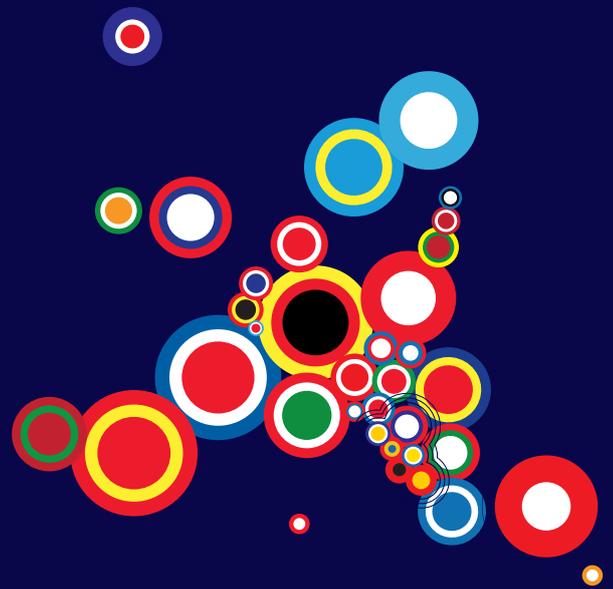




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

MULTI- COUNTRY Regional Housing Programme (Sarajevo Process) 3rd phase



Action Summary

Embedded in the context of the Sarajevo Process, the Regional Housing Programme (RHP) aims to make a substantial contribution to the satisfactory resolution of the protracted problem of the remaining refugees and displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia by providing long-lasting, sustainable housing solutions. The RHP consists of four Country Housing Programmes, one in each partner country, and aims to benefit about 27,000 households or 74,000 individuals. The total budget of this Regional Housing Programme is estimated at EUR 584 million.

Action Identification	
Programme Title	IPA II Multi-country action programme 2014
Action Title	Regional Housing Programme (RHP)
Action Reference	IPA 2014/031-603.16/MC/RHP
Sector Information	
ELARG Sectors	Education, employment and social policies
DAC Sector	73010 – Reconstruction relief and rehabilitation
Budget	
Total cost (VAT excluded)¹	EUR 11.5 million Out of which, EUR 1.5 million earmarked for Montenegro (national envelope for Montenegro)
EU contribution	EUR 11.5 million
Management and Implementation	
Method of implementation	Activity 1: Indirect management Activity 2: Direct management
<i>Direct management:</i> ELARG unit in charge <i>Indirect management:</i> Responsible Unit or National Authority/Implementing Agency	Activity 2: ELARG/D.3 Activity 1: Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)
Implementation responsibilities	Activity 1: Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia
Specific implementation area(s)	N.A.
Timeline	
Deadline for conclusion of the Financing Agreement	N.A.
Contracting deadline	31 December 2015
End of operational implementation period	31 December 2018

¹ The total action cost should be net of VAT and/or of other taxes. Should this not be the case, clearly indicate the amount of VAT and the reasons why it is considered eligible.

1. RATIONALE

The Sarajevo Declaration process, initiated in 2005, aims to find long-lasting solutions for refugees and displaced persons following the 1991-1995 conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, including IDPs in Montenegro from 1999. The process involves four countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia (the “Partner Countries”).

The RHP is an integral part of the Sarajevo Process. The process was in a stalemate until March 2010, when a ministerial meeting, held in Belgrade in November 2011, brought together the four Partner Countries, the UNHCR, the EU and the OSCE. At this meeting, the four Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Partner Countries signed a Joint Declaration together with a Framework Programme in which it was agreed that a Regional Housing Programme should be established.

The objective of the RHP, which will consist of four Country Housing Projects (CHPs), is to make a substantial contribution to the satisfactory resolution of the protracted problem of the remaining refugees and displaced persons in the Partner Countries by providing long-lasting, sustainable housing solutions.

The RHP will consist of four Country Housing Programmes, one in each Partner Country, and will assist about 27,000 households or 74,000 individuals. The total budget of this Regional Housing Programme is estimated at EUR 583.7 million.

A donors’ conference aiming at attracting a maximum amount of funds to support the financing of the RHP took place on 24 April 2012 in Sarajevo. At the Conference the international donors pledged an amount of EUR 261 million, out of which EUR 230 million was pledged by the EU. The EU pledge, makes up for about half of the necessary amount for the entire action, estimated at EUR 584 million. This pledge is subject to the overall EU budget under the new financial perspective 2014-2020 and subject to agreement by the IPA Committee.

The biggest contributions, besides that of the EU, came from the US (EUR 7,5 million for 2012, and with an intention for similar-sized annual contributions over the following years) and from Norway, Switzerland, Germany and Italy with EUR 5 million each for the entire duration of the Programme.

International donations are paid into a designated RHP Fund, which is managed by the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). The Fund provides grants to the four CHPs for the implementation of specific sub-projects and following a well-defined evaluation and approval procedure. The CEB stands ready to also provide soft loans to the Partner Countries to ensure that sufficient funding for implementing the CHPs is available². The exact role of the CEB in the programme (explained in section 3 in more detail) is to manage the RHP Fund as well as the entire RHP programme. For this purpose a RHP Fund Secretariat will be set up at the CEB.

The European Commission has in previous actions committed to the Programme EUR 138 million. EUR 110 million as subsidy grants for investment (contribution to the RHP Fund) and EUR 28 million dedicated to technical assistance, operating grants, management fees and other administrative costs of the implementation of the action. The present Action Document is the third such contribution and will exclusively finance investment (contribution to the RHP Fund).

² Complementary measures to secure funding such as holding a second Donor’s Conference or introducing national financial contributions could also be considered

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

As a consequence of the armed conflicts in the 1990s, over three million people were displaced both within and beyond the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. Over the past two decades, sustained efforts on the part of the four affected states, as well as support from the international community, have enabled the majority of those affected to return home or find other durable solutions. However, despite these efforts, almost half a million people remain displaced throughout the region.

To solve this protracted displacement situation, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia launched, with the support of the international community, a regional initiative aimed at ensuring the voluntary return and reintegration or local integration of refugees and displaced persons from the 1991-1995 conflicts in these countries.

The legal framework regulating refugee housing has been reasonably well developed and covers most aspects of the areas of concern. There are significant differences in the approach of the Partner Countries in regulating this specific area.

