



## **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Directorate-General Neighbourhood and Enlargement  
Negotiations DG NEAR

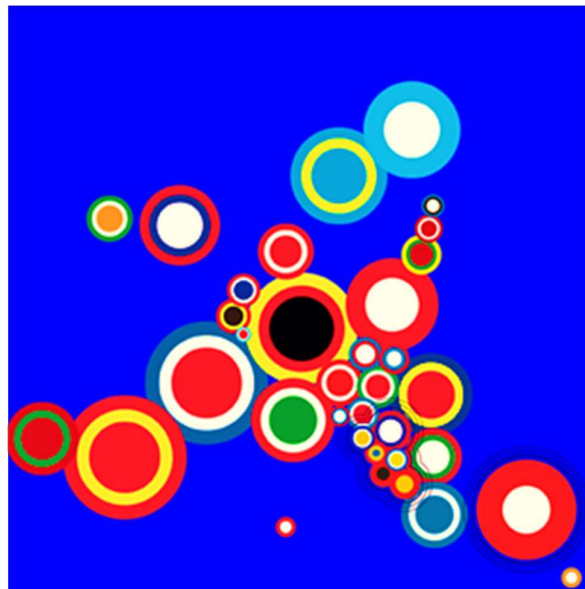
D – WESTERN BALKANS

D.5 – WESTERN BALKANS REGIONAL COOPERATION AND  
PROGRAMMES

## **IPA MULTI-COUNTRY PROGRAMMES**

### **ACTIVITY REPORT:**

**JULY - DECEMBER 2017**



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

### LINK

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme/index_en.htm)

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AEI	Agency for European Integration
ATA	Administrative and Technical Assistance Facility
BAS	Business Advisory Services
BIRN	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network
BKA	Bundeskriminalamt/Federal Criminal Police Office Germany
BPR	Biocidal Products Regulation
CAB	Conformity Assessment Bodies
CAN	Capacity Needs Assessment
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CBIB	Cross-border Institution Building
CC	Climate Change
CCW	Climate Change Window
CEB	Council of Europe Development Bank
CEECIS	Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent states
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CEN	Comité Européen de Normalisation
CFR	Country Feasibility Report
CHP	Country Housing Projects
CHU	Central Harmonisation Unit
CIRCA	Communication & Information Resource Centre Administrator
CLP	Classification, labelling and packaging
CN	Contract
CO	Coordination Office
CoE	Council of Europe
CoP	Community of Practice
CSF	Civil Society Facility
CSF	Classical Swine Fever
CSO	Civil Society Organisation

CSP	Country strategy paper
CSR	Country Strategy Report
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officers
DG	Directorate General
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EAMLA	European Accreditation multilateral agreement
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EBU	European Broadcasting Union
EC	European Commission
ECAS	European Citizen Action Service
ECENA	Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network for Accession
ECS	Energy Community Secretariat
ECT(S)	European credit transfer (System)
EDIF	Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility
EE(FE)	Energy Efficiency Finance Facility
EEA	European Economic Area
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EETF	Energy Efficiency Task Force
EFSE	European Fund for Southeast Europe
EGP	Enterprise Growth Programme
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EIF	European Investment Fund
EJN	European Judicial Network
EMMA	European Multi-services Meteorological Awareness
ENEF	Enterprise Expansion Fund
ENER	Energy
ENIF	Enterprise Innovation Fund
ENIF	Enterprise Innovation Fund
ETF	European training Foundation

EU	European Union
EUBEC	EU Platform for Blending in External Cooperation
EUD	European Union Delegation
EUI	European University Institute
EUMETNET	European National Meteorological network
EURAMET	European Association of National Metrology Institutes
FAD	Fiscal Affairs Department
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
GB	Governing board
GF	Guarantee Facility
GGF	Green for Growth Fund
GHG	Green House Gases
GIS	Geo Information System
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEREs	Higher Education Reform Experts
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HLC	Humanitarian Law Centre
HOT	Hands-on training
HRM	Human resource Management
IACS	Integrated Administration and Control System
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IBM	Integrated Border Management
IC	Investment Committee
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IFC	International Finance Cooperation
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFICO	International Financial Institution Coordination Office
ILECU	International Law Enforcement Coordination Units
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration

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



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

RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
RCI	Regional Competitiveness Initiative
RE	Renewable energy
RECOM	Regional Committee for Truth and Reconciliation
REEP	Regional Energy Efficiency Programme
REG	Regional
REACH	Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals
RENA	Regional Environmental Network for Accession
ReSPA	Regional school of public administration
RHP	Regional Housing Programme
RIPA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAI	Supreme Audit Institution
SBA	Small Business Act
SBS	Small Business Support Programme
SC	Steering Committee
SEE	South East Europe
SEECEL	South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning
SEED	Systematic Electronic Exchange of Data
SEEIC	Southeast Europe Investment Committee
SEETO	South East Europe Transport Observatory
SEI	Strengthening European Integration
SELEC	Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SMECSF SME	Competitiveness Support Window
SPS	Sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
SWP	Strategic work programme
TA	Technical Assistance
TAC	Travel, accommodation and conference facility

TACSO	Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations
TADAT	Tax Administration Diagnostic Assessment Tool
TAXUD	Directorate General Taxation and Customs Union
TBC	To be confirmed
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
T-CY	Cybercrime Convention Committee
TFCS	Task Force for Culture and Society
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly
TNA	Training needs assessment
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of trainers
TVR	Temporary and Virtual Return
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USKOK	Office for the Prevention of Corruption and Organized Crime
VAC	Violence against Children
VAT	Value Added Tax
VIND	Vinca Institute Nuclear Decommissioning
WB	Western Balkan
WBG	World Bank Group
WBIF	Western Balkans Investment Framework
WeBSEDF	Western Balkans Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility
WeBSEFF	Western Balkans Sustainable Energy Financing Facility
WELMEC	European cooperation in the field of legal metrology
WG	Working group
WINPRO	Witness Protection in the Fight against Serious Crime and Terrorism
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

WPU

Witness Protection Unit

WSSD

World Summit on Sustainable Development

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# CHAPTER 1: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

## 1.1 SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (SIGMA)

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) in the Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 18 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Contribution agreement with OECD
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/360-644
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/07/2015 – 30/06/2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.sigmaweb.org">www.sigmaweb.org</a>
<b>Contact:</b>	Alberto Costa, <a href="mailto:Alberto.COSTA@ec.europa.eu">Alberto.COSTA@ec.europa.eu</a>

### PURPOSE

SIGMA supports public administration reform (PAR) in the Western Balkans and Turkey, providing the beneficiaries with assistance to strengthen their legal frameworks, administrative capacities and processes for sound implementation of national policies and harmonisation and implementation of the *EU acquis*. Areas of intervention are the core areas of PAR: (1) strategic framework of PAR, (2) policy development and co-ordination, (3) civil service and human resource management, (4) accountability, (5) service delivery, (6) public financial management (PFM) including public procurement (PP) and external audit.

### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Delivery of seven country assessment monitoring reports against the Principles of Public Administration and published on the SIGMA website.
- Preparation of nine concept papers, analyses and studies in the areas of civil service, administrative law, organisation of administration, public procurement (PP) and Public Finance Management (PFM) (Albania, Montenegro and Serbia).
- Delivery of thirty advisory and written commentaries on: strategic planning, regulatory improvement, regulatory impact assessment, external and internal audit, civil service legislation, public internal financial control, PAR and PFM strategies and Action Plans, organisation of public administration and PP legislation and systems (Albania, Kosovo\*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia).

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

- Organisation and/or support to twenty workshops/seminars on: strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, internal control and accountability, organisation of the Centre of Government (CoG), civil service legislation, service delivery, strengthening PP systems and disseminating the findings of the CoG regional paper (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey).
- Organisation of 2 focus group meetings, supported by the questionnaires for senior officials, on managerial accountability and senior civil service (Western Balkans).
- Organisation of the Ministerial Conference on "*Good Public Governance - Delivering for Citizens and Business*" (Paris, December).
- Contribution to the PP chapter of the *SME Policy Index – Western Balkan and Turkey 2019 – Assessing the Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe* and PAR related chapters of the *SEE Competitiveness Outlook*.
- Support to organisation and discussions during three PAR and PFM policy dialogue meetings between the EU and Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Updated Principles of Public Administration and Methodological Framework.
- Seven monitoring reports against the Principles of Public Administration.
- PAR and PFM strategies and Action Plans; PAR and PFM monitoring frameworks; methodologies for monitoring and outcome-based reporting; strategic planning and costing of sector strategies (Kosovo, Montenegro, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia).
- Capacity building to improve public procurement legislation and practices in Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey and to improve the public financial internal control framework and practices in Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo and Serbia.
- Refined and improved methodology on Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) followed by two draft RIA reports; Albanian and English versions of the Commentary of Administrative Procedures (CAP) and a methodological paper on agency restructuring to support reforms in Albania.
- Methodology for optimising the number of public sector employees and written comments on the Law on Civil Servants and State Employees in Montenegro.
- Written comments to the draft Civil Service Law, the Law on Organisation and Functioning of Public Administration and the annual report on the PAR strategy as well as support to establishment of the Secretariat to Rationalise Agencies in Kosovo.
- Work Programme of the State Audit Institutions' Network 2018-2020.
- PAR Information System available online and open for EC stakeholders.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

SIGMA will continue to provide country-specific assistance to strengthen the functioning of public administration in all the beneficiaries. Finalisation of several studies and policy/concept papers (in the areas of civil service, public financial management and public procurement) is planned for the first half of 2018. Regional events on public procurement, civil service and managerial accountability will be organised and/or co-organised between April and June 2018.

### 1.2 PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

#### Strengthening Accountability and the Fiduciary Environment (SAFE TF)

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2010/022-028 and IPA 2015/031-609
<b>Project title:</b>	Strengthening Accountability and the Fiduciary Environment (SAFE), EU Single-Donor Trust Fund
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 1 million + EUR 3 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Administration Agreement with the World Bank
<b>Contract reference:</b>	IPA 2015/031-609
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	21/12/2010 - 20/04/2019
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.worldbank.org/">www.worldbank.org/</a>
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#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

The following activities are under implementation:

**Albania - PEFA 2016/17:** The peer review on the PEFA assessment was carried out on 2 November 2017. An updated PEFA report was provided to peer reviewers on 8 December.

**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Enhancing the Implementation of Public Procurement:** Progress was made with all four major activities, i.e. upgrading the e-

procurement system, performance indicators, capacity building and implementation of low value contracts.

**Turkey - Deepening the Implementation of Public Sector Internal Audit Reforms:** The semi-structured interviews with the heads of selected public administrations were completed and the report on the survey results was updated accordingly. The Internal Audit Coordination Board intends to revise their strategy paper taking into consideration the survey results.

**Kosovo - Strengthening Office of the Auditor General capacities:** Procurement of international consultants was re-launched in December 2017, since no candidate applied for the call in September.

**Regional - Internal Audit Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme:** The regional community of practice developed a Good Practice Paper for institutions to establish effective fraud management programmes. A virtual workshop focusing on Internal Audit Fraud Detection Data Analytics Tools was delivered for around 100 participants. Presentations and recordings of these webinars have been disseminated within the Community of Practice to be further used in the local context. All finalised and disseminated materials and videos were made available on the Internal Audit ToT web page.

**Regional - Strengthening Financial Management Functions of Line Ministries:** Several upgrades were made to the portal's interface of the line minister's web portal. Back-end functionalities were improved and the content feed was upgraded. As the portal stimulates collaboration, the hub collaborative tool was chosen for the community building purposes, and was successfully tested. Webinar on Pre-Budget Formulation seminar was carried out. A 2-week e-learning course on Programme and Performance Budgeting was concluded with a 3-day workshop at the CEF.

**Regional - Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny in Western Balkans Countries:** The Parliament of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia hosted in Skopje the annual parliamentary conference for the Network of Parliamentary Committees on Economy, Finance, and European Integration of the Western Balkans. Forty Members of Parliament, committee clerks, and analysts from parliamentary budget offices attended the conference.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

**Albania PEFA 2016/17:** A completed PEFA draft report.

**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Enhancing the Implementation of Public Procurement:** Three new functionalities in the e-public procurement system (active as of July 2017); harmonisation of e-procurement with e-archiving and e-appeals completed.

**Turkey - Deepening the Implementation of Public Sector Internal Audit Reforms:** An analytical study; a revised report after the semi-structured interviews conducted with the high-level managers of selected administrations and the private sector.

**Regional - Internal Audit Training of Trainers Programme:** A Good Practice Paper; a virtual workshop; and materials and videos available on the Internal Audit Training of Trainers web page.

**Regional - Strengthening Financial Management Functions of Line Ministries:** A platform on public financial management for knowledge improvement of line ministries; two workshops.



## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

**Albania PEFA 2016/17:** The project was extended by 3 months until 31 March 2018 to allow for the finalisation of the PEFA report.

**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Enhancing the Implementation of Public Procurement:** Completion of the activity for development of procurement performance indicators and governance red flags; completion of the activity for development of a strategy for implementation of low value procurement such as e-marketplace and e-catalogue. Subject to completion of the red flags activity and sufficient time available, possible upgrade of the e-procurement system based on the findings/outputs of activities. Development of procurement performance indicators and governance red flags will conclude in the first quarter of 2018. Capacity building (the next levels of the accreditation programme) will continue as planned.

**Turkey - Deepening the Implementation of Public Sector Internal Audit Reforms:** An internal audit conference will take place in May 2018. The conference aims to increase the visibility of the internal audit function by raising the awareness of high level managers in the administrations on internal audit. The workshop will also include a discussion on the survey results and strategy and several knowledge sharing sessions for internal auditors.

**Kosovo - Strengthening Office of the Auditor General capacities:** Capacity-building activities will be continued in view of more tangibles towards the second semester of 2018.

**Regional - Internal Audit Training of Trainers Programme:** Developing resources and teaching materials for the advanced training module in April/May 2018, including (i) Presentations for the Advanced stream workshop, (ii) Update of the Case Study with assignments added for the Advanced Module, (iii) Developing a Teachers Manual (Section III of the Case Study), (iv) Fraud Detection educational resource (group exercise), and (v) Quality Assurance educational resource (group exercise). Delivery of Advanced module on 4-7 June. During the event representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will introduce a social media group "AuditWithoutWalls!" ADB Yammer Network Group covering 340 public sector internal auditors from 48 countries.

**Regional - Strengthening Financial Management Functions of Line Ministries:** An online course on Budget submission of Line Ministries (21 May – 1 June 2018) and a workshop (13-15 June 2018). Organisation of country visits to all IPA countries in the second half of June. Voices from the region (collection of project participants' impressions): video material largely collected and will be edited in the remaining months. Managing Health Care Costing and Finance Seminar (28 February – 2 March) to examine possible approaches to the improvement of health care systems financing and reduction of sector specific fiscal risks through better coordination of allocated financial resources.

**Regional - Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny in Western Balkans Countries.** Finalise the draft Network of Parliamentary Committees (NPC) legislative scrutiny performance framework and incorporate inputs received during the Annual Regional Parliamentary Conference. Collaborate with the NPC Board (constituting two Members of Parliament from each NPC jurisdiction) to finalise and endorse the draft NPC Performance Framework. Incorporate the endorsed NPC Performance Framework into the final NPC Strengthening Legislative Scrutiny Knowledge Product for e-distribution to all NPC members. Organise a

series of webinars/case clinics with the NPC Working Group Clerks to rollout the NPC Performance Framework, including preparing a submission to the PEFA Secretariat aimed at updating the PEFA 2016 field guide to include additional guidance on assessing the parliamentary indicators.

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### Strengthening Economic Governance and Public Financial Management

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<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014 / 031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Strengthening Economic Governance and Public Financial Management
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 8 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	PAGODA with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/358-797
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	09/06/2015 - 08/06/2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.imf.org">www.imf.org</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Javier Casanovas, <a href="mailto:Javier.Casanovas-Bernad@ec.europa.eu">Javier.Casanovas-Bernad@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this IMF-led project is to support the implementation of the relevant parts of the partners' Economic Reform Programmes and the preparation and implementation of their national public financial management (PFM) reform programmes.

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

The following activities are under implementation:

**Albania:** Technical Assistance focused on supporting the draft of the public investment guidelines. The Fiscal Affairs Department conducted a mission on Public-Private Partnership and cash management. Long- and short-term missions to strengthen the fiscal risk unit and support the first fiscal risk statement that is included in the 2018-2020 Medium Term Budget Framework. For tax administration there has been a review of the second-generation reform plan. Follow-up on VAT refunds and credit issues. Compliance Risk Management, Taxpayer services, regional organisation support and a review of the arrears collection system and business process.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Mission to assess the public investment management framework in BiH and state institutions. Mission to analyse overall arrears and expenditure controls in the Federation and Cantons. Mission to analyse arrears in the health sector of the Republika Srpska entity. Follow up mission to enhance the preparation of the draft PFM reform for 2019. For tax administration there was a follow up of the reform process. TADAT preparation. IT reform preparation and risk analysis. Audit efficiency and Customs compliance risk management system.

**Kosovo:** Support for a better control of public investment management capital projects and administrative instructions. Fiscal Affairs Department mission to follow up on Medium Term Expenditure Framework and coherence with Public Investment Management. For Tax Management there was a review and update of the IT project documentation and

implementation plan. Compliance Risk management, Performance Management and Tax audit support.

**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:** Fiscal Affairs Department mission to review cash management practices and commitment controls. Revision of the new Organic Budget Law to strengthen commitment controls and the medium term expenditure framework process. Revision of fiscal rules and fiscal council proposals. Review of the PFM reform programme and attendance to the PFM policy dialogue. For tax administration there was several IT reform support missions. Technical Assistance for the improvement of the audit function and shadow economy was contracted.

**Montenegro:** Participation in the accrual accounting conference. Mission for strengthening coordination on cash and debt management and provide guidance to ensure segregation of duties. Mission for developing a credit risk management framework for guarantees and review the state aid law. Meeting with the mission of the government of Slovakia and Treasury to discuss reform progress and future Technical Assistance. For tax administration there was a meeting with the minister of finance and several missions for the follow up of the implementation of the reform, the improvement of large taxpayers, arrears and strategic management.

**Serbia:** Participation in the accrual accounting conference. Follow up missions on accounting reforms. For tax administration there was a follow up on the implementation of the transformation programme and reorganisation of the field offices of taxation. Missions for the improvement of the audit, collection, risk management and large taxpayers functions.

**Regional** - Training at the Joint Vienna Institute on PFM reforms in the context of Public Administration Reforms. Workshop on Fiscal Risks with particular focus on public corporations. Webinar training on management of non-financial assets and fiscal reporting. Training on public investment management assessments. Participation in the OECD South Eastern Europe seminar and the advisory Board meeting of the CEF. For tax administration there was trainings and seminars for Webinar, combating grey economy and business process reengineering.

## OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

The Technical Assistance supported the development implementation of PFM reform plans and Tax Administration in each of the six countries. Generally, there has been reform progress across key public finance management and tax administration components—bringing these administrations materially closer to international good practice in several areas. More specifically progress was made in improving medium term expenditure frameworks, commitment controls, arrears, fiscal risks and public investment. With regards to the tax administration framework (e.g., governance and organis

ations structures); core business functions (e.g., taxpayer registration, returns filing, and payment systems); and CRM, for example, gathering and dissemination of data and intelligence, compliance strategy development, taxpayer services, and audit.

**Albania** – Report on cash management process and recommendation to strengthen cash forecasting and integrate more closely cash and debt management to ensure that cash is available to meet payments when due and avoid arrears. Comments provided to the draft PEFA 2014-2016.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** - PIMA completion and presentation to FBiH and BiH institutions. Reports on overall arrears completed and presented.

**Kosovo** - Strengthened the medium-term budget framework, and public investment management.

**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** – Recommendations provided for strengthening commitment controls and cash management. Recommendations provided to strengthen commitments' control and medium term budget framework in the new Organic Law. Recommendations for institutions to better monitor fiscal objectives and rules. Recommendations for oversight of state owned companies and fiscal risks analysis and reporting. Comments provided for the PFM Reform programme approved in December 2017.

**Montenegro** - Recommendations for strengthening coordination of cash and debt management, guarantees and state aid law.

**Serbia** - Comments provided on the World Bank assessment of accounting practices and follow up.

**Regional** - Training delivered for PFM reforms, fiscal risks, management of non-financial assets, fiscal reports and financial statements.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The work programme for 2018 has been developed with country authorities based on the 2017 IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings and the May 2017 IMF-EU Annual Coordination Meeting in Ljubljana. For the next period the key PFM priorities continue to include analysis and management of fiscal risks, strengthening medium-term budgetary framework (MTBF) processes through implementation of fiscal rules, strengthening the scope and coverage of fiscal reports, and adoption of and reporting against PFM reform strategies. In Tax Administration Technical Assistance efforts will continue to focus on helping revenue administrations to build strong governance, organisational structures and IT structures; improve core tax administration processes such as large taxpayers units; and implement modern CRM methodology, including strategic-based compliance strategies and strong compliance functions including taxpayer services, audit, and arrears enforcement.

**Albania** – Technical Assistance will continue to concentrate on the management of public investments and developing the fiscal risks oversight function. Emphasis will be on hands-on practical assistance to ensure that previous recommendations are implemented and properly embedded in financial management processes. Attention will also be given to strengthening the MTBF process through the implementation of fiscal rules (in cooperation with the new EC-Financed TA programme) and enhancing fiscal coverage and quality of reporting. There may also be a need to focus again on arrears. Tax Administration Technical Assistance will focus on helping the tax administration to improve its management and governance approach, streamline the regional organisational structure so that it matches the administration's current business needs and delivers a more effective and efficient product to stakeholders; continue to phase in a modern CRM approach; commence an improvement of the tax audit function; and enhance services to taxpayers.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** - Completion of the country-wide PFM reform strategy is the priority for the next semesters and its adoption is foreseen for 2019. Arrears and commitment controls missions will be carried out in the first semester of 2018. Oversight of fiscal risks at all levels of government, primarily from SOEs and enhancing the coverage, timeliness, and quality of fiscal reports will also be prioritised. Assessing the effectiveness of public investment management would contribute to strengthening medium-term budgeting. Tax Administration Technical Assistance will focus on adopting a more strategic approach to improving taxpayer compliance; strengthening the execution of the audit programme including improving risk analysis and adapting enforcement measures to the specific risks; review to modernise procedural legislation to facilitate improved efficiency and effectiveness; and supporting an initiative to systematically map the most serious tax fraud methods being used in BiH. Information technology and risk management missions are planned for the first semester of 2018.

**Kosovo** - Enhancing the effectiveness of the MTEF and public investment management and technical assistance with a focus on performance management are the priorities in the next semester.

**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** - The agenda for next semester will include further revision of the Budget Organic Law, fiscal rules, fiscal risks and state owned companies. Tax Administration Technical Assistance will focus on helping the tax administration strengthen revenue management and governance arrangements particularly in the areas of reform strategy development and strategic management, organisational arrangements, effective support functions, and effective risk management; stronger tax administration core functions specifically audit and other verification programmes and arrears collection. Improvement of the audit function, shadow economy and indirect audit methods missions are planned for the next semester.

**Montenegro** - Strengthening cash management, commitment control, fiscal risks and contingencies will continue to be in the working programme for the first semester of 2018. The work under the programme will need to be fully coordinated with the UNDP/Slovakia project and the proposed EC-financed TA project in this area. Support in strengthening public investment management will also be targeted. Tax Administration Technical Assistance will focus on helping the tax administration to streamline the HQ and regional structures to deliver a more effective and efficient reforms, improved governance, and management of the regional offices; continue to phase in a modern CRM approach; and commence a programme to improve audit planning, execution, and evaluation with an initial focus on the large taxpayer segment.

**Serbia** - Technical Assistance advice will target accounting, fiscal reporting and public investment in the next semester. Tax Administration Technical Assistance will focus on strengthening revenue administration management and governance arrangements particularly in the areas of reform strategy development and strategic management, organisational arrangements, effective support functions and effective risk management; and strengthen large taxpayers office.

### 1.3 REGIONAL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (RESPA)

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA II 2015/031-609
<b>Project title:</b>	Support to the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) in its efforts to contribute to the Public Administration Reform under the EU integration process in the Western Balkans
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 3.5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant contract
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2016/373-854
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/07/2016 – 10/12/2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.respaweb.eu">http://www.respaweb.eu</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Inma Perez-Rocha, <a href="mailto:perez-rocha.maria-inmaculada@ec.europa.eu">perez-rocha.maria-inmaculada@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

Following the overall ReSPA strategic approach, the implemented activities are directly linked to the European Integration, Public Administration Reform and Governance for Growth pillars. During the reporting period the following activities have been carried out:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Conference on the EU Budget Support;
- Study Visits to the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights for representatives of ministries of justice and institutions responsible for EU integration processes;
- Seminar on Revised Internal Audit Standards for the regional working group on Public Internal Financial Control;
- E-Government Working Group meeting at the 24<sup>th</sup> Festival of Information Technology Achievements (INFOFEST 2017);
- ReSPA Annual Conference devoted to “Innovation in Public Administration - Navigating in Times of Change”;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference on Regional cooperation of the Technical Secretariat of the National Investment Commissions;

- 7th Meeting of Public Administration Reform Network, devoted to the discussion on the costing of PAR strategies and managerial accountability;
- 12<sup>th</sup> Ethics and Integrity working group meeting focused on detecting conflict of interest and integrity;
- Regional Conference on Measuring Gender Equality in Western Balkans, covering also issues related to Gender Equality in Public Administration;
- 7th meeting of the PPP working group;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of ReSPA National Coordinators;
- 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Coordinating Structure devoted to the Effective Public Service Dimension within Governance for Growth Pillar of SEE 2020 Strategy.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

- Baseline Analysis on Quality Management in Public Administration and Public Services in the Western Balkans;
- Methodological Guide for Costing of Government Strategies developed and presented to the countries;
- Study on the Case-Law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) applicable in Administrative Disputes;
- Feasibility study devoted to establishment of Regional Quality Management Centre within ReSPA;
- Recommendations on Improving Public Participation in Western Balkans drafted and endorsed by all Ministers responsible for PAR in Western Balkans during the ReSPA Ministerial meeting in November 2017;
- New ReSPA coordination structure devoted to the Effective Public Service Dimension within Governance for Growth Pillar of SEE 2020 Strategy established.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Development of the ReSPA Strategy 2019-2024;
- Development of a comparative study on public service delivery;
- ReSPA Secretariat CAF Training;
- Conference on Gender Equality and PAR in WB in Belgrade – 30-31 January;
- Conference on Gender Equality and PAR in WB in Tirana;
- National Investment Commissions Technical Secretariat Working meeting;
- Study on Performance Evaluation;
- IPA II Conference in Brussels in May;
- Workshop on Coaching – Belgrade, 28 February;
- Centre of Governments Working Group Meeting— 5-6 March in ReSPA;

- Training on EU Budget Support for BiH – 25-26 May in Sarajevo;
- PIFC Working group meeting – 16-17 May in ReSPA;
- Round table on the Study on the Case-Law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) Applicable in Administrative Disputes – 16-17 May in Belgrade;
- ReSPA representatives will have panel on NISPAcee Conference in Romania – 24-25 May;
- Working group meeting on Open Government Partnership – 7-8 May in Skopje;
- Ministerial Conference on Good Governance in Western Balkan with Ministers responsible for PAR and Ministers of Finance – Mostar 12-13 June 2018.

## 1.4 STATISTICAL COOPERATION

### Support for Improvement in Statistics

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2014/032-064
<b>Project title:</b>	Statistical cooperation for the Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 8 million (of which 7.8 million contracted)
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Service contract and grants to 4 national statistical offices
<b>Contract reference:</b>	Service contract with GOPA Consultants, EUR 5.3 m Grant to Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT), EUR 0.54 m Grant to State Statistical Office (SSO) of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, EUR 0.64 m Grant to Statistical Office of Serbia, EUR 0.75 m Grant to Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), EUR 0.56 m
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	Service contract 01/11/2015 – 31/12/2017 (extended) Grants 01/10/2015 – 31/08/2017
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/our-partners/cooperation">http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/our-partners/cooperation</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Torbioern Carlquist, <a href="mailto:Torbioern.Carlquist@ec.europa.eu">Torbioern.Carlquist@ec.europa.eu</a> Bernd Wild, <a href="mailto:Bernd.Wild@ec.europa.eu">Bernd.Wild@ec.europa.eu</a>
<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2015/031-898
<b>Project title:</b>	Statistical cooperation for the Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 16 million (of which 15.8 million contracted)
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Service contract and grants to 4 national statistical offices
<b>Contract reference:</b>	Service contract with GOPA Consultants, EUR 9.8 m Grant to Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT), EUR 1.34 m Grant to State Statistical Office (SSO) of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, EUR 1.73 m



<b>Duration of activities:</b>	Grant to Statistical Office of Serbia, EUR 1.50 m Grant to Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), EUR 1.38 m Service contract 01/04/2017 – 31/10/2019 Grants to 4 statistical offices 01/07/2017 – 31/10/2019
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/our-partners/cooperation">http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/our-partners/cooperation</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Torbioern Carlquist, <a href="mailto:Torbioern.Carlquist@ec.europa.eu">Torbioern.Carlquist@ec.europa.eu</a> Bernd Wild, <a href="mailto:Bernd.Wild@ec.europa.eu">Bernd.Wild@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

Regular activities continued until October 2017 to be financed from the service contract under IPA 2014 such as participation in working group meetings, expert missions to the partner countries, study visits to EU MS, training events. The draft final report was submitted in December 2017.

From November 2017, the regular activities were financed from the service contract under IPA 2015. Twenty-one traineeships were financed from IPA 2015 (service contract and grants) from September to December 2017.

The implementation of the four grants under IPA 2014 ended in August 2017. The final reports for all four IPA 2014 grants were submitted to Eurostat in October - November 2017. In July 2017 the implementation of activities under the four IPA 2015 grants started.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

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

Activity reports from around 300 participants representing the 3 statistical systems supported under the service contract (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo) who participated in working group meetings at Eurostat, in pilot project workshops, training courses and study visits organised by the contractor. The participants from the countries (Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey), which are benefitting from a grant, also took part in these activities and described their experiences in mission reports.

Documentation of statistical sources and methods continued.

Data delivery compatible with common standards has continued from partner countries to Eurostat.

A novelty under IPA 2015 is that peer reviews of the statistical systems in the enlargement countries are financed from IPA. Peer reviews were conducted in Kosovo and Serbia.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The IPA 2014 service contract final report and final invoice will be submitted to Eurostat. The final payments (or recoveries) for the IPA 2014 grants will be made.

Regular activities are financed from the IPA 2015 service contract and grants.

Many types of activities will take place: participation in Eurostat working groups and workshops, training events, expert missions to the national statistical offices, study visits, beneficiaries' work in different areas of statistics under 31 different pilot projects.

A total of 22 statisticians from partner countries are planned to participate in traineeships at Eurostat and in statistical offices in selected EU Member States from January to June 2018.

A peer review of the statistical system in Albania is planned for June 2018.

Evaluation of grant applications of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey under the next statistical cooperation programme, IPA 2017 MBP, are planned for the second quarter of 2018. An invitation for a proposal of the IMF and a call for tender for the successor service contract, also under IPA 2017 MBP, are planned to be launched.

