



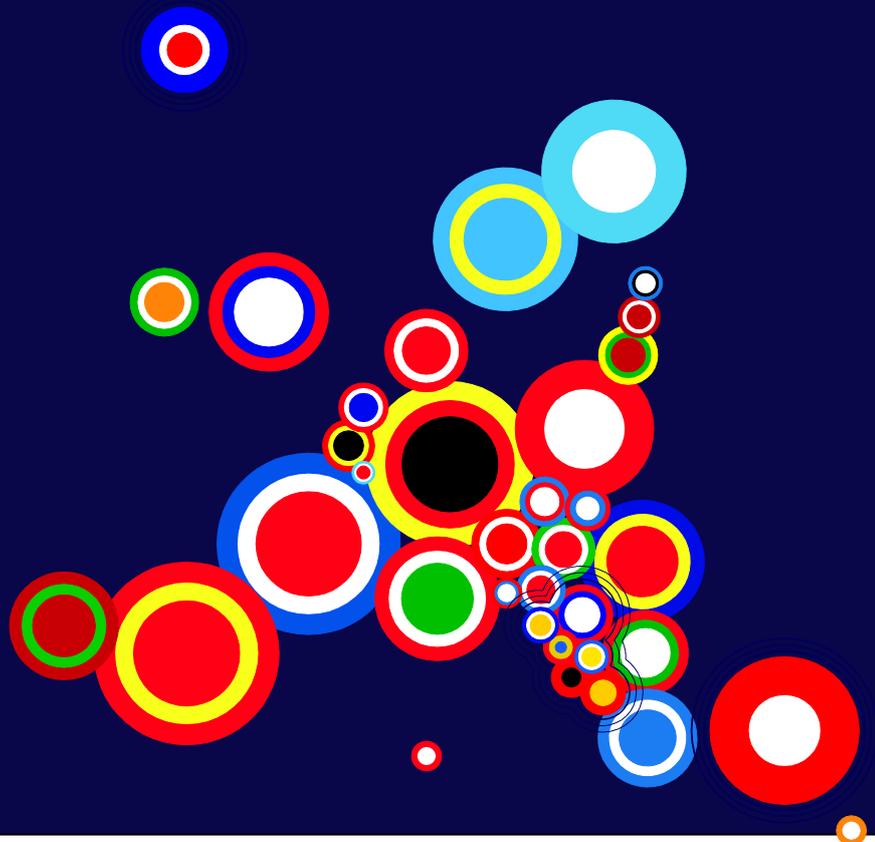
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

D – WESTERN BALKANS

D.5 – WESTERN BALKANS REGIONAL COOPERATION AND PROGRAMMES

MULTI-COUNTRY PROGRAMMES: ACTIVITY REPORT: JANUARY – JUNE 2015



CONTENTS

- Chapter 1: Public Administration Reform (PAR) 5**
 - 1.1 SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (SIGMA) 5
 - 1.2 REGIONAL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (RESPA) 7
 - 1.3 STATISTICAL COOPERATION 10
 - 1.4 CUSTOM AND TAXATION..... 13
 - 1.5 ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE 15

- Chapter 2: Rule Of Law And Fundamental Rights 21**
 - 2.1 FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION 21
 - 2.2 TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE 29
 - 2.3 HUMAN RIGHTS AND MINORITY PROTECTION 40
 - 2.4 REGIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME 42

- Chapter 3: Private Sector Development 45**
 - 3.1. WESTERN BALKAN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION FACILITY (WB EDIF) 45
 - 3.2 EUROPEAN FUND FOR SOUTHEAST EUROPE (EFSE) 54
 - 3.3 CRISIS RESPONSE PACKAGE 56
 - 3.4 COMPETITIVENESS 64
 - 3.5 HUMAN CAPITAL..... 65
 - 3.6 TRADE..... 70

- Chapter 4: Transport And Energy Infrastructure, Nuclear Safety..... 75**
 - 4.1 WESTERN BALKANS INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK (WBIF)..... 75
 - 4.2 HORIZONTAL SUPPORT TO IFI COORDINATION 78
 - 4.3 WBIF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS FACILITIES (IPF)..... 80
 - 4.4 MUNICIPAL WINDOW 81
 - 4.5 ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN FOR GROWTH..... 86
 - 4.6 RADIATION PROTECTION..... 95

