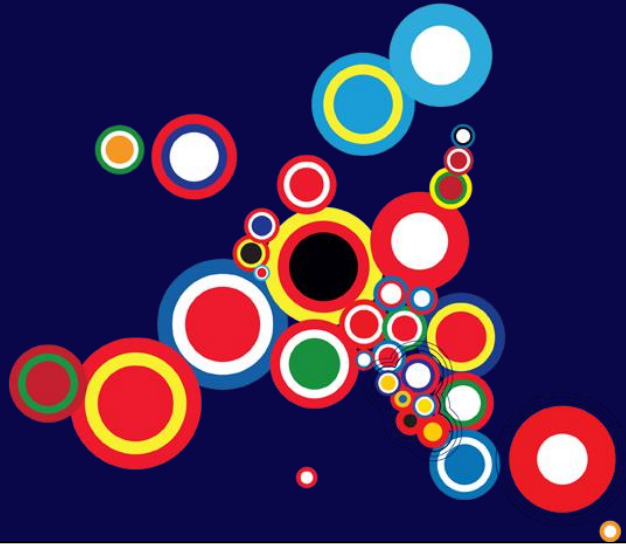




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

MULTI-COUNTRY

Support to the Western
Balkan Integrative Internal
Security Governance



Action summary

The action's main objective is to assist Western Balkans in tackling occurring forms of Serious and Organised Crimes (SOC) including terrorism that have been impacting the region and Europe as a whole. It will assist their law enforcement services to eliminate to the highest extent possible the main motivating factor to Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) operating in/through the region – their illegally gotten financial gains, building on the existing achievements, relevant regional mechanisms and structures to further improve the capacities of prosecutors, police, judiciary as well as financial investigation units, enabling the seizure or illegal financial profits through successful cross-border investigations and sufficient follow up.

The action will deliver an integrative and coordinated approach to countering SOC in/emanating from the Western Balkan region – based on the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) concept, which builds on the methodology of the EU Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism initiative. The integrated multi-annual action plan will integrate the efforts of EU and international partners.

Action Identification			
Action Programme Title	IPA II Annual Multi-Country Action Programme 2017		
Action Title	Support to the Western Balkan Integrative Internal Security Governance		
Action ID	IPA 2017/039-402.09/MC/SecurityGovernance		
Sector Information			
IPA II Sector	9. Regional and territorial cooperation		
DAC Sector	15210 - Security system management and reform		
Budget			
Total cost	EUR 21 625 000		
EU contribution	EUR 20 000 000		
Budget line(s)	22.020401 – Multi-country programmes, regional integration and territorial cooperation		
Management and Implementation			
Management mode	Direct and indirect management		
<i>Direct management</i> European Commission	Direct management - Unit D.5. - Western Balkans Regional Cooperation and Programmes		
<i>Indirect management:</i> Entrusted entity	Indirect management - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)		
Implementation responsibilities	N/A		
Location			
Zone benefiting from the action	Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia)		
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A		
Timeline			
Final date for contracting including the conclusion of delegation agreements	31 December 2018		
Final date for operational implementation	31 December 2021		
Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

* 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.

Aid to environment	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Biological diversity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Europol's strategic analytical reports have revealed a changed criminal landscape in Europe. Serious and organised crime groups are using a crime-as-a-service business model and trading in diversified commodities, which means that organised crime invariably seeks to change the commodities which promise better criminal profits at lower risk. Serious and Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) are increasingly flexible, becoming more inter-connected and cooperative at international level but also financially and politically stronger and engage in multiple forms of crime, and finally, cheaper means of transport and ways of communication, including internet, make criminal groups from both sides more mobile and even closer. As indicated by the *EU Global Strategy* (2016), the challenges of migration, energy security, terrorism and organised crime are shared between the EU and the Western Balkans. Western Balkans have been identified as having significant deficiencies to combat Serious and Organised Crime (SOC), especially when it comes to tackling its financial dimension. At the same time, the nature of modern SOC challenges in/emanating from the region call for a coordinated and more efficient approach at EU level in assisting the Beneficiaries to tackle them and in furthering operational cooperation – in view of the need to close the gap between internal and external dimensions of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA).

The inability to cut the SOC subjects in the Western Balkans' jurisdictions off from their ill-gotten gains is a crucial gap and significant risk to the region and beyond. As to the ways the illegal proceeds are gained, many reports emphasise the Western Balkans as a region where OCGs are particularly active in diverse types of crime or it represents a region of origin/transit. The United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report *Drug Money: The Illicit Proceeds of Opiates Trafficked on the Balkan Route* (2015) revealed credible amounts for the value of opiates trafficked through the Western Balkans' jurisdictions and showed that the effect as a percentage of GDP is broadly above European averages.

Jurisdiction	Best Estimate of Gross Profit from Heroin Trafficked in Jurisdiction, USD	Gross Profit of Heroin Trafficked as a Percentage of GDP ¹
Albania	320 million	2.422%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	40 million	0.219%
Kosovo	25 million	0.338%
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	39 million	0.344%
Montenegro	11 million	0.240%
Serbia	33 million	0.075%
Annual Average for Western and Central Europe		0.11%

In the Regional Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA), developed within the project “Enhancing Capacities for Strategic Analysis and Strategic Assessment in the Criminal Investigation Directorates of the Serbian, Montenegrin and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Ministries of Interior”², the authors estimated that each individual Balkan OCG earns a profit of up to EUR 100 million per annum from the trafficking of cocaine in Western Europe. They use corruption to place the proceeds in the legal flows, causing damage to the financial systems of Serbia and Montenegro. The assessment also observed that the Central Balkan heroin smuggling route, which partly crosses the territories of Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, is less used, as a result of a more intensive use of the new transport infrastructure (in Albania, the Priština–Durres highway) and maritime ports (Albania and Greece). Albania is the biggest marijuana producer in this part of Europe, hence the largest quantities

¹ GDP figures sourced from the World Bank. <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/GDP-ranking-table>

² The project is funded by the Government of Switzerland within the Regional Police Cooperation Programme (2012-2016) and it is implemented by the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

are distributed to Greece and Italy, and smaller quantities to Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and onward, via the Balkan route to Central European countries, according to this Regional SOCTA. As a result of big police operations carried out in Albania in the last few years, there has been a significant drop in the offer of marijuana on the local markets of Serbia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The reduction of the offer has resulted in the increase of the price of up to 300%, which resulted in the intensification of marijuana production in the three countries. The R-SOCTA foresees that organised crime groups that engage in other types of crime (property crimes and smuggling of excise goods), will switch to the production and trafficking of marijuana, because of a big market demand and big proceeds. The synthetic drug market is the most dynamic of all drug markets, in terms of intensity and announcements of new synthetic drugs. Synthetic drugs produced in Western Europe continue to be seized along the Balkan route, en route to the east. Another special problem is a rise in the online trafficking of synthetic drug.

