, project cycle management, project application and business plan preparation, IPARD funding and usage of resources as well as CBC programmes.
- SWG RDD assisted local stakeholders in the preparation of four project proposals for different calls (EU programs, UN programs and other grants).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- More than 300 stakeholders and staff improved their skills on agro-food and tourism value chains for local development actions and preparation of project proposals under various grant schemes in 7 cross-border regions;
- At least 4 clusters and short value chains are identified and the focus on finding and pursuing labour market opportunities for local economic development and investments has been built;
- Enhanced opportunities for socio-economic development in rural areas through continuous dialogue among the stakeholders and provision of technical support for the development of quality project proposals.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Implementation of the approved People-2-People events in the course of June – October 2018;
- Organization of 7 cross-border study tours inter-regionally on best practices and networking among the set value chains;
- Development of a short promo video on the actions implemented locally as a visibility indicator;
- Organization of 7 Stakeholder meetings in all regions to follow up on the regional strategy measures and future actions;
- Organization of policy dialogue platforms to define policy measures in line with EU acquis and IPA instruments.

1.6 SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL INVESTMENT POLICY AND PROMOTION IN THE W.B.

Programme reference:	2016 / 037-900 Multi-country Action Programme for 2016
Project title:	<i>Administration Agreement between the European Commission and the International Finance Corporation concerning the Western Balkans Regional Investment Policy and Promotion</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 2.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans

Type of contract:	Single Trust Fund with the World Bank
Contract reference:	CN-2016/379-787
Duration of activities:	18/04/2017 – 18/04/2020
Links:	
Contact :	Gabriel Blanc, gabriel.blanc@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The overall objective is to, as part of the overall Western Balkans Regional Investment Policy and Promotion (WBIPP Program) and the Regional Economic Area (REA), contribute to greater convergence of regional investment policies in the Western Balkans and greater alignment with the relevant EU and international standards. This will improve the attractiveness of the region for foreign investors (extra- and intra-regional) and ultimately lead to increased investment.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY– JUNE 2018)

During the current reporting period, the project's main focus was on laying the foundations for further downstream policy reform work through the establishment of a regional framework for investment policy reforms. Representing the main outcome of the project's work during the current supervision period, the Regional Investment Reform Agenda (RIRA) was adopted by the WB6 at the SEEIC Ministerial meeting in May 2018. The document was further recognized by the PMs of the region at the Western Balkans Summit in London, which is part of the Berlin process supported by the EC. RIRA provides a solid foundation and platform for the development and implementation of concrete economy level investment policy reform action plans that will be supported by the project in the upcoming reporting periods. The RIRA was accompanied by a set of policy and technical notes further detailing the recommended reform areas for the region.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY– JUNE 2018)

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

- The project implemented an investor perception study with more than 65 investors throughout the region to identify regional investment policy barriers and prioritize potential reform proposals. A report summarizing the main findings from this survey was completed to inform the formulation of the Regional Investment Reform Agenda (RIRA), the project's main output and outcome during this reporting period (see below).
- The project conducted a series of in-depth consultations with the governments of the WB6 to facilitate the development and establishment of RIRA. Consultations took place on technical as well as Ministerial level, with the economies of the WB6 on an individual basis as well as collectively to arrive at a reform agenda that is supported and shared by all participating economies.

- The project produced a series of in-depth technical notes on various policy aspects relevant for the formulation of the proposed reform agenda to support the consultations process. Topics included investment entry and establishment, investment protection and retention, investment incentives and investment promotion.
- The project led the conceptualization and formulation of the Regional Investment Reform Agenda (RIRA). The document lays out the key policy areas for regional investment reform and specifies a number of specific reform proposals that will be implemented by the WB6 economies going forward. The document was adopted at the SEEIC Ministerial meeting in Tivat in May 2018 and further recognized by the PMs of the region in the London Summit declaration from July 2018 that is part of the Berlin process. The project will support the implementation of economy level reforms under component 2.
- The project completed an options report for the establishment of a modular operational platform for joint investment promotion in the WB6. The proposed options range from a very light-touch cooperation in the form of joint trainings or a common web platform for example, to more comprehensive cooperation in terms of joint outreach activities or supply chain development initiatives at the other end of the spectrum. The report was delivered and discussed with the six IPAs of the region at a joint workshop and training event for IPA representatives at the Germany Trade and Investment Agency in Berlin.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Activities in the next reporting period will be geared towards the support of the economies in creating economy level Investment Reform Action Plans (IRAP) and in enhancing the regions investment attractiveness through tailored investment promotion and outreach activities. This will entail:

- Develop a draft monitoring and reporting framework to track progress with RIRA implementation on regional level (December 2018).
- Initiate an assessment of the WB6 current legal base for investment to help inform the formulation of economy level investment policy reform action plans (continues through next reporting period).
- Develop initial drafts of economy level investment policy reform action plans to translate the reform objectives specified in RIRA into economy level reform agendas for the WB6 (December 2018).
- Develop a concept for the establishment of a Joint Investment Promotion Initiative (JIPI) among the IPAs of the region (December 2018).
- Initiate targeted investment outreach activities in cooperation with the WB6 IPAs, including identification of target sectors, agreement on concept, scope and scale of the proposed outreach activities, as well as identification of training needs (December 2018).

CHAPTER 2: RULE OF LAW AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

2.1 FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION

Programme reference:	IPA 2017/ 390-087
Project title:	<i>GRASP: Governance Risks Assessment Project in Western Balkans: Diagnosis and Measuring Captured Societies Phenomena</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 299.999,70
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans (Albania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia)
Type of contract:	Grant agreement with Partnerstvo za drustveni razvoj udruge (PSD)
Contract reference:	IPA 2017/ 390-087
Duration of activities:	08/12/2017 – 08/12/2018
Links:	www.psd.hr
Contact :	Jutta Pomoell-Segurola, Jutta.POMOELL-SEGUROLA@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to assure effectiveness and sustainability of the governance reforms in EU accession countries through establishment of a comprehensive instrument for assessing, monitoring and process tracing of the state/social capture phenomena.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The second activity, Country Correspondents and Experts Preparatory Meeting, was conducted during January 16-19, 2018 in Sarajevo. Final agreements on overall data collection process, usage of the IT infrastructure, implementation of the research methodology and standards in reporting was adopted and agreed with experts. All key aspects of coordination, communication, and management of activities were delineated.

Information packages needed for the assessment (standardized requests for information and data sets) were designed by PSD experts. Letters to accompany requests for information to relevant authorities was signed both by PSD and EC. Both, information packages and accompanying letters were distributed to respective organizations in charge of data collection in each country during March 2018. Translation to local languages was ensured, as well.

The country correspondents (respective country organizations) engaged in data collection during April and May. Country correspondents used access to information requests to conduct data collection. While free access to information (data and evidence collection) was being processed, country correspondents engage in collecting publicly available information from primary sources, as well as relevant information from secondary sources.

During May – June PSD engaged in sub-contracting an IT company to adjust and fine tune IT tool for this project. All data collected by the country correspondents are currently being uploaded into this IT tool by the country correspondents.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Final agreement on overall data collection process, usage of the IT infrastructure, implementation of the research methodology and standards in reporting adopted and agreed with experts.

Information packages and accompanying letters for data collection distributed to country correspondents.

Data collection finalized.

IT tool for uploading collected data adjusted and ready for upload.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Writing the country specific reports – Based on the findings from data collected, country experts will write up to a 60 page country specific reports on the findings (approximately 5 pages per given area of assessment).

Writing the comprehensive state capture risk assessment report in the EU Accession Countries – Steering group members will engage in writing the comprehensive state/social capture risk assessment report (up to 20 pages).

Finalizing the report and final recommendations – PSD will provide final country reports and comprehensive report for comments to DG Near. DG Near and Steering Group will jointly decide on set of recommendations.

Presentation of the report to the EC, other relevant EU bodies and respective national stakeholders – Presentation of findings to EC representatives will be organized together with the DG Near based on the needs for the next country reports for covered countries.

Evaluation and Follow up – Final evaluation of the project will be conducted by key representatives from all project implementers during the 2 day meeting in Belgrade.

2.2 ROMA INTEGRATION

Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme IPA 2016/037-900
Project title:	<i>ROMACTED – Promoting good governance and Roma Empowerment at local level</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 3 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement with the Council of Europe
Contract reference:	CN 2017/384-651

Duration of activities:	01/05/2017 – 30/04/2020
Contact:	Kristina Vujic, kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

The project's start date was 1 May 2017 and the inception period concluded on 31 October 2017.

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

- Steering Board Meeting (between DG NEAR and the Council of Europe), 25 January 2018;
- Launching Meeting and National Workshop, Tirana, Albania, 21-22 February 2018;
- Launching Meeting and National, Skopje, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", 19-20 March 2018;
- Launching Meeting and National Workshop, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 20-21 March 2018;
- Working Meeting with Turkish Partners, Ankara, 19 May 2018;
- Launching Meeting and National Workshop, Belgrade, Serbia, 29-30 May 2018;
- Launching Meeting, Pristina, Kosovo*, 31 May 2018;
- Regional Coordination Meeting of National Teams, Tirana, Albania, 11 June 2018;
- ROMACTED Steering Committee Meeting, Tirana, Albania, 12 June 2018;
- Submission of the first (Annual) Interim Report;
- A total of 215 local interventions/visits to the participating municipalities in the beneficiaries, comprising Community Action Group meetings (102), Municipal Institutional Working Group Meetings (37) and negotiation meetings with the local authorities.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JULY 2018)

The main outputs of this period were the mobilisation of Roma citizens from the participating municipalities into Community Action Groups, the building of commitment in the local authorities through the signatures of the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), the appointment of municipal contact points and the establishment of Institutional Working Groups as follows:

- National support organisations, focal points and teams of facilitators in each beneficiary/countries have started the implementation at local level of the ROMACTED methodology;
- Coordination and synergies with the main stakeholders and partners at local, central and regional levels were developed, as well as complementarity with various existing programmes in the field of Roma inclusion;
- 50 municipal contact points for ROMACTED were appointed by mayors;
- 48 MoU were signed with municipalities and, in most of the beneficiaries, also with the ministry responsible for the implementation of the respective Roma integration strategy;
- Over 1 100 Roma citizens have been directly involved in CAG meetings or other local meetings;
- The process of identification of priorities has been initiated in a large number of participating communities;
- Assessment of the needs for additional facilitation and expertise at local level has been developed.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

For the period July to December 2018:

- Launching Meeting and National Workshop, Podgorica, Montenegro, 17-18 July 2018;
- Launching Meeting and National Workshop in Turkey, Istanbul/Ankara (tbc), September/October/November;
- Call for Experts and additional Facilitators, August/September;
- CAG Meetings and training sessions in the participating municipalities together with continuous community mobilisation throughout the semester;
- Meetings of the municipal Institutional Working Groups/Task Forces in participating localities throughout the semester;
- Initiation of capacity-building and provision of technical advice/support to local authority and municipal staff throughout the semester;
- Publication of the ROMACTED Handbook, November/December;
- Meetings of national support teams;
- Coordination meetings with national stakeholders and projects in relevant related fields.
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Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme, IPA 2014/ 031-603
Project title:	<i>Roma Integration 2020</i>
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:	www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/home

PURPOSE

The Roma Integration 2020 (RI2020) 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, the RI2020 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 (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

The RI2020 supported preparation of annual progress reports on the implementation of Roma integration Action Plans of participating economies. Additionally, RI2020 supported preparation of new Action Plans of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

The RI2020 organized three Public Dialogue Forums in Tirana, Podgorica and Belgrade. These forums provided for presentations of the 2017 monitoring reports of the governments, budget proposals and prioritization of measures for 2019, as well as consultation on relevant mainstream socio-economic policies to be used for advancing Roma integration.

The RI2020 Action Team organized a Regional Workshop on *Addressing Discrimination and Anti-Gypsyism in the Enlargement Region* in Berlin, Germany. The conference brought together more than 80 participants, including National Roma Contact Points (NRCs) from the Western Balkans and Turkey together with relevant persons from Germany, other European Union Member States and international organizations who are included in fight against anti-Gypsyism. The conference served as a platform for representatives of participating economies to better understand the phenomenon of anti-Gypsyism, learn about promising German and EU practices in combating anti-Gypsyism, and think how to improve their anti-discrimination and anti-Gypsyism practices in the future.

The Regional Conference on *Holistic Approach to Housing for Roma in the Enlargement Region* was organized in Bar, Montenegro. The conference brought together more than 60 participants, including NRCs and other government representatives dealing with housing, together with representatives of NGOs and international organizations working on the issue. The conference served as an opportunity to share experiences and promising practices in resolving housing situation of Roma in the enlargement region, as well as to promote a holistic approach to housing as the best way to ensure sustainability of implemented solutions.

The RI2020 Action Team formed a Working Group on Roma Responsible Budgeting composed of NRCs and representatives of Ministries of Finance from the enlargement region. The RI2020 organized two meetings of the Working Group with the aim to analyse the current budgeting practices and devise solutions which will promote Roma responsible budgeting.

The RI2020 also strengthened the cooperation between the NRCs of the enlargement region and those from the EU Member States, by enabling participation to the *EU Roma Week 2018* in Brussels and the Conference *Roma Inclusion - Where we stand and where are we heading to* organized by the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

- Two policy recommendation papers based on the discussions of the Public Dialogue Forums in Tirana and Podgorica on the implementation of the Roma integration Action Plans in 2017, the Roma Seminar operational conclusions as well as the measures to be prioritized and budgeted for 2019.
- Two reports from the Regional Workshop Addressing Discrimination and Anti-Gypsyism in the Enlargement Region and the Regional Conference Holistic Approach to Housing for Roma in the Enlargement Region.
- Coordinated and analysed the 2017 monitoring reports of the governments;
- Analysed the budgeting practices of the enlargement region;
- Distributed the second issue of the Roma Integration 2020 newsletter.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Organize the 3rd Task Force Meeting.
- Organize a regional conference on the topic of employment for Roma.
- Organize a High Level Event in Skopje on Roma and EU Enlargement.
- Organize Public Dialogue Forums in Sarajevo, Pristina, Skopje and Ankara.
- Publish a comparative overview of housing legislation in the enlargement region.
- Publish regional guidelines on Roma responsible budgeting as the final output of the Working Group on Roma Responsible Budgeting.
- Publish a monograph on the achievements and challenges of the RI2020 on Roma Integration in the enlargement region.
- Participate in the EU Roma Platform and organize the NRCs participation in the Platform.

Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme, IPA 2016/ 037-900
Project title:	<i>Regional Roma Survey</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 0.75 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement with UNDP
Contract reference:	CN 2017/383-793
Duration of activities:	01/11/2016 – 31/05/2018
Links:	www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home.html
Contact :	Kristina Vujic, kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

Regional Roma Survey aims to narrow the gap in multi-dimensional poverty and access to socio-economic rights between marginalized Roma and non-Roma population in Western Balkans and Turkey. The project will produce a new generation of comprehensive and regionally comparable quantitative data about income and living conditions, education, health, employment, migration, access to personal documentation and values and norms. Quantitative data will be supplemented by qualitative studies on specific topics: position of Roma being returned to Western Balkans from EU; non-visible Roma with no personal documentation; access to work and experience with discrimination; exposure to environmental and health risks; violence against women and factors resulting in early marriages. Data will be used for evidence based policy making, programming and progress assessment.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

- Quantitative survey “Socio-economic position of marginalised Roma in Western Balkans” datasets were finalised and indicators constructed for dissemination and public use. Six country briefs/factsheets with key indicators prepared and disseminated.
- Qualitative study (fieldwork) on Roma women experiencing gender based violence and factors influencing early marriages/cohabitation was conducted, and report analysing this qualitative and quantitative data finalised.
- Report analysing micronarratives about Roma access to employment and experience with discrimination at labour market in the Western Balkans finalised; Report on Roma exposure to environmental and health risks in Western Balkans was finalised.
- Launch of initial Roma Regional Survey results in the European Parliament and dissemination of visual products.
- Dissemination workshops presenting survey results held in six Western Balkan countries.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

- Key indicators were constructed using survey data on the socio-economic position of Roma and their non-Roma neighbours. This encompassed a range of data across the Western Balkans and disaggregated by sex. This was summarised into six factsheets/briefs for each country. Thus, providing new and up-to-date data for policy making, programming and evaluation
- In addition, quantitative study (survey) data on the socio-economic position of Roma and their non-Roma neighbours and indicators (disaggregated by sex), returnees micronarratives report had been released and disseminated for all stakeholders.
- The first Virtual Reality video of “I am Fatmira’ was released at the event in the European Parliament in March providing stakeholders with a new perspective on the life of a Roma woman in Albania.

- Reports from qualitative studies (on Roma personal documentation, gender based violence/early marriages, micronarratives on employment and environmental risks) finalised and in preparation for dissemination.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

All activities envisaged under the project/contract have been completed.

Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme, IPA 2016/ 037-900
Project title:	<i>Supporting the Effective Reintegration of Roma Returnees in the Western Balkans</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 1.25 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement with the World Bank
Contract reference:	CN 2017/384-989
Duration of activities:	01/04/2017 - 01/07/2019
Contact:	Kristina Vujic, kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The objective of the project is to identify relevant policy responses and implementation pathways for the effective reintegration of returnees in the Western Balkans, based on the evidence of reintegration experiences. A particular focus on Roma returnees is of importance as it is clear that a substantial number of Roma are among the migrants who will be affected by the changed asylum regime towards WB countries and by the return policy of some EU countries.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

- High -quality local and international research teams was selected and contracted in each of the six non-EU Western Balkan countries as well as in four EU countries (Austria, Belgium, France and Germany).
- A project initiation workshop was convened in Vienna in January 2018, bringing together the European Commission, World Bank Country Management; and international EU based academics and organizations working on the reintegration of returnees in the Western Balkans.
- Meetings, to introduce the project, were held with governmental stakeholders from relevant ministries, departments and local municipalities, as well as international development partners and NGOs working on the reintegration of returnees i.e. Roma inclusion agenda in all six Western Balkan countries (January-February 2018)
- Two inception workshops were conducted in each of the six Western Balkans countries with: i) governmental stakeholders and ii) , international development partners, CBOs and NGOs (January-February 2018)
- Studies were conducted in each of the six Western Balkans countries: i) qualitative research on vulnerabilities of (Roma) returnees; ii) an institutional framework services

for returnees stocktaking exercise; iii) a stakeholder mapping exercise and iv) legal framework snapshot studies. A synthesis report was developed for each of the six countries (February-May 2018)

- Four free-standing research studies on the return framework and implementation reality was completed in Austria, Belgium, Germany and France. An overall synthesis report was also drafted (February-April 2018)
- Preliminary research findings were shared during Roma week at the European Parliament in April 2018
- Preliminary research findings were shared with and discussed with the European Commission DG NEAR as well as EC delegation representatives in June 2018
- Validation workshops to present and discuss research findings and prepare for TA phase were undertaken with governmental stakeholders in the six Western Balkans countries, as well as validation workshops with international development partners and NGOs were delivered (May-June 2018)

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

- For Western Balkans countries: one synthesis report per country, 6 vulnerability mapping reports, 6 institutional framework and services mapping reports, 6 stakeholder mapping reports
- At the EU level one synthesis report and four country reports assessing the return and reintegration framework and implementation reality in Austria, Belgium, France and Germany
- Presentations on research findings for European Commission and Parliament, national Governments, bilaterals and international development community

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Finalization and delivery of research reports to the European Commission in October 2018
- Substantive preparation of TA phase in the six Western Balkans countries (July-September 2018)
- Establishing TA delivery team in six Western Balkan countries (September 2018)
- Initiation of TA implementation (October to December 2018)

Programme reference:	IPA II Annual Multi-Country Action Programme 2017
Project title:	<i>Increased education opportunities for Roma students and Roma youth in Western Balkans and Turkey</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 3 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant agreement with Roma Education Fund (REF)
Contract reference:	CN 2018/396-125
Duration of activities:	10/04/2018 – 09/07/2021

Links:	https://www.romaeducationfund.org/news/ref/news-and-events/ref-and-eu-dg-near-partner-roma-education-western-balkans-and-turkey
Contact :	Kristina Vujic, kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (APRIL – JUNE 2018)

In the period April-June 2018 the preparatory project management activities took place as follows:

- Terms of References for the Project Team were drafted and Calls for Project Manager, Project Officer, Administrative Assistant and Finance Coordinator were published in April 2018. Internal meetings held to discuss the role of Country Facilitators and Country Coordinators in the field.
- Call for Short-Term Research Assistants for conducting the community needs assessments was drafted. Call for Database Developer was drafted and published.
- Call for the selection of implementing partner organizations was drafted and published with deadline to 30 June 2018.
- Participation at the regional conference, organised by European Union (EU) and Council of Europe (CoE) in frames of the ROMACTED program in Tirana. Meeting with authorities from the project's targeted countries (excluding Turkey) at the event on Secondary Scholarship and Mentoring Program on 12 June 2018 in Belgrade.

OUTPUTS (APRIL – JUNE 2018)

A Project Manager, Project Officers and Administrative Assistant were selected by the end of June 2018. The deadline for the Call for Financial Coordinator was extended up to 31 July 2018.

Twenty-three (23) civil society organisations submitted their applications for implementing partners on the early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education levels in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

The Project was presented to the representatives of the EU funded regional projects for Roma integration, Roma focal points as well as to the CSO representatives from the Western Balkan and Turkey at the regional conference in Tirana. Representatives of the ministries of education from Western Balkan were informed about the project intervention and activities that will be conducted in the field of education and employment in their countries at the event on Secondary Scholarship and Mentoring Program in Belgrade.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Process of recruitment of members of the project team and consultants will be completed. Inception and coordination meeting with the project team at REF Headquarters will be held in July 2018.
- Introductory, technical assistance and advocacy meetings will be organised in all project's countries in the period August – October 2018.
- Community needs assessment and gender mainstreaming assessment will be conducted. A database will be created for each level of education.
- Implementing partners that will facilitate implementation of project activities related the early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education levels in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey will be selected in August 2018 and contracted by the end of September 2018.
- Project visibility events will be conducted jointly with selected partner organizations and local national institutions in November 2018.
- Training material will be developed on parenting program and regional and country trainings on parenting skills and IDELA will take place.

2.3 REGIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programmes: IPA 2017/039-402 , IPA 2014/031-603, IPA 2014/024-133, IPA 2014/024-134, IPA 2012/023-537
Project title:	<i>Regional Housing Programme (RHP)</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 194.8 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution and Delegation Agreements with Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) and UNHCR, grant contract with Igman Initiative
Contract reference:	CN 2017/394-290, CN 2017/394-876, CN 2017/394-875, CN 2015/369-230, CN2013/325-470, CN2013/325-468, CN 2013/314-991, CN 2012/297-405, CN 2012/307-562, CN 2012/305-516
Duration of activities:	14/12/2012 - 31/12/2021
Links:	www.regionalhousingprogramme.org
Contact :	DanielHurtado Dominguez, daniel.hurtado-dominguez@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Regional Housing Programme (RHP) addresses in a regional framework the housing needs of the most vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP) from the armed conflict in the 1990s in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. The European Union is the biggest donor to this multi-donor financed programme (over 80%), having committed EUR 194 million that should benefit an estimated 9 500 most vulnerable refugee or IDP families.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

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

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

RHP figures as at end June 2018 (cumulative):

- 9 000 people rehoused.
- 3,000 housing solutions handed over.
- Over 200 municipalities involved in the implementation, in all four Partner Countries.
- Over 100 Personnel involved in RHP implementation benefit from continuous on-the job training.
- 1 600 central and local government staff received formal training.
- Over 100 local companies engaged for provision of services, supplies and works.
- Intensive Cooperation between the four Partner Countries and improved neighbourly relations.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Over 1 500 additional housing solutions will be delivered during the semester. There will also be a strong focus on monitoring and reinforcing sustainability. As well as on visibility.

2.4 MIGRATION

Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
Project title:	<i>Regional support to Protection-sensitive migration management in the W. B. and Turkey (component 1)</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 5.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant agreement with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)
Contract reference:	CN 2015/369-697
Duration of activities:	01/01/2016 – 31/12/2018
Contact :	Lucia Santuccione, lucia.santuccione@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The main aim of the IPA II Project led by Frontex in partnership with EASO, IOM and UNHCR, is to support the target countries in developing a protection-sensitive response to mixed migration flows, by strengthening their systems for identification, registration, and referral,

as well as asylum procedures and return mechanisms, aligning them with EU policies. The project consists of five interventions.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The third Regional Steering Committee was organized on 24 April 2018 and hosted by the DG NEAR in Brussels. The meeting allowed to receive further feedback from the beneficiaries regarding the implementation of the Action, to pass jointly key messages, as well as to present the concept of Phase II of the Action.

Within the framework of Intervention 1, as foreseen in the initial action plan and during the reporting period, Frontex completed the rollout of the first national trainings in the area of detection of falsified documents. Moreover, in order to measure the impact, effectiveness and lessons learned of the trainings, as well as to ensure the smooth takeover of ownership of all capacity building activities implemented, an Evaluation and Transposition meeting on the abovementioned topic was organized in June. National trainings on trafficking in human beings were successfully conducted in Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The training sessions were based on a standardized multiplier concept and took place in the presence of EU experts as mentors. Observers from other beneficiary countries were also involved in those trainings.

Putting emphasis on enhancing the skills required for performing protection-sensitive migration management with full respect of fundamental rights, Frontex launched in May 2018 a *European Course for Fundamental Rights Trainers* with the introduction of an e-learning module. The online learning module concluded with an exam, allowing for the admission of eligible candidates to the in-person training sessions, to be continued in September 2018.

Under Intervention 1, EASO organised a regional workshop to ensure quality translations and national adaptation, where needed, of five EASO products translated in 2017 in all Western Balkan languages. At regional level, EASO in cooperation with IOM held a meeting on Country of Origin (COI) to facilitate synergies between beneficiaries in the Western Balkans in order to enhance the cooperation and strengthen the provision and use of COI information, including a session on the establishment of a regional practitioners' network.

At national level and with its own complementary funds, EASO also organised the rollout of the two EASO core modules on Inclusion and Interview Techniques in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In addition, an EASO core Training Module on Inclusion has been also conducted in Serbia (the EASO core Modules on Evidence Assessment and Interview Techniques are planned to be rolled out for September 2018) and in Kosovo** (which already took place in 2017).

Throughout the first half of 2018, under Intervention 2 Frontex conducted a series of working visits to further develop and conclude the Action Plans prepared throughout 2017,

*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, and is applicable throughout this document, also when referring to "Beneficiary Countries".

including planning of information sessions on different EU advance information systems, to take place in the second half of the year. Given the different stages of finalization of each sub-national action plan, additional ad-hoc meetings were needed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

Within the framework of Intervention 3, EASO organised with its complementary funds two on-the-job coaching sessions on reception and examination procedures in Serbia that were preceded by an expert mission to harmonise the procedural guide developed under a Twinning project* with the relevant EASO tools. At national level and with EASO's own complementary funds, EASO also facilitated the participation of Serbia in two meetings of EASO's network of reception authorities, that is normally attended by EU+ countries only, and for which an agreement of the network was obtained for the Serbian authorities to attend. It was followed up by a working visit of the Serbian authorities to the Netherlands on the reception of unaccompanied children (EASO's own funds). With regards to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, EASO participated to the OSCE organised roundtable on contingency planning on 16 May 2018, as this topic was addressed as in need of support by EASO in the roadmap.

In intervention 4, EASO organised on 21 June 2018, in the margins of the regional meeting on COI Information, a discussion on the possible establishment of regional practitioners' network, with a focus on COI. The role of MARRI was also raised in that regard. An agreement on common needs, including a database to share COI documents was reached.

Frontex continued with the implementation of Intervention 5 and during the reporting period four national trainings for Albania, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning return escorts were successfully held. In addition, one regional training for non-voluntary return monitors was organized. All capacity building activities in the area of non-voluntary return at the national and regional level aimed at developing an operational and transparent return system based on a unified European approach and procedures. Interoperability with EU practices and standards was in the focus of all abovementioned activities.

As an ad-hoc activity, launched upon a request by DG NEAR, the Project Partners undertook in May an analysis of the possible support to *"The Overview of the required additional financial resources for the implementation of the Emergency Measures Action Plan to Combat Illegal Migration"*, which was prepared by the Bosnian authorities in the context of the rapidly evolving situation along a new migration 'sub-route'. Having in mind the resources of the project and its original purpose of capacity building, a discussion was initiated among all Project Partners, the EU Delegation and the Bosnian authorities. The National Steering Committee meeting in Sarajevo was organized already in June, earlier than planned, and was used to liaise closely with beneficiaries and prepare a set of proposed ad-hoc activities feasible for implementation before the closure of Phase I.

* The project "Support to National Asylum System in the Republic of Serbia" implemented September 2015 - February 2018.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Project activities implemented in the reporting period contributed to the following outputs:

- Improved skills and resources delivered to assist government officers in the more efficient identification of irregular migrants and asylum seekers, including through the use of the Geneva Convention and its relation to the EU Qualification Directive. The identification of vulnerable groups and the use of COI information enhanced;
- The implementation of the training activities concerning the detection of falsified documents was finalised, the evaluation meeting was organized, and a transposition process was launched by Beneficiaries;
- Six National Action Plans and one Regional Action Plan in the area of registration of mixed migration flows discussed with Beneficiaries, including further implementation modalities;
- Capacity built of officials from Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on referral mechanisms, on reception, on fundamental rights and international protection, on examination procedure of asylum applications and on contingency planning in case of an increase of asylum seekers;
- Agreement on a Roadmap to set up an asylum system in line with EU standards in Serbia;
- Regional harmonisation and alignment with EU acquis through regional fora such as practitioners' network, MARRI, and a regional workshop on EASO tools and guides;
- The translations of the five EASO relevant products for WB authorities were improved to ensure national use and national adaptation where needed;
- Necessary knowledge gained and skills acquired to successfully operationalize joint non-voluntary return operations, the process of national training rollout evaluated.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

In the second half of 2018 Frontex will continue with the organization of national trainings on combating trafficking in human beings. The *European Course for Fundamental Rights Trainers* is expected to be finalised with participants certified in line with the Frontex methodology. Frontex will also organize a regional training on screening and nationality assumptions.

In relation to the registration of mixed migration flows, upon approval from the DG NEAR, Frontex plans to initiate the development of national Masterplans for the beneficiary countries that would define the necessary equipment for the successful implementation of the systems, estimate the necessary technical development and gradual implementation costs and recommend the best strategy for the technical implementation.

In the second half of 2018, EASO has foreseen to complete the national roll-out training sessions of the EASO Core Modules on Inclusion and Interview Techniques in all Western Balkan countries – and on evidence assessment in Serbia only. EASO will also address the question of access to asylum procedure and support first contact officials in guaranteeing effective access to international protection with the organisation of workshops and printing of relevant EASO training materials and other products.

As regards the two roadmaps on asylum with Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, EASO will organise a work visit on asylum procedure and will support the two countries on contingency planning and on registration and examination procedures through expert missions and organisation of workshops. Finally, technical support will be provided to MARRI in view of assessing the possibility of the establishment of a regional mechanism on training on asylum. As regards the possible intervention on Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of the current situation, EASO is planning few interventions in the second half of 2018 on reception, registration, and identification of persons with special needs and the final scope and modalities are currently under discussions with all relevant stakeholders.

The remaining meetings in the third round of the National Steering Committees will be combined with mid-term expert missions. These missions, with the participation of all Project Partners and relevant national authorities, will allow for taking stock of the current impact of the Regional Programme. Feedback concerning the activities planned for Phase II will be collected, with a view to meet the specific needs of the relevant Western Balkan authorities.

2.5 HORIZONTAL FACILITY

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

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

PURPOSE

The Horizontal Facility (HF) aims to support the beneficiary-tailored reform processes in the areas of rule of law, democracy and human rights with the aim of advancing compliance with European standards in the South-East Europe (SEE) region. It provides programmatic support to beneficiaries in addressing the recommendations of Council of Europe monitoring bodies in the areas of justice, fight against corruption, organised crime and economic crime, anti-discrimination and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, linked with relevant EU accession priorities.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

In the six month period, 349 activities were implemented within the technical co-operation component of the HF, bringing the beneficiaries in SEE region closer to achieving European standards in the areas of rule of law, democracy and human rights. The number of requests received under the Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism (ECM) was three times higher than in the previous reporting period, with nine requests submitted.