- Chapter 5: Environment And Climate Change100**
 - 5.1 ECRAN 100
 - 5.2 INTERNATIONAL SAVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION 103
 - 5.3 CIVIL PROTECTION COOPERATION..... 105

- Chapter 6: Civil Society107**
 - 6.1 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (TACSO) 108
 - 6.2 FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS 113
 - 6.3 OPERATING GRANTS 123

6.4	MEDIA	128
Chapter 7: Social Development		136
7.1	TEMPUS	136
7.2	ERASMUS MUNDUS	138
7.3	YOUTH IN ACTION	141
7.4	CULTURAL HERITAGE – LJUBLJANA PROCESS, HISTORY	143
Chapter 8: Other Horizontal Actions		145
8.1	EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY	145
8.2	EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY.....	146
8.3	REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL.....	148
8.4	CROSS-BORDER INSTITUTION BUILDING CBIB+	150
8.5	MONITORING	154
8.6	FOSTERING REGIONAL COOPERATION	155
8.7	AREA BASED DEVELOPMENT	157
8.8	VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION.....	159
8.9	IT INTERCONNECTIVITY	161
8.10	ATA AND TAC	162

CONTACT

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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 unit D.5 – Western Balkans Regional Cooperation and Programmes.

LINK

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/multi-beneficiary-programme/index_en.htm

CHAPTER 1: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM (PAR)

1.1 SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (SIGMA)

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) in the Western Balkans and Turkey
EU contribution:	EUR 10 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with OECD
Contract reference:	CN 2013/319-423
Duration of activities:	01/07/2013 – 30/06/2015
Links:	http://www.sigmaweb.org
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PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

SIGMA provided analysis, advice and on-the-job-assistance to strengthen the functioning of public administration in all the beneficiary countries. In particular, SIGMA reviewed and provided input on: the new Code of Administrative Procedures in Albania; the draft Law on Public Administration of the Brčko District in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the Law on General Administrative Procedures in both the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo* ;

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

the Law on Public Procurement in Montenegro. SIGMA also assisted the beneficiaries in improving a number of national strategies and action plans, such as the PAR Strategy and Action Plan in Albania; the Public Financial Management Sector Planning Document and Sector Approach Roadmap in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the Public Administration Modernisation Strategy and the related Action Plan in Kosovo; and the Anti-Fraud Strategy in Montenegro. SIGMA also reviewed and provided input regarding the Evaluation Report of the Montenegro PAR Strategy and the new Public Private Partnership Legislation in Albania.

In addition, SIGMA participated and contributed in the PAR Special Groups in Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia to provide technical support to the policy discussions.

Finally, SIGMA carried out the 2015 baseline measurements and evaluations in all beneficiary countries against the Principles of Public Administration.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- SIGMA finalised and submitted its 2015 baseline measurement assessment reports for all beneficiaries, based on the Principles of Public Administration.
- The SIGMA Public Procurement Training Manual was updated in order to be aligned with the new developments in the EU law (2014 public procurement directives) and was published on the SIGMA website.
- A comparative study on Parliaments and Executive Oversight and Control was finalised.
- SIGMA submitted and agreed on 18 month Action Plans defining the activities to be implemented from July 2015 in each IPA country and for multi-country actions.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

A new Agreement with SIGMA has been signed on 30/06/2015 and will cover the period July 2015 – June 2018. The activities planned for next semester are as follows:

- The SIGMA Baseline Measurement Country Reports for all beneficiaries will be published in autumn 2015.
- The comparative study on Parliaments and Executive Oversight and Control will be published in autumn 2015.
- A SIGMA Regional PAR Ministerial Conference will take place in Paris in December.
- SIGMA will continue to provide support to improve the preparation and monitoring of PAR strategies in Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.
- Methodological guidance will be provided for the preparation of PFM reform programmes in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.