As underlined by both the European Agenda on Security and the European Migration Agenda, trafficking in human beings is an extremely pernicious and highly lucrative form of crime. The International Labour Organisation report *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour* shows that two thirds of the estimated total of US\$ 150 billion, or US\$ 99 billion, came from commercial sexual exploitation, while another US\$ 51 billion resulted from forced economic exploitation, including domestic work, agriculture and other economic activities. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Report *Trafficking in persons to Europe for sexual exploitation* shows that this is one of the most lucrative illicit businesses in Europe, where criminals are making around 2.5 billion EUR per year through sexual exploitation and forced labour. The Regional SOCTA on this reads: Criminal groups that organise the smuggling of human beings in one country, cooperate with groups in neighbouring countries along the Western Balkan route. The criminal activity of smuggling of irregular migrants is still topical and the intensity of smuggling changes mostly as a result of political decisions and measures undertaken in the Beneficiaries of the region and the EU. It also predicts that the activities of organised crime groups involved in the smuggling of migrants will increase and that they may be expected to become involved in the forging of documents in order to facilitate the smuggling of people. Irregular migrants (especially children and teenagers, and girls who travel with, or, more frequently, without companions) can be expected to experience a greater risk of becoming human trafficking victims. Citizens of the Beneficiaries in the region who are staying in the EU and whose status is not regulated, may become human trafficking victims in EU member-states, and be forced to any type of exploitation. The internal human trafficking in the observed Beneficiaries will continue to depend directly on the socioeconomic position of potential victims, and its level is expected to remain low.

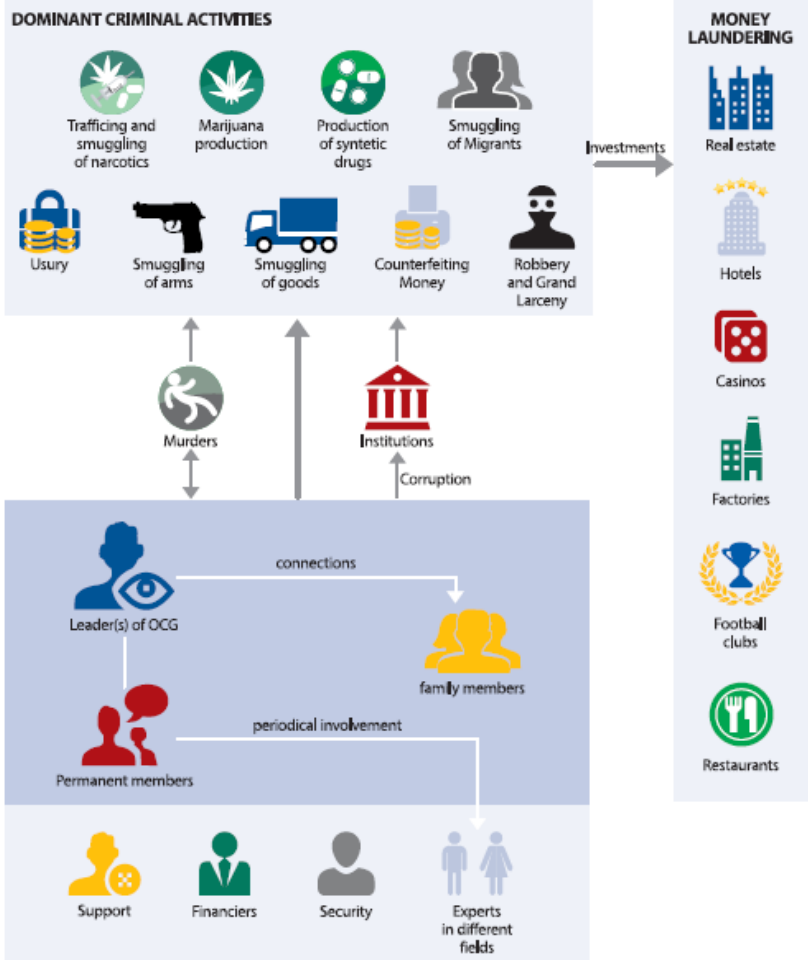
The trafficking of firearms appears prominently in the region, often as a legacy of conflicts during the 1990s which left masses of undeclared weapons. Europol's Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2011³ identified Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with Serbia, as the main sources for weapons and ammunition provided to Organised Crime Groups operating in the EU. The threat assessment also reported that military grade arms trafficked from the Western Balkans to the EU pose a significant internal security threat, "The figure of 4 million unregistered illegal war firearms in the Balkans is well-known and remains deeply worrying."⁴

The Regional SOCTA, concludes that the security concerns that result from Serbian and Montenegrin citizens' membership in the OCGs involved in cocaine smuggling also result from the fact that enormous profits prompt these groups to make associations and operate. Any lack of discipline in the realization of a given task, as well as OCG detection and cocaine seizures, result in clashes between and liquidations of members of these groups in Serbia and Montenegro, as well as the countries of origin of cocaine (South America). The most serious threat for Serbia and Montenegro, whose citizens make up Balkan OCGs, is the placing of proceeds of crime into legal economic and other flows. This profit is partly used for corrupting the main players in the laundering of proceeds from cocaine smuggling.

³ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/press/europol-organised-crime-threat-assessment-2011-429>

⁴ EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström, 19 November, 2012. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-12-841_en.htm

Money laundering is the mechanism that is allowing these criminals to enjoy the fruits of these criminal endeavours; Europol’s iOCTA 2015 states that cybercrime is becoming more aggressive and present, and that some SOC subjects engaging in cybercrime are particularly active in the Western Balkans region; terrorist organisations and individuals engage in SOC to finance their illegal activities, and so on. At the same time, as also indicated by the 2015 EU progress reports, specialised units within law enforcement agencies are mostly in place, but need to further develop their human resource capacity and/or require specialised trainings. Financial investigations as well as Joint Investigation Teams and seizure, freezing and confiscation of assets remain underused. The project will actively try to involve EU MS in these JITs.



Source: Regional SOCTA Serbia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

As the EU’s Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2014 has noted, the threat to the EU from extremists returning from Middle-Eastern jihads is likely to “increase exponentially” in the near future (due to the failure of expansive military campaign of Da’esh’s) — and ISIL’ Balkan networks are a key link in this dangerous chain. ⁵A March 2015 report commissioned by the United Nations Security Council found that the number of foreign fighters (FF) for Islamist causes worldwide was higher than it has ever been and had soared by 71 percent between mid-2014 and March 2015.