The implementation of two new Actions in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** to strengthen the protection of national minorities and to promote quality education in multi-ethnic societies started during the reporting period, as well as one new Action in “**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**” to support legal aid reforms.

Under theme I – Ensuring Justice, a total of 229 activities were implemented in the sectors of Human Rights (69 activities), Justice (35 activities), Prisons and Police (98 activities) and Legal Co-operation (27 activities). Some of the key activities are highlighted below:

- **Human Rights:** In **Albania**, 59 representatives of courts and prosecution were trained in a series of trainings on effective remedies for lengthy proceedings, property rights and the reopening of criminal proceedings. In “**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**”, the capacities of Justice Academy to deliver human rights trainings were strengthened through development of a training curriculum, a methodology guidebook for trainers and a methodology for moot trials on how to handle detention issues (Article 5) in line with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). In **Montenegro**, an assessment on the influence of the Constitutional Court case-law on regular court decisions was launched to further strengthen the inter-judicial dialogue on the implementation of the ECHR. In **Serbia**, an online course on international co-operation in criminal matters was launched, and a survey was carried out in all courts to assess the accessibility of European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case-law;
- **Justice:** In **Albania**, a development of the methodology for the judicial map review and the relationship between the judiciary and the media were at the centre of the Action’s activities in the reporting period. In **Kosovo***, an in-depth assessment report on the functioning of the justice system was completed, and results of the satisfaction surveys for court users were endorsed by the beneficiaries;
- **Prisons and Police:** In **Albania**, guidelines for identifying prisoners’ regime based on the assessment of their risks and needs were developed, in line with European practice. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, draft protocols on the treatment of forensic patients were developed for medical staff in prisons. In “**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**”, 90 prison staff gained new knowledge about the concept of dynamic security and its application in the work of all prison staff. In **Kosovo**, the draft instructions on effective complaint system in prisons were prepared and an assessment of prevention of ill-treatment was made. In **Montenegro**, the first round of advanced police training for trainers on dealing with cases of ill-treatment was conducted. The curricula for in-service

* 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.

training on the prevention of ill-treatment in **Serbia** were designed and one module fully developed.

- Legal Co-operation: In **Montenegro**, an assessment of the Judicial Council was conducted and recommendations provided to improve the Council's working methods. In **Serbia**, a series of activities were organised for 160 judges and prosecutors to raise awareness on how to detect and counter risks of undue pressure. In "**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**" an assessment report on the legal aid system was issued.

Under theme II – Fighting Corruption, Organized Crime and Economic Crime – a total of 41 activities have been implemented in the sectors of Economic Crime (27 activities) and Corruption in Education (14 activities). Some key activities are highlighted below:

- Economic Crime: In **Albania**, the discussion on legislative changes focusing on party and election campaign funding was initiated and peer-exchanges regarding asset management and seizure were organized with the Dutch and Belgian authorities. In "**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**", a training on how to protect whistle-blowers in line with European standards was delivered to all relevant authorities on the basis of a curriculum developed within the Action. In **Montenegro**, the new risk assessment tool to control financing of electoral campaigns was developed within the Action and applied for the first time, during the local elections in May 2018. Moreover, an assessment of how conflict of interest provisions are implemented was undertaken with recommendations on how to strengthen the existing control mechanism;
- Corruption in Education: National experts from **Kosovo**, **Montenegro** and **Serbia** participated in the meetings of the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity.

Under theme III – Promoting discrimination and the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, a total of 76 activities were implemented in the sectors of Education (36 activities), Trafficking in Human Beings (10 activities), National Minorities, Human Rights/Ombudspersons (30 activities). Some key activities are highlighted below:

- Ombudsman: A number of tailor-made distance-learning HELP courses on anti-discrimination and combating hate crimes and hate speech were launched in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, targeting 85 professionals. An analysis containing recommendations on how to build up advocacy among public institutions was prepared.
- Bullying and Extremism in Education: the Teacher Training and School Support Programme was accredited and piloted in **Albania** and was followed by specialised trainings on countering discrimination and bullying in schools targeting school principals and teachers.
- Democratic School Culture: In **Kosovo**, a training curriculum for teachers and school administrations was accredited and endorsed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and the official "Diversity day" was introduced on 26 April. In **Montenegro**, a training curriculum for educational professionals was introduced at all levels of pre-university education. In **Serbia**, 19 pilot schools started the complementary process of

revision of the quality standards in education. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, a new Action on Quality Education in Multi-ethnic Societies was launched.

- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Following the preparation of a new guide on “Policing Hate Crime against LGBTI persons: Training for a Professional Police Response”, over 150 police officers from different parts of **Albania** were trained to identify and address hate crimes towards LGBTI people.
- Trafficking in Human Beings: In “**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**” 30 lawyers and NGO representatives, specialised in providing free legal aid, received training on compensation for the victims of trafficking in human beings. In **Serbia**, an Opinion on a possible revision of the Standard Operating Procedures for the Treatment of Victims of Human Trafficking was prepared and presented with a focus on the elements related to the transnational referral mechanism.
- National Minorities: A high-level conference was organised in **Albania** to increase transparency and promote the development of legislation pertaining to the rights of national minorities. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Minority Coordination Group was established with the Action support. The findings of the Analysis of the presentation of national minorities in textbooks and educational programmes were discussed with national authorities and relevant actors in **Serbia**.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

The highlights of the reporting period under the three Horizontal Facility thematic areas are the following:

Theme I - Ensuring Justice - seventeen Actions are tailored to support the national reforms in six HF beneficiaries.

- In the sector of prisons and police, the HF actions contributed to an enhanced application of ethical standards in prisons, including the prevention of ill-treatment and improving prison health care, as well as to further strengthening of the prison management. The Ministry of Justice in “**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**” approved and disseminated the Code of Conduct for prison staff, providing guidance on ethical behaviour. In **Serbia** the assessment of the treatment of mentally-ill prisoners has set up the basis for drafting a new Mental Health Care Strategy.
- In the field of human rights and the judiciary, strengthening the capacities of legal professionals continued in **Albania, Montenegro, Serbia** and “**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**” to apply the ECHR in order to prevent its violations in the future, through the development of human rights training programmes and their inclusion into regular training curricula of the judiciary institutions. In **Albania**, the

Committee of Ministers closed the examination of the so-called Caka group of cases*, concluding that the beneficiary took all the necessary measures in this regard.

- Enhancing judicial services in the justice sector, Actions in **Albania** and **Kosovo** continued improving data collection in line with the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) tools. The Action in **Kosovo** contributed to developing the case management system for courts and prosecutorial services (CMIS) and in **Albania** CEPEJ modules were integrated into training on court management offered by the School of Magistrates.

In the field of legal co-operation, in “**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**” an expert assessment report on the free legal aid system was endorsed by beneficiaries. Assistance provided in **Serbia** to strengthen judiciary independence was important in light of the constitutional reforms. The Action in **Montenegro** contributed to developing guidelines for the implementation of the Code of Ethics for prosecutors.

*Theme II - Fight against corruption, organised crime and economic crime - six Actions to fight corruption and organised crime are being implemented in **Albania**, “**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**”, **Kosovo**, **Montenegro** and **Serbia**.*

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

Programme reference:	IPA II Annual Multi-Country Action Programme 2016
Project title:	<i>Support to the follow-up of electoral recommendations in the Western Balkans (Support to Elections in the Western Balkans)</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 1 600 000
Beneficiary region:	five OSCE participating States in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia), as well as Kosovo (<i>this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in</i>
Type of contract:	
Contract reference:	CN 2017/386276
Duration of activities:	26.06.2017 – 26.06.2020
Links:	https://www.osce.org/odihr/support-to-elections-in-western-balkans
Contact :	Raul Muresan, Project Co-ordinator / raul.muresan@odihr.pl

* The cases in these group concern violations of the ECHR arising from unfair criminal proceedings which led to the conviction of the applicants to terms of imprisonment and use of evidence obtained as a result of torture and ill-treatment by the police.

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Consultation and planning (inception) visits took place in Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo.
- Topical workshops were organized in Bosnia and Herzegovina (on the central voter registry) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (for the Working Group mandated to review the Electoral Code).
- A total of 19 in-depth assistance activities took place across all 6 beneficiaries covering the 3 thematic areas of election management, voter registration and media.
- Five ODIHR handbooks (Handbook on the Follow-up of Electoral Recommendations, Guidelines for Reviewing a Legal Framework for Elections, Handbook for the Observation of Voter Registration, Handbook on Media Monitoring for Election Observation Missions, and Guidelines on Population Registration) were translated in six languages, printed and distributed.
- The tender for the recommendations database was published and offers were evaluated.
- The project factsheet was produced, translated in six languages and printed.
- A total of 354 local counterparts (37 per cent women) interacted with project activities.
- As per the project outline, the activities were on hold for several months in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Kosovo due to ongoing elections.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Interlocutors and stakeholders were informed about the project and its objective in the inception visits. Presentations and materials that raise awareness of importance of follow-up to electoral recommendations and the next steps of the action were provided. Focal points with national and international counterparts were established. Strategic plans were drafted with local actors and developed through open consultation with stakeholders
- The inception visit reports were prepared and submitted to donors.
- Albania: the Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee on Electoral Reform Expert received technical support, including analysis papers and background documents. The output of the sessions will serve as the basis for amendments to the Electoral Code.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: the CEC received expert support in drafting regulations ahead of 2018 general elections on the role of media in election campaigns (specifically early

campaign and hate speech), campaign finance, the administration of elections by polling station commissions, as well as candidate and voter registration.

- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: the draft laws on ‘Central Population Register’, ‘Electronic Management and Electronic Services’ and ‘Electronic Documents, Electronic Identification and Trust Services’ were informally reviewed; the Working Group mandated to review the Electoral Code received expert technical support, including analysis papers and background documents.
- News items were published on the ODIHR website regarding the project activities.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Albania: finance two workshops on election administration and media coverage of elections in July; expert support the drafting of amendments to the Electoral Code.
- Kosovo: informally review the procedures of the Counting and Results Center of the Central Election commission in July and the media coverage of elections in September; provide expert support to workshops on voter register in September, on reviewing of conditional voting in October, and on media coverage of elections in November (the latter co-financed).
- Serbia: expert support and co-financing the regional conference “Political and Electoral Participation of Persons with Disabilities Conference” in October.
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: expert support and co-financing the national conference “Electoral Participation of Persons with Disabilities” in October; expert support to the drafting of amendments to the Electoral Code.
- Montenegro: re-start the project activities after the ODIHR’s presentation of its Election Observation Mission Final Report for the 15 April 2018 Presidential Election.
- Warsaw: expert support and co-financing of the regional conference “Electoral Participation of Roma” in November.
- Develop and publish the electoral recommendations database by November.

2.7 SECURITY

Pilot Project deployment of Liaison Officers in the Western Balkans

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2017/039-402
Project title:	<i>Pilot Project deployment of Liaison Officers in the Western Balkans</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 2 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans: i.p. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia
Type of contract:	Grant agreement for a pillar assessed organisation with the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
Contract reference:	CN 2018/395-549
Duration of activities:	01/04/2018 – 31/03/2020
Links:	

Contact :[Jutta Pomoell-Segurola \(Jutta.Pomoell-Segurola@ec.europa.eu\)](mailto:Jutta.Pomoell-Segurola@ec.europa.eu)**PURPOSE**

The **overall objective** is to improve the overall security in the Western Balkans and the EU by combatting organized crime and terrorism.

The specific objective of the action is to counter serious crime and terrorism by contributing to better information exchange, and linking investigations in the EU with investigations in hosting Third States, ensuring that relevant data is available.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Drafting of the visibility and communication plan re the deployment of Europol Liaison Officers (ELOs).
- Publication of the call for applications for the 3 Europol Liaison Officers, 27 March 2018.
- Fact finding missions (i.e. Negotiation of Liaison Agreements, visit of the premises which will be hosting ELOs) carried out in the three hosting countries.
- Short listing of candidates, 4 June 2018.
- Drafting of the Regional threat assessment prepared by Europol Strategy & Analysis Unit for SEPCA countries as the baseline on criminal threats in the region and the alignment of IISG and the EU policy cycle.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Finalization of practical arrangements with COM
- Initiation of the recruitment procedure

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Selection process of ELOs.
- Training and deployment of the ELOs.
- Finalization of the legal arrangements with the hosting countries.
- Initial assessment on obstacles for cooperation in the three hosting countries.

On a more general note, the project is supposed to i.a. :

- Facilitate cooperative relations between Europol and the receiving third country to support the MS of the EU in preventing and combating organised crime, terrorism and other forms of international crime within Europol's mandate;
- Encourage exchange of operational information between the designated competent authorities via the established channel(s) of communication;
- Strengthen contacts between the receiving third country and Europol in relation to on-going initiatives and tools in the receiving third country;

- Facilitate and support implementation of the operational cooperation agreement in place with the competent national authorities, highlighting opportunities while addressing shortcomings;
- Support provision of on-the-job training exercises on operational cooperation and coordination, in particular the proper exchange of operational information;
- Facilitate reporting on criminal situation including cross-border crime and terrorism, contributing to maintaining an updated situational picture, in cooperation with local law enforcement officers, thereby increasing mutual understanding and trust;
- Support operations and investigations involving Europol, mobilising additional support when needed so as to assure that the local law enforcement's capacities are upgraded to successfully complete these operations and investigations;
- Promote and support training of local authorities in Europol's best practices and solutions, such as intelligence led policing, proper strategic analysis (SOCTA and TESAT methodology) and involvement of the relevant authorities in EMPACT activities;
- Assist Europol in monitoring the organisational and operational developments in the receiving country;
- Strengthen coordination and assistance in the organisation of meetings, trainings, workshops, seminars and other activities held by Member States and Europol;
- Support drafting the regional and country SOCTA/TOCTA, TE-SAT etc.
- Facilitate Europol participation in meetings on strategic and operational matters;
- Support coordination meetings with the relevant EU Delegation, Member States, IPA projects, Interpol, OSCE, UNODC, and other donors/stakeholders.

Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

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

PURPOSE

The overall objective of this contract is to develop a Western Balkans (WB) Civil Society Hub to empower civil society organizations (CSOs) to be more effective and accountable actors and to improve their capacity to implement projects and dialogue with governments,

influencing policy and decision-making processes as it relates to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) that leads to terrorism in the region.

ACTIVITIES* (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- **Mapping:** The activity aims to identify CSOs and faith based organisations working in the field of prevention and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) in the Western Balkans and to provide understanding of quality and potentials of their relations with key local/national/regional stakeholders from public, civic and business sector. International expert Eric Rosand has developed guidelines for mapping activities which include instructions on research methodology, implementation and full content. Guidelines were delivered to all project partners: Center for Conflict Management Partners Kosovo* (CCMPK), Cultural Center DamaD Serbia (DamaD), Search for Common Ground Macedonia (SCGM), Hope and Homes for Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina (HHC), Center for Legal Civic Initiatives Albania (CLCI) and Forum MNE.
- **Develop and Coordinate - Network development** – within this work-package an inception meeting with project partners was organised in Podgorica, as well as online consultations.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2017)

- Produced document “Guidelines for Mapping of P/CVE civil society stakeholders” which will allow the collection of data relevant for creation of Regional Mapping Report for the Balkans.
- Ensured participative and coordinated operation of all project partners.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- **Mapping:** Production and promotion of six national reports as well as the regional report. The national reports will be produced by national mapping experts who will be engaged in each of the project countries while the regional report will be produced by the international expert.
- **Connect – Network Mobilization Working Groups:** Following the mapping of CSOs/FBOs regionally, project partners will mobilize these actors through both national and regional consultations and events/workshops. The first national workshop in each of the countries will be organised within the first year of project implementation. In addition initial activities for the design and launch of a ‘Western Balkans P/CVE Online Portal’ will be started. The ‘Hub’ will aim to provide the first and only cross-regional CSO information-sharing mechanism on P/CVE containing case studies, practical resources and materials gathered internationally on P/CVE; and communications functionality to enable cross-CSO dialogue and engagement.

* Please note that the contract was signed in March 2018.

- **Develop and Coordinate - Network development:** Activities planned include: online consultations between co-applicants and the second partners meeting in Albania.
- **Empower - Capacity building and mentoring:** During the next semester activities include development of training curriculum on P/CVE.
- **Promote** - In order to achieve maximum visibility, Forum MNE will hire an expert to develop Marketing and Communication Plan. Marketing agency which needs to have an access to media in all 6 countries will be tasked to manage the implementation of the Plan.

2.8 PARTICIPATION OF WESTERN BALKANS JUDICIAL PROFESSIONALS IN EJTN TRAINING ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE

EJTN is one of the beneficiaries of the EU Justice Programme and is addressing its training offer to judges, prosecutors, trainees and trainers from EU Member States. Under this project EJTN aims to be in the position to offer participation in its activities to the judges, prosecutors, trainees and trainers from EU candidate countries (Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia) and potential candidates (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The implementation of this project started on the 1 January 2018. Institutes that perform initial training of the candidates to the positions of a judge and prosecutor and/or continuous training of acting judges and prosecutors from Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo were invited to nominate candidates to attend EJTN organised training activities. For the first half of the 2018 year, participants from the western Balkans states were invited to attend seminars on the following fields of law: Linguistic; Criminal; Civil; Administrative; Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; Judicial Training Methods.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Activities:

From January until June 2018, EJTN organised 31 activities in which participants from Western Balkans countries were invited to join. Activities ranged from Initial Training seminars (EJTN's THEMIS Competition as observers) and Continuous training seminars.

Outputs:

- A. Continuous Trainings attendance:

Until June 2018, EJTN activities were attended by 12 participants: Albania: 4 participants; from Bosnia and Herzegovina 2 participants; from Montenegro 0 participants; from Serbia 4 participants; from FYROM 1 participant; from Kosovo 1 participant.

B. Initial Trainings:

The team from Serbia won the third place, while the team from Albania won the special prize of the THEMIS competition, a competition organised for future EU magistrates undergoing entry level training.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

For the July-December 2018 reporting period EJTN will invite participants from the Western Balkans states to take part in the following EJTN organised training activities:

CR/2018/11 Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters in Counterterrorism: Practical Case-Based Simulation

CI/2018/07 Consumer protection

AD/2018/06 EU Antitrust Law

AD/2018/07 EU Direct Taxation

AD/2018/08 EU Competition Law

AD/2018/09 EU Data Protection and Privacy Rights

HFR/2018/04 ECtHR-EJTN training on Human Rights for EU Judicial Trainings

HFR/2018/05 Human Rights and Access to Justice in the EU - 2

HFR/2018/06 Cultural diversity in the courtroom. Judges in Europe facing new challenges

TM/2018/05 Seminar on methodology and evaluation

TM/2018/07 Seminar on judge craft

TM/2018/06 Conference on leadership

ROL/2018/01 Upholding the rule of law in practice: The crucial role of Judges and Prosecutors

ROL/2018/02 Independent Judges as a cornerstone of the Rule of Law

ROL/2018/03 The Prosecutors and their essential role for the Rule of Law

2.9 FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMME, WESTERN BALKANS 2017-2019 (CEPOL FI)

Programme reference:	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA2)
Project title:	Financial Investigation In-Service Training Programme, Western Balkans 2017-2019

EU contribution:	EUR 2,5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Pillar assessed Grant Agreement to the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)
Contract reference:	IPA/2017/393/268
Duration of activities:	21/12/2017-21/12/2019
Links:	https://www.cepol.europa.eu/
Contact :	Jutta Pomoell-Segurola (Jutta.Pomoell-Segurola@ec.europa.eu)

PURPOSE

The programme aims to develop and sustain institutional capacity of the law enforcement agencies of the beneficiary countries by training means in order to prevent, investigate and prosecute transnational organised crime and financing terrorism in the context of effective use of financing investigations. Furthermore, it also centres on supporting the creation of sustainable professional networks building upon practical exchange of professional experience of Financial Investigation, Anti-Money Laundering Units and Counter-Organised Crime Departments across the region and with the EU Member States, being able to contribute to carrying out of actions under the EU policy cycle against serious and organised crime.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

As the project inception phase started in January 2018, hand in hand with UNODC, a Training Needs Assessment exercise was kicked-off in the frame of a Focal Point meeting took place on 23 February in Budapest and completed between February and June 2018. The Training Needs Assessment comprised collection and analysis of relevant information in the way of environment scan, questionnaires and on the spot meetings with wide range of law enforcement entities of the partners in the beneficiaries, respective members of EU Delegations and parallel projects. The TNA meetings took place as follows:

- Albania, 5-8 March 2018
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, 24-26 April 2018
- Kosovo*, 9-12 April 2018
- former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 7-10 May 2018

* 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

- Montenegro 28-31 May 2018
- Serbia, 22-24 May 2018

Based on conclusion of an analysis of collected information, the project work programme was drafted in June and being fine-tuned in round of consultations with beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders. The project work programme is expected to be concluded during the second Focal Point meeting on 17 July 2018 in Ljubljana and hosted by IISG.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

N.A.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The draft work plan comprises the following activities:

- Organisation of 6 training courses and webinars in the beneficiaries for national target group
- Organisation of a regional workshop for law enforcement specialists of the Western Balkan beneficiaries and EU Members States
- Conducting exchange programme for respective law enforcement officials of Western Balkan beneficiaries and EU Member States

2.10 REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE (XCEU60)

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2017/039-402
Project title:	Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (XCEU60) – Building Regional Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism Capacity in South Eastern Europe
EU contribution:	EUR 2.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant agreement for a pillar assessed organisation with UNODC
Contract reference:	IPA/2017/393-994
Duration of activities:	01/01/2018 – 31/12/2019
Links:	https://www.unodc.org/southeasterneurope/; http://wb-iisg.com/

PURPOSE

The **overall objective** is to improve the overall security in the Western Balkans and the EU by combatting organized crime and terrorism. The specific **objective** of this action is two-fold: (i) **Organized crime and terrorism threats are degraded** due to addressed jurisdictions' enhanced ability to detect, deter and prosecute money laundering, financing of terrorism, including foreign terrorist fighters; (ii) **Regional threats of transnational organized crime and terrorism are reduced** due to addressed jurisdictions' enhanced ability for interagency and international cooperation on anti-money laundering, combating terrorism financing and asset recovery. This project is carried out as a joint UNODC/European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) collaborative action. Furthermore, UNODC's Independent Evaluation Unit will carry out an independent mid-term evaluation of the Integrative Internal Security Governance pillar II (Western Balkan Counter Serious Crime Initiative – WBCSCi) and EU supported pillar II action to inform the future development of this initiative and identify national evaluation capacity needs in the Western Balkans.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

1. UNODC formally presented this programme to all jurisdictions (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244) and raised awareness of the Western Balkans Integrative Internal Security Governance Initiative (IISG).
2. The UNODC Independent Evaluation unit (IEU) developed an extensive evaluation approach and draft Terms of Reference for the mid-term evaluation. The evaluation was launched in June.
3. The first technical meeting of the UNODC and CEPOL National Focal Points from all jurisdictions was successfully held in February 2018 in Budapest, Hungary.
4. In March 2018, UNODC joined the 2nd IISG Board Meeting (Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia), which endorsed the Integrative Plans of Action (iPAs) of the three IISG Pillars for 2018-2020, as well as appointed UNODC to be a co-lead partner of the IISG Pillar II.
5. During spring 2018, UNODC and CEPOL successfully completed six joint Training Needs Assessments (TNAs), aimed at outlining the particular needs of local law enforcement and the judiciary in the field of financial investigations in all six jurisdictions.
6. Based on the outcomes of these TNAs, national training plans on financial investigations were developed by UNODC and CEPOL for each jurisdiction in the region.
7. In June, the first round of national trainings on financial investigations was rolled out in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244.

8. UNODC maintained dialogue with the IISG Support group, CEPOL Management and other implementing partners. UNODC also co-launched, the process of updating of the IISG Pillar II, as lead partner of this Pillar.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2017)

- All relevant regional counterparts of the programme were informed about its details, expected steps and results, as well as roles of all actors. Visibility was enhanced. National buy-in and ownership was ensured.
- The TNAs covered over 100 institutions in the region and collected important information for the future work, ensuring that assistance is tailored to the needs of the jurisdictions and the EU.
- UNODC participated in building the vision of the IISG for the future including through the launching of the mid-term evaluation.
- The interactive train-the-trainers trainings are designed to strengthen the capacities of the law enforcement sector and the judiciary to effectively detect, investigate, prosecute and recover the proceeds of crime. Building upon the trainings, national curricula on financial investigations, will be developed.
- UNODC supported the coordination, communication, efficiency and non-duplication efforts of the IISG.
- Visibility of the EU as a donor of the action was continuously raised.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Financial Investigations Component

- In September – October 2018, UNODC will complete the first round of national training courses on financial investigations (in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia).
- Thereafter, a group of national trainers will be established in each jurisdiction (up to 10 experts from the training institutions, law enforcement and the judiciary), who will attend a one week sub-regional training of trainers in Vienna, Austria, in October – November 2018.
- In the fall 2018, UNODC and CEPOL will conduct another coordination meeting of the project focal points to discuss project activities, challenges and share best practices.
- In October 2018, UNODC in cooperation with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the OSCE, will organize a 2-day operational meeting of the Heads of FIUs from the Former Republic Yugoslavia and Albania to discuss operational matters pertinent to the current anti-money laundering / counter-financing of terrorism risks in the region.
- In November – December 2018, UNODC will initiate establishment of the learning management system/platform which will include access to the training modules and training course materials, and allow for exchange information on training activities in the area of financial investigations.

Evaluation Component

- In July and August 2018, the desk review phase, including the development and finalisation of the methodological approach, to the mid-term evaluation will be

conducted and finalised by the independent evaluation team and UNODC's IEU in the form of an "Inception Report".

- Based on the Inception Report, the data collection phase will take place in end August to beginning of October. It will include numerous interviews, observation of trainings/conferences/other events, possibly focus groups, etc. Evaluation missions to the Western Balkans as well as other relevant countries (including Slovenia, Austria, Belgium) will be conducted.
- The data analysis and drafting of the evaluation report will occur in October and November.
- In December 2018 and January 2019, the evaluation report will be finalised and a follow-up plan, including approaches for dedicated national evaluation capacity building activities, will be presented to key evaluation stakeholders and subsequently to the IISG Board.

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 BALKANS ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION FACILITY

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programmes, IPA 2011/021-964; IPA 2012/022-966; IPA 2013/024-091; IPA 2015/031-609; IPA 2016/039-919; 2017/039-402
Project title:	<i>Western Balkan Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WB EDIF)</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 148.3 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution agreements (CA) with OECD and World Bank Group; CA and Delegation Agreements (DGA) with the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Guarantee Facility, ENEF and ENIF; Competitiveness programme
Contract reference:	CN 2012/295-825; CN 2012/306-154; CN 2012/306-653; CN 2013/319-472; CN 2012/306-667; CN 2013/333-444; CN 2013/318-776; CN 2013/331-504 (closed in Q1 2018); CN 2014/334-654; IPA/2015/364-466; IPA/2015/368-971; CN 2016/380-963; CN CN 2017/393-451; CN 2017/394-451;
Duration of activities:	05/12/2012 – 21/12/2028
Links:	www.wbedif.eu
Contact :	Aleksandra Kostova, aleksandra.kostova@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

There was good progress under the whole WBEDIF platform during H1 2018, including:

For the financial instruments:

- The Guarantee Facility: the first round of financing (GF) has been almost entirely utilised and the banks are now in their run off phase. The results from the second deployment of funding (GF II), whereby EIF signed with 5 banks in the region, show very good and nearly full absorption by the market. WB EDIF Guarantee Facility Serbia was signed in December 2017 dedicated to Serbian SMEs and the Call for Expression of interest was launched in February 2018. The first guarantee agreements were planned to be signed in Q3 2018. Enterprise Innovation Fund has to date invested in 16 companies. Fund manager (South Central Ventures) has also been actively promoting ENIF in its target region, often together with various local stakeholders, targeting start-ups and entrepreneurs. The team participated to a number of roadshows in the entire region.
- The Enterprise Expansion Fund has 12 investments (with 10) companies. The ENEF portfolio is performing according to expectations and is well represented across the region. The Fund is focusing on continued growth of a healthy pipeline as well as marketing activities with the key sectors of focus. In order to further boost the attractiveness of ENEF financing, an integrated approach which incorporates the ASB programme and specialised products such as the EBRD's "Blue Ribbon", is being consistently promoted as well.

In addition, the EBRD has launched a new lending instrument called the Competitiveness Programme, for which an agreement was signed in December 2017. This additional component in WB EDIF will provide funds to local banks for on-lending and incentives to SMEs.

- The World Bank Venture Capital and Investment Readiness: most of the activities under the programme are already completed and a phase II programme is under preparation. A second Pioneers of the Balkans competition. The long-term impact assessment of the outcomes of the first competition has been finalised, after intensive data gathering among the participants through a 2-year follow-up survey.
- The World Bank EU-REPARIS: the regional integration has been the key focus of the activities in the past period, whereby Western Balkan Professional Accounting Organisations (PAOs) are linked to international bodies like IFAC (International Federation of Accountants) through workshops, like the last Joint Education Community of Practice, organised on April 11. Other workshops held in this period included the Training of Trainers – Focus on Services for SMEs and Advancing Audit Quality Assurance Systems, as well as virtual workshops organised in February and March. Among other issues, REPARIS is working on preparing regional banks to introduce new accounting standards, as set out by IFRS9. To this effect, there has been direct engagement in FYROM and Montenegro, and a workshop organised in Bosnia Herzegovina.
- The EBRD's Advice for Small Business (ASB) - so far the EDIF funding supported a total of 416 companies in the region and has been deployed in five beneficiary economies. The

companies are mostly from the agro-food, retail and machining sectors. Various activities are ongoing (the Blue ribbon programme, Financial Enhancement, etc).

- The EIB has finalised a Feasibility Study and a Road Map for Regional Centres of Excellence following rigorous benchmarking for the 4 candidate institutions. One was selected for further support and development to the status of Regional Centre of Excellence. The Study on Intellectual Property (IP) and Intangibles resulted in a Toolkit on Intellectual Property protection for entrepreneurs in the region. The toolkit was presented through Workshops in the Western Balkan countries, and attracted attention from regional innovative SMEs.
- Platform communication and visibility activities have been further streamlined, resulting in: i) new WB EDIF Annual Report with a user-friendly design published and used as marketing and communication tool; ii) improved WB EDIF website; iii) first WB EDIF Business Forum organised in Belgrade, together with the Western Balkan 6 Chamber Investment Forum, bringing together a number of stakeholders and SMEs from the entire region.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Access to finance for SMEs: good absorption for the guarantee facility as well as healthy uptake of the equity instruments;

Support Services: the capacity building measures continued complementing the investment-oriented measures;

Improved platform visibility and communication

New instruments launched as the Competiveness programme.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

ENIF: pace of investments is expected to continue and work will focus on promoting the fund further as to create a geographically diversified portfolio.

ENEF: business development and marketing activities shall continue across all countries to source additional investment opportunities. Measures are discussed to increase the absorption of the Fund.

Guarantee Facility: The first guarantees under the Guarantee Facility for Serbia are to be signed. The WB EDIF Youth Guarantee Facility is expected to be launched in the second half of 2018.

The EBRD will continue developing its Competiveness Programme under the umbrella of WB EDIF.

The ongoing Support Services activities will proceed and a phase II of some of the will be launched in the next semester.

Platform Coordination: marketing and visibility efforts will continue, leveraging on the new visibility and communication tools.

A Proof of concept grant scheme to bring research and innovation closer to industry will be launched.

Turkey to align the findings of the government and independent assessments (March-June)

Support Activities: Back-to-back with the SBA Co-ordinators' meeting, a regional policy dialogue meeting will be organised, focusing on SME greening policies (March).