1.2 REGIONAL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (RESPA)

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Mainstream of ReSPA Activities
EU contribution:	EUR 3.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant contract
Contract reference:	CN 2013/331-241
Duration of activities:	14/11/2013 – 15/11/2015
Links:	http://www.respaweb.eu
Contact :	Konstantina Maragkou, konstantina.maragkou@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The principal aim of ReSPA is to help improve regional cooperation in public administration among the Western Balkans; to strengthen administrative capacities as required by the European integration process; and to develop human resource capacities.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The activities were primarily focused on the operation of the networks of Public Administration Reform (PAR) and European Integration (EUI). These leading networks were giving directions and coordinating the existing expert working groups operating in ReSPA (Human Resource Management Development, General Administrative Procedure Acts, eGovernment, Ethics and Integrity, Public Procurement, and Public Private Partnership). Two more expert working groups were established for Quality management and Regulatory Impact Assessment. A “Checklist for Assessment of Risks for Abuse of IT for Corruption” was developed as a practical follow-up of the Study on “Abuse of Information Technology (IT) for Corruption”. The checklist was also piloted in 8 institutions in the region. In addition a competency framework for civil services was developed as a result of the visit to the National School of Public Administration in Zagreb.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

A number of workshops and trainings were organised in the region focusing on PAR and EUI issues. In cooperation with the British Council a number of trainings were also developed and delivered on written communication and negotiation skills in order to improve preparedness of national administration to communicate effectively with the EU and other international partners. In addition in country workshops were organised on sector budget support operations.

Five outlines of comparative baseline reports have been developed with regard to HRMD, Ethics and Integrity, eGovernment, Quality Management, PP and PPP.

Mobility scheme programmes and visits to EU countries enhanced the exchange of experience and good practices among ReSPA member countries. The visit to the Austrian Federal Chancellery resulted in the preparation of the manual for one stop shop. The visit to the City Hall of Vienna resulted in initiation of the comparative study on Quality Management in the Western Balkans.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- ReSPA Governing Board meeting at Ministerial level, and 8th ReSPA Annual Conference
- Public Administration Network Conference: "Monitoring Evaluation of Public Policies"
- Regional Conference of Technical Secretariat of National Investment Committees
- Long-term impact assessment of ReSPA activities.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Strengthening Democratic Governance and Trust in Public Services in the Western Balkans - Support to Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) component "Quality of Public Services" (QPS)
EU contribution:	EUR 1.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service contract with consortium led by GDSI Ltd.
Contract reference:	CN 2013/333-221
Duration of activities:	1/11/2013 – 30/11/2015
Links:	http://www.respaweb.eu/qps
Contact :	Konstantina Maragkou, konstantina.maragkou@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The key objectives of this project are to provide technical assistance and capacity development for the ReSPA by strengthening internal structures and working methods, further developing and deepening the work of regional networks managed by ReSPA, developing high level political dialogue amongst ReSPA members, assisting with stakeholder engagement and supporting the development of enhanced methodologies by ReSPA to achieve its mission.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The project was primarily focused on implementing the decisions taken by the Ministers during their meeting in October 2014. It further supported the development of an informal Regional Public Administration (RePAN) network and the regional action plan on Effective Public Services under the 5th Pillar "Governance for Growth" of the SEE 2020 strategy. It further supported ReSPA's internal governance and operational capacities by reviewing a number of internal procedures and regulations and introducing innovative procedures and techniques (establishment of a merit based recruitment system, introduction of a secondment policy and procedures, realignment of Governing Board policies and procedures to fit with reorientation, development of manuals, policies, guidelines and protocols in relation to HR practices, induction, network management, publications and training management and quality systems). It provided strategic advice to the Director and supported the preparation of ReSPA's programme of work for 2015.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Adoption of new programme of Work for 2015. Establishment of merit based recruitment system. Recruitment, training and coaching of new staff able to be actively engaged in supporting and developing networks and implementing the ReSPA PoW. Monitoring and assessment of the ethics and integrity national action plans. Development of a range of new internal procedures and regulations.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Development of the programme of work for 2016 and planning system for future years. Preparation of the 6th Ministerial Meeting in November 2015. Review of the financial procedures and documents. Review of the visibility and communication strategy. Review of the financial, accounting and Management Information System (MIS) software systems.