The presence of Balkan fighters in Syria has been recorded since 2013. They have joined both al Qaeda’s official branch in Syria, the Al Nusrah Front, and the Da’esh. Based on the available data, it would appear

⁵ Returning Fighters from Syrian Conflict Cause Concern in the EU, EUROPOL Press Release, 29 May 2014, (<https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/returning-fighters-syrian-conflict-cause-concern-eu>)

that the number of fighters from the Balkans has at least doubled, if not tripled, since June 2014.⁶ The bulk of the fighters have come from Kosovo, but others can be traced back to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Western Balkans is important for the ISIL for reasons beyond recruitment. The Balkans is becoming an important transit route for the ISIL, allowing fighters to travel between Europe and the Middle East. There is concern that, if the current trajectory continues, ISIL could use the Western Balkans to plan and launch attacks across the rest of Europe. While there are not clear indicators on the links between organised crime and terrorism, it shouldn't be underestimated that foreign fighters and terrorist may exploit the skills and experience of organised criminal groups in the region to obtain fake EU documents and firearms to come back from war zones and to commit terrorist attacks.

The EU-Western Balkans cooperation and international assistance in the Western Balkans has seen a wide recognition of the need to not only monitor but also to streamline or even functionally *integrate* the objectives of EU regional policies and objectives of other actors. Indeed, there had been a few attempts to address the issue of lacking coordination among the various donors, which were mostly initiated by a Member State or agency, but resulted in a partial overview with encouraging information exchange among state and non-state donors at best. The initiatives, such as the German-led *Treptower Group*, have not had the possibility to address any systemic coordination issues in the long-term, lacked visibility or have not had sufficient follow-up to lead to improved coordination and functional alignment. Nevertheless, their results and lessons will be considered.

As of 2015, the *Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism initiative* (WBCTi) has represented a joint, coordinated approach to assistance and regional cooperation in the Western Balkans, representing the first wide and consistent policy attempting the integration of all external assistance actions within a concrete policy field in the context of EU-Western Balkans relations. Its main aim is to integrate EU (Enlargement and Justice and Home Affairs) and international assistance and regional cooperation in the counter-terrorism field, minimizing duplications of action and maximizing cost-benefit efficiency. It is backed also by the European Commission – Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), who oversees the progress of the Western Balkan (prospective) EU Candidate Countries, and supported by more than 50 relevant actors⁷.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

In line with the priorities of the *European Agenda on Security* (2015), the action focuses on some of the major gaps in areas posing the gravest challenges to the region and requiring immediate actions and strengthened cross-border regional and international cooperation – incl. countering money laundering, forgery of travel documents and financing of terrorism as a result of SOC activities – by improving (financial) criminal investigations. As a result, the Western Balkans will be better equipped in tackling SOC, major serious criminal phenomena and terrorism, including its links to violent extremism and radicalization. To tackle the challenges of fighting transnational SOC, the respective law enforcement authorities (i.e. prosecutors, police, Ministries of Justice - MoJs, Financial Investigation Units – FIUs, customs, border police) need to improve their technical skills and align their practices with international standards and best practices in the EU and beyond. Based on the poly-crime nature of OCGs, the action will fully consider the lesson identified at the EU level on the principle of combining specialist SOC investigations, such as e.g. on Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), with financial investigations and applying wide parameters to an investigation in order to take into account all possible underlying types of “general” crime, when e.g. dealing with money laundering, in order to successfully investigate the source of illegal gains, which might be used for terrorism. In addition, the action intends to establish a better cooperation with other actors like notaries,

⁶ Estimated number of Balkan Jihadi volunteers in Syria/Iraq – Albania 140, Bosnia and Herzegovina 350, Kosovo 150, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 20, Montenegro 30, Serbia 3 / total 693 (source: Central Intelligence Agency, September 2014); ISIS' Balkan Networks, By Gordon N. Bardos, March 25th, 2015

⁷ Council of the EU 2015. *Conclusions of the Council of the EU and of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Integrative and Complementary Approach to Counter-Terrorism and Violent Extremism in the Western Balkans*. <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14986-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

real estate agencies, money transfer agencies as Western Union, etc. to avoid that the ‘underworld’ infiltrates in the ‘upper world’ in the framework of money laundering, etc

The action will respond to the necessity for an integrative and complementary approach aimed at reducing overlapping and avoiding duplication in order to successfully link internal and external dimensions of internal security, as emphasised by the *Renewed EU Internal Security Strategy 2015-2020*. The Western Balkans are already associated to the EU Policy Cycle and participate in the implementation of action plans, but the document calls for the further stepping up of operational cooperation combined with a greater efficiency of assistance. The action will therefore deliver an integrative and coordinated approach to countering SOC in/emanating from the Western Balkan region – based on the *Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG)* concept – by integrating existing instruments and all relevant actors’ future and planned efforts, in line with the methodology used in case of the IISG first pillar – WBCTi, expanding the concept to SOC (Pillar II: *Western Balkan Counter-Serious Crime initiative-WBCSCi*) and border security (Pillar III – *Western Balkan Border Security initiative-WBBSi*).

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II MULTI-COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The action will respond to the priorities stemming from the European Agenda on Security, focussing on the areas that require cross-border/international co-operation, including anti-money laundering/counter financing of terrorism, and the financial component of criminal investigations. This Agenda will drive better information exchange, improved training capabilities, increased operational cooperation and mutual trust, drawing on the full range of EU policies and tools. Moreover, it will ensure that the internal and external dimensions of security work in tandem.

The action will focus on priority areas when it comes to the gravest challenges of the Western Balkans to fight against SOC, a key sector to support them in preparing to meet the membership criteria and to align with the EU *acquis*. Recognizing these shortcomings, the result of the action will be that the Beneficiaries will be more resistant to SOC in particular the trafficking of people, weapons and drugs. Particular focus will be placed on improving the ability of partner Beneficiaries to carry out financial investigations in order to identify, prosecute and convict the serious and organised criminals and where appropriate confiscate their assets. The action will also focus attention on investigations dealing with terrorism and radicalisation. The improved ability of the partner to collaborate and include rigorous financial investigation as part of their work will help investigate and prosecute terrorist cases. Thus, the action will be delivering a higher level of internal security in the EU via addressing the external dimension of EU security via this key region.