3.2 EUROPEAN FUND FOR SOUTHEAST EUROPE (EFSE)

Programme reference:	IPA 2015 / 031-609 - Multi-country Action Programme for 2015, and CARDS 2006/018-264 and Multi-beneficiary Programme IPA 2007/019-344, IPA 2008/020-300, IPA 2009/021-373, IPA 2010/022-028
Project title:	<i>European Fund for Southeast Europe (EFSE)</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 85.1 million
Beneficiary region:	14 countries including Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Delegation (Trusteeship) Agreement with the European Investment Fund (EIF) (and previous Contribution agreements)
Contract reference:	CN 2016/381-821 Previous CN 2006/124-240; CN 2008/154-338, CN 2009/201-622, CN 2009/222-012, CN 2011/268-296)
Duration of activities:	04/08/2006 – 31/12/2023
Links:	www.efse.lu
Contact :	Judit Andrea GYORI, Judit.GYORI@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

EFSE extends loans to selected financial institutions in the region of Southeast Europe (as of 30 June 2018 41 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 (JANUARY - JUNE 2018)

By 30 June 2018, the outstanding investment portfolio in the EFSE amounted to EUR 909.5 million with 65 Partner Lending Institutions (PLI), thereof EUR 490.1 million with 41 PLIs in the Western Balkans and Turkey. During H1 2018, EFSE signed 8 investments totalling EUR 82.8 million, of which EUR 16.0 million with 3 Partner Lending Institutions (PLIs) were in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

In terms of the sub-loan portfolio, by 30 June 2018, the outstanding sub-loan portfolio amounted to EUR 1.04 billion, including EUR 660.6 million in the Western Balkans and Turkey. This translates into an on-lending rate of 105% for the total Fund and 107% for the Western Balkans and Turkey by 30 June 2018.

Almost 940,000 sub-loans have therefore been financed since EFSE's inception, accounting for EUR 6.9 billion in lending, with a clear focus on microloans below EUR 20,000.

On the TA side, the EFSE Development Facility ("DF") has 45 projects under management in the Western Balkan region and Turkey, with a total volume of EUR 3.8 million. For example, the EFSE DF supports its PLIs in their digitalisation efforts that enhance the end client experience of banking services while increasing operational efficiency and reducing costs. In Turkey for example, a PLI is implementing a comprehensive road map to digitalisation that transforms the PLI's business processes and the way the PLI conducts business. The EFSE DF also support the Fund's product development, in particular the lending in local currency in

the ENR region. Country specific regulations, risks or other framework conditions are being investigated to facilitate local currency lending in these partner countries.

In BiH, a PLI is assisting MSE clients through online services in further building their business and financial management capacity that in return increases their repayment capacity. Furthermore, the EFSE DF is deepening its support to MSE business growth in the SEE region. In particular, the EFSE DF promotes business acceleration and investment readiness of MSEs, social enterprises and start-ups through business development organisations and facilitates access to finance through the linkages to financial institutions (e.g. via subsidized loans or grant contributions by the financial institutions).

The Fund has been well funded in H1 2018 and has mobilized EUR 61.1 million of subscriptions from private investors, bringing the share of private investor Notes to 19% as of 30 June 2018. This was also enabled by the Fund’s strong performance also in the Western Balkan region and Romania. Overall, the Fund's performance remains very solid with a good risk profile every good financial performance and continued leveraging the Fund's C Shares. The Fund was able to create high visibility through various initiatives and activities beyond mere investments, such as social business incubation, financial literacy, or fintech projects. Moreover, the “EU4Business – EU Local Currency Partnership Initiative”, i.e. the cooperation to foster local currency lending in in the Neighborhood region has been approved. The Fund’s Issue Document has been changed accordingly and the new L Share class is currently being implemented.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JULY 2018)

EFSE investment portfolio figures as at end Q2 2018*	
1. Total Invested Portfolio (Q2 2018 figures)	EUR 909.5 million
2. Number of current Partner Lending Institutions (Q2 2018 figures)	65
3. Type of Partner Lending Institution (Q2 2018 figures)	66% Commercial Banks, 14% Micro-finance Institutions, 20% Non-Bank Financial Institutions
EFSE sub-loan figures as at end Q2 2018*	
4. Active End Borrowers (Q2 2018 figures)	138,202
5. Reached End Borrowers since inception (Q2 2018 figures)	938,809
6. Average sub-loan amount outstanding (Q2 2018 figures)	EUR 7,517
7. Disbursed sub-loans since inception (Q2 2018 figures)	EUR 6.9 billion

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

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

An intensive monitoring regime for the Fund's investments in Turkey continues to be in place while no new investments in Turkey are currently pursued. There is also a continued economic stagnation and low-price environment in South-east European countries. The investment pipeline for 2018 looks promising to reach the Fund's business plan targets but significant investment management efforts will still be required until year-end. In the second half of 2018, the Fund seeks to close the L Share transaction for the Neighborhood East and to start the joint project of local currency lending. The Fund's Advisory Group Meeting, i.e. the unique forum for central bank governors from the 16 EFSE target countries, is scheduled to meet on 7 and 8 November with a particular focus on the topic of local currency lending.

The focus on the EFSE DF in the second half of 2018 will be on facilitating access to finance for startups and enterprises that have successfully passed the EFSE DF's incubation and acceleration programs and that now require capital to continue on their growth path. Through its partners on the ground, the DF will conduct EFSE Competitions that will bring together EFSE PLIs, investors and business angels with startups and other businesses. Winners will receive prizes based on their actual needs and potential; prizes will vary from preferential loans to cash prizes and continued mentoring support. Furthermore, the EFSE DF will in collaboration with banking associations for example in Montenegro and Serbia replicate workshops on the topic of cyber security and other topics related to digitalisation and fintech.

3.3 CRISIS RESPONSE PACKAGE

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2009/021-373
Project title:	<i>Private Sector Support Facility for Turkey (PSSF) - Crisis Response Package</i>
EU contribution (IPA only):	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:	Domagoj Denacic, Domagoj.DENACIC@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 (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

MSME Finance Window – TC activities initially envisaged under the MSME Finance Window came to an end on 30 May 2017. Additional TC interventions may be proposed for approval in due course.

Energy Efficiency Window - Garanti Leasing joined TurSEFF III (Turkish Sustainable Energy Financing Facility) in H1 of 2018 - the second leasing company and fourth PFI (participating financial institution) now active under the Facility. The Facility Consultant (FC) organised a kick-off meeting with Aklease during the period, and focused on pipeline development for all four PFIs by conducting extensive business development activities, providing training to PFI staff, and assessing projects identified for funding (including 5 SARs/FARs completed during the period). To build programme awareness, the FC attended a total of 33 events and conferences throughout Turkey, and significantly developed the content of the website - including the evaluation and addition of 340 new products to the Technology Selector, the addition of 5 [news stories](#) and the upload of new marketing materials such as the [Public Sector Brochure](#). Under MidSEFF (Turkish Mid-size Sustainable Energy Financing Facility), the preparation and financing of sub-projects continued with the aim to fully allocate the remaining funds.

Advice for Small Business (ASB) Window - During the reporting period the team has started 3 projects with international advisors (formerly EGP; Enterprise Growth Programme), and launched 19 projects with local consultants (formerly BAS) – of these, 17 are currently ongoing and 2 are completed.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

Energy Efficiency Window - Under TurSEFF III, EUR 172M of EUR 400M funds have now been allocated to four PFIs. One of the four PFIs is actively lending its funds, and 24 sub-loans totalling EUR 5.5M were disbursed during the reporting period. In total, 36 sub-loans for just over EUR 11M have now been on-lent to sub-projects. MidSEFF funds are effectively fully allocated to PFIs and the disbursement or utilisation period for all PFIs has ended; one sub-loan worth EUR 7.6M was signed in the period, bringing the Facility total to EUR 914.5 M invested in 56 sub-projects.

Advice for Small Business (ASB) Window - Since the inception of the Programme, 21 projects with international advisors (formerly EGP) were started under EU PSSF for Turkey. Out of these, 14 projects were completed, 4 projects were cancelled due to insufficient commitment of the company's management and 3 projects are ongoing. In addition, a total of 187 projects with local consultants (formerly BAS) were launched, one of which was cancelled. To date, 166 of the projects have been evaluated one year following completion. (17 projects are currently ongoing and 3 are completed but not evaluated yet).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Energy Efficiency Window - The TurSEFF III Facility Consultant will continue business development activities for all four PFIs through a series of meetings and events planned with potential PFI clients, vendors and suppliers, business and professional associations, NGOs, Universities and Government organisations. Intensive staff training will continue at each PFI, and the PC will plan a kick-off meeting and initial training activities with Garanti Leasing. In addition, a Marketing Strategy and Action Plan will be developed for both Aklease and Garanti Leasing. Infographics, sector leaflets, a Facility Video and Municipal Video will all be created as marketing materials for the programmes as a whole. The MidSEFF Project Consultant will continue to monitor the implementation of active MidSEFF projects until end September when their current contract ends.

Advice for Small Business (ASB) – The current pipeline of two projects with international advisors (formerly EGP) will be approved and start in the third quarter of 2018, effectively allocating all available resources. The team also plans to start 14 business advisory projects with local consultants and organize 2 *Grow Your Consulting Business* trainings to train 30 local consultants.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2009/021-373
Project title:	<i>SME Recovery Support Loan for Turkey – Crisis Response Package</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 30.00 million
Beneficiary region:	Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with EIB
Contract reference:	CN 2009/228-929
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 :	Domagoj Denacic, Domagoj.DENACIC@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

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.

A Steering Committee meeting was held on November 2016 to present the activities implemented in the last 12 months as well as present the proposal for a second round of loans, which was approved. It has been proposed to extend the Contribution Agreement (CA) for 12 months from 22 December 2016 to 22 December 2017 to allow the EIB to define, approve and deploy the second round. However, the proposal for the second round has not been approved by the relevant EIB decision-making bodies. Consequently, the Contribution Agreement expired on 22 December 2017 and there were no actions to report in 2018.

OUTPUTS

There are no outputs to report in 2018.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

No further activities are planned in 2018. Final report of the project is submitted by EIB and approved in first half of 2018. Procedure for recovery of the outstanding amount is still in progress and is planned to be finalised in the 2nd half of 2018.

3.4 OECD-SUPPORT TO ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

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

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Economic Reform Programmes: The OECD provided comments to the final draft ERPs 2018-2020, which South East Europe governments then adopted and submitted to the European Commission on January 2018. This ERP cycle is closed and the OECD prepared a report for the Commission in February, summarising the process, assessing the documents and

providing suggestions for further actions. The annual Regional Meeting of ERP Co-ordinators, organised by the OECD, in partnership with DG NEAR, DG ECFIN and DG EMPL, took place on April 2018. The meeting focused on lessons learnt and how the three ERP support instruments - *Diagnostic, Prioritisation and Monitoring Tool* - can support the economies along the way. It was also discussed how to build synergies between the OECD policy assessments (Competitiveness Outlook and SME Policy Index) and the ERP process for the benefit of policy makers from the region. Bilateral meetings between ERP co-ordinators, OECD and European Commission were held to agree upon country-specific support activities. The OECD supported ERP kick-off events in Tirana, Skopje and Pristina in June.

Competitiveness Outlook: The OECD completed the Competitiveness Outlook 2018 publication. The publication contains detailed analysis and policy assessments across 17 policy dimensions, more than 600 indicators, as well as actionable policy recommendations. The publication was launched at a high-level regional event in Paris and in-country high-level conferences in collaboration with the EU delegations, one in Skopje and one in Tirana. The results of the conference and the publication are available under the following link:

<http://www.oecd.org/south-east-europe/programme/co-meetings.htm>

SBA Assessment: For the *SME Policy Index*, the governments and independent assessments were completed, and statistical data from the national statistical offices were collected by March. Subsequent to these, reconciliation meetings were organised in the capitals of Western Balkans and Turkey to align the findings of the government and independent assessments and to fill the remaining information gaps (March-June).

Support Activities: A fourth regional policy dialogue meeting titled “SMEs in a green economy” was held in March 2018, focusing on policies facilitating smooth and successful transition of SMEs towards greener economy. In addition to experts from EU countries, who presented good practice examples, DG Environment presented the Commission’s Green Action Plan for SMEs that serves as a template for the Western Balkans in improving SMEs’ competitiveness while reducing environmental impact.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Economic Reform Programmes: The OECD updated all the ERP tools and distributed copies during the ERP meetings in April and June. The ERP kick-off assistance events helped raise wider awareness of the exercise, engage line ministries in the process and to reflect upon pertinent growth constraints and priority reforms within the framework of the ERP.

Competitiveness Outlook: One High-level Launch Conference was completed (in April High-level Conference in Paris to launch the SEE Competitiveness Outlook 2018 publication). One 700-page Competitiveness Outlook was published and disseminated. Two in-country launch events were held, one in Skopje and one in Tirana. One pocketbook was published and one promotional background video was produced.

SBA Assessment: *SME Policy Index:* Reconciliation meetings were held to help policy-makers improve their understanding of how SMEs are impacted by current policies. *Supporting Activities:* One regional policy dialogue to enhance the implementation of the last SME Policy

Index recommendations and to bring their national policies closer to EU standards. Focus on *SME greening* policies and instruments, as well as by presenting the relevant EU strategies and actions in that regard.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Economic Reform Programmes: ERP workshops will be conducted in the Western Balkan capitals in September/October to provide assistance to line ministries in preparing their new ERP for 2019-2021. The seminars are scheduled in Tirana for 12-13 September, in Pristina for 18 September, in Skopje for 20-21 September, in Belgrade for 25-26 September and in Sarajevo for 9-10 October. A regional policy seminar on industrial policy will be held, providing support to governments on ERP measures with strong sectoral impact.

Competitiveness Outlook: The Competitiveness Outlook publication will continue to be launched, in Pristina on 11 September, in Belgrade on 25 September, in Sarajevo on 10 October and Podgorica on 17 October. Subsequent to the launch events, the next assessment cycle of the Competitiveness Outlook will be set up (November – December).

SBA Assessment: SME Policy Index: The collected inputs and data will be analysed, and the publication will be drafted throughout the second semester of 2018. *Support Activities:* A second study visit will be organised to Poland, focusing on internationalisation policies targeted at SMEs (November).

3.5 TRADE - SUPPORT TO FACILITATION OF TRADE BETWEEN CEFTA PARTIES

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

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JULY 2018)

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

- Two regional meetings of private sector representatives were organized on March 7-8, under the role of the Regional Business Advisory Group (RBAG) for both iron and steel and vegetables sectors. The meeting gathered a diverse set of members of both sectors (including producers, exporters, importers, private trade support institutions etc.) from participating CEFTA parties in order to further discuss the common and most problematic market access barriers in the region.
- A workshop on Mutual Recognition of AEOs in CEFTA was held on March 28-29, 2018. The objective of the Workshop was to discuss the planning of a pilot exercise for implementation of the Mutual Recognition (MR) of AEO Programmes in CEFTA, which is to be established on the basis of national AEO Programmes, in line with Additional Protocol 5 (AP5).
- Two capacity building workshops were organized as a joint activity for four CEFTA Parties. The first three-day workshop was organized on May 8-10, 2018, for custom officers from Albania and Kosovo. The second three-day workshop was organized on May 15-17, for custom officers from Montenegro and Bosnia and Hercegovina. The objectives of the workshops were to improve capacities for AEO validation and to support developing of national AEO pilot programs.
- As a continuation of capacity building activities, the first AEO awareness seminar was organized in Prishtina with Kosovo Customs Authority and private sector representatives on June 21, 2018. The aim of the seminar was to increase the knowledge of the private sector in Kosovo about the benefits of obtaining AEO status. Likewise, the businesses were provided with information about the mutual recognition developments in the CEFTA region.
- During June and July 2018, six national validation meetings were organized in order to present and discuss the findings of reports on Non-tariff Measures in the Western Balkans CEFTA Parties. The reports on NTMs were presented to the national authorities and discussed from the point of actions to be undertaken in order to resolve the stated issues. These discussions will result in preparation of national action plans for priority reforms that must be undertaken to improve national trade legislation and practice.
- Within Component 3, a training of officials dealing with risk management issues was undertaken during the period of 4 to 6 July, 2018. The aim of the workshop was to assess and compare national risk management programs and pave the way for development of a harmonized regional risk management strategy and profiling approach in CEFTA.

- A regional 2-day workshop for preparation of the MR validation and first validation visit was held on 10 -11 July 2018. A team of 21 validators, named by all CEFTA Parties was trained and prepared for the MR validations which will take place in Moldova, Serbia and Macedonia in fall of 2018.
- Mapping of the documents and data submission requirements in accordance to the EU Acquis and international standards is undergoing and in line with the developed methodology.
- Project website is regularly updated and newsletter prepared and distributed to all stakeholders.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JULY 2018)

- The common and most problematic market access barriers in the region were identified during the Regional Business Advisory Group (RBAG) meeting.
- The Parties' capacities for AEO validation were improved and developing of national AEO pilot programs supported through a number of workshop organized in the reporting period.
- Increased knowledge of the private sector with respect to AEO benefits and mutual recognition developments in the CEFTA region.
- Six national reports on NTMs were produced and presented to the public authorities in the six respective CEFTA Parties. Likewise, six national action plans with concrete actions to be undertaken were developed based on the findings of the reports.
- Trainings of risk management officers conducted in order aid in developing a harmonized regional risk management strategy and profiling approach.
- 21 Customs Authorities' officers trained to be validators in missions to take place in fall in three pilot countries.
- The project website is regularly updated and newsletter prepared and distributed to all stakeholders involved or interested in the project.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Validation workshop of the Regional Report on NTMs will be organized in September. The regional report is being prepared based on the findings of the six national reports on NTMs. The regional report will consist of the common findings and recommendations for the CEFTA region and will be followed by a regional action plan on measures and reforms to be undertaken on CEFTA level.
- Validation mission of three pilot Parties: Moldova, Macedonia and Serbia will be undertaken during September – October.
- The second round of Regional Business Advisory Group (RBAG) meetings for both sectors will be organized in October. The goal is to present the so far undertaken activities to the private sector representatives and discuss priority needs and reforms to be undertaken in the following period from their perspective.

- National stakeholder consultation meeting under the umbrella of NTFC will be organized in October. These meetings will result in the presentation of the National Action Plans for priority reforms to be undertaken on national level to remove market access barriers.
- The trainings of public authorities on methodology for mapping will be organized in October. The aim of the trainings is to raise the understanding of public authorities on the process of mapping and the mapping methodology.
- Regional workshop on Risk management will be organized in October. The workshop will aim to assist the Parties to develop the methodology and common risk profiles, enabling them to be prepared for implementation of joint risk management in line with CEFTA AP 5.
- Following the Business Process Analysis (BPA), conducted by the ITC, the validation of national maps and discussion of the findings will be organized in six CEFTA Parties in November. ITC will also present country specific recommendations for reforms that will remove bottlenecks in the region.
- CEFTA Parties presented the project with their needs for trainings within the preparation for AEO implementation. These needs comprise mostly of security and financial aspects of AEO. Hence, the project will organize trainings for improving their capacities in the identified areas.

3.6 COMPETITIVENESS

Programme reference:	IPA Multi-Country Programme 2017
Project title:	<i>Triple P Tourism in SEE: Promotion, Policy and Pilots</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 5,000,000
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans IPA Six
Type of contract:	Grant to the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)
Contract reference:	2017/392-591
Duration of activities:	19/12/2017 – 19/12/2020
Links:	https://www.rcc.int/tourism
Contact :	Jlenia Destito, Jlenia.DESTITO@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The objective of the Triple P Tourism in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) Promotion, Policy and Pilots (Triple P) project is to contribute to the economic growth and competitiveness of the Western Balkans region. It aims to do so through the consolidation of a fragmented tourism offer in the Western Balkans Six and the development of internationally competitive regional tourism routes and offers, which would attract more international tourists, lengthen their stay in the region, increase revenues and contribute to the increase of employment in the industry, as well as in the overall economy of the region.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Project team hired and in place as per Action Document within the RCC Secretariat.
- Detailed activity and expenditure plan developed for the 1st year of implementation.
- Communications plan and initial visibility tools developed:
 - project internet presentation <https://www.rcc.int/tourism>,
 - project brochure and
 - Project video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1ry1w-uGl4&feature=youtu.be>.
- National consultations held in each IPA Beneficiary, where the project priorities and plans were presented to the main stakeholders (line ministries for tourism, culture, environment, agencies, business and civil sector).
- Industry assessment performed in two priority sector niches, culture and adventure Policy assessment commenced, to identify main sector
- Regional dialogue re-convened, with the 7th Tourism Expert Group (TEG) meeting held on 27 June 2018.
- Product development well under way for the regional routes, with “Crossroads of Civilization” selected by the TEG as the overall brand for the regions tourism development and promotion. Following the industry assessments for the cultural and adventure tourism in the Western Balkans, as well as national consultations the TEG confirmed the routes and themes to be developed by “Triple P” Project, namely Via Dinarica trails expansion for the adventure routes, and for the cultural routes a combination of Roman archaeological sites, fortresses and fortified cities, and art & design of WWII monuments.
- “Triple P” Project officially launched on 28 June 2018 during the conference that presented the Project to the main stakeholders from the region and wide public.
- The Pilot grants Work Programme and Grant Applications Guidelines developed, in accordance with the EU and RCC rules on small grants.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- **Re-convened regional cooperation dialogue (RCC TEG)**
 - Consultations conducted in each IPA beneficiary; Confirmed TEG Coordinators and participants from line ministries, national tourism boards and business sector; Adopted TEG ToR.
 - Focus groups established in sector niches (culture and adventure) involving participants from horizontally linked institutions (i.e. ministries of culture, environment, etc.), agencies and business and civil sector.
- **Activity 1 – Product Development and Promotion**
 - Cultural Tourism Industry Assessment (with focus group consultations) completed and recommendations for regional routes proposed to TEG.
 - Adventure Tourism Industry Assessment (with focus group consultations) completed and recommendations for regional routes proposed to TEG.
 - Routes and Themes selected and confirmed by TEG, based on above industry assessments:

- Cultural: Spomeniks: Art and Design of Post WWII Monuments; Archaeological Sites of Roman Period; Crossroads of Civilization
- Adventure: Via Dinarica + sub-programs i.e. Trans Dinarica
- **Activity 2 – Policy Reform**
 - Policy needs determined as part of industry assessments
 - Tourism Policy Survey developed so as to solicit the input from the private sector on main industry obstacles
- **Activity 3 – Pilot Projects**
 - Grant Work Programme and the Guidelines for Applicants for the 1st Call for Proposals developed.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- **Product Development:** The coming semester will see intense product development efforts tailored for each selected route/theme based on the development level for each. Consultative meetings will be held focused on strategic and business model planning and development in particular for the Via Dinarica and the Spomeniks routes. For the Archaeology Sites of the Roman Period the core activities will focus on establishing cooperation with the existing EU certified cultural routes (i.e. Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route) and developing road map for new sites to be incorporated into the route. Finally, for the Crossroads of Civilizations brand development TA will be engaged to lead brand definition and guidelines development.
- **Promotion:** the following events and promotional efforts are planned for the next semester:
 - Regional events: Sarajevo Film Festival; Weekend Media Festival (promotion and developing the regional media pool for tourism)
 - International Trade Events/Fairs: Adventure Travel World Summit (main annual adventure trade event)
 - Other events to promotion: International Conference on Cultural Tourism in Europa (Triple P presentation); Cultural Routes of Advisory Forum 2018 (by invitation, TBC)
 - TA will be engaged to support the market outreach for the regional product
 - The development of the regional tourism online communication and cooperation platform will be launched
- **Policy**
 - Tourism Policy Survey will lead into the full tourism policy assessment that will seek to develop recommendations for improvements and solutions to key challenges.
- **Pilots**
 - 1st Call for Proposals scheduled to be announced on 16 July 2018 (<https://www.rcc.int/tourismgrants>)
 - Up to 10 grants will be awarded for implementation, as a support to regional tourism product development. Implementation period will be from October

2018 to May 2019, resulting in new and/or upgraded product elements and potentially new and/or improved skills for workforce.

- **Other**

- Annual Industry Survey to support the indicator monitoring process will be developed and launched
- 8th TEG meeting back to back with participation at the Closing Conference on European Year of Cultural Heritage

CHAPTER 4: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND NUCLEAR PROTECTION

One of the priorities for IPA assistance is to help Beneficiaries 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 transport and energy networks, energy efficiency and renewable energy as well as environment and social infrastructure. Close coordination with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) is essential and the EU technical assistance and investment grants instrumental for the projects to materialise.

4.1 WESTERN BALKANS INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK (WBIF)

The Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) was established in 2009 as a regional tool for EU enlargement. It supports socio-economic development and EU accession across the Western Balkans through the provision of financing and technical assistance to strategic investments. It pools resources from the European Commission's Instrument for Pre Accession (IPA) with those of the involved Financial Institutions (FIs), bilateral donors and the governments of the Western Balkans. The WBIF increases the region's capacity to finance crucial infrastructure and priority investments in line with accession priorities and enhances the overall coordination of assistance. The WBIF seeks to maximise the impact of grant financing by using it to leverage lending by the involved Financial Institutions to priority strategic investments as identified by the Western Balkan beneficiaries. Since its launch, the WBIF has developed a pipeline of priority investments of approximately EUR 16.8 billion. A grand total of 271 technical assistance (TA) and investment grants (INV) with a cumulative value of EUR 842 million have been awarded to 162 investment projects. The grants are used for project preparation, implementation, and co-financing of infrastructure investments for which financial support is provided by the partner organisations – CEB, EBRD, EIB, KfW, as well as by the World Bank Group in its capacity of participating organisation. The grant assignments are implemented by the Lead FIs or the European Commission. The implementation of EU grants, is carried out either under Commission awarded TA contracts - the Infrastructure Project Facility (IPF) and Contribution Arrangements with the European Western Balkans Joint Fund (EWBJF) Managers (EBRD & EIB) for the co-financing of connectivity projects. The European Commission is the largest contributor to the WBIF with a total of EUR 773 million channelled through the WBIF. Some EUR 474 million has been allocated for the co-financing of investments in the energy, transport and environment sectors under the Connectivity Agenda and the Municipal Window. Between 2009 and 2017, bilateral donors have contributed more than EUR 75 million to the EWBJF.

PURPOSE

The WBIF has three objectives: 1. To create a one-stop-shop, where a request for project support can be presented, screened, assessed, and, eventually, provided with the required financing for its implementation; 2. to pool different sources of funding (FIs, EC and bilateral

donors) and work out an appropriate blend of grants and loans for various actions; and 3. to strengthen the strategic and policy coordination of actions by multiple donors and investors that addresses the socio-economic priorities for the region. These socioeconomic priorities are accession-driven and relate to the alignment of the WB6 candidate countries and potential candidates with the EU acquis. WBIF activities are supported by the EC-financed IFI Coordination Office – see below for a more detailed description of its activities. The identification of priority projects is a result of consultations with other relevant DGs (Environment, Climate Action, Move, Energy, Regional Policy, Economic and Financial Affairs) thus ensuring coordination with their activities in the region.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Key activities under the WBIF work programme for the first half of 2018 included in particular the 19th TA call for proposals, and the assessment of the mature investment projects for co-financing under the connectivity agenda. Round 19 Technical Assistance (TA) call for proposals was launched in December 2017 and 14 applications were received for a total of EUR 25.2 million. The Project Financiers' Group (PFG) met in April 2018 in Skopje to discuss the screened and assessed grant applications. The Connectivity projects were politically endorsed during the EU -Western Balkan Summit in Sofia in May 2018.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The 19th Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the WBIF took place in Paris, June 2018, and was hosted by the French Ministry of Economy and Finance. Based on the recommendations of the PFG, the SC approved 11 TA grant requests for a total of EUR 22.3 million to projects in the environment, digital and transport sector. A new TA call for proposals were announced (TA Round 20) with a deadline for submitting applications of 7 September 2018.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FRO NEXT SEMESTER

The indicative work programme for the second half of 2018 includes the assessment and approval of TA Round 20 as well as the approval of INV Round 3 projects during SC meeting in Luxembourg in December. The INV grant call for proposals was open to all four sectors although the approval of environment and social sector projects is subject to availability of funds from bilateral donors' resources as IPA funds are limited to the financing of connectivity projects only. The next PFG meeting will be held in Brussels in November 2018. The next SC meeting will take place in December 2018 in Luxembourg.

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4.2 WBIF CONNECTIVITY INVESTMENT GRANTS

Programme reference:	IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2015-2016 (DN 2015/038-055 and 2016/038-727)
Project title:	<i>Contribution Arrangement with respect to the European Western Balkans Joint Fund under the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF)</i>

EU contribution:	EUR 144 900 000
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution Arrangement with the European Western Balkans Joint Fund managers (EBRD and EIB)
Contract reference:	CN 2016/375-830, CN 2016/375-855 and CN 2016/380-342
Duration of activities:	16.06.2016 – 31.12.2024
Links:	www.wbif.eu
Contact :	Judit Andrea GYORI, judit.gyori@ec.europa.eu

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

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

PURPOSE

The WBIF connectivity investment grants contribute improving connectivity within the Western Balkans, as well as between Western Balkans and the European Union, and will serve as a driver for economic growth, jobs and new investments in the region. The Western Balkans Six (WB6) indeed has made the connectivity agenda one of its highest priorities, with a special emphasis on the preparation and financing of major regional infrastructure investment projects.

In this context, the WBIF connectivity investment grants support the development of infrastructure investment connectivity projects (transport and energy) in the Western Balkans not only through technical assistance aimed at project preparation, but most importantly through the financing of a share of the actual investment costs.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The connectivity investment grants are approved on an annual basis by the WBIF Steering Committee. For the time being, the Steering Committee held three investment rounds and approved eight grants in December 2015 (round 0), three grants in December 2016 (round 1) and two grants in December 2017 (round 2). Investment round 3 is in assessment stage and approval of the selected projects is foreseen end of the year.

Several other important activities have taken place during the reporting period:

- Signature of the Contribution Arrangement for the IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2017-2018 (CN 2018/397-087 and 2018/397-088)
- Political endorsement of the 4th connectivity package at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia on 17 May 2018 - 9 investment grants from round 3 (EUR 180.6 million) and two technical assistance grants from round 19 (EUR 9.6 million)
- Continuation of construction works on four connectivity projects approved in 2015, and progress to the final stage of works tender on other two projects approved in 2015 and 2016 respectively
- Launch of WBIF investment round 4
- Written procedure for three Bosnian transport investment grants (that had been endorsed in Trieste in 2017 but that were not part of the package approved by the Steering Committee in December 2017) has been launched.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Initiation/continuation of construction activities in IPA II beneficiaries
- More than EUR 1 billion investment leveraged through the projects endorsed at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia on 17 May 2018, reaching a total investment volume of EUR 2.4 billion supported by EUR 698.2 million in grants under the Connectivity Agenda to date

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Finalisation of the assessment of the WBIF investment round 3 and approval by the Steering Committee in December 2018
- Decision of IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2018-2019 by end of 2018
- Commencement of works on two new connectivity transport projects
- Submission of applications in WBIF investment round 4
- Self-assessment of WBIF structure and processes with view to the future strategic and financial expansion of the WBIF as foreseen in the Western Balkan Strategy.