1.3 STATISTICAL COOPERATION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2011/023-176
Project title:	Statistical cooperation for the Western Balkans and Turkey
EU contribution:	EUR 8.2 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans, Iceland and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service contract and grants to 5 national statistical offices
Contract reference:	Service contract with GOPA Consultants, EUR 3.2 m Grant to Central Bureau of Statistics of Croatia, EUR 1.10 m Grant to Hagstofa Íslands, EUR 0.81 m Grant to State Statistical Office of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, EUR 0.88 m Grant to Statistical Office of Serbia, EUR 1.10 m Grant to Turkish Statistical Institute, EUR 1.08 m.
Duration of activities:	Service contract 01/07/2012 – 30/06/2014 Grants 01/09/2012 – 31/08/2014 (the grant to Statistics Iceland was terminated on 8/06/2014)
Link:	http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/our-partners/cooperation
Contact:	Torbioern.Carlquist@ec.europa.eu Eurostat Bernd.Wild@ec.europa.eu , DG NEAR

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The implementation finished during 2014 and activities in 2015 were related to the closure of the projects.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The final reports from the countries benefitting from a grant were approved and one payment done (RS). Requests for recoveries of funds have been sent to three countries (HR, MK and TR). For the service contract, a draft final report was discussed with the contractor in September 2014. Revised versions of the final report were subsequently being checked by Eurostat. At the end of the reporting period the final version of the final report was still not approved.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

As activities were closed in 2014, the remaining issues are the final payment for the service contract and recoveries from some of the grant beneficiaries.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme IPA 2012, IPA 2012/023-625
Project title:	Statistical cooperation for the Western Balkans and Turkey
EU contribution:	EUR 10 million (of which 9.3 million contracted)
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service contract and grants to 4 national statistical offices
Contract reference:	Service contract with GOPA Consultants, EUR 4.4 m Grant to Central Bureau Statistics of Croatia, EUR 1.42 m Grant to State Statistical Office of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, EUR 1.21 m Grant to Statistical Office of Serbia, EUR 1.34 m Grant to Turkish Statistical Institute, EUR 0.94 m.
Duration of activities:	Service contract 01/12/2013 – 30/11/2015 Grants 01/01/2014 – 30/11/2015
Links:	http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/about/our-partners/cooperation
Contact:	Torbioern.CARLQUIST@ec.europa.eu , Eurostat Bernd.Wild@ec.europa.eu , DG NEAR

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Statisticians attended Eurostat working groups and training courses in a wide number of statistical fields. International experts provided advice to statisticians in the beneficiaries, either in workshops common for the whole region, or directly in the premises of each statistical office. A number of young statisticians from beneficiaries were on traineeships in Eurostat and in statistical offices in selected EU Member States from January – June 2015.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The draft second 6-monthly progress report for the service contract was discussed during the second progress meeting mid-January 2015 and subsequently revised during the reporting period.

The draft third 6-monthly progress report was submitted mid-June 2015.

Two out of four countries benefitting from a grant submitted interim reports and requests for further pre-financing (Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). Turkey and Croatia had requested postponement in submitting interim reports. Interim report from Serbia has been approved. Interim report from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been suspended.

Reports from missions show that statisticians in the region are learning more and more about the EU standards in their statistical domain. Around 230 participants from the 4 countries (AL, BA, XK, ME) under the service contract have participated in working group meetings at Eurostat and approximately the same number of participants from the countries (MK, RS, TR) with grants. This participation supports the countries in obtaining knowledge on the development of the EU acquis in certain statistical domains and hence fosters the application of the European standards in regular data collection. Workshops were organised for statisticians from the enlargement countries, such as a workshop on international trade in goods and services statistics and another workshop on consumption of fixed capital. Training event on specific statistical topics has been organised for the statisticians from the beneficiaries. International experts have visited the statistical offices of beneficiaries and discussed many issues of relevance for the EU integration, such as national accounts methodology, agri-monetary statistics, how to implement surveys on structure of earnings and on income and living conditions, and other specific issues. The international experts also help the statistical offices to draft quality reports and to compile data according to EU standards in various statistical domains.

Documentation of statistical sources and methods continues.