In line with the provisions of the *IPA II Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020*⁸, the action will fully consider the support provided through other stakeholders, in particular the international community, bilateral and multilateral donors, existing regional organisations and initiatives. It will deliver an *integrative and coordinated approach* to countering SOC in/emanating from the Western Balkan region – based on the *Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG)* concept – by integrating existing instruments and relevant actors’ future and planned efforts into an *Integrated Plan of Action 2017-2020*. The approach, utilising the methodology of the WBCTi, will strengthen the efficiency of the sectorial support to Beneficiaries through the Enlargement policy. It will provide efficient support to regional cooperation and facilitate coordination – i.e. between implementation processes in the beneficiaries and between the relevant actors (regional, international initiatives and agencies) themselves. It will aim to ensure that the Beneficiaries are approximated to EU standards and align with EU membership conditions (esp. Chapter 24), and that they are aligned with EU priorities.

The Western Balkans had supported the IISG model at the Brdo Process Ministerial Conference in April 2016 at Brdo, Slovenia. The action is also in line with the regional growth *SEE 2020 Strategy*, which recognises the importance of regional cooperation in ensuring strong political commitment and thus more

⁸ C(2014) 4293, 30.06.2014

effective reform goals, as well as some concrete recommendations of the *2014 Report on Gap Analysis*⁹ prepared under the *SEE 2020* framework.

In line with the objectives of the *EU Enlargement Strategy 2014*, the action is supporting a future EU policy model, which will become a tool to further deepen cooperation on key foreign policy issue and strengthen EU governance of that cooperation. It will achieve greater transparency and inclusiveness of the process, with wide stakeholder consultation emphasised in relation to the new approach to Chapter 24. The action also focuses on a significant issue in the Beneficiaries, emphasised as a priority in the area of rule of law.

The priorities have been identified in co-operation with experts of the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG Home), the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST), the European External Action Service (EEAS), Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), Europol, Interpol, Eurojust, and the EU Member States within the EU Policy Cycle for serious and organised crime.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Evaluations have evidenced that EU international support in the field of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) in the Western Balkans is very fragmented. It lacks an overall coherent strategy and approach. Fortunately, the projects implemented are successful, having a great potential for more impact if these fit within an integrative approach. Moreover, there are a lot of players active in the Western Balkans, who implement activities, provide expert advice, prepare reports, etc. without knowing what others have carried out on the same/similar issues. The European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), UNODC, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the beneficiaries as well as the main IPA projects acknowledged this at the Regional Programming event in Tirana in May 2016. They agreed to work toward a more integrative approach as described in the previous sub-sections. Whilst this was agreed in principle, it has to become a reality at a central and regional level.

The technical assistance project on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) granted to UNODC/UNICRI (United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute) in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region, Turkey and the Western Balkans to enhance the capacities of criminal justice officials to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of foreign fighters or would-be foreign fighters started in 2015 and will continue. The CoE-EU project “iPROCEEDS” (begun in 2016) works to strengthen the capacities to search, seize and confiscate cybercrime proceeds and prevent online money laundering. The projects will be linked with the action interventions, and integrated into the WBCSCi, where their experience and possible lessons will be duly considered.

The action will thus particularly emphasise the practice-oriented approach and the good experiences we have with the IPA2014 Prosecutors’ Network and Police Cooperation projects supporting the Beneficiaries along the lines of real cases. This approach not only ensures a high level of ownership, sustainability of newly gained capacities, and it tackles the problems on the ground based on day-to-day experiences.

⁹ RCC 2014. *Report on Gap Analysis on Regional Cooperation in the Area of Migration Management and Fight against Serious and Organised Crime*. Accessed at: <http://www.rcc.int/docs/366/report-on-gap-analysis-on-regional-cooperation-in-the-area-of-migration-management-and-fight-against-serious-and-organised-crime>

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To improve the overall security in the Western Balkans and the EU by combatting organised crime and terrorism	Number of investigations related to serious organised crime and terrorism Perception of sense of security among the population and trust in law enforcement Amount of confiscation of criminal proceeds/terror finances	Crime data (stolen cars, drugs confiscated, arrests, convictions, assets recovered, money seized, etc.) Population surveys as those carried out by Belgrade Centre for Security Policy on the perception of the WB Police and of CSOs on integrity on the state of the judiciary Annual reports of DG NEAR	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
To counter serious crime and terrorism based on intelligence led policing, financial investigations through an effective and functioning Integrative Internal Security Governance in the Western Balkans	Number of investigations carried out involving intelligence led policies techniques, focussing criminal proceeds The Security Governance Strategy and Programme for the Region adopted and endorsed by the EUMS and WB JHA ministers	Crime data (stolen cars, drugs confiscated, arrests, convictions, assets recovered, money seized, etc.) Population surveys as those carried out by Belgrade Centre for Security Policy on the perception of the WB Police and of CSOs on integrity on the state of the judiciary Annual reports of DG NEAR	Political will exists making resources available
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Results: 1. Beneficiaries are better equipped in tackling organised crime, major and serious criminal phenomena and terrorism including violent extremism, 2. Improved co-operation and collaboration between WB law enforcement and judiciary and with other bodies (notably those of the EU Member States and the EU Agencies) 3. One overarching Western Balkan Security Governance with integrative plan of actions created and endorsed based on the needs identified by the Beneficiaries and the main donors, indicating the priority, the potential implementing body (and its partners) and the financing. 4. Trust between the Beneficiaries, donors and implementers is increased on cross border and international cases 5. Capacity and confidence among the Beneficiaries in fighting organised crime, terrorism and alike is improved 6. Europol Liaison Officers fully operational in the selected WB beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsement by the EUMS and WB ministers of JHA of the integrated plan of actions based on three pillars: Western Balkans Counter Terrorism initiative, Western Balkans Counter Serious Crime initiative and Western Balkans Border Security initiative. • Existence of a web based up to date overview of all relevant completed, on-going and planned programmes, projects and actions on counter terrorism, violent extremism, anti-radicalisation, organised crime, judiciary co-operation, etc. allowing to identify missing links and to measure progress and impact • Number of operations carried out, and the lessons drawn from these, serving as input for additional operations. Including those in which Eurojust and Europol will be involved or for which EJM channels are used • Number of investigations (in particular, those involving the programme) started and completed, accompanied by an overview of the proceeds/assets confiscated • Number of persons trained and have contributed to financial investigations, etc. • Liaison officers operational. 	Crime data (stolen cars, drugs confiscated, arrests, convictions, assets recovered, money seized, etc.) Evaluation by UNODC Appraisals / reviews by Europol, Interpol, Eurojust, EUMS, etc. Interviews of the stakeholders	Official crime data follows UNODC standards and is available Specialised Agencies cooperate with the ECTs and project staff Europol supports the Western Balkans SOCTA EU MS support the Western Balkans alignment with the Policy Cycle EU Agencies support involvement of Western Balkans in their activities Trust among implementers

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

The activities foreseen are:

(1) **Training** – The action foresees training activities to be implemented by CEPOL and UNODC on financial investigations training. Both leading partners of this component already gained extensive experience on training activities in the region, and will apply tried-and-tested training methodology. The program will be tailored to account for different country laws, jurisprudence and enforcement programme designs by UNODC, CEPOL, GIZ, CILC (Centre for International Legal Cooperation) in The Hague, EU MS and Western Balkans Security Structures, NI-CO (Northern Ireland Co-operation Overseas) and PCC SEE with the aid of local expertise.