### 1.5 CUSTOMS AND TAXATION

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2015/031-609
<b>Project title:</b>	SEED Maintenance and Development
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 898,160.00
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Service Contract with Italian Customs and Monopolies Agency
<b>Contract reference:</b>	2016/374-941
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	22/07/2016 – 21/07/2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.eu-seed.net/">http://www.eu-seed.net/</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	<a href="mailto:Gabriel.blanc@ec.europa.eu">Gabriel.blanc@ec.europa.eu</a>

### PURPOSE

The main aims of this project are:

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

Maintenance and supervision of all SEED modules and constant monitoring of the system; advisory services and technical support to IT departments of all six Beneficiary administrations; monitoring and supervision, on a daily basis, of processes and applications at all six servers in the Region and the Middle server located in Rome at the Italian Customs and Monopolies Agency premises for the data exchange between Belgrade and Pristina; maintenance of the Interconnectivity between the New Computerised Transit System and SEED in Serbia and Macedonia; improvement of the interface for the notification alarm related to the pre-arrival data; creation of three new SEED functional modules related to VAT refund, Cash Flow and Carnet ATA; maintenance of the intellectual property rights software INES+, development of the public part of the INES application and technical support to the law office in Serbia for using the electronic IPR application; preparatory activities for the implementation of the SEED+. An important extra activity has been carried out: the development of new SEED software.

## OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

- The performance and integration among the customs administrations of the Beneficiaries countries was improved thanks to the maintenance and regional coordination of the 11 bilateral data exchange links and 7 SEED nodes. The improvement of alarm notifications system streamlined and enhanced customs procedures.
- The extension of the scope in the customs area was fulfilled. Three new modules of the SEED Web application have been created and are operational under the newest version of the SEED: the Cross-border Cash flow module for recording, controlling, exchanging data on cash flow; the VAT Module related to data exchange on VAT refunds in passenger traffic, the module related to the international customs document ATA Carnets, which allows an overview of all ATA Carnets throughout the Country, for a given period of time for each customs post. In addition, a preparatory activity was carried out to create a functionality that will provide the possibility of exchanging attached documents for the Beneficiary customs offices.
- Preparatory activities were finalized to the implementation of the SEED+, including the preparation of three different Scenario for SEED+, the elaboration of the most preferred "Scenario 3". SEED+ will support the interoperability between inspection agencies and other Authorities involved in trade in the Balkans as main technical IT tool for the implementation of the CEFTA Additional Protocol 5.
- Extra activity: development of a completely new SEED software, based on the latest technology. This is an important improvement of the SEED infrastructure and the related security features.
- Beneficiary Administrations were appropriately trained (IPR and ATA Carnets) thanks to the two trainings which were held in Podgorica and Belgrade.
- Regional cooperation strengthened with the Regional meeting in Sarajevo, the technical group meeting at Merdare, the meeting with the new Director of Macedonian Customs and the additional activities carried out in synergy with other IPA projects and CEFTA structures (regional statistics, presentation at "Single window" conference in Podgorica and at the CEFTA Committee and Subcommittee on Agriculture in Tirana).

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Maintenance of the SEED and INES+ infrastructures: a) Finalization of installation of new SEED Web application; complete transfer from old to new system; trainings for customs officers for using new SEED web application; b) Deployment of the “INES Public” software in Serbia, improvement of the infrastructure related to the IPR module.
- Extension of the scope in the Customs area: VAT refund module for operational use; Carnet ATA module in Montenegro for operational use; Cross-border cash flow module for piloting in data exchange (Serbia and Montenegro); finalisation of needs and requirements for future SEED data warehouse; development of the functionality for exchange of attached documents.
- SEED+ Preparatory activities: defining steps for the SEED+ Project, preparatory activities for piloting for AEO mutual recognition and for creation of Regional Databases, organization of the final Steering Committee.

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

<b>Programme reference:</b>	2016 / 037-900 Multi-country Action Programme for 2016
<b>Project title:</b>	Administration Agreement between the European Commission and the International Finance Corporation concerning the Western Balkans Regional Investment Policy and Promotion
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 2.5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Single Trust Fund with the World Bank
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN-2016/379-787
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	18/04/2017 – 18/04/2020
<b>Contact :</b>	Gabriela Negut, <a href="mailto:gabriela.negut@ec.europa.eu">gabriela.negut@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

During the current reporting period, the project fully launched into implementation with several analytical outputs completed and intensive engagement with the project's clients initiated through the South East Europe Investment Committee (SEEIC) and the national coordinators for the REA MAP process. In the reporting period, the project's timeline, workplan and deliverables have been adjusted so that they are now fully aligned with the objectives and priorities of the REA MAP. These adjustments have been made in close consultations with the donor (EC) and the clients, who have endorsed the project's workplan, timeline and expected deliverables.

Activities during the current reporting period have mainly been geared towards supporting the economies of the region and the RCC with the development of a Regional Investment Reform Agenda in line with the commitments and objectives specified in the REA MAP. In particular these activities included analytical work, capacity / peer-to-peer learning activities (e.g. covering the areas of international investment agreements (IIAs) and international investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS) ), and consultations with project clients and key partners such as the RCC in different fora. The project further collected baseline data for the different parts of the results chain.

## OUTPUTS (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

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

- The project completed an FDI mapping report analyzing data on FDI flows within and into the WB6 region and benchmarking the region's performance with relevant comparator regions. The findings from this analysis will inform the formulation of the regional investment reform agenda.
- The project completed a database of existing investors in the WB6. The database compiles relevant information about existing foreign direct investors in the region and provides the basis for a targeted investor survey to identify and prioritize regional investment barriers from the perspective of investors. The survey will be completed in the next reporting period.
- The project completed a summary overview of key existing investment policy barriers and potential reform proposals based on a review of existing research, analytical pieces, and investor perception studies. The summary provides a key input for the development of the Regional Investment Reform Agenda for the WB6 which will be completed in the next reporting period.
- The project identified country focal points for supporting the project's upcoming regional investment promotion activities through the SEEIC coordination mechanism. A focal point has been nominated for each of the WB6 economies.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Activities in the next reporting period will be geared towards providing analytical inputs and practical support to the economies of the region with the development and adoption of a Regional Investment Reform Agenda. This will entail:

- Implement private sector consultations with investors in the region to identify regional investment policy barriers and prioritize potential reform proposals. The findings from these consultations will form an important input for the formulation of the regional investment reform agenda required by the REA MAP.
- Provide analytical inputs and conduct in-depth consultations with the WB6 on technical as well as Ministerial level to help develop the outline of the Regional Investment Reform Agenda (structure, main topics and headings, initial substance and potential reform areas).
- Support the drafting of the Regional Investment Reform Agenda for the WB6 economies to be adopted by the leaders of the region at the upcoming summit in Sofia in May 2018.
- Develop an options report for the establishment of a modular operational platform for joint investment promotion in the WB6

## CHAPTER 2: RULE OF LAW AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

### 2.1 FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
<b>Project title:</b>	International Cooperation in Criminal Justice: the Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 5.0 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant Contract with GIZ GmbH, in partnership with Center for International Legal Cooperation (CILC) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2014/350-650
<b>Duration of activities :</b>	19/11/2014 – 30/11/2017
<b>Contact :</b>	Henk Visser, <a href="mailto:henk.visser@ec.europa.eu">henk.visser@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

To strengthen the operational capacity and capabilities of the Public/State Prosecutors' Offices in the beneficiaries, to prosecute and investigate serious and trans-border organised crime, including linked cases of illicit trafficking destined to the EU, in particular trafficking in firearms, drugs and human beings. To intensify the strategic and operational cooperation between the members of the Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans and the relevant European institutions in particular EUROJUST and EJNI.

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY - NOVEMBER 2017)

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

Furthermore, the training on various issues related to fighting organized crime and cross-border cooperation continued at a national level. Examples of such trainings are a workshop on "Organized Crime and High Corruption investigations: Interagency cooperation" in Montenegro, Workshops on MLA in Kosovo and Serbia. In Serbia the project supported a 5 day working session in Novi Sad for the MoJ working group which is drafting the new Law on

Personal Data Protection\* and engaged a CoE-expert in the field of Data Protection from UK. Also in Novi Sad the Regional EJN meeting was organized with participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Slovenia and Serbia. Furthermore two internships of Prosecutors from BiH to Croatia were facilitated and several language courses in different countries came successfully to an end. The officially appointed EJN Contact Points also attended the EJN Plenary in Tallinn in November 2017. In September internships for two prosecutors were organized in BiH in Croatia in September 2017.

Finally on 14 and 15 November 2017, the closing conference of the IPA2014 project 'International Cooperation in Criminal Justice: Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans' took place in Berlin. Representatives from the beneficiaries' public prosecution offices, ministries of justice, EUROJUST, the European Judicial Network in Criminal Matters, the European Commission, GIZ, the German Ministry for Development Cooperation (BMZ), the project teams and some other representatives such as the German and Netherlands prosecution offices and the Ministry of Justice and Security discussed the project outputs, assessed their impact on the political and legal context and deliberated on remaining challenges.

The beneficiary representatives have appreciated a lot the project's support in general as well as the permanent advice by the various country teams. In particular, they thanked the project for the numerous capacity building measures and the operational support provided to more than 365 international criminal investigations. The support to assisting the Western Balkans region in fighting organized crime by GIZ and CILC continues under the Western Balkans Counter Serious Crime Initiative as of 1 January 2018.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY - NOVEMBER 2017)

- Prosecutors, police and associates were trained on various topics related to fighting organized crime and cross-border cooperation in Kosovo, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia;
- Many regional and sub-regional cross-border organized crime cases further supported.
- EJN Contact Points participated at the EJN plenary meeting in Tallinn in November;
- 2 Internships organized for 2 prosecutors of BiH

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Final narrative and financial report submitted to European Commission.
- Follow-up project to start in 2018

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\* From the entire MoU working group 6 representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, the Security-Information Agency and a law professor from Law Faculty, University UNION took part;



<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
<b>Project title:</b>	Fight against organised crime: international cooperation in criminal justice in the Western Balkans
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 5.0 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Delegation Agreement with the Italian Ministry of the Interior, Public Security Department
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2014/341-116
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	12/07/2014 – 30/11/2017
<b>Contact :</b>	Henk Visser, <a href="mailto:henk.visser@ec.europa.eu">henk.visser@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

- Assessment of the IT of BiH HJPC for the implementation of Sidda-Sidna System;
- Supply of Sidda-Sidna modules to BiH for a value of 40,000 euros;
- Supply of technics to BiH and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Mols;
- Workshops on Fugitives Units in all the Beneficiaries;
- Closing activities of Croatian Science/Police Experts in the Beneficiaries;
- Closing activities of French Prosecutors' Experts in the Beneficiaries;
- Workshop "International Cooperation on Organized Crime and Money Laundering" in Banja Luka;
- Workshop in Prevalle (Kosovo ) on JITs;
- French Prosecutor deployed to Sarajevo to assist the prosecutors office of BiH in the management of the cases;
- Workshop on anti trafficking of narcotics in Rome;
- Counter terrorism operational cooperation meeting Italy-Albania-Kosovo in Tirana – (Skanderbeg group);
- Workshop on the exchange of best practices related to the establishment of the Police Trilateral Cooperation Center of Plav, Podgorica and Plav (Montenegro);
- Regional Workshop on Organised crime in Podgorica;

- Workshop “Organised crime and high corruption investigations – Interagency cooperation” in Budva (Montenegro)
- Workshop on fugitive units in Rome;
- Workshop on financial investigations in all the Beneficiaries;
- Training course on “TRAFFIC IN HUMAN BEINGS – MIGRANTS SMUGGLING”, in Caserta;
- Ministerial Closing Conference in Trieste.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

- Dozens of investigative meetings between Beneficiaries LEAs and between Beneficiaries and MS LEAs.
- 33 persons arrested; more than 15 kg of cocaine, vehicles and luxury vehicles, 110,000.00 seized as well as goods for a value higher than 500,000.00.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Final narrative and financial report submitted to European Commission.
- Follow-up project to start in 2018

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2015/031-609.07
<b>Project title:</b>	Cooperation in Criminal Justice: Strengthening Witness Protection in the Fight against Organised Crime, Terrorism and Corruption (WINPRO III)
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 5,00 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Delegation agreement with Northern Ireland Co-operation Overseas (NI-CO)
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/370-989
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	24/12/2015 – 23/12/2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.nico.org.uk">http://www.nico.org.uk</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Henk Visser, <a href="mailto:henk.visser@ec.europa.eu">henk.visser@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2017)

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

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Project Steering Committee Meeting took place on 26<sup>th</sup> September 17 in Podgorica, followed by a Regional meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 17. It was attended by many senior officials from Police, Prosecution services, Courts and Prisons from the BCs across the region.
- Balkan Network Meeting took place in Serbia (October 2017).
- Support provided to the beneficiary delegates attending Advanced Witness Protection Training organised jointly by Europol and CEPOL in Poland (August 2017).
- A Work shadowing programme with the ICC Victims and Witness Support in The Hague completed in August 17.
- The WINPRO III team continued working on a WINPRO III Strategy Document addressing long and short term WP issues in each BC as well as any WINPRO III legacy and sustainability aspects to be considered by all parties involved in the project. Relevant Action Plans have also been drafted.
- Relevant training courses for various stakeholders were organised to enhance their knowledge and best practice related to implementation of the Witness Protection programmes across the region, including stakeholders' awareness courses, witness assessment, witness management and risk and threat assessment for prosecutors etc.

## OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2017)

- Professional operational capacity of the Witness Protection Units strengthened across the region.
- International relations within the region and between BCs Witness Protection Units and EU Member States strengthened, including better co-operation with Europol and ICC.
- Improved understanding of Witness Protection programmes amongst the stakeholders across the region, in particular by prosecutors through relevant training courses, seminars and direct project interventions.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Work will continue on the implementation of the WINPRO III Sustainability Strategy in the Western Balkans.
- Procurement procedures for equipment for Witness Protection Units will be completed. This equipment will supplement systems and items purchased under WINPRO II.

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Project iPROCEEDS - Cooperation on Cybercrime under the Instrument of Pre-accession (IPA): Project on targeting crime proceeds on the Internet in South-eastern Europe and Turkey
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey

<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant agreement for a pillar assessed organisation with the Council of Europe
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/367-971
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/01/2016 – 30/06/2019
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://ww.coe.int/cybercrime">ww.coe.int/cybercrime</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Henk Visser, <a href="mailto:henk.visser@ec.europa.eu">henk.visser@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

The Action aims to assure that the Enlargement countries will comply with relevant standards regarding cybercrime and crime proceeds including the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime (CETS 185)\* and the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (CETS 198)<sup>†</sup> of the Council of Europe (CoE). Both treaties and the related assessment or monitoring mechanisms are most relevant for countries covered by this Action. In fact, the beneficiaries are expected to comply with the *EU acquis* and relevant Council of Europe conventions and standards.

## ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

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

- Update of the basic course material on cybercrime, electronic and online crime proceeds following the regional training of trainers on delivery of the basic training module on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds for judges and prosecutors with the aim to be further delivered at the national level (July-August 2017).
- Translation of the training modules on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds (September 2017).
- Preparatory meeting to agree on the aspects/elements, including technical solutions of the Cyber Exercise Scenario that need to be revised/updated/developed with the aim to be further replicated at the national level (9-11 August 2017, Bucharest, Romania)
- Development of a Questionnaire on obtaining and using electronic evidence in criminal proceedings under the respective domestic legislation of the beneficiary countries (September 2017).
- Support the in participation in the Underground Economy Conference 2017 organised by Team Cymru (5-8 September 2017, Barcelona, Spain)

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\* Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia , the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey are Parties. The Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) assesses implementation of this treaty ([www.coe.int/tcy](http://www.coe.int/tcy)).

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

- Workshop on online financial fraud and credit card fraud (18-19 September 2017, Podgorica, Montenegro).
- Three case simulation exercises on cybercrime and financial investigations (25-28 September 2017, Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 13-16 November 2017, Prostina, Kosovo and 4-7 December 2017, Belgrade, Serbia).
- Meeting of the 24/7 Network of Contact Points of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime at Europol (26-27 September 2017, The Hague, The Netherlands)
- Participation in the 5th INTERPOL/Europol Cybercrime Conference (27-29 September 2017, The Hague, The Netherlands).
- Regional workshop on indicators and guidelines for financial sector entities to prevent money laundering in the online environment in cooperation with FIU Slovenia (4-5 October 2017, Ljubljana, Slovenia).
- Regional conference on cybercrime and money laundering in cooperation with the Global Prosecutor's E-Crime Network (GPEN) and General Prosecutor's Office of Azerbaijan (9-11 October 2017, Baku, Azerbaijan).
- Study visit Study visit on CSIRT/CERT Regulations and Operational Environment hosted by CERT-RO (12-13 October 2017, Bucharest, Romania).
- Pilot introductory training course on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds for judges and prosecutors in cooperation with the Albanian School of Magistrates (1st part on 23-24 October and 2<sup>nd</sup> part on 6-7 November 2017, Tirana, Albania).
- Pilot introductory training course on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds for judges and prosecutors in cooperation with the Centre for Training of Judiciary and State Prosecution Service of Montenegro (23-26 October 2017, Podgorica, Montenegro).
- Advice and workshop on the preparation of interagency cooperation protocols (26 October 2017, Podgorica, Montenegro) and workshop on domestic protocols for international sharing of intelligence and evidence (27 October 2017, Podgorica, Montenegro).
- IVth South-eastern Europe Regional Forum on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior of Bulgaria and the International Cyber Investigation Training Academy (30 - 31 October 2017, Sofia, Bulgaria).
- Regional workshop on obtaining and using electronic evidence in criminal proceedings (2-3 November 2017, Bucharest, Romania).
- Pilot training introductory training courses on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds for judges and prosecutors in cooperation with the Centers for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska (6-9 November 2017, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- Participation in the plenary of the Conference of the Parties to CETS 198 (C-PROC) (22 November 2017 Strasbourg, France).

- Participation in the 18th Plenary of the Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) and 1st Protocol Drafting Plenary (27-29 November 2017, Strasbourg, France).
- Pilot introductory training course on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds for judges and prosecutors in cooperation with the Judicial Academy (4-7 December 2017, Belgrade, Serbia)
- Pilot introductory training course on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds for judges and prosecutors in cooperation with Justice Academy of Turkey (18-20 December 2017, Ankara, Turkey).
- Support of 12 law enforcement officers in participation in the Winter Examination in the long-distance Master programme in Cybercrime and Digital Forensics, offered by the University College Dublin. The programme runs for 24 months and covers modules like Computer Forensics, Financial Investigation Techniques – Following the Money, Network Investigations, Mobile Devices Investigation, Live Data Forensics, VoIP and Wireless Investigations and others (11 -15 December 2017, Dublin, Ireland).
- Regional workshop for sharing good practices on reporting mechanisms existent in IPA region combined with the 4th meeting of the Project Steering Committee (20-21 December 2017, Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
- Update of the online platform/tools in the Octopus Community, namely Country Wiki Profiles, Legal Profiles, Online Tool on Public/Private Cooperation and Online Tool on International Cooperation (July-December 2017).

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Increased knowledge and understanding of investigators, prosecutors and FIUs on the latest cybercrime trends and threats, tools and investigative techniques to fight cybercrime as well as improved detection and mitigation techniques.
- Improved interagency cooperation between investigators, digital forensic experts, prosecutors and FIUs through simulation exercises that required exchange of information, close coordination and cooperation in investigation of cybercrime and criminal proceeds, application of digital forensics skills, detection and handling suspicious financial transactions and money laundering, and recovering data through international cooperation channels.
- Sustainable Judicial Training programmes on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds through integration of the new modules in the curricula of training institutions and piloting the trainings in project countries/areas.
- Preparation of structured and documented procedures (domestic protocols) for interagency and international sharing of information and evidence that are auditable, simple and applied by cybercrime unit, financial investigation unit, FIU and Prosecution service in the search, seizure and confiscation of online crime proceeds.
- Assessment of guidelines to prevent and detect/identify online crime proceeds in all project countries/areas with corresponding recommendations for the update of indicators.

- Better understanding of the operational environment of a CERT and guidance in further development of national CERTs' regulatory framework and operational environment with regard to functioning of a CSIRT/CERT, regulatory framework, interagency cooperation, exchange of information with the law enforcement and international cooperation in preventing, detecting and handling incidents.
- Assistance in building partnerships with counterparts in the region, other countries and international organisations (Europol, INTERPOL, etc.).
- Updated Country Wiki Profiles and Legal Profiles of each project country/area are available online in the Octopus Community.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuous update of country wikis for South Eastern Europe in the Octopus Community regarding legislation and jurisprudence.
- Update of the online resource in support of law enforcement / Internet service provider cooperation.
- Update of the online platform for international cooperation.
- Meetings of the working groups to elaborate/improve guidelines and indicators for financial sector entities to prevent money laundering in the online environment in each project country/area.
- Seven trainings on the application of the guidelines for financial sector entities to prevent money laundering in the online environment in all project countries/areas.
- Three case simulation exercise on cybercrime and financial investigations (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Turkey).
- Pilot introductory training courses on cybercrime, electronic evidence and online crime proceeds for judges and prosecutors in all project countries/areas.
- Four meetings to support existing public/private initiatives or establish such mechanisms at domestic level (Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Turkey).
- Workshop on international cooperation in cooperation with EUROJUST for prosecutors and MOJs (The Netherlands).
- Three meetings of the regional working group on developing guidelines for obtaining and using electronic evidence in criminal proceedings.
- Workshop on online fraud and credit card fraud (Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- Participation in the UN intergovernmental expert group meeting on cybercrime (Austria).
- Delivery of three ECTEG courses on Introductory Open Source IT Forensics & Network Investigations, Malware Investigations and Live Data Forensics.
- Regional meeting on International cooperation on cybercrime and electronic evidence in cooperation with the EAP 2018 project (Ukraine).
- Regional Forum on cybercrime legislation in South-eastern Europe in cooperation with the Judicial Academy of Croatia (Croatia).
- Support in participation in long-distance master programme at UCD (Summer and Winter examinations, Ireland).
- Participation in EuroDIG 2018 – focus on criminal justice action in cyberspace (Georgia).
- Participation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> T-CY plenaries (France).
- Meeting of 24/7 Point of Contacts (France).

- Octopus Cybercrime Conference (France).
- Preparatory meeting to develop a Cyber Exercise Scenario (C-PROC, consultants).
- Underground Economy Conference 2018 co-organised with Team Cymru (combined with the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Project Steering Committee) (France).
- Participation in INTERPOL-Europol Cybercrime Conference (INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI), Singapore).
- Two workshops for cybercrime units, economic crime units, financial investigators, FIUs and specialised prosecutors on specific issues (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey).
- Regional training in the management and use of the reporting mechanisms (Romania)
- International Conference on Cybercrime Strategies in cooperation with EAP 2018, GLACY+, Cyber South (Romania).
- Regional case simulation exercise on cybercrime and financial investigations (Romania).
- Training on financial frauds and virtual currencies in cooperation with the International Training Centre, International College of Financial Investigations (Hungary).

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

## PURPOSE

The project will contribute to the strengthening of the rule of law through the fight against organised crime in the beneficiary countries and territories by enhancing the understanding of the nature and evolution of organised crime. Specifically, the project will develop and implement a statistical framework for quantifying and analysing organised crime in the Western Balkans and to establish mechanisms to monitor it and produce an evidence-based analytical report.

## ACTIVITIES (JUNE – DECEMBER 2017)

In this reporting period, the development of the statistical framework was progressed through the assessment of availability of data in each of the six beneficiary countries and territories under the project. In order to begin the assessment, a checklist and a



comprehensive list of organized crime related indicators were prepared by the project team. Semi- structured interviews with up to nine or more agencies that collect criminal justice data in each of the countries and territories under the project were conducted using the checklist and indicators as guides.

Assessments were undertaken specifically to evaluate 1) which data are already available and can be collected; 2) which indicators could be addressed through proxy data; 3) which data could be made available given some technical assistance and/or extra time and effort; 4) which indicators are better suited to a qualitative data collection to be undertaken later in the project cycle; and finally 5) which data are simply not available.

## OUTPUTS (JUNE – DECEMBER 2017)

In preparation for the assessments, the project team elaborated a checklist and indicators tables to provide a framework for the interviews. The framework was organized by institution and included questions on databases or registries under use; data flow including territorial coverage, collection, entry, analysis and reporting; as well as content, including what exact data are collected, how often and how far back the data extends. The indicators tables included data points on organized crime groups, organized crime activities, enablers, economic value and State response.

During the assessments, all agencies were asked to outline any specific training needs that could benefit their ability to collect, analyse and report better quality criminal justice data. These will be further examined to see which could be provided within the specific scope of the project.

In addition, in all project beneficiaries, National Technical Group meetings were convened before and after the assessments to brief all stakeholders on the purposes and the results, respectively, and to secure buy-in on the national level.

With respect to the results of this assessment, a situation report for each beneficiary was produced following the data collection and evaluation activities to provide a baseline/snapshot of the data availability and quality that will inform the statistical framework. In addition, a visual designation of the availability status of the indicators were collected in Excel tables for each country or territory and were color coded according to their availability.

The Excel tables from all countries and territories under the project were compared and collated to form a regional master list of indicators, or the framework. This framework will serve as a basis for the ongoing design of the data repository and the first data collection in mid-2018.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

An Advisory Committee meeting will take place in March 2018 to discuss the results of the assessments, the first data collection under the project starting in April 2018, potential ideals for technical assistance provision, and to present a preview of the database.

Ongoing database design and development will intensify in the next half of the year as the framework is translated from the findings of the assessments to the structures of the data repository.

First data collection to start in April 2018. The database will have a secure password protected log in for each Focal Point of the project, who sit in the National Statistical Offices of each of the countries and territories under the project. Each Focal Point will coordinate the national data collection process based on the results of the recently undertaken data availability assessments and the proceed to validate and submit the data to UNODC for analysis. UNODC will begin to analyse the data to refine the subsequent data collections under the project and conceptualize the final report.

Technical assistance regional workshop will be organized in June 2018 (TBC) to increase the capacity of the countries and territories under the project to collect and share better quality statistics on organized crime.

Methodology for surveys and case law analysis developed and team formed to undertake the work. The production of new data relevant to the measurement of organised crime is necessary; such data will be used to provide additional information to interpret data from administrative sources and to fill knowledge gaps on the modus operandi of organised criminal groups. These data will be produced through targeted surveys/studies on selected crime victims (such as victims of human trafficking or smuggled migrants) or other relevant knowledgeable parties (such as law enforcement officials, former members of organised crime groups, youth gangs or drug users, and people incarcerated for organised criminal activities). The specific groups and numbers of people to be targeted with surveys will be determined by the PMT, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, and the National Technical Groups.

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2017/039-402
<b>Project title:</b>	Governance Risks Assessment Project in Western Balkans: Diagnosis and Measuring Captured Societies Phenomena - GRASP
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 299,999
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant Contract with Partnership for Social Development (PSD), Zagreb (Croatia)
<b>Contract reference :</b>	CN 2017/390087
<b>Duration of activities :</b>	08/12/2017 – 08/12/2018
<b>Contact:</b>	Henk Visser, <a href="mailto:henk.visser@ec.europa.eu">henk.visser@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2017)

The grant contract was signed in the beginning of December (8<sup>th</sup> of December, 2017). The first activity, *“Establishing the final list of indicators and preparing the data collection process and a 3-day Steering group meeting”* was executed timely in the first month of implementation, as envisaged in grant contract. Namely, a 3-day Steering group meeting was held in Bucharest from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of December. Members of the Steering group present at the three day meeting were: Laura Stefan, Sorin Ionita, Munir Podumljak and Ana Hećimović. Ruslan Stefanov has participated the meeting via Skype. During this meeting, the Steering group has finalized the indicators for the governance risks assessment. In addition, Steering group members have agreed on how they will conduct the review of country reports and who will be responsible for drafting the regional report.

Preparations for execution of the second activity, *“Country Correspondents and Experts Preparatory Meeting”* were conducted during December. A 4-day Country Correspondents and Experts preparatory meeting was held in Sarajevo from 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> of January, 2018.

## OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2017)

List of indicators and methodology for the governance risk assessment in six WB countries finalized.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- 4-day Country Correspondents and Experts preparatory meeting.
- Data Collection related activities
- Adjustment of IT Tool

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2017/037900
<b>Project title:</b>	ICTY Outreach Programme 2017 – International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 0.5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant Contract with ICTY
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2017/386-608
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	20/06/2017 – 31/12/2017
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.icty.org/en/outreach/home">http://www.icty.org/en/outreach/home</a>
<b>Contact:</b>	Henk Visser, <a href="mailto:henk.visser@ec.europa.eu">henk.visser@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

Organised four ICTY Legacy Lectures in cooperation with the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies of Leiden Law School. Each lecture was dedicated to a particular section of the Tribunal, with the aim to present the unique experiences of ICTY staff and those working in Defence, all of whom have played a crucial role in the Tribunal's work. The lectures took place in October and November;

Organised final ICTY Symposium entitled *Looking Back to Move Forward: Final Reflections on the ICTY*. This was one of the key events in the ICTY Legacy Dialogues series, and on the eve of its closure the Tribunal held a final symposium on Monday, 18 December 2017 in The Hague at Leiden University's The Hague Campus. This occasion provided participants and attendees with an invaluable opportunity to discuss and address the contributions that the ICTY made during its 24 years of existence in three key areas: contribution to international criminal courts and tribunals; contribution to the region of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and contribution to international criminal law;

Organised the official ICTY Closing Ceremony, which took place at the prestigious Hall of Knights (Ridderzaal) of the Dutch Parliament in The Hague. His Majesty, King Willem-Alexander of The Netherlands, and United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres honoured the ICTY with their presence, joining the three principals of the ICTY, former judges and principals, and numerous other distinguished guests. This historic occasion gathered together the Tribunal's significant supporters and contributors from throughout its 24-plus years, and the high-level guests created a memorable atmosphere in the beautiful Hall. Other attendees included representatives of states, international courts and tribunals; international and regional organisations, as well as victim representatives, members of civil society and academia, and a number of ICTY staff. The ICTY Closing Ceremony was the last in a series of legacy and closing events entitled *ICTY Legacy Dialogues*, which were held over 2016 and 2017;

The final cycle of the *Youth Outreach* project implemented. The project included delivery of university lectures and training of local actors in the countries of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to deliver presentations about the work of the ICTY;

Documentary *Srebrenica Genocide: No Room for Denial* completed;

Completed short video feature *End of Impunity*. The video depicts the ICTY's groundbreaking achievements over the past 24 years. Completed short video feature *Voices of Victims*, which was screened during the ICTY's Closing Ceremony;

Provided broadcast of Outreach documentaries on regional TV networks and on UNTV;

Facilitated the establishment and opening of locally owned Information Centre (IC) in Sarajevo. Continued negotiations on the establishment of the IC in Srebrenica/Potočari, BiH. The MoU discussions with the Croatian Ministry of Justice for an IC to be established in Zagreb, Croatia continued. Focal point appointed within the Serbian Ministry of Justice in December for an information centre to be established in Belgrade, Serbia;

Organised visits to the ICTY for students and professionals from around the world, including the countries of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

More than 400 academics, students, and practitioners were provided with an opportunity to hear a “behind the scenes” perspective from ICTY Registry, Prosecution, Chambers and Defence staff members and to learn about their individual experiences throughout their tenures;

More than 200 academics, international experts, judges and legal practitioners (from the ICTY and other legal institutions), members of the diplomatic community, and stakeholders from the region of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were provided with an opportunity for rigorous and analytical discussion about what will constitute the core of the Tribunal’s legacy;

Approximately 300 high-level guests, including representatives of states, international courts and tribunals; international and regional organisations, as well as victim representatives, members of civil society and academia and a number of ICTY staff participated in the event;

Held 10 lectures at universities in BiH, Croatia, Montenegro, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, which were attended by more than 300 students. During the implementation of the final cycle of the Youth Outreach project, the project directly benefited more than 10,000 young people from the region;

Held a ‘train-the trainer’ workshop in Čakovec, Croatia, for 12 high school history teachers;

Establishment and opening locally owned IC in Sarajevo was successfully facilitated with the City of Sarajevo through a series of coordination meetings and public events, including the organisation of a donor coordination meeting held in Sarajevo in October;

Tens of thousands of citizens viewed the ICTY Outreach documentaries broadcast by local and regional TV networks in BiH, Serbia and Croatia;

Around 3,000 individuals visited the ICTY and received briefings on the work of the Tribunal and attended trials.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Following the closure of the ICTY on 31 December 2017, the Outreach Programme’s activities were terminated.