Data are increasingly being sent to Eurostat in formats compatible with common standards.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Activities will continue: workshop participation, training events, expert missions to the national statistical offices, study visits.

A number of young statisticians from beneficiaries will be on traineeships in Eurostat and in statistical offices in selected EU Member States from September – November 2015.

The 3rd progress meeting with the contractor is planned for July 2015.

1.4 CUSTOM AND TAXATION

Programme reference :	Multi-beneficiary Programme IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Maintenance of the SEED (Systematic Electronic Exchange of Data) system in the Western Balkans II
EU contribution:	EUR 0.77 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Service contract - Agenzia delle Dogane e dei Monopoli - Italy
Contract reference:	CN 2014/345-232
Duration of activities:	15/07/2014 – 14/07/2016
Links:	http://www.eu-seed.net
Contact:	Petra.SCHLUETER@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

Support the Customs Administrations of the Beneficiaries to continue to use the SEED platform and INES+ software, by providing regional coordination, maintenance and slight improvement of the existing SEED/INES infrastructure and functionalities. Support the Customs Administrations of Serbia and Kosovo to maintain electronic data exchange via middle server located at the premises of Italian Customs Agency in Rome.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Joint site visits to the crossing points at the administrative/border line between Serbia and Kosovo, along with the DG TAXUD representatives.

4 bilateral meetings at the border Customs Offices regarding the operational use of the SEED at the local level organised: 1 Montenegro - Serbia, 3 Serbia – Kosovo (Gates 31, 1 and 3).

4 training sessions for the operational use of the SEED organised in Serbia: one for the Customs Investigation Department (20 officers trained) and 3 at the local level – Customs Offices at the border with Montenegro and administrative line with Kosovo (Common Customs Points Spiljani, Brnjak and Merdare).

Five training sessions (Banja Luka, Prishtina, 2 in Belgrade and 1 at Regional Customs House Nis) organised covering the use of the INES+ software modules.

The second regional event of the SEED Maintenance project organised in Durres, Albania on 19-20 May, 2015

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The new INES+ (fully aligned with the COPIS system of the EU) put in production in Kosovo, as of beginning of February 2015. Customs officials from the IPR Unit and IT Department trained to properly use and maintain the INES+ software.

The new version of the e-IPR module of the INES+ software (fully aligned with the latest IPR regulation in the EU) developed and tested – ready for production when new legislation enters into the force. New software presented to the end-users (Right Holders' representatives) on May 18, 2015.

After the launching of the NCTS at the national level, the SEED Operational guidelines additionally updated in Serbia, as of January 25, 2015.

Electronic records on trains (and wagons) in transit on entry side implemented on the SEED system in Montenegro, as of January 28, 2015.

The new SEED software release (V 5.5.0) additionally improved and tested, but implementation postponed for second half of September.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The new Version (V5.6.0) of the SEED2 software will be deployed to all 7 SEED servers in the second half of September.

The new version of the both e-IPR module as well as the INES+ software (fully aligned with the IPR regulation in EU) will be put in production in Serbia, as of September 1, 2015 (along with the entry in force of the new IPR legislation in Serbia).

The third regional event of the SEED maintenance project or the Steering Committee Meeting will be organised end of October/beginning of November (place to be defined).

1.5 ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2010/022-028
Project title:	Improving Public Financial Management in the Western Balkans
EU contribution:	EUR 1.00 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Administration Agreement with the World Bank
Contract reference:	CN 2011/258-142
Duration of activities:	21/12/2010 – 30/11/2014 (extended until November 2016)
Links :	www.worldbank.org/
Contact :	Rodolfo.Lazarich-Gener@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose of this World Bank-led project is to provide a platform for systematic improvement of public financial management across the Western Balkans through coordinated action by donors, using a common diagnostic and analytical framework (Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability -PEFA- methodology) to guide intervention and encourage cooperation and dialogue between Beneficiaries. The interventions are carried out through small grants based on applications submitted by target countries.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Croatia Cities PEFA: Final versions of the reports submitted to the PEFA Secretariat and ensured that consent for public disclosure was provided to PEFA Secretariate by the city authorities.

Serbia PEFA assessment: Completion of the final draft after the Second field mission in May 2015. Delivery of the final draft for Peer Reviewers comments included the Serbian Government.