In addition, customized space for the Western Balkans on the **CEPOL's platform e-net** will be created to enable wider dispersion of training. In addition to trainings, staff exchanges (based on the experience and methodology of the European Police Exchange Programme) and study visits will be executed.

A **regional pool of training experts** will be established and incorporated into the IISG Integrated Online Matrix described below. This expert pool will fully consider trainers emanating from the region where applicable, using the data base on regional experts being crafted by GIZ together with RCC.

The **'train-the-trainers'** training method will be prioritized so that technical capacity is institutionalized and not residing solely with a few trained individuals. The jurisdictions will be asked to make commitments to follow-up to spread knowledge gained from the activities. A certification programme will provide further sustainability where the authenticity of trainings and certificates will be verifiable. This approach will provide for better coordination of training (it will ensure that participants are not trained on an identical subject more than once – by any action partner). Local trainers at law enforcement training institutions and judicial training academies, as well as other local experts in relevant fields will be identified to be trained. After receipt of this training, they will be expected to provide the training to new entrants into the area of tackling financial crime, as well as professionals seeking continuous professional development. Participants in the courses will be issued certificates denoting their training experience, which will be able to be verified online and also to ensure that participants are not trained on the identical topics more than once. Given their continuous field presence, UNODC and OSCE will periodically provide updated training material and provide trainer evaluation/coaching so that this initiative is truly a sustainable solution. The findings of this component will be fully incorporated into the WBCSCi implementation and wider IISG training scheme.

Organizations participating in the action with staff located in the affected Beneficiaries will bridge the gap between mentorship and training through utilizing **practice-oriented trainings** wherever possible. UNODC is expected to conduct such practice-oriented trainings with financial intelligence units, CEPOL through its activities and links with partner institutes in the beneficiaries and as GIZ already cooperates with the network of the judicial training institutions in civil matters this would be an ideal complement as well.

(2) **Mentorship** – This component will provide on-the-job support in on-going and upcoming investigations. The action will deploy long-term resident experts to the Beneficiaries' administrations by continuing and building on the work carried out under the Western Balkan Prosecutors Network and the relevant police cooperation projects ending in 2017. Respective **Embedded Country Teams (ECT)** in general but not necessarily consisting of **a seconded prosecutor and police officer**, as well as National Legal Officer(s) will be embedded in the central structures responsible for fighting SOC (Special Prosecution Offices and competent Police Departments), supported by Administrative Officers to ensure a smooth and quick implementation. The ECT should act as one team and follow and integrated approach in each Beneficiary in terms of mentoring, providing input to the trainings, etc. As such the demand for trainings, coaching and other support should come from the field and ensures the ownership of the action. The ECTs will also enhance cooperation with EUDs, EU MS Liaison Officers, US Liaison Officers, and others present in the field. The role of the core deployment will primarily be to increase expertise on financial investigations, but as a result directly improve the ability of local partners to be able to address all forms of serious and organised crime, in particular the trafficking of firearms, drugs, people and terrorism within the Beneficiary and the region.

ECTs will be supported by medium-term and long-term expertise, including mid-term regional advisors on asset recovery/ARO issues and terrorism, (returned) foreign terrorist fighters and radicalization, smuggling (notably of migrants see point (6) below), to cover all Beneficiaries. The experts on terrorism related matters will work closely with the CT coordinator of the EU based in Sarajevo. UNODC will provide an expert in the development, triage, analysis and communication of financial intelligence to the region that can provide technical assistance for both strategic and ongoing case level requirements for the participants of the action. This expert, located in the region, will be in daily contact with affected Financial Intelligence Units and other units for financial crimes and money laundering and will, in addition, conduct onsite mentoring/training events. Interpol will provide its expertise and experts for operations focussing on dismantling fraudulent document production hotspots in the region. Interpol would thereby take the lead in reinforcing both forensic document examination and operational capacities of the targeted Beneficiaries by implementing collaborative forensic document examination strategies.

Each ECT will have daily interactions with their peers from the hosting Beneficiary; they will advise on strategic issues related to serious and organised crime (SOC) and support their peers on planned/running investigations and prosecutions, but also identify the investigations the action will support. EU funded financial grants planned for initiatives in this project should take into account the operational actions (OAs) and funding for those actions that Europol will be providing to EMPACT OAs. The thirteen EMPACT Priority Draft Operational Action Plans (OAPs) have been analysed for cross-overs and synergies between themselves and other agency and regional initiatives such as this. It comes to light that in each priority matches with the general scope of this project and there are at least 26 EMPACT operational actions are focused on preventing to and fight against SOC in the Western Balkan. Therefore the cases should cover the scope of EMPACT priority operational action plans (OAP) with links to the Western Balkans, in order to further investigate the financial element of SOC, and to directly include Europol and Eurojust in the cases. In order to facilitate cross-border cooperation in the region, the mechanisms of the Police Cooperation Convention for Southeast Europe-PCC SEE (police) and the Western Balkan Prosecutors Network-WBPN (prosecution) will be used. The PCC SEE mechanism will also see that during the course of SOC-related investigations the Beneficiaries will jointly seek solutions on how to improve their cooperation (legislative, practical solutions) and will adopt them on the necessary levels in order to ensure sustainability. The PCC SEE should also create and coordinate a Pool of Translators/Interpreters for the region to be used.

Given the focus on financial investigations and asset recovery, advice, coaching and training to ARO-like structures in the Beneficiaries will be provided or the setting up of such units will be facilitated, which might require advice on the legislative framework and organisational aspects. A coordinating role will be given to OSCE in providing technical assistance in the area of identifying, seizing, confiscating and reallocating illegal assets. The EU ARO Network and CARIN Network will be involved as there is a clear need for practitioners.

(3) Information Sharing and Mutual Trust – the facilitation of mechanisms for the development of professional cooperation, mutual trust and information sharing, emphasizing the regional and cross-regional (involving 3rd countries and EU Member States) approach, will be the core of this component.