4.3 HORIZONTAL SUPPORT TO IFI COORDINATION (IFICO)

Programme reference: IPA I Multi-beneficiary Programme 2013 (DN 2013/024-091) and IPA II Multi-country Programme 2015 (DN 2015/031-609)

Project title: *Horizontal Support to Coordination with International Financial Institutions – IFI Coordination Office (i.e. IFICO2)*

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 and CN 2016/372-315

Duration of activities: 01.04.2014 – 31.01.2018

Link: www.wbif.eu

Contact: Antonio García Suárez, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu

Programme reference: IPA II Multi-country Action Programme for 2017 - part NEAR (DN 2017/039-402)

Project title: *Horizontal support to coordination with International Financial Institutions and bilateral donors in the Western Balkans (i.e. IFICO3)*

EU contribution: EUR 4.52 million

Beneficiary region: Western Balkans

Type of contract: Service contract with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Contract reference: CN 2018/395-656

Duration of activities: 27.02.2018 – 26.02.2020

Link: www.wbif.eu

Contact: Antonio García Suárez, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Overall support to the WBIF Secretariat
- Support to the WBIF Secretariat in the organisation and follow-up of the WBIF Project Financiers' Group meeting in April in Skopje and the Steering Committee meeting in June in Paris
- Support to the EC and beneficiaries on the grant applications to be financed from TA Round 20 and INV Round 3.
- Support during the yearly IFIs portfolio review
- Assistance to the WBIF Secretariat with updating the WBIF Rules of Procedure and the Vademecum
- Preparation of analyses and assessments on relevant topics, such as NIC implementation, youth education infrastructure projects for co-financing, ex-ante assessment for a new guarantee instrument for the Western Balkans
- Drafting of Terms of References for approved TA projects

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Supported preparation, organisation and follow-up of WBIF related meetings, in particular the Project Financiers Group meeting in Skopje and the WBIF Steering Committee meeting in Paris.
- Supported the EC and the WBIF Secretariat in the screening process for applications from TA Round 19 and preparation of INV Round 3.
- Maintained and developed new features for the WBIF website and MIS.
- Drafted and submitted 10 Terms of References for selected TA projects.
- Delivered the 2017 WBIF Annual Report bi-monthly reports of active WBIF projects.
- Finalised communication material including bilateral donor and sector factsheets.

- Delivered the bi-annual Monitoring Report and the bi-monthly reports of active WBIF IPF projects.
- Finalised the WBIF 2017 Annual Report.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuation of support to the WBIF.

4.4 WBIF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS FACILITIES (IPF)

Programme reference:	IPA I Multi-beneficiary Programmes 2011 (DN 2011/022-964) and 2012 (DN2012/022-966)
Project title:	<i>Infrastructure Projects Facility 3 – Technical Assistance Window</i>
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 and CN 2013/331-494
Duration of activities:	20.06.2012 – 30.09.2018
Links:	www.wbif.eu
Contact :	Antonio García Suárez, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu

Programme reference:	IPA II Multi-country Programme 2014 (DN 2014/031-603)
Project title:	<i>Support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework projects – Infrastructure Project Facility (extension IPF4 and IPF5)</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 35.54 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Specific Grant Agreement with the European Investment Bank
Contract reference:	CN 2015/368-253
Duration of activities:	17.12.2015 – 31.12.2020
Links:	www.wbif.eu
Contact :	Antonio García Suárez, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu
Programme reference:	IPA II Multi-country Programme 2015 (DN 2015/031-609)
Project title:	<i>Support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework projects – Infrastructure Project Facility 2015 (IPF 6)</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 26.12 million

Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Specific Grant Agreement with the European Investment Bank
Contract reference:	CN 2016/379-644
Duration of activities:	23.11.2016 – 31.12.2021
Links:	www.wbif.eu
Contact :	Antonio García Suárez, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu

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

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 also occasionally be provided during the implementation phase, for the preparation of tender dossiers and for the supervision of works, providing therefore support throughout the project cycle. In some exceptional cases, IPFs may be asked to provide ad-hoc advisory and technical assistance, for example for regional sector development studies.

To date, seven IPFs have been deployed. The European Commission has been managing directly the first three facilities, with the activities of the first two already completed. To ensure the implementation of WBIF technical assistance grants in the most efficient manner while minimising the administrative weight on the European Commission, it was decided that the EIB would manage the facilities from IPF4 and onwards.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY–JUNE 2018)

IPF3 has been assigned 26 technical assistance (TA) grants for implementation, using fully its resources. During the reporting period, work continued on 11 TA grants, with 5 fully completed and a further one substantially completed. The activities on the remaining TA grants are of a minor nature, mainly related to completion of final reports and obtaining beneficiary and IFI approvals. All will be completed by end of September 2018, when the service contract ends. Furthermore, IPF 3 continued developing the Regional Strategy for Sustainable Hydropower in the Western Balkans. In addition, to ensure a continuity of activities between the IFICO2 and IFICO3 service contracts, IPF 3 was also assigned some WBIF horizontal tasks, such as supporting the screening of TA Round 20 and INV Round 3, contribute to organisation of the subsequent WBIF meetings and the London Western Balkans summit, or draft the WBIF Communication & Visibility Guidelines and Plan.

IPF4 has been assigned 20 TA grants in all four WBIF sectors, using fully its resources. 11 TA grants have been completed, while 9 are still ongoing (6 transport, 1 social, 1 environment and 1 energy). All TA grants will be finalised by the end of December 2018, when the service contract ends. IPF4 has as well been assigned the preparation of 8 Terms of Reference, of which all had been completed and 7 approved by the end of the reporting period. The outstanding approval is due to a change of the beneficiary.

IPF5 began their activities in July 2016 and experienced a slow start due to delays in their receiving completed Terms of Reference, but the facility is now back on track. Currently there are 11 TA grants under implementation, all of which are progressing according to plan. One ad-hoc advisory assignment was allocated in February 2018, namely to assist DG ENERGY with a renewable energy and energy efficiency study, and the draft final report was produced in June 2018. Furthermore, 4 ToRs have been allocated, out of which one has been completed, with the remainder planned for completion in the next quarter. IPF5 have also been the first to seek VAT exemption in BiH since procurement for IPFs was outsourced to EIB. It has taken longer than expected to define the requirements for this and to carry out the necessary steps in the procedures, but an exemption certificate has eventually been issued at the end of June 2018.

IPF6 commenced its activities on 28 February 2017 and experienced as well a slow start, again because of delays in preparing the ToR. At present 11 assigned TA grants are under implementation and all 6 allocated Terms of Reference have been finalised and approved.

IPF 7 mobilised and commenced operations with a kick-off meeting on 09 April 2018 and have already received 12 TA grants to implement. In addition, they have been asked by DG NEAR to provide support in setting up the new Guarantee Facility and to take over the Regional Strategy for Sustainable Hydropower in the Western Balkans from IPF3.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY–JUNE 2018)

- 5 TA grants completed
- 8 TOR completed

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuation of the implementation of TA grants in the IPA II Western Balkans countries.

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

Programme reference:	IPA II Multi-country Action Programme for Connectivity 2015-2016 Part I (DN 2015/038-055)
Project title:	<i>Technical Assistance to Connectivity in the Western Balkans (CONNECTA)</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 7.03 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Service contract
Contract reference:	CN 2016/382-382
Duration of activities:	19.12.2016 – 18.12.2020
Contact :	Antonio García Suárez, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The CONNECTA facility:

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

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

Thus, CONNECTA boosts the "Connectivity Agenda" and supports the development of transport and energy interconnections within the Western Balkans and between this region and neighbouring Member States. It also supports the necessary acquis alignment regarding the TEN-T standards on the core network to be achieved by 2030.

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

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

PURPOSE

JASPERS is a technical assistance partnership between the European Commission and the EIB, which provides independent advice to beneficiary countries to help prepare high quality major projects to be co-financed through the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund. Besides, JASPERS is now also supporting the countries eligible for Cohesion Funds in the context of the Connecting Europe Facility. Since 2013, JASPERS has been expanding its services to the IPA countries (initially to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, since 2016 to all IPA countries including Turkey).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY–JUNE 2018)

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, to improve programming and subsequently the timing and quality of the projects.

JASPERS continued to offer their services to all IPA countries. As of 30 June 2018, JASPERS had 27 active assignments (11 in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 8 in Montenegro and 8 in Turkey), out of which 2 were initiated during the reporting period (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro). The contacts with the national authorities in Albania and Bosnia Herzegovina have not resulted in assignments yet. In Kosovo, initial discussions were held with the NIPAC office regarding three possible assignments (health, energy, project preparation) and a first fact-finding mission was scheduled for July 2018.

During the annual JASPERS Stakeholders meeting in Sofia on 14/15 June 2018, a separate session was dedicated to IPA countries, which was as well attended by DG NEAR. In addition,

JASPERS established and intensified contacts with CONNECTA with a view of identifying areas of cooperation.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY–JUNE 2018)

- 4 assignments completed (3 in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 1 in Montenegro)
- 1 leaflet produced (“JASPERS in IPA”)
- 25 missions (10 in Montenegro, 4 in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 5 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 6 in Turkey)

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

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

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

4.7 GREEN FOR GROWTH FUND (GGF)

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

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2018)

GGF continued to build-up a diversified portfolio and increased impact by transferring best practices across a broad spectrum of Partner Institutions (PIs). During first half of 2018, the GGF signed and/or disbursed 21 new investments to financial institutions, direct investments and corporates, amounting to EUR 94.5 million. In SEE, these new investments were related to one financial institution in Turkey, three microfinance institutions in Bosnia & Herzegovina and two project finance investments in Serbia and totaling EUR 42.9 million.

GGF continued to build upon its strong momentum, increasing the environmental impact of the Fund through considerable on-lending and outreach. GGF's cumulative sub-loan portfolio reached EUR 522.3 million in SEE and EUR 718.1 million in total by the end of Q2.

On the funding side, EUR 20 million new perpetual first-loss capital was provided by the EU for the Western Balkans in early January. Also during the period, substantial progress was achieved in the documentation of an additional EUR 8 million C Share investment and EUR 2 million TA contribution for the ENR-East from the Neighbourhood Investment Facility under trusteeship of KfW. Furthermore, the documentation of two investments in EUR 9 million ENR-South C Shares (EUR 5 million from the Luxembourg-EIB Climate Finance Platform and EUR 4 million from CAMENA, both under trusteeship of EIB) has been initiated and are expected to be closed by year-end. A EUR 25 million A Share commitment of EIB was signed shortly after quarter end in July. In addition, a EUR 20 million (USD equivalent) A Share commitment from FMO is in documentation.

The TA Facility approved 32 new projects with a total budget of EUR 1,201,052 in the first half of 2018. The current funding of the TA Facility benefited from a waterfall contribution of the Fund in the amount of EUR 0.5 million as well as from an extension of the EC Donation Addendums until end of 2019 (earmarked for projects in SEE) and 2021 (eligible for ENR-East), which will be executed in H2 2018.

With these contributions, and the approved EUR 2 million donation to the ENR-East region, the TA Facility is sufficiently funded in the near-term. However, to ensure availability of funding across all of its regions, the Facility will continue to seek further funding, particularly for the MENA region.

The Fund successfully held the Sustainable Future Forum on 27 June, a stakeholder meeting of 200 international leaders in climate and sustainable finance communities, as well as a new competition of innovative sustainable businesses or projects ("clim@ competition").

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2018)

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

- Total cumulative investment portfolio since inception: EUR 288.5 million.
- Number of active Partner Institutions (Q2): 27.
- Number of active target countries (Q2): 8.
- No asset impairments have been accorded.
- CO₂ Savings / CO₂ Reduction (Q2): 467,918 tons of CO₂/year (59%).
- Energy Savings (Q2): 1,701,566 MWh/year (56%).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The Fund will enter the second half of 2018 with a strong approved pipeline of EUR 93.7m, with investments under consideration, in particular in Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Georgia, Tunisia and Egypt.

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

The Fund will continue exploring the potential of investments which complement energy savings and/or CO₂ reductions by achieving measurable impact in water, waste and resource efficiency (“nexus investments”) in 2018. In addition, following Board approval of the implementation of L Shares, a new share class dedicated to facilitate local currency lending, in March, the Fund will particularly focus on the necessary amendments of the Fund’s documentation as well as intensify fund raising efforts with potential investors who have signaled their interest in investing in class L Shares.

4.8 RADIATION PROTECTION

Programme reference:	Horizontal programme on nuclear safety and radiation protection, IPA 2011/023-384
Project title:	<i>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)</i>
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:	Antonio García Suárez, Antonio.Garcia-Suarez@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The overall objective of this regional project is to improve the protection of the population and the environment from the harmful effects of ionising radiation, by enhancing the capabilities and capacity of regulatory bodies in 6 Western Balkan countries in the area of radiation protection, nuclear safety and security. To achieve this overall objective, the project aims to complete the transposition of the *EU acquis* into the legal system of 6 Western Balkan countries, support the development of specific regulations and arrangements, enhance the functioning of the regulatory bodies by implementing modern management systems and establishing strategic plans, provide needed training to the regulatory staff as well as resolve specific identified weaknesses. In short, the overall

objective is to complete the transition process in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia towards modern, EU aligned and IAEA compliant, safety standards.

ACTIVITIES

The most notable task completed during the reporting period was Task #2.1 / Transposition of the EU acquis. The activities included a series of workshops to complete the Tables of Concordance (TOC) of the new laws and regulations developed (or updated) by each beneficiary country in line with the EU acquis. Some of the countries are delayed with the formal adoption of laws and regulations and therefore full compliance was not achieved by the time of completion of the project. However, all countries have made considerable progress in transposing the EU acquis, as shows the table below, and all will continue to draft/amend their legislation and regulations and complete their TOCs at a later date.

	BiH	FYROM	KOS	MNE	SRB
Council Directives 2009/71 and 2014/87 (Nuclear Safety)	73%	97 %	73%	22%	76 %
Council Directive 2011/70 (Radioactive Waste)	42%	100 %	56%	65%	73%
Council Directive 2013/59 (Basic Safety Standards)	85 %	67 %	94 %	64 %	53 %
Council Directive 2013/51 (Drinking Water)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Council Directive 2006/117 (Shipment)	100%	100 %	100%	82%	100%

Task #2.2 / Development of regulatory procedures, has been completed in all countries. Specific procedures have been prepared, which the staff of the respective regulatory authorities will to continue to use and further develop. Under Task #2.5 / Strategic Plan and Management System, support has been provided for the finalisation of management system documentation. All countries developed their own management system and strategic plan and reviewed their organisational structure and the different job descriptions. Under Task #2.7 / Public Information continued, each of the beneficiary countries developed its own communication plan, which was then reviewed by the experts. Round tables were organised in five beneficiary countries, on various themes of relevance, for instance informing the public on the activities of respective regulators in each country, but also on the achievement of this project in enhancing the legal framework and regulatory oversight in radiological areas to the level as in the EU. All the roundtables were highly successful, with tens of participants from dozens of national organisations and media attending in each country.

The Final meeting took place on 24/25 May 2018 in Brussels, which also symbolically marked the completion of the IPA activities related to radiation protection, nuclear safety and security.

The project formally ended on 24 June 2018.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY–JUNE 2018)

- 5 roundtables
- 10 workshops
- 1 final meeting
- 6 communication plans
- 6 technical summaries
- 27 final task reports
- 6 sub-project final reports
- 1 project completion report

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY–JUNE 2018)

CONNECTA has been assigned a total of 10 sub-projects spread over all of the WB6 countries and covering both transport and energy. Five of the assignments are regional in nature covering road safety, road and rail maintenance, intelligent transportation systems for road and rail, improvement of border crossings and the first steps for the preparation of an inventory for public buildings which will assist in improving energy efficiency. The four regional transport projects are all implemented in close cooperation with SEETO and their aim is to fill gaps in the steps taken by the WB6 countries to reform their transport systems in alignment with the Connectivity Agenda. Three of the remaining sub-projects relate to transport infrastructure assignments in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. One sub-project covering the cost benefit analysis for a new gas interconnector in Bosnia and Herzegovina was completed during the reporting period.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY–JUNE 2018)

41 reports submitted, of which the most important are the Final Report for the gas interconnector in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the draft Final Report for the Road Safety Connectivity Transport Reform Measures. Another key deliverable was the cost estimate report for the Budva Road Bypass.

1 sub-project completed

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Continuation of work on ongoing sub-projects and start working on new sub-projects subject to additional funds.

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

Programme reference :	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2012/022-966
Project title:	<i>Regional Energy Efficiency Programme for the Western Balkans - REEP</i>
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-leep.org
Contact :	Antonio García Suárez, antonio.garcia-suarez@ec.europa.eu Wolfgang Schlaeger, wolfgang.schlaeger@ec.europa.eu

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.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

WINDOW 1 - PUBLIC SECTOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY, POLICY DIALOGUE, INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

THEME 1 ESCO SUPPORT

ESCO LEGISLATIVE WORK (POLICY DIALOGUE)

Legal analysis and contract templates for the ESCO energy performance contracting (EPC) and energy supply contracting (ESC) were prepared for all remaining countries. Updates were also provided to country templates that were previously completed.

ESCO PROJECT PREPARATION WORK

Project preparation was continued for 3 hospitals and 1 university in Serbia, and for 1 street lighting ESCO project in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Additionally in BiH, work was done on 2 studies for ESCO biomass district heating projects and the preparation of further technical support projects. In Croatia, 1 remaining assignment was prepared for completion.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue: All REEP policy deliverables (28 in total) were completed and submitted to the beneficiaries by December 2016. Of those, 16 have been

adopted as regulations, or are likely to be adopted by end-2018, or were implemented as intended. The remaining deliverables are currently at different stages of adoption and implementation, and the REEP team continues to follow up with the beneficiaries to clarify and assist, where possible, in the cases of delayed adoption.

WINDOW 2 (PART OF THE WEBSEFF PROGRAMME) – SUSTAINABLE ENERGY CREDIT LINES

During the reporting period, EBRD has obtained internal approval to increase the WebSEFF II credit line by up to EUR 25 million and has identified two PFIs in Serbia to take up the new funding. To support the additional on-lending, EBRD has submitted an official proposal to EU requesting the re-allocation of unutilized incentive funds for additional TC support. In the interim, the Project Consultant (PC) has focused entirely on Sub-project assessment for existing funds; during the period a total of 3 projects were assessed, 7 verification site visits were conducted and 13 Verification reports issued in total by the Verification Consultant (VC).

WINDOW 3 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DIRECT FINANCING FACILITY

No new projects were approved or signed during the first half of 2018. The biomass-fired CHP project that was evaluated and structured in the second half of 2017 did not proceed to approval due to lack of sufficient equity contribution and financial strength of the project sponsors. Two potential projects were identified for review (one SHPP in Albania and a biomass CHP project in Croatia), but did not show sufficient potential to be included in the pipeline.

During the period, one incentive payment of EUR 420,000 was made to a SHPP project in Montenegro whose completion was verified in 2017. No projects were completed during the current period, and thus no verifications took place.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

WINDOW 1 PUBLIC SECTOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY, POLICY DIALOGUE, INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

THEME 1 ESCO SUPPORT

ESCO LEGISLATIVE WORK (POLICY DIALOGUE)

Legal gap analyses as well as contract templates for ESCO projects, in particular energy performance contracting (EPC) and energy supply contracting (ESC), have been provided to the legislatures of the 5 Western Balkan countries. In some cases the countries received updates that incorporated the lessons learned from prepared ESCO projects.

ESCO PROJECT PREPARATION WORK

In BiH, the technical aspects of the Zenica hospital project were prepared which resulted in signing of a [loan agreement with the EBRD](#) (see REEP Plus, Window 4). Furthermore, studies for the 2 biomass ESCO district heating projects were completed.

In Serbia, tender documentation for ESCO projects in 3 hospitals and 1 university were provided, as well as for 1 biomass ESCO district heating project. As a result of REEP's support for tender preparation and tender/contract templates, more than 20 street lighting ESCO projects were [approved by the respective authority](#) and can proceed.

In Croatia, several prepared street lighting ESCO tenders have been published. Through the direct preparation of street lighting projects and by municipalities copying the REEP-supported tender and contract templates, 38 street lighting projects have been initiated in Croatia.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue: No REEP policy outputs this reporting period, as the work transitioned into REEP Plus (please see the REEP Plus section).

WINDOW 2 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY CREDIT LINES

EUR 92 million funding to PFIs is fully allocated of which EUR 91.4 million has been disbursed to PFIs to finance eligible sub-projects.

By the end of H1 2018, 304 sub-projects have been approved and loans signed for a cumulative total of EUR 79.49 million. Of those, 4 were signed in H1 2018 for EUR 0.98 million.

13 sub-projects were successfully verified by the Verification Consultant in H1 2018. To reporting end date, EUR 5.2 million has been paid in investment incentives to sub-borrowers of which EUR 0.495 million was paid out in H1 2018. As of end of June 2018 the total (equivalent) primary energy savings is 499,695 (MWh/y), with CO₂ emissions saving of 116,897 (tonnes/y).

WINDOW 3 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DIRECT FINANCING FACILITY

At 30 June 2018, the EBRD had approved 7 projects under the second phase of the WeBSEDF: 4 small hydropower plant projects in Albania, BiH, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, 1 biomass project in BiH, and 2 biogas projects in Serbia. The amount of finance provided is EUR 31.9 million (of which EUR 6.0 million is still not committed). The implementation of these projects will add up to 25.9 MW of electricity generation capacity, with annual production of 253.5 GWh and will lead to estimated CO₂e emission reductions of 339,826 tonnes per year. Of these 7 projects, 5 have been completed and verified, 1 will be completed and verified during the second half of 2018 and the last one is still in early stages of implementation. (Note that the latter project may not be fully completed due to lack of funds by the sponsors.) In total, the 7 projects will qualify for up to EUR 2.14 million worth of incentive payments, if all are completed.

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)

The policy support for ESCOs under REEP has been concluded, however it is anticipated that further clarifications and adjustments will likely be needed in the future (as for all policy and legislation).

ESCO (PROJECT PREPARATION WORK)

Follow-up on the prepared projects in Serbia and BiH will take place in the next period, and support will be provided to additional projects.

A new technical assignment will seek to initiate projects in the remaining countries.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue: The progress in adoption of the deliverables will be continuously monitored by the REEP team, so as to take timely action to prevent delays as appropriate.

WINDOW 2 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY CREDIT LINES

Activities next period will focus on continuation of project assessments and sub-loan signings by PC/PFIs in order to fully utilise the existing EBRD funding. Following the recent increase in the credit line, the EBRD will also seek to sign loan agreements with 2 additional PFIs in late 2018/early 2019, and to begin project origination and pipeline development for these PFIs.

WINDOW 3 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DIRECT FINANCING FACILITY

One project will be completed in the second half of 2018, and may be verified before the end of the year, with the incentive payment of EUR 380,000 payable in the first half of 2019.

During the period, efforts will also be made to identify and add another 1-2 projects to the pipeline and progress with their approval to allow for the full utilisation of the WeBSEDF.

Programme reference :	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2016/039-858
Project title:	<i>Regional Energy Efficiency Programme for the Western Balkans – REEP Plus</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 30 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution Arrangement with the WBIF Joint Fund

Contract reference:	CN 2017/383-636
Duration of activities:	21/06/2017 – 21/06/2021
Links:	http://: www.wb-reep.org
Contact :	Antonio García Suárez, antonio.garcia-suarez@ec.europa.eu Wolfgang Schlaeger, wolfgang.schlaeger@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The REEP Plus programme builds on of the success of REEP in it's aim to establish a sustainable market for energy efficient financing of private and public sector in the Western Balkans. REEP Plus will scale up previous investments in sustainable energy opportunities and expand the scope of support to allow for the continuation of on-going activities as well as extending the programme to include the residential sector.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

WINDOW 1 - POLICY DIALOGUE AND ESCO DEVELOPMENT

Theme 1 ESCO Support: The new technical support assignment has now begun, and will begin to identify and initiate new ESCO projects in continuation of the previous programme (REEP).

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue: All seven priority assignments identified at the start of REEP Plus (Q1'2017) have started and are at different stages of implementation.

In this reporting period, new policy assignments were agreed with beneficiaries and have started as follows: Albania – support for EED harmonisation (pending waiver letter); FYR – drafting of Energy Efficiency Law (primary law); Kosovo – further support for EPBD/MESP regulations.

In addition, in response to feedback communicated by most beneficiaries about the complexity of the implementation of EED Art.7 (EEO schemes /alternative measures), the REEP Plus team initiated a regional activity “Development and application of a ‘framework roadmap’ for Energy Efficiency Obligation Schemes”. The Roadmap is a tool to distil international best-practice into a clear and consistent framework for designing and identifying suitable interventions to address barriers/gaps in EEO schemes (existing or planned).

WINDOW 2 (PART OF THE WB GEFF PROGRAMME) – SUSTAINABLE ENERGY CREDIT LINES

Three Loan Agreements with PFIs were signed in this period for a total of EUR 15 million, as follows:

- TEB, Kosovo – EUR 5 million (10 January 2018)
- Partner, BiH – EUR 5 million (29 March 2018)
- Erste, Serbia – EUR 5 million (29 June 2018)

On-lending to sub-borrowers continued this period, and all ten PFIs are now actively signing sub-loans for residential projects under WB GEFF.

The Project Consultant (PC) Kommunalkredit established two regional hub offices in H1 2018 – one in Belgrade, Serbia and one in Tirana, Albania. In addition, well-attended launch events were held in Pristina (16th March) and Skopje (30th April) to mark the start of GEFF activities in Kosovo and FYR Macedonia, respectively. GEFF Marketing campaigns featuring digital, billboard and radio advertising were held in BiH, Kosovo and Macedonia, many country- and PFI-specific marketing materials were produced, and the PC participated in several conferences and events to promote the Facility. The PC also spent a significant amount of time on trainings for PFI staff, vendor meetings and Technology Selector (TS) population for all countries of operation. The Serbian TS was successfully launched in March of 2018.

WINDOW 3 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DIRECT FINANCING FACILITY

Implementation of this Window has not begun in earnest yet, as there is still availability of funding under the REEP programme.

WINDOW 4 DIRECT LENDING TO MUNICIPALITIES

A first project was signed during the reporting period – Energy Efficient Refurbishment of Zenica Hospital (27 June) for which EUR 1 million (10% of estimated investment cost) has been earmarked from grant funds. Marketing of Window 4 continued in this period in several WB countries and several new leads have been identified.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

WINDOW 1 - POLICY DIALOGUE AND ESCO DEVELOPMENT

Theme 1 ESCO Support: The assignment is only starting and there are no outputs to report.

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

Albania – Policy Options report and workshop with beneficiary and TWG, based on which a detailed roadmap for transposing EPBD secondary regulations was agreed with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy.

BiH Republika Srpska – Work Plan report with analysis of current status and proposed approach for EPBD transposition, workshop with beneficiary (Minsitry of) and TWG; Policy Options Report.

BiH Federation – Draft databses to refine the energy calculation software required to support implementation of the EPBD.

FYR Macedonia – Draft Energy Efficiency Law; Policy Options reports and workshops with beneficiary (Minsitry of Economy) and TWG regarding EED Articles 4, 5, 7.

Kosovo – Draft Regulation on Minimum Energy Performance Requirements, scheduled for review by beneficiary (Minstry of Environment and Spatial Planning) and TWG in H2'2018.

Montenegro - the project delivered Ecodesign rulebooks that will place minimum energy performance requirements on domestic room air conditioners / fans, refrigerators, directional and LED lamps, and standby systems. These have been formally adopted and published in the official gazette during the reporting period. Several trainings with market surveillance authorities have been delivered along with associated templates for conducting the assessments.

Serbia (EED) – Status Review report (including options analysis) and workshops with beneficiary (Ministry of Mining and Energy) and TWG on Serbia’s energy efficiency policy mix position with respect to EED Article 7.

Serbia (EPBD) – Kick-off, Work Plan report and Scoping report (including options analysis and recommendations) and workshops with beneficiary (Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure) and TWG on transposing EPBD secondary regulations.

WINDOW 2 (PART OF THE WB GEFF PROGRAMME) – SUSTAINABLE ENERGY CREDIT LINES

The Facility now totals EUR 39.5 million in PFI loans to 10 PFIs in BiH, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. In H1 2018, the 10 active PFIs signed a total of 217 sub-loans with a combined value of EUR 1.16 million. In addition, EUR 28,783 of incentives payments were disbursed to sub-borrowers with successfully verified sub-projects.

To date, a cumulative total of EUR 1.49 million has been signed in 281 sub-loans, and EUR 51,525 has been disbursed as incentives to sub-borrowers.

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility No outputs under this window to date.

WINDOW 4 DIRECT LENDING TO MUNICIPALITIES

Energy Efficient Refurbishment of Zenica Hospital was signed as the first transaction under this Window in June 2018.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

WINDOW 1 - POLICY DIALOGUE AND ESCO DEVELOPMENT

THEME 1 ESCO SUPPORT

Initiation and preparation of more energy efficiency ESCO projects will continue in the next period.

THEME 2 ENERGY EFFICIENCY POLICY DIALOGUE

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

- Albania: Draft regulations under EPBD will be submitted to the government.

- Finalisation of the first round of EPBD support for BiH, both in Federation and Republika Srpska.
- FYR Macedonia: Finalisation of the Energy Efficiency Law and agreement with beneficiary on activities for relevant secondary regulations.
- Kosovo: Finalisation of Minimum Energy Performance Requirements regulation under EPBD, as well as associated changes to relevant Administrative Instructions including EPCs.
- Montenegro: Delivery of additional market surveillance trainings and provide further ad-hoc support to energy labelling / ecodesign regulations.
- Serbia EED: Finalisation of assistance for EED Article 7 implementation.
- Serbia EPBD: Delivery of cost-optimality analysis and draft regulatory amendments.
- Pending progress in adoption of REEP deliverables and status of first round of REEP Plus assignments - organise country missions to discuss support needs, and the timing and topics for a next round of policy assignments;
- Planning of local/regional awareness-raising event on the energy efficiency policy work.

WINDOW 2 (PART OF THE WB GEFF PROGRAMME) – SUSTAINABLE ENERGY CREDIT LINES

In the next semester, EBRD will start implementation in Albania (2 PFIs) and continue discussions with 2 PFIs in Montenegro and 2 PFIs in Serbia with the aim of signing the remaining EUR 45.5 million in financing by end of Q1 2019. Launch events for both Albania and Serbia are planned for Q3 2018, and the PC also plans to jointly participate in several fairs and conferences with PFIs in Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia and BiH. Training and development of marketing strategies will be prioritised for the new-to-join PFIs. Finally, the Technology Selectors for Albania and Montenegro and are expected to launch in October and December of 2018.

WINDOW 3 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DIRECT FINANCING FACILITY

During the second half of 2018, efforts will begin to identify potential projects for financing and develop a pipeline of suitable projects.

WINDOW 4 DIRECT LENDING TO MUNICIPALITIES

EBRD will continue to market the products eligible to public authorities and to identify projects for funding under this window.

CHAPTER 5 : ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

5.1 FLOOD RESPONSE

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, IPA II 2014/037-853
Project title:	<i>Prevention, preparedness and response to floods in the Western Balkans and Turkey - Lot 2</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 4 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant
Contract reference:	ECHO SUB/2014/ 707177
Duration of activities:	22/07/2015 – 30/03/2018
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 (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Final (4th), Steering committee meeting on 18 January 2018 in Brussels.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Final report of the project, September 2018

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

No activities, project will have finished.

5.2 DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, IPA II 2015/038-052
Project title:	<i>Disaster Risk Assessment and Mapping</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 2 999 250
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey

Type of contract:	Procurement
Contract reference:	ECHO SER/2016/740641
Duration of activities:	01/12/2016 - 01/12/2019
Links:	http://www.ipadram.eu/
Contact :	Biljana Zuber, biljana.zuber@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

Improving beneficiary countries' national systems for disaster loss data collection, risk assessment and mapping, and alignment with and integration into the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Participation of the beneficiaries in the Civil Protection Forum in Brussels, March 2018.
- Second regional workshop on disaster loss data held in June 2018 in Turkey.
- International training for Disaster Risk Reduction in Sweden took place in June 2018.
- Beneficiary experts attended "exchange of experts" programme with Slovenia on Disaster Loss data system in June 2018.
- 3rd Steering committee meeting in June 2018 in Turkey.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Report on lessons learned on disaster loss data indicators and procedures
- Reports per country on recommendations on developing and improving disaster loss data collection and sharing
- Electronic Risk Assessment Atlas (ERRA) concept note
- Exchange of experiences by exchange of experts
- Progress report of the activities

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Finalising and consolidating all national Plans of Action with precise planning of activities
- Three advisory missions in September to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. Main topic of the missions will be Electronic Risk Assessment Atlas (ERRA) and a follow up on Risk assessment and Mapping, Disaster Loss Data
- Technical workshop organised jointly with United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN ISDR) in September in Montenegro on Disaster Loss data
- Attending the Disaster risk Reduction Balkan conference in September in Belgrade
- 4th Steering committee meeting in November in Slovenia.