In some cases, countries have developed and adopted a single overall law which regulates all issues regarding refugees (i.e. social benefits, legal status, access to medical care, housing etc.) and is treated as the “main law” applicable to refugees. However, as time has passed, that legal framework appeared to be insufficient to address all challenges related to reintegration or local integration of refugees and IDPs.

A good example is Serbia, where the Law on Refugees regulates most aspects of the rights of refugees. However, for refugees who have naturalized, but still have not achieved durable solutions, other laws regulating social, medical and other rights of socially vulnerable categories are more relevant (e.g. Law on Health Insurance). At the same time, the Law on Refugees remained relevant framework for ensuring durable housing solutions for them. In Partner Countries where such specific laws do not exist (e.g. Montenegro), refugee issues are regulated by existing sectoral laws and specifically developed strategies.

There is a divergence among the Partner Countries regarding the level of legal coverage of durable housing solutions for refugees and displaced persons as well as housing assistance under social protection schemes. Nonetheless, legislation on construction activities may be considered adequate and there is a comprehensive legal framework governing construction procedures.

The institutional framework incorporates institutional responsibility for all the processes for providing refugees with sustainable housing solutions, from the identification and selection of beneficiaries to the provision of actual housing solutions, the monitoring of the actual transfer of the housing solution with the beneficiary refugees and- eventually- it will also encompass the follow up of the provision of accompanying measures for the integration of the refugees to the local communities.

During the preparatory phase of the RHP (2012- 2014) the entire institutional framework was designed and put in place:

Detailed information and analysis of the institutional set-up of the CHPs;

- All Partner Countries have finalised the Feasibility Reports, which cover all relevant aspects of the CHP implementation (scope, beneficiary selection and sustainability, institutional framework and legal set-up, technical and procurement issues, costs and financing, monitoring and reporting).
- RHP implementing structures (the Project Implementation Units- PIUs) in the Partner Countries have been established and are operational. CEB conducted technical and financial verifications of the Partner Countries’ implementing structures starting in the second half of 2013.

The Partner Countries' capacities in a number of key areas such as legal set-up, procurement, control environment or financial management and accounting were thoroughly screened, potential deficiencies were identified and a set of recommendations for addressing them were formulated. Throughout the implementation of the CHPs, CEB will be undertaking regular reviews assessing the implementing structures' adherence to the agreed rules and procedures.

- All Partner Countries signed in 2013 the Framework Agreement i.e. the legal framework for RHP implementation is now in place (although the ratification process took somewhat longer in some countries). The specific details and conditions governing the financing of each sub-project are defined in sub-project specific Grant Agreements (GA):

Procurement legislation, arrangements and procedures; (manuals)

- Procurement under RHP will be done based on the procurement legislation in force in the Partner Countries and shall comply with CEB's Procurement Guidelines. Each PC's procurement systems were assessed in 2013. Based on this assessment, each PC prepared manuals and guidelines describing in detail RHP procurement procedures (including templates).

Management of funds i.e. channelling of funds, payments mechanisms, accounting procedures including financial reporting and control systems;

- The implementing structure verification process covered the financial flow of RHP funds. Where necessary, the Partner Countries were requested to improve/modify the proposed flow of funds in order to guarantee transparent and efficient use of RHP funds.

- The PIUs verification process also examined the accounting, financial reporting and control systems in place in the PC implementing structures, and expressed the need for improvements, where necessary, in order to comply with the best practices that should guarantee sound use of donor funds.

Thorough and sound estimates of project costs of the envisaged housing solutions in each of the CHPs; (done through feasibility report)

- The Feasibility Reports finalised in 2013 provide updated estimates of each Country Housing Project, per housing solution. This baseline data is developed at the context of each Project Application Form, where the proposed costs are thoroughly assessed for their soundness.

After the second year of RHP preparation and implementation the following elements remain still to be addressed by the four Partner Countries and the international stakeholders. These elements are necessary for the adequate functioning of the national implementation mechanisms and for the implementation of the RHP as a whole:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina: need to establish the legal framework related to social housing; need to define and apply measures to mitigate the risk of low occupancy of housing allocated through the CHP;
- Montenegro: following the adoption of the Law on Social Housing in 2013, there is a need to establish a regulatory framework at the municipal level, aimed at setting up a system for sustainable management of social housing by the municipal structures (including issues such as running costs, costs of investment maintenance, payment of utilities, criteria for remaining eligible for allocated social housing unit etc.)
- Partner Countries need to ensure and allocate adequate human resources in the specific technical fields; procurement (legal and technical), technical design, financial management, information management, etc.;
- Some PCs have provided estimates about the supplementary resources needed to carry out RHP implementation. These estimates form the basis for the limited financial support that will

be provided to the PCs (so-called “CHP Support Grants”) and will be finance by the European Commission (via previous commitment). This work is still on-going and as of June 2014 no such funds have yet been disbursed to any PC implementing institution.

- Partner Countries need to thoroughly consider, plan and mitigate the socio-economic direct and indirect effects of the CHPs ;
- The Partner Countries, together with the assistance of the CEB need to draft and maintain thorough and sound estimates of project costs of the envisaged housing solutions in each of the CHPs
- Thorough investigation needs to be performed of the tenancy/ownership rights of the end-beneficiaries as to how they may influence housing models and costs.

Assumptions and preconditions

It is assumed that the international community stays committed to help the region finding appropriate solutions to the protracted problem of the remaining refugees and displaced persons by honouring their pledges to the fund.

To this end, it is necessary that international Donors are support the Partner Countries close the financing gap, i.e. the remaining funds EUR 240 million needed to finance the entire foreseen cost of the Programme.

Furthermore, it is assumed that all four Partner Countries stay committed to completing the Sarajevo Process and provide sufficient resources to set up a coherent mechanism to steer, supervise and control the implementation of their CHP. Regular consultation of all stakeholders and accountability throughout the implementation are preconditions for achieving the expected results.

Fair, transparent and vulnerability criteria- based beneficiary selection is one of the most important pillars of the RHP and Partner Countries should remain committed throughout the Programme's implementation to this fundamental principle so that the aim of the programme to provide adequate housing to the most vulnerable refugees is fulfilled.

In addition, a further assumption for the fulfilment of the Programme's objective of durable housing solutions is that Partner Countries ensure the long- term sustainability of the housing solutions, through socio-economic integration of the end – beneficiaries into the local communities. This aspect remains a fundamental factor that will eventually condition the successful implementation of the durable solutions. At present and after two years of RHP preparation and implementation, the assumption is that in order for the Programme to fulfil adequately its objective, the aspect of sustainability/ durability would need to be reinforced both in what concerns national policies but also through actions financed by other external sources.