A new project was selected by the SC to be partially supported with EU funding: Enhancing Public Spending Transparency & Performance. The proposal is to host an e-Procurement forum in the region under the theme using e-Procurement data to measure the transparency and performance of public spending based on procurement-related indicators and integrated with open contracting standards.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- PEFA assessments for 4 Croatia Cities published on the PEFA web site.
- Draft Serbia PEFA assessment.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Delivery of the final Serbia PEFA. Dissemination event to be agreed with Government after the formal final delivery. Separate report that will pilot the compliance to the new PEFA framework.
- Organisation of three-day international workshop on e-Procurement and the use of data to benchmark public procurement to be held in Vienna, Austria (December 1-3, 2015).

Programme reference :	Multi-beneficiary Programme IPA 2012/022-966
Project title:	Strategic Planning and Budgeting (SPB)
EU contribution:	EUR 1.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Direct Grant to the Center of Excellence in Finance (CEF)
Contract reference:	CN 2012/310-295
Duration of activities:	21/03/2013 – 20/09/2015
Links:	http://www.cef-see.org/spb
Contact:	Konstantina.MARAGKOU@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to strengthen beneficiaries' governance for growth by strengthening their capacity to design and implement medium-term macro-fiscal policies. It provides a comprehensive approach to strengthen countries' policy-making practices and to encourage incorporation of good practices and standards.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

In the first half of 2015, four learning and networking activities have been delivered (and one has started), attended by 113 participants (91 fully-funded SPB beneficiaries), covering budget formulation, medium-term budgeting, fiscal institutions, and budget execution. In addition, the CEF trained beneficiaries' own experts (especially those from line ministries) to share knowledge and experience. Some of them have been involved in the delivery of CEF learning and networking activities as lecturers and co-facilitators.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Delivered activities strengthened beneficiary institutions' capacity to design and implement medium-term macro-fiscal frameworks, and facilitated beneficiary institutions exchange of good practice and regional cooperation. Exit surveys and interviews with beneficiaries show that delivered activities helped strengthen public administration officials' capacities and coordination in preparing those frameworks, promoted sharing of experience and good practices, and provided opportunities to strengthen networks with other officials. Experts from beneficiary countries have been identified, trained and involved in delivering learning activities. Back-to-office interviews with several beneficiaries illustrated the project's value creation (available at <http://www.cef-see.org/news/>).

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

In the second half of 2015, the e-learning course on Budget Execution will conclude, and the SPB will come in September to an end through the delivery of a Seminar on Enabling Fiscal Programming of Structural Reforms, and a High-level Policy Dialogue on Economic Governance in South East Europe.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Technical Cooperation Programme with the central banks of the Western Balkans preparing their accession to the European System of Central Banks (ESCB)
EU contribution:	EUR 500,000
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with the European Central Bank (ECB)
Contract reference:	CN 2013/334-681
Duration of activities:	19/12/2013 – 18/06/2015
Contact :	Rodolfo.Lazarich-Gener@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Action is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Bank of Albania (BoA) and the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo (CBRK) by identifying the legal, organisational and resource requirements for alignment with the standard institutional and operational framework of the ESCB and the ECB. Moreover, this Action aims at prioritising technical cooperation needs of the National Bank of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (NBRM).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Component 1: Needs analysis reports BoA and CBRK

Expert meeting: Following the assessment missions the RPC, the ECB, partner NCB experts and the ECB Team met in Frankfurt to review the findings from the assessment missions and identify synergies, overlaps and deficiencies in the analysis and agree on the structure and content of the needs analysis report.

Component 2: prioritisation of recommendations NBRM

Regular contacts with the NBRM continue, including the ECB visit at NBRM in February 2015 where a review of the recommendations from the needs analysis report carried out in July 2013 was discussed. Subsequent discussions aim at a prioritisation of activities in the further advancement of an implementation plan related to bridging gaps identified in needs analysis report.

OUTPUTS

Needs analysis report presenting recommendations for the CBK (Kosovo) with respect to measures to be taken to reach EU central banking standards.