5.3 PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT

Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme for 2016 - part CLIMA, IPA 2016/039-320
Project title:	<i>Technical assistance towards the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 0.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service contract
Contract reference:	22020401/2017/760926/SER/CLIMA
Duration of activities:	15 months (1 month extension was approved)
Links:	www.ripap.eu
Contact:	Ivana Mijatovic Cernos, Ivana.Mijatovic-Cernos@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

RIPAP (Regional Implementation of Paris Agreement Project) overall purpose is to contribute to climate change mitigation, and adaptation and the development towards a resource-efficient, low-emissions and climate-resilient economy.

This is done through policy dialogue, training and hands-on assistance to the Western Balkans and Turkey.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY- JUNE 2018)

Study visit of the MNE delegation to the Slovenian ETS competent authority, Ljubljana, SLO **13-14 Nov.** (7 participants)

High-level regional event on Talanoa dialogue under UNFCCC, Podgorica (MNE), **7 Feb**, 2018 (26 participants)

Regional workshop on national GHG inventory systems, Podgorica (MNE), **8-9 Feb**, 2018 (41 participants)

Regional workshop on modelling systems and tools for preparing GHG emission projections, Skopje, (FYROM), **14-16 May**, (36 participants)

High-level EU-Serbia Talanoa dialogue under UNFCCC, Belgrade, (SRB), **16 May** (60 participants)

Technical national workshop on the EU Emissions Trading System, Belgrade (SRB), **17 May**, (8 participants (12 participants)

Expert mission to prepare the implementation of the EU ETS, Belgrade (SRB) **18 May** (12 participants)

Regional workshop on priority GHG emissions and removal categories, Skopje (FYROM), **5-6 June** (31 participants)

OUTPUTS (JANUARY- JUNE 2018)

Future Montenegrin ETS competent authorities have better insight into their responsibilities and also they have better grasp of the relevant EU acquis.

Participants from the Ministries of Environment and Energy respectively have better understanding of their obligations under the Paris Agreement, and also their EU obligations in terms of emission reductions.

National GHG experts have better understanding of GHG inventory process; have improved their technical knowledge in compiling GHG inventory data, also in preparing the GHG inventory reports.

National modelling and GHG experts have improved knowledge on modelling systems and tools for preparing GHG emission projections.

Serbian stakeholders, involved in implementation of Paris Agreement have better understanding of the process, and their obligations.

Competent authorities and major ETS installations increased understanding, through in-depth discussions on the implementation of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) on their responsibilities, timelines and also assistance available in the process.

Competent authorities and the representatives of the Serbian electricity supply company increased knowledge on the pros and cons of decarbonisation of Serbian industry and electricity sector; the operational requirements of the EU ETS for the Serbian industry and electricity sector; options and requirements for EU ETS related support mechanisms to stimulate innovation; and EU ETS implementation in the scope of Serbia's EU Accession process.

National inventory experts increase knowledge and understanding on priority GHG emissions and removal categories for compiling of GHG inventory systems and reports.

Additionally, the project has designed and launched website (www.ripap.eu), prepared logo and 1000 leaflets to distribute in order to increase the visibility. Three newsletters on ETS have been prepared and disseminated.

National inventory experts increased understanding on reporting on emissions coming from sectors of LULUCF and F-gases.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Regional Workshop on GHG modelling from energy sector, 19-20 September, Tirana (ALB)
- High-level Energy Community and RIPAP Talanoa meeting, 10 October, Vienna (AUS)
- National Technical Workshop on ETS requirements, (date to be confirmed), Ankara, (Turkey)
- Steering Committee Meeting, end of October.

CHAPTER 6: CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA

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

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

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

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

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

Link to the guidelines:

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

Civil Society Facility

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

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

- Support/technical assistance (TACSO) for local civic initiatives and capacity building, thereby enforcing the role of civil society at national level;
- Actions to build partnerships and develop networks between CSOs, businesses, trade unions and other beneficiary social partners and their counterparts in the EU to promote transfers of knowledge and experience. The main instruments (implementation modalities) of the action at regional level are the Framework Partnerships Agreements (FPAs), functional to create long-term CSOs coalition building and re-granting schemes for smaller organization;

A "People 2 People" (P2P) programme to bring a variety of organisations in the ELARG region into contact with EU institutions and European-level counterparts. These include CSO representatives, human rights and minority defence activists, NGOs dealing with *acquis-*

related subjects, journalists, young politicians and trade union leaders. TACSO has taken over the management of the third strand, the P2P programme applying a demand driven approach.

6.1 ACTION GRANTS

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme, IPA 2016/038-960 and IPA 2017 / 038-961
Project title:	<i>Support to regional thematic networks of Civil Society Organisations – Long-term Grants</i>
EU contribution:	EUR ca. 16 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	17 Grants
Duration of activities:	January 2018 – December 2021
Contacts:	Lucia Santuccioni, Lucia.SANTUCCIONE@ext.ec.europa.eu Maria Esposito, maria.esposito@ec.europa.eu Kristina Vujic, kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu Karl Giacinti, karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

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

BAN - The Balkans ACT (Against Crime of Trafficking) Now! - Phase III (2017/394-348) – Regional kick off meeting for all partners was launched in March 2018 Tirana and the partners have updated their knowledge on project activities, time lines, operational, financial, communication and visibility requirements for the project implementation. In the initial months of the project implementation, a final draft Accountability Charter, setting the joint working principles for all partners, as well as the Comparative Research and Analysis of the National Rapporteur Mechanism were elaborated. The Comparative Research will support national THB mechanism to decide on the most adequate future National Rapporteur system. BAN Monitoring tool and National Rapporteur mechanism have been introduced into the THB National Strategy final draft Action Plan for 2019-2020 in Serbia. Presentation and introduction of the Monitoring tool into the national policy papers in this stage will allow more efficient work on the adaptation of the national indicators in the coming period. National THB partners in Serbia have agreed to use BAN monitoring tool as a

national instrument, which will provide better cooperation between police, prosecutor's office and the court and enhance establishment and support to the National Rapporteur mechanism. National working groups for adjusting the Monitoring tool indicators into the national context have been established in Albania and a three working sessions took place in May – Jun 2018. In the upcoming months, a Regional Action Plan Meeting, together with Regional Co- applicants meeting, and Steering Board meeting will take place in Sarajevo from 29 Oct – 02 Nov. During the Meetings, Yearly Plan of activities 2019-2020 will be agreed. Preparations for establishing of all national Monitoring tool's Working groups will be done. Preparatory activities for launching tender for local grass root civil society organisations' granting will be finalised, as well as the capacity building trainings for THB monitoring of the local grass root organisations in partners' countries.

WeB4YES – Western Balkan Civil Society Organization for Youth Employment Support (2017/394-387). The Project addresses the challenges of insufficient cooperation among the civil society actors and public authorities in Western Balkan in policy processes regarding youth unemployment. Starting from December 2017 project has already significantly contributed to the establishment of a structured dialogue on national and WB level between key stakeholders in the field. Six National Fora on Youth Employment were formed, offering a platform for dialogue at the national level in: Serbia, Montenegro, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo. National Fora involved so far more than 130 representatives from key stakeholders, focusing on consultations regarding the National Reports on Youth Employability and National Reports on Active Labor Market Measures for Youth, developed by the project consortium. Bringing the discussion to the regional level, the Regional Forum on Youth Employment was held in Skopje to contribute strengthen the cooperation of relevant stakeholders and exchange of know-how in pursuing feasible policies and practices for youth employment. Regional Forum gathered more than 70 participants from European and regional institutions, public institutions including ministries, business, civil society organizations and young people. Resulting from the process, two regional reports and policy briefs were created, one for youth employability and other for active labour market measures for youth. In order to offer a comprehensive regional e-service platform for employment and labor mobility the portal [WEB4JOBS](#) was drafted (beta version). [Project website](#), [FB page](#) and [Instagram](#) channels were launched. Moreover, partners utilized their communication channels leading to the extensive dissemination activities (in total 30 FB posts, 16 Instagram posts, 16 website articles and 10 reports in diverse media from the region).

Regional Youth Compact for Europe (2018/395-387) aims to contribute to empowerment of CSOs, particularly the youth organizations, in WB and Turkey, to more effectively participate in reforms relative to the EU accession negotiation process, to dialogue with governments and influence policy through consolidating platforms for regional cooperation, fostering participative culture and promoting active citizenship, accountability of government to citizens and society and nurturing common European identity. Project is being implemented by 14 partners from the Region, most of them already members of the ALDA network. Project implementation started on April 21, 2018, with preparatory activities on defining project procedures and setting up the Project Management Team, which held its first meeting on June 28-29, 2018 in Belgrade. Meeting of all partners resulted with Activity plan for the first year of project implementation, and preparation of the outline for

Communication Strategy of the project, that is to be prepared during the summer. Next activity on the field will be Training for the Network Members, which aims to provide exchange of knowledge and experience among co-applicants for participation in various forms of structured evidence-based dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

The Time is Now: Consolidating Regional Efforts for Advancing LGBTI Rights and Equality in the Western Balkans and Turkey 2017/394-394 aims to advocate and improve protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people (LGBTI) in the Western Balkans and Turkey. During the first half of the year, partner organizations have prepared and submitted shadow reports on the implementation of the Recommendation CM(2010)5 to the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe. A number of advocacy meetings were held with members of parliament, state officials and government representatives from different ministries. Partners from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were advocating with the Inter-Party Parliamentarian group on LGBTI for support of the new antidiscrimination law which includes both sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds, while partners from Albania were advocating on the adoption of the new law on housing that specifically includes LGBTI people as beneficiaries. Partners from Serbia were monitoring the modification of the law on amendments to the law on registry books, which regulates the legal recognition of transgender people in Serbia for the first time. Partners from Turkey were campaigning to condemn the ban of the Pride March, while others marked IDAHOT day and Pride month with different events. During the whole period, support to the LGBTI community was provided through psycho-social support, shelter for LGBTI people living under risk of homelessness (in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania) and free legal aid. In Serbia only during the last six months 7 complaints were filed to the Commissioner for Protection of Equality. For 2 of them, the Commissioner filed criminal complains. The project team has been working on setting up procedures for providing financial support to grass-root CSOs, which will be launched by the end of the year.

SIGN Up for Impact: Philanthropy Development for Stronger Civil Society (2018/395-435). In March 2018, the SIGN Network launched the *SIGN Up for Impact* project that will be implemented until September 2021 in 5 IPA beneficiaries in the Western Balkan region. The project aims to enhance the impact of civil society in policy and decision making processes in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, by improving legal and financial environment for philanthropy development and contributing to civil society greater financial sustainability, independence and legitimacy. In the previous period, SIGN partners developed a detailed project implementation strategy and conducted the necessary preparation activities needed for the successful launch of their advocacy initiatives, outreach activities and their capacity building and sub-granting component. A kick-off coordination meeting was held, several promotional events were organised, along with the meeting of Western Balkans Community Foundations Initiative that is currently designing a long-term strategy for development of this field in the region. In the following period, the SIGN partners will continue conducting their advocacy efforts, produce a public opinion survey on philanthropy in all project implementation countries and create their communication strategy, accompanying visuals and outreach channels. SIGN will also build its own pool of trainers in local resource mobilization and launch a Call for Applications for their capacity building and subgranting program that will be published in

December 2018.

ENV.Net “Factoring the Environmental Portfolio for WB and Turkey in The EU Policy Agenda” - 2017/394-372 The project is aimed at factoring the environmental portfolio for the Western Balkans and Turkey region in the EU policy agenda. The network also aims to generate region-representative evidence-supported input to contribute to EU discussions on matters of climate change and environment, and to explore and introduce to the region new inter-related aspects such as circular economy. Since its *regional kick-off meeting in Tirana in mid-February*, the project has worked on the revision and further elaboration of the existing monitoring matrix to include all newly introduced legislation fields subject to monitoring. The monitoring matrix represents the most succinct and thorough tool covering changes and developments in the field of environment and climate change in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The matrix will be made available online in a reviewed, user-friendlier format at the end of September 2018. Moreover, the project partnership has worked and produced a Circular Economy Methodology, a novelty at regional level, which will serve as the basis of the national and regional reports to be produced on an annual basis. The reports for 2018 will be presented in a dedicated regional conference on Circular Economy, to be held in Belgrade (Serbia) end of November 2018. Representatives from [ENV.Net](#) participated to the Civil Society Consultative Meeting on Circular Economy organised by the EC Delegation in Tirana in July. In addition, representatives from the network participated also to the TAIEX High Level Regional Workshop on Circular Economy held in Tirana on July 18-19, 2018. Numerous activities have taken place locally in Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkey in the form of advocacy campaigns (such as on the week of Earth Day celebrations); guest lectures to local universities (in Belgrade and Tirana); site visits to localities with environmental issues (also covered by foreign press, as is the case of the German Newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*).

GEAR – Green Economy for Advanced Region (2017/394-354) aims to increase the activities and impact of CSOs from the region in the environmental protection through networking, strengthening their capacities and promoting green economy and green entrepreneurship. The main activities of this three-year project, whose implementation started in March 2018, include a capacity building programme for CSOs on green economy, public advocacy and lobbying, participation in decision making, project cycle management, etc., sub-granting for local CSOs, regional conferences on green economy, development of a study on possibilities for the development of green economy in the target region, promotional campaigns, etc. So far, the project partners including FORS Montenegro as the Coordinator, SMART Kolektiv from Serbia, the Center for Development and Support from Bosnia and Herzegovina, EDEN Center from Albania, Eko-Svest from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Association Slap from Croatia, have worked on the visual identity of the project, on publications on Green Economy, at the organisation of the project kick-off meeting, on familiarisation meetings with local CSOs, and on preparation of the first trainings for CSOs which will be held in autumn. In addition to that, several media activities were held in order to announce the project. Until the end of 2018, the partnership will work on the Strategy of the Network for Green Economy, on joint capacity building events for CSOs – trainings on Green Economy, Public Advocacy and Lobbying, Participation in Decision Making and Project Cycle Management, on the distribution of the manuals and brochures on Green Economy and Green Entrepreneurship, on the preparation of the Calls for proposals for local CSOs and

media campaigning.

NAGE – Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy (2018/395-379). The project is implemented by a partnership of six rural development networks from the Balkans and one rural development network from EU, all acting jointly through the Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN). The project aims to provide support in enhancing the policy and decision-making impact of BRDN and its constituents, through their involvement in the agricultural and rural program and policy reform processes for the introduction of the green economy concept. The action will encourage grassroots involvement, networking and advocacy to advance the issue of environmental protection and green entrepreneurship, offering evidence-based policy solutions.

The project started in April with the process of team setting. In the reporting period a coordination meeting among partners was held and Partnership agreements were signed with the partners. The experts to draft the Communication and Visibility Plan, the Media Advocacy Plan and the Internal progress monitoring and Financial management procedures of the NAGE project were selected.

In the coming period, training of trainers will be organized for the BRDN member organizations for capacity building trainings on management, advocacy, lobbying and networking, and green economy and entrepreneurship. The gained knowledge will be further disseminated to grassroots CSOs in each of the implementing countries. Furthermore, green entrepreneurship caravans will be used in all of the targeted countries.

IRIS NETWORKing (CN 2017/394311) – CSOs for protection sensitive migration management is a new regional initiative developed by the IDC (Serbia) and its partners from ASB SEE (Germany), SOS Podgorica, LIR CD (Bosnia and Herzegovina), La Strada (fYRoM) and Initiative ARSIS (Albania). The Project aims to contribute to the improvement of service delivery and policy framework related partnership building meetings and broadening of the organization network, the reporting period was marked by mapping the needs of migrants coming through Western Balkans and assessing the level of social services available to them. Since the migration transition route shifted from Bulgaria through Serbia to EU member states to route from fYRoM, Albania and Montenegro to Bosnia and Herzegovina, IDC as a lead applicant and the organization with decade long experience in refugee and migrant related projects, is transferring its experience and knowledge to its partners in these countries. The Project was presented at the Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth as one of the 7 projects representing concrete and effective ways of implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights organized by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion on April 27, 2018 in Brussels.

Empowering CSOs in Combatting Discrimination and Furthering Women’s Labour Rights (2018/394-402): The project kicked off in March. Since then, all partners held the first Regional Networking Meeting, during which they held strategic discussions regarding the Annual Work Plan, internal and external communication, and the research methodology. The main activity was to carry out research on discrimination: partners analysed the legal framework in each country, conducted literature reviews, elaborated stakeholder analyses, and finalised the detailed methodology. The main planned activities/expected results for the upcoming reporting period (July - December) are: literature reviews, interviews, survey, and

drafting of country and regional reports on gender-based discrimination. The outreach plan, visibility materials and meetings with relevant stakeholders will be completed as well. All partners will have conducted Organizational and Advocacy Capacity Assessments and developed Capacity Development Plans.

The European Union, Innovation & Media Partnerships for Action, Collaboration and Transformation in the Western Balkans - EU-IMPACT-WB (2017/394-404) The overall objective of the project is for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), young entrepreneurs and social innovators to work collaboratively to use new media tools more effectively to create new jobs and promote socio-economic reforms issues in the Western Balkans. The project focused on its preparatory activities which were completed successfully (the project management team was established, the project steering committee and the project advisory members identified, the visibility and communication plan was completed). Representatives of the coordinating organization attended a Project-Kick off conference organized by the European Commission in Brussels. In total 87 informative and coordination meetings were held during the reporting period with key stakeholders (relevant government ministries/agencies, municipalities and other relevant ongoing EU funded projects) in the region to explore future synergies. The relevant memoranda were drafted for the Ministry for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Kosovo (for project co-financing) and it will be signed at the beginning of the next reporting period.

Western Balkans Pulse for Police Integrity and Trust - POINTPULSE (2017/391-807) This project seeks to contribute to increased trust and confidence in the police services in the Western Balkans, by fighting corruption and promoting police integrity, through activities of the regional civilian oversight network: POINTPULSE (<http://pointpulse.net/>). It builds on previous IPA funded actions implemented by POINTPULSE. In the first half of 2018 six panel discussions were organized, focusing on police integrity and public communication of police through media and social networks. Researchers from the POINTPULSE advocated the improvement of the 2016 Law on Police in Serbia and published 19 short policy outputs and insights, as well as a policy study on the level of police presence in the Western Balkans social media platforms. Op-ed on security issues for the London Summit within the Berlin Process was prepared based on the POINTPULSE research findings. The POINTPULSE compared different statistics of policing in the Western Balkans and visually presented “Balkan Cops” map with 10 info-graphics on the website which continues to be regularly updated. In the coming period Six national and one comparative research reports on public perception of police integrity will be produced, published, and presented in October 2018 based on the regional public opinion survey on a representative sample. Police integrity vision for the next decade in the Western Balkans as a roadmap policy report will be published in December 2018 based on implementation of national consultations on different areas of police integrity and publication of two-page policy briefs.

SELDI - Civil Society for Good Governance and Anticorruption in Southeast Europe: Capacity Building for Monitoring, Advocacy and Awareness Raising (2016-038-960, 2017-038-931, 2018/394-123). This action aims at enhancing the impact of civil society in public decision-making and reform processes in the Western Balkans in the area of good governance and anti-corruption through evidence-based advocacy, watchdog and policy monitoring, and dialogue with the Governments. The Contract was signed on 09.05.2018,

and the implementation commenced on 10.05.2018. In the reporting period January-June 2018, preparatory and coordination activities took place. The Coordinator- the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, and the Project Partners formally assigned project teams. Individual Partners’ budgets were prepared, and the procedure for signature of Partnership Agreements was initiated. Project Team representatives from the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation participated in SELDI conference “Democracy that delivers”, organized on 16 May 2018 in Sofia, Bulgaria. Also Project Team representatives participated in the Kick-Off Conference for projects awarded under EuropeAid/154870/DH/ACT/Multi, organized in the period 31.05.2018-01.06.2018.

Balkan Tender Watch (2017/393-763). The purpose of the project is increasing the Western Balkans (WB) civil society impact on anti-corruption policies and practices during the public procurement (PP) cycle by utilizing the EU integration as a transformative agenda. The project aims to influence the WB governments to introduce reforms which will enable establishing accountable PP systems aligned with the EU rules and building alliances with public authorities willing to engage in reforms. The first Balkan Tender Watch (BTW) Coalition coordination meeting has been held in Belgrade in the period March 6-8, 2018. A detailed activity plan for the first year of the project has been developed, as well as a draft communication strategy and monitoring, evaluation and learning plan. A benchmarking tool has been developed to identify corruption-vulnerable spots in PP cycle, based on previous accomplishments of the coalition and through a wide consultative process. Upon completion of the consultations and analysis at national level, the final document is planned to be adopted by the Coalition in the Final coalition workshop to be held in Sarajevo in September 2018. In December, a regional conference on public procurement is planned in Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Coalition will work on production and dissemination of the shadow reports and policy and media briefs. The shadow reports will address the key issues in public procurements in five countries providing independent insight and a local view on the topics covered by the country reports, while briefs will be used as a tool for raising attention on certain issues spotted through monitoring and subsequent discussions through round tables, conferences and on-line fora.

6.2 OPERATING GRANTS

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility Programme and Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-081, IPA 2014/031-605, IPA 2015/037-653, IPA 2016/038-960
Project title:	<i>Operating grants</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 1.48 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grants
Duration of activities:	01/01/2018 – 31/12/2018
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PURPOSE

Operating grants contribute to the general expenses of an organization whose overall mission and objectives correspond to the policy priorities of the European Commission. The current operating grants provide structural support to 9 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 LGBT 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 2017 an evaluation took place and resulted in the extension of support for one more year to 9 regional CSO partnerships.

Regional CSO platform advocating social innovation under employment policies that guarantees security for youth at risks – YOU SEE! Platform (2017/391-846 continuation of 2016/382-275, 2015/368-862 and 2014/351-917). CSOs produced regional policy intelligence and policy recommendations due to fostering employment policies reforms which effectively represent interest of young people in an attempt to overcome marginalization risks; regional platform fostering application of the social innovations for inclusion and employment of youth based on transfer of inspiring EU practice and testing of the impact of proposed policies measures. During reporting period partners worked on preparation of National Policy papers. Draft of National Policy papers are presented on National Conferences in Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. National Conferences are realised in period May-Jun 2018. Six stakeholders meetings are realised in period March – May 2018. On all stakeholders meetings leading applicant presented drafted Law on Traineeship. More than 300 people have participated in events (stakeholder meetings and National conference) in the region. The first partner meeting in 2018 took place in Novi Sad, Serbia at February 19th-21st 2018. During reporting period are submitted 6 interventions on proposals and existing policies which have effects on employment of all youth groups at risk of exclusion. Visibility events in all partner countries are implemented with the aim to provide information to widen publicity and youth. During the reporting period project aims and results are presented through five speaking opportunities through networks, meetings, workshop and events in Slovenia, Turkey and Croatia.

Regional Youth Exchange Association (2017/390-800 continuation of 2016/381-965, 2015/371-378 and 2014/351-845). The "Regional Youth Exchange Association" project was designed to provide possibilities for established regional youth exchange institution (RYCO) to develop its practice, test developed models, and adopt the best possible mechanisms to achieve the institution's mandate. In the period January - June 2018, as the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) started to work but still didn't become able to conduct exchange programs on its own. YIHR continued to work on building the capacities of RYCO for facilitating youth exchanges in close cooperation with institution's bodies and its staff. YIHR was involved in 3 major meetings (Skopje, Berlin, Pristina) with RYCO staff that aimed to discuss the concrete steps for further RYCO activities in order to raise RYCO's capacities for facilitating youth exchanges. In the previous period YIHR has organized three dealing with the past exchanges; all programs were focused on dealing with the past issues, based on YIHR's previous experience. More than 50 young people have participated in the dealing with the past exchange programs organized by YIHR. YIHR Croatia established strategic partnership with RYCO and is trying to get financial support for foundation of RYCO liaison

office in Croatia and Slovenia. Process of sustaining political support for RYCO has been upgraded with the visit of young MP's to RYCO Headquarters in Tirana, organized by YIHR. In Tirana 6 members of parliament agreed to establish an informal regional network of parliamentarians that supports the mission and the work of RYCO. The "Declaration of Support of WB6 Parliaments to RYCO" has been signed by all present MP's in Tirana.

Young With a Voice (2017/391-692 continuation of 2016/381-500, 2015 / 371-191 and 2014 / 351-938). During the period January - June 2018 national networks from project countries have organized national consultations to develop set of recommendations regarding the current state of child rights in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia and define actions necessary to improve general position of children in each project country. Recommendations were presented on national events in each country and will be presented in Brussels to relevant European stakeholders in September. Project has also ensured high participation of children and young people in listed countries, empowering them to monitor and analyse relevant policies and enabling them to develop their recommendations that will be published and presented in Brussels, together with the CSOs recommendations.

Balkan regional platform for youth participation and dialogue (2017/391-600 continuation of 2016/382-276, 2015/371-185 and 2014/351-922). The project aims at structuring the regional thematic cooperation and coordination between civil society and public authorities in Western Balkan countries to improve environment for youth participation, in particular of young people with fewer opportunities. The regional co-operation platform promoting culture of dialogue and educating youth for participation in the EU integration process was made operational. The updated partnership strategy of the Balkan Network for Local Democracy comprising eight Local Democracy Agencies (LDA) with their host cities was adopted at the Regional Network meeting in Podgorica (22-24 February). Regional Youth Forum was organised in Skopje (May 14-17) tackling education for active youth citizenship through youth cultural participation and the policy recommendations promoted. Regional exchange programme for youth correspondents, Local Youth Fund and Youth Taking Over Day programmes are being implemented in eight LDA host cities. An interactive regional co-operation platform connecting youth groups across the region promoting active citizenship and participation in the reform process towards the EU integration is fully functional: (<http://www.alda-balkan-youth.eu>). Regional Network evaluation meeting is scheduled for 17/20 October in Novi Sad.

Strengthening NGO capacity and promoting public health and human rights oriented drug policy in South Eastern Europe (2017/391-625 continuation of 2016/382-208, 2015/ 371-158 and 2014/351-836). The purpose of the project is to promote drug policies and drug legislation based on a public health and human rights approach, improve the contacts between relevant national and regional authorities and NGO's, strengthen the cooperation among NGO's, exchange information and best practices, involve youth and organisations of drug users in drug policy issues and improve NGO capacity for advocacy and dialogue with authorities and society. Meeting between NGOs active in the field of drugs and National drug coordinators from the countries in the SEE region (9-11 May 2018). The meeting was organised in Belgrade by Diogenis, Drug Policy Dialogue, in cooperation with the Drug Policy Network South East Europe (DPNSEE) and the Office for Combating Drugs of Serbia. The aim was to exchange information and experiences of good practices and to reflect on

possibilities of future cooperation on drug issues between NGOs and national authorities. Participation of a delegation of the project at the annual session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna (12-16 March 2017). Regional Drug Policy Conference in Thessaloniki (7-9 June 2018). An annually recurring meeting of representatives of NGOs, national policy makers, scientists and practitioners to discuss drug policy developments and trends in South East Europe, the EU and the UN. The agenda of this year was a. Refugees, migrants and Drugs, b. Youth culture, festivals, drug use and harm reduction in South East Europe, c. The evaluation of the UN Political Declaration 2009-2019 and its relation to the UNGASS outcome document, d. The Follow up of the Harm reduction project in South East Europe. Activities per country in the framework of the international Drugs Day and the campaign "Support. Don't Punish." and negotiations with the Global Fund on harm reduction services. The partners of the project were involved in these activities in their respective countries.

European Integration and the social dimension: strengthening regional cooperation of trade unions in the Balkans (2017/391-635 continuation of 2016/381-594 2015/371-495 and 2014/351-847). Focus: institutional capacity building, expertise & knowledge development within the TU organisations to empower them as competent social partner in the social dialogue. The women's network focused on the strengthening of the position of women in the textile industry as one of the main industrial sectors. The Bulgarian initiative to highlight the WB integration process includes the recognition of social partners (joint Declaration, Sofia Summit). Solidarnost supports the development of new technologies emphasizing the risk of the precarisation (joint Declaration on Atypical Forms of Work). The OHS working group has produced experts among the unionists on health & safety standards enforcement. See: www.onthewaytoeu.net

Balkans Independent Disability Framework - BIDF (2017/391-494 continuation of 2016/382-458 , 2015/371-187 and 2014/351-920). With this project, ACED and its partners, CIL in Serbia, UPCG in Montenegro Polio Plus in Macedonia and the recently registered regional network BIDF, will assist associations dedicated to the fulfillment of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities to establish focal points and undertake policy and legislative advocacy, public education campaigns and other related activities at national and regional level. Last year's promotional study trips have enabled BIDF representatives to establish potential for future regional cooperation with EU disability associations and networks. This year activities build on the accomplishments achieved till now, based on the prepared Shadow Reports on the implementation of the UNCRPD (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability). Within the objectives set for 2018, for the first 6 months BIDF activities were aiming for closer cooperation with National Disability Umbrella Organisations (NDU) and National Disability Councils (NDC) – consisting of representatives of associations of persons with disabilities and representatives of national governments. This resulted in a total of 12 initial meetings and 10 training sessions in all 4 project countries. In addition, in late June, a total of 21 representatives of NDUs and NDCs from all 4 project countries met on a regional meeting in BiH, as the first common regional cooperation event of such dimension (representatives from CSOs and government institutions from all 4 project countries). This gathering was the initiator for planning a joint regional conference in Belgrade with OSCE's ODIHR department in October 2018. The regional conference will aim

to improve the political participation of persons with disability, ensuring to represent the interests of PwDs through their inclusion in decision-bringing processes.

Together for Equality: Advancing Human Rights of LGBTI people in the Western Balkans and Turkey (2017/391-629 continuation of 2016/382-246, 2015/371-462 and 2014/351-960).

During the reporting period, ERA – LGBTI Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Turkey increased its membership to 60 LGBTI organisations and has implemented a number of key activities, in the domain of advocacy, capacity building and research. Comprehensive Organizational Capacity Assessments of new member organizations has continued, involving 8 LGBTI organizations. In March, following the rapid deterioration of the rights of LGBTI persons in Turkey, ERA has organized strategic planning and capacity development meetings with its member organizations in Istanbul, Ankara and Bursa, with the aim to address burning issues related to security and safety, services, international solidarity, emergency measures and policies, etc. In the period January-June 2018, 21 advocacy meetings and workshops with representatives of CSOs, national governments and institutions, as well as with representatives of international institutions and donors took place. After two years of targeted advocacy efforts, ERA was able to influence the pioneering inclusion of LGBTI issues within the W6-Berlin Process, one of the most important political forums for regional inter-governmental cooperation. In addition, as a result of advocacy efforts and strategic cooperation with the World Bank – SOGI Team, for the first time ever ERA was able to integrate an LGBTI perspective within the World Bank Spring Meetings, which were held in Washington in April, and which resulted in a concrete and actionable plan for comprehensive inclusion and economic empowerment of LGBTI persons in the Western Balkans and Turkey region, in the coming period. Finally, as part of its advocacy efforts, ERA has prepared a comprehensive report on the position of trans persons in the Western Balkans and Turkey, and has submitted it to the United Nations Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity. In the coming period ERA will be particularly working on developing and conducting capacity building trainings in priority areas, as well as on organizing ERA’s Third Annual Conference, which will take place in October in Skopje.

6.3 LONG- TERM GRANTS

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme, IPA 2014/031-605
Project title:	<i>Support to regional thematic networks of Civil Society Organisations – Long-term Grants</i>
EU contribution:	EUR 15.8 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	16 Grants
Duration of activities:	December 2015 – December 2019
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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.

The 16 action grants have completed their inception phase in the first six months of 2016.

ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST SEMESTER AND PLANNED FOR THE NEXT

The 16 projects are divided in 3 thematic areas:

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

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 the Western Balkan. The reporting period was very dynamic due to increasingly hostile environment for journalists, production of 2017 Indicators on the level of media freedom and journalists' safety reports and keeping these topics highly present in the public discourse. Advocacy and strategic plans for each organization were produced and internal capacities of partners advanced through trainings on communication with stakeholders and financial management. The regional network reacted 13 times covering 17 incidents by requesting from national and international stakeholders to put pressure on national governments to secure safe environment for journalists and condemn all types of violence and pressures against them. A small grants programme "Protecting Media Freedom and Freedom of Expression in the Western Balkans" awarded 11 national and 4 regional grants that contribute to realisation of the Project goals. The project was presented at the EU-Western Balkans Media Days in Tirana and its results were recognised by a number of participants. The Project underwent an external evaluation that concluded that not only it is still highly relevant, but that majority of targets were met or surpassed. It also gave concrete recommendations as to how it can be improved in order to increase its outcomes and impact.

Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform – WeBER (2015/370-038). The project has published the first PAR Monitor findings

and regional comparisons, presenting results of indicators in the areas of Policy Development and Coordination, Accountability, and Public Service and Human Resource Management. Moreover, successful implementation of the Grant Facility has also led to disclosing the preliminary findings of PAR monitoring at local level being conducted by 33 grantee organisations. Six consultative National Working Group (NWG) meetings were implemented, directly contributing to the fulfilment of the second specific objective of the project: facilitate sustainable regional and national level government-CSO consultation platforms, policy dialogue and quality media reporting on PAR. Following NWG meetings, the Third meeting of the regional WeBER Platform was held in Skopje, with participation of representatives of civil society, media, governments and relevant regional and international organisations. With the aim to ensure the visibility of the project among the expert community and the interested public at the EU level, a panel discussion assessing the role of civil society in PAR in the Balkans, as well as the importance of openness and transparency of the policy dialogue on PAR at all levels, was organised in Brussels. Regional PAR Scoreboard, online benchmarking tool was published, presenting the indicator results from SIGMA/OECD 2017 assessment reports. In the upcoming period, the project team will be focused on finalising the monitoring activities, delivering and promoting the results, planning the final round of NWG and WeBER Platform meetings, monitoring, supporting and finally evaluating the implementation of the Grant Facility activities.

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 organizations in the creation of public opinion, policymaking and participation in the decision-making mechanisms. The action partners managed to successfully conduct the first measurement for the Openness Index of institutions and 24 policy papers were prepared from the collected data from the monitoring phase for all 6 countries covering the following branches: judiciary, parliament, ministries and units of local self-government. The total number of monitored institutions during the first iteration of the monitoring is 653. The results and the policy papers with precise recommendations for increasing the openness of state institutions were distributed to relevant stakeholders and discussed on a number of round tables, meetings and conferences in all the countries. Furthermore, In August 2017, 6 National Roadmaps for Good Governance were published for all the project countries presenting recommendations and concrete action steps for improvement. The interactive Index Visualization Tool was developed and made available online. A total of 148 CSOs applied for support in the Small Grants Scheme and 17 initiatives were selected for support. The Action showed that small organizations while cooperating with the media can amplify their impact and visibility, and put into light relevant local issues related to accountability and transparency. Media briefing packages were prepared and distributed containing information about the project, the Policy Papers and the Roadmaps. Besides many of media releases sent, more than 15 public events were organized across the targeted region.

CSOs as equal partners in monitoring public finances (2015/370-293). The project partners have been working on the visibility of the project - they participated in the EuroIFI meeting organised by Eurodad and Bankwatch in Thessaloniki, a conference on the Key challenges in the area of Transparency and Accountability in the EIB and co-organised the event “Corruption challenges of development finance” in Slovenia. Also the project has been supporting the global PPPs campaign manifesto and organised national workshops for local NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and Kosovo and organised a round table with

CSOs, experts, ministries, media, academia in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The project has been finalizing all 4 regional analysis on public debt, tax justice, PPPs and public infrastructure and in the framework of the Global Solidarity Summit in Hamburg the project organised a workshop Debt bondage in the Balkans: New research from the European Semi-Periphery.

SOCIAL INCLUSION, MIGRATION, RECONCILIATION

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 objective is to improve the capacities of CSOs in South East Europe in managing social inclusion. The first half of 2018 was marked by the activation of five Working groups on Social inclusion as the main arena where institutions and CSOs meet, discuss and exchange experiences about welfare system and social policies. Following the training *Analysis of the impact of social initiatives*, a study visit to Milan was organized as the final step of the training process led by Italian partners. Both activities enabled the participants to learn from one of the most advanced and fruitful experience concerning the de-institutionalization process, community-based services and social entrepreneurship. The 25 sub-granted projects continued providing innovative social services tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities. In the coming reporting period, in the course of the regional anti-stigma campaign, linked to the World Mental Health day (October 10) and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3), different materials, media and social channels will be used to raise awareness and spread the message of equal opportunities, respectful and inclusive society towards persons with disabilities. By the end of 2018, the Working groups' work will materialize in five written Policy Papers and Recommendations on how to increase the social inclusion of people with disabilities and mental disorders.

Taking action on social inclusion of older people - TASIOP (2015/370-287). The project aims at strengthening networks of civil society organizations from the Western Balkans in order to improve social inclusion of older people in local communities and the society at large across the region. It entered its final phase in which the emphasis was on the educational workshops for older people to increase their knowledge about human rights, the way to access them and promote volunteering and participation in the community. More than 4,000 older people were reached across the five project countries through these activities, with support to their further community based activities provided per request. Likewise, the local, community based social inclusion initiatives for older people were finalised in four out of five project countries – the implementation period was extended in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to administrative obstacles. The total of 62 micro-projects were implemented. The data on lessons learned was collected from each of the local initiatives and the publication on good practice is in preparation, to be printed in all five languages as well as English at the end of the project. Workshops on communication with the media and workshops with journalists on reporting on older people and ageing were organised in all project countries. Campaigns to mark the 1 October, International Day of Older people were organised, including a 70 day long street photo exhibition in Belgrade (with estimated 300,000 visitors over this period) as well as participation of an older female Red Cross of Serbia volunteer in marking of the International Day of Older Persons, at the UN headquarters in New York. A large, two-day final conference of the project was organised in Belgrade, Serbia, with more than 100 participants, followed by final national conferences in

Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania. Final public campaigns were prepared in each country as one of the final activities in the project, aiming to reach the public with messages on social inclusion of older people through the traditional media and other means. Project partners in all the project countries participated in meetings with decision makers and in the work of different bodies creating public policy, advocating for decisions and policies to ensure increased social inclusion of older people and improved quality of their life.

Increasing capacities and strengthening the role of regional CSOs for improving labour conditions and labour dialogue with public institutions (2015/370-380). In the reporting period within the project activities, five national baseline studies were promoted, 5 public debates in 5 IPA countries were prepared and organized, on which the acquired knowledge and experience from the realized study visit to the European Agency for Occupational Safety and Health, Bilbao was successfully transferred. In the mentioned reporting period, the preparation of the Regional Study and Strategy has started, for that purpose, a Workshop, from 04 - 06 December 2018 in Ohrid, was organized. Participants were representatives from public institutions, experts in the field of education, the authors of the national studies, OSH representatives from organizations of all 5 IPA countries, project promoters, as well as representatives from the countries that supported the action. In addition, representatives from Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), the State Labor Inspectorate from Turkey and from the European OSH agency, Bilbao, took part in the workshop via skype. In the period from 01 - 03 November, in Pristina, IV international Occupational Safety (OSH) and Health conference was held. It is a tool for networking and was used for presentation of research stories - a product of 10 projects from 5 IPA countries, developed by project grantees. In December, a regional TV spot was prepared, with clear message to introduce the general public to the existence of BALKANOSH network, the possibility of joining it and creating a preventive culture for the OSH in the Balkans. Project website and social networks were maintained up-to-date, in five languages. Project implementors organized events on various locations (factories, construction sites, conferences, seminars etc.) where project activities were promoted. All the events were public and covered on social media, broadcasted on national/local electronic media and communicated through promotional material, in each IPA beneficiary country.

Youth Banks Hub for Western Balkans and Turkey (2015/370-394). The project is designed to create a coordinated network of organizations focusing on fostering youth participation in decision-making processes in Western Balkans and Turkey. During the reporting period, the most important process was selection of 15 local youth CSOs into YBH4WBT* Network, now consisting of 20 members. These organizations were selected through competitive three-phases evaluation process out of 64 received applications. New members will be supported by tailored capacity-building program (May-Sep) and grant for local advocacy initiatives. In addition, Monitoring and Evaluation training was organized for 5 national partners in order to established the same procedures for cooperation with new members. In June 2018, 35 representatives of the Network participated in the study visit to Serbian national and local institutions, and local youth bank initiatives. In order to get acquainted with the youth-

* Youth Banks Hub for Western Balkans and Turkey (YBH4WBT)

related legislative, round table was held with key speakers such as Ambassador of EU Delegation, State Secretary for Youth and Sports, and director of Office for cooperation with CSOs, and with strong media outreach.

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. During the reporting period the project activities included: a) Creating Zero Draft Manual “CSO cross-stakeholder approach in advocacy and non-formal education for peace dialogue and reconciliation in WB and Turkey” b) Conducted Regional training for partner organizations on usage of methodology of cross-stakeholder approach and non-formal education for peace dialogue and reconciliation in WB and Turkey c) Executed the second three-day meeting in Kosovo for 2 researchers and 14 facilitators in the frame of Development of cross-stakeholder approach activity d) The book under title Process of reconciliation in the Western Balkans and Turkey: A Qualitative study has been published online and in hard copy <http://jointfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Process-of-Reconciliation-Qualitative-study.pdf>

South East 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. Project teams were deployed in all five respective partner organizations. Baseline studies of the Gender-based violence (GBV) in the region, Human trafficking (HT) in the region and Legislative framework pertinent to GBV and HT with the Public opinion on GBV and HT presence in the society in region were completed and prepared for publishing. Regional Policy paper at the Balkan regional level on women and children protection and cessation of both gender-based violence and human trafficking activities in SEE drafted and adopted at the Second Regional meeting of the national partners. Estimated capacities and strengths of national CSOs related to trafficking in human beings, genocide, smuggling and protection of children through developed unique standardized questionnaire by the project team. Based on the obtained results capacities and strengths of national CSOs estimated, and created training modules that are harmonize with recognized county CSOs needs.

Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey – JIERCSWBT (2015/370-300). The action sets up a supporting facilitating structure for (pro) Roma civil society to actively participate in the local and national policy and decision making process. The project mobilised and supported 74 Local CSOs in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, and Turkey by organising them in 7 national coalitions. Each of them meets regularly, having in total 11 meetings, to analyse the implementation of the national action plans for Roma integration and to plan and implement advocacy initiatives. JIERCSWBT project, provided support through small grant scheme for 30 local advocacy initiatives, implemented by 31 CSOs across the region. The projects co-organised together with European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, the public hearing - “Reintegration” into the Western Balkans: Returnees’ perspective with special attention to Roma community. Participation at 12th meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion organised by The Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers – first time

enlargement countries participated equally. JIERCSWBT project partner participated in the conference on – How to address anti-Gypsyism in a post-2020 EU Framework, organised by Austrian Presidency of the European Council, spotlighting the Enlargement countries. The transparency standards and implementation tools are available in the relevant languages and 17 CSOs are making use of them. Continuous coaching and mentoring is available for grassroots CSOs in setting up these standards.

SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable agriculture for sustainable Balkans: Strengthening advocacy capacities of CSOs and developing policies in the Western Balkans” (2015/370-487)

The project aims to strengthen capacities for sustainability, networking and advocacy of CSOs working on sustainable agriculture in the Western Balkans. During the period January – June 2018, activities related to the Grant & Training Programme for Western Balkan CSOs were continued. During this period partner organisations conducted monitoring visits of supported CSOs, concluding that all projects were approaching their completion successfully. Another partner coordination meeting was held, to summarize monitoring visits reports, to prepare the project partners for the upcoming final reporting process, and to plan monitoring activities for the period July - December 2018. Until the end of the year, the revision of the final reports submitted by supported CSOs as well as identification and exchange of good practices between them and monitoring of effects of supported advocacy projects is planned to be conducted. More information can be found at www.sasb-eu.org

ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas (2015/370-371).

In the period January – June 2018 the project continued to support dialogue and cooperation between CSOs and CSOs networks and decision makers to create a conducive environment to prepare the establishment of rural development structures (rural development networks) in the Western Balkans and Turkey. In June 2018 the 1st Balkan Rural Parliament was organised, as regional platform for inter-sectorial cooperation with about 70 participants from 17 European countries. During the event a Declaration of the 1st BRP was prepared, with strong recommendations and messages from participants to decision makers and rural activists about future actions to be taken in the rural development sector. In the coming reporting period the project partners will continue to work on national platforms for supporting rural development. At regional level the 2nd Rural Policy Forum will be organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina in October and a Rural Gathering will take place in Kosovo* in early November 2018. Web <http://balkan-noborder.com/>.

Civil society Acts for Environmentally Sound Socio-Economic Sevelopment - CO-SEED (2015/371-198).

The project aims at promoting sustainable management of natural resources through more participatory and transparent decision-making processes involving civil society organisations as crucial stakeholders. During the reporting period, advocacy efforts for regulatory framework improvement regarding Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) are furthered. In addition, checklists on EIA and SEA reports are disseminated to provide guidance to non-practitioners interested in actively engaging in decision-making on environmental assessments. Beneficiary CSOs took active part in public consultations meetings for EIAs and SEAs. A networking meeting was held in May 2018 in Podgorica to work on a lobbying plan with the aim to mobilise public authorities to participate in the development of a roadmap for regulatory framework

improvement. Furthermore, a regional conference on public participation was held in June 2018 in Istanbul. In the coming period, roundtable meetings will be held, trainings for media representatives in each country will be organized to build their capacity and understanding about SEAs and EIAs, and advocacy efforts will continue to agree on a roadmap with public authorities in each country. (<http://co-seed.eu>).

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). In the last 6 months, Smart Start has started the implementation program for CSOs in the targeted countries in order to support, mentor and upgrade financed business ideas in cooperation with the private sector. On the national level, Smart Start has been implementing advocacy campaigns in order to improve the CSOs environment and promote sustainability models through good economy and social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, Smart Start has completed the second Social Innovation Competition where the best sustainable and innovative ideas for solutions in 5 communities (1 per targeted IPA beneficiary) were chosen through two selection processes – evaluation by committee and online voting through the Smart Start communication channels. In the next period, Smart Start will continue working on five advocacy campaigns at national level, on progress reports from CSOs in the social entrepreneurship program, on a mentoring program on legal aspect for CSOs engaging with social entrepreneurship.

6.4 RELOAD

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

PURPOSE

ReLOaD aims to strengthen partnerships between local governments (LG) and civil society by scaling-up a successful model of transparent and project-based funding of CSOs. The Western Balkan (WB) countries/territories namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, and Serbia, invest significant

*All references to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

efforts to mainstream the EU accession agenda within their socio-political contexts. The ReLOaD will, as support to these efforts, expand LG - CSO relations, facilitating dialogue among them, and improve quality of CSO services, by focusing on needs of 50 LGs, and supporting implementation of 200 CSOs' projects, for the benefit of 38,000 people.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

During the reporting period, the main activities included:

- **Assessment of existing municipal (budget) mechanisms** for disbursement of public funds to CSOs were completed. Assessments have been conducted in 43 LGs (assessments in other 10 partner LGs were done through the previous LOD intervention phases implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- Public calls for CSOs were prepared in all six IPA beneficiaries, including defining and agreeing on thematic priorities by LGs and civil society in target localities. Within the reporting period, **42 public calls for CSOs were launched**. Evaluation of CSO project proposals in 42 LGs encompassed assessing **of 759 CSO project proposals and selection of 117** projects for financing.
- When it comes to **capacity building activities**, training programs in Project Cycle Management (PCM) were delivered to **119 LG staff** (50 male and 69 female). Also, capacity building on PCM involved **1,048 participants** from more than **700 grass-root CSOs** throughout the WB. The planned activities were completed in line with the annual workplan in all partner LGs.
- Development of an online interactive platform to facilitate knowledge sharing, advocacy and communication was initiated with support of the UNDP's Istanbul Regional Hub.
- Regular communication and collaboration was maintained with relevant regional initiatives and EU-funded projects, such as ROMACTED (see chapter related to Roma Integration), through meetings and information exchange.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

- Local counterparts aware in more details of the procedures and legislative framework as well as necessary steps to improve existing practice;
- Partner local governments learnt in practice how to maintain transparent process of Public calls for CSOs;
- Key staff in partner local governments and main local CSOs have increased their knowledge on PCM, inclusion and participation in decision-making processes and transparent execution of public calls for CSOs;

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuing with the execution of Calls for CSOs, implementation of CSO projects in over 50 partner local governments;
- Continuation of awareness-raising and familiarisation of local government leadership and staff, as well as CSOs on the Methodology for Transparent Allocation of Funds for CSOs (LOD) and its benefits;

- Further support for setting up financing mechanism (i.e. specific local governments budget lines) to fund CSO activities within each participating LG, with due consideration of national legislations;
- Launching of remaining Calls for CSOs in partner local governments in line with the conclusions of the Board of Partners in each IPA beneficiary;
- Implementation of CSO projects in target localities;
- Continuation of capacity development for CSOs in Montenegro (one training for CSOs remaining);
- Support to formalization of the methodology and accompanying tools, as well as monitoring framework for funding of CSOs by local governments within all target localities;
- Testing and operationalization of an online interactive platform to facilitate virtual knowledge sharing, advocacy and communication and cross country thematic networking;
- Organizing the 1st Regional Conference and 1st Project Board Forum (planned in September 2018);
- Development of adjusted tools and procedures for the second round of public calls for CSOs in partner LGs.

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. The programme is implemented through activities both at regional and national level in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

ACTIVITIES

Component 1 – Legal professionals: Third regional conference of certified trainers, including judges, lawyers and prosecutors was organised in Montenegro on 2-3 November 2017 with a special focus on freedom of expression online: participants have been updated on current developments of jurisprudence and about their possible application in their daily practice. Approximately 30 cascade training sessions on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media related issues have been organised through grant agreements with the national partners.

Component 2 – Regulatory Authorities: Second regional conference for regulatory authorities: “Hate speech, distribution of foreign channels and election campaigns, European works”, was held on 6-7 July in Dures, Albania, which enabled exchange of experiences and proposed possible improvements applicable in daily practice of media regulatory bodies in South-East Europe. A Media Sector Inquiry has been carried out in Montenegro through a pool of international experts involving all relevant stakeholders and key State authorities. An expert opinion was provided to the Albanian regulator for a judicial review of the Transmission Code. A training workshop on copyright was provided to employees of the Macedonian regulator in Skopje, and one on co-regulation was addressed to Montenegrin and Serbian regulators in Belgrade.

Component 3 – Media actors: The third edition of the Summer School on European Media Standards went regional for the first time, involving students of journalism and law from all project countries and covering a wide range of topic, including access to the information of public importance, right to privacy and data protection media and democracy, hate speech, investigative journalism, safety of journalists, ethical standards, internet and copyright. Several inter-professional seminars have been organised in all countries gathering media actors and legal professionals, as well as public officials on a variety of topics, including data protection, access to information, media reporting on court proceedings and transparency of the courts, hate speech, defamation, etc. Various lectures have been held in Faculties of Journalism in Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia on journalistic ethics, public service media and other Art. 10 ECHR related issues. Update of the code of ethics in Albania and working groups for the Dictionary in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place. A high level conference on Freedom of Expression Online in the Albanian Parliament provided a platform for a fruitful debate among the various stakeholders on the need of various models of online regulation, co-regulation, and self-regulation and laid out a good foundation for a follow up dialogue with legislators, ISPs, and media organisation in the form of roundtable discussions. Three round-tables, several working groups, more than 20 interviews and a long exercise of data collection and analyses of media content were carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a first draft of the Legal-Media Dictionary.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Component 1 – Legal professionals: More than 400 judges and prosecutors, as well as more than 130 lawyers, have been trained in the 6 project countries on several aspects of the Article 10 ECHR and the case law of the Court. The capacities of national academies of judges and prosecutors, as well as bar associations, to manage grant agreements and organise training events have been enhanced. Training materials tailored to the 6 specific countries’

system have been designed and printed. About 50 certified trainers have been updated on last developments related to freedom of expression online.

Component 2 – Regulatory Authorities: The English version of the regional publication “Media regulatory authorities and hate speech” was printed and presented in July 2017. An INDIREG Study has been carried out in Serbia, concerning the independence and functioning of the Regulatory Authority on the basis of criteria drawn from the AVMS Directive and on a methodology developed under EC supervision. Also, a study providing a comparable analysis of the best European practices regarding co-regulation with a focus on Serbia was delivered to the regulator.

Component 3 – Media actors: About 150 journalists and media actors were trained on European media standards and/or had the opportunity to exchange with representatives of other professions on the matter. About 100 students of faculties of journalism were addressed through lectures, summer school or involvement in seminars on European standards on media and journalism.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Fourth regional conference of the Judiciary and second annual Steering Committee to take place in Strasbourg, France on 17-18 April. Several activities addressing legal professionals, media actors, and regulatory authorities on freedom of expression related issues, including online content to be carried out in all countries. Publication in the six local languages of the “Media regulatory authorities and hate speech” booklet. Pilot publication “Dictionary of Media and Judicial Terms” to be finalised, printed and distributed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Similar exercise to be launched in the other countries. Media Sector Inquiry to be officially delivered to the national authorities in Montenegro. Second annual Steering Committee to be held in Strasbourg in April 2018.

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 (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Operational Manual with rules and procedures for the regional scheme of EU awards for investigative journalism in Western Balkans and Turkey was updated in order to further elaborate award criteria and other administrative rules taking into account the lessons learned from the award contests in 2015 and 2016. 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. In each country, independent juries appointed by EU Delegations selected three investigative stories published in 2016, including the best stories by young journalists.

In total, 237 nominations were processed by national coordinators and evaluated by independent juries in the participant countries; award ceremonies were organised to deliver the awards and celebrate the winners. Regional press release summarizing the 2017 EU award contests' results, and also the overall results of the 3-year award scheme was distributed to target audiences.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

21 investigative stories contributing to transparency and reporting on societal issues related to abuse of power and fundamental rights, corruption and organised crime, were awarded in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. The stories covered a wide range of societal issues, including those connected to corruption and abuse of power in local and state institutions, attempted state capture by the underground and misuse of power by political party officials, but also procurement and subsidies controversy, irregularities in energetics business, tax fraud, environmental disasters and abuse of children.

Altogether 25 journalists were awarded. In comparison with the previous year when teams of journalists were authors of number of the winning stories, this time most of the stories were authored by individual journalists. Amongst the media with extraordinary achievements regarding the number of the 2017 winning stories are Žurnal online magazine (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Alsat-M TV channel (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and Vijesti daily newspaper (Montenegro) that have each published 2 award-winning stories, as well as the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) whose journalists have worked on three of the prized stories (in Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia).

Winning journalists received a total of 75,000 euro. Individual prizes ranged between 3,000 and 5,000 euro.

Hundreds of media reports with news about the EU award winners were published across the region. Regional press release with summary of the regional EU award scheme results in 2017 was republished by several regional and European communication platforms including the web site and social networks of the European Commission, DG NEAR.

Programme reference:	The Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the years 2014-2015, allocation 2014 (2014/ 031-605)
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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

Activities aimed to strengthen media self-regulation, to increase media good governance and Media Information Literacy (MIL) are under way in all countries covered by the project (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244). Following key activities took place between July and December 2017:

Representatives of all press and media councils of the target countries took part in the [annual meeting of the Alliance of Independent Press Councils in Europe](#) (AIPCE) in Budapest from 11 to 13 October 2017.

The press and media councils from the region organized various capacity-building activities and awareness-raising activities as defined in their work plan. Among others, the Macedonian Media Council organized an [ethical award competition](#) and ceremony, the new Albanian Media Council launched [its new website](#), the Kosovo Press Council developed an online database of all the complaints it received, the Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina launched a media campaign to address fake news.

The third meeting of the [Labour Rights Expert Group +](#) (LAREG +) of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) took place in Brussels on 13 and 14 November 2018 together with a press conference.

The Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) organized media consultations and two seminars with media owners and editors of media outlets in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Montenegro in October and November 2017 [to promote media good governance and internal media audits](#).

The School of Journalism and Public Relations (SJPR) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gave visibility to the research entitled "[Back to the Drawing Board](#): Crafting the Ideal Journalism Curricula for Southeast Europe" through the dissemination of 5 infographics summarizing the main outcomes of the state of journalism education in the region and a social media campaign.

An awareness raising campaign on Media Information Literacy called “MIL CLICKS” was organized in partnership with MEC to build citizens’ knowledge on MIL and give visibility to the project. It included posts with infographics, social media graphics, video, photo and a webinar.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- 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.
- Turkish press Council is the newest member of the Alliance of independent press councils in Europe
- 15 media outlets consulted in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Montenegro about performing media ethical audits.
- Representatives of all target countries involved in the LAREG + activities.
- 5 infographics summarizing the main outcomes of the survey “back to the drawing board” and dissemination through a newsletter, a web banner and a social media campaign.
- Increased visibility of the project “Building Trust in Media in SEE and Turkey”.
- Strengthened social media strategy and educational content disseminated on MIL to build trust in media. More than 11000 followers of the “MILCLICKS” campaign

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Capacity-building activities, awareness-raising and networking activities to raise the profile of press and media councils in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244).
- Joint promotion of the journalistic code of ethics by the Montenegro Media Council and the ombudspersons of Dan, Vijesti and Monitor in Montenegro.
- Regional training of press and media councils from South East Europe and Turkey in Serbia in March 2018.
- Organization of a training of trainers on journalist’s labour rights in Montenegro.
- Publication of a report assessing the current state of media self-regulation and complaint mechanisms, opportunities for legal redress and other mechanisms to safeguard press integrity in Turkey and organisation of a conference in Istanbul in June 2018.
- National consultations on MIL to be organized in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) Publication of a report assessing the current state of media self-regulation and complaint mechanisms, opportunities for legal redress and other mechanisms to safeguard press integrity in Turkey and organisation of a workshop with academics and media practitioners to define the approach and methodology of the report.

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/
Contacts:	Karl Giacinti, Karl.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 (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Implementation of detailed regional advocacy action plan
- Repeating the country specific research for the third measurement of Media Clientelism Index and writing country-specific and regional reports
- Third 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)
- Addendum to the Contract Civil Response to Clientelism in Media - MEDIA
- CIRCLE was signed in November 2017 - Implementation of the Action will end on 29 March 2018

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Detailed plan for regional advocacy activities implemented
- Third 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 2017 for all countries published
- 206 analytical articles written and published on national languages of the countries participating in the project
- 38 analytical articles written and published on central portal in English
- 475 media related articles republished from other media outlets
- 5 videos published
- 17 Fairpress playlists aired on Radio Tuzla 91.2
- 77.614 Fairpress.eu sessions; 103.071 Fairpress.eu pageviews; 55.242 Fairpress.eu users; 314.107 Fairpress.eu Facebook reach; 19.076 Fairpress.eu Facebook likes

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Presenting results of the third measurement of the Media Clientelism Index in Brussels
- Country specific reporting on the state of media clientelism and politicisation through Fairpress portal (continuously)
- Closing conference of the project in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Evaluation and follow-up of the project.

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 https://www.facebook.com/SEEMediaPartnership/?fref=ts
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

- Editing and disseminating the fourth and fifth wave of Freedom of Expression reports. Topics: "Whose Media Are these?" - a report looking into how the social media add to, compete or replace the "traditional" platforms; "Gatekeepers and Middlemen" - a report looking into how entities with no apparent media mandate (companies or state bodies) can restrict freedom of expression.
- Producing, editing and disseminating a sixth report on Freedom of Expression, presenting a general overview of the FoE in the SEE countries at the end of 2017.
- Conducting an advocacy visit to Brussels (Oct 10-11), with meetings within the Commission (2), the Parliament (1) and organizations interested in freedom of expression (3). Apart from the group meetings, representatives of 4 partners had one-on-one meetings with Commission experts responsible of the respective countries.

- Communication and visibility of the project
- Participation in the Media and Information Literacy conference in Sarajevo (Sept 19-22).
- Project management. The sixth Steering Committee meeting took place in Brussels (9 October);
- Freedom of expression and media monitoring. Participation in the global advocacy networks (IFEX campaigns, IFEX Board - Ioana Avadani was re-elected for a second mandate as a board member, Global Forum for Media Development).

OUTPUTS

- three freedom of expression reports
- an advocacy visit in Brussels

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER:

- The project closed on November 2017.

6.6 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 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 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.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

The key focus during the reporting period was on advocacy, awareness raising and capacity building on response and protection of children from violence (VAC), and the fulfilment of the rights of children with disabilities (CWDs). This was done through the launch of studies and reports, round table discussions, introduction of training modules (on proceedings with child victims and witnesses of violence, and inclusive education), work meetings, workshops, public consultations, peer mediation training sessions, piloting positive parenting programs, signing petitions and organizing theatre performances with the participation of policy makers, front-line professionals, civil society, media, parents and children in Albania, Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Kosovo* and Turkey. Through partnerships with DPOs and NGOs, the knowledge was collected on CWDs through SitAn field work. Support was provided to improve data collection mechanisms through the introduction of indicators on VAC. Existing networks of CSOs (including DPOs) were supported through capacity building efforts leading to several important initiatives (advocacy, awareness raising, dialogue building, independent monitoring, development of guidelines on intersectoral cooperation for addressing child marriage as well as research on the prevention of child marriages, determining eligibility of CWDs for social protection benefits, accrediting training programmes on VAC) undertaken by the networks' members. The European Disability Forum (EDF) continued providing expert support for drafting the Serbian SitAn report on CWD, for a briefing meeting for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with the CRPD Committee, and to Montenegro in their review by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. At the regional level, EDF initiated the organisation of the workshop in Podgorica with DPOs and UNICEF from the participating countries on lessons learned, exchanging best practices, and defining the way forward on social inclusion of CWDs and the role of the DPOs in this process.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

The development of six by-laws on Child Rights and Protection in Albania; two policy papers with key recommendations on VAC and CWDs in BiH; an advocacy plan on CWDs and a revision of child protection related articles under the Family Law in Kosovo; submission of a new national VAC strategy for adoption by the Government and Parliament of Serbia along with an Action Plan and General VAC Protocol contributed to the advancement of legislative and policy frameworks. Over 600 teachers have better understanding and knowledge on children with special needs and disability, including on differentiated instructions in inclusive education, tools and methodologies. Different professionals (police, social welfare, judiciary, education, health), parents and children have increased awareness and understanding of peaceful communication and usage of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms (Kosovo*), on positive parenting thanks to certified evidence based Programme Parenting for Lifelong Health and on child marriage cases. More than 6,500 children and students in the participating countries learned to recognise and report various types of violence, and to raise awareness on legal prohibition of corporal punishment. Intersectoral collaboration to respond to VAC has been further promoted through the signature of new local agreements, adoption of new intersectoral protocols; improved cross-sectoral communication between state entities, schools, police, social workers, NGOs and others; and new partnerships with municipalities to address child rights issues. Successful partnership with NGOs and DPOs resulted in advocacy, knowledge building, monitoring and dialog building with state entities and Ombudsman offices on both VAC and CWDs related issues. Under the leadership of ICC (International Children's Centre), the VAC Network has grown to 77 members, and continued to be influential in mobilizing NGOs towards advocacy and lobbying on VAC related incidents. Building on this model, the Network on the rights of children with disabilities has been established in Turkey with 'Tohum Autism Foundation' as a lead secretary for the network. Besides, through partnerships, more evidence on VAC and CWDs was generated through SitAn on CWDs in the participating countries. The newly launched study in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia sheds light on the prevalence of violence and abuse of children; and the findings of the two KAP studies on child discipline led to the development of a long-term communication for social change strategy. Based on the

developed indicators, admin data on VAC is obtained from five Bar Associations and university-based child protection centres in Turkey, and indicators on VAC are endorsed by the National Coordination Body for Protection of Children from Violence and will be used to collect data from social, education, health, law enforcement and judicial sectors in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Thanks to EDF support, quality and accuracy of the CRPD alternative reports increased; participating DPOs and CSOs have better understanding of the UNCRPD; information is gathered on DPOs' lessons-learned and best practices through this project, as well as DPOs' vision for the next steps beyond the project.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The countries will finalise and submit for approval all legislation and policy pieces on VAC and CWDs developed so far. The project will continue building knowledge and evidence through finalisation and launch of SitAn on CWDs in Albania and Turkey; further activities foreseen for the coming 6 months are: completion of a study on 'Inclusion in pre-school education' and launch of a first report on VAC situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the re-test survey on intersectoral collaboration in child protection from violence in Serbia, drafting of a monitoring report on court practice towards children in cases of family violence in Montenegro, and development of a brief shadow report on CRPD in Turkey. Mapping of VAC data collection by all relevant sectors will be conducted by the end of the year in Montenegro, whereas indicators combined with definitions and instructions on how to collect VAC data will be moulded into a Manual for CSOs in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Activities in support of intersectoral collaboration on VAC response at local level will include: scaling up VAC response strategies in the remaining municipalities in Kosovo*, establishment and functioning of the multi-sectoral teams to work with cases of children victims of violence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, development of the Protocol/SOPs for the health sector on VAC, and adoption of local intersectoral agreements in five additional municipalities in Serbia. In support of this, a series of capacity building initiatives is foreseen for: the health professionals, the school directors and teachers, social and child protection professionals and police to identify, report and refer cases of child victims of violence and on risk assessment and individual planning with victims of family violence, children and families to empower them for using various channels to access to justice mechanisms such as the Ombudsperson's Institute. Besides, several trainings are planned for various professionals, DPOs and parents on disability issues. Several nationwide communication campaigns on VAC, parenting and CWDs will be launched in Albania, BiH and the fYRoM (along with a follow up KAP survey on disability). The inclusive sport and recreative activities for CWDs will be done in Serbia followed by big final events/tournaments in six municipalities. A high-level meeting is planned to discuss the outcomes of the project as well as to address the challenges on combatting VAC in Turkey. At the regional level, EDF will: provide expert support for Albania and Turkey in writing their Alternative reports on CRPD; facilitate National Workshop in Turkey with DPOs and CSOs and government representatives on the further understanding and implementation of the UNCRPD; and write a comprehensive final report including key lessons learned. Finally, a regional end-project meeting will be organised on 19-20 September in Skopje to take stock of project results achieved and lessons learned, with participation of all key project implementing partners and teams, EDF and representatives of the European Commission and EU Delegation to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In December, during the

week of the International Disability Day, together with EDF, an advocacy and visibility event will be organised in Brussels to present key findings of the SitAn reports on CWDs from five countries and share key results achieved through the project. It is also planned to produce visibility materials for the two regional events.