Risks do exist that could hamper the successful implementation of the programme. These include: delays in the Partner Countries in fulfilling the conditions set by the Donors precedent to the signature of and/ or conditions precedent to first disbursement; delays in the beneficiary selection procedure and inability to follow UNHCR recommendations; delays in the tendering procedures. Mitigating actions should be carefully planned by the Programme' manager and the monitoring authorities.

Furthermore, there may be a risk that the relocated communities are perceived as "privileged" by the pre-existing neighbouring communities and thus conflicts can arise. However, this risk should not be over-estimated; all Partner Countries have been exposed to experience in implementing housing projects for vulnerable refugee/displaced populations, especially on the municipal level.

Several key lessons learned from previous projects in the region (through diverse financing) may be summarised as follows:

- Ensure availability of appropriate land plots within the municipalities where the actions are implemented and the willingness of the latter bodies to support the projects.
- Financial capacity of the municipalities to provide infrastructure, connections to existing public networks, supervision and in general to comply with their contractual obligations as an investor of the projects is important.
- Uniform living and quality-technical standards throughout implementation irrespective of the source of funding (donors, state budget etc) must be ensured.
- Proper technical and social monitoring is important to ensure good quality of the final product and to avoid misuse of funds.
- Proper legislation of specific individual housing solutions (i.e. prefabricated houses, building materials) should be in place.
- Build up sufficient capacity (financial and managerial) of the municipalities or municipal welfare centres or state welfare agencies to support and follow up actions related to housing solutions under social welfare conditions.
- Develop different housing solutions for different countries/regions/groups.
- Focus on integration and avoid creating ghetto conditions by selecting appropriate land plots, not isolated from but within city urban limits and with access to civic utilities.
- Ensure transparent selection of beneficiaries. Formation of the evaluation committee for the selection of beneficiaries by experienced members representing key stakeholders of the project (including the UNHCR) having the capacity to perform duties promptly and efficiently.
- Thorough social needs assessments to ensure a proper selection of end-beneficiaries.
- Develop integrated return programmes (housing, basic infrastructure and utilities (rehabilitation), provision of civil infrastructure (schools, health care, social security and pensions); Income generation and job creation are prerequisites for sustainable integration.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Paper (MCSP) 2014-2020³ (hereafter referred to as Strategy Paper) emphasises that the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons will be addressed by providing durable housing solutions through the Regional Housing Programme (RHP). Assistance will be provided in complementarity to the actions under the Indicative Strategy Papers⁴.

Regional investment support is one of the four axes along which assistance under the Strategy Paper will be delivered. This type of support will be directed towards projects having a clear regional dimension which contribute to the socio-economic development of more than one beneficiary. One of the main instruments for such support are the blending facilities WBIF, Green for Growth Fund, as well as the Regional Housing Programme. By being an investment programme that is simultaneously inextricably linked to the Sarajevo Process, the Regional Housing Programme is an action that directly promotes reconciliation and regional cooperation. Besides its social character that shifts to the forefront the most vulnerable groups of the society that have lived under disadvantageous circumstances for twenty years, the Regional Housing Programme is, through its implementation,

³ C(2014) 4293, 30.06.2014

⁴ C(2014) 9495-Bosnia and Herzegovina, 15.12.2014; C(2014) 5771, 18.08.2014-Montenegro; and C(2014) 5872, 19.08.2014-Serbia;

assisting countries to build up their capacities in the management of similar housing programmes. This is the case because the Regional Housing Programme is an action that is implemented directly by the national authorities with the management and monitoring of the Council of Europe Development Bank, the UNHCR, the OSCE and the international donor community.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Lessons learnt since the beginning of Regional Housing Programme implementation

After more than two years of the programme's preparation, the following lessons can be drawn:

Unimpaired, frequent and proactive communication between all the stakeholders but primarily between the Partner Counties and the manager of the programme and the UNHCR AND OSCE is of utmost important for the smooth operation. Given the complexity of the action and the demanding preparations communication has at times been impaired during the preparatory period. A sound communication method between the principle stakeholders should be established and standardised.

The beneficiary selection procedure is a process that can be lengthy and impaired by a series of factors that vary between the countries. The large number of applications, the many criteria to apply, including vulnerability criteria, may delay the process. Moreover, a potential risk could be a non-efficient management of second instance committees.

The cross checking of data across the borders of the participant countries remains a challenge in the exercise to establish the eligibility of potential beneficiaries who wish to return from their place of asylum to the their original place of residence. Particularly challenging is the prompt reaction of the country of asylum to provide the requesting country with adequate proof that the beneficiaries at hand have not benefit form housing solution in the past.

More emphasis should be placed on the issue of sustainability of the action and the avoidance of the phenomenon of "empty houses". One of the most important risk that might compromise the success of the programme is that the sustainability of the housing solutions is not ensured (i.e. social integration and fulfilment of socio-economic rights prove to be non-successful). As a result, it is observed that in similar programmes implemented in the past some beneficiaries (especially returnees) choose not to return to the accommodation provided to them. Given the large scope of the programme and the aspirations to include vulnerable returnees that would wish to return, particular importance should be paid to mitigate the risk through complementary measures at national level.

Other relevant actions

In previous years, the EU has funded under CARDS and IPA a number of refugee support programmes, usually implemented through NGOs. Recently, the EU has funded from IPA Multi-beneficiary assistance the project "*Regional Programme for refugee return and provision of durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Western Balkans*", which was implemented by the UNHCR. The project cost was about EUR 3 million.

The activities under the project implemented in the period July 2010 – December 2011 targeted the most vulnerable refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia who live in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo*; returnees to Croatia and to a lower extend to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance, assisted voluntary repatriation to Bosnia and Herzegovina and mostly Croatia, extended social outreach assistance and

* 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

facilitated local integration as measures deemed suitable to achieve durable solutions. The project provided direct assistance to a total of 16, 688 beneficiaries in the region. The assistance provided is distributed as follows:

- 778 refugees were assisted with voluntary repatriation.
- 861 refugees and IDPs were assisted with local integration.
- 6,893 refugees received legal counselling.
- 8,156 returnees received legal counselling.