The action will work toward the development of both personal and agency-to-agency relationships and mutual trust, allowing for a freer flow of information, intelligence and evidence to aid in combatting illicit money flows, and lasting lines of communication for the long term, based also on relevant existing regional operational cooperation networks (also those involving the Beneficiaries as well as EU Member States). The UNODC/OSCE policy platform for financial intelligence units, law enforcement and prosecutors is an intelligence-sharing platform, which will be used to promote interconnectivity between such IPA II beneficiary's level and regional groups created by UNODC to further enhance central and regional cooperation and networking amongst the participating financial intelligence units, law enforcement agencies and prosecutors. Such facilitation of cooperation has led to real time information sharing and will benefit from the long lasting and extensive experience of UNODC in interconnecting its country and regional programmes in Europe, West and Central Asia and building partnerships among key law enforcement and judicial authorities.

In the context of information sharing and access to information, the Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans website will be enhanced under the IISG.

In addition, tactical investigation-based information sharing could be improved through extending the ILECU (International Law Enforcement Coordination Units) present in South Eastern Europe in such a way that additional links will be established between the relevant specialist units in between the Beneficiaries and Europol. This data exchange within SIENA would also be further enhanced and extended. Secondly, strategic-level information exchange on criminal finances and topical predicate crimes, as well as best practices in financial investigations will be continued through the joint UNODC/OSCE information sharing platform for financial intelligence units, law enforcement and prosecutors. This established strategic intelligence sharing platform has already started meaningful strategic information sharing allowing financial investigators to conduct their day to day activities across South East Europe.

The second aspect relates to operational information exchange for the purpose of executing the real-life operational measures and investigations under component 1. Operational information exchange at the regional and cross-regional scope will be one of the leading areas of the action as well as the IISG implementation. Here, one of the main strategic objectives of the WBCSCi's aim is to work toward achieving a greater efficiency of information exchange and analysis in/with the Western Balkan region by integrating existing instruments/channels for information exchange at the regional level and in cooperation with the EU (i.e. EU instruments, such as Europol, which are tasked to enhance operational cooperation with the region for the purpose of EU internal security). So, before the ECT support to the investigations commences, this area will already be devoted considerable attention under the WBCSCi. During the measures themselves, appropriate regional mechanisms will be utilised—i.e. regional networks (e.g. PCC SEE and WBP) to propose a most efficient and rational modus operandi. This component will contribute lessons learned, an analysis of the experience gathered and a preliminary analysis of the state-of-play with recommendations. The latter analysis will feed into the WBCSCi, which will be dealing with operational information exchange in a wider sense. Also, partners' activities in the area of strengthening operational information exchange in the Western Balkan region will be fully integrated into the WBCSCi.

(4) Support in formation of Joint investigation teams (JIT) - The project will secure support in establishment of JITs (financial support, support in harmonization of legislation for establishing of JITs, practical knowledge and experience) in the field of international organised crime and terrorism. Long-term resident experts mentioned in activity 2 (Mentorship) will be in charge for giving help with the organization and establishment of JIT.

(5) Support to Liaison officers at Eurojust and of and at Europol - In order to also strengthen the sustainable cooperation between the Beneficiaries on the one hand and EU agencies on the other, the action will provide hands-on support in the work with Europol and Eurojust. Liaison Officers from Albania, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia have been/are being posted at Europol in The Hague. In addition, the action will also provide financial support to cover the costs related to the deployment of Europol's Liaison Officers in the Region starting with a pilot deployment to:

- Facilitate and support the implementation of the agreement in place with the competent authorities;
- Facilitate and encourage the operational cooperation and coordination, in particular proper exchange of operational information;
- Establish and maintain contacts with the relevant authorities/institutions;
- Monitor criminal situation including cross-border crime and terrorism, contributing to maintaining an updated situational picture;
- Support the implementation of operations and investigations involving Europol;
- Promote Europol's best practices and solutions, such as intelligence led policing, proper strategic analysis (SOCTA methodology) and involvement of the relevant authorities in EMPACT activities;
- Liaise with international organisations and EU bodies in the region;
- Establish and maintain contacts with ministries, civil society, regional organisations and other local stakeholders in the field of security.
- Cooperate with the European External Action Service/EU Delegations in the region;

- Coordinate and assist in the organisation of meetings, trainings, workshops, seminars and other activities held by Europol.

(6) Capacity building for strengthening the Beneficiaries efforts in fighting against migrant smuggling

This action is part of the core mandate of IPA, and covers an area where the needs are high. The action will strengthen the beneficiaries in the long term, including on improving exchange of information and international police cooperation. The implementation of this component will be pursued in synergy with the activities planned within the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia IPA 2016 Action Programme and the Sector reform contract supporting the Integrated Border Management Strategy of Serbia included in the IPA 2016 action programme, including appropriate sequencing of activities, and target in particular support to the law enforcement capacities to tackle migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons as well as on fostering regional cooperation and exchange of information and other relevant issues.

This component will be taken on board in the training activities designed by CEPOL and UNODC given the profitability of this illegal activity. More importantly migrant smuggling will be considered as the top priority when selecting up-coming and on-going investigations to be supported by the action. A specific budget of EUR 3 million will be set aside exclusively to cover this component. Specific expert capacity will be made available to support the Embedded Country Teams (ECTs).

RISKS

The economic circumstances can negatively impact the political will both at the EU's and at the Western Balkans' side to counter organised crime and terrorism effectively by making the necessary resources available. Furthermore, organised crime's penetration into our societies can give it a political/economic power making it harder to eradicate it out of our societies. In some cases citizens but also politicians and administrators are taken hostage by organised crime controlled businesses, while direct threats can make law enforcement officers closing a blind eye. Administrations have to take the necessary pre-cautions to protect whistle blowers, witnesses, collaborators with justice, and even law enforcement officers. This will also require that media understands its responsibility when reporting on crime.

By working together with all relevant stakeholders, they can each provide for the necessary support and pressure to make sure that the different requirements and commitments are being fulfilled. The support to the coordination of the IISG work will be utilised for this purpose in particular.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The IISG coordination mechanism will have to be set up by Q3 2017. Its Terms of Reference, promotion and communication strategy, and a monitoring and evaluation framework, also applicable for the action representing piloting activities for the IISG Pillar II – *Western Balkan Counter-Serious Crime initiative (WBCSCi)*, have to be set up by mid-2017 in order to be communicated to partners, to achieve support, awareness and to begin functioning.

The Beneficiaries should commit themselves to prioritize within their own organisations the objectives mentioned in the Action. Furthermore, it is expected that the beneficiaries allocate budget for regional JIT's, just as Eurojust has a budget to support JIT's. A special budget for travel, accommodation and translation could be a good stimulus to establish more regional JIT's. Furthermore, a budget for translations/interpretation should be guaranteed and the co-financing of the LO's/LM's at Europol and Eurojust.