6.7 ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WB COUNTRIES AND TURKEY

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme IPA 2016/038-960
Project title:	Ending violence against women in the Western Balkan Countries and Turkey: Implementing Norms, Changing Minds
EU contribution:	EUR 5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Agreement with UN Women
Contract reference:	2017/380-469
Duration of activities:	01/02/2017 – 31/01/2020
Links:	http://eca.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/regional-programme-in-the-western-balkans-and-turkey
Contact :	Maria Esposito, maria.esposito@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The programme set up regional and national platforms to foster regional advocacy, monitoring and networking capacity among women’s rights organizations on gender equality and ending violence against women, inter alia: Women against Violence in Europe (WAVE) established the Civil Society Strengthening Platform (CSSP) (www.cssp.org), in which 9 CSOs from the region convene to strengthen women’s voices and agency by receiving training in Ankara and Belgrade on reporting on international and regional human rights instruments;

CSO Imkaan produced the research *“A thousand ways to solve our problems’: An analysis of existing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) approaches for minoritized women and girls in the Western Balkans and Turkey”* to inform regional and national key stakeholders on policy development and service provision to minority women; in Albania, the programme supported the establishment of the Monitoring Network on Gender-based Violence that conducted a two-day training with 35 network members on the role of CSOs and methodologies to be used for monitoring the fulfillment of obligations under human rights mechanisms and held a forum with 20 CSOs, government authorities, parliamentarians, Ombudsman, and Prosecution office on cases of femicide. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, through United Women Banja Luka, 53 women coming from thirty-two 32 women’s organizations and associations took part in two three-day trainings on how to monitor the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and contribute to alternative reporting to GREVIO. In Kosovo, Lawyer’s Association NORMA provided 53 women representatives of CSOs from three municipalities with three training and awareness-raising sessions on legal provisions related to VAW/G, with specific focus on property rights and domestic violence. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights trained 15 representatives of CSOs, networks, and legal professionals on the use of human rights complaint mechanisms to claim women’s rights and address gender-based discrimination and violence under the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. In Serbia, NGO Women Space conducted a training course with 15 representatives of organizations within the Roma Women Network (RWN) on collecting data related to violations of Roma women’s rights and for monitoring the effects of public policies on both Roma men and women; and as part of the campaign “Month of Roma Women Activism”, members of the RWN organized 26 activities and events at 21 locations to raise awareness and increase the visibility of Roma issues among the general population and also among decision-makers in the local self-governments. In Turkey, led by the Turkish Women’s Union, 60 representatives of 13 organizations that gathered under the Executive Committee for CSOs were trained on using a legal toolkit for monitoring the fulfilment of the State’s obligations under CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention.

Six CSOs conducted a baseline exercise at country level on communities’ perceptions and attitudes toward violence against women, along with an assessment of advocacy initiatives and tools on prevention of violence, both of which will inform the activities of a GenderLab to challenge harmful gender stereotypes, to be set up in the second half of 2018. Furthermore, in Albania, 466 women, girls, men, boys, local coordinators on gender equality, and other representatives of local government institutions discussed harmful gender stereotypes that contribute to violence against women through 11 community forums in the region of Elbasan.

With a view to empower women and girls (including those from disadvantaged groups) who have experienced discrimination or violence to advocate for and utilize available, accessible and quality services, the programme conducted over 50 capacity-building activities targeting state and non-state service providers to comply with the standards and provisions set forth in the Istanbul Convention. Inter alia, In Albania, the Disability Rights Foundation, together with the Roma Women Rights Centre and LGBT Alliance, implemented 15 capacity-building activities targeting police staff, municipal units, health care centers, schools and CSOs involved in response and protection measures regarding violence against women and girls. In Kosovo, more than 100 participants from key institutions and CSOs participated in 3-day

Strategic Planning workshops in municipalities, resulting in the finalization of the Domestic Violence Municipal Action Plans (2018-2020). In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Health Education and Research Association (HERA), at the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, assisted in the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and developed a first draft of standards and procedures for the establishment of rape crisis centres, which do not currently exist in the country. In Montenegro, a coordination mechanism has been established among the CSOs supported by the programme and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and national body for monitoring the Istanbul Convention. In Serbia, CSO ...Iz kruga – Vojvodina conducted a desk analysis and assessment of the legal and policy framework related to VAW/G, and also conducted a mapping of 63 CSOs representing persons living with disabilities in interested municipalities. In Turkey, Foundation for Women's Solidarity trained 14 women's CSOs working in the field of EAW and 13 local actors working in the field of refugee rights (including representatives from Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Family and Social Policies and Çankaya Municipality, as well as representatives from NGOs and university research centers) on the rights of refugee women, their legal status in Turkey, and their specific needs.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2018)

During the reporting period (1 January 2018 to 31 July 2018), the programme engaged over 40 small- and medium-sized CSOs (including CSO networks) through project cooperation agreements at the European level, and in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo (UNSCR 1244), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey at the country level. It also engaged CSOs through grants in Montenegro.

As a result of the programme support to over 40 CSOs:

- Over 100 organizations are better equipped to monitor and report on human rights legal instruments and to advocate for the development and implementation of comprehensive and coordinated policies on violence against women.
- Over 600 law enforcement officials and service providers involved in prevention, prosecution and protection in cases of violence against women are increasing their knowledge and skills regarding case management, data collection, reporting, and referral and response mechanisms. These providers include community leaders, health care workers, municipalities, local NGOs, and security and justice officials.
- 1000 women, including minority women, are gaining a better understanding of their rights, and how to access available services when facing violence.

Communication and visibility continues to be a fundamental element in the implementation of the programme. Since January 2018, two animated videos showcasing results and portraying testimonies from programme beneficiaries, three issues of an e-newsletter (featuring 10 stories from the region) and one social media advocacy campaign on the occasion of International Women's Day (March 8, 2018) have been produced and widely disseminated in the region, including at European Development Days 2018 in Brussels (5-6 June).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

In the second half of 2018, the programme's key focus will be on holding a regional forum for promoting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Western Balkans and Turkey by fostering a regional dialogue and knowledge-sharing mechanism on the implementation of the Convention and CEDAW among governments, CSOs, and other regional stakeholders. The forum will convene around 120 persons and will be held in Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on the 27 and 28 November 2018.

CHAPTER 7: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

7.1 TEMPUS AND ERASMUS+

Programme reference:	IPA 2011/SI2.596555; IPA 2012/SI2.615827; IPA 2013/SI2.645034; IPA 2014/SI2.691984; IPA 2015/D45.B1515.000567; IPA 2016/D45.B1616.001476
Project title:	Tempus: Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies; Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE)
EU contribution:	IPA 2011/SI2.596555, EUR 15.3 million IPA 2012/SI2.615827, EUR 14.9 million IPA 2013/SI2.645034, EUR 11.7 million IPA 2014/SI2.691984, EUR 10.07 million IPA 2015/ D45.B1515.000567, EUR 13.2 million IPA 2016/ D45.B1616.001476, EUR 13.5 million IPA 2017/D45. B1717.001712, EUR 10.3 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans (except 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
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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 (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The **CBHE Grantholder's meeting** has been successfully organised on 29-30 January 2018 in Brussels with a participation of 370 representatives from the CBHE projects selected under the Call for proposals EACEA/A04/2015, National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs), International Contact Points, EU Delegations, European Commission (EAC and DEVCO) and EACEA. In total, 73 nationalities were represented.

Under the Call EACEA /05/2017 119 applications involving Western Balkans institutions were received which represents an increase of 9% compared to the previous year. The number of applications coordinated by the Western Balkan Higher education institutions has increased and represents about of 70% of the total projects. This shows for the increased capacities of these WB institutions to run international projects and ensuring

ensures factor for the ownership of project results. A tendency to cooperate with the other regions in the world is noted: and the WB institutions are involved in 33 cross regional projects. The following tendencies are identified: structural project proposal were characterised by lack of quality, feasibility and impact on system level; an increase of applications in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in both qualitative and quantitative terms; - EU enlargement process reflected especially in topics related to environment (e.g. water resource management, sustainable forestry); overall neglect of doctoral studies.

Developing entrepreneurial skills: a new challenge for universities- an initiative which took place on 19-20 April, 2018 in the University of Montpellier, France. The study visit was attended by 33 participants. This included Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) from 15 countries with very different profiles, including ministry representatives, rectors, vice-rectors, teaching and administrative staff, directors of doctoral and master programmes, heads of quality assurance (QA) departments and international relations units. The WB HEREs brought their experiences and learnt on how the HE institutions have to introduced entrepreneurship and make benefit of it for the benefit students.

Social Dimension in Higher Education – Increasing Diversity by Providing Structured and Effective Support to HE Students – a seminar held in Belgrade, 31 May 2018 involving around 80 people. The participants had the opportunity to learn about the concept and relevance of social dimension in higher education, the current state of affairs related to policy support, institutional mechanisms established and projects implemented so far, as well as the benefits and challenges in the field of social dimension faced by the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Serbia and abroad, but also to learn about the best practices.

Research-based teaching and learning: From national and institutional policies to practice a seminar that took place in Podgorica, Montenegro; May 28-29, 2018 involving 70 participants. In the seminar the participants analysed national frameworks, policies and funding that may help or hinder the development of research based teaching in diverse types of institutions; explored good practices in institution-driven, strategic approaches on how to integrate research and education missions; and generated ideas for how to build capacity of faculty members to implement research-based teaching and create a research based learning environment.

22 monitoring visits carried out by the Agency or NEOs have taken place in the Western Balkans region.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

As result of the CBHE Grantholders' meeting the attendees were briefed on the project management and financial rules and it's expected that thanks to this information, the coordinators and partners will be able to implement smoothly the project in their countries.

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 topics for the modernisation process in their countries.

The monitoring visits held in the region have confirmed that in general the projects are implemented well. However, there is still a need for further commitment and involvement of various stakeholders at institutional and national levels.

The results of the Call 2018 confirmed that more should be done in the promotion/support in order to attract participation of institutions that have less participated less in the CBHE and to increase the number of qualitative structural projects.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- NEO /ICP meeting foreseen on 12 October 2018 – focusing mainly on the training of NEOs staff on issues related to the dedicated promotion and monitoring
- Learning and teaching: Professional development of staff in higher education - Study visit in London; September, 2018
- "Joint degrees: strategic and operational implementation: one size does not fit all"- Study visit in Coimbra; November, 2018.

7.2 ERASMUS MUNDUS

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/935
Project title:	Erasmus Mundus Action 1 and Action 2
EU contribution:	Action 1: EUR 8.0 million Action 2: EUR 12.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Erasmus Mundus Action 1: Western Balkans 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:	https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/2007-2013/erasmus-mundus-programme_en http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-1-learning-mobility-individuals/erasmus-mundus-joint-master-degrees_en
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PURPOSE

The Erasmus Mundus programme's objective was 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. The programme has been discontinued in 2014 to be included in the Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Erasmus Mundus Action 1

Action 1 of the former Erasmus Mundus programme supports high quality joint master courses and doctoral programmes which are run by consortia of European and third country higher education institutions (HEIs). The action mainly fosters cooperation between HEIs and academic staff in Europe and third countries with a view of creating poles of excellence and providing highly trained human resources. The joint programmes must involve mobility between institutions of the consortium and lead to the award of recognised joint, double or multiple degrees. Students/doctoral candidates are awarded Erasmus Mundus scholarships/fellowships. 12 doctoral programmes co-funded by IPA are still ongoing.

Erasmus Mundus Action 2

Under Action 2, the Erasmus Mundus Partnerships bring together HEIs from Europe on the one hand and those from a particular region in the world on the other, to manage mobility flows between the two regions for a range of academic levels – undergraduate, master, doctorate, post-doctorate – and for academic staff. The partnerships allow sharing of best practice and exploring further opportunities for cooperation between European and Western Balkan HEIs through bilateral agreements and other measures. In January 2018, four Action 2 projects selected in 2014 were still active in the Western Balkans.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

Erasmus Mundus Action 1

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

Within the framework of the 2018 selection of success stories exercise, all 8 listed EMMCs (selected in 2011) had benefited from the Western Balkans and Turkey scheme under the IPA 2014 funds.

The Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates (EMJD) selected under the former Erasmus Mundus programme are still running their intakes, partly funded by IPA funds for what concerns the Western Balkans and Turkey. In particular, 12 EMJDs whose intake started in the second semester of 2014 have awarded fellowships to doctoral candidates who will complete their studies in the second semester 2018. The concerned EMJDs will submit their final report by the end of 2018.

Erasmus Mundus Action 2

From January to June 2018, four partnerships selected in 2014 were still on-going. The last mobilities in these projects will end on 15th July 2018. A total of 694 mobility flows for student and staff are expected to have taken place (520 non EU and 174 EU). The final reports will arrive in September 2018. The partnerships enhanced regional cooperation between the participating universities from Western Balkans and strengthened academic links between Europe and the targeted region, also in view of future cooperation under Erasmus+.

As part of the valorisation strategy for Erasmus Mundus Action 2, EACEA.A.3 organised a conference entitled *“10 Years of Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (2007-2017): Worldwide Bridges towards the Future”*, which took place on 8th & 9th February 2017 in Brussels. A summary of the conclusions of the conference, including the main results achieved in the Western Balkans region (Part II, page 78-79) in terms of employability and personal development, recognition, internationalisation, etc. can be found in the publication *“Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Partnerships – Main achievements and results (2010-2018)”*. A web version of the publication is available in the EU bookshop under the following link: <https://publications.europa.eu>

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Erasmus Mundus Action 1

The final reports of the EMJDs that had benefited from the IPA funds (2014 intake) will be submitted by the end of 2018 and be analysed subsequently. The results will be known in the first semester 2019.

Erasmus Mundus Action 2

The final reports of the Erasmus Mundus Action 2 partnerships that had benefited from the IPA funds will be submitted in autumn 2018 and be analysed subsequently. The results will be known in the first semester 2019.

7.3 CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
Project title:	Erasmus+ Capacity building in the field of youth – Western Balkans
EU contribution:	EUR 3 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	The programme is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
Contact :	Albert Sese Ballart, Albert.SESE-BALLART@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The objectives of these projects are to enhance cooperation between Programme and Partner Countries, improve the quality and recognition of youth-work, non-formal learning, and volunteering in Partner Countries and foster synergies with education systems and the labour market, reinforce non-formal learning mobility schemes and programmes, and promote transnational non-formal learning mobility. Further, the projects aim to promote strategic cooperation between youth organisations and public authorities and raise the capacities of youth councils, youth platforms and local, regional and national authorities dealing with youth in Western Balkan countries.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

EACEA provided an on-line information session on Capacity Building Youth, including question-answer component (questions received via e-mail, answered during the session) which took place on 18/12/2017. The web-streaming of the session as well as frequently asked questions remained available on the EACEA's website.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The deadline of the 2018 selection 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 8 March 2018. In total, 160 applications have been submitted representing a decrease of 20% compared to last year's selection (200 applications). Serbian organisations submitted 49% (79) of the applications. 26% (42) were submitted by organisations based in Albania, 10% (16) by Bosnia and Herzegovina, 9% (14) by Kosovo and 6% (9) by Montenegrin organisations.

The selection process will finish at the end of July 2018. Approximately 38 projects representing a total grant request of EUR 2,97 million are selected (average grant request is just above EUR 78.000). This is significantly higher than in 2017 where a total of 44 project were selected with an average approximate amount of EUR 68.000.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

EACEA will start the contracting phase in the beginning of August and expects to finalise the process including the pre-financing payments in October. This under the condition that previous years difficulties with validating ID numbers (PICs) and the financial capacity goes more smoothly. An on-line kick off meeting will be organised towards the end of 2018.

After the publication of the call 2019 (expected October 2018) the EACEA will deliver information campaigns (on-line or/and in the region).

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:

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PURPOSE

The overall objective of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform is to assist the Western Balkan countries with the employment and social policy reforms in their pre-accession process. The action will help improve the regional cooperation in employment and social policy-making, labour market governance, working conditions and social dialogue.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY –JUNE 2018)

ILO

- Four workshops for Labour Inspectorates on planning of labour inspection campaigns in the Construction Sector (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*).
- Support to the organization of the High level constitutive meeting of the newly re-composed National Tripartite Labour Council in Albania.
- Learning Forum for Secretaries of Economic and Social Councils in the Western Balkans.
- Peer Learning visit of the secretary of the ESC of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska) to the SEC of the Republic of Serbia for experience and good practice sharing.

RCC

- 3 comparative thematic analyses of Active Labour Market Policies and Measures completed and 3 regional peer review workshops held on self-employment programmes, employment of persons with disabilities and youth employment;
- 1 regional expert meeting on informal employment;
- 6 external assessment reports on the performance of Public Employment Services (PES) in the Western Balkans in line with the European bench-learning methodology; 1 comparative report on PES performance management in the Western Balkans
- 1 Directors' meeting of WB6 PES; WB6 Directors' participated in the EU PES network meeting under the Bulgarian Presidency;
- 4 technical assistance actions implemented to address national employment and labour market priorities (Montenegro: EURES requirements; Kosovo*: rules of procedure for newly established Board of the PES; monitoring framework for Action Plan Youth Employment 2018-2020; Albania: study visit of Albanian PES management to PES Pristina) to exchange experience based on the findings of the bench learning assessment.
- Half day event presenting ESAP results, Brussels 20 June 2018 (with ILO contribution)

* 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

OUTPUTS (JANUARY –JUNE 2018)

ILO

- ESAP virtual platform public available to beneficiaries – www.esap.online
- Two virtual Community of Practices established: Sub-regional Network of Agencies for Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes and Central and Eastern European Network of labour law experts.
- Sub-regional Case database (Labour Disputes) established on the ESAP.
- Consolidated report on Economic and Social Councils peer review in Western Balkans
- CEELEX database updated.
- 130 labour inspectors have enhanced knowledge on design and implementation of labour inspection campaigns.
- 4 labour inspection campaigns in construction sector launched; ILO campaign material (leaflets and posters) tailored, translated into local languages and printed; ILO Guide on labour inspection in the construction sector adapted to national contexts.

RCC

- Improved knowledge of practitioners from Ministries of Labour and PES of Western Balkan about good practices in the design, implementation and evaluation of priority employment measures;
- Performance analysis of Western Balkan PES Offices and prioritization of national actions to address the identified weaknesses;
- Bench learning experience among the Western Balkan PES offices shared with the EU PES network and potential cooperation modalities were identified;
- Methodology for the analysis of informal employment in the Western Balkans, in line with the approach of the European Platform tackling undeclared work.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

ILO

- Assistance in and monitoring of implementation of selected recommendations by the ESCs in the Western Balkans (July – December).
- 3rd Annual meeting of the Network of Agencies for Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes, (July, Arandjelovac, Serbia).
- Technical meeting in CEELEX Network (September, Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).
- High level sub-regional meeting of Economic and Social Councils (November, Becici, Montenegro).
- Joint ILO – RCC regional meeting on results of peer review of labour market programmes in the Western Balkans (tbd, tentatively November).

RCC

- 3 regional analyses on internships, local employment partnerships and on the job training;

- 3 regional peer review workshops on internships, local employment partnerships and on the job training;
- 2 regional analyses on management by objectives and EURES readiness that will address the main challenges identified in the bench learning exercise;
- 2 respective training /learning events on management by objectives and EURES;
- 3 high level policy discussions on activation measures for the unemployed based on the peer review results, performance of PES based on bench learning, and Informal employment based on the holistic approach.

7.5 TRENDS ON MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE STUDY TIMSS

Programme reference:	IPA 2017/040-009.05 International assessment for mathematics and science testing in primary education (TIMSS)
Project title:	Participation of the Western Balkan countries to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study - TIMSS 2019
EU contribution:	EUR 1.498.597
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)
Contract reference:	TIMSS EAC/S07/2017
Duration of activities:	2017-2020
Links:	
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PURPOSE

TIMSS 2019 will report on the overall achievement at the end of the primary education against international benchmarks. This will be done by major content domains (mathematics and science) as well as by cognitive domains. Like the previous TIMSS assessments, the study will collect detailed information about curricula, curricula implementation, instructional practices, school resources, and other context information.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Translating and adapting the field test version of the instruments - *Achievement Booklets* and *Background Questionnaires* (based on the guidelines released and trainings performed in 2017);
- Verification of the translations and layout of all language versions of instruments used for the field testing at a national level across the six Western Balkan countries;
- Scorer training, targeted toward the National Research Coordinators (NRCs) and any professional staff involved in the scoring procedure, was conveyed in March 5-9, 2018 in Madrid;
- Specific (additional) scoring training was organized for Kosovars on April 5-6, 2018 Tirana, Albania

- Field testing of procedures and the instruments in April and May 2018;
- Scoring the Constructed Response Items;
- Creating the Databases (using the already released software and skills obtained from DM trainings in 2017) and submitting them in June 2018.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The following units, manuals, and software systems have been provided for guiding the TIMSS 2019 FT implementation and processing:

- TIMSS 2019 Survey Operations Procedures Unit 4: Preparing Achievement Booklets and Context Questionnaires (Accompanied by the IEA Online Survey System (OSS) and its manual. The IEA Online Survey System supported the online administration of the school, teacher, and home questionnaires.)
- TIMSS 2019 Survey Operations Procedures Unit 5: Conducting the Data Collection (Including the Test Administrator Manual and the National Quality Control Monitor Manual.)
- TIMSS 2019 Survey Operations Procedures Unit 6: Scoring the Constructed Response Items (Accompanied by the TIMSS 2019 Scoring Guides, the IEA Coding Expert Software, the Trend Reliability Scoring Manual, & the Cross-country Reliability Scoring Manual.)
- TIMSS 2019 Survey Operations Procedures Unit 7: Creating the Databases Post FT responses of NRCs were recorded into the Survey Activity Questionnaire (SAQ)

The National Research Coordinators, the Data Managers and the other staff involved in the TIMSS 2019 project conveyed the field test operations and obtained the experience and expertise necessary for finalization of the instruments and procedures to be used across the participating countries during the main data collection scheduled in the first half of the year 2019.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The key activity during this period (July – December 2018) is the finalization of the TIMSS 2019 Main Data Collection *instruments, procedures* and *samples* at the international, as well as the national levels.

13 to 17 August: the 5th TIMSS 2019 NRC Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, the focus of the meeting is to review results of the 2019 Field test and discussing resulting modifications of instruments and procedures.

28 to 31 August: the TIMSS 2019 Data Manager Seminar in Hamburg, Germany, the main focus of the meeting is to update Data Managers from participating countries on any changes and improvement related to the software used by TIMSS 2019 at the main data collection stage.

30 to 31 October: specific Western Balkan countries meeting in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, the main focus of this meeting is on various aspects of quality assurance, particularly in relation to the language of instruments and implementation of the main data collection procedures at the level of participating schools.

7.6 SUPPORT TO YOUNG CIVIL SERVANTS

Programme reference:	Multi-Country Programme under EU Integration Facility, IPA 2017/039-402.06/MC
Project title:	EU Scheme for Young Professionals in the Western Balkans
EU contribution:	EUR 1.8 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Delegation Agreement with British Council
Contract reference:	CN 2017/389-939
Duration of activities:	27/09/2017 - 26/09/2019
Links:	http://eu4wb6.com
Contact :	Karolina Buzaljko, karolina.buzaljko@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The EU Scheme for Young Professionals in the Western Balkans aims to promote regional cooperation, while building professional capacity of next generations of public administrators and policy makers in the Western Balkans. The action involves 30 young civil servants (5 from each WB beneficiary) per year, who participate in a) a 2-week executive programme at Sciences Po in Paris, France, b) a 2-week executive programme at College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium and c) a 2-week exchange programme in the Western Balkans. The current action is a 2-year continuation of a pilot action from 2016/17.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Second executive training phase was organised at College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium between 29th of January and 9th of February.
- Regional Exchange Programme took place between 11-24 March. During this phase, each of beneficiaries hosted a group of five young civil servants from other Western Balkan 6 beneficiaries. Each working group focused on a specific topic and developed a high-quality policy paper.
- Networking, lessons learnt and visibility events were organised throughout the region. Regional Closing Conference took place in Podgorica, Montenegro on 30-31 May. The main findings and results of each working group were presented during the conference. Key recommendations from the conference include:
 - ✓ EU process needs to be owned by potential future members (supported by political opposition and society);
 - ✓ Regional cooperation among people is an accelerator of the entire process;
 - ✓ Joint tangible/concrete projects among WB6 civil servants as the forefront runners of the integration process needs to be increased (concrete exchange visits on specific topic recommended);

- ✓ Ensure country's own human allocation and financial resources to implement reforms;
- ✓ Develop strategies that are realistic but in line with strategic objectives, and ensure budgetary allocations;
- ✓ Decrease donor dependability and increase absorption capacities – accountability;
- ✓ Strong political will and concrete actions with the support of the EU are necessary to enhance further regional exchange/cooperation;
- ✓ Cooperation in the rule of law, with tangible and sustained reforms are immense;
- ✓ Further strengthen connectivity agenda and follow up on Berlin process

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Six research papers have been produced as a result of the Regional Exchange Component on the following topics: (1) EU Negotiations, what does it imply, preparations and skills needed, (2) Strategic Planning of IPA II and Effectiveness of Implementation of EU Projects, (3) Participating in Sector Budget Support Programmes, (4) Regional and EU Positive examples for good neighbourhood and regional cooperation in EU context, (5) EU Reforms with focus on functioning, efficient and accountable Public Administration, and (6) EU Connectivity Agenda for the Western Balkans: Key initiatives and instruments aiming to smoothen regional cooperation and approximation with EU.
- Another group of 30 alumni of the programme, who demonstrated the strong willingness to participate in regional activities, to learn from other experiences, and to work together in multinational groups.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Application period and interviews to take place at the British Council country offices in the Western Balkans. Selection of the 3rd round of young professionals.
- The first executive training for the 3rd round of young professionals to take place.

CHAPTER 8: OTHER HORIZONTAL ACTIONS

8.1 EU AGENCIES

Programme reference:	IPA 2014/031-603, IPA 2016/037-900
Project title:	Preparatory measures for the participation of candidates and potential candidates in EU Agencies
EU contribution:	EUR 3,300,000
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant contracts
Contract reference:	11 contracts signed in 2017; 1 contract signed in 2015
Duration of activities:	Q3 2015 – Q1 2020
Contact :	Jutta POMOELL- SEGUROLA, jutta.pomoell-segurola@ec.europa.eu

List of Agencies, duration of activities and total amounts:

CN	Agency	Duration	Amount in EUR
2016/377-705	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)	12/10/2016 – 11/01/2019	350.000
2017/386-267	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)	19/08/2017 – 18/08/2019	310.000
2017/389-613	European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)	01.09.2017 – 30.11.2018	200.000
2017/386-560	European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)	01/01/2018 – 31/12/2019	290.000
2017/386-550	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)	01/07/2017 – 30/06/2019	340.000
2017/390-067	European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)	01/03/2018 – 28/02/2019	180.000
2017/388-568	European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)	01/12/2017 – 31/05/2019	320.000
2015/364-928	European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)	14/10/2015 – 13/04/2018	300.000
2017/391-240	European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)	01/05/2018 – 30/04/2020	200.000
2017/390-035	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)	01/12/2017 – 30/11/2019	290.000

2017/391-230	European Railway Agency (ERA)	01/01/2018 – 31/12/2019	200.000
2017/391-249	European Environment Agency (EEA)	01/02/2018 – 31/01/2020	320.000

PURPOSE

The programme supports EU Agencies to carry out preparatory measures with Beneficiaries and stakeholders to ensure that Beneficiaries are able to participate effectively in the activities of EU Agencies as they implement important parts of the EU *acquis*.

Activities are designed to help beneficiaries understand the function and operations of EU Agencies, and more importantly, their role within them. EU support also permits IPA II beneficiaries to involve other relevant national stakeholders in their activities in ways similar to those of EU Member States. This support mainly consists of advice on organisational matters, staff training and participation in stakeholder meetings.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2018)

Eurofound

Eurofound identified and contracted National Experts for the Working Life country profiles (apart from Bosnia and Herzegovina, where no expert has been identified yet). Upon delivery of the experts' contributions, Eurofound performed quality control and revisions.

Preparation of the 4th European Company Survey including the translation of the questionnaire and sampling information started in May; this is currently in progress.

An event on Quality of Life has been organised in Belgrade for which Eurofound had prepared a selection of indicators in three key areas covered by the European Quality of Life Survey: quality of life, quality of public services, and quality of society. The indicators for candidate countries were presented in the backdrop of EU28 average and the maximum and minimum country figures (taking the highest and lowest scores out of all 33 countries surveyed). In organising the event, helpful facilitation of contacts was provided by the EU Delegation in Belgrade, DG Employment, as well as Serbia's Social inclusion and poverty reduction unit (under Prime Minister's office) and the independent Centre for Social Policy. The debate helped to clarify advantages of the data as well as some practical issues around data analysis.

EASA

Highly specialised on-site working sessions with regard to the State Safety Programme (SSP) and the European Plan for Aviation Safety (EPAS) were delivered for two of the IPA beneficiaries.

Dedicated on-site support activities were conducted for two of the Western Balkans beneficiaries with the aim to further support safety analysis and occurrence reporting according to the EU requirements.

ECDC

ECDC technical and network meetings were organised for Western Balkans and Turkey. In total 45 experts attended ECDC events, such as consultation meeting on annual monitoring of laboratory capabilities using ENLabCap tool; workshops on preliminary results of ECDC point prevalence surveys of healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial use in acute care hospitals and in long-term care facilities; ECDC National Microbiology Focal Point meeting; meeting on Tuberculosis Prevention and Control; and ECDC 4th joint meeting on antimicrobial resistance and healthcare associated infections networks. In addition, to mark the tenth anniversary of the ECDC cooperation with the EU enlargement countries and to discuss achievements, lessons learned, and future priorities for the cooperation, ECDC organised the meeting of National ECDC Correspondents. During this meeting, network members acknowledged that the EC/ECDC assessment and the subsequent Action Plan is a valuable negotiating and advocacy instrument for the EU enlargement country to secure government commitment and mobilise EU investment in the field of communicable disease prevention and control.