In addition it was decided to allocate EUR 7.84 million from IPA 2011 funds to implement a preparatory first phase of the current Regional Housing Programme. The first phase is being implemented by the Council of Europe Bank and the UNHCR for a period of 15 months.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Since 1996, the EU has funded up to date around EUR 500 million for the return of refugees and displaced persons as well as the implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton peace Agreement. Assistance has been used to rehabilitate properties, basic utilities and social infrastructure as well as to implement sustainability measures (livelihood measures and creation of employment opportunities). Over the period 1996 to 2004 the total number of properties that will have been reconstructed with EU funds is approximately 30,000, ca. 4,500 jobs have been created and approx. 1,128 technical infrastructure projects had been successfully completed. Under IPA 2007-2011, only one project for refugees was implemented, in the amount of ca 0.5 Mio EUR for the "reconstruction of small infrastructure in support to sustainable return in Kotor Varos" implemented by ASB (241-288).

Since 2012, the IPA national programme for Bosnia offers financial support for housing needs under the Sarajevo Process (RHP) as well as housing needs and socio economic measures linked to the implementation of the revised Strategy for Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement (National IPA 2012, 7 Mio EUR of EU co-financing).

For the RHP, since 2011, EUR 29 million have been earmarked in the IPA national envelope for Bosnia. Another EUR 36 million will be committed in the next financial perspective.

Croatia

No EU assistance has been provided in recent years as Croatia funded its own national housing programme, which was monitored by the EU for closing Chapter 23. Several previous EU financed projects targeted, however, socio-economic reforms and human rights in the Areas of Special State Concern (former war zones inhabited by refugees, returnees and IDPs). Croatia foresees to allocate EUR 9.2 million in total to the Sarajevo Process from its IPA national programme 2012 and 2013. Further, Croatia has requested assistance by DG REGIO to look into the possibility for using ERDF funds 2014-2020 as part of Croatia's contribution to the Sarajevo Process.

Montenegro

A project of EUR 2.5 million aimed at identifying durable solutions for IDPs and residents of Konik camp – a major settlement located in Podgorica – was adopted under the IPA 2011 national programme and includes the construction of 50 apartments plus social integration and return measures. The social integration component includes improving access to legal status, education, health and employment for the residents. Construction of apartments will start in September 2014. Under IPA 2013, a project of EUR 1 million will fund a second phase of the social integration project until end 2015.

A project to provide comprehensive support to refugees and displaced persons under IPA 2008 (EUR 1.5 million) included providing over 400 IDPs with housing, supporting over 230 income generation schemes and facilitating return of 50 displaced families to Kosovo.

So far, EUR 1 million has been allocated to the RHP from the IPA national envelope for Montenegro. Another EUR 3.15 million will be allocated in the the next financial perspective.

Serbia

Up until the end of 2003, the EU provided humanitarian assistance throughout Serbia. The assistance included basic support for the residents in collective centres. Since 2004, EUR 60 million have been allocated under CARDS and IPA to mainly support the local integration of refugees. The activities of the funded projects were twofold: (a) providing durable solutions for refugees and IDPs which include housing and income generation activities and (b) provision of legal aid/assistance necessary for the implementation/enforcement of the rights of IDPs and refugees in Serbia.

In agreement with Serbian authorities, EUR 60 million will be allocated to the RHP from the national IPA envelope. EUR 22 million has already been committed from the IPA 2012- 2013 allocations to Serbia.

As IDPs are not among the beneficiaries of the RHP in Serbia, further projects under the IPA allocation for 2012 are currently under implementation in order to support housing solutions for IDPs complementing projects to be funded under the RHP

Donor activities

Several donors have been actively involved in dealing with issues relating to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The European Commission and the UNHCR have been at the forefront and have provided crucial humanitarian assistance over the past twenty years. Since the end of the conflict, several European countries have assisted the countries in the Western Balkans to address the social needs of the displaced and vulnerable population. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and USAID - State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM) has been working on refugee and IDP-related issues. NGOs such as the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) have been working on providing more durable solutions.

The "Social Housing Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina" implemented by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in cooperation with UN, and jointly financed by the Netherlands, the Bosnia and Herzegovina State-level Government and the CRS, has helped to develop a regulatory and legal framework.

The "Peacebuilding and Inclusive Local Development" (PBILD) UN Joint Programme has worked towards inclusive, peaceful and sustainable development in South Serbia, jointly managed by six specialized UN agencies, including UNHCR and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), in co-operation with a number of national partners.

With regard to 'de-institutionalisation' of social care there have been projects and programmes such as "Raising Standards and Self-Reliance" and "Social Innovations Fund" funded by the Department for International Development (DfID) and by Norway. These programmes continue.

In 2009, the UNHCR with INTERSOS (Italian NGO) and the Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia worked to provide the necessary assistance to the refugees from closed collective centres and to find solutions for the residents of the remaining collective centres.

Coordination

The European Commission and the CEB will implement the RHP with other international partners, namely the US Government, the UNHCR and the OSCE. In addition several national stakeholders –

line Ministries, directorates etc. – will be involved. These institutions and their respective roles will be identified and defined as part of the Technical Assistance component of the programme.

Thematic Evaluation on EUs support to refugees

In 2013 DG Enlargement completed a thematic evaluation on EU's support to refugees⁵. The evaluation acknowledged that the financial assistance has been effective, contributing to the objectives and priorities. The evaluation suggested several lessons learned and recommendations relevant to the future development of the Regional Housing Programme. In terms of action priorities, the main lesson of the evaluation in question is the importance of good economic conditions and income perspectives on the ground as “pull factor” for return, while in terms of facilitating intervention, it is certainly crucial to create incentives for a proactive role of the “last segment” of the assistance chain (local authorities and local branches of the central government). The evaluation suggested merging the refugees' policies within general welfare/poverty reduction policies, as the return and reintegration process is extremely sensitive to external socioeconomic factors, which can strongly increase or reduce the impact of interventions irrespective of the quality of planning and implementation. In terms of monitoring and performance framework, the evaluation recommended a set of SMART indicators for measuring the result and impact of the financial assistance which are taken into account while designing the current programme.