National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia: prioritisation of recommendations with a view of preparing an implementation plan.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014 / 031-603
Project title:	Strengthening Economic Governance and Public Financial Management
EU contribution:	EUR 8,000,000
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	PAGODA with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
Contract reference:	CN 2015/358-797
Duration of activities:	09/06/2015 – 08/06/2018
Contact :	Rodolfo.Lazarich-Gener@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Preparation of the contract and signing of the agreement with the IMF on 9 June.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Indicative Action Plan June 2015 – April 2016

Public Financial Management

Regional	Workshops on spending reviews and fiscal transparency and fiscal risk management.
Albania	To provide follow up guidance on the Organic Budget Law, the MTBF, and commitment control and the associated regulatory framework in support of the reform agenda.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Development of the PFM reform plans linked to the ERP. To provide support on the development of PFM reform plans, to establish SOE monitoring units, and to establish commitment control and arrears containment. To review the implementation of medium-term budget frameworks, spending review process, implementation of fiscal rules.
Kosovo	Strengthening expenditure controls and preventing expenditure arrears. To review the MTBF and lay the groundwork for development of a fiscal risk management framework.
FYR Macedonia	To strengthen expenditure controls and arrears prevention. To provide support on introducing the medium-term budget framework.
Montenegro	To provide support on introducing the medium-term budget framework. Improving debt and cash management.
Serbia	To provide support on implementing the PFM reform program, operationalizing the Fiscal Risk Unit and SOE monitoring, and strengthening fiscal reporting, including arrears monitoring. Amending the Budget System Law.

Revenue Administration

Regional	Support on organization and governance of tax administration and on the phasing in of modern compliance approaches and associated business processes. Workshops on regional tax policy issues. Forum for chief executives of the six tax administrations.
Albania	To provide support on reorganization, governance, and compliance management. To assess the reform status across key components. To provide guidance on refund procedures, compliance risk analysis and audit selection, and compliance strategies for one to two risk clusters/taxpayer segments.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	To provide support on compliance management and core functions. To follow up on reform efforts. To provide guidance on the design and implementation of

	risk management and compliance improvement strategies, and help strengthen selected core tax administration functions
Kosovo	To provide follow-up on large taxpayers, arrears management, and business process improvement. After an initial TADAT assessment to assess the reform status across key components. To follow up on reform efforts and provide guidance on core business processes.
FYR Macedonia	To provide follow-up on large taxpayers, arrears management and business process improvement. To follow up on reform efforts and provide guidance on core business processes.
Montenegro	To provide support on compliance efforts concerning large taxpayers. To assess the reform status across key components, establish a baseline and provide guidance on the way forward on the reform path.
Serbia	To provide advice on reorganization, governance, and compliance management. To follow up on reform efforts and discuss further needs for technical assistance. To provide guidance on: (i) tax administration and procedure law drafting and (ii) design and implement risk management and compliance improvement strategies.

CHAPTER 2: RULE OF LAW AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

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

2.1 FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	International Cooperation in Criminal Justice: the Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans
EU contribution:	EUR 5.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with GIZ GmbH, in partnership with Center for International Legal Cooperation (CILC) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Contract reference:	CN 2014/350-650
Duration of activities :	19/11/2014 – 18/10/2017
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

In the reporting period all EU MS seconded prosecutors and national legal officers started their assignment and started to assist the beneficiaries with first cross-border cases. Coordination meetings were held with EUROJUST, European Judiciary Network and the Witness Protection Project (WINPRO II - see below). In April 2015, a first steering committee meeting and a joint meeting with the team of the Police project (see below) took place in Rome. In order to discuss the installation of an Mutual Legal Assistance - MLA request registration and case management system a regional working meeting was organized in June 2015. Inception Report was drafted and discussed at Steering Committee meeting.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Project teams in all six beneficiaries operational and first cases supported by the project. First steering committee held and agreements made with the Police project about operational cooperation. Inception Report approved.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Start of process to install LURIS system. Regional case meeting with IPA 2013 project. Continuation of case work. Finalization of MLA Handbook in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Preparation of progress report.

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

PURPOSE

To improve international law enforcement strategic and operational cooperation among Beneficiaries as well as between Beneficiaries, EU