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Joint EU - ICTY Training project for national prosecutors and young professionals from former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 0.5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant Contract with ICTY
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/357561

<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/04/2015 – 31/12/2017
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.icty.org/">http://www.icty.org/</a>
<b>Contact:</b>	Henk Visser, <a href="mailto:henk.visser@ec.europa.eu">henk.visser@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

The objective is to strengthen the capacity of judicial authorities in the countries of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to effectively investigate and prosecute war crimes. National prosecutors for domestic war crimes cases and young professionals with a legal or other relevant background participate in the Action.

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

MICT OTP narrative proposal and the budget for the 2018 Action submitted to the European Commission.

New agreement regarding the 2018 Action signed by the EC and MICT.

Preparation of the final narrative and financial report for the 2017 Action.

### Visiting National Prosecutors

- Visiting National Prosecutors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia continued their activities. .
- The OTP supported the Visiting National Prosecutors during searches for investigative material which will be used in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes in their respective countries.

### Visiting Young Professionals component

- Group of 4 young legal professionals continued their internship and ended it at the end of December 2017. .
- The feedback on their work from the respective teams and supervisors is positive.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

### Visiting National Prosecutors component

- 168 Requests for Assistance received.

### Visiting Young Professionals component

- Visiting Young Professionals trained in the use of OTP databases and other available judicial tools.
- Visiting Young Professionals actively participated in the preparation of the trials and appeals.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- The final narrative and financial report for the 2017 Action will be submitted to the EC.

- New group of Visiting Young Professionals will start in February/March 2018.
- Current Visiting National Prosecutors will continue their activities and all three will end their term in the MICT OTP by the end of June 2018.

## 2.2 TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Civil Society Facility and Media, IPA 2014 /031-605
<b>Project title:</b>	Strengthening and supporting the RECOM Process, Phase II
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 0.700 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant contract with Humanitarian Law Centre, Belgrade (HLCB),
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/364-189 (continuation of CN 2012/292-650)
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	20/08/2015 – 19/02/2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.hlc-rdc.org">http://www.hlc-rdc.org</a> ; <a href="http://www.recom.link/">http://www.recom.link/</a>
<b>Contact:</b>	Karl Giacinti, <a href="mailto:Karl.GIACINTI@ec.europa.eu">Karl.GIACINTI@ec.europa.eu</a>

### PURPOSE

Establishment of the Regional Commission for the facts about war crimes and other serious human rights violations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (RECOM). The initiative was launched by the Coalition for RECOM which brings together about 2,050 civil society organizations from post-Yugoslav countries. The Coalition has won support from 580,000 citizens, drawn up a draft RECOM Statute and received strong political backing for the establishment of RECOM. The region's Presidents have affirmed their support for the establishment of a regional commission by appointing personal envoys to RECOM, who, in October of 2014, after a year's worth of collaboration and consultations with their respective Presidents and Presidency members, submitted the "Amendments to the RECOM Statute" to the Coalition for adoption. On November 14th, 2015, the Coalition Assembly voted to adopt the Amendments to the RECOM Statute without any objections, which marked the start of the transfer of the initiative to an inter-state level, where the decision to establish RECOM is to be made.

### ACTIVITIES

After regional street campaign organised in May 2017, when more than 50.000 citizens from the post-Yugoslav countries gave support for establishing RECOM within the Berlin Process, the organizers of Civil Society Forum within the Berlin Process called the representatives from the Coalition for RECOM to participate, which resulted with the stressing the

importance of RECOM Initiative in the Declaration of the Italian Chair after the Western Balkans Summit held in Trieste in July.

In November 2017, Coalition for RECOM published the Policy brief “Reconciliation through the Berlin Process: the Role of RECOM” with a recommendation that in order to advance the process of regional reconciliation, which is a necessary precondition for cooperation and security in the Western Balkans, as well as for its accession the European Union, the successors of the former SFR Yugoslavia should conclude the Agreement on the Establishment of RECOM at the forthcoming session of the Western Balkans Summit Series (“the Berlin Process”) in 2018; and after that, without delay, they should take concrete steps for the establishment of RECOM, in accordance with the Draft Statute of RECOM.

Also in November, The Coalition for RECOM organized debates across the region to discuss the state of reconciliation in the region and whether the EU has an appropriate strategy to support transitional justice in post-Yugoslav countries.

On December 20, 2017 the Presidents of Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo, and the Bosnian Member of the Presidency of BiH have appointed Personal Envoys, who will, together with the Coalition for RECOM, prepare a draft Agreement on the Establishment of RECOM, signed by the Prime Ministers at the Berlin Process summit in London in July 2018, after which the presidents and the BiH Presidency will initiate procedures for the candidacy and election of RECOM members, in accordance with the Draft Statute of RECOM.

## OUTPUTS

**Outcome 1.1:** Ensure political support of key stakeholders in the region

The Coalition for RECOM held meetings with the Presidents of Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo, and the Bosnian Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina which resulted with the appointment of Personal Envoys who will prepare a draft Agreement on the Establishment of RECOM at the Berlin Process Summit in London in July 2018.

**Outcome 1.2:** Enhance support for RECOM through public outreach including debates, press conferences and non-formal education

The Coalition for RECOM organized six debates across the region – in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Skopje, Podgorica, Zagreb and Pristina to discuss the Berlin Process and the Reconciliation in the region.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Before February 19, 2018, the Coalition will organize the VIII Assembly of the Coalition for RECOM and the XI Forum for Transitional Justice in post-Yugoslav countries.
- By March 20, 2018, the Coalition will publish Policy Brief: “How can the EU help reconciliation among post-Yugoslav countries”.
- The Coalition for RECOM is preparing a draft Agreement on the Establishment of RECOM, which will be discussed at the meeting of envoys of the President / Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by the end of April. According to the agreement of the Coalition for



RECOM and the leaders of the Western Balkans (WB), the Draft Agreement on the Establishment of RECOM will be signed by the Prime Ministers at the Berlin Process summit in London in July 2018, after which the Presidents and the BiH Presidency will initiate procedures for the candidacy and election of RECOM members, in accordance with the Draft Statute of RECOM.

- By the end of April 2018, the Coalition will organize a round table with representatives of the EC and meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany and Great Britain on support for reconciliation in the territory of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia through the Berlin Process.
- By the end of June 2018, the Coalition will organize two debates to evaluate the prospects of regional reconciliation and the role of the regional civil society network.
- By the end of June 2018, the Coalition will establish the identity and circumstances of the death of at least 600 war victims and write a narrative of 1,500 victims and 50 places of detention in BiH.

### 2.3 ROMA INTEGRATION

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-country Action Programme IPA 2016/037-900
<b>Project title:</b>	ROMACTED – Promoting good governance and Roma Empowerment at local level
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 3 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant Agreement with the Council of Europe
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2017/384-651
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/05/2017 – 30/04/2020
<b>Contact :</b>	Kristina Vujic, <a href="mailto:kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu">kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

The project starting date was 1 May 2017 and concluded the inception period until 31 October 2017.

The Key Activities under between July and December were the following:

- Inception visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: 10-11 July 2017
- Inception visit to Turkey: 19-21 July 2017
- Inception visit to Serbia: 20-23 September 2017
- Inception Visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina: 25-27 September 2017
- Induction Training for ROMACTED Project officers, Strasbourg: 13-17 November 2017
- Training of ROMACTED National Teams, Budapest: 17-20 December 2017
- Preparation of the baseline surveys and selection of Municipalities
- Initial Visits to mayors and municipality officials and communication with the target municipalities.
- Calls and recruitment of Project Officers, Focal Points, Support Organisation, and Facilitators in the beneficiaries
- Conclusion and submission of the inception report.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

Main output of this period is the improved knowledge and understanding of the various stakeholders about the approach and objectives of the ROMACTED programme in each beneficiary and establishing the synergies, strategy and teams to initiate the intervention.

- ROMACTED finalised the inception phase in November and the implementation of the programme in each of the beneficiaries has started.
- the team of ROMACTED based in Strasbourg and in the beneficiaries was set up
- A national support organisation and a Focal point in each beneficiary/countries have been selected resulting from a call for grants were identified. This grantees/organisations will be assisting the implementation of the all the 7 beneficiaries.
- The inception visits to the various beneficiary countries were successfully carried out in the months of June, July and September.
- The completion of the baseline surveys per municipality was done and the selection of Municipalities was submitted with inception report.
- The selection of facilitators was also completed in December as result of a public call for Tenders.
- The first field visits to the municipalities have been initiated in the month of December.
- The Project officers are trained, the induction training was held in November in Strasbourg. The national teams were set up (Focal Points, Support Organisations and Facilitators) and trained.

The synergies with the main stakeholders and partners at local, central and regional level were established as well as the complementarity with various existing programmes in the field of Roma Inclusion.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Visits to the participating Municipalities, local interventions, local trainings and process of community mobilization and organising (setting up of the Community Action Groups)
- Signature of the Memoranda of Understanding with the participating municipalities and the relevant Ministries responsible for the implementation of the Roma inclusion strategies.
- Establishment of Municipality Task Forces
- National Workshops and launching events in each of the beneficiaries (Feb to May/June 2018)
- Meeting of ROMACTED Steering Board (January 2018)
- Meeting of the ROMACTED Steering Committee (June 2018 tbc);
- Celebration of the International Roma day in the Municipalities (April)
- Meetings of National support teams;

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-country Action Programme, IPA 2014/ 031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Roma Integration 2020
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 0,8 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant Agreement with RCC
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2014/369-226
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/01/2016 – 31/12/2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/home">www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/home</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Kristina Vujic, <a href="mailto:kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu">kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

The Roma Integration 2020 (RI2020) project contributes to reducing the socio-economic gap between the Roma and non-Roma population in the Western Balkans and Turkey and to strengthening the institutional obligations of governments to incorporate and deliver specific Roma integration goals in mainstream policy developments. In line with this, the RI2020 aims to assist national governments to integrate Roma specific policy measures into: (1) mainstream socio-economic policies and public service delivery; (2) national budget planning and service delivery processes.

## ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

The RI2020 organized three public dialogue forums in Ankara, Sarajevo and Pristina during July-October 2017. These forums provided for presentations of the 2016 monitoring reports of the governments, budget proposals and prioritization of measures for 2018, and consultations on relevant mainstream socio-economic policies to be used for advancing

Roma integration. The forums also reviewed implementation of obligations stipulated in operational conclusions adopted at previous Roma Seminars.

The RI2020 Action Team organized two national workshops on public budgeting for Roma integration policies in Serbia and in Montenegro. Around 20 public servants from relevant ministries implementing the Roma integration Strategy participated in these workshops, which assisted them to increase their capacities to integrate measures relevant for Roma integration into the domestic budget planning.

The RI2020 Action Team organized the 2nd Task Force meeting in September 2017. The meeting brought together NRCs and representatives of the RCC, EC, OSF and civil society. During the meeting it was decided to further focus on improving budgeting standards and practices in the region. The monitoring and reporting template was adopted as final without changes, reporting deadlines were agreed, and the participating economies agreed to officially adopt/recognize the template as part of their strategies/action plans. It was further agreed that the RI2020 will form a working group which will develop regional budgeting standards for Roma responsible budgeting in 2018.

The Regional Conference on Filling in the Budget Gaps in Roma Integration Policies was organized in Tirana and attended by over 80 representatives from the Western Balkans and Turkey, donors, international financial institutions and Roma civil society. The main objective of the conference was to create a platform for participating economies and donors to discuss needs and priorities for Roma integration, in particular in the areas of employment and housing, and identify and match adequate funding opportunities either on bilateral or regional basis for measures, and programs that cannot be fully funded from national budgets.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

Three policy recommendation papers based on the discussions of the Public Dialogue Forums in Ankara, Sarajevo and Pristina on the implementation of the Roma Strategies, the Roma Seminar operational conclusions as well as the measures to be priorities and budgeted for in 2018;

Trained 40 participants from Serbia and Montenegro on public budgeting methods (national regulatory framework, methodology, implementation and monitoring process);

Produced the “Analysis of the Priorities and Budget of the Official Roma Integration Policies in the Areas of Employment and Housing in the Western Balkans and Turkey” document, which identifies the funding gaps in the areas of employment and housing;

Adopted the final version of the monitoring and reporting template at the 2nd Task Force meeting;

Continuously updated the Roma Integration 2020 website.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Organize two regional conferences on the topic of Addressing Discrimination and Anti-Gypsyism in the enlargement region and on the topic of Strengthening regional housing initiatives for Roma;

Organize Public Dialogue Forums in Tirana, Podgorica and Belgrade;

Provide expert support to the participating economies for the preparation of the 2017 monitoring reports;

Form a regional working group which will develop minimum standards for Roma responsible budgeting and organize initial meetings of this working group.

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

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

Quantitative survey “Socio-economic position of marginalised Roma in Western Balkans”. Survey questionnaire was finalised and tested in each country participating in the project in cooperation with a company selected through a tender procedure; Training of Trainers for interviewers was conducted and interviewers trained; fieldwork completed.

Micronarratives about Roma access to employment and experience with discrimination at labour market; and Roma exposure to environmental and health risks in Western Balkans collected.

Assessment of the re-integration policies and the position of Roma with no personal documentation in selected localities in the Western Balkans. Reports on Roma returnees to Western Balkans and non-visible Roma with no personal documentation using qualitative data finalised.

Production of Virtual Reality Video and other visual products about the situation of Roma in the Western Balkans

#### OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

Data about socio-economic position, experience with migration, values and norms of marginalised Roma and their non-Roma neighbours collected. A total of 4 592 Roma households and 2 168 non Roma households participated in the survey.

Qualitative information on specific topics difficult to capture through quantitative survey (due to the nature of the method) collected and prepared for analytical reports/studies.

A number of visual products produced and in preparation for dissemination.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Finalisation of full data set and indicators for dissemination and public use
- Finalisation and dissemination of report on Roma employment and experience with discrimination (analysing qualitative and quantitative data)
- Finalisation and dissemination report on Roma women experiencing gender based violence and factors influencing early marriages/cohabitation (analysing qualitative and quantitative data)
- Finalisation and dissemination of report on Roma experience with exposure to environmental and health risks
- Series of events presenting project results

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

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

- An in-depth desk review of various international and national return migration frameworks ("Roma Returnees to the Western Balkans: Policy, National Frameworks and Programming on Migration & Return – 6 Country Studies") assessing existing research and initiatives relating to the (re)integration of return migrants, with an explicit (but not exclusive) focus on Roma migrants
- Six separate country overviews of the domestic policy and institutional framework for return migration. Each country overview documents where Roma are given particular attention in the country's return migration framework
- Missions to Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, meetings with key Government officials and stakeholders

## OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

- Better overview of the complex state of existing policies, programs and services available to return migrants and offered by home country governments, third-country governments or NGOs/civil society in the WB countries
- Collection of information on the availability and access to reintegration services for returnees in the WB countries and in-depth answers for six WB countries to three main questions:
- Who are those who migrated and those who are returned?
- What is the international and national framework affecting migration and return?
- How are Roma given particular attention in the national return migration framework?

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Inception Workshop with core members of the World Bank implementation team in Brussels to further discuss the methodology of the mapping exercises and next planned activities (September 2017)
- Meeting with DG NEAR to present the draft inception report (September 2017)
- Finalize TOR for analytical activities (mapping exercises) and hire the research team (September – October 2017)

- Conduct four mapping exercises which focus on a comprehensive assessment and identification of the challenges that (Roma) returnees encounter when returning to home countries - answering the following broad questions:
- Who are the returnees and to what extent do their needs differ from those of the “regular” population? (**Vulnerability Mapping**)
- How do repatriation processes take place between sending countries in Western Europe and the receiving WB countries? What practices work and where are gaps? (**Process Mapping**)
- What are existing policies/ programs/ services provided to facilitate the reintegration of returnees by receiving country governments – and where are they lacking? (**Institutional Mapping**)
- Who are important partners (governmental and non-governmental) for the implementation of solutions going forward? (**Stakeholder Mapping**)

Conduct background research for four mapping exercises and develop qualitative research instruments (November - December 2017)

## 2.4 REGIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programmes: IPA 2017/039-402 , IPA 2014/031-603, IPA 2014/024-133, IPA 2014/024-134, IPA 2012/023-537
<b>Project title:</b>	Regional Housing Programme (RHP)
<b>EU contribution (IPA only):</b>	EUR 194.3 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Contribution and Delegation Agreements with Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) and UNHCR
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2017/394-876, CN 2017/394-875, CN 2015/369-230, CN2013/325-470, CN2013/325-468, CN 2013/314-991, CN 2012/297-405, CN 2012/307-562, CN 2012/305-516
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	14/12/2012 - 31/12/2021
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.regionalhousingprogramme.org">www.regionalhousingprogramme.org</a>
<b>Contact:</b>	Daniel Hurtado, Daniel.Hurtado-Dominguez@ec.europa.eu

### PURPOSE

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



## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

Continuation of beneficiary selection, construction and handing-over of housing units, capacity building, communication and visibility.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

RHP figures as at end of 2017 (cumulative):

- 8 100 people rehoused.
- 2,700 housing units completed.
- 200 municipalities involved in the implementation, in all four Partner Countries.
- 100 Personnel involved in RHP implementation benefit from continuous on-the job training.
- 1 600 central and local government staff received formal training.
- 100 local companies engaged for provision of services, supplies and works.
- Intensive Cooperation between the four Partner Countries and improved neighbourly relations.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Over 1 000 additional housing will be delivered during the semester.

There will also be a strong focus on monitoring and reinforcing sustainability. As well as on enhancing RHP's visibility.

## 2.5 MIGRATION

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

## PURPOSE

The main aim of the IPA II Project led by Frontex in partnership with EASO, IOM and UNHCR, is to support the target countries in developing a protection-sensitive response to mixed migration flows, by strengthening their systems for identification, registration, and referral, as well as asylum procedures and return mechanisms, aligning them with EU policies. The project consists of five interventions.

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

Within the framework of Intervention 1, after having the regional trainings implemented and materials translated into the beneficiary countries languages, Frontex supported the national roll-out of the training activities and reinforced the process of cascading the knowledge and skills at the national level in detection of falsified documents and combatting trafficking in human beings.

As regards EASO, a train-the-trainers module on Interviewing Vulnerable Persons was delivered to all seven beneficiaries countries (including Turkey) and a specific workshop on Interviewing Persons with special needs was organised in Serbia. Country of Origin Information was enhanced in Serbia and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia through the organisation of 'on-the-job' trainings and a train-the-trainer training module. EASO Complementarity funding to IPA allowed the national roll-out training sessions of the two EASO core modules on Inclusion and Interview Techniques for Kosovo (one Module), Albania, Montenegro and Turkey (both modules). Finally, the five translated EASO tools/guides were proofread by the national authorities through the organisation of an EASO regional workshop.

Throughout the second half of 2017, under intervention 2, set of six Field Assessment visits was concluded with the visit to Kosovo. Country Reports with recommendations were drafted and discussed with the beneficiary countries. Six National Action Plans and one Regional Action Plan for the improvement of the six National Systems were put forward and discussed with the beneficiaries in a Regional Conference that took place in November, after the establishing cooperation with eu-LISA.

Within the framework of intervention 3 – setting up and streamlining of referral systems into national mechanisms, EASO intervened at national level through the implementation of the two Roadmaps for Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. A joint workshop on the Common European Asylum System and the Asylum Procedures Directive was organised with the support of Member States' experts.

Regarding intervention 4, establishing EU compatible system for persons in need of international protection, EASO organised at regional level a number of activities to enhance regional harmonisation: kick off meeting of a practitioners' network, workshop on EASO tools and guides and policy discussions on cooperation with the Migration, Asylum, Refugees

Regional Initiative. At national level, EASO held a meeting to discuss Serbia's asylum system and agreed on a Roadmap. The Roadmap allowed Serbian officials' participation to the EASO reception network and to a Reception Module (also with the participation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

Frontex also continued with the implementation of the Intervention 5, launching the national rollout of the training in non-voluntary return and laying the ground for setting up the national pool of well-trained return escorts. Soon after regional training and the Translator Workshop, Frontex launched the national trainings and in close cooperation and full logistical support of IOM and the hosting authority. First national trainings for forced return escorts were successfully implemented in Serbia and Montenegro. Apart from training, a comprehensive desk research on capacities of the beneficiary countries on non-voluntary return was completed by the contracted external consultant.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

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

- Improved skills and resources delivered to assist government officers in the better identification of individuals, including identifying vulnerable groups and through the use of Country of Origin information;
- Existing capacities mapped and assessed in the six beneficiaries after country visits;
- Country Reports for Western Balkans with sets of recommendations for improvement put forward and accepted by the beneficiaries;
- Six National Action Plans and one regional action plan developed and presented to authorities;
- Capacity built of officials from Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on referral mechanisms and in reception;
- Agreement on a Roadmap to set up an asylum system in line with EU standards in Serbia;
- Regional harmonisation and alignment with EU acquis through regional fora such as practitioners' network, MARRI or regional workshop on EASO tools and guides;
- The relevant national authorities have the necessary knowledge and skills acquired to successfully operationalize joint non-voluntary return operations.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

In the first half of 2018 Frontex will continue with organization of trainings on national level in beneficiary countries in the following areas: Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Detection of falsified documents.

In relation to the registration of mixed migration flows, in the first half of 2018, six Action Plans are to be finalized. Implementation strategy will be defined and implementation of the Action Plans shall start by June.

In the first half of 2018, at regional level, EASO has foreseen to ensure quality translations of 5 EASO tools and guides and to continue discussing on a regional practitioners' network on

asylum. At national level, the implementation of the two Roadmaps with Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will continue especially through on the job trainings and work visits to Member States on reception, examination procedures and registration. The third Regional Steering Committee is scheduled to take place on 24 April 2018. The Project Partners will also focus on further development of the concept of Phase II of the project together with DG NEAR.

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-country Action Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Regional support to Protection-sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey (component 2)
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 2.5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant agreement with the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2016/369-495
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	15/12/2015 - 15/12/2018
<b>Contact :</b>	Lucia Santuccioni, <a href="mailto:lucia.santuccioni@ec.europa.eu">lucia.santuccioni@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

The overall objective of the action is to develop and operationalize a comprehensive migration management system in seven IPA beneficiary countries, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey, in line with EU standards. The specific objectives aim to facilitate and strengthen some of the key areas of a migration management system, focusing on enhancing the exchange of non-personal information in the region, and contribute to establishment of assisted voluntary mechanism in the beneficiary countries.

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Identification of the best approach for enhancing the collection and sharing of migration data in the region and between the countries through a detailed assessment of institutional and statistical capacities of the Western Balkan countries to inform the plan for the implementation of activities;
- Increasing capacities for the national implementation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) through the provision of support for establishing AVRR structures and capacity development of AVRR practitioners;
- Setting up a two-pronged system for provision of translation services for rare languages through the engagement of interpreters/cultural mediators and the setup of a regional roster of interpreters.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

Overall Result 1: Activity 1.2 – Develop operational framework agreements for regional data exchange, including data protection safeguards

In consultation with national project participants it has been agreed that the framework for exchange of data on regional level will be implemented through existing communication channels and via MARRI RC.

Activity 1.3 Create standardized template for collecting migration and asylum data The purpose of this activity is to create a regionally harmonised template for collecting migration and asylum data which would result in standardization of data collection and will allow direct comparison of data and trends at the regional level.

Outputs:

- EU compliant templates for collecting migration and asylum data in three areas: Migration, International Protection and Residence Permits
- Technical guidelines for collecting statistical data in line with the EU standards/Eurostat reporting, in accordance with Regulation 867/2007.
- Explanatory documents for the methodology (grid of indicators/ reporting sources, codes and classifications used, glossary)

Overall result 2: Activity 2.2 – Develop standardized operational procedures (SOPs) for assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) On 6 December 2017, a peer review meeting with national AVRR consultants furthered the development of each AVRR SOPs in the region.

Activity 2.3 - Establish relevant structures for AVRR, creating synergies among all services involved A second training event aimed at building national AVRR structures. Government participants gained better understanding of AVRR operations in the neighbouring countries, role of governments in its implementation and different modalities of cooperation between different actors.

Activity 2.4 – Organize capacity building activities for AVRR practitioners two-day workshop was organised to introduce the participants to the actual process of AVRR, its various steps and requirements, and to ensure a standard starting point and common understanding among AVRR practitioners of the process and its requirements. During the two days of the training, the participants learned about the AVRR process from IOM's perspective, highlighting the roles of different authorities and stakeholders, outreach and information, counselling on AVRR, preparations for return and assisted travel, reintegration, return of UMC, return of migrants with health needs, return of victims of trafficking and voluntary return from detention.

Overall result 3: Activity 3.1 – Assess the scope for the pilot shared pool of interpreters and cultural mediators in Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia The project has seconded two positions (Migration Data Officer and Project Assistant) to support MARRI in this role, and in particular in operationalizing the regional pool of interpreters, including support to the introduction and implementation of regional interpretation protocols as well as other tasks, including regional data collection and exchange. Activity 3.2 – Pilot shared

pool of interpreters and cultural mediators in Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia This approach is two-pronged: it entails recruitment of translators/cultural mediators, whose primary role in the field is to work directly with migrants and ensure correct communication between migrants and service providers. Four interpreters/cultural mediators have been engaged. Complementary to this is a second vein of support: the establishment of an online pool of translators available to service providers in the entire region of the Western Balkans.

## 2.6 HORIZONTAL FACILITY

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

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

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

During the reporting period, 303 interventions entailing an outreach to more than 120 national beneficiary institutions and organisations were carried out within the framework of the technical cooperation component of the HF to assist Beneficiaries to achieve increased

compliance with European standards. In addition, three requests under the Expertise Co-ordination Mechanism (ECM) were received and provided the basis for the provision of ad hoc Council of Europe legislative expertise and policy advice (see below related outputs).

Implementation of a new Action to enhance human rights policing in Kosovo started during the reporting period, following the approval of Horizontal Facility Steering Board in July 2017.

*Under theme I – Ensuring Justice, a total of 199 activities were implemented in the sectors of Human Rights (51 activities), Justice (82 activities), Prisons and Police (66 activities). Some of the key activities are highlighted below:*

- **Human Rights:** In **Albania**, the Council of Europe presented an assessment on remedies in property restitution/compensation cases, and finalised three training courses for the School of Magistrates and eight other institutions. In **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** representatives of the Constitutional Court received training on freedom of expression based on Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR). The training curricula on Article 3 (prohibition of torture) and Article 6 (right to a fair trial) of the ECHR were provided to the Justice Academy. In **Montenegro**, 180 lawyers were trained on admissibility criteria before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Constitutional Court. In **Serbia**, comprehensive training curricula were drafted for prosecutors, deputy prosecutors and prosecutorial assistants on the ECHR and the ECtHR case law. Courses on countering gender-based domestic violence were provided ahead of the entry into force of the new law on this issue.
- **Justice:** In **Albania**, judges, court presidents and chancellors were trained on how to collect judicial statistics to improve court management. A report on relations between the justice system and the media with recommendations to increase public trust was produced and presented. Satisfaction surveys for courts users in **Kosovo** have been launched. To support the Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils in strengthening their procedures and practices in **Montenegro**, disciplinary practices were assessed and support given for preparation of the budget for 2018.
- **Prisons and Police:** In **Albania**, a draft Code of ethics and the initial training curricula on prison management were finalised. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, guidelines on how to deal with detainees, including the healthcare in detention facilities were published ahead of a series of training activities for senior police and prison staff. In **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** around 620 police officers were trained in preventing ill-treatment. In **Kosovo**, an assessment tool to help develop rehabilitation programmes for offenders was completed. In **Montenegro**, selected number of inmates was equipped with knowledge through the pilot rehabilitation programme to support their better integration into society. In **Serbia**, a report on Existing Offender Behaviour Programmes has been prepared and presented. Recommendations on how to revise police

operational guidelines and the existing admission procedures to detention facilities (including medical screening) were finalised.

*Under theme II – Fighting Corruption and Economic Crime – a total of 38 activities have been implemented in the sectors of Economic Crime (27 activities) and Corruption in Education (11 activities). Some key activities are highlighted below:*

- Economic Crime: In **Albania**, the capacities of independent experts to draft audit reports have been improved through the provision of specifically tailored trainings for 29 financial experts. In order to improve the local asset declaration system, an assessment of IT needs for declaration, audit of assets and conflict of interest was finalised. Guidelines for Albanian anti-money laundering supervisory authorities were developed to promote a risk-based approach to supervision. Additionally, legislation and available tools were assessed to enhance effective prosecutorial services and 65 prosecutors and investigators were trained to trace, seize and confiscate criminal assets. In **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** authorities were supported in drafting new legislation on anti-money laundering/counter terrorism financing and building the capacities of the Financial Intelligence Office (FIO). In **Montenegro**, a training session for 21 members of the Parliament was organised in order to support the implementation of the Guidelines on Good Conduct.
- Corruption in Education: In **Serbia**, an assessment on integrity and corruption with recommendations was produced and shared with beneficiary institutions and civil society.

*Under theme III – Promoting discrimination and the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, a total of 66 activities were implemented in the sectors of Education (26 activities), Trafficking in Human Beings (16 activities), National Minorities, Human Rights/Ombudspersons (24 activities). Some key activities are highlighted below:*

- Ombudsman: a study visit was organised for the staff of the Ombudspersons' Institution from **Bosnia and Herzegovina** to the Council of Europe and the ECtHR in Strasbourg. Representatives of the Ombudspersons' Institution completed the HELP on-line course on hate crime and hate speech. A regional conference was also organised for 550 civil legal professionals from **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro** and **Serbia** to exchange knowledge and practices regarding European anti-discrimination standards.
- Bullying and Extremism in Education: In **Albania**, 249 teachers from 21 pilot schools gained understanding and skills on bullying and extremism, and strengthened their knowledge on institutional and legal mechanisms addressing bullying. Finally, the International Conference on Bullying and Extremism in Schools took place in Durres in June in **Albania** gathering more than 160 representatives from the Ministries of



Education from **Montenegro, Serbia** and **Kosovo**, as well as education policy and research institutes and NGOs.