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2014/20140403-eu-support-to-refugees.pdf

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE (the RHP programme in its entirety)	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To contribute to the satisfactory resolution of the protracted problem of the remaining refugees and displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia by providing long-lasting, sustainable housing solutions with full respect for the rights of refugees and displaced persons.	74 000 vulnerable end-beneficiaries have attained and are occupying a durable housing solution; are effectively integrated and enjoy full access to rights and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings Regional Coordination For a: x5/ year; Technical Committee: x5 time/ year; Assembly of Donors: x4/ year; Steering Committee: x2/ year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting RHP Annual Fund Reports; Monthly reports from CEB and UNHCR; housing sub-project specific report by CEB and UNHCR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the spot monitoring • ROM 	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE (of this particular action as part of the RHP programme)	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
To provide durable and socio-economically sustainable housing solutions.	More than 1550 vulnerable refugees and displaced persons entering into their respective accommodation	CEB Fund and programme manager official reports to the technical committee, Assembly of Donors and the annual RHP Fund report On the spot verification	Donors and Partner countries stay committed to complete the Sarajevo Process Financial gap filled to the entirety of the real cost of the programme Fair and transparent beneficiary selection based on international vulnerability

			<p>criteria</p> <p>Socioeconomic sustainability and integration of the end-beneficiaries is ensured</p> <p>Proper functioning of the national implementing structures</p>
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RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>Result 1: Vulnerable refugees and displaced persons, fairly and transparently selected according to international vulnerability criteria enter and occupy a durable housing solution (2 % of the estimated cost of the entire programme)</p>	<p>500 housing solutions built ,for more than 1550 vulnerable refugees and displaced persons.</p>	<p>CEB Fund and programme manager official reports to the technical committee, Assembly of Donors and the annual RHP Fund report</p> <p>On the spot verification</p>	<p>Donors and Partner countries stay committed to complete the Sarajevo Process</p> <p>Financial gap filled to the entirety of the real cost of the programme</p> <p>Fair and transparent beneficiary selection based on international vulnerability criteria</p> <p>Socioeconomic sustainability and integration of the end-beneficiaries is ensured</p> <p>Proper functioning of the national implementing structures</p>

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

Activity 1: Funds under Activity 1 will be disbursed to the RHP Fund and will be used to finance housing solutions in the RHP Partner Countries following the established decision making process under the RHP. The housing solutions include: provision of flats and houses through building, reconstruction, renovation or purchase; provision of construction materials. The decision making procedure is as follows: Partner Countries prepare and submit to the Assembly of Donors comprehensive housing subprojects. The Assembly of Donors following the recommendations of the Technical Committee as well as UNHCR, OSCE and CEB approve grants that will finance the housing sub-projects. A detailed list of the Grant Assessment criteria is annexed to this Action Document.

Funds under this Action Document come from both IPA National as well as IPA Multi-country programmes. These funds add to the fulfilment of the European Commission's pledge of EUR 231 million in the International Donors' conference in Sarajevo in April 2012. The full commitment of the pledged funds will be done gradually over the period between 2011- 2016. It is estimated that the present amount will ensure support to the financial running of the RHP Fund for 2015 (depending on the pace of implementation).

Activity 1 will be implemented by the CEB under indirect management through a Delegation Agreement, of a total amount of EUR 11.5 million, which shall be signed in quarter 2, 2015, provided that CEB has successfully completed the Pillars Assessment and following the corresponding provisions of the IPA II Implementing Rules.

Activity 2: Funds (EUR 0.2 million) under Activity 2 will be used for the launch of a request for services under a Framework Contract that will evaluate the implementation of the RHP to date. Given the size of the action as well as the high risks involved a mid-term evaluation is deemed necessary as a tool for sound management and as a means to draw lessons on implementation.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The RHP has a structure reflecting the tasks of the overall management of the RHP Fund and the selection and funding of the projects to be financed. The CHPs will be structured reflecting the tasks of implementation of the programmes taking national and local specificities into account.

The RHP has the following Governance structure: a *Steering Committee*, an *Assembly of Donors* and a *Technical Committee* Furthermore, a *Regional Coordination Forum* takes place regularly. The function of each respective body is outlined below.

The Steering Committee is composed of the donors, the Partner Countries, the RHP Secretariat, the UNHCR and the OSCE. It will provide strategic guidance and coordinate activities under the RHP, and review the effectiveness of the activities financed with RHP Fund resources. It will also supervise the Fund's operations and the progress of the RHP.

The Assembly of Donors consists of the donors, and one representative from CEB, having a non-voting status. It will approve grant requests, and monitor and oversee the financial status of the Fund. The Commission will permanently co-chair the Assembly, together with another donor representative on an annual rotary basis. In 2013, the co-chair was the USA and in 2014, Switzerland.

The Technical Committee is composed of the Commission, each donor or group of donors who has made one or more contributions totalling EUR 5 million, and the RHP Secretariat. The Committee prepared grant request assessment criteria, screens and assesses grant requests, submits grant requests for approval to the Assembly of Donors, and discusses implementation related issues based on information provided by the RHP Secretariat.

The Regional Coordination Forum comprises of the Partner Countries, the Commission, the RHP Secretariat, the UNHCR, the OSCE and the US. In spite of the discussions that took place at the RHP

preparation phase, the RCF is not a physical office, but a meeting place to discuss issues of regional relevance. It provides a forum in which to:

- a) discuss Country Housing Project preparation and implementation as well as related technical assistance needs;
- b) coordinate sub-project pipeline to be submitted to the Technical Committee through the RHP Secretariat;
- c) exchange best practices and harmonise procedures related to the preparation and implementation of Country Housing Projects; and
- d) discuss other issues of common interest related to the preparation and implementation of Country Housing Projects.

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

The largest part of the action (activity 1) will be implemented by the CEB in indirect management. All funds under this activity will be paid into the RHP Fund through the signature of a Delegation Agreement with the CEB provided that CEB has successfully completed the Pillars Assessment.

The RHP Fund consists of six (6) separate accounts: One for each Partner Country containing earmarked Funds; one regional account where non earmarked funds are kept and one sub-regional account for funds that are not eligible for Croatia. The present contribution will be paid into the sub-regional account.

The CEB will further commit and disburse the funds under the present action in the form of Grants to the RHP participant Partner Countries. Each Grant will correspond and will be financing a specific and well defined Country Housing Subproject. The Grants will be signed between CEB and the Partner Country after the relevant decision by the RHP Assembly of Donors.

Activity 2 will be implemented through a service contract that will be procured as a framework contract and will be managed by the operational unit responsible for the RHP in the EC Headquarters. Activity 2 focuses on the in-depth evaluation of the implementation so far and the production of specific recommendations.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The action will be monitored primarily through participation in the monitoring and decision making bodies of the Programme, namely the Regional Coordination Forum, the Technical Committee, the Assembly of Donors and the Steering Committee. In these forums, the implementation of the action is monitored, challenges and problems are discussed and the proposals for new projects and their financing are examined.