It is also expected that the Beneficiaries nominates a prosecutor (and if possible also a police officer) especially dedicated to (further) asset recovery, who will stimulate the use of all legal measures already in place for this. This person can be part of the Embedded Country Teams and the advisors and experts on asset recovery and ARO issues.

The ECT staff should be placed in the appropriated offices at the Beneficiaries' administrations (the Organised Crime/Special Prosecution Offices and the respective police units).

Essential for the success of the project is that the beneficiaries guarantee access to files, access to information, all respecting the legal framework and constraints. It often remains a challenge getting the right statistical data (crime related, related to international judicial cooperation, etc.).

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The main **institutional stakeholders in the beneficiaries** will be Ministries of Justice (MoJ) and Interior (MoI), prosecutor's offices, police, financial intelligence units and Asset Recovery Offices (ARO).

As described in Section 1, the action will support the introduction of the IISG model by supporting its Pillar II – *Western Balkan Counter-Serious Crime initiative (WBCSCi)*, whose coordination, as well as the inter-pillar coordination, monitoring and evaluation will be the task of the IISG. The planning and implementation of the WBCSCi will require a full involvement of **relevant action partners** – a group of regional, international and EU initiatives/agencies/organisations, gathered in an informal working group during the preparation process – Europol, Eurojust, Interpol, UNODC, CEPOL, Italian Ministry of Interior, GIZ, CILC, PCC SEE, OSCE, EUMS, Western Balkan Security Structures, NI-CO etc. The preparation of the WBCSCi Plan of Actions for the upcoming multi-annual period (predictably 2018-2020), undertaken by the IISG, will invite an even wider group of state and non-state donors in Western Balkan regional cooperation to contribute.

The third group of stakeholders discerned here involves **regional instruments**, organisations owned by the region and supported by investments of the Beneficiaries, such as e.g. Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), already-mentioned PCC SEE regional working groups, bi-/tri-lateral/multilateral Centres for Police (and Customs) Cooperation, EU missions relevant for JHA cooperation, etc. This action aims at enhancing their operational cooperation at the regional level,

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD(S) AND TYPE(S) OF FINANCING

The action will be mainly implemented in indirect management. A Delegation Agreement will be concluded with the German Gesellschaft for Internationaler Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). GIZ will carry out budget implementation tasks: procurement and grant award procedures and management of corresponding contracts and payments as well as directly implement activities. The contract of an indicative value of EUR 13 million will receive German co-financing for an amount of EUR 1.5 million.

In the performance of the activities, GIZ will cooperate with implementing partners, in particular the Italian Ministry of Interior, the Center for International Legal Cooperation, other EU MS agencies and the Police Cooperation Convention secretariat for South East Europe.

GIZ will be in charge of outfitting the monitoring function and ensure that implementing partners understand respective requirements and investments to be made. Please see below section on Performance Measurement and Methodology for Monitoring.

In addition, part of the action will be implemented in direct management through the signature of three grant agreements. Grant agreements for financing in full for a value of EUR 2.5 million will be concluded with CEPOL (training) and for a 95% financing with UNODC (training and evaluation). CEPOL will lead the training activities and will involve the local academies as much as possible. Another grant agreement of an indicative value of EUR 2 million (100 % financing) will be concluded with Europol to cover the costs regarding the deployment of Europol Liaison Officers in the Western Balkans.

The direct awards are based on Article 190 (1)(f) of the Rules of Application, since a particular type of body on account of its technical competence and its high degree of specialisation is required.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The European Commission may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the DG NEAR Guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation.

MONITORING

As described in Section 1, the action will support the introduction of the IISG model by supporting the WBCSCi Pillar, whose coordination, as well as the inter-pillar coordination, monitoring will be the task of the IISG coordination mechanism under the guidance of GIZ. The IISG will develop the Integrated Online Matrix Database, where all WBCSCi partners will be entering and monitoring relevant events, tools and activities. In the development process, we will consider the lessons learned in the establishment and use of the Treptower Group matrix. A sufficient promotion and monitoring strategy will be set up. The action partners have agreed that the evaluation approach will be designed in close cooperation between the IISG and UNODC as a leading partner. Three clear dimensions will be subject to appropriate forms of action evaluation, based on sets of indicators:

RELEVANCE of the Action's actions (mentoring, information sharing and training);
short-term and medium-term institutional *IMPACT* of the delivery of the services provided by partners.
added value of the integrated and complementary approach under IISG in contributing to the accession of the Beneficiaries to the European Union (*PROCESS*); and

Dimensions (1) and (3) (Relevance and Process) should be the object of a mid-term evaluation that should take place 4 months before the half-way point of implementation. The main objective of the mid-term evaluation will be to learn about the appropriateness of the design and process of implementation, and to corrections and improvements for the second phase. Dimension (2) (Impact) will be subject to a final evaluation that should start 6 months before the end of implementation.

Given the multi-partner nature and complexity of the integrated approach of the WBCSCi pillar, a significant investment into a Data Collection Plan, additionally to the above-mentioned Matrix, will be developed by and for each partner to follow and implement from day one. The two tools will enable regular and sufficient contributions on part of all partners to the monitoring and evaluation process executed for the WBCSCi Pillar and for the wider IISG (inter-pillar). Monitoring will be executed on the basis of jointly agreed indicators and targets. The implementing body will be in charge of all reporting and will coordinate periodical monitoring reports with all Partners. The design, coordination and quality assurance of this process is paramount to the success of the evaluation approach proposed below. GIZ will advise on the communication among all action partners and monitoring their compliance with these requirements by advising and assessing the coordination of the data collection plan.

EVALUATION

Accountability and learning are at the core of this action and evaluations as well as capacity building in this respect provide the means to achieve both. In order to sensitize all partners, including external stakeholders, and in implementing the GA resolution on National Evaluation Capacity (NEC) building, UNODC, as the lead agency on evaluation and NEC, will devise a plan on implementing capacity building in the area of evaluation in close coordination with the Steering Committee Members. Capacity building and awareness raising, in light of the additional mandates emanating from this resolution, which resonate with the need for all Member States to be in a position to assess the achievements of the targets of the SDGs, has claimed center stage in international development discourses and practices, connecting evaluation capacity building to governance, accountability and evidence-based decision making. These pre-investments are deemed core

to and serve as a precondition to an institutional change process which embraces evidence-based and transparent decision making and uses a rigorous methodology to assess results.

Following this first phase of capacity building, UNODC, through its Independent Evaluation Unit, will coordinate and carry out two evaluation exercises; an early mid-term evaluation and a final, summative evaluation.