ECHA

The beneficiaries have been given an opportunity to take part in one EU level event, one study visit and two workshops:

- E-learning course “The Practical Guide to Ecotoxicology and the Environment”: thirteen licenses for experts representing Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.
- Study Visit to the German Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health: eight experts representing Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia.
- IPA Meeting and Workshop on Substance Evaluation, Risk Management and Dissemination: twelve experts representing Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia.
- Helsinki Chemicals Forum: eleven experts representing Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia.

EFSA

Agreements on the participation of the Assistant Coordinator in the framework of the Programme have been concluded with six IPA beneficiaries as follows: Albania (applicable from December 2017); Bosnia and Herzegovina (applicable from December 2017); the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (applicable from December 2017); Kosovo* (applicable from June 2018); Montenegro (applicable from December 2017) and Turkey (applicable from December 2017). In case of Serbia, due to a lengthy procedure for approval of agreement on Assistant coordinator at the national level, despite the fact that the candidate was identified and agreed in December 2017, the agreement has still not been signed by competent authority in Serbia.

IPA representatives (in total 11) participated in the first Risk Assessment Research Assembly (RARA) organised by EFSA, with a view to stimulating new partnerships in food safety research to safeguard public health, and highlighting the importance of public funding. RARA served as a platform to: exchange research ideas, which may form part of future calls, and identify partners and possible ways of funding.

In order to ensure successful reporting of 2017 zoonoses, zoonotic agents, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and food-borne outbreaks (FBOs) data, 5 webinars were organised for the IPA Beneficiaries. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia confirmed their participation in EFSA zoonoses data reporting cycle in 2018.

EIGE

During this period, EIGE organized the 7th Meeting of Officials from IPA beneficiaries in Vilnius. Data collection of all project beneficiaries into Women and Men in Decision Making Database has started. EIGE organized a training on development of a Gender Equality Index for the statisticians from the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo*, along with a high-level visit of EIGE's director to Skopje. EIGE participated in the Western Balkan Summit in Sofia, organized within the Bulgarian Presidency of the European Council and in the Regional Conference on the Future of Welfare State in Belgrade, Serbia, which gathered over 250 different stakeholders across the region and EU. EIGE participated in a UN Commission of Status of Women side event in New York, organized by OSCE Gender Section presenting our work in the region. During this year's Women's Political Leader's Summit in Vilnius, EIGE organized a workshop on gender-sensitive parliaments, to which many prominent women MPs from the Western Balkans participated. EIGE has initiated the additional activity of collection of good practices on gender equality in the region of Western Balkans and Turkey. The Institute hosted a study visit of the Swedish Foundation Kvinna till Kvinna of twenty-seven participants of various women's Civil Society Organizations across Western Balkans and welcomed experts from the region to EIGE's consultation meeting on discussing opportunities and risks for young girls and boys in digitalization.

EMCDDA

The first nationally representative General Population Survey (GPS) on drugs was launched in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Technical visits to Albania and Kosovo* took place to review the state of play of activities. The visit to Albania was used to discuss with the Ministry of Interior next steps for drafting and signing a Working Arrangement. Visits to review the status of national drug observatory (NDO) and national early warning system (NEWS) in Serbia and Montenegro took place in June. Two forensic toxicologists of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia visited the partner laboratory in Athens with an aim to review the ISO17025 accreditation process. A total of 11 experts from the beneficiaries attended the 2 EMCDDA Annual expert meetings (on GPS indicator and on the European Early Warning System), where special sessions with them were organised in parallel. In addition, the project and the EMCDDA activities were presented to wider audiences, at the 2018 Commission for Narcotic Drugs, the UNODC Western Balkan programme steering committee, the 10th Congress of Toxicology in Developing Countries and the EU political dialogue with Western Balkan countries. The work continued to finalise a regional report on the implementation of the European Facility Survey Questionnaire in the selected Beneficiaries. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia have provided data on 2017 drugs seizures (quantities and numbers of seized

drugs) in line with the EMCDDA standard data collection tool and requirements. Reminders to the other beneficiary countries have been sent to report 2017 drugs seizures data.

EMSA

EMSA delivered a training session on the Sulphur Directive at EMSA's premises in Lisbon for the Western Balkan beneficiaries, and an in-country training course on *Port State Control* in Turkey.

Some of the beneficiaries also participated in training sessions normally arranged for EU MS: Montenegro in a training course on EMSA's systems for vessel traffic monitoring, and Turkey, Serbia and Albania in an advanced training on the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) Convention and Code.

Port State Control (PSC) officers from Montenegro participated in a seminar arranged by the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on PSC* (Paris MoU) Paris MoU in The Hague. In addition, Port State Control officers from Turkey were invited to a seminar of the Mediterranean MoU, arranged at EMSA in Lisbon.

Shortly after a new contract was put in place, a Kick-off Meeting for the focal points and maritime directors of the IPA beneficiaries had been held. The event was attended by the coordinator for the project from DG NEAR, EMSA officials and representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. A plan of activities for the project was agreed.

Some of the beneficiary countries participated together with EU Member States in three meetings arranged by EMSA concerning vessel reporting services or earth observation services. One Port State Control officer from Montenegro participated with funding from the project in a seminar arranged by the Paris MoU in Denmark.

EU-OSHA

During this period, EU-OSHA supported with speakers an International congress on occupational health in Turkey, as well as three workshops in Serbia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The topics covered were Management of Dangerous Substances on the Workplace, European occupational safety and health (OSH) legislation and Regional networks.

OSH professionals from Western Balkans and Turkey attended two Focal Point meetings in Bilbao. There were also attendants from the beneficiary countries to several OSH trainings in Member States. In addition, there was a study visit in the premises of the Agency for 15 representatives of OSH organisations from the beneficiary countries.

Nearly 150 participants from government, social partners, journalists and OSH professionals attended the supported events.

* The Paris MoU consists of 28 participating maritime Administrations and covers the waters of the European coastal States and the North Atlantic basin from North America to Europe. The Paris MoU aims at eliminating the operation of sub-standard ships through a harmonized system of port state control, requesting each participating Administration to inspect a certain amount of foreign vessels calling its ports.

ERA

The following activities for IPA beneficiaries have been carried out:

- Workshop on International Railway Legislation, 6-7 February 2018, Belgrade, Serbia: The workshop, co-organised by the Directorate of railways of Serbia and Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), provided detailed and practical information regarding the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) and highlighted its importance for both national and cross-border rail traffic. The workshop also provided an opportunity to attend a series of technical visits to Serbian Rail Authorities and relevant stakeholders providing in-house information about experiences regarding legal background of these activities, administrative and operational issues faced while implementing and applying European regulations. As a follow-up, invited experts had the opportunity to attend the 34th Working Group Tech (WG TECH) meeting of the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) in Bern.
- Study visit to NIB Bosnia and Herzegovina, 7 March 2018, Doboje, Bosnia and Herzegovina: the scope of the visit was to provide the National Investigation Bodies (NIB) with institutional building support and guidance on legislative requirements and development of legislation in the field of accident investigation, and independence of NIBs.
- Participation of experts of Serbia, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the 7th TAF TSI (COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 1305/2014) Regional Workshop, 7 – 8 March 2018, Bucharest, Romania.
- Participation of experts to the European Rail Safety Summit, 11 – 12 April, Dubrovnik, Croatia.
- Participation of experts to the TEN-T (Trans-European Transport Networks) Days 2018, 25 – 27 April, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Meeting with representatives of Institutions of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Ministry of Transport, Regulatory Body and National Safety Authority, 16 – 17 May 2018, Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Participation of experts to the 48th plenary meeting of the Network of National Safety Authorities and 37th plenary meeting of the Network of National Investigation Bodies, 29 – 31 May 2018, Valenciennes
- Meeting with Railway Inspection Directorate of the Republic of Albania focused on EU requirements for training and licensing of train drivers as well as requirements for recognition of training organizations, 27 June 2018, Durrës, Albania

EEA

Participation of Western Balkan (WB) experts in general meetings, for the National Focal Points (NFP) and specific meetings for the National Reference Centres.

To strengthen the coordination capacities of EEA National Focal Points in the WB beneficiaries this grant also covers the full local salary costs of one technical expert (assistant coordinator) to work alongside the EEA National Focal Points in each of the six WB countries (for up to 12 months between February 2018 and December 2019) to help organise and support the national contributions to the project.

Eurofound

The updated working life profiles for Kosovo and Turkey have been delivered by the contractors and are currently being edited. The first draft of the profile for Montenegro has been delivered.

The event in Belgrade on Improving quality of life in Europe – Sharing data to shape better policies, bringing together around 50 participants and speakers from the candidate countries, to discuss the findings of the European Quality of Life Survey on life and society in the EU candidate countries.

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.

ECDC

Western Balkan beneficiaries participated in the ECDC ENLabCap survey with 2016 data using standardised tool adjusted to IPA beneficiaries. The overall objective of this annual exercise is to monitor key public health microbiology capabilities and capacity for surveillance and epidemic preparedness, including comparison and benchmarking against both – EU levels and among Western Balkan region. ECDC has submitted the ENLabCap individualised country reports to country authorities anticipating that this could, apart from its overall objectives help national stakeholders to identify possible areas for action and to evaluate the impact of health system reforms.

National ECDC Correspondents expressed the need, importance, and their commitment for the Joint ECDC/EFSA regional workshop on One Health approach against Anti-microbial Resistance (AMR) in Western Balkans with the aim to identify gaps, challenges, and key priority areas for effective implementation of EU legislation on AMR. This workshop (planned for February 2019) should result in building blocks for a large-scale regional multi-country One Health project against AMR.

All Western Balkans (with exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina) continued to be included into annual data call to submit their national surveillance data on selected diseases to the European Surveillance System (TESSy).

ECHA

- The e-learning course gives a 12 months access to interactive training material on how to use ecotoxicological information for compliance of REACH and CLP requirements. The training enabled a better understanding of which ecotoxicological data is required under Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) and Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Chemicals (CLP) and how to interpret the information in a wider context. In particular the role of the data to conclude on potential risk for the environment is of particular use for competent authorities.
- The study visit gave an insight into the practical aspects of the German authority's work related to the REACH, CLP and Prior Informed Consent Regulation (PIC) Regulations. It

also allowed for contacts to be established between officials at authority level in Germany with those in the beneficiaries which is beneficial for future work and knowledge transfer.

- During the IPA meeting, the new project team in ECHA was introduced as a result of a reorganisation. In addition, the future planned activities were discussed to ensure they were meeting the expectation and needs of the beneficiaries’.
- Back to back with the IPA meeting, a workshop was organised on evaluation, risk management and IT tools. By the use of case studies a better understanding of the impact of REACH in terms of restriction of chemicals was presented.
- The Helsinki Chemicals Forum provided up-to-date information on chemical management at international level.

EFSA

The latest scientific report published on 19 February 2018 on Lumpy Skin Disease of The Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) was prepared with input data received from IPA beneficiaries. EFSA has generated an animation (available on YouTube) showing the success of the vaccination campaign, which was very useful.

EFSA hosted four IPA beneficiaries in the annual progress meeting of the EU Menu project. Under this project, the most recent and high quality food consumption data will be provided to EFSA, useful for its risk assessment work.

IPA Advisory Forum and Focal Points members strongly supported idea for a Joint EFSA/ECDC regional workshop planned for February 2019 on One Health approach against Anti-microbial resistance (AMR) in Western Balkan countries with the aim to identify gaps, challenges, and key priority areas for effective implementation of EU legislation on AMR.

EIGE

Cooperation with all Western Balkan beneficiaries and relevant institutions progressed as expected and exceeded expectations in some cases. EIGE has continued good working relationship with the institutions responsible for advancement of gender equality in the IPA countries; EIGE’s publications and other tangible work outcomes have been regularly shared with key partners in each IPA beneficiary. All IPA project beneficiaries have taken concrete steps in the production of their national Gender Equality Index and EIGE strengthened cooperation with gender focal points in EUDs in IPA countries, as well as DG NEAR and DG JUST. Also, more civil society organizations have been better informed about EIGE’s work in the region.

EMCDDA

At least 13 experts from the beneficiaries have better knowledge about the EMCDDA reporting requirements and quality procedures for data collection in the area of their expertise.

The international stakeholders working in field of drugs are better informed about the EU activities in the beneficiaries, which allow for more coordinated and informed approach for the activities at national levels.

EMSA

The implemented activities have enabled beneficiaries to strengthen their administrative capacity and organisation capability needed for the implementation and enforcement of international and EU maritime law. The participation in training on EMSA's maritime systems has helped the participants acquire technical skills and practical experience on how to make the best possible use of the systems. The in-country training allowed EMSA to inform a larger number of officials and make them familiar with EMSA's tasks and EU legislation. The participation in trainings together with Member States have enabled the sharing of best practices and extending knowledge. The participation of Port State Control officers from Montenegro to the seminar of the Paris MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) on Port State Control has been a way to assist the country to move closer to meeting the requirements for membership in the Memorandum. The support of Port State Control officers from Turkey to attend a seminar of the Mediterranean MoU has enabled them to enhance knowledge of the relevant procedures.

During the Kick-off meeting of the new project, the participants were introduced to the contract, the administrative arrangements and the new activities to be developed in the area of capacity building and tools. The representatives of the beneficiaries presented their views and needs related to the activities to be implemented under the project and provided an update of the European legislation that had already been transposed or would be transposed in the coming years. Participants agreed on the priorities for actions to be implemented within the framework of the project.

EU-OSHA

Throughout the implemented activities, EU-OSHA managed to reach the stakeholders dealing with occupational safety issues in most of the beneficiary countries. The positive effects were supported by additional visualisation activities (interviews and entries in traditional and social media, distribution of promotional materials, etc.) Apart from benefiting their local OSH capacity and raising awareness on common problems, the participants of the supported events were able to exchange experience and ideas with their counterparts from the Member States.

ERA

All beneficiaries 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, institutional building, International railway legislation, safety management systems (SMS) and EU requirements for training and licensing of train drivers has raised. Beneficiaries have received better understanding of the newly adopted Fourth 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.

EEA

Participation of the National Focal Points and the assistant coordinators in two European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) NFP meeting, in February and in May.

Participation of one Macedonian expert in the European Commission Joint Research Centre Aquila meeting on calibration of air quality equipment and participation of several

environmental experts from the West Balkans in Eionet/National Reference Centre (NRC) meetings.

A country visit by EEA representatives and lead by the Executive Director to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. During these visits, meetings with the Environmental ministers from the countries were held in order to explore further and more enhanced cooperation between the EEA and the countries.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR JULY-DECEMBER 2018

Eurofound

Publication and translation of the country profiles on Working Life; editing, publication and translations of country profiles on Quality of Life.

Finalisation of the preparation of the European Company Survey, including the translation of the questionnaire for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

EASA

Dedicated on-site support missions to one/two of the Western Balkan beneficiaries with a review of the current status of the safety analysing and occurrence reporting system.

On-the-Job (OJT) support activities with regard to the implementation of safety analysing and occurrence reporting system(s).

On-site support to one/two of the Western Balkan beneficiaries with a review of the State Safety Programme (SSP) implementation.

ECDC

Key activities to be undertaken include 9th Annual Legionnaire's Disease Network (ELDSNet) meeting, Joint annual meeting for National Focal Points (NFP) for Preparedness and Response and NFP for Threat detection, Joint meeting of NFP for Microbiology and NFP for Surveillance, Annual Emerging and Vector borne Diseases Network Meeting, Regional course on planning, implementation and evaluation of simulation exercises in public health settings (with focus on antimicrobial resistance). In addition, ECDC will initiate microbiological support to European surveillance of Clostridium difficile infections extending this to Western Balkans and Turkey.

ECHA

For the remainder of the project, ECHA is organising four EU level events (HelpNet meeting and workshops, Biocides Stakeholders' Day, Restriction workshop and Forum Open Session), four workshops (on substance of very high concern (SVHC), biocides assessment, enforcement and International Uniform Chemical Information Database (IUCLID)) as well as providing translation of relevant ECHA material (guidance and/or leaflets) into the beneficiaries' official languages.

EFSA

EFSA will publish a scientific report on possible scenarios of an exit strategy for Lumpy Skin Disease by end September 2018. A workshop with the affected Member States and experts from pre- accession countries will take place in November 2018 and a scientific report on the epidemiological analysis of LSD outbreaks will be published in January 2019.

In the next period various capacity building activities will take place in IPA beneficiaries and EFSA in order to support their efforts to report data on pesticides and veterinary drug residues in 2018.

IPA representatives will be invited to attend EFSA's 3rd Scientific Conference 'Science, Food, Society'. Two webinars on the food classification and description system FoodEx 2 will be organised in September/October 2018.

EFSA recently initiated the SIGMA project to harmonize data collections on animal health and to automatize the data exchange between Member States and EFSA. It was agreed that IPA countries will take part in the new project. However, the budget for their involvement should come from IPA grant funds.

EIGE

In the upcoming period, EIGE is planning for the 8th Meeting of Officials from EU candidate and potential candidate countries in October in Vienna, during the Austrian Presidency of the European Council. The process of collection of good practices on gender equality will be finished and published on EIGE's webpage. Continued support is planned in the area of development of national Gender Equality Indices for project beneficiaries from the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo and one regional event tackling gender-based violence is under preparation, which will take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina in September.

EMCDDA

The project mid-term coordination meeting with the participation of IPA national correspondents and in cooperation with the EU Delegation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will take place in Skopje in September. The experts from the Beneficiaries will attend 3 EMCDDA Annual expert meetings (on drug-related deaths, drug-related infectious diseases, treatment demand indicator and problem drug use), the Extended Reitox network meeting and the Reitox Academy on Prevention. National capacity building activities are planned for Albania (on drug-related deaths), Serbia (on new psychoactive substances) and Montenegro (on monitoring treatment entrants). The reports of the review of National Drugs Observatory (NDO) and National Early Warning System (NEWS) in Serbia and Montenegro will be communicated to the EC, and to relevant national authorities in September. The General Population Survey (GPS) in Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue. The work on the updated Information maps, NEWS profiles and updated national reports, as well as the annual review of Roadmaps for participation in the EMCDDA will be launched.

EMSA

The project under CN: 2015/364-928 was concluded on 23 April 2018, and followed by a new project under CN: 2017/391-240 that started on 1 May 2018.

During the next semester, EMSA will continue implementing the agreed training plan with activities taking place both at EMSA and in the enlargement countries, or as events arranged by Paris MoU or the MED MoU (Mediterranean Memorandum Of Understanding On Port State Control). Some of the countries will be invited to events normally arranged for EU Member States and concerning EMSA's maritime systems. Trainings will be offered also as distance learning programmes.

IPA beneficiaries will also be offered access to RuleCheck, which is a web based decision supporting tool and up-to-date repository of maritime legislation.

A possible pilot project on the sharing of automatic identification system (AIS) data, to enable an efficient vessel traffic monitoring in the region, will be further explored together with relevant countries, as will the possibility to receive satellite images from the CleanSeaNet, a European satellite-based oil spill and vessel detection service making it possible to identify and trace oil pollution on the sea surface.

EU-OSHA

There are several trainings planned for the second half of the year, as well as the start of the preparation of the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER) that will be carried in two of the beneficiary countries. Apart from that, it is expected that there will be progress on the Development and adoption of Risk assessment tools for SMEs in Serbia.

ERA

Participation of accident investigation experts in the Workshop on Rail Safety Accident Investigation, 11 – 12 September 2018, Lisbon, Portugal

- Participation of experts at the “Cleaning up of National rules” workshop exchanging experiences with experts from Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia on the alignment of National Rules to European regulations 16 October 2018, the day before the 6th Regional Workshop on Railway Safety and Interoperability, Budapest, Hungary
- Participation of experts of IPA beneficiaries to the 6th Regional Workshop on development of Railway Safety and Interoperability, 17 October 2018, Budapest, Hungary

EEA

Preparations for country visits to other countries are envisaged for the latter half of 2018. Western Balkans NFPs are foreseen to participate in the October 2018 NFP/Eionet meetings and NRCs will be invited to NRC and Eionet Expert meeting on a routine bases.

A meeting between the EEA and the environmental experts from EU delegations in the Western Balkans is foreseen in order to enhance cooperation and to better coordinate environmental activities in the countries.

8.2 REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL

Enhancing mobility, connectivity and competitiveness in South East Europe

Programme reference:	Multi-country Action Programme for 2016, IPA 2016/037-900
Project title:	Enhancing mobility, connectivity and competitiveness in South East Europe – Support to RCC
EU contribution:	EUR 7.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant agreement with RCC
Contract reference:	CN 2016/380-471

Duration of activities: 01/01/2017 – 31/12/2019

Links: www.rcc.int

Contact: Jlenia Destito, Jlenia.Destito@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to provide financial assistance to the functioning of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat and contribution to the activities of the RCC for 2017-2019, as foreseen in its Strategy and Work Programme 2017-2019, in particular implementing the South East Europe (SEE) 2020 strategy.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- SEE2020 Programming Committee meeting; six national SEE2020 programming consultations; six Multi-Annual Action Plans on Regional Economic Area (MAP REA) needs assessment meetings; Donor coordination meeting; SEE 2020 Governing Board meeting; Meetings of MAP coordinators and of Component contact points (MAP CCP); SEE2020 Monitoring Committee meeting; Development of database for collection of statistical data for SEE2020 and SEE2020 Progress Tracker; Finalization of Balkan Barometer 2018 findings; Launching Call for Proposals under RCC Grant Facility (support to MAP);
- MAP Investment: Three meetings, including on Ministerial level; meeting on investment policy dialogue; workshop on defining the roadmap for joint investment promotion; business conference/investment promotion conference (Sarajevo Business Forum); Meeting of Working Group on Capital Markets;
- MAP Mobility: support to Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) for 4 agreed professions and Recommendation to Open Negotiations on MRA; Meeting of Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (JWG MRPQ) to complete technical preparations for opening the negotiations on MRA; Two Meetings of Working Group on Recognition of Academic Qualifications (WGRAQ) and one Seminar on Quality Assured recognition of Academic Qualifications (AQ); Development of study on Recognition of AQ; Development of methodology, kick off and coordination of Joint Exercise on Recognition of AQ; Regional meeting of Joint Working Group on Research and Development (R&D) and EURAXESS contact points; Identification of EURAXESS training needs; Training on Smart Specialisation (S3) with DG JRC for both Industrial and R&D WG;
- MAP Digital: Meeting of WB Digital Summit Steering Committee; Western Balkans Roaming Policy Meeting; High-level WB Digital Summit; Conducting study on Telecommunications Market and Roaming Prices in WB; Meeting on Coordination and Harmonization of WB Spectrum Policies;
- Meeting of Working Group on Environment (RWG Env); Conducting study on Climate Change in WB;
- Trainings on corruption risks in healthcare sector; three trainings on liability of legal persons;

- Two working meetings on Peer Missions for WB Recommendation on Public Participation; Support to Peer Missions Methodology development; Regional conference to raise authorities' awareness of WB Recommendation on Public Participation;
- Two meetings of WB WG on Justice; SEE Association of Mediators Network Meeting.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- SEE2020 Annual Implementation Report for 2018 prepared and endorsed; SEE2020 Programming cycle completed with endorsed Programming Document 2018-2020; Annual Regional Donor Coordination maintained ; Implementation commenced of awarded small grant projects;
- Efficient regional coordination and monitoring on MAP REA (regular regional coordination maintained, Monitoring and reporting methodology and guidelines endorsed, Implementation report and Economy fiches published);
- Regional Investment Reform Agenda (RIRA) endorsed; extended capacity building on the topic of investment arbitration and mechanisms for prevention, as well as for Investment Promotion Agencies in drafting Joint Investment Promotion Initiative (JIPI);
- Regional Programme on Capital Markets Development prepared and endorsed;
- Drafted legal text of MRA on professional qualifications; Endorsed Recommendation on opening of negotiations on MRA;
- Completed comparative study on Recognition of Academic Qualification (AQ) and launched WB6 Joint Exercise on Recognition of AQ; Principles for the model for automatic recognition of AQ in WB6 endorsed by Education Ministers;
- Joint Statement of WB6 on Horizon Europe agreed and circulated to EUMS and EU institutions; Training on S3 provided (S3 Roadmaps developed);
- Structured High-level regional political dialogue on WB digital transformation established and first ever WB Digital Summit organized, with endorsed Conclusions;
- Advanced implementation of MAP REA digital measures: regional consultations on further reduction of intra-WB roaming charges held, regional consultations on spectrum policy harmonization launched; Preliminary briefings from Study on Telecommunications Market and Roaming Prices in WB prepared;
- Regular Meeting of RWG Env reviewing implementation of Bonn Ministerial Declaration and progress on key environmental projects supporting SEE2020 implementation; Assessed impact on Climate Change in WB6;
- Regional meeting and conference organized to raise awareness on public participation in decision-making and endorse the Methodology on Peer Missions on Public Participation;
- Two workshops on corruption risk assessment and anti-corruption assessment of laws;
- Extended participation and involvement of Councils for judiciary in the activities of WB Working Group on Justice in order to improve independency of judges and prosecutors, based on objective and standardized appointment procedure;

- Increased capacities of WB Associations of mediators and Ministries of justice on legal frameworks and best practices in cross-border alternative dispute resolution;
- Established structure for exchange of information on regionally relevant activities and projects in judicial training area; RCC confirmed by SEE JTI Network as a link and focal point in judicial training field in WB; RCC became partner of European Judicial Training Network (EJTN);
- Established cooperation on efficiency of justice and e-learning with Council of Europe (CEPEJ and HELP); Maintained and updated map of projects in judicial training in WB.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- SEE2020 Programming Committee meeting; Conducting donor coordination activities; Start of the Balkan Barometer 2019 edition; coordination meeting with SEE2020 Regional Dimension Coordinators; Meeting of MAP Coordinators and MAP CCP;
- MAP Investment Activities: Six national workshops on National Action Plans for implementation of RIRA; Two capacity building trainings for investment experts on the legal and promotion matters within the investment agenda; Meeting of WG on Capital Markets for strategy development, aiming at broadening the region's capital markets integration;
- MAP Mobility Activities: Launch negotiations on mutual recognition agreement for professional qualifications; Facilitate preparation of draft model for automatic recognition of AQ; Complete joint exercise on recognition of AQ; Launch cooperation in open access to research infrastructure between WB6; Facilitate WB6 participation at a regular meeting of the EU Member States on Open Science; EURAXESS capacity building training; Training on S3 development in WB6 in cooperation with DG JRC;
- MAP Digital Activities: regional capacity building meeting of CSIRTs and authorities in charge of NIS Directive; Initiation of the organization of the next WB Digital Summit; Regional meeting on roaming;
- Regional meeting of Ministers for Environment;
- Two peer missions on Public Participation and sharing best practices from WB6; Two trainings on corruption risk assessments in healthcare;
- Development of a Regional judicial training programme and Common standards in judicial training process; Regular WB WGJ meeting; Conference 'Rule of law at a heart of enlargement process; Regional seminar for judges and prosecutors; Finalisation of Database of regional legal experts in EU law.

8.3 MONITORING

Programme reference:	Support Measure – Monitoring Programme
Project title:	Multi-country Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) - Western Balkans & Turkey

EU contribution:	EUR 6.89 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service Contract with Particip GmbH
Contract reference:	CN 2015/361-031
Duration of activities:	03/6/2015 – 02/06/2019
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 and Turkey. The purpose of ROM is to support the results monitoring activities of interventions by the Operational Managers in the EU Delegations and at EC Headquarters. The ROM reviews are conducted in accordance with the ROM Handbook.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

The project completed work on the 2017-18 Workplan covering the period from May 2017 to April 2018 (87 reports) and started implementing the 2018-19 Workplan which has 55 approved ROM missions. A total of 56 ROM missions were launched in the semester covering problematic, innovative, or not visited programmes or allocations where specialist sector knowledge is required.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

49 draft ROM Reports were issued in the period. The reports addressed performance issues in Albania (11), Bosnia and Herzegovina (0), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (5), Kosovo (7) Montenegro (5), Serbia (7), Turkey (3) and Regional programmes (11).

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.

8.4 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 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 – 31/12/2018
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 (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Date, venue and draft agenda for holding a post-2020 IPA CBC event.
- Logistical preparations for the organisation of the 6th Regional CBC Forum in Prizren (Kosovo).
- Launch and coordination of a technical working group (TWG) on the post-2020 IPA CBC programmes, including the analysis of responses provided by its members through a tailored questionnaire.
- Guidelines for assessors to work in evaluations of IPA II CBC calls for proposals and on the efficient implementation of financial support to third parties (e.g. under the programme MK-AL).
- JTS needs assessment analysis report, along with a capacity building plan including staff exchange, and a model report for coaching, exchange of staff and job shadowing for staff of the joint technical secretariats.
- Ex-post survey reports for three (3) 2007-2013 IPA CBC programmes: Montenegro-Albania, Montenegro-Kosovo* and Serbia-Bosnia Herzegovina, as well as the first draft of the horizontal analysis and synthesis report for eight (8) 2007-2013 IPA CBC programmes.
- Launch of a survey on the unsuccessful applicants under the 2014-2020 1st call of the programme the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-Albania.
- First collection of data on indicators under the regional IPA II CBC monitoring system from projects funded from 5 programmes.
- Delivery of 11 workshops for different stakeholders on the implementation of the regional IPA II CBC monitoring system.
- Delivery of 18 training events for programme management structures and grant beneficiaries following ad-hoc requests.
- Compilation of a tender dossier for development of a software that would ensure efficient data collecting and smooth functioning of the monitoring system.
- Upgrading and continuous use of several communication tools such as the project website, the newsletter (7th issue published), social media pages (Interreg good practices) and flash news.
- Training event on public relations skills in Belgrade (the last of six of them over the region).

- A two-day training of trainers event on advanced presentation skills for the staff of JTSs under all IPA II CBC programmes.
- Application for the 2018 EU Cities and Regions celebration, in close coordination with INTERACT, DG NEAR and DG REGIO.
- Preliminary steps to feed the KEEP database under INTERACT with inputs from IPA and IPA II CBC projects.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY-JUNE 2018)

- Best practice culture and sharing of experience is being promoted through the regional CBC forum, project on-line tools and newsletters.
- Capacities of the IPA II CBC programme structures are being strengthened in line with their requirements and specific needs.
- The basis for a better monitoring of the IPA II CBC between Beneficiaries is set through the establishment of a result/impact measurement system.
- Targeted and systematic measures that will enhance better visibility and promotion of CBC IPA programmes and their achievements are being undertaken (training sessions for programme structures, project newsletters, website, Facebook, etc.).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Organisation of a brainstorming regional workshop on post-2020 IPA CBC (18 and 19 September 2018, Bečići, Montenegro).
- Organisation of the 6th Regional CBC Forum (November 2018, Prizren, Kosovo).
- Support the activities of the TWG on performance management and the post-2020 IPA CBC strategic orientations.
- Finalisation of a methodology for systematic impact measurement to improve the overall quality of the IPA CBC programmes and a guidance report to improve technical and operational aspects, as well as processes in the CBC programmes.
- Delivery of workshops for different stakeholders on diverse topics: (i) the implementation of the regional IPA II CBC monitoring system under the programmes Montenegro-Kosovo, Serbia-Montenegro and Serbia-Bosnia Herzegovina; (ii) CBC programme, project and procurement management in Belgrade and Sarajevo; and (iii) reporting and visibility under the programmes the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-Albania, Albania-Kosovo and Kosovo-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Development of a software that will ensure efficient data collection and smooth functioning of the monitoring system.
- Participation in a workshop in Brussels under the 2018 EU Week of Cities and Regions.
- Providing the necessary support to programme structures in daily management of the programmes and the technical assistance services contracts.
- Regular update and continuous use of several communication tools (project website and social media pages).
- Preparation of the 8th issue of the project newsletter and regular distribution of the monthly e-mail flash news.
- Finalisation of the IPA CBC programme and project communication guidelines.