For having different compositions and roles, these forums ensure the proper evaluation and monitoring of the action on different levels. One the operational level, while the Regional Coordination Forum is a purely technical and operational forum where the Partner Countries meet with the international stakeholders to discuss operational issues, the Technical Committee comprises only of the donors' representatives and the international organisations responsible for the monitoring of the action (CEB, UNHCR, OSCE). It tackles operational issues and examines requests for grants. On the decision making level, the Steering Committee allows for strategic decisions to be taken between the Donors and the Partner Countries, while the Assembly of Donors is the exclusive body of the Donors where overall strategic issues are being discussed and grants are approved.

The Fund and Programme manager, CEB is providing four types of reporting: a) an annual RHP Fund Report describing the entire activity of the Fund and the financed actions; b) monthly reports to the international stakeholders, c) reports are being produced also at each sub-project level; d) specific reports for the purpose of the Commission's contribution agreements (that largely overlap in their content with the annual RHP Fund report). Moreover, UNHCR and OSCE are producing project specific reports – both at project preparation and during implementation- as well as bi-monthly reports to the Technical Committee on the advancement of activities in their field of expertise.

The role of the European Union Delegations (EUDs) is also important in the monitoring of the programme. While the RHP is a programme managed centrally in Brussels, the EUDs are responsible for following up developments in consultation with the Headquarters.

Results Oriented Monitoring should also be frequently utilised to make sure that the action is implemented efficiently.

An evaluation on the performance of the programme is also envisaged through the evaluation contract financed under this programme.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Description	Baseline 2014	Milestone 2017	Target 2020	Source of information
<i>CSP indicator(s) – if applicable</i>					
Action outcome indicator <i>Provision of durable and socio-economically sustainable housing solutions to approximately 2% of the entire target of final beneficiaries estimated under the RHP.</i>	<i>Beneficiaries that are fairly and transparently selected benefit from durable housing solution that respects their socioeconomic rights. Indicators include the provision of housing units but ultimately the number of vulnerable end beneficiaries entering into their housing solutions.</i>	2000 housing solutions are expected to be delivered from the previous EU contributions to the RHP programme (approx. EUR 110 million)	40% of the ultimate target: 200 housing solutions ready to be provided or 640 beneficiaries entering their assigned housing solution	500 housing solutions ready to be provided or 1550 beneficiaries entering into their assigned housing solution.	<i>CEB Fund and programme manager official reports to the technical committee, Assembly of Donors and the annual RHP Fund report. On the spot verification</i>
Action output indicator 1 <i>More than 1550 vulnerable refugees and displaced persons entering into their respective accommodation</i>	<i>More than 1550 vulnerable refugees and displaced persons entering into their respective accommodation (which amounts to 2% of the total estimate for the entire programme)</i>	2000 housing solutions from previous EU contributions	40% of the ultimate target: 200 housing solutions ready to be provided or 620 beneficiaries entering	500 housing solutions/ 1550 people entering into their assigned housing solution	<i>CEB Fund and programme manager official reports to the technical committee, Assembly of Donors and the annual RHP Fund report On the spot verification</i>

Indicator	Description	Baseline 2014	Milestone 2017	Target 2020	Source of information
			<i>their assigned housing solution</i>		
<i>Process indicator 1</i>	<i>Delegation</i>				

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

The RHP implementation involving construction should strive to apply the highest technical building standards to maximize energy efficiency, environmental protection and ensure sustainable development. In most cases energy efficiency in the buildings must be enhanced, enriched and the relevant EU Directives have to be implemented. In some of the Partner countries and to a certain extent the issue is covered through the applicable legislation and regulatory framework but this has to be further supplemented in the forthcoming period with the addition of secondary legislation, regulations etc. This constitutes a solid basis for constructing energy efficient buildings and houses and it must be set as a priority for the RHP considering the big number of dwellings that will be constructed.

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

While significant benefits could flow from the economic effects of the RHP/CHP, there is need to also identify and evaluate the associated potential negative outcomes. The social impact of the RHP/CHP needs to be identified and possibly measured. This process should be managed in such a way that positive externalities are magnified and negative ones minimized. Nevertheless, overall macroeconomic conditions of national economies and state of local economies will significantly affect the magnitude of positive economic and social impacts.

Tenure diversification should be considered when and if possible in order to avoid concentration of the poor and disadvantaged, protraction of poverty and stigmatisation of the beneficiaries.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination principles will be respected as regarding gender as well as minorities at the programming and implementation stage. Based on the fundamental principles of promoting equality and combating discrimination, participation in the project will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

When it comes to involvement during construction, equal opportunities will be provided to industry players from all partner countries under international competition rules, where applicable.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

The needs of the displaced change with their age, gender, education, duration of displacement and living conditions and many other complex aspects of protracted refugee situations. Although it is expected that the resolution of housing needs will have a catalytic effect and enhance the social integration process of the displaced populations, the creation of a framework for prioritizing, gathering, analysing and incorporating social information and the conditions for ensuring adequate participation into the design and delivery of individual projects could be beneficial to enhance social integration of the beneficiaries including minorities and vulnerable groups.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

To ensure its successful implementation, the RHP will be based on two guiding principles:

- Mutual accountability; and
- Project sustainability.

Political and financial sustainability in the four Partner Countries will determine the levels of sustainability for the RHP and the four CHPs and will be underpinned by:

- a) A strong sense of ownership of Partner Countries;

- b) An integrated approach that Partner Countries, supported by the key international stakeholders, have adopted in preparing their projects. This integrated approach places emphasis on sub-project specific complementary measures to accompany each housing sub-project
- c) Substantial support for capacity building in Partner Countries throughout the duration of the Programme.

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 the responsibility of the beneficiary, and 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.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives and the accession process. 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. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to keep the Commission fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.

The beneficiary shall report on its visibility and communication actions in the report submitted to the IPA monitoring committee and the sectoral monitoring committees.

Communication and visibility are of utmost importance for the smooth implementation of the RHP. A robust and efficient communication strategy should be developed on three different levels:

- Communication strategy between RHP stakeholders: this is to be achieved through:

- a) the established RHP structures: Regional Coordination Forums, Technical Committee and Steering Committee meetings, Assembly of Donors;

- b) the communication strategy that should be developed by the technical assistance that is utilised for the purposes of the Programme;

- c) the role of the EUDs is important for the communication between the Headquarters of the European Commission that are managing the implementation of the RHP and the national authorities, facilitating, amongst other, the exchange of information and the update concerning developments on the ground.