The mid-term evaluation will have a formative focus and will specifically cover, i. a. the design and coordination aspects of the programme. Furthermore, it will prepare the action to be fully evaluated through a summative final evaluation. In this sense, the team of independent consultants will assess the design of the programme and its provisions regarding (indicators, quality of the log frame, data collection, monitoring activities, coordination mechanisms, etc.). The independent evaluation team will determine if these provisions are enough to carry out a meaningful final summative evaluation. If this is not the case the consultants will issue corrective recommendations to modify the course of the implementation and the elements of the design and monitoring so the programme can improve in the second phase of implementation and be fully evaluated six months before reaching the end of the programme.

The final evaluation will have a summative focus with the objective of determining the worth of the actions against a set of evaluation criteria including: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, partnership, human rights, gender and sustainability. The evaluation will seek to measure and report on the effects and changes that the action has contributed to. An independent team of evaluators and substantive experts lead by UNODC's Independent Evaluation Unit will carry out this exercise.

Both independent evaluations will be closely designed and implemented with the participation of an evaluation reference group comprised by the key intended users of the evaluation results assuring ownership and change. These will include donors, partners and implementers of the action.

The action will allocate funding for UNODC to carry out the first phase linked to capacity building and the two evaluations plus the coordination the quality assurance of the two exercises.

In addition, the action might be subject to external monitoring and quality assurance in line with the European Commission rules and procedures.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT:

Indicator	Baseline (value + year)	Target 2020	Final (2020)	Target	Source of information
Number of (in particular multi-country) investigations started and completed	2017 = 0	30	> 2020 = 60		Crime data (stolen cars, drugs confiscated, arrests, convictions, assets recovered, money seized, etc.) Appraisals / reviews by Europol, Interpol, Eurojust, EUMS, etc.
Number of cases of confiscated assets following (in particular multi-country/regional) co-operation	2017 = 0	20	> 2020 = 40		
Number of arrests of (returning) FTFs and recruiters	2017 = 40	0	> 2020 = 0		

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

In this context the staff working on the action will use the Guidance note for UNODC staff on Gender mainstreaming in the work of UNODC. Already the on-going preceding projects have a good gender balance, in particular in the prosecutors' network. As concerns the police the female participation is a concern, and the project will try to promote a stronger involvement of females at the policing side. As concerns the prosecutors, more involvement of males seems to be the target.

In addition and along the lines of the European Institute for Gender Equality the operators will be made further aware that crime is a gender-oriented phenomenon, but the justice system does not equally accommodate women's and men's needs. Moreover, acknowledging the gender dimension of crime is not only an issue of gender equality and human rights, but also an economic one. Last but not least the due diligence principle holds states (and other actors in the police and justice system) responsible for taking measures to fight violence against women.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Within the implementation the Beneficiaries and the donors will jointly establish what needs to be done and when (together with a costing). Only after this the possible implementer can be identified/recruited. In this process all EU MS, Agencies and international organisations will have the opportunity to subscribe to specific activities along with their own interest and priorities.

The design of assistance and its implementation has to recognise the ethnic and religious background along which Organised Crime Groups are organised. Likewise the police force and judiciary should be a proper reflection of the society, requiring an appropriate gender balance, but also involvement of minority groups.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Minorities and vulnerable persons in general are not only targets for terrorism recruiters but also for criminal groups. As such they require particular attention, and specific action. This to avoid further stigmatization and discrimination, leading to further radicalisation/criminalisation in the Western Balkan. In particular as concerns victims of trafficking in human beings (refugees, migrants) as well as victims of (sexual) exploitation, special police officers, investigators and prosecutors may be needed. As stated above the police and judiciary should also reflect the diversity of the country assuring that minorities are properly represented, which in turn would contribute to increasing trust in the law enforcement and judiciary while on the other hand taking advantage of the understanding of the different communities by employing persons from these communities. The action will seek to address this if the need arises.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY (AND IF RELEVANT OTHER NON-STATE STAKEHOLDERS)

Civil Society Organisations can prove to be essential allies. Not only can they provide intelligence for further action (e.g. anti-corruption) but they can also provide the necessary social services to victims of crime (which in turn can provide information for further investigation). In particular in the field of trafficking in human beings CSOs are important sources of information when they provide assistance to the victims. Furthermore, CSOs can provide the support to vulnerable groups to avoid that persons go on the wrong track. On the other side CSOs could also be abused a cover up for money laundering operations, or as instruments for extreme thinking/beliefs. CSOs will be encouraged to play a pro-active role in presenting cases worth investigating.

The ECTs will therefore engage with civil society representatives to involve them in their work.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

The action does not have any particular impact on environment and climate change, even though environmental crimes could be tackled.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

This action is designed with a strategy of sustainability at its core. The three strategic concepts to be delivered as part of all of the action's activities are:

Building capacity to be self-sustainable: All training and technical assistance to be delivered in the region will be done with a 'train-the-trainers' approach such that technical capacity is institutionalized into the region, and not residing solely with a few, trained individuals. Addressed jurisdictions will be asked to make commitments to follow-up training provided with addressed jurisdiction-led training sessions to spread knowledge gained from the activities. Other solutions such as the development of a certification programme, or affecting participant pay by successfully completing course activities will be considered.

Improving structural relationships: Ensuring that the action elements are multilateral and regional to enable a freer flow of information, intelligence and evidence to aid in combatting illicit financing flows. Such flows of information, when proven to be fruitful, open up lasting lines of communication that ought to stay open in the long term.

Taking a coordinated approach: Recognizing that there are many national agencies, and projects designed to build capacity with those national agencies, that are involved in the fight against money laundering/terrorism financing, and ensuring that technical assistance is complementary to other relevant projects. Such an approach will build a community of AML/CFT (anti-money laundering - combating the financing of terrorism) expertise that is more sustainable than the delivery timeline of a project.

Delivering activities that reflect these three strategic concepts will ensure that the action delivers a community more resistant to money laundering and the financing of terrorism, instead of a few trained individuals who can better detect, deter and prosecute these crimes.

This action is designed to be completely self-sustainable; however, sustainability of the action is dependent on the willingness of addressed jurisdictions to absorb, localize and reproduce their learnings, as well as share information at a regional level.

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the action. The implementation of the communication activities shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the European Commission (DG NEAR) will have to be followed.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed action objectives and the accession process, as well as the benefits of the action for the general public. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Moreover, communication to the public can contribute to their sense of security while at the same time it could be word of warning preventing persons from entering into crime or violent extremism. All this would lead to more public support for security governance.

Hence joint press conferences presenting the results obtained by the investigations will be organised, stating the contribution of the EU to the work. Furthermore, it is expected that specialised press and internet fora (notably the Europol, Interpol and national police and judiciary websites) will cover the work of the action.

In this context law enforcement, prosecution and courts need to understand on how to deal with media, while in turn the media will need understand its responsibility in reporting on crime.