- Democratic School Culture: Inclusive day events were organised in five cities in **Kosovo**. In **Montenegro** a series of events were organised in 17 cities and 23 schools aiming to promote diversity and democratic citizenship involving 1000 pupils, teachers, parents and members of local communities. In **Serbia**, more than 140 teachers from the wider school project teams learned about the concept of the competences for democratic culture, carried out a situational analysis and determined specific school needs in this context.
- Trafficking in Human Beings: In **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** and in **Serbia**, reports and mapping studies on human trafficking for the purposes of the labour exploration were produced. In addition, information brochures were produced in both Actions in cooperation with the civil society organisations (CSOs).
- National Minorities: In **Albania**, expert advice was provided on three aspects of the newly adopted Law on National minorities.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

1. During the reporting period the following are highlights under the three Horizontal Facility thematic areas:

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

- Through eight actions on prison in six beneficiaries, the capacities of the prison administrations were further strengthened with regards to prison staff management, application of ethical standards, including prevention of ill-treatment and improving prison health care. New protocols on prison and police staff recruitment, codes of conduct for prison staff, health care and monitoring and inspection mechanisms were developed and adopted (e.g. **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** and **Kosovo**). The assistance led to reinforcing and/or establishing new practices relating to the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into the society, such as in **Montenegro** and **Serbia**.
- In the field of human rights and the judiciary, assessments of the application of the ECtHR case law, together with recommendations, have been made available to the authorities in **Albania** and **Montenegro**. As a result, the Constitutional Court in **Montenegro** has adopted a new Act setting up a special department for the harmonisation of practice with ECtHR case law. Three road maps for ECtHR case law application were developed, namely national court Guidelines, Training plan and a Platform for harmonisation of the court practices. Beneficiary-tailored support was

provided to judiciary training institutions with regard the implementation of the ECtHR case law: new training curricula and HELP courses enhancing capacities of legal professionals were prepared and integrated in the training programme of the School of Magistrates in **Albania** and in **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**.

- Moreover, the Actions contributed to strengthen effectiveness of the available domestic legal remedies (**Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**). In **Serbia**, the assessment of the systemic human rights violations with recommendations was endorsed by the authorities; in **Albania** the amended Code of Criminal Procedure (allowing for the reopening of domestic judicial proceedings concerning the non-execution of judgments) was assessed.
- To strengthen the efficiency and quality of justice, Actions in **Albania** and **Kosovo** focused on improving case management systems, including the introduction of an electronic/automatic system, and improving capacity to collect judicial statistics in line with the methodology of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ). In addition, satisfaction surveys for court users were carried out in three pilot courts in Kosovo.

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

- In **Albania** the revision and implementation of legislation on political party financing has resulted in reduced electoral spending and misuse of state resources. Furthermore, the Action contributed to setting up an oversight structure to control and verify audit reports within the Central Election Commission. Similarly, in **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** further efforts were made in strengthening the transparency of beneficial ownership by introducing a road map for the establishment of a central register. Finally, in **Montenegro** a manual on good practices and guidelines for financial investigations of corruption cases has been prepared and endorsed by the authorities.
- Under interventions to strengthen integrity and combat corruption in higher education, in **Kosovo**, an outline of the Code of Ethics targeting three categories of Higher Education institutions was developed. In **Montenegro**, recommendations from the baseline study and a related policy debate underpinned the decision of the government to establish an independent Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education and to develop the Law on Academic Integrity.

*Theme III – Anti-discrimination and the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups - eleven Actions have been designed to support beneficiaries in various segments of anti-discrimination.*

- In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, staff of the Ombudsperson Institution increased their knowledge on combating hate crime and hate speech including through the Council of Europe HELP methodology. Regional cooperation and exchange of knowledge on EU anti-discrimination standards, prevention and protection mechanisms were further strengthened through regional gatherings/exchanges.
- To combat discrimination in schools four Actions in **Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia** continued to invest in locally-driven processes of learning to advance policy development in education and non-discrimination.
- To protect LGBTI rights, the capacity of the Police Academy in **Albania** was increased to address Hate Crimes against LGBTI persons, under the implementation of the national Action plan on LGBTI people. Furthermore, the capacity of the Gender Equality Focal Points within the local administrations was further reinforced through enhancing training curricula, which was validated by the School of Public Administration.
- Actions to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings in **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia**, strengthened capacity of relevant institutions and NGOs in victim identification and the national referral mechanism. In **Serbia**, modalities for setting up a state compensation scheme for victims of trafficking were for the first time placed on the agenda of the relevant authorities.

Actions on the protection of national minorities in **Albania** and **Serbia** showed concrete progress. In **Albania**, with the support of the Action, authorities adopted a Law on National Minorities aligned with European standards, and expressed willingness to discuss ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). In **Serbia**, a study on challenges and recommendations on the use of minority languages within the administration and judiciary was finalised and distributed to the authorities.

2. The **Expertise Coordination Mechanism (ECM)** continued to be an operational and effective mechanism providing Council of Europe legal and policy expertise upon request.

- In the reporting period, further efforts were made to promote the ECM as well as to reinforce the results obtained through this mechanism. Three official requests for legislative expertise were submitted:
- Following the request of the Minister of the Interior of **Montenegro**, an opinion on the new Law on Foreigners was prepared by the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees. The opinion on the new draft was made available in November 2017. The Law was reviewed at the Government session of 28 December 2017 and will go into parliamentary procedure in January 2018.
- In the context of amendments to the Constitution of **Serbia**, an official request was submitted by the Serbian authorities for the support of the Venice Commission experts

in drafting constitutional amendments in the area of judiciary. The request was approved in November 2017 and the support is on-going.

- Legal expertise was requested on the draft Law on the Rights of the Victims of Torture by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, which is to be addressed in the next reporting cycle.
- Additionally, printed and electronic versions of the ECM information leaflet were made available in all local languages and in English, and distributed widely to the stakeholders in the Horizontal Facility beneficiaries.

### 3. Transversal issues:

- **Gender mainstreaming:** A gender-mainstreaming checklist was developed as a tool for staff working in the framework of the Horizontal Facility implementation and reporting. The New Council of Europe Strategy on Gender Equality 2018-2023 recently adopted, as well as its new gender toolkit, currently under development, will provide further opportunities to improve in this area.
- Progress has been noted in several Actions regarding the participation of **civil society organisations**. In **Albania**, CSOs benefited from four cascade trainings related to supporting effective domestic remedies and six CSOs received small grants to monitor and report on the use of propaganda materials by political parties; in **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** and **Serbia**, CSOs are actively supporting wider outreach of HF Actions; in **Kosovo**, CSOs are consulted on the revision of the administrative instruction on disciplinary procedures for prison inmates; and in **Montenegro**, CSOs are assisting in the development of a prisoner rehabilitation programme.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Three new actions will be launched in the next semester, namely “Support to legal aid reforms” in **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** and “Strengthening the protection of national minorities” and “Quality education in multi-ethnic societies” in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

Key activities foreseen for the next semester:

- *Theme 1 – Ensuring Justice:* Launch of the national version of the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) course on International Cooperation in Criminal Matters (ICCM) for a group of trainee prosecutors in **Serbia**; training of trainers on Article 5 of the ECHR (protection of the right to liberty and security) for judges and prosecutors in **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**; training of prison officers on the fight against ill-treatment and humane treatment of

detainees in **Montenegro**; cascade training sessions on treatment of violent offenders in prisons in **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**; publishing an in-depth assessment of the judicial system in **Kosovo** and piloting the future case management information system at the Basic Court of Ferizaj; training of prosecutors on reporting concerns of undue pressure on the prosecution service in **Serbia**;

- Under *Theme II – Fight against corruption, organised crime and economic crime*: Support to the Central Election Commission in **Albania** in setting up a relevant structure for the control and verification of audit reports; public debates with students and academic staff to raise awareness of combatting corruption in higher education institutions in **Montenegro** and **Serbia**; and providing expertise on the draft Law on Higher Education in **Kosovo**;
- Under *Theme III – Promoting discrimination and the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups*: Presentation of Council of Europe’s new Anti-discrimination manual in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**; distance-learning course on protection against discrimination for staff members of the Agency for Gender Equality and gender centres in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**; training for pilot schools in **Kosovo** on developing individual action plans for children with special needs; training to build the capacity of lawyers and NGO representatives in **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** to assist victims of human trafficking to access compensation.

## 2.7 SUPPORT TO THE FOLLOW-UP OF ELECTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE WB

<b>Programme reference:</b>	IPA II Annual Multi-Country Action Programme 2016
<b>Project title:</b>	Support to the follow-up of electoral recommendations in the Western Balkans (Support to Elections in the Western Balkans)
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 1 600 000
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	five OSCE participating States in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia), as well as Kosovo ( <i>this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence</i> ).
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2017/386276
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	26.06.2017 – 26.06.2020
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="https://www.osce.org/odihr/support-to-elections-in-western-balkans">https://www.osce.org/odihr/support-to-elections-in-western-balkans</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Raul Muresan, Project Co-ordinator / <a href="mailto:raul.muresan@odihr.pl">raul.muresan@odihr.pl</a>

### PURPOSE

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is implementing the Support to Elections in the Western Balkans project to support institutions and civil society in their efforts to follow up on election observation recommendations in areas related to

election management, voter registration and the role and work of the media during election campaigns.

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- The launch event with 67 participants (21 women and 46 men) from all 6 beneficiaries was successfully held in Warsaw on 8 September.
- Consultation and planning (inception) visits took place in Montenegro (3-6 October), Bosnia and Herzegovina (13-17 November) and Albania (4-8 December).
- Project activities were on hold during periods of time in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro due to ongoing elections and in Albania and Serbia due to the finalization and presentation of ODIHR election observation reports.
- The development of the recommendations database was initiated. The recommendations from 24 election observation missions' final reports were compiled and categorized.
- The project website was launched.
- The project logo and visibility materials were designed and produced (roll-ups, pens, notepads and folders).
- A list of 243 local counterparts (90 women and 153 men) for the six beneficiaries was created.
- The terms of reference for external experts for provision of in-depth assistance during activities 2.1 Topical workshops and 2.2 Provision of in-depth assistance were drafted.
- In-depth assistance activities took place in Montenegro. On 21 December, ODIHR presented informal comments on draft amendments to election-related laws (on the election of councillors and representatives, on the financing of political entities and campaigns, on the electoral register and on electronic media) to the parliamentary working group set up to implement the Action Plan for Implementation of OSCE/ODIHR Recommendations on 2016 Parliamentary Elections.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Interlocutors and stakeholders were informed about the Project and its objective in the launch event and 3 inception visits. Presentations and briefing materials that raise awareness of importance of follow-up to electoral recommendations and the next steps of the action were provided.
- Report of launch event was submitted to donors.
- Focal points with national and international counterparts were established.
- Inception visit reports were prepared and submitted to donors.
- Strategic plans drafted with national actors and developed through an open consultation with stakeholders in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania.
- Montenegrin legislators were provided expert review of their legal initiatives, contributing to informed decision-making on the basis of ODIHR recommendations, OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections.

- Letters outlining progress were sent to authorities in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania.
- News items were published on the ODIHR website regarding the project activities.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Inception visits to Serbia (29 January – 1 February), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (19 – 23 March) and Kosovo (16 – 20 April TBC).
- Translate, print and disseminate five ODIHR handbooks (Handbook on the Follow-up of Electoral Recommendations, Guidelines for Reviewing a Legal Framework for Elections, Handbook for the Observation of Voter Registration, Handbook on Media Monitoring for Election Observation Missions, and Guidelines on Population Registration) in six languages by April.
- In-depth assistance activities to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Activities in Montenegro are on hold due to ongoing electoral process.
- Develop and publish the electoral recommendation database by June.

# CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Support in the area of private sector development and investments aims to provide access to finance, raise regional competitiveness, increase competence of human capital, attract investments, facilitate trade and establish a business climate conducive to the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Private Sector Support Facilities established under the Crisis Response Package are also included.

3.1 PLATFORM FOR SME FINANCING AND SUPPORT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS	
<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programmes, IPA 2011/021-964; IPA 2012/022-966; IPA 2013/024-091; IPA 2015/031-609; IPA IPA 2016/039-919; 2017/039-402;
<b>Project title:</b>	Western Balkan Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WB EDIF)
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 148 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Contribution agreements (CA) with OECD and World Bank Group; CA and Delegation Agreements (DGA) with the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Guarantee Facility, ENEF and ENIF;
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2012/295-825; CN 2012/306-154; CN 2012/306-653; CN 2013/319-472; CN 2012/306-667; CN 2013/333-444; CN 2013/318-776; CN 2013/331-504 ; CN 2014/334-654 05/12/2012 – 30/11/2025/; CN 2016/380-963; CN 2017/393-451; 2017/394-450
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	05/12/2012 – 21/12/2028
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.wbedif.eu">www.wbedif.eu</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Aleksandra Kostova, <a href="mailto:alexandra.kostova@ec.europa.eu">alexandra.kostova@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

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



## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

There was good progress under the whole WBEDIF platform during H2 2017, including:

For the financial instruments:

- The Guarantee Facility: the first round of financing (GF) has been almost entirely utilised and the banks are now in their run off phase. The results from the second deployment of funding (GF II), whereby EIF signed with 5 banks in the region, show very good and nearly full absorption by the market. Guarantee Facility Serbia has been signed in December 2017 and the Youth Employment Guarantee is expected to come online in 2018.
- Enterprise Innovation Fund has to date invested in 13 companies. Fund manager (South Central Ventures) has also been actively promoting ENIF in its target region, often together with various local stakeholders, targeting start-ups and entrepreneurs. In October the Fund also held an event in Dubrovnik whereby all investors were invited as well as portfolio companies.
- The Enterprise Expansion Fund currently has 12 investments (with 10) companies. The ENEF portfolio is performing according to expectations and is well represented across the region. The Fund is focusing on continued growth of a healthy pipeline as well as marketing activities with the key sectors of focus. Around 600 companies have been visited since the start of ENEF.

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

For the Support Services:

- The World Bank – The VC Ecosystem assessment in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is ongoing, while in Serbia an assessment of the legislative framework for VC and Private Equity has been completed. In Albania, the Legislative Assessment Report and Compliance Report have been submitted and capacity building organised for government officials. A first draft of the future legislation was prepared in October 2017. Under the Investment Readiness programme the second Pioneers of the Balkans competition is being prepared. The long-term impact assessment of the outcomes of the first competition is being finalised.
- The World Bank – Under the EU-REPARIS programme, the six beneficiary countries expressed a wish to integrate regionally additional functions regarding Professional Accounting Organisations (PAO), including audit quality assurance, creating regional PAOs and setting consistent standards of financial transparency within the region. This became a

new priority, along with developing the capacity of regional PAOs to provide business advisory to their clients. Events for accounting education have been held in Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo.

- The EBRD's Advice for Small Business (ASB) - so far the EDIF funding supported a total of 257 companies in the region and has been deployed in five countries (all Western Balkan countries except Albania). The companies are mostly from the agro-food, retail and machining sectors. In the past period, training has been provided for 100 local experts and 120 companies. Various additional programmes are ongoing (the Blue ribbon programme, Financial Enhancement, etc).
- The OECD has held seven launch events in the respective Western Balkan countries in 2017. While publication of the Report is expected in early 2019, there have been numerous capacity building events in the region, including study visits and workshops.
- The EIB continued working on two studies; The Feasibility Study for Regional Centres of Excellence has provided a short-list of institutions and partners with potential to develop into a regional Centre of Excellence (CoE). The Study on IP and Intangibles resulted in a Toolkit on Intellectual Property protection for entrepreneurs in the region. The toolkit was presented through Workshops in the Western Balkan countries, and attracted attention from regional innovative SMEs.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

Access to finance for SMEs: good absorption for the guarantee facility as well as healthy uptake of the equity instruments, WB EDIF's financial outreach to SMEs is always increasing. Reach of Support Services: through its complementary soft measures, WB EDIF has reached multiple stakeholders.

Awareness-raising at Platform level: the Western Balkans Summit (July 2017) was a key event to promote the valuable work being undertaken by the various IFI partners in increasing access to finance and improving conditions for SMEs in the region. 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event was organised in November 2017, with several local stakeholders, financial institutions and SMEs present to discuss strategic orientation of the platform and addressing the results achieved so far.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

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

ENEF: business development and marketing activities shall continue across all countries to source additional investment opportunities.

Guarantee Facility: the GF Serbia and GF Youth Employment are to be launched accompanied with related marketing activities.

The EBRD will put in place its Competitiveness Programme under the umbrella of WB EDIF.

The World Bank is preparing to launch the second phase of the VC ecosystem and to organise a second ‘Pioneers of the Balkans’ competition.

Platform Coordination: additional communications efforts are planned for 2018, a new EDIF website will be launched, a strategic meeting will take place in the first semester in Belgrade and the Annual Report in its new design will be publicly available.

### 3.2 EUROPEAN FUND FOR SOUTHEAST EUROPE (EFSE)

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

#### PURPOSE

EFSE extends loans to selected financial institutions in the region of Southeast Europe (as of 31 December 2017 44 in the IPA Region), including the European Eastern Neighbourhood Region, for on-lending to micro and small enterprises and low-income private households with limited access to financial services. EFSE’s partner lending institutions include commercial banks, microfinance banks, microcredit organisations and non-bank financial institutions.

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

By 31 December 2017, the outstanding investment portfolio in the EFSE amounted to EUR 896.2 million with 68 Partner Lending Institutions (PLI), thereof EUR 527.1 million with 44 PLIs in the Western Balkans and Turkey. During H2 2017, EFSE signed 23 investments totalling EUR 131.6 million, of which EUR 58.1 million with 13 Partner Lending Institutions (PLIs) were in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

In terms of the sub-loan portfolio, by 31 December 2017, the outstanding sub-loan portfolio amounted to EUR 867.1 million, including EUR 525.0 million in the Western Balkans and Turkey. This translates into an on-lending rate of 97% for the total Fund and 100% for the Western Balkans and Turkey by 31 December 2017.

More than 910,000 sub-loans have therefore been financed since EFSE’s inception, accounting for EUR 6.5 billion in lending, with a clear focus on microloans below EUR 20,000.

On the TA side, the EFSE Development Facility (“DF”) has 61 projects under management in the Western Balkan region and Turkey, with a total volume of EUR 4.8 million. For example, the EFSE DF works closely with PLIs who develop non-financial services for their MSE and agricultural clients. In BiH, a PLI is assisting MSE clients through online services in further building their business and financial management capacity that in return increases their repayment capacity. Furthermore, the EFSE DF is deepening its support to MSE business growth in the SEE region. In particular, the EFSE DF promotes business acceleration and investment readiness of MSEs, social enterprises and start-ups through business development organisations and facilitates access to finance through the linkages to financial institutions (e.g. via subsidized loans or grant contributions by the financial institutions). The Fund has been well funded in H2 2017, including 17% Notes from private investors as of 31 December 2017. This was also enabled by the Fund’s strong performance also in the Western Balkan region and Turkey. Overall, the Fund's performance remains very solid with continuously low impairment levels, very good financial performance, and continued leveraging the Fund's C Shares.

\* Includes all six Western Balkans countries and Turkey.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

<b>EFSE investment portfolio figures as at end Q4 2017*</b>	
1. Total Invested Portfolio (Q4 2017 figures)	EUR 896.2 million
2. Number of current Partner Lending Institutions (Q4 2017 figures)	68
4. Type of Partner Lending Institution (Q4 2017 figures)	67% Commercial Banks, 14% Micro-finance Institutions, 19% Non-Bank Financial Institutions
<b>EFSE sub-loan figures as at end Q4 2017*</b>	
5. Active End Borrowers (Q4 2017 figures)	137,924
6. Reached End Borrowers since inception (Q4 2017 figures)	912,869
7. Average sub-loan amount outstanding (Q4 2017 figures)	EUR 6,287
8. Disbursed sub-loans since inception (Q4 2017 figures)	EUR 6.5 billion

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

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

An intensive monitoring regime for the Fund’s investments in Turkey continues to be in place and up to now. There is also a continued economic stagnation and low-price

environment in Southeast European countries. Significant investment management efforts will be required for reaching the Fund’s portfolio goals for 2018. The focus on the EFSE DF in the first half of 2018 will be on facilitating regional exchange among organisations dedicated to business and entrepreneurship development: the EFSE DF will moderate a workshop as part of a regional conference of social enterprise organisations that will develop a joint action plan for systemic topics such as small business enabling regulations in the countries in the SEE region. Another important activity will be the promotion of fintech among Central Banks. Based on the EFSE DF’s experience of engaging with fintech start-ups, the EFSE DF will facilitate a workshop at the Central Bank of Macedonia to enable decision makers to better understand fintech and how to develop appropriate policies and regulations.

### 3.3 CRISIS RESPONSE PACKAGE

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2009/021-373
<b>Project title:</b>	<b>Private Sector Support Facility for Turkey (PSSF) - Crisis Response Package</b>
<b>EU contribution (IPA only):</b>	EUR 22.5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Contribution agreement with EBRD
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2009/228-868
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	18/12/2009 – 30/11/2021
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.turseff.org">http://www.turseff.org</a> ; <a href="http://www.midseff.com">http://www.midseff.com</a> ; <a href="http://www.msmeturkey.com">http://www.msmeturkey.com</a>
<b>Contact:</b>	Domagoj Denacic, Domagoj.DENACIC@ec.europa.eu

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

**MSME Finance Window** – TC interventions came to an end on 30 May 2017 and no further activities are planned under this window.

**Energy Efficiency Window** - The first phase of TurSEFF (Turkish Sustainable Energy Financing Facility) was successfully finalised in early 2013 and no further activities were undertaken. TurSEFF III was launched successfully in H1 of 2017 with one partner bank joining the

programme. Another partner bank joined in H2 2017 as well as a leasing company. The Facility Consultant (FC) organised a kick-off meeting with the two partner banks during this period, and attended 23 events and conferences to promote the programme. The FC also successfully completed the TurSEFF III Inception Phase tasks by September 2017 and is now actively supporting the participating financial institutions (PFIs) to develop their pipelines and disburse their credit lines. Under MidSEFF (Turkish Mid-size Sustainable Energy Financing Facility), the preparation and financing of sub-projects continued with the aim to fully allocate the remaining funds.

**Advice for Small Business (ASB) Window** - During the reporting period the team has developed a pipeline of four projects with international advisors (formerly Enterprise Growth Programme (EPG)) which will be approved and start in the first quarter of 2018.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

**Energy Efficiency Window** - Under TurSEFF III, EUR 122M of EUR 400M funds have now been allocated to three PFIs, and twelve sub-loans totalling just under EUR 5.5M have been effectively on-lent to sub-projects. The Facility Consultant submitted the Inception Report in this period, as well as all associated deliverables including: Quality Assurance Manual, Marketing Plan, Technology Selector, and revamped website. MidSEFF funds are effectively fully allocated to PFIs and disbursement is nearly complete; one sub-loan worth EUR 9.7 M was signed in the period, bringing the Facility total to EUR 906.9 M invested in 55 sub-projects.

**Advice for Small Business (ASB) Window** - Since the inception of the Programme, 18 projects with international advisors (formerly EPG) were started under EU PSSF for Turkey. Out of these, 14 projects were completed and 4 projects were cancelled due to insufficient commitment of the company's management. In addition, a total of 168 projects with local consultants (formerly BAS) were launched; 167 have been successfully implemented and 1 project was cancelled. To date, 165 of the projects have been evaluated one year following completion, and two are pending evaluation (one is currently on-going and the other one is completed but not evaluated yet).

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

**Energy Efficiency Window** - The TurSEFF III Facility Consultant will work with the three signed PFIs to market the programme and develop a pipeline of projects. The FC will organise a kick-off meeting with the most recently signed PFI, and will work closely with the two newest PFIs to develop bank-specific marketing plans and assess any staff training needs. Content for the training modules designed during the Inception phase will be developed and completed during H1 2018. The MidSEFF Project Consultant will work towards allocation of all remaining MidSEFF funds (approximately EUR 27.3million\*) and continue to monitor the implementation of active MidSEFF projects.

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\* Note that this figure is lower than reported in previous report due to unutilised funds from Vakifbank and Denizbank who are no longer disbursing under the Programme.

**Advice for Small Business (ASB)** – The current pipeline of four projects with international advisors (formerly EPG) will be approved and start in the first quarter of 2018, effectively allocating all available resources. In December 2017 EBRD submitted a proposal to reallocate a further EUR 2.2 million from MSME Window to ASB Window in order to provide at least 135 additional companies with consultancy services as well as to further strengthen capacities of local business advisers. Building on these positive results, the proposed funding reallocation will enable the continuation of the ASB Programme for an additional period of 30 months with the expected outcome as follows:

- At least 125 SMEs supported with advisory services projects through local consultants;
- At least 10 SMEs supported with advisory services projects supported through international advisers.
- At least 30 local consultants trained in consulting skills.

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

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

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

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

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

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

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

There are no outputs to report in 2017.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

No further activities are planned. Final report of the project should be submitted for approval by EIB in first quarter of 2018.

### 3.4 OECD SUPPORT TO ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

<b>Programme reference:</b>	2016/373-821
<b>Project title:</b>	OECD Support to Economic Competitiveness in South East Europe
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 10.7 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Contribution agreement with OECD
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2016
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	11 05 2016 –10 November 2019
<b>Contact :</b>	Gabriela Negut, gabriela.negut@gmail.com

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

**Economic Reform Programmes:** The OECD first joined the ERP kick-off meetings in June and July, during which the OECD provided its assessment how the ERP can be improved and the



ERP tools can be applied remotely. The OECD then held a series of capacity building seminars with line ministries in September and October, tailored to the specific needs of the beneficiary countries, to support the diagnostics and reform measures of the new draft ERP. During the seminars, the status of reform implementation was checked and potential key performance indicators for an improved ERP reporting were identified. The OECD provided inputs on how to improve the overall coherency between macroeconomic projections, state budget expenditure and reform plans. Following the in-country support events, the OECD provided written inputs and recommendations to the draft ERP chapter on structural reform between September and December.

**Competitiveness Outlook:** The OECD held Competitiveness Outlook Week in July, during which key stakeholders discussed and validated draft assessment scores and regional recommendations. The drafting process of the Competitiveness Outlook was finalised. The draft manuscript underwent a comprehensive review by partner governments and partner organisations. It was then edited by professional editors.

**SBA Assessment: SME Policy Index:** The revised SME Policy Index assessment frameworks had been presented in the SBA Co-ordinators' Meeting for final feedback (September), subsequent to which the frameworks were finalised. Seven in-country SBA launch meetings were organised in the capitals of the Western Balkans and Turkey to present the key features of the SBA assessment process and to introduce the revised assessment frameworks by dimension (September-November). Upon organisation of the in-country launch meetings, the assessment phase started off. *Supporting Activities:* The third regional policy dialogue was held to discuss the implementation of successful bankruptcy prevention and second chance provisions (September). The pilot capacity building event was organised in Istanbul to share Turkey's experience in fostering SME-academia collaboration in innovative activities.

## OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

**Economic Reform Programmes:** The third ERP Tool (Monitoring Tool) supported ERP co-ordinators and line ministries in the reporting of the ERP implementation by providing guidelines and concrete examples. The capacity-building seminars facilitated the improvement in the quality of the ERPs.

**Competitiveness Outlook:** One Competitiveness Outlook Week was successfully completed, validating draft assessment scores and regional results. One 600-page Competitiveness Outlook manuscript was drafted, reviewed and edited. It contains detailed analysis and policy assessments across 17 policy dimensions, more than 600 indicators and six economies, as well as actionable policy recommendations.

**SBA Assessment: SME Policy Index:** By finalising the assessments, the capacity of policy-makers were enhanced in identifying strengths and weaknesses in a broad range of SME policies. *Supporting Activities:* The regional policy dialogue helped SBA Co-ordinators and high-level policy makers increase their understanding of developing appropriate policies and instruments concerning "bankruptcy and second chance". The capacity building event in Istanbul allowed practitioners to learn from the Turkish experience in establishing

innovation infrastructure and offering tailored services to foster collaboration between SMES and academia.

### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

**Economic Reform Programmes:** The annual Regional Meeting of ERP Coordinators will reflect upon lessons learnt and set the path for the new ERP cycle, which will be followed by in-country kick-off events and capacity building sessions in the WB capitals.

**Competitiveness Outlook:** The Competitiveness Outlook will be put into a publication format. It will be published and launched at a high-level conference in Paris on 24 April.

**SBA Assessment: SME Policy Index:** The government and independent assessments will be completed (March), and seven reconciliation meetings will take place in the capitals of Western Balkans and Turkey to align the findings of the government and independent assessments (March-June) **Support Activities:** Back-to-back with the SBA Co-ordinators' meeting, a regional policy dialogue meeting will be organised, focusing on SME greening policies (March).

### 3.5 TRADE

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Strengthening the CEFTA Structures and their implementation capacities
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 2,579,700.00
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Moldova
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Action grant with the CEFTA Secretariat
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/356-738
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/05/2015 – 30/04/2018 with time extension
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.cefta.int">http://www.cefta.int</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Gabriel Blanc, <a href="mailto:gabriel.blanc@ec.europa.eu">gabriel.blanc@ec.europa.eu</a>

### PURPOSE

The specific objective of the Action is to provide the CEFTA Parties with technical assistance related to the priorities identified in the Integrated Growth Pillar of the SEE Strategy 2020, where specific technical preparations are needed.

### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

The National Experts Programme has regularly been implemented. The CEFTA Secretariat received Seconded National Experts from Serbia, Kosovo and Albania in line with the rotational Chairmanship of CEFTA Structures.

The contract on “Implementation Status of Government Procurement Related Articles of CEFTA” CPF III 2017-03 starts its implementation in July 2017. The CEFTA Monitoring mechanism has been mobilised through the engagement of monitoring in public procurement. The final report of the monitoring public procurement is expected in 2018.

The project “Creation of the Reporting System for Services Statistics, FATS and FDI Statistics” (CPF III 2016-01) has been implemented as envisaged by the ToR. No major delays or changes are encountered. The key outputs delivered: the formats for reporting of the Services, FATS and FDI Statistics have been finalised and approved by the members of the CEFTA Working Group on Trade in Services Statistics, FATS and FDI. The list of the key indicators has been developed and will constitute the part of the Statistical Database on Trade in Services. The project is closed in December 2017.

The project “Legal Counsel on CEFTA Negotiations and Implementation” (CPF III 2016-09) has been implemented as envisaged by the ToR. No major delays or changes are encountered. The key outputs delivered in the reporting period: legal opinion on the Proposal to modify Article 3 of the Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services, draft of the new Annex IV, and review of current CEFTA Dispute Settlement Mechanism.

The project “CEFTA Investment Report” (CPF III 2016-10) has been implemented as envisaged by the ToR. No major delays or changes are encountered. The key outputs delivered in the reporting period: final draft of the Investment Report. The first CEFTA Investment Report was presented at the meeting CEFTA Week 2017 in Belgrade. The Report provides relevant information on regional investment flows and trends and promote the Region as an attractive destination for foreign direct investments.

Chair in Office have organised the CEFTA Week 2017, an annual event which gathers representatives of national institutions, private sector and academia to discuss implementation of CEFTA. The event was held on 21 November 2017, in Belgrade. CEFTA Week 2017 represented series of discussions and presentations on different aspects of this Agreement. The participants were government representatives, the business community and academia from CEFTA Parties as well as representatives of international organizations. Discussions were divided in three sessions: facilitation of free trade in goods and services and harmonization of cefta markets with the eu , towards the regional investment agenda and LSEE academic round table on data analyses.

The project “Improvement of regulatory cooperation in services sectors” (CPF III 2016-11) has been implemented as envisaged by the ToR. No major delays or changes are encountered. The key outputs delivered in the reporting period: Final Draft Compilation of data on existing regulatory bodies, governmental agencies and professional associations in charge of services across the CEFTA Region, List of identified service sectors of common interest for CEFTA Parties Questionnaire for more detailed analysis of selected regulators, proposal on potential forms of cooperation amongst regulators in the region. The project is closed in December 2017.

The project “Visualization of CEFTA Statistics” (CPF III 2017-02) has been implemented as envisaged by the ToR. The key outputs delivered in the reporting period: IT solutions for processing of trade and investment data by the CEFTA Secretariat to be collected from CEFTA Parties, and set up of the database called CEFTA Statistics Portal. The project is closed in December 2017.

The contract “Event Organisation” (CPF III 2017-05) was signed on 29 June 2017 with an implementation until the end of January 2018. The preparations for the launch of a tender for a multiple Framework contract on travel was prepared during the reporting period.

The tender “Preparation of Questionnaires for Risk Management Systems” (CPF III 2017-04) was cancelled in September as no offer did comply with the minimum requirements specified in the procurement documents and has been relaunched. The contract “Preparation of Questionnaires for Risk Management Systems” (CPF III 2017-09) has started in December.

The workshop on MAP was organised in September in Brussels in order to agree the modalities for reporting the needs.

The tender procedure on Establishment of the Regulatory Database in Services Sectors (CPF III 2017-07) has been unsuccessful, no suitable, qualitatively or financially acceptable tender has been received or and therefore the procedure was cancelled in December and will be relaunched as direct tender (one in each CEFTA Party) in Q1 2018.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

The seconded national experts provided support in the daily activities of the CEFTA Secretariat, including preparation of reports, project synopsis and the CEFTA Trade Statistics Brochure, as well as represented the Secretariat in a number of meetings and workshops.

The formats for reporting of the Services, FATS and FDI Statistics have been finalised and approved by the members of the CEFTA Working Group on Trade in Services Statistics, FATS and FDI. The formats were uploaded and can be accessed online. The indices were agreed and are calculated once the data is uploaded by the Parties.

The databases on trade in services and goods statistics is fully operational as of 2017. It can be accessed via CEFTA Secretariat website. It features indices to monitor implementation of the Additional Protocol 6.

The final version of the Investment Report was finalised. The publication promoted in November 2017 during CEFTA Week organized in Belgrade.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The implementation of the project Legal Counsel on CEFTA Negotiation and Implementation (CPF III 2016-09) the project Implementation Status of Government Procurement Related Articles of CEFTA (CPF III 2017-03), the project Preparation of Questionnaires for Risk Management Systems and the National Experts Programme (CPF III 2017-09 ) will continue to be implemented during the next semester - upon time extension granted.

The 7 contracts on Establishment of the Regulatory Database in Services Sectors, one in each CEFTA Party, will be signed in April 2018.

The contract with the OECD regarding potential inclusion of CEFTA Parties is envisaged to be finalised during first half of 2018.

The work of the WG of on the harmonisation of certificates will start.

The negotiations on AP 7 should be launched in this period.

An time extension of the Action Grant is requested to allow the implementation of the above mentioned contracts/projects.

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

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

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

- In September 2017, two supply chains were selected as the focus for the activities in Component 1 and 2. The two selected supply chains are: edible vegetables, certain roots and tubers (in short: vegetables sector) and iron and steel (in short: metals sector).
- A methodology for mapping documentary requirements at all clearance stages in border-crossing transactions has been developed by the International Trade Center (ITC). The document is published on the project webpage and is available [here](#).
- In November – December 2017, six national consultation meetings were organized in Western Balkan CEFTA Parties, with the aim of detecting all barriers that hinder trade within the CEFTA region. The event was organized as a three-day consultation meeting with representatives of private sector in both areas: vegetables and metals. The last day a meeting was held with the representatives of public administrations, under the umbrella of national NTFCs in order to discuss validate the findings reported by the private sector representatives.

- Within Component 3 of the project, in October 2017, the analysis of the current status of implementation of national AEOs in the region was undertaken. Following the assessments done on the status of national AEOs, the findings were presented at the validation workshop, held in November 2017 in Belgrade.
- The project [webpage](#) was developed under the official CEFTA website. The webpage is continuously updated with activities, documents and information about the project for all interested parties. In addition, the second newsletter covering the next quarter of the project implementation was distributed to all stakeholders.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

- Two supply chains for identifying the most trade distortive barriers in the region were selected.
- Business Process Mapping methodology for mapping documentary/data submission requirements in line with best practices was developed by ITC.
- The most relevant NTBs were identified and validated during the National Consultation meetings.
- The assessment reports on the status of AEO legislative framework and implementation were produced and validated by the CEFTA AEO Working Group.
- The project webpage developed, with all the information and reports resulting from project implementation.
- The project newsletter is regularly prepared and distributed to all stakeholders involved or interested in the project.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- The national reports on NTBs, resulting from the meetings held with the private sector will be finalized and validated in February 2018.
- Setting up and convening the first meeting of the Regional Business Advisory Group (RBAG) will be held. The RBAG is to be established for both sectors as a mechanism for regional private sector advocacy on trade facilitation reforms in March 2018.
- Based on inputs made by the RBAG meetings, the regional reports for both sectors, which identify and prioritize the main difficulties economic operators encounter in the CEFTA region, will be prepared in April 2018.
- Elaboration of country-specific recommendations for countermeasures to eliminate the identified NTBs, in consultation with the relevant national institutions, will be undertaken in May 2018.
- Validation of the country-specific recommendations to address the identified NTBs, through simplifying, harmonizing or eliminating those aspects of the regulations that pose obstacles to intra-regional trade will be carried out in June 2018.

- Mapping of the documents and data submission requirements in accordance to the EU Acquis and international standards will be conducted in line with the developed methodology.
- Piloting of Mutual Recognition (MR) of national AEO programs in CEFTA will be launched and implemented during April-June 2018. The piloting phase will also include regional capacity development workshops aimed at developing core skills of AEO officials for piloting, running and maintaining of the MR AEO programme.

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Support to CEFTA Secretariat 2017-2018
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 285,000
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Moldova
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Operating grant with the CEFTA Secretariat
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2017/384-220
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	03/04/2017- 02/04/2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://cefta.int/">http://cefta.int/</a>
<b>Contact:</b>	Gabriel Blanc, <a href="mailto:Gabriel.BLANC@ec.europa.eu">Gabriel.BLANC@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

The overall objective is to enhance economic development through supporting liberalisation and facilitation of intra-regional trade in the context of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). The Project supports the operation of the CEFTA Secretariat, which provides technical and administrative support to the CEFTA Structures (Chair in Office – CiO, the CEFTA Joint Committee – JC, the CEFTA Subcommittees, CEFTA Working Groups and CEFTA Committee for Trade Facilitation).

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

The CEFTA Secretariat assisted the CEFTA Parties in the implementation of priorities outlined in the 2017 Work Programme and facilitated the organisation planned meetings of the CEFTA Structures.

Regarding the Additional Protocol 5, during the reporting period all CEFTA Parties have initiated the parliamentary ratification procedures as required by the Protocol.

For the preparation of smooth and timely implementation of the Additional Protocol 5, the CEFTA Parties agreed to discuss further the alternative IT related strategies regarding the engagement of TRACES within SEED+ in the context of the AP 5 data exchange. During the CEFTA Committee of Trade Facilitation meeting, held on 26 October 2017, the Committee agreed to establish a network of veterinary experts under the Subcommittee of Agriculture and SPS in order to assess the differences between the documentary requirements in each CEFTA Party, the EU formats and the data submission requirements of the AP 5.

In addition, the Committee of Trade Facilitation requested the project team of SEED to report the feasibilities of using TRACES together with SEED for data exchange.

In the same period, the Subcommittee on Agriculture and SPS agreed to deepen the statistical data to be collected by the CEFTA Secretariat on agricultural products, namely to collect data at HS 6 level.

During the reporting period, the CEFTA Subcommittee on Customs and Rules of Origin held its meeting in Pristina on 18-19 October 2017. In this meeting, the CEFTA Parties have agreed to have a single date to start the application of full cumulation and duty drawback in the regional trade. In addition, they have agreed to update the AEO network who will be working for the drafting of CEFTA Implementing Provisions for the mutual recognition of AEO according to the AP 5.

On 11 September 2017 the CEFTA Secretariat's Steering Committee has been organized in accordance with the financing agreements signed between the Secretariat and the European Commission (EC). The meeting provided with the opportunity to CEFTA Parties and key donors to meet not only to review activities of the Secretariat but also to discuss any open issues in relation to the implementation of the Secretariat's mandate, and to revisit CEFTA Chairmanship priorities regarding the implementation of the Agreement.

Tenth Joint Committee meeting was held on 23 November 2017, in Belgrade. Conclusions of the Western Balkan Summit in Trieste on 12 July 2017 were reiterated in the Chair's Conclusions regarding the establishment of a regional economic area in CEFTA on the basis of the EU compliance, with an objective to support efforts to attract more investments, decrease the cost of trade and production and eliminate market access barriers. It was considered that a key challenge in front of CEFTA Parties is to implement the Additional Protocols of CEFTA on trade facilitation and trade in services, once they enter into force, in a manner that contributes to the economic growth of our Region. All CEFTA Parties adopted the following the Decision No. 2/2017 on the Amendment to the Decision No. 1/2016 – List of Mediators and the Decision No. 3/2017 on the Amendment to the Decision on Open Fund

On 28 September 2017 the third meeting of the CEFTA Subcommittee on Trade in Services was held in Belgrade. The Parties discussed about the outstanding issues related to the Additional Protocol 6, the Secretariat's report on the activities of the Working Group on Trade in Services Statistics, FATS and FDI Statistics and Joint Working Group on Recognition of Professional Qualifications and presentations of the current status of the implementation of the project on Improvement of Regulatory Cooperation in CEFTA Parties and OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index in Rail and Road Transport for CEFTA. Exploring possibilities of including eligible CEFTA parties into the OECD TiVa Database was also discussed. On 20 November 2017 the fourth meeting of the CEFTA Subcommittee on Trade in Services was held in Belgrade. Parties continued the discussion on the outstanding issues related to the Additional Protocol 6 and adopted the Annual Report of the Subcommittee. Parties agreed on next steps for future work regarding improvement of regulatory cooperation.

The third Meeting of the CEFTA Working Group on Trade in Services Statistics, FATS and FDI Statistics and the Workshop on Trade in Services Statistics were held in Belgrade, Serbia on 10-11 July 2017. The main objective was to perform the first testing of an IT solution for the Database on Statistics and discuss the open issues in order to finalise the development of the Database which is expected in late September. Fourth Meeting of the CEFTA Working Group on Trade in Services Statistics, FATS and FDI Statistics and the Workshop on Trade in



Services Statistics were held in Belgrade, Serbia on 2-3 November 2017. The main objective was to share experiences from populating of the Database on Statistics and discuss about future steps. Parties agreed on several technical issues and main activities for the next year. The Database became operational as of December 2017.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Parliamentary Ratification of Additional Protocol 5 in each CEFTA Party has started.
- CEFTA AEO network of experts was updated.
- CEFTA Parties agreed to have a single date for the application of full cumulation and duty drawback.
- CEFTA Network of Veterinary Experts for TRACES/SEED + was established.
- The IT solution for the Reporting System of data on trade in service, FATS and FDI was developed
- The Database on trade in services, FATS and FDI as well trade in goods became operational and accessible through the CEFTA Secretariat's website as of December 2017
- First regional CEFTA Investment Report was published and presented at the CEFTA Week held in November in Belgrade
- Recommendation to open negotiations on mutual recognition of professional qualifications for doctors of medicine, dentists and civil engineers and architect
- The list of existing regulatory bodies in charge of services as well proposal on pilot service sectors potentially subject to concrete forms of cooperation amongst the respective regulatory bodies has been developed

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The CEFTA Secretariat will keep providing technical and administrative support to the Chair in Office for the implementation of the Chairmanship Programme 2018 and will continue assisting the CEFTA Parties in the organisation of all the regular meetings of the CEFTA structures and in conducting negotiations.

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

- 1) Preparation of Implementing Provisions for Mutual recognition of Border Documents and AEO Programmes according to the AP 5.
- 2) Start the negotiation on AP 7
- 3) Encouraging CEFTA Parties to conclude signing the Memoranda of Understanding between Customs Authorities and other Competent Authorities of CEFTA Parties involved in the clearance of goods.
- 4) Encouraging to coordinate the positions of CEFTA Parties in the revision exercise of the PEM Convention and to undertake the concerted actions to propose the modifications of the bi-lateral free trade agreements with the EU, EFTA States, and Turkey to include full cumulation and duty drawback.
- 5) Agreeing with CEFTA parties about the possible scope of SEED + Project for the electronic

exchange of documents.

- 6) Adoption of the Additional Protocol 6 on Trade in Services and its subsequent ratification
- 7) Regular update of the CEFTA Statistical Portal on Goods, Services and FDI Statistics
- 8) Types of potential arrangements on intraregional cooperation amongst regulatory bodies to be agreed upon.
- 9) Identification of barriers in electronic commerce amongst CEFTA Parties
- 10) Work on establishment of the CEFTA Contact Points for Services.
- 11) Opening negotiations for recognition of professional qualifications in sectors and professions of mutual interest.
- 12) Support in the preparation of CEFTA Parties for the MAP Donor Conference
- 13) Support the Parties in the implementation of MAP

### 3.6 COMPETITIVENESS

#### OECD Support to Economic Competitiveness in South East Europe

<b>Programme reference:</b>	2016/373-821
<b>Project title:</b>	OECD Support to Economic Competitiveness in South East Europe
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 10.7 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Contribution agreement with OECD
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2016
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	11 05 2016 –10 November2019
<b>Contact :</b>	Hillen Francke, Hillen.francke@ec.europa.eu

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

**Economic Reform Programmes:** The OECD first joined the ERP kick-off meetings in June and July, during which the OECD provided its assessment how the ERP can be improved and the ERP tools can be applied remotely. The OECD then held a series of capacity building seminars with line ministries in September and October, tailored to the specific needs of the beneficiary countries, to support the diagnostics and reform measures of the new draft ERP. During the seminars, the status of reform implementation was checked and potential key performance indicators for an improved ERP reporting were identified. The OECD provided inputs on how to improve the overall coherency between macroeconomic projections, state

budget expenditure and reform plans. Following the in-country support events, the OECD provided written inputs and recommendations to the draft ERP chapter on structural reform between September and December.

**Competitiveness Outlook:** The OECD held Competitiveness Outlook Week in July, during which key stakeholders discussed and validated draft assessment scores and regional recommendations. The drafting process of the Competitiveness Outlook was finalised. The draft manuscript underwent a comprehensive review by partner governments and partner organisations. It was then edited by professional editors.

**SBA Assessment: SME Policy Index:** The revised SME Policy Index assessment frameworks had been presented in the SBA Co-ordinators' Meeting for final feedback (September), subsequent to which the frameworks were finalised. Seven in-country SBA launch meetings were organised in the capitals of the Western Balkans and Turkey to present the key features of the SBA assessment process and to introduce the revised assessment frameworks by dimension (September-November). Upon organisation of the in-country launch meetings, the assessment phase started off. *Supporting Activities:* The third regional policy dialogue was held to discuss the implementation of successful bankruptcy prevention and second chance provisions (September). The pilot capacity building event was organised in Istanbul to share Turkey's experience in fostering SME-academia collaboration in innovative activities.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

**Economic Reform Programmes:** The third ERP Tool (Monitoring Tool) supported ERP co-ordinators and line ministries in the reporting of the ERP implementation by providing guidelines and concrete examples. The capacity-building seminars facilitated the improvement in the quality of the ERPs.

**Competitiveness Outlook:** One Competitiveness Outlook Week was successfully completed, validating draft assessment scores and regional results. One 600-page Competitiveness Outlook manuscript was drafted, reviewed and edited. It contains detailed analysis and policy assessments across 17 policy dimensions, more than 600 indicators and six economies, as well as actionable policy recommendations.

**SBA Assessment: SME Policy Index:** By finalising the assessments, the capacity of policy-makers were enhanced in identifying strengths and weaknesses in a broad range of SME policies. *Supporting Activities:* The regional policy dialogue helped SBA Co-ordinators and high-level policy makers increase their understanding of developing appropriate policies and instruments concerning "bankruptcy and second chance". The capacity building event in Istanbul allowed practitioners to learn from the Turkish experience in establishing innovation infrastructure and offering tailored services to foster collaboration between SMES and academia.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

**Economic Reform Programmes:** The annual Regional Meeting of ERP Coordinators will be organised on 24-25 April and will reflect upon lessons learnt and set the path for the new ERP cycle, which will be followed by in-country kick-off events and capacity building sessions in the WB capitals in June and July.

**Competitiveness Outlook:** The Competitiveness Outlook will be put into a publication format. It will be published and launched at a high-level conference in Paris on 24 April.

**SBA Assessment:** *SME Policy Index:* The government and independent assessments will be completed (March), and seven reconciliation meetings will take place in the capitals of Western Balkans and Turkey to align the findings of the government and independent assessments (March-June) *Support Activities:* Back-to-back with the SBA Co-ordinators' meeting, a regional policy dialogue meeting will be organised, focusing on SME greening policies (March).

## CHAPTER 4 : TRANSPORT AND ENERGY, INFRASTRUCTURE, NUCLEAR SAFETY

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One of the priorities for IPA assistance is to help Beneficiaries by jointly working on increasing competitiveness and investments in infrastructure. Interventions in this sector have the ultimate goal of supporting the modernisation of their economies, also with a view to promote transport and energy networks, energy efficiency and renewable energy as well as environment and social infrastructure. Close coordination with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) is essential and the EU technical assistance and investment grants instrumental for the projects to materialise.

### 4.1 WESTERN BALKANS INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK (WBIF)

The Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) was established in 2009 as a regional tool for EU enlargement. It supports socio-economic development and EU accession across the Western Balkans through the provision of financing and technical assistance to strategic investments. It pools resources from the European Commission's Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) with those of the involved Financial Institutions (FIs), bilateral donors and the governments of the Western Balkans. The WBIF increases the region's capacity to finance crucial infrastructure and priority investments in line with accession priorities and enhances the overall coordination of assistance. The WBIF seeks to maximise the impact of grant financing by using it to leverage lending by the involved Financial Institutions to priority strategic investments as identified by the Western Balkan beneficiaries.

Since its launch, the WBIF has developed a pipeline of priority investments of approximately EUR 16 billion. A grand total of 256 technical assistance (TA) and investment grants (INV) have been awarded to 156 investment projects for a cumulative value of EUR 773 million. The grants are used for project preparation, implementation, and co-financing of infrastructure investments for which financial support is provided by the partner organisations – CEB, EBRD, EIB, KfW, as well as by the World Bank Group in its capacity of participating organisation.

The grant assignments are implemented by the Lead FIs or the European Commission. The implementation of EU grants, is carried out either under Commission awarded TA contracts - the Infrastructure Project Facility (IPF) and Contribution Arrangements with the European Western Balkans Joint Fund (EWBJF) Managers (EBRD & EIB) for the co-financing of connectivity projects.

The European Commission is the largest contributor to the WBIF with a total of EUR 659 million in grants channelled through the WBIF framework. Some EUR 500 million have been allocated to the co-financing of investments in the energy, transport and environment sectors under the connectivity agenda and the Municipal Window. Between 2008 and 2017, bilateral donors have contributed more than EUR 75 million to the EWBJF and the involved

FIs have set aside EUR 10 million each in grant and other contributions. Grants provided to the WBIF from bilateral donors and the FIs are implemented directly by the FIs.

## PURPOSE

The WBIF has three objectives:

1. To create a one-stop-shop, where a request for project support can be presented, screened, assessed, and, eventually, provided with the required financing for its implementation;
2. to pool different sources of funding (FIs, EC and bilateral donors) and work out an appropriate blend of grants and loans for various actions; and
3. to strengthen the strategic and policy coordination of actions by multiple donors and investors that addresses the socio-economic priorities for the region. These socio-economic priorities are accession-driven and relate to the alignment of the WB6 candidate countries and potential candidates with the EU acquis. WBIF activities are supported by the EC-financed IFI Coordination Office – see below for a more detailed description of its activities.

The identification of priority projects is a result of consultations with other relevant DGs (Environment, Climate Action, Move, Energy, Regional Policy, Economic and Financial Affairs) thus ensuring coordination with their activities in the region.

## ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

Key activities under the WBIF work programme for the second half of 2017 included in particular the 18th TA call for proposals, and the finalization of the mature investment projects for co-financing under the connectivity agenda.

Round 18 Technical Assistance (TA) call for proposals was launched in July 2017 and 23 applications were received. The Project Financiers' Group (PFG) met in November 2017 in Sarajevo to discuss the screened and assessed grant applications.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

The 18th Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the WBIF took place in Frankfurt, December 2017, and was hosted by the KfW. Based on the recommendations of the PFG, the SC approved 13 TA grant requests for a total of EUR 23.4 million to projects in the environment and transport sector. The SC also approved EUR101.4 million INV grant for 3 investment projects FYR Macedonia (Rail interconnection Corridor VIII) and Serbia(Orient/East - Med Corridor (Xc), and Upgrade of Makis Water and Waste water Treatment Plant). As new TA call for proposals were announced (Round 19 TA) with a deadline for submitting applications of 28 February 2018.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The indicative work programme for the first half of 2018 includes the assessment and approval of TA Round 19 as well as the endorsement of INV Round 3 during the WB summit in Sofia in May 2018. The INV grant call for proposals was open to all four sectors although the approval of environment and social sector projects is subject to availability of funds from

bilateral donors' resources as IPA funds are limited to the financing of connectivity projects only.

The next PFG meeting will be held in Skopje in April 2018. The next SC meeting will take place in June 2018 in Paris and will be hosted by France.

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#### 4.2 HORIZONTAL SUPPORT TO IFI COORDINATION

<b>Programme reference:</b>	IPA I Multi-beneficiary Programme 2013 (DN 2013/024-091) and IPA II Multi-country Programme 2015 (DN 2015/031-609)
<b>Project title:</b>	Horizontal Support to Coordination with International Financial Institutions – IFI Coordination Office
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 7.76 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Service contract with Mott MacDonald Limited
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2014/340-622 and CN 2016/372-315
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01.04.2014 – 31.01.2018
<b>Link:</b>	<a href="http://www.wbif.eu">www.wbif.eu</a>
<b>Contact:</b>	Elodie Loppé, <a href="mailto:Elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu">Elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu</a>

The IFI Coordination Office refers to the consultancy service contract awarded by DG NEAR aiming to ensure better coordination and cooperation between the beneficiaries, the EC, the IFIs and bilateral donors. The IFI Coordination Office (IFICO) provides a range of technical, management and communication services to support coordination among all WBIF stakeholders. It delivers analytical and operational services to the EC, IFIs and bilateral donors in the main WBIF sectors to facilitate better programming and planning of assistance including investments.

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

- Preparation and follow-up of the WBIF Project Financiers' Group meeting in Sarajevo in November and Steering Committee meeting in Frankfurt in December 2017.
- Support to the EC on the grant applications to be financed from INV Round 3.
- Support to the Beneficiaries applying for project grants for TA Round 18.
- Preparation of Terms of References for approved TA projects.

## OUTPUTS (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

- Supported preparation, organisation and follow-up of WBIF related meetings, in particular the Project Financiers Group meeting in Sarajevo in November and the WBIF Steering Committee meeting in Frankfurt in December 2017.
- Supported the EC and the WBIF Secretariat in the screening process for applications from TA Round 18 and preparation of INV Round 3.
- Maintained and developed new features for the WBIF website and MIS.
- Drafted and submitted Terms of References for selected TA projects.
- Delivered the bi-annual Monitoring Report in November 2017, and bi-monthly reports of active WBIF projects.
- Finalised communication material including bilateral donor and sector factsheets.

### 4.3 WBIF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS FACILITIES (IPF)

<b>Programme reference:</b>	IPA I Multi-beneficiary Programmes 2011 (DN 2011/022-964) and 2012 (DN2012/022-966)
<b>Project title:</b>	Infrastructure Projects Facility 3 – Technical Assistance Window
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 22.422 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Service contract with Mott MacDonald Limited
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2012/293-208 and CN 2013/331-494
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	20.06.2012 – 30.09.2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.wbif.eu">www.wbif.eu</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Élodie LOPPE, <a href="mailto:elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu">elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu</a>

<b>Programme reference:</b>	IPA II Multi-country Programme 2014 (DN 2014/031-603)
<b>Project title:</b>	Support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework projects – Infrastructure Project Facility (extension IPF 4 and IPF 5)
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 35.54 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Specific Grant Agreement with the European Investment Bank



<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/368-253
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	17.12.2015 – 31.12.2020
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.wbif.eu">www.wbif.eu</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Élodie LOPPÉ, <a href="mailto:elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu">elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu</a>

<b>Programme reference:</b>	IPA II Multi-country Programme 2015 (DN 2015/031-609)
<b>Project title:</b>	Support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework projects – Infrastructure Project Facility 2015 (IPF 6)
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 26.12 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Specific Grant Agreement with the European Investment Bank
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2016/379-644
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	23.11.2016 – 31.12.2021
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.wbif.eu">www.wbif.eu</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Élodie LOPPÉ, <a href="mailto:elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu">elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu</a>

<b>Programme reference:</b>	IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2016 part II (DN 2016/039-401)
<b>Project title:</b>	Support to the Western Balkans Investment Framework projects – Infrastructure Project Facility 2016 (IPF 7)
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 36 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Specific Grant Agreement with the European Investment Bank
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2017/388-401
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	13.09.2017 – 31.12.2022
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.wbif.eu">www.wbif.eu</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Élodie LOPPÉ, <a href="mailto:elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu">elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

The Infrastructure Projects Facilities (IPFs) are consultancy services contracts implementing the Western Balkans Infrastructure Framework (WBIF) technical assistance grants for priority infrastructure projects in the transport, environment, energy and social sectors.

Technical assistance is most largely requested for pre-feasibility studies, general designs, feasibility studies, preliminary designs, financing plans, cost-benefit analysis, tariffs plans, environmental impact assessments, detailed designs, etc., that is to say for the preparation of project documentation. Technical assistance may also occasionally be provided during the implementation phase, for the preparation of tender dossiers and for the supervision of works, providing therefore support throughout the project cycle. In some exceptional cases, IPFs may be asked to provide ad-hoc advisory and technical assistance, for example for regional sector development studies.

To date, six IPFs have been deployed. The European Commission has been managing directly the first three Facilities, with the activities of the first two already completed. To ensure the implementation of WBIF technical assistance grants in the most efficient manner while minimising the administrative weight on the European Commission, it was decided that the EIB would manage the facilities from IPF 4 and onwards.

## ACTIVITIES (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

IPF 3 has been assigned a total of 26 technical assistance grants, using fully its resources. IPF 3 portfolio is well advanced and most of the technical assistance grants are reaching the completion stage. In addition to the implementation of WBIF TA grants, IPF 3 has continued developing the Regional Strategy for Sustainable Hydropower in the Western Balkans. To ensure a continuity of activities between IFI-CO 2 and IFI-CO 3 contracts, IPF 3 was also assigned some WBIF horizontal tasks, such as the organisation of the technical assistance round 19 and the investment round 3 and of the subsequent WBIF meetings.

IPF 4 has been assigned the implementation of 18 technical assistance grants, using fully its resources. Their activities are in full swing, with eight projects completed and an end date of activities for end 2018.

IPF 5 started their activities in July 2016 and have been for the time being implementing ten projects, while IPF 6, which initiated their activities in February 2017, have been implementing one project and preparing terms of reference for four projects. The IPF 5 and IPF 6 limited pipelines are due to difficulties encountered in the preparation of the terms of reference for some of the grants approved by the WBIF Steering Committee.

The tender procedure for IPF 7 was continued.

## OUTPUTS (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

Preparation and implemenattion of priority transport, environment and energy infrastructure projects.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuation of the implementation of technical assistance in IPA II beneficiaries
- Signature of IPF7 contract and initiation of IPF 7 activities

### 4.4 WBIF CONNECTIVITY INVESTMENT GRANTS

<b>Programme reference:</b>	IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2015-2016 (DN 2015/038-055 and 2016/038-727)
<b>Project title:</b>	Contribution Arrangement with respect to the European Western Balkans Joint Fund under the Western Balkans Investment Framework
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 144 900 000
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Contribution Arrangement with the European Western Balkans Joint Fund managers (EBRD and EIB)
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2016/375-830, CN 2016/375-855 and CN 2016/380-342
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	16.06.2016 – 31.12.2024
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.wbif.eu">www.wbif.eu</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Élodie LOPPE, <a href="mailto:elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu">elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu</a>

<b>Programme reference:</b>	IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2016 part II (DN 2016/039-401)
<b>Project title:</b>	Contribution Arrangement with respect to the European Western Balkans Joint Fund under the Western Balkans Investment Framework
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 145 500 000
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Contribution Arrangement with the European Western Balkans Joint Fund managers (EBRD and EIB)
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2017/390-295
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	04.12.2017 – 31.12.2025
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.wbif.eu">www.wbif.eu</a>
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## PURPOSE

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

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

The connectivity investment grants are approved on an annual basis by the WBIF Steering Committee. For the time being, the Steering Committee hold three investment rounds and approved eight grants in December 2015 (round 0), three grants in December 2016 (round 1) and two grants in December 2017 (round 2).

The recent introduction of connectivity investment grants in the WBIF financing structure and its complex set-up required the adjustment of several aspects.

- The amounts of some of the grants from rounds 0 and 1 required to be revised as some costs were not originally reflected. The WBIF Steering Committee meeting taking place in Frankfurt on 13 December 2017 formally endorsed these changes.
- The distribution of costs under the different Multi-country Programmes Connectivity needed to be revised and the requirements to process disbursements to be further defined.

## OUTPUTS (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

- Establishment of the legal frameworks and initiation of construction activities in IPA II beneficiaries

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Screening and assessment of the WBIF investment round 3 and political endorsement of the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia on 17 May 2018
- Signature of the Contribution Arrangement for the IPA II Multi-country Programme Connectivity 2017-2018

## 4.5 JASPERS

<b>Programme reference:</b>	IPA II Multi-country Programme 2015 (DN 2015/031-609) and Multi-country Programme 2016 (DN 2016/037-900)
<b>Project title:</b>	JASPERS IPA II
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Specific Grant Agreement with the EIB
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2016/368-304 and CN 2017/390-198
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/01/2016 – 31/12/2020
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.jaspers-europa-info.org">www.jaspers-europa-info.org</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Élodie LOPPE, <a href="mailto:elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu">elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu</a>

### PURPOSE

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

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

### ACTIVITIES (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

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

JASPERS continued to provide their services in Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as initiated under their previous agreement with DG REGIO – activities in Serbia are falling under a separate agreement between JASPERS and the EU Delegation. They also initiated activities in Turkey in relation with environment projects. In

parallel, JASPERS established contacts with the national authorities and the EU Delegations in Albania and Kosovo.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY– DECEMBER 2017)

- 29 active projects
- 10 completed projects
- 14 projects initiated during the reporting period

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

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

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

#### 4.6 ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN FOR GROWTH

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Management of Participation in the Green for Growth Fund
<b>Project title:</b>	Green for Growth Fund, Southeast Europe (GGF)
<b>EU contribution (IPA only):</b>	EUR 38.6 million - Shares, EUR 10.8 million - Technical Assistance (TA)
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	19 countries including Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Delegation (Trusteeship) Agreement with the European Investment Fund (EIF)
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2016/381-814. Previous: CNs 2009/228-008; 2009/228-006; 2011/267-146; 2010/257-202; 2010/257-202
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	17/12/2009 - 31/12/2023
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.ggf.lu">www.ggf.lu</a>
<b>Contact:</b>	Davor Kunc, <a href="mailto:davor.kunc@ec.europa.eu">davor.kunc@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

GGF continued to build-up a diversified portfolio and increased impact by transferring best practices across a broad spectrum of Partner Institutions (PIs). During second half of 2017,

the GGF signed and/or disbursed 20 new investments to financial institutions, direct investments and corporates, totaling EUR 148.8 million. In SEE these new investments were related to three financial institutions in Serbia and Turkey, four microfinance institutions in Kosovo and Bosnia & Herzegovina and one project finance investment in Serbia and totaling EUR 71.0 million.

GGF continued to build upon its strong momentum, increasing the environmental impact of the Fund through considerable on-lending and outreach. GGF's cumulative sub-loan portfolio reached EUR 470.7 million in SEE and EUR 580.2 million in total by the end of Q4.

On the funding side, EUR 15 million new perpetual first-loss capital was provided by the BMZ, whereas substantial progress was achieved in the documentation of further public funding, including EUR 20 million in C Shares for the Western Balkans which closed and funded in January, 2018. Also during the period, the Neighbourhood Investment Facility approved an additional EUR 8 million C Share investment and EUR 2 million TA contribution for the ENR-East. These are in documentation for closing in 2018. With two private investments subscribed in December 2017 the share of private capital on total capital accounted for 22% at year-end.

The TA Facility approved 27 new projects with a total budget of EUR 1,533,839 in the second half of 2017. The current funding of the TA Facility benefited from a EUR 5.8 million contribution from the DG NEAR, earmarked to WB6 in November 2017 as well as from a EUR 2.5 million contribution from BMZ, dedicated to projects in all target countries except Croatia.

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

The Fund was prominently featured at the COP23 and continued to actively attend industry events, and participate in the Energy Community's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy coordination group meetings.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

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

- Total cumulative investment portfolio since inception: EUR 247.2 million.
- Number of active Partner Institutions (Q4): 25.
- Number of active target countries (Q4): 8.
- No asset impairments have been accorded.
- CO2 Savings / CO2 Reduction (Q4): 402,990 tons of CO2/year (56.1%).
- Energy Savings (Q4): 1,478,938 MWh/year (53.8%).

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The Fund will enter the first half of 2018 with a strong approved pipeline of EUR 59.6m, with investments under consideration, in particular in Serbia (two approved wind projects), Turkey, and Bosnia & Herzegovina.

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

The Fund will continue exploring the potential of investments which complement energy savings and/or CO2 reductions by achieving measurable impact in water, waste and resource efficiency (“nexus investments”) in 2018. In addition, the Fund is in active preparation of the Sustainable Future Forum, a stakeholder meeting of 200 international leaders in the climate and sustainable finance communities, as well as a new competition for innovative businesses or projects (“clim@ competition”).

#### 4.7 RADIATION PROTECTION

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

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES

The project is in a highly advanced phase. Some of the tasks were completed in the previous periods (e.g. 2.4, 2.6, 3.1 and 3.2), while others are being finalised in this period and others



are continuing. Most notable tasks completed in this period include the Task #2.3, Training of the regulatory body staff, where 3 OJT events took place in the reporting period; Task #3.3, Improvement of protocols for diagnostic and interventional radiology and associated training, where the final workshop on the results of the optimisation processes in intervention radiology was held; Task #3.4, Definition of National policy and a national strategy for radioactive waste management, where both the strategy and policy were discussed, assessed against similar strategies in comparable EU MS, presented to the national stakeholders and adopted by the beneficiary country (Serbia); as well as the Task #3.5, Decommissioning of the RA Research Reactor, where the assessment of the decommissioning options, the visit to Julich laboratory in Germany to observe the actual decommissioning activities, a walk down to Vinca reactor to assess the adequacy of the options as well as the workshop to comment on and approve the report on decommissioning options for Vinca research reactor took place.

There are several tasks the implementation of which continued. Those include the Task #2.1 Transposition of the EU Acquis, where the support in the development of the new national law on radiation protection and nuclear safety continued in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, but also the development of other regulations to transpose the EU directives. In Kosovo, the Law is already in the parliamentary procedure. Further in this task, the on-site support for Kosovo continued with an EU expert embedded in the KARPNS for a period of time; Task #2.2 Development of regulatory procedures, which has been completed in 4 countries but continued in Montenegro where a Workshop to review 14 existing procedures and merge those into 5 new ones took place; as well as Task #2.5 Strategic Plan and Management System, where continued support is being provided by in finalisation of management documentation. In this period, the last task of the project, Task #2.7 Public Information was initiated with a comprehensive workshop on how to inform the public on the regulatory activities related with ionising radiation, which was attended by regulators from all the beneficiary countries. Another relevant aspect in relation with this task is that, recognising that the public information is highly important and lacking the knowledge in this area, all of the beneficiary countries joined the task, although it was originally planned only for 3 countries.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

This project is expected to be finalised in the next semester, with the Final meeting of the project, which would also symbolically commemorate the completion of the IPA activities in the radiological and nuclear field, is planned for late May 2018. All of the tasks of the project are expected to be completed by that time.

For the Task #2.1, Transposition of EU Acquis, the activities will include a series of workshops to complete the Tables of Concordance (TOC) of the new laws and regulations developed (or updated) by each country with the EU Acquis. Some of the countries are delayed with the

formal adoption of laws and regulations, so it might be that the full compliance would still not be in place by the time of completion of the project. In those cases the beneficiary countries themselves will complete their TOCs at a later date. Task #2.2 will be completed with the finalisation of the procedures in Montenegro, planned for March 2018. Under Task #2.5, the management systems for the participating countries would, upon their completion, be reviewed and commented on by the project team, to enable their implementation.

The most visible activities are expected under Task #2.7, where each of the beneficiary countries will develop its own communication plan, which will be reviewed by the EU experts. Then, a series of “Round tables” will be held in each country, with the participation of the national stakeholders and the media, but also of the representative of neighbouring countries (and Consultant’s public information experts). The series of Round Tables is expected to be held in February with some follow up in March. The Round Tables are likely the best way to both inform the public on the activities of respective regulators in each country but also on the achievement of this project in enhancing the legal framework and regulatory oversight in radiological areas to the level as in the EU.

# CHAPTER 5: ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

## 5.1 FLOOD RESPONSE

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

### PURPOSE

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

### ACTIVITIES (JULY - DECEMBER 2017)

- Final planning conference for the Exercise "Varazdin 2017", 14 September.
- Field Exercise "Varazdin 2017" in Croatia on 9-13 October.

### OUTPUTS (JULY - DECEMBER 2017)

- Developed and trained two different types of flood response multinational teams: High Capacity Pumping module (HCP) and Flood Containment module (FC).
- Standard operational procedures, Protocol on border crossing and Host Nation Support and training packages for the modules were developed and tested at the exercise.
- Newsletter No 8.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

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

## 5.2 DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-country Programme, IPA II 2015 (CRIS 2015/038-052)
<b>Project title:</b>	Disaster Risk Assessment and Mapping
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 2 999 250
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Procurement
<b>Contract reference:</b>	ECHO SER/2016/740641
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/12/2016 - 01/12/2019
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.ipadram.eu/">http://www.ipadram.eu/</a>
<b>Contact:</b>	Biljana Zuber, <a href="mailto:biljana.zuber@ec.europa.eu">biljana.zuber@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

- A two-day study-visit in September to Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency .The objective was to increase understanding and knowledge of decentralised approaches to risk-, vulnerability- and capability assessments by providing a full overview of a working example of a decentralised risk assessment system.
- Sept- Oct: country visits to all the beneficiaries to produce the Plans of Action.
- 21 November 2<sup>nd</sup> steering Group Meeting in Sarajevo, BiH.
- Developing on line platform for installing the Electronic Regional Risk Atlas (ERRA).

## OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

- The Plans of Action for each beneficiary were developed and adopted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering committee meeting. The Plans of Action specify actions needed to develop and improve national and regional risk assessment and mapping, the disaster loss data collection and sharing, and the use of the Electronic Regional Risk Atlas (ERRA) for each beneficiary.
- Overview of risks in the region.

- Newsletter No. 3.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Integration of on line platform with Electronic Regional Risk Atlas.
- Participation in the Civil Protection Forum in Brussels, March 2018.
- Second regional workshop in June 2018.
- International training for Disaster Risk Reduction in Sweden in June 2018.
- Beneficiary experts to attend "exchange of experts" programme with Slovenia on Disaster Loss data system in Slovenia, June 2018.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering committee meeting in June 2018 in Turkey .

## CHAPTER 6: CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA

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

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

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

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

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

Link to the guidelines:

[http://www.tacso.org/documents/otherdoc/?id=9887&template\\_id=73&langTag=en-US](http://www.tacso.org/documents/otherdoc/?id=9887&template_id=73&langTag=en-US)

### Civil Society Facility

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

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

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

A "People 2 People" (P2P) programme to bring a variety of organisations in the ELARG region into contact with EU institutions and European-level counterparts. These include CSO representatives, human rights and minority defence activists, NGOs dealing with *acquis*-related subjects, journalists, young politicians and trade union leaders. TACSO has taken over the management of the third strand, the P2P programme applying a demand driven approach.

## 6.1 OPERATING GRANTS

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Civil Society Facility Programme and Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-605
<b>Project title:</b>	Operating grants
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 1.48 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grants
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/01/2017 – 31/12/2017
<b>Contacts:</b>	Kristina Vujic, <a href="mailto:kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu">kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu</a> Henk Visser, <a href="mailto:henk.visser@ec.europa.eu">henk.visser@ec.europa.eu</a>

### PURPOSE

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

**Regional CSO platform advocating social innovation under employment policies that guarantees security for youth at risks – YOU SEE! Platform (2016/382-275 continuation of 2015/368-862 and 2014/351-917).** Project is designed to create CSO platform for regional response to challenges in implementation of socio-economic policy reforms toward youth. Regarding the project action plan, during second part of the year a draft of legislative solutions for traineeship was prepared. Other realized activities during this period were: 7 Progress reports on the active labor market policies, a structured dialogue between youth and decision makers in Serbia and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and also more than ten partner interventions on proposals and existing policies which have effects on employment of all youth groups at risk of exclusion are collected. In Montenegro in July a second consultative regional meeting was realized on policy analyses. The Social Innovation Forum (7/12/2017) was the biggest event last year, with the participation of 100 people which enabled the networking of creators, professionals, thinkers who created a kind of social innovation or started their own social enterprise.

**Regional Youth Exchange Association (2016/381-965 continuation of 2015/371-378 and 2014/351-845).** Youth Initiative for Human Rights- YIHR continued to organise youth exchanges across the region of Western Balkans – an exchange program in Vukovar, called „Dealing With the Past – Second Generation’s Perspective“, a Feminist Exchange, where 10 participants from Kosovo had a chance to visit Belgrade, a History Students Exchange for 10 history students from Serbia and Croatia in Zagreb to discuss and compare their curriculums, so as pilot exchange called Culture of Memory held in Sarajevo when ten participants from Serbia visited Sarajevo and discussed issues of transitional justice, memory activism and war legacy of the city of Sarajevo. YIHR also organized Zagreb Youth Summit that was held from November 6-9th in Zagreb, Croatia, with over 100 activists from Western Balkans countries and participation of activists from all around the world. YIHR created 15 short video clips, where participants of pilot exchanges from all countries in the region talked about the importance of Regional Youth Cooperation Office - RYCO and regional exchange programs in general. Video clips can be found on YIHR Facebook and Youtube page. YIHR also created „Exchange Guidelines“. This is a document with all relevant information and recommendations regarding youth exchanges. YIHR and RYCO are currently discussing ways for implementation of this document into RYCO’s official work.

**Young With a Voice (2016 / 381-500, continuation of 2015 / 371-191 and 2014 / 351-938).** Period July - October 2017, was used to organize series of national events in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia to present the recommendations regarding actions necessary to improve general position of children in each project country and to discuss the matters of greater support for children and young people from marginalized groups. In November 2017, regional conference “State of Child Rights in the WB Region” was organized in Belgrade, Serbia, gathering representatives of regional ChildPact network, national networks for children from project countries, CSOs and relevant public institutions representatives. Conference was focused on discussion about the general state of child rights in the region, with special emphasis on position of migrant children and children living and working on the street. During the conference regional actors have identified mechanisms for influence on relevant institutions and bodies at the European level and accordingly have developed joint action strategy and set of regional recommendations as part of the contribution for the EU enlargement package for 2018. Implemented action has also included youth driven activities which have enabled and secured high level of direct participation of young people within the project. Accordingly, in August 2017, group of 20 young people from all project countries went through the training for peer educators and they have implemented series of peer workshop in each project country on UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the position and rights of children from marginalized groups, policies for child protection, monitoring and advocacy.

**Balkan regional platform for youth participation and dialogue (2016/382-276 continuation of 2015/371-185 and 2014/351-922).** The project aims at structuring the regional thematic cooperation and coordination between civil society and public authorities in Western Balkan countries to help improve environment for youth activism and participation, in particular of young people with fewer opportunities. The regional co-operation platform connecting youth groups from across the region promoting active citizenship and participation in the EU integration reform process was created (<http://www.aldabalkan-youth.eu>). The partnership strategy was adopted and Balkan Regional Network for Local Democracy comprising eight Local Democracy Agencies with their host cities established. The Regional Youth Forum was



organised in Peja/Pec in Kosovo from 17-20 October 2017 with the research results presented and policy recommendations on youth cultural participation adopted. Regional exchange programme for youth correspondents, My City-Youth City, Local Youth Fund and Youth Taking Over Day programmes were implemented in eight host cities.

**Together for Equality: Advancing Human Rights of LGBT people in the Western Balkans and Turkey (2016/382-246 continuation of 2015/371-462 and 2014/351-960).** During the reporting period, ERA – LGBTI Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Turkey increased its membership to 58 LGBTI organisations and has implemented a number of key activities. In September, ERA’s second Annual Conference entitled “*Empower, Challenge, Transform*” was organized in Podgorica, bringing together more than 150 participants from the region and beyond, including LGBTI CSO representatives, government representatives, representatives of the international institutions and organizations, and donors. In October, ERA has cooperated with RFSL, the leading LGBTI organization in Sweden, in organizing a training on fundraising for 15 ERA member organizations, from each country of the region. The training has taken place in Tetovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In November, ERA has organized a study visit to Berlin, for 12 member organizations from each country of the region, with the purpose of establishing closer dialogue and cooperation with relevant representatives of the German government, parliament and LGBTI CSOs. In December 2017, ERA has partnered with Stonewall, the leading LGBTI organization in the United Kingdom, in organizing a Regional Access to Justice Conference in Skopje, which aimed to strengthen cooperation and exchange of practices between criminal justice institutions in the UK and those in the Western Balkans and Turkey region, as well as to facilitate dialogue between LGBTI CSOs and relevant state institutions. The Conference brought together over 70 participants from the region. In addition, ERA has organized a number of advocacy meetings and round-table discussions, both on national level and international level. These meetings were held in Brussels, Amsterdam, the Hague, Berlin, Bonn, Belgrade, Podgorica, Tirana, Pristina and Zagreb.

**Strengthening NGO capacity and promoting public health and human rights oriented drug policy in South Eastern Europe (2016/382-208 continuation of 2015/ 371-158 and 2014/351-836).** In September 2017 a delegation of Diogenis, NGO 4life and Aksion Plus, all members of DPNSEE, visited Slovenia. The visit was part of the efforts for the enlargement of the Network. The main aim of the visit was to present DPNSEE, enhance contacts and improve drug policy dialogue with the relevant authorities, state institutions, policy makers and NGOs. The delegation had meetings, among other, with Mr. Jose Hren (Senior Advisor Directorate for Public Health, Ministry of Health) and also with representatives from the NGOs “Stigma” and the “Association of NGOs working on the field of drugs and addictions”. Two Newsletters have been published. Diogenis issued a publication on “Drug Law Reform. The UNGASS 2016, A Catalyst for change?” in order to inform NGOs and policy makers on international drug policy developments. In November the General Assembly of DPNSEE took place in Belgrade, with participation of the 22 member organisations. The partners meeting was held back to back with the General Assembly. Main issue of both meetingw was the evaluation of activities in 2017 and the new action plan for 2018.

**Balkans Independent Disability Framework - BIDF (2016/382-458 continuation of 2015/371-187 and 2014/351-920).** With this project, Agency for Cooperation, Education and Development-ACED and its partners, CIL in Serbia, UPCG in Montenegro, Polio Plus in the

former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the newly registered regional network BIDF, will assist associations dedicated to the fulfillment of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities to establish focal points and undertake policy and legislative advocacy, public education campaigns and other related activities at national and regional level. In addition to initial networking activities in Switzerland, Belgium, Albania and Croatia, BIDF network representatives have organized during the second half of 2017 meetings with disability associations and networks and attended regional events in Ireland, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Slovenia and Croatia. These study trips and meetings have enabled BIDF representatives to conduct presentations of its accomplishments and establish potential for future regional cooperation with EU disability associations and networks. Within the process of strengthening the regional operational capacities of BIDF network, two quarterly Management Board meetings and BIDF General Assembly were organized in Montenegro and Serbia. Responding to a high level of understanding that was achieved with disability organizations from Albania, at the BIDF General Assembly meeting conducted in Belgrade, Serbia in December 2017, the General Assembly adopted proposal to accept Albania as a BIDF member with ADRF - Albanian Disability Rights Foundation, Tirana, as a BIDF Albanian national coordinator agency. Facilitating a continuation of its policy advocacy efforts towards incorporation of disability policy recommendations in national legislations, 4 additional round tables were organized in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gathering BIDF network members and government representatives.

**Stronger Social Dialog in Western Balkans Countries - SSD WBC (2016/381-317 continuation of 2015/371-444 and 2014/351-846).** The project aims at strengthening the capacity of social partners in participating countries to contribute to the national and regional development of social dialogue and the harmonization with EU regulations (in Serbia, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania). It is implemented by the Montenegrin Employers Federation (coordinator) and its partners: the Association of Employers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, BusinessAlbania, the Business Confederation of Republic of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Serbian Association of Employers, the Union of Employers' Associations of Republika Srpska. During this reporting period, the project partners implemented a national debate in each country. The panel discussions were a great opportunity to share knowledge about the youth unemployment and informal economy. Also, the project partners prepared e-leaflets which were distributed to their members (at least 1.000 companies per country) and also to other relevant institutions.

**European Integration and the social dimension: strengthening regional cooperation of trade unions in the Balkans (2016/381-594 continuation of 2015/371-495 and 2014/351-847).** The programme deals with institutional capacity, expertise & knowledge building within trade union organisations in ex-Yu. It aims at promoting experience exchange in the main areas of TU activities, policies and internal reform processes, in order to empower them as strong actors in society and as recognized partners in the social dialogue. The exchange of experiences and information of tripartite bodies (SECs) had been in the focus (comparative analysis). Industrial relations in key sectors (textile, Telecom) had been evaluated and a branch union network is established. The participation in the WB Civil Forum (EESC) in Sarajevo facilitated the development of until now relatively weak relations between NGOs and unions. The final declaration underlines the importance of social

partners' involvement in the regional cooperation. Preparation of a cooperation agreement between the regional employers (affiliated to BusinessEurope) and the project partners is under construction. See: [www.onthewaytoeu.net](http://www.onthewaytoeu.net)

**Western Balkans Pulse for Police Integrity and Trust: POINTPULSE (2016/382-205 continuation of 2015/371-144 and 2014/351-850).** The project seeks to contribute to increased trust and confidence in police services in the Western Balkans by promoting police integrity. Launched in January 2015, the POINTPULSE network now comprises seven civil society organizations: Analytica, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Serbia, Centre for Security Studies, Institute Alternative, Institute for Democracy and Mediation, and Kosovar Centre for Security Studies. In the past six months, the POINTPULSE organized 14 public events gathering more than 400 professionals from the police, prosecution, civil society, regional initiatives, and international community to discuss most emergent police integrity issues: trust in the police, criminal liability of police officers, public procurments, and conflict of interest. In a conversation with the group of 15 journalists from the EU member states, the POINTPULSE explains the issues of police integrity in the Balkans. The POINTPULSE opened a public discussion about Draft Law on Internal Affairs in Montenegro, despite the fact that there is no legal obligation for Montenegrin government to discuss law proposals in a field of security. Researchers from the POINTPULSE network took part in a panel organized by the Regional Anticorruption Initiative discussing the importance of research and advocacy of the civil society in raising the resistance to corruption. The POINTPULSE website continues to be regularly updated.

## 6.2 LONG- TERM GRANTS

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme, IPA 2014/031-605
<b>Project title:</b>	Support to regional thematic networks of Civil Society Organisations – Long-term Grants
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 15.8 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	16 Grants
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	December 2015 – December 2019
<b>Contacts:</b>	Kristina Vujic, <a href="mailto:kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu">kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu</a> Karl Giacinti, <a href="mailto:karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu">karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu</a> Henk Visser, <a href="mailto:henk.visser@ec.europa.eu">henk.visser@ec.europa.eu</a>

### PURPOSE

The 16 Long-term grants were awarded after a Call for proposals launched under the Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2014-2015 to provide support to regional thematic networks of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), fostering regular networking at regional and EU level, facilitating the exchange of knowledge, skills and connections, and increasing and widening their impact in campaigning and advocacy.

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

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

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

## ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST SEMESTER AND PLANNED FOR THE NEXT

The 18 projects are divided in 3 thematic areas:

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

### 1. RULE OF LAW, GOVERNANCE AND MEDIA FREEDOM

**Western Balkan's Regional Platform for advocating media freedom and journalists' safety (2015/369 - 846)** aims at empowering journalist associations to be effective and accountable actors in advocating application of EU standards of media freedom and integrity in the Western Balkan. The reporting period was very dynamic due to increasingly hostile environment for journalists, production of 2017 Indicators on the level of media freedom and journalists' safety reports and keeping these topics highly present in the public discourse. Advocacy and strategic plans for each organization were produced and internal capacities of partners advanced through trainings on communication with stakeholders and financial management. The regional network reacted 13 times covering 17 incidents by requesting from national and international stakeholders to put pressure on national governments to secure safe environment for journalists and condemn all types of violence and pressures against them. A small grants programme "Protecting Media Freedom and Freedom of Expression in the Western Balkans" awarded 11 national and 4 regional grants that contribute to realisation of the Project goals. The project was presented at the EU-Western Balkans Media Days in Tirana and its results were recognised by a number of participants. The Project underwent an external evaluation that concluded that not only it is still highly relevant, but that majority of targets were met or surpassed. It also gave concrete recommendations as to how it can be improved in order to increase its outcomes and impact.

**Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform – WeBER (2015/370-038).** The project has published the first PAR Monitor findings and regional comparisons, presenting results of indicators in the areas of Policy Development and Coordination, Accountability, and Public Service and Human Resource Management. Moreover, successful implementation of the Grant Facility has also led to disclosing the preliminary findings of PAR monitoring at local level being conducted by 33

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

**Accountability, Technology and Institutional Openness Network in the South East Europe region - ACTION SEE (2015/370-251)** aims at enhancing the involvement of civil society and media organizations in the creation of public opinion, policymaking and participation in the decision-making mechanisms. The action partners managed to successfully conduct the first measurement for the Openness Index of institutions and 24 policy papers were prepared from the collected data from the monitoring phase for all 6 countries covering the following branches: judiciary, parliament, ministries and units of local self-government. The total number of monitored institutions during the first iteration of the monitoring is 653. The results and the policy papers with precise recommendations for increasing the openness of state institutions were distributed to relevant stakeholders and discussed on a number of round tables, meetings and conferences in all the countries. Furthermore, In August 2017, 6 National Roadmaps for Good Governance were published for all the project countries presenting recommendations and concrete action steps for improvement. The interactive Index Visualization Tool was developed and made available online. A total of 148 CSOs applied for support in the Small Grants Scheme and 17 initiatives were selected for support. The Action showed that small organizations while cooperating with the media can amplify their impact and visibility, and put into light relevant local issues related to accountability and transparency. Media briefing packages were prepared and distributed containing information about the project, the Policy Papers and the Roadmaps. Besides many of media releases sent, more than 15 public events were organized across the targeted region.

**CSOs as equal partners in monitoring public finances (2015/370-293).** The project partners have been working on the visibility of the project - they participated in the EuroIFI meeting organised by Eurodad and Bankwatch in Thessaloniki, a conference on the Key challenges in the area of Transparency and Accountability in the EIB and co-organised the event “Corruption challenges of development finance” in Slovenia. Also the project has been

supporting the global PPPs campaign manifesto and organised national workshops for local NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and Kosovo and organised a round table with CSOs, experts, ministries, media, academia in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The project has been finalizing all 4 regional analysis on public debt, tax justice, PPPs and public infrastructure and in the framework of the Global Solidarity Summit in Hamburg the project organised a workshop Debt bondage in the Balkans: New research from the European Semi-Periphery.

## 2. SOCIAL INCLUSION, MIGRATION, RECONCILIATION

**SOCIETIES - Support Of CSOs In Empowering Technical skills, Inclusion of people with disabilities and EU standards in South east europe (2015/370-229).** The project objective to improve the capacities of CSOs in South East Europe in managing social inclusion processes is being achieved through two modules of activities - the sub-granting process and capacity building program. During sub-granting process, initiated in first half of 2017, 25 initiatives were approved and their implementation started in second half of 2017. Sub granted actions are aiming to support the development of social services in community and the small business initiatives managed by CSOs and fostering the social inclusion of people with disabilities and mental health problems. One of the pillar activity that gives support to the CSOs is capacity building program designed for the grass-root organizations involved in social inclusion of people with disabilities. In the last year 3 two day training sessions in five countries were organized with participation of more than 200 participants from 100 civil society organizations.

**Taking action on social inclusion of older people - TASIOP (2015/370-287).** The project aims at strengthening networks of civil society organizations from the Western Balkans in order to improve social inclusion of older people in local communities and the society at large across the region. The project partners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia finished the first year with all of the activities done according to schedule. The major achievements in the second half of the second year of the project include conduct of research studies in the project countries as well as the beginning of the subgranting support efforts for grassroots initiatives across the region. The research activities are finalized in all project countries except Bosnia and Herzegovina and their results are being used in development of advocacy strategies that will feed into advocacy campaigns promoting social inclusion and the need for more adequate public policies. Research results and the policy recommendations based on them enabled the CSO networks to engage with policy creators in their countries and start the public policy dialogue. The support for local grassroots initiatives will be provided for ten months for 62 small projects in the five project countries working on social inclusion of older people. Activities range from education, art, digital literacy and intergenerational solidarity activities to improving participation in remote and rural areas. The examples from these projects will be used in a publication promoting examples of good practice at the end of the TASIOP

project, to encourage and inspire replication and further grassroots initiatives for social inclusion of older people. The publication and promotion of research results and the activities of subgranted initiatives increase the media coverage and public awareness of the issue of social inclusion of older people which all contributes to increase in social inclusion of older people in the project countries. The project website: [www.tasiop.org](http://www.tasiop.org)

**Increasing capacities and strengthening the role of regional CSOs for improving labour conditions and labour dialogue with public institutions (2015/370-380).** In the period from September until November 2017, 5 three-days regional trainings are held. The trainings were for the basic OSH standards, advocacy and lobbying skills of CSOs and public institutions in 5 IPA countries (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo). Project employees and members of BALcanOSH.net, participated at International Conference for Regional Colaboration on Safety and Health "Building OSH for the 21st century" as well as Healthy Workplaces Summit 2017 in Bilbao, organized by the European OSHA. In the period from July until August, number of working meetings with media organizations and public institutions were organized by the COS as well as collaboration with TV, written and electronic media. In the period of three months, starting from August until October, a Mid-Term Project External Evaluation Report was prepared, in order to control and evaluate project activities, results and impact. The report was made by an independent Evaluator. In December 2017, a Regional call for sub granting scheme for Investigative journalism was prepared. For its promotion, 5 info sessions in all 5 IPA countries were organized, by the partners in the Project. Project website and social networks were maintained and updated continuously and simultaneously, in five languages. More details are available at [www.project-balcanosh.net](http://www.project-balcanosh.net) In the following period, preparation is planned for 5 Baseline – studies on a national level and selection on COS for sub granting for preparation of research stories. In June 2018, realization on Study visit in one EU country is planned.

**Youth Banks Hub for Western Balkans and Turkey (2015/370-394).** The project is designed to create a coordinated network of organizations focusing on fostering youth participation in decision-making processes in Western Balkans and Turkey. The network developed the Youth Participation Index (YPI) - a tool suitable for monitoring and evaluating the overall level of social, political and economic inclusion of youth. The total scores of YPI for 2017 show that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has the lowest level of political and economic participation, which is followed by Montenegro and Albania. Serbia and Turkey have a higher score than rest of the participating countries, but still far below than the European values or targeted figures by Europe 2020 Strategy. Based on the YPI score, the monitoring reports become a guide for evidence-based policy recommendations and advocacy initiatives reaching over 100 decision-makers in participating countries in 2017. Through various activities, meetings, national events and media campaign, reached over 1.000,000 people. During 2018 and 2019, the Network will welcome 15 new member

organizations which will implement 15 local initiatives in order to advocate for the improvement of youth position at the local level.

**Divided Past - Joint Future (2015/370-393).** The project aims for CSOs to be recognised by governments as an important societal factor with strong capacity to implement the peace building and reconciliation agenda in the Western Balkans and Turkey. During the reporting period the project activities included: a) Creating Zero Draft Manual “CSO cross-stakeholder approach in advocacy and non-formal education for peace dialogue and reconciliation in WB and Turkey” b) Conducted Regional training for partner organizations on usage of methodology of cross-stakeholder approach and non-formal education for peace dialogue and reconciliation in WB and Turkey c) Executed the second three-day meeting in Kosovo for 2 researchers and 14 facilitators in the frame of Development of cross-stakeholder approach activity d) The book under title Process of reconciliation in the Western Balkans and Turkey: A Qualitative study has been published online and in hard copy <http://jointfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Process-of-Reconciliation-Qualitative-study.pdf>

**South East Europe Transnational CSO Coalition for Women and Child Protection Against Human Trafficking and Gender-based Violence - STOP (2015/370-114)** project aims at fostering networking of CSOs to facilitate exchange of knowledge and skills while increasing their campaigning and advocacy skills related to illegal migration and its consequences such as human trafficking and gender based violence while transiting across SEE. Project teams were deployed in all five respective partner organizations. Baseline studies of the Gender-based violence (GBV) in the region, Human trafficking (HT) in the region and Legislative framework pertinent to GBV and HT with the Public opinion on GBV and HT presence in the society in region were completed and prepared for publishing. Regional Policy paper at the Balkan regional level on women and children protection and cessation of both gender-based violence and human trafficking activities in SEE drafted and adopted at the Second Regional meeting of the national partners. Estimated capacities and strengths of national CSOs related to trafficking in human beings, genocide, smuggling and protection of children through developed unique standardized questionnaire by the project team. Based on the obtained results capacities and strengths of national CSOs estimated, and created training modules that are harmonize with recognized county CSOs needs.

**Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey – JIERCSWBT (2015/370-300).** The action sets up a supporting facilitating structure for (pro) Roma civil society to actively participate in the local and national policy and decision making process. The overall objective is to establish a constructive and systematic dialogue between local and national authorities and Roma CSOs in order to improve policies for Roma integration, social inclusion, non-discrimination, interethnic dialogue, socio-economic development and citizens’ rights. In November 2017, the team launched *Most Roma Friendly mayor campaign*. The advocacy initiatives of the local CSOs in the project countries were supported. 24 CSOs have benefited from sub-grant scheme.



### 3. SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

The project is managed by coalition of six national rural development networks from the Balkans, one CSO from Turkey and two rural development networks from the EU. The main objective of the project is to stimulate an enabling legal and financial environment for civil society, as well as to empower civil society to be effective and accountable independent actors. The project aims to improve CSO capacity to dialogue with Governments influencing policy and decision making processes in sustainable development of rural communities and holding them accountable for their performance towards citizens and society at large. In the reporting period the Action was focused on advocacy and networking activities in the countries.

#### **Smart Start - Sustaining civil society impact through social entrepreneurship and innovations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey (2015/369-433).**

The project aims to help create an enabling environment for social entrepreneurship of civil society organizations (CSOs) and to improve their sustainability, financial viability and social impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. During the reporting period, project has evaluated all business plans in targeted countries and has selected 50 CSOs to be granted. Public call for mentors in each country has been published in order to acquire mentors from different sectors to provide support and mentorship to CSOs in developing their ideas. Project has finalized and published regional research and has developed Policy briefs for each country in order to develop a sustainable impact on environment for social entrepreneurship. In order to map the social enterprises and CSOs with this model in each country, project has established directories for social enterprises and CSOs with commercial activities on national levels. Furthermore, advocacy campaigns activities have started through national Smart Start networks and will be implemented in the following period. Project has reached interests of the institutions in targeted countries and has been establishing close collaboration for more enabling environment for CSOs.

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

The project aims to improve sustainability and capacities of advocacy and regional networking of CSOs working on sustainable agriculture Western Balkans. During the reporting period, activities related to the Grant & Training Programme for Western Balkans CSOs were continued as planned. As per provisions of their Contracts, organisations provided progress and interim reports, including financial reporting. The conclusion of the reporting processes was that all 10 projects were progressing as planned with their financial reports approved. In December regional media conference was organised gathering more than 30 journalists from Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia. The conference covered various topics related to sustainable agriculture, civil society, European integrations and strengthening capacities of media for reporting in these areas. More information can be found at project website [www.sasb-eu.org](http://www.sasb-eu.org)

**Civil society Acts for Environmentally Sound Socio-Economic Development - CO-SEED (2015/371-198).** The project aims at promoting a more sustainable management of natural resources in the target region through more participatory and transparent decision-making processes involving civil society organisations which are recognized as crucial stakeholders. During the reporting period, trainings for media representatives in each country were held to build their capacity and understanding about SEAs and EIAs as well as roundtable meetings with the involvement of public authorities, professional companies and civil society organizations to discuss policy improvements. In addition, checklists are produced for EIA and SEA reports to provide guidance to non-practitioners interested in actively engaging in decision-making on environmental assessments. Beneficiary CSOs took active part in public consultations meetings for EIAs and SEAs. In the coming period, further roundtable meetings will be held, a networking meeting will be convened with all project partners and beneficiary CSOs and engagement will continue with stakeholders to promote the usage of the checklists. (<http://co-seed.eu>).

### 6.3 RELOAD

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

### PURPOSE

ReLOaD aims to strengthen partnerships between local governments (LG) and civil society by scaling-up a successful model of transparent and project-based funding of CSOs. The Western Balkan countries namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, invest significant efforts to mainstream the EU accession agenda within their socio-political contexts. The ReLOaD will, as support to these efforts, expand LG - CSO relations, facilitating dialogue among them, and improve quality of CSO services, by focusing on needs of 50 LGs, and supporting implementation of 200 CSOs' projects, for the benefit of 38,000 people.

## ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

During the reporting period, the main activities included:

Selection of partner municipalities in six participating Western Balkans countries/territories were selected.

- Assessments of existing in-country mechanisms for disbursement of public funds to CSOs, including specific recommendations for improvement were completed;
- Assessment of existing (budget) mechanisms for disbursement of public funds to CSOs were initiated in all 43 partner municipalities
- Activities related to awareness-raising and familiarisation of LG leadership and staff, as well as CSOs, with the methodology for disbursement of public funds to CSOs was performed throughout the reporting period.
- Public calls for CSOs were prepared in each country, including finalizing thematic priorities jointly developed and agreed with key stakeholders in local communities. Given the reporting period, in some LGs, public calls for CSOs were launched, while in some they were in final stage;
- Tailored capacity building of municipal staff and local CSOs was performed; it was based on a training needs assessment and adjusted standardized training curriculum;
- Initiation of creation of an online interactive platform to facilitate knowledge sharing between partner municipalities, advocacy and communication, was secured through the support of the UNDP's Istanbul Regional Hub;

## OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

- 53 partner municipalities in participating WB countries/territories selected
- 5 assessments of existing in-country mechanisms for disbursement of public funds to CSOs, including specific recommendations for improvement, drawing on the experiences and lessons learned in the implementation of the principal model from Bosnia and Herzegovina were executed (note: in BiH this activity was not planned);
- Assessments of existing (budget) mechanisms for disbursement of public funds to CSOs in selected LGs are initiated: 5 fully completed, 22 in a form of a final draft, and 16 initiated;
- 192 in 490 LGs in six WB countries (39%), along with 370 CSOs were reached directly as a part of awareness-raising campaign;
- 10 public calls for CSOs were launched, while 43 calls were prepared for launch in the period January – February 2018;
- 6 trainings in project cycle management were held for municipal staff covering 38 partner municipalities with minimum two participants from each partner LGs;
- 186 CSOs have been supported through trainings including 213 participants

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Finalisation of remaining assessments of existing (budget) mechanisms for disbursement of public funds to CSOs, including specific recommendations for improvement;
- Continuation of awareness-raising and familiarisation of local government leadership and staff, as well as CSOs with the Methodology for CSO Fund Disbursement and its benefits;
- Setting up of a financing mechanism in line with relevant legislations (i.e. specific municipal budget lines) to fund CSO activities within each participating local government;
- Launching of remaining calls for CSOs in partner municipalities;
- Implementation of CSO projects in targeted localities;
- Continuation of capacity development for LGs and CSOs in targeted localities;
- Formalization of the methodology and accompanying tools, as well as monitoring framework for funding of CSOs by municipalities within all target localities;
- Creation of an online interactive platform to facilitate virtual knowledge sharing, advocacy and communication and cross country thematic networking.

### 6.4 MEDIA

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

### PURPOSE

Objective of the programme is to promote freedom of expression and freedom of the media in line with CoE standards, with a specific focus on the Judiciary. The programme comprises one major component, namely the judiciary, and two additional components (regulators and media actors) relating to the interconnected segments, which are of significant importance for freedom of expression and exercise of human rights, in line with CoE and European standards. The programme is implemented through activities both at regional and national level in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

## ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

**Component 1 – Legal professionals:** More than 400 judges and prosecutors, as well as more than 130 lawyers, have been trained in the 6 project countries on several aspects of the Article 10 ECHR and the case law of the Court. The capacities of national academies of judges and prosecutors, as well as bar associations, to manage grant agreements and organise training events have been enhanced. Training materials tailored to the 6 specific countries' system have been designed and printed. About 50 certified trainers have been updated on last developments related to freedom of expression online.

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

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

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

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

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

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JANUARY-JUNE 2017)

Operational Manual with rules and procedures for the regional scheme of EU awards for investigative journalism in Western Balkans and Turkey was updated in order to further elaborate award criteria and other administrative rules taking into account the lessons learned from the award contests in 2015 and 2016. Seven separate EU award contests were organised in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey based on joint criteria and procedures. In each country, independent juries appointed by EU Delegations selected three investigative stories published in 2016, including the best stories by young journalists.

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

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

21 investigative stories contributing to transparency and reporting on societal issues related to abuse of power and fundamental rights, corruption and organised crime, were awarded in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. The stories covered a wide range of societal issues, including those connected to corruption and abuse of power in local and state institutions,

attempted state capture by the underground and misuse of power by political party officials, but also procurement and subsidies controversy, irregularities in energetics business, tax fraud, environmental disasters and abuse of children.

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

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

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

<b>Programme reference:</b>	The Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for the years 2014-2015, allocation 2014 (2014/ 031-605)
<b>Project title:</b>	Building Trust in Media in South East Europe and Turkey
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 1.5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	PAGODA with UNESCO
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/367-802
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/01/2016 – 31/12/2018
<b>Contact:</b>	<a href="mailto:Karl.GIACINTI@ec.europa.eu">Karl.GIACINTI@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

The project Building Trust in Media in South East Europe and Turkey aims to strengthen freedom of expression, access to information, and free, independent and pluralistic media, ensuring that journalists and media organizations in South East Europe and Turkey are key drivers for democratic, sustainable and peaceful development in the region. Its implementation started in January 2016.

## ACTIVITIES

Activities aimed to strengthen media self-regulation, to increase media good governance and Media Information Literacy (MIL) are under way in all countries covered by the project



(Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244). Following key activities took place between July and December 2017:

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Increased visibility and capacity of press councils in SEE and increased connections between representatives of press councils from the whole region (including Turkey and Albania) through participation in international and regional events.
- Turkish press Council is the newest member of the Alliance of independent press councils in Europe
- 15 media outlets consulted in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Montenegro about performing media ethical audits.
- Representatives of all target countries involved in the LAREG + activities.

- 5 infographics summarizing the main outcomes of the survey “back to the drawing board” and dissemination through a newsletter, a web banner and a social media campaign.
- Increased visibility of the project “Building Trust in Media in SEE and Turkey”.
- Strengthened social media strategy and educational content disseminated on MIL to build trust in media. More than 11000 followers of the “MILCLICKS” campaign

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

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

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

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Implementation of detailed regional advocacy action plan
- Repeating the country specific research for the third measurement of Media Clientelism Index and writing country-specific and regional reports
- Third measurement of Media Clientelism Index presented in six countries (Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Romania)
- Country specific reporting on the state of media clientelism and politicisation through Fairpress portal (continuously)
- Addendum to the Contract Civil Response to Clientelism in Media - MEDIA
- CIRCLE was signed in November 2017 - Implementation of the Action will end on 29 March 2018

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Detailed plan for regional advocacy activities implemented
- Third measurement of the Media Clientelism Index presented in 6 SEE countries (Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Romania)
- Report summarizing the main findings of the Media Clientelism Index 2017 for all countries published
- 206 analytical articles written and published on national languages of the countries participating in the project
- 38 analytical articles written and published on central portal in English
- 475 media related articles republished from other media outlets
- 5 videos published
- 17 Fairpress playlists aired on Radio Tuzla 91.2
- 77.614 Fairpress.eu sessions; 103.071 Fairpress.eu pageviews; 55.242 Fairpress.eu users; 314.107 Fairpress.eu Facebook reach; 19.076 Fairpress.eu Facebook likes

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

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

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

#### PURPOSE:

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

#### ACTIVITIES

- Editing and disseminating the fourth and fifth wave of Freedom of Expression reports. Topics: "Whose Media Are these?" - a report looking into how the social media add to, compete or replace the "traditional" platforms; "Gatekeepers and Middlemen" - a report looking into how entities with no apparent media mandate (companies or state bodies) can restrict freedom of expression.
- Producing, editing and disseminating a sixth report on Freedom of Expression, presenting a general overview of the FoE in the SEE countries at the end of 2017.
- Conducting an advocacy visit to Brussels (Oct 10-11), with meetings within the Commission (2), the Parliament (1) and organizations interested in freedom of expression (3). Apart from the group meetings, representatives of 4 partners had one-on-one meetings with Commission experts responsible of the respective countries.
- Communication and visibility of the project
- Participation in the Media and Information Literacy conference in Sarajevo (Sept 19-22).
- Project management. The sixth Steering Committee meeting took place in Brussels ( 9 October);

- Freedom of expression and media monitoring. Participation in the global advocacy networks (IFEX campaigns, IFEX Board - Ioana Avadani was re-elected for a second mandate as a board member, Global Forum for Media Development).

#### OUTPUTS

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

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER:

- The project closed on November 2017. Final narrative and financial reports expected end of March 2018.

### 6.5 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Civil Society Facility and Media Programme, IPA 2014/031-605
<b>Project title:</b>	Protecting children from violence and promoting social inclusion of children with disabilities in Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant Agreement with UNICEF
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/368-251
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/01/2016 – 31/12/2018
<b>Contact:</b>	Kristina Vujic, <a href="mailto:kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu">kristina.vujic@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

During the reporting period, capacities of various professionals, parents, children and CSOs to better understand and recognise signs and forms of violence, to report violence against children (VAC), to learn about positive parenting skills, to identify disability early enough, and raise awareness on importance of social inclusion of children with disabilities (CWDs) were strengthened. The process of establishment and advancement of multi-sectoral

coordination and response to VAC, and introduction of various services for CWDs were further supported. Knowledge was generated through SitAns on CWDs and surveys on VAC, and strengthening monitoring capacities of the CSOs through set of indicators and guidelines on VAC. Support was provided on VAC strategy development and VAC primary and secondary legislation revisions. Strengthening and building of partnerships with NGOs and DPOs continued through involvement of the CSOs in VAC strategy development and carrying out SitAn on CWDs in Serbia, preparation of shadow and alternative reports on VAC and CWDs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Advocacy and awareness raising initiatives on social norms and attitudes on VAC and child disability were around: initiation of non-violence programmes in 15 schools in three municipalities of Kosovo, launch of the “Be fair. For a childhood without barriers” campaign in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the second phase of the campaign “End Violence” in Montenegro with a focus on prevention of violence in the family and child discipline.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY – DECEMBER 2017)

With support of the Action, the organisations of persons with disabilities in the region became much stronger in engaging in national and regional policy making to advance the rights of children with disabilities. Better partnerships are built between DPOs and NGOs working on child rights issues. Formal and informal networks of different DPOs are established in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Turkey. Multi-disciplinary response on violence against children is improved at local level.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- In the next semester, the Action’s key focus will be on:
- Knowledge generation through completion of SitAns on CWDs in Albania and Turkey, and launching/dissemination of VAC report and KAP/Social Norms surveys in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, statistical report by ALO116 in Albania and NGO shadow report on VAC in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Capacity building to advance skills and knowledge of multi-sectoral professionals, parents, children and CSOs on key child protection risks and violations, peer-violence, monitoring and reporting on VAC, inclusive education;
- Engaging CSOs in monitoring on VAC and social exclusion of CWDs through regular monitoring of VAC protocols implementation, testing and refining indicators on VAC;
- Improving data collection mechanisms through introduction of new modality on VAC data collection in Serbia, preparation of fact sheets and reports by the Bar Associations on VAC in Turkey, strengthening child protection reporting and referral mechanisms at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Awareness raising will remain one of the key priorities in all participating countries through various campaigns organised jointly with CSOs. EDF will continue to provide

technical support to networks of DPOs for the preparation of alternative reports. Follow up on the recent establishment of the national council in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its current activities will be done along with preparations for the organisation of the seven closing workshops at country level.

## 6.6 GENDER EQUALITY

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

### PURPOSE

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

### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

During the reporting period, over 30 calls for proposals were launched in order to solicit applications from women's organizations and organizations working to end violence. The focus of the calls for proposals was to strengthen the responding organizations' capacities for outreach, advocacy, monitoring, networking and service provision for victims of violence. As a result, over 40 organizations received financial and technical support to implement a number of initiatives.

Several initiatives were undertaken with a view towards reinforcing rights-holders' capacities to monitor and advocate for the implementation of all relevant international obligations. In Albania, the programme supported the establishment of the Monitoring Network on Gender-based Violence, a network of 41 civil society organizations (CSOs) to monitor and advocate for the implementation of international obligations on ending violence.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

The programme was launched at the premises of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU on 10 July 2017. The event brought together over 80 representatives from governments and civil society from the Western Balkans and Turkey and representatives from the Council of Europe, the European Institute for Gender Equality, the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations. The representatives gathered to discuss the way forward for eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls and for developing ethical guidelines for working with women survivors of violence.

The programme provided over 40 organizations with technical and financial support (indirectly benefiting over 180 organizations). In most cases, support enabled multi-year projects. Over 15 CSOs were provided support in order to advocate for the adoption, implementation and monitoring of normative frameworks to address gender-based discrimination and violence against women as aligned with international normative standards and enshrined in CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention, and the European Union (EU) *acquis communautaire*. Over 10 CSOs were provided support in order to address the root and structural causes of gender inequality — and violence against women as one of its most pervasive expressions — by seeking transformative changes in society and communities' beliefs and perceptions on discriminatory gender stereotypes. Over 15 CSOs were supported in their efforts to empower women and girls (including those from disadvantaged groups) who have experienced discrimination or violence to advocate for and use available, accessible and quality services.

On the occasion of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, a collective social media action was launched under the theme “How can we change minds to end violence against women?” In the first week, the post was shared 260 times by 230 users across multiple social media platforms, reaching over 13.2 million people on the Internet.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

In the first semester of 2018, the programme's key focuses will be on:

- Continuing support to CSOs and CSO networks to deliver capacity-building on how to monitor and report on international, regional and national commitments on gender equality;
- Producing inputs to monitoring mechanisms such as CEDAW and GREVIO in all countries covered by the programme;
- Collaborating with the Council of Europe to organize regional fora to take stock on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention;



- Developing baseline data analysis and finalizing the regional assessment of prevention and advocacy tools and initiatives for changing gender discriminatory social norms and attitudes;
- Launching a new round of calls for proposals to select organizations to test good practices that lead to country-level behavioural change;
- Implementing capacity-building activities for state and non-state service providers of general and specialist support services for women survivors of all forms of violence in order to implement the relevant international standards, including those provided by CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention.

## CHAPTER 7: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### 7.1 TEMPUS AND ERASMUS+

<b>Programme reference:</b>	IPA 2011/SI2.596555; IPA 2012/SI2.615827; IPA 2013/SI2.645034; IPA 2014/SI2.691984; IPA 2015/D45.B1515.000567; IPA 2016/D45.B1616.001476
<b>Project title:</b>	Tempus: Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies; Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE)
<b>EU contribution:</b>	IPA 2011/SI2.596555, EUR 15.3 million IPA 2012/SI2.615827, EUR 14.9 million IPA 2013/SI2.645034, EUR 11.7 million IPA 2014/SI2.691984, EUR 10.07 million IPA 2015/ D45.B1515.000567, EUR 13.2 million IPA 2016/ D45.B1616.001476, EUR 13.5 million IPA 2017/D45. B1717.001712, EUR 10.3 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans (except Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
<b>Type of contract:</b>	The programmes are implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus</a> ; <a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-2-cooperation-for-innovation-and-exchange-good-practices/capacity-0_en">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-2-cooperation-for-innovation-and-exchange-good-practices/capacity-0_en</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Karolina Buzaljko, <a href="mailto:karolina.buzaljko@ec.europa.eu">karolina.buzaljko@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

The Tempus programme and Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) facilitate the reform of higher education institutions by upgrading the quality and management of academic institutions, in line with changing political, social and economic needs and through voluntary convergence with higher education reform developments in the EU Member States.

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

On 12-13 October 2017 the **Coordination meeting** for the National Erasmus+ Offices (NEO) in the ex-Tempus Partner Countries and the International Contact Points (ICP) of the Erasmus+ National Agencies in the Programme Countries took place.

As result of the meeting the attendees were briefed on the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme for what concerns its international dimension in Higher Education (Credit Mobility, Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, Jean Monnet and Capacity Building in Higher Education). As result of the meeting is expected that everyone conveys the same message to their domestic stakeholders.

The **2017 HERE annual conference** held in Brussels on 11-12 December was an occasion to take stock of the HERE activities, and to look at national and global higher education development trends.

It focused in particular on the regional, bi-lateral and bi-regional policy frameworks that shape and enable higher education reforms, exchanges and collaboration, which also contribute more broadly so social and economic development and have an important political and diplomatic function.

For the Western Balkans three major issues were discussed: Primarily, the evaluation of EU assistance in the Western Balkans revealed different interpretations of the visibility and scope of the progress that Western Balkans countries had made; Secondly, the ratio of incoming and outgoing mobility and led to several recommendations; Thirdly, the issue of recognition of qualifications particularly regarding which aspects should be considered in recognition decisions (study period, ECTS, and/or learning outcomes) and who is in charge of recognition (the ministry or the HEIs).

A **regional seminar** - A magic triangle of Higher Education in Western Balkan region: Funding Model - Research Capacity - Quality of PhD Studies – was held in Serbia on 25-26 /09 involving participants from Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina. During the seminar possibilities of better collaboration in research and doctoral studies in the region; funding models, research capacities and quality of PHD studies; mobility of researchers and doctoral students were discussed.

7 other seminars and round tables were held by HEREs in the region focusing mainly on: the Management of Human Resources in Public Higher Education (BH), procedure and tools for a qualitative accomplishment of PhD studies (AL); global University Rankings and their impact (RS); recognition of prior learning (ME) etc.

The 16 projects selected under Call EAC/A03/2016 were contractualised and paid within the 2017 second semester. The projects have started their activities as from October 2017. 62 % of the projects are coordinated by the institutions located in the region, which shows a promising ownership of results. In terms of regional cooperation there is a balance between the national and regional projects.

A total of 23 on-going Erasmus+ CBHE projects in the Western Balkans were monitored during this period by the NEOs and EACEA staff.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

As outputs of monitoring visits held in the region the following can be noted:

- The support of the Ministry of Education to the projects is essential in order to ensure the sustainability of the projects and to maximise their impact. Therefore is recommended to involve public authorities since the beginning of the projects in order that they are well aware of the outcomes achieved.
- The commitment of the authorities in the institutions is also required in order to reinforce the impact of the projects in which the institutions are participating. Moreover, the institutions should keep on supporting the projects with human and financial resources in order to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes achieved. This is in particular needed for the sustainability of the structures and centres created in the framework of the projects.
- There is a need to enhance mechanisms for knowledge sharing and knowledge management amongst Tempus and Erasmus+ projects within the institutions/country/region. A greater level of synergy among the project partners would help avoiding duplication of projects, enhance the exchange of experiences etc.
- The reinforcement of International Relations Office (IRO) focused on the management of international projects is also very much recommended in order to avoid that the knowledge acquired by individual project coordinators is lost.
- It is advisable to continue activities which aim to establish cooperation with business sector through joint projects, internship programmes, creating curricula in accordance with industry needs, etc. A Career Centre can play a huge role in these activities, acting as a link between the University, society and business representatives.

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

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- 2017 Grant holders meeting –held in Brussels in January
- Study visit: Fostering entrepreneurship skills through teaching, student support services and outreach – University of Montpellier, April
- Seminar: Research based teaching, University of Montenegro, May

## 7.2 ERASMUS MUNDUS

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/935
<b>Project title:</b>	Erasmus Mundus Action 1 and Action 2
<b>EU contribution:</b>	Action 1: EUR 8.0 million Action 2: EUR 12.0 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Erasmus Mundus Action 1: Western Balkans and Turkey Erasmus Mundus Action 2: Western Balkans

<b>Type of contract:</b>	The programme is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/</a> <a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-1-learning-mobility-individuals/erasmus-mundus-joint-master-degrees_en">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-1-learning-mobility-individuals/erasmus-mundus-joint-master-degrees_en</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Karolina Buzaljko, <a href="mailto:karolina.buzaljko@ec.europa.eu">karolina.buzaljko@ec.europa.eu</a> Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, <a href="mailto:EACEA-EPLUS-JMD@ec.europa.eu">EACEA-EPLUS-JMD@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

The Erasmus Mundus programme's objective was to promote European higher education, to help improve and enhance the career prospects of students and to promote intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries, in accordance with EU external policy objectives, in order to contribute to the sustainable development of third countries in the field of higher education. The programme has been discontinued in 2014 to be included in the Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020).

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

### Erasmus Mundus Action 1

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

### Erasmus Mundus Action 2

Under Action 2, the Erasmus Mundus Partnerships bring together HEIs from Europe on the one hand and those from a particular region in the world on the other, to manage mobility flows between the two regions for a range of academic levels – undergraduate, master, doctorate, post-doctorate – and for academic staff. The partnerships allow sharing of best practice and exploring further opportunities for cooperation between European and Western Balkan HEIs through bilateral agreements and other measures. In July 2017, four Action 2 projects selected in 2014 were still active in the Western Balkans.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

### Erasmus Mundus Action 1

The Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates (EMJDs) selected under the former Erasmus Mundus programme are still running their intakes, partly funded by IPA funds for what concerns the Western Balkans and Turkey. In particular, 12 EMJDs whose intake started in the second

semester of 2014 have awarded fellowships to doctoral candidates who will complete their studies in the second semester 2018. The concerned EMJDs will submit their final report by the end of 2018.

Moreover, the generation of the Erasmus Mundus Master programmes (EMMCs) selected in 2011 submitted their final report in the autumn.

#### Erasmus Mundus Action 2

Mid July 2017, three partnerships selected in 2013 came to an end. These projects financed a total of 727 mobility flows for students and staff (603 non-EU and 124 EU). The partnerships enhanced regional cooperation between the participating universities from Western Balkans and strengthened academic links between Europe and the targeted region, also in view of future cooperation under Erasmus+.

The four partnerships selected in 2014 have started their last year of implementation. A total of 694 mobility flows for student and staff are expected (520 non EU and 174 EU) for the end of the projects eligibility period.

### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

#### Erasmus Mundus Action 1

The reports of the EMMCs received in autumn 2017 are being analysed. The results will be known in the next few months.

Some EMMCs may be selected as Erasmus Mundus Master programmes success stories.

#### Erasmus Mundus Action 2

The results of the conference "Ten years of Erasmus Mundus Partnerships: Building Bridges Towards the future" which took place in Brussels on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017 will be published in the next few months.

### 7.3 ERASMUS+ CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Erasmus+ Capacity building in the field of youth – Western Balkans
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 3 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	The programme is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
<b>Contact :</b>	Karolina Buzaljko, <a href="mailto:karolina.buzaljko@ec.europa.eu">karolina.buzaljko@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

The EACEA provided an on-line information session on 2018 Capacity Building Youth Western Balkans, including question-answer component (questions received via e-mail, answered during the session) which took place on 18/12/2017. The web-streaming of the session as well as frequently asked questions remained available on the EACEA's website. Following the plan of monitoring visits for selected projects funded under the Western Balkan Youth Window some monitoring visits to Tirana were performed in October. It was also the occasion to promote the action during the event Erasmus+ Living Library: 30 years of education held in the same town.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

The deadline for Capacity Building Youth Western Balkans was on 8 March 2017. In total, 200 applications have been submitted representing a slight increase of 6,38% compared to last year's 2nd round of selection (188 applications). Serbian organisations submitted 51% (102) of the applications. 44 applications were submitted by organisations based in Albania, 22 by Bosnia and Herzegovina, 18 by Montenegrin organisations and 14 by Kosovo.

44 projects representing a total grant request of EUR 2.998.888,27 were selected (average grant request: EUR 61.500,00). Among the organisations funded there are: 16 beneficiaries from Serbia, 6 from Albania, 8 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10 from Montenegro and 4 from Kosovo. Among the selected partners, 136 come from the EU, 82 from Western Balkan countries and 36 from Non EU programme Countries - The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (23) and Turkey (13). Selection results were published by the beginning of August 2017.

Among the 126 organisations from the Western Balkans involved in the selected projects (either as coordinators or as partners), 52 have participated in a project in 2015 or in 2016 (17 for Serbia, 13 for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 8 for Albania, 7 respectively for Montenegro and Kosovo. 74 of the 2017 organisations are new comers to the scheme.

2017 projects continue to work in majority on enhancing the capacity of Youth workers and organisations to work with Young people (main activities: trainings, sharing experiences, peer learning and testing this new acquired knowledge with young people exchanges and volunteer activities). To a lesser extent, they focus on the elaboration of new informal and non-formal learning methods and tools and they cooperate to improve the quality of volunteering activities (i.e. improve volunteers' experiences in hosting countries).

The main topics addressed by the 2017 projects are unemployment, entrepreneurship, development of skills and competences for the labour market, migration, social inclusion, gender equality and democracy. The proportion of projects dealing with the youth unemployment and development of entrepreneurship skills is constantly growing since 2015.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

EACEA will

- hold an on-line kick off meeting in March 2018 for projects selected in 2017.
- continue to deliver information campaigns (on-line or/and in the region) as well as perform monitoring missions.
- Start the 2018 selection procedure in March (deadline to submit proposals: 8/03/2018).

#### 7.4 EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2015, IPA 2015/038-054.11
<b>Project title:</b>	Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP)
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 3 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant agreements with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO)
<b>Contract reference:</b>	VS/2016/0054 (RCC) and VS/2016/0002 (ILO)
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/03/2016 – 28/02/2019 (RCC) 01/04/2016 – 31/03/2019 (ILO)
<b>Contact :</b>	Kiril Kiryakov, <a href="mailto:kiril.kiryakov@ec.europa.eu">kiril.kiryakov@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)



### **RCC:**

- One regional meeting of representatives of Western Balkan Public Employment Services on the qualitative benchmarking methodology;
- One regional training event on benchlearning;
- One session discussion on informal labour markets in the Western Balkans at the margins of a regional training event on the shadow labour market organized by the Center of Excellence in Finance;
- 6 national workshops on PES benchlearning self-assessment;
- 6 external assessment visits on PES benchlearning ;
- Two technical assistance actions implemented to address national employment and labour market priorities.

### **ILO:**

- High-level Conference on the Peer-review of Economic and Social Councils in the Western Balkans;
- Sub-regional Tripartite Capacity Building Workshop on Employment Policy Design;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual meeting of the Network of Agencies for Amicable Settlement of Labour Disputes;
- Workshop on Planning of Labour Inspection Campaign in the Construction Sector (Montenegro);
- Technical Meeting of Economic and Social Councils in the Western Balkans;
- Learning Forum for Secretaries of Economic and Social Councils in the Western Balkans;

## **OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)**

### **RCC:**

- One regional analytical report on labour markets in the Western Balkans produced;
- 6 benchlearning self-assessments completed;
- One thematic review on self-employment programme completed;

### **ILO:**

- Consolidated Report on the Peer-review of Economic and Social Councils in the Western Balkans produced;
- Inter-agency Memorandum of Understanding for Collaboration on Labour Dispute Prevention and Resolution signed;
- Network of Agencies for Amicable Settlement of Labour disputes established;
- Terms of Reference for the implementation of Labour Inspection Campaign in the construction sector produced;

- Information leaflets for the Labour Inspection Campaign designed and distributed to Labour Inspectors.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

### RCC:

Coordination meeting with RCC ESAP contact points from Ministries of Labour (March, Brussels);

National follow-up workshops on benchlearning (Western Balkan capitals)

Regional peer review workshop on self-employment (April, Prishtina);

Regional peer review workshop on employment of persons with disabilities (April, Belgrade);

Regional peer review workshop on youth employment (May, Podgorica);

Regional conference on PES benchlearning results (May, Podgorica);

### ILO:

- Launch of the ESAP online platform (January);
- Specific Workshops on Planning of Labour Inspection Campaigns in the Construction Sector (January – April):
  - ❖ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska), Kosovo – confirmed;
  - ❖ Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) – pending confirmation
- Implementation of Labour Inspection Campaigns (April to June);
- Provision of technical assistance to RCC in peer-review of employment policies/programmes (i.e. ILO will provide expert input to the draft thematic papers and will participate in planned peer-review regional events, providing interventions and presentations (March to May in Pristina, Belgrade, Podgorica);
  - ❖ Provision of assistance in organization of peer-to-peer learning meetings between Economic and Social Councils of: (April to June; Belgrade, Skopje), Serbia and BiH (Republika Srpska); and Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Learning Forum of ESC Secretaries in the Western Balkans (May; Igalo - Montenegro);
- 3rd Annual Meeting of the Network of Agencies for Amicable Settlement of Labour Disputes (July; Arandjelovac – Serbia);
- Provision of assistance in organization of Awareness Raising Days (Info days) to be implemented by Economic and Social Councils (May; Skopje and Podgorica);
- Monitoring of the progress in implementation of recommendations by the ECSs in the Western Balkans (March – September).

## 7.5 TRENDS IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE STUDY

<b>Programme reference:</b>	EU International Cooperation and Development envelope-DEVCO/AIDCO
<b>Project title:</b>	Participation of the Western Balkan countries to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study - TIMSS 2019
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 1.498.597,-
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans (excluding Croatia)
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grand Contract with IEA
<b>Contract reference:</b>	TIMSS EAC/S07/2017
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	2017-2020
<b>Contact :</b>	<a href="mailto:karolina.buzaljko@ec.europa.eu">Karolina Buzaljko, karolina.buzaljko@ec.europa.eu</a>

### PURPOSE

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

### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Developing new items and related scoring procedures for the Field Test (FT)
- Revising and streamlining the questionnaires (for student, teachers and school), preparing them for FT
- Developing procedures for instruments translation verification
- Developing sampling plans for each participating country, monitoring the sampling procedures in each country
- Sampling and research experts from IEA Hamburg supported Western Balkan countries in preparation of the national sampling plans based on their priorities for their reporting plans
- Data Management Seminar in Hamburg, Germany (October)
- National Research Coordinator Meeting in Melbourne, Australia (November)
- In November, IEA organized a specific capacity building workshop aimed in familiarizing the Western Balkan experts involved in TIMSS 2019 with the structure and organization of the work on TIMSS, as well as covering for the trainings they were unable to attend (any of the two key seminars aimed in Data Managers or National Research Coordinators)

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

The following units, manuals, and software systems were provided for guiding the TIMSS 2019 FT preparation:

- TIMSS 2019 Survey Operations Procedures

Unit 1 on Sampling Schools and Obtaining their Cooperation;

Unit 2 on Preparing for and Conducting the TIMSS 2019 Field Test (including instruments translation, adaptation, and layout); and

Unit 3 on Contacting Schools and Sampling Classes for the Data Collection field test.

- TIMSS 2019 FT versions of manuals for the following roles:

School Coordinator Manual;

## CHAPTER 8: OTHER HORIZONTAL ACTIONS

### 8.1 EU AGENCIES

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Preparatory measures for the participation of candidates and potential candidates in EU Agencies
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 4.46 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant contracts
<b>Contract reference:</b>	11 contracts signed in 2015
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	Q3 2015 – Q1 2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement">www.ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Agnieszka Iwanowska-Biel, <a href="mailto:agnieszka.iwanowska-Biel@ec.europa.eu">agnieszka.iwanowska-Biel@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### List of Agencies, duration of activities and EU contribution:

CN	Agency	Duration	Amount (EUR million)
360-343	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions	30/06/2015 – 29/09/2016	0.3
361-042	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control	30/06/2015- 29/06/2017	0.35
362-071	European Institute for Gender Equality	30/06/2015 – 30/06/2017	0.2
361-490	European Aviation Safety Agency	01/07/2015 – 31/08/2017	0.5
361-979	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction	01/07/2015 – 30/06/2017	0.6
361-049	European Chemicals Agency	01/09/2015 –	0.3

		28/02/2018	
361-733	European Food Safety Authority	02/10/2015 - 30/11/2017	0.6
364-928	European Maritime Safety Agency	24/10/2015 - 23/04/2018	0.3
367-495	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work	01/12/2015 – 30/11/2017	0.41
368-133	European Railway Agency	01/01/2016- 31/12/2017	0.3
367-323	European Environment Agency	01/02/2016- 31/01/2018	0.6

## PURPOSE

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

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

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

## ECHA

During the reporting period, the beneficiaries took part in two EU level events, two study visits, two workshops and two awareness raising activities: Study Visits to the Croatian (Zagreb) and Hungarian (Budapest) Competent Authority for Chemicals Management (13 experts from 6 beneficiaries); ECHA's 5<sup>th</sup> Biocides Stakeholders' Day and ECHA's Forum-28 Open Session for ECHA's Accredited Stakeholder Organisations in Helsinki (overall 9

experts representing 6 beneficiaries); Serbian SVHC workshop - seven representatives from the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Ministry of Environmental Protection, and over one hundred company representatives; E-learning course “Beginner’s Guide to Toxicology”: eleven licenses for experts representing Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey.

The following ECHA material was translated: three CLP items translated into Serbian and three ECHA factsheets – into Albanian, Montenegrin, Macedonian, Serbian and Turkish.

## **EFSA**

Around 50 participants from all IPA countries attended a multi country workshop on risk communication (Skopje, July 11-12) and training on risk assessment exposure assessment (Belgrade, 26-27 October).

EFSA’s AHAW Panel working group on Lumpy Skin Disease, with representatives from IPA and affected Member State countries held a meeting back to back with the Standing Group of Experts on Lumpy Skin Disease (GF-TADs) in Montenegro.

A hand on IPA training on pesticides and Veterinary drug residues data collection and reporting to EFSA has been arranged back to back with respective ESFA’s scientific network meetings. Attendees at the training were representatives at EFSA’s scientific network for pesticides and Veterinary drug residues monitoring.

## **EMSA**

Two training sessions were delivered at EMSA’s premises: the first one on Ship Security and the second one on EU Marine Environmental Legislation. Officials from Turkey and Montenegro also participated in a training, initially organised for EU Member States, on CleanSeaNet (EMSA’s oil spill monitoring and polluter identification service).

EMSA delivered three in-country trainings: one training for Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, delivered in Serbia, on EU Maritime Legislation, one training in Albania on Flag State Implementation and Port State Control, and one training in Montenegro on the EU legislation for seafarers.

Port State Control officers from Montenegro participated in a seminar arranged by the Paris MoU as a way to assist the country to move closer to meeting the requirements for membership in the Memorandum.

## **EU-OSHA**

During the period EU-OSHA supported two conferences and three trainings in the beneficiary countries. The topics covered were OSH in education, Healthy Workplaces for All Ages campaign, European OSH legislation and structure, Social Dialogue.

OSH professionals from Western Balkans and Turkey attended workshops in Bilbao and Brussels on topics: Policy and practice on rehabilitation and return-to-work after cancer; E-tools in OSH risk assessment. 300 participants from government, social partners, journalists and OSH professionals attended the supported events.

New project titled “Preparatory measures for the participation of Western Balkans and Turkey in the network of EU-OSHA” has been signed and started on 01/12/2017.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

### **ECHA**

In the SVHC workshop, ECHA experts explained the regulatory requirements for SVHCs at EU level as well as ECHA’s support to companies. The e-learning course provided guidance on the use of toxicological information to comply with REACH requirements. The study visits gave an overview on how a member state competent authority (MSCA) manages the implementation of REACH, CLP and BPR, and the Croatian MSCA shared its experience on transition from a candidate country to a member state. ECHA’s 5<sup>th</sup> Biocides Stakeholders’ Day and Forum-28 Open Session provided the latest information on the implementation of BPR and enforcement, respectively. ECHA’s CLP video, CLP banner and the “Selling products containing hazardous chemicals” image were translated to be used in the CLP campaign in Serbia and three ECHA factsheets on ECHA’s databases, guidance and tools for downstream users, safety data sheets and exposure scenarios were translated into the beneficiaries official languages.

### **EFSA**

EU summary report on zoonoses, zoonotic agents and food-borne outbreaks 2016, including the data from IPA countries (for the first time) is published on EFSA’s website in December 2017.

Input received from IPA and MSs affected with LSD, at the meeting in Montenegro will be analysed and presented in the next scientific report on Lumpy Skin Disease of AHAW Panel in the first half of 2018.

Report from hands on training, including the next steps for IPA involvement in pesticides and Veterinary drug residues data reporting from 2018, agreed with representatives at the training, has been published on EFSA’s website.

### **EMSA**

The implemented activities have enabled beneficiary countries to strengthen their administrative capacity and organisation capability needed for the implementation and enforcement of international and EU maritime law. The participation in the meetings or trainings on EMSA’s maritime systems has helped the participants acquire technical skills and practical experience on how to make the best possible use of the systems. The in-country trainings have allowed EMSA to inform a larger number of officials from the relevant administrations and other stakeholders and make them familiar with EMSA’s tasks and EU legislation. The participation in trainings together with MS have enabled the sharing of best practices and extended knowledge.

### **EU-OSHA**

The beneficiary countries participated in the network of EU-OSHA and the European OSH week in October. Apart from benefiting their local OSH capacity and raise awareness on



common problems, they were able to exchange experience and ideas with their counterparts from the Member States.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

### **ECHA**

During the remaining project period ending on 28 February, two EU level events are planned such as ECHA's 13th Stakeholders' Day and HelpNet REACH Workshop on 31 January – 1 February in Helsinki to provide final tips for the 2018 REACH registrants and outline the future expectations.

### **EFSA**

In the next period various capacity building activities will take place in IPA countries and EFSA in order to support their efforts to report data on pesticides and veterinary drug residues in 2018. Support will be also provided in the area of zoonoses, AMR and FBOs and animal health data collection and reporting. At the latest Scientific network meeting on animal health (October), it was agreed that IPA countries will take part in the new EFSA initiative on EU harmonisation of data on animal transboundary diseases. However, the budget for their involvement should come from IPA grant funds. The Bulgarian representative presented proposal for the regional project on animal health, where IPA countries are also invited to join the consortium. A colleague from the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture will join EFSA's Data Unit team for 6 months (based on the national scholarship received) , starting from December, to exchange knowledge and initiate future national data reporting from Turkey.

### **EMSA**

EMSA will deliver a training session on the Sulphur Directive at EMSA's premises and one in-country training on Port State Control in Turkey. Some of the beneficiaries will take part in trainings normally arranged for MS: Montenegro in the training on EMSA's systems for vessel traffic monitoring, and Turkey, Serbia and Albania in the training on the STCW Convention and Code.

Port State Control officers from Montenegro will participate in a seminar arranged by the Paris MoU. In addition, Port State Control officers from Turkey may be invited to a seminar of the Mediterranean MoU, arranged at EMSA in Lisbon.

### **EU-OSHA**

No activities under the project which ended as scheduled on 30/11/2017.

On the new project *Preparatory measures for the participation of Western Balkans and Turkey in the network of EU-OSHA* the following activities are foreseen for the next semester: two Focal Point meetings, preparation and distribution of visibility materials for the beneficiaries, an international conference in Turkey, trainings and contracting translation company.

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2016/037-900
<b>Project title:</b>	Preparatory measures for the participation of IPA II beneficiaries in EU Agencies
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 3 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant contracts
<b>Contract reference:</b>	11 contracts signed between Q3 2016 and Q4 2017
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	Q4 2016 – Q2 2020
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement">www.ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Agnieszka Iwanowska-Biel, <a href="mailto:agnieszka.iwanowska-biel@ec.europa.eu">agnieszka.iwanowska-biel@ec.europa.eu</a>

List of Agencies, duration of activities and EU contribution:

CN	Agency	Duration	Amount (EUR million)
377-705	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions	12/10/2016 – 11/01/2019	0.35
386-267	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control	19/08/2017 – 18/08/2019	0.31
386-550	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction	01/07/2017 – 30/06/2019	0.34
389-613	European Institute for Gender Equality	01/09/2017 – 30/11/2018*	0.2
386-560	European Aviation Safety Agency	01/01/2018 – 31/12/2019	0.29
388-568	European Food Safety Authority	01/12/2017 - 31/05/2019	0.32
390-035	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work	01/12/2017 – 30/11/2019	0.29
390-067	European Chemicals Agency	01/03/2018 – 28/02/2019	0.18
391-230	European Railway Agency	01/01/2018-	0.2

		31/12/2019	
391-240	European Maritime Safety Agency	01/05/2018 - 30/04/2020	0.2
391-249	European Environment Agency	01/02/2018-31/01/2020	0.32

\* Amended end date - currently under approval

## PURPOSE

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

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

## ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

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

## EIGE

During the reporting period, EIGE has launched event to present new Gender Equality Index to which all national project beneficiary partners attended in Brussels. Statistical officers from Western Balkans and Turkey have participated in Gender Statistics Database. EIGE participated in three regional events: Gender Equality Index Regional Conference organized by RESPA and held in Montenegro, Gender Mainstreaming Training for IPA programing officers and UN Economic and Social Council (UNECE) Conference on Gender Statistics in Serbia. Assessment of all project beneficiaries in light of any policy changes, gender equality mechanisms and human resources has been conducted, including status of development of national Gender Equality Indices. Consultations with both national and international stakeholders have been done, in particularly with UNWOMEN Regional Office for Europe and

Central Asia and OSCE for mapping joining synergies in the area of gender equality in the region of Western Balkans and Turkey, as well as with gender focal points in EU Delegations operating in this region. EIGE's research studies and other products were shared with project partners regularly.

## **ECDC**

After signature of the PA Grant Agreement on ECDC-IPA5 project, ECDC invited IPA beneficiary countries to sign Letters of Intent to participate in the project activities. The implementation of new project started with invitation to nominate Observers to the ECDC National Surveillance Focal Points. Furthermore, four meetings were organised for the experts working in the field of communicable disease prevention and control, namely on WGS-based surveillance of carbapenem- and/or colistin-resistant *Enterobacteriaceae*, network meetings for public health microbiology focal points, legionnaires disease surveillance, and food- and waterborne diseases. The second ECDC stakeholder survey on added value of ECDC technical cooperation with EU enlargement countries was also launched at the end of 2017.

## **EMCDDA**

The Project Steering Committee for the newly signed grant with participation of representatives from DG NEAR, DG HOME, the Permanent missions and national correspondents of the Beneficiaries took place in Brussels in October. A total of 23 Beneficiaries' experts attended 4 EMCDDA Annual expert meetings and the Extended Reitox Network meeting in Lisbon, during which developments in the Beneficiaries was discussed. Results of the first General Population Study (GPS) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, presented in November in the presence of the State secretary of the Ministry of Health and the EMCDDA, had been widely communicated in national media. The results of the first GPS in Montenegro were also presented in December, and the activity was widely covered in the national media. The EMCDDA continued preparatory activities to launch the first GPS also in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina and from Serbia attended the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Croatian Early Warning System meeting, thus further strengthening regional cooperation.

## **EUROFOUND**

Eurofound continued the preparation of the 4th ECS in the second half of 2017. The procurement process was finalised in October, resulting in a framework contract with Ipsos MORI, which covers the preparation and implementation of the survey in the 28 EU Member States as well as Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. The contract was kicked off with the contractor in November. In the meantime final drafts of the questionnaires were prepared, which were approved by the stakeholders from Eurofound represented in the Steering group for the 4th ECS in December.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

### **EIGE**

Mapping of all stakeholders relevant to the project was made and good working relationship with all institutions responsible for advancement of gender equality in Western Balkans and Turkey, including EU-based and international partners have been established.

EIGE's publications and other tangible work outcomes have been regularly shared with key partners in each IPA country.

### **ECDC**

All seven IPA beneficiary countries have communicated to ECDC their Letters of Intent (signed by National ECDC Correspondents), thereby demonstrating commitment and willingness to implement technical ECDC pre-accession activities for the upcoming two years during 2017 – 2019.

Upon initiation of follow-up activities under signed new grant agreement with DG NEAR, ECDC established an observer role in EU enlargement countries to the ECDC National Focal Points for Surveillance. To continue supporting Western Balkan countries and Turkey in their preparations to participate in ECDC activities, 30 experts from national authorities participated in four ECDC events during October and November.

ECDC, after Multi-country workshop on microbiology laboratory systems supporting public health, imitated follow-up feasibility activities to include EU enlargement countries in annual data collection on standardised laboratory capabilities' and vulnerabilities' monitoring and benchmark against EU levels/standards.

### **EMCDDA**

Outputs for this period include:

- Increased awareness on the EMCDDA and the Beneficiary cooperation among their permanent missions to the EU.
- The public launches of the GPS ensured that the policy makers, professionals and public have better knowledge about the illicit substance use.
- The participants of the Annual Expert meetings increased their knowledge about the latest developments in the EU and were able to build new partnerships with the EU countries (e.g. Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with Greece on drug-related deaths).

## **EUROFOUND**

Questionnaire for the 4<sup>th</sup> European Company Survey. In terms of content, the survey builds upon previous work and evidence by Eurofound. The questionnaire covers companies' skills strategies (i.e. recruitment, skills utilization and training/learning) and digitalisation as well as issues surrounding business strategy and performance (i.e. innovation and competitiveness).

## **ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER**

### **EIGE**

7<sup>th</sup> meeting with Government officials and statistical officers from the Western Balkans and Turkey to discuss priorities for this year's cooperation in the area of gender equality, scheduled for February 2018.

Concrete steps in developing National Gender Equality Indices and project related activities in the area of gender mainstreaming.

### **ECDC**

The Agency is planning seven events, each one offering participation of 7 designated representatives from IPA beneficiaries:

- One in Montenegro, Podgorica - ECDC Consultation meeting with EU enlargement countries on annual monitoring of their laboratory capabilities using ENLabCap tool;
- Five in Sweden, Stockholm: (1) Workshop on preliminary results of the second ECDC point prevalence survey of healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial use in acute care hospitals; (2) Workshop on preliminary results of Healthcare-Associated Infections in Long-Term Care Facilities (HALT-3); (3) Meeting of ECDC Network of National Correspondents in EU enlargement countries; (4) National Microbiology Focal Point meeting; (5) Meeting on TB Prevention and Control in EU/EEA countries.
- One in Denmark, Copenhagen- ECDC 4th joint meeting on ARHAI networks and joint meeting of DNCCs (EARS-Net, ESAC-Net and HAI-Net).

### **EMCDDA**

The EMCDDA will visit Kosovo, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Albania, the visit will focus on the possible Working Agreement, as requested by the Ministry of Interior. Additional visits to Serbia and Montenegro will be carried out to make a formal review of the operations of the national early warning system in the context of their drug monitoring systems (as a support to Chapter 24 reporting), and information exchange will be made regular with all Beneficiaries. Further support will be provided to enhance comparable data collection: the first GPS in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a new round of data collection on drug seizures will be launched. Several capacity development activities, including trainings, study visits and expert support, along with invitations to attend the EMCDDA Annual expert

meetings will take place. The EMCDDA will contribute to the 2018 Enlargement package and to the EU political dialogue with the Western Balkans. The cooperation will be promoted in the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna (in March). Synergies will be explored with other partners, such as UNODC, via participation in its South Eastern Europe Project steering committee. The EMCDDA will launch selected publications in the national languages of Beneficiaries.

## EUROFOUND

The implementation of the 4th European Company Survey is planned to start in the first half of 2018. Although not financed by the current grant agreement, the implementation builds on the preparation which is one of the objectives of this contract.

The country profiles on working life will be updated by the national experts appointed by Eurofound in the first quarter of this year, and they will be handed over for publication between April and June. Final editing and publication will follow, presumably in August-September.

## 8.2 REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL

### Enhancing mobility, connectivity and competitiveness in South East Europe – Support to RCC

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-country Action Programme for 2016, IPA 2016/037-900
<b>Project title:</b>	Enhancing mobility, connectivity and competitiveness in South East Europe – Support to RCC
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 7.5 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Grant agreement with RCC
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2016/380-471
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/01/2017 – 31/12/2019
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.rcc.int">www.rcc.int</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Agnieszka Iwanowska-Biel, <a href="mailto:agnieszka.iwanowska-biel@ec.europa.eu">agnieszka.iwanowska-biel@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to provide financial assistance to the functioning of the RCC Secretariat and contribution to the activities of the RCC for the period 2017-2019, as

foreseen in its Strategy and Work Programme (SWP) 2017-2019, in particular implementing the SEE 2020 strategy.

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

In the reporting period, the RCC Secretariat's activities were focused on the implementation of the SWP 2017-2019 through flagship approach – skills and mobility, connectivity and competitiveness and on the start of implementation of MAP REA - the Multiannual Action Plan for establishing the Regional Economic Area in WB6. The RCC Secretariat continued to uphold a regional cooperation framework conducive to the implementation of the strategy by actively engaging in regional political and sectorial activities, as well as by maintaining partnerships with regional and international stakeholders involved in supporting the regional cooperation in SEE.

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Coordinated preparation of Multi Annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area (MAP REA), endorsed by WB6 Leaders in Trieste on 12 July 2017;
- SEE2020 Programming and Monitoring cycle for 2018 launched;
- Fourth Call for Proposals under the RCC Small Grant Facility launched;
- Balkan Barometer (BB) 2017 edition published, and BB 2018 preparatory activities launched;
- Capacity building extended on recognition of academic qualifications and establishment of a Joint ERI SEE – RCC Working Group on Recognition of Academic Qualifications;
- Prepared draft legal text of the Mutual Recognition Agreement on professional qualifications;
- Kicked off implementation of the MAP REA Smart Specialization activities;
- Continuous implementation of the activities ensured in the field of Open Science through the RCC's Open Access Working Group (OAWG), integrated within EU's platform of National Points of Reference (NPRs) on Open Access;
- Western Balkans Recommendation on Public Participation endorsed by the WB6 ministers in charge of public administration;
- Checklist on corruption risks in healthcare sector developed and agreement on application of the Checklist achieved;
- Completed study on the existing systems of judicial training in the Western Balkans;
- MAP structure for implementation, coordination and monitoring of MAP REA established and functional in each economy and regular coordination on MAP REA established by RCC;
- Bonn Declaration adopted (by Ministers in charge of environment and climate change), calling for joining efforts in protecting environment and climate, integral energy and climate planning, enforcement of Monitoring Mechanism Regulation and coordinated implementation of regional projects.



- South East Europe Investment Policy Review completed;
- Capacity building for Investment experts extended in area of International Investment Agreements and Investor State dispute settlement;
- “Triple P” tourism project contract signed.

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- SEE2020 Annual Implementation Report for 2018 and first Annual Report on MAP REA implementation prepared and endorsed;
- SEE2020 Programming cycle completed with endorsed Programming Document 2018-2020, fourth annual regional donor coordination meeting organized and implementation commenced of awarded small grant projects;
- Launched negotiations on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications;
- Agreement on the model for fast-track recognition of academic qualifications and concept of a joint online system for facilitation of recognition of academic qualifications;
- Joint Workshop on the Governance of Smart Specialisation and Training on the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process with JRC with the aim to support the process of establishment of a governance structure for preparing smart specialisation strategies in WB6;
- Endorsed Regional Investment Reform Agenda;
- Launched Regional Online Investment Promotion Platform;
- Established Regional platform on financial markets and endorsed roadmap for financial markets integration;
- Launched regional Smart Growth Platform;
- Co-organization of WB Digital Summit;
- Prepared Regional Study on international roaming charges, as an input to the Roadmap for decreasing international roaming prices;
- Strengthened cybersecurity capacities and enhanced regional cooperation among WB6 CSIRTs;
- Methodology on peer review missions for implementation of WB Recommendation on Public Participation finalized, along with promotional activities raising awareness on public participation of general public and civil servants;
- Workshops organized and support delivered on application of the Checklist on corruption risks in healthcare sector;
- Bi-annual Regional Training Programme for judges and prosecutors 2019-2020 approved. Support training of judges and prosecutors on liability of legal persons for corruption related offences and/or conducting financial investigations. Regional seminar/s for judges in judicial ethics implemented;
- Developed Study on the minimum standards and comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation in the judicial training processes and developed Guidelines in alternative dispute resolution;

- Regional Biodiversity Work Programme to be adopted with priority actions for the region in the upcoming period.

### 8.3 CROSS-BORDER INSTITUTION BUILDING - CBIB+ PHASE II

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-Country Action Programme 2014/031-603
<b>Project title:</b>	Cross-border Institution Building - CBIB+ Phase II
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 2 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Service contract with GIZ International Services (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH)
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/368-298
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/12/2015 – 30/11/2018
<b>Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.cbibplus.eu">www.cbibplus.eu</a>
<b>Contact :</b>	Jlenia Destito, <a href="mailto:jlenia.destito@ec.europa.eu">jlenia.destito@ec.europa.eu</a>

#### PURPOSE

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

##### Regional Forum and technical working group meetings

- The 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Consultative Forum was held in Struga (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) on 17 and 18 October 2017. More than 60 participants from WB countries, EU Delegations and DG NEAR shared experiences on the ongoing implementation of the 2014-2020 IPA II CBC programmes. A special focus was given to ensuring improvements in programme management and better impact of programme implementation. On the latter, the Managing Authority of another CBC environment –i.e. ENI CBC programme Karelia – brought their experience with thematic calls for proposals. Also, a preliminary debate on CBC post -2020 was initiated.
- A Technical Working Group (TWG) on performance management / impact assessment methodology launched and started its operations via an e-forum portal. The necessary documents (instruction note, background report with respective annexes) as a base for further work of the group prepared by the project and made available to the group members.

- The Guide for the identification, selection and implementation of strategic projects under IPA II CBC and its annexes, drafted by the project team was finalised through the TWG established for this specific topic.

#### Impact measurement and promotion of quality improvement

- The strategy for exploiting lessons learnt and synergies has been further improved, including sections on performance framework.
- Numerous surveys were initiated or finalised within this reporting period: the reports for ex-post survey for six (6) IPA 2007-2013 programmes were prepared as well as a working version of a horizontal analysis and synthesis report from these ex-post surveys. Surveys on capacities and knowledge of the participants of info sessions (BIH-ME and AL-XK programme) and knowledge and capacities of JMC members (AL-XK programme) were done. IPA II JTSs' staff training needs and competences assessment also carried out.
- The excel based monitoring system (performance measurement tool) developed to be used by all IPA II CBC programmes, was further improved. The project team started preparing the user manual tool and developed concept and training materials for both programmes' structures and programmes' beneficiaries.
- Use of the new monitoring system started: 5 (five) working meetings on the revision of indicators at projects level within the first round of CBC Call for Proposals were organised for the alignment with the indicators set at programmes level.

#### Communication and Visibility

- Project online tools regularly updated (website and Facebook page)
- 6<sup>th</sup> issue of the project newsletter Yellow&Blue prepared and printed (44 pages), while the 7<sup>th</sup> issue of the newsletter is under preparation. At the same time regular monthly e-mail flash news were sent out (6 in total within the reporting period).
- List of culture related projects implemented under IPA 2007-2013 programmes prepared.
- The training materials for the public relations skills training developed and the same training module was delivered during 5 two-day sessions during this reporting period (Pristina, Skopje, Sarajevo, Tirana, Podgorica).
- Close coordination with INTERACT and established with ENI CBC programme Karelia.
- Good practice and experience from Interreg and IPA CBC programmes promoted through project social media pages and project newsletters.

#### Provision of demand-driven technical expertise

- Two training sessions on concept note evaluation delivered for RS-BIH and RS-ME programmes and one day session on financial reporting under the TASC delivered.
- Regular support provided in programme implementation and management, as well as in management of the bilateral technical assistance services contracts provided to programme structures in line with their requirements and needs.

## OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Best practice culture and sharing of experience is being promoted through regional CBC forum, project on-line tools and newsletters.
- The basis for better monitoring of the IPA II CBC at intra-Western Balkan are set through the establishment of the result/impact measurement system.
- Targeted and systematic measures that will enhance better visibility and promotion of CBC IPA programmes and their achievements are being undertaken (training sessions for programme structures, project newsletters, website, Facebook, etc.).
- Capacities of the IPA II CBC programme structures are being strengthened in line with their requirements and specific needs (trainings for CFCU in RS and ME, training in financial management of TA service contract in Albania, etc.).

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

### Regional Forum and technical working group meetings

- Organisation of Brainstorming regional workshop on post 2020 (April/May 2018)
- Keeping on supporting the activities of the TWG on performance management / impact assessment methodology and TWG on IPA post 2020 (launching of this TWG will take place end of January 2018)
- Delivering ToT for JTSs staff – Soft skills training (8 and 9 March 2018 in Belgrade)

### Impact measurement and promotion of quality improvement

- Finalising 2 more ex-post surveys for IPA 2007-2013 programmes and prepare the draft horizontal analysis and synthesis report from the eight (8) ex-post surveys.
- On-the-job training for the use of monitoring tools to improve the performance framework of the IPA II CBC programmes.
- Organisation of a tailor made training on the monitoring system for the grant beneficiaries under the first IPA II CBC calls for proposals.
- Preparation of the 5<sup>th</sup> draft of the performance framework action plan.
- Close follow up with the relevant JTSs on the GBs under the MK-AL, AL-XK and XK-MK, while implementing their projects and collecting data for the monitoring system.

### Communication and Visibility

- Regular update of project online tools (website and Facebook page)
- Finalisation and printing of the 7th issue of the project newsletter and regular distribution of the monthly e-mail flash news.
- Delivering one more training session on public relations skills in Belgrade
- Keeping on the coordination with INTERACT and TESIM project.
- Keeping on promoting good practice and experience from Interreg and IPA CBC programmes through the project social media pages and project newsletters.

### Provision of demand-driven technical expertise

- Providing the necessary support to programme structures in daily management of the programmes and TA services contracts.
- Training of the newly recruited staff for the JTS of IPA II CBC Serbia – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Organisation of tailor made capacity building events in the region for new and recently employed staff of Operating Structures, CFCUs and Joint Technical Secretariats on programme-project and procurement management.

## 8.4 MONITORING

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Support Measure – Monitoring Programme
<b>Project title:</b>	Multi-country Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) - Western Balkans & Turkey
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 6.89 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Service Contract with Particip GmbH
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2015/361-031
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	03/6/2015 – 02/06/2019
<b>Contact :</b>	Petra Schlueter, <a href="mailto:petra.schlueter@ec.europa.eu">petra.schlueter@ec.europa.eu</a>

### PURPOSE

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

### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

The project is implementing the 2017-18 Workplan covering the period from May 2017 to April 2018. A total of 37 ROM missions were launched in the semester covering problematic, innovative, or not visited programmes or allocations where specialist sector knowledge is required. The project also participated in the pilot exercise for On-going Programme Results Reporting (OPRR) during the semester.

### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

42 draft ROM Reports were issued in the period. The reports addressed performance issues in Albania (12), Bosnia and Herzegovina (4), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (5),

Kosovo (2) Montenegro (5), Serbia (5), Turkey (4) and Regional programmes (5). The Turkish reviews include two large programmes implemented under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRiT).

The report outcomes are a contribution to the overall results monitoring of IPA programmes by the Operational Managers (OMs) and support to interim decisions and actions taken by the OMs to improve the outcomes achieved by the programmes. 29 OPRR outputs were also uploaded in the semester.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Approximately 50 ROM Reviews are expected to be made in the next semester, all from the 2017-18 ROM Review workplan. The preparation of the 2018-19 ROM Review workplan has started. A further 63 ROM Reviews have been identified from the initial risk analysis for this plan.

## 8.5 VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Programme reference:</b>	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013, IPA 2013/024-091
<b>Project title:</b>	Enhancing the regional dimension of the pre-accession assistance by the improved visibility of IPA Multi-country projects
<b>EU contribution:</b>	EUR 0.357 million
<b>Beneficiary region:</b>	Western Balkans and Turkey
<b>Type of contract:</b>	Specific Contract under Framework Contract with JCP Srl
<b>Contract reference:</b>	CN 2014/350-489
<b>Duration of activities:</b>	01/12/2013 – 31/10/2017
<b>Contact:</b>	Agnieszka Iwanowska-Biel, <a href="mailto:agnieszka.iwanowska-biel@ec.europa.eu">agnieszka.iwanowska-biel@ec.europa.eu</a>

## PURPOSE

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

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

#### ACTIVITIES (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- Final editing of remaining success stories
- Translation of remaining stories
- Layout of all stories and translations
- Finalisation of Handbook
- Training sessions for Task Managers on use of Handbook

#### OUTPUTS (JULY-DECEMBER 2017)

- 30 stories available in English and the languages of IPA beneficiaries

#### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- No activities, end of contract