- Outreach / visibility/ coordination needs: are ensured through the following actions:

- a) again, the technical assistance used for the RHP entails a component dedicated to the outreach/visibility issue

- b) the EUDs role here is again of vital importance. The RHP should be included in the communication strategies of the EUDs for more efficient coordination between IPA refugee related actions as well as for optimal EU visibility.

- c) communication and information sharing between the RHP and other (refugee) housing projects or (e.g. flood victims) will be needed. The EUDs as well as the Programme and Find manager (CEB) should be providing for the needs for coordination between all housing related activities on the ground so that synergies can be encouraged and overlaps can be avoided.

LIST OF ANNEXES

- 1. List of reference documents**
- 2. Further Information on Implementation Modalities, Roles and Procedures**

ANNEX 1

LIST OF REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- *Joint Declaration Programme on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons (Framework Programme) as signed by the four RHP Partner Countries*
- *General Conditions to the RHP Fund*
- *Adherence Agreement to the RHP Fund between the Council of Europe Development Bank and the European Commission*
- *Grant Assessment Criteria*

ANNEX 2

FURTHER INFORMATION ON IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES ROLES AND PROCEDURES

THE ROLE OF THE CEB

The CEB plays three roles within the framework of RHP:

- a) in its capacity as Fund Manager, the CEB manages the RHP Fund. This role mainly entails managing the contributions received from Donors, providing administrative support to the RHP Fund’s governance bodies and reporting to the Donors on activities undertaken.
- b) in its capacity as Finance Institution, the CEB assists the Partner Countries in preparing and implementing their Country Housing Projects (including pre-appraisal of grant applications) as well as monitors the use of grants disbursed from RHP Fund resources to the Partner Countries. As part of this role, the CEB supervises the technical assistance, funded by the European Commission that will be provided to the Partner Countries by external consultants.
- c) in its capacity as RHP Secretariat, the CEB facilitates coordination between the Partner Countries, the Donors and other international stakeholders and itself, during RHP preparation and implementation phases. This role entails providing administrative support to the RHP coordination structure, and ensuring that the RHP receives appropriate visibility.

RHP & RHP Fund institutional framework

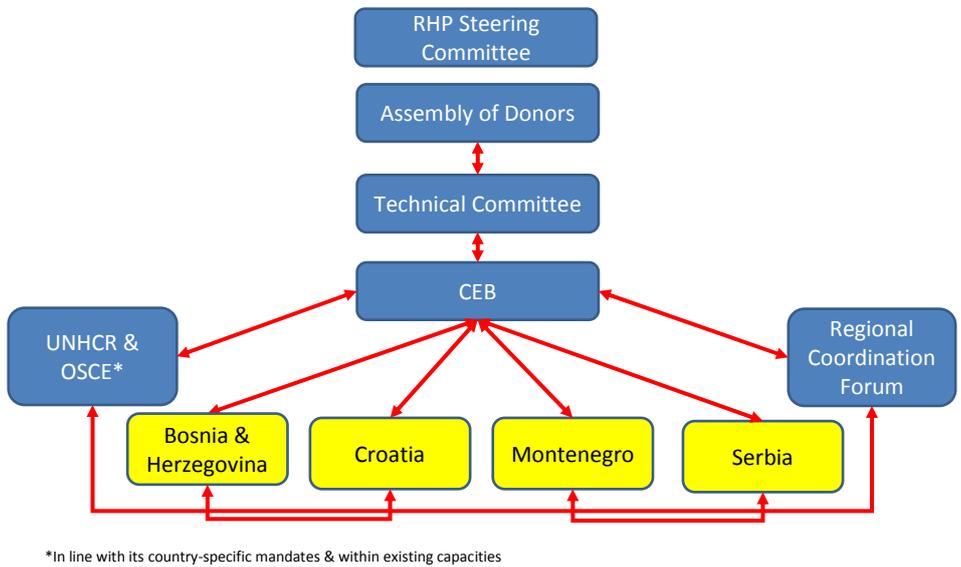


Figure 1. Institutional and organisational set up - RHP

THE RHP FUND

To raise funds for the RHP initiative, a Donors' Conference was held in Sarajevo in April 2012. In total, EUR 261 million was pledged, of which EUR 230 million by the European Commission and USD 10 million by the United States. To hold Donor contributions, the CEB set up a multi-Donor fund, named the RHP Fund.

All 14 countries and institution who pledged contributions during the Donors' Conference, that is the European Union, the USA, Germany, Italy, the Kingdom of Norway, the Swiss Federation, the Kingdom of Denmark, Turkey, Luxembourg, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Romania, Hungary and the Slovak Republic have now committed and paid in contributions. At end-April 2014, Donors had committed EUR 141 million and the RHP Fund held EUR 68 million. The European Union has committed a total of EUR 110 million to the RHP Fund, making it the largest donor. Of this total, it has already paid in EUR 44 million.

Un-earmarked funding covering all Partner Countries is the preferred option. However, a donor may earmark its contribution for a specific Partner Country or Partner Countries, in which case this is specified in the Agreement signed between the donor and the CEB.

To be eligible for a Grant, Partner Countries will have to ensure that investment projects benefit at least one of the six categories of beneficiaries identified within the Programme, namely:

- a) **Category I** includes all 1991-1995 refugees, regardless of their status, who are residents of collective centres or other forms of collective accommodation, whether formal or informal.
- b) **Category II** includes all 1991-1995 vulnerable refugees accommodated privately and all former occupancy right holders without a durable solution in their country of origin or reception country. For the purpose of the joint programme, the vulnerability criteria applied by UNHCR in regional countries are also to be used.
- c) **Category III** includes all vulnerable returnees to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia as well as all vulnerable returnees who have already returned to Croatia but do not have a durable solution either in the country of origin or in the reception country.
- d) **Category IV** applies to displaced persons accommodated in collective centres or private accommodation in Croatia.
- e) **Category V** includes vulnerable displaced persons outside collective centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- f) **Category VI** includes vulnerable displaced persons in Montenegro from 1999. This has specifically been agreed by the participating countries given that the joint programme in other countries deals only with 1991-1995 refugees.

Identification of beneficiaries will be carried out by the Partner Countries with the support and under the monitoring of the UNHCR in line with jointly agreed eligibility and vulnerability criteria.

Sub-project approvals in 2013:

In 2013, three calls were launched to invite the Partner Countries to submit grant applications to CEB and they yielded 12 sub-project grant applications for a total amount of EUR 61 million, namely: Bosnia-Herzegovina submitted two, Croatia four, Montenegro three and Serbia three grant applications respectively. Each grant application contains a section prepared by the UNHCR and OSCE, providing their observations on each sub-project proposal as concerns beneficiary selection and protection-related issues.

After internal CEB screenings during the sub-project pre-appraisal phase, the Technical Committee appraised all 12 sub-project applications and submitted them to the Assembly of Donors for approval.

The Partner Countries are receiving extensive Technical Assistance throughout the implementation of the RHP, provided by the Consultant Consortium (Eptisa/GIZ/Danish Refugee Council) that was selected for this assignment. This TA support enables the Partner Countries to address any institutional capacity constraints while leaving them firmly in charge of implementing their Country Housing Projects. The TA is financed by the European Commission and supervised by the CEB.

INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP – COUNTRY HOUSING PROGRAMMES

Each CHP will have a National Steering Committee consisting of key stakeholders of the country. This may be based on existing structures or set up as a new institution. It is important that the Lead

Institution has the overall responsibility for reporting to the RHP Steering Committee. The Lead Institution will be overall responsible for the implementation of the CHP, for the establishment of the PIU and for selecting the beneficiaries in particular in close cooperation with the UNHCR and OSCE (final lists to be endorsed by the National Steering Committee (NSC)).

The PIU(s) is (are) in charge of the practical day-to-day implementation of the sub-projects.

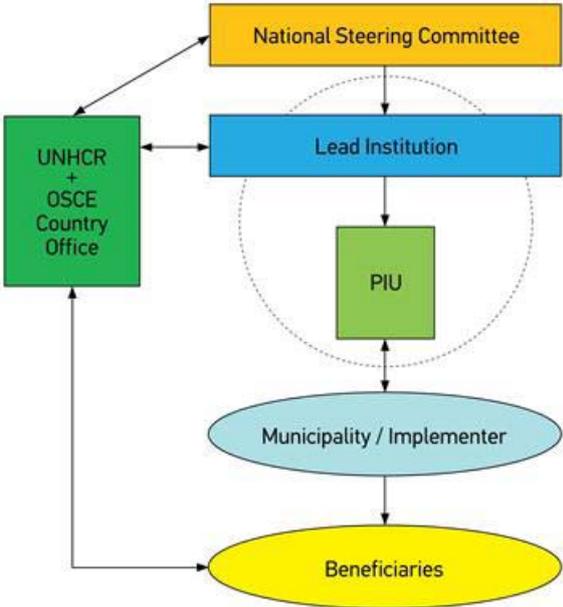


Figure 2. Generic Institutional and Organisational set up - CHP

All Partner Countries have operational RHP implementing structures, as follows:

Bosnia and Herzegovina :

- Lead Institution : Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees
- Project Implementing Units:
 - The Federal Ministry of Displaced Persons and Refugees in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
 - The Republika Srpska Ministry of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Republika Srpska;
 - The Department of the Brčko District Government for Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Housing Issues in Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In addition, strategic guidance is provided by the State Commission for Refugees and Displaced Persons whereas the Return Fund is in charge of the financial administration of RHP funds. It is also worth noting that in BiH, the “Project Implementation Team” (PIT) acts as the National Steering Committee.

Croatia :

- Lead Institution : State Office for Reconstruction and Housing
- Project Implementing Unit: Project Implementation Unit situated within the State Office for Reconstruction and Housing.

Montenegro:

- Lead Institution: Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
- Project Implementing Unit: PROCON

Serbia:

- Lead Institution: Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia
- Project Implementing Unit: PIU for Research and Development, Ltd

In addition to these implementing structures, depending on the country and on the housing modality, the local authorities may also be involved in sub-project implementation as may some other Government agencies/bodies.

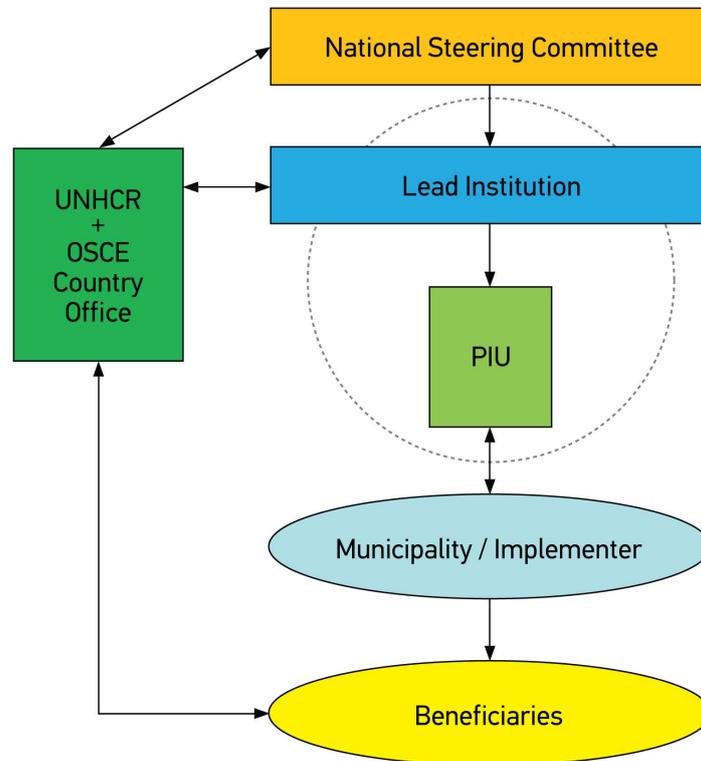


Figure 2. Generic Institutional and Organisational set up - CHP

UNHCR and OSCE (in line with its country specific mandates and within existing capacities) will provide support to Partner Countries by monitoring progress of the country projects as regards beneficiaries and by reporting to relevant partners. This will ensure, inter alia, that the end-beneficiaries will be those qualified as the most vulnerable, such as defined by the Partner Countries jointly with the UNHCR. UNHCR and OSCE will also support CEB, when necessary, in monitoring that the housing solutions provided to the end-beneficiaries address their specific needs. This is implemented by means of a Contribution Agreement with the UNHCR under joint management and financed with IPA Multi-Beneficiary allocation for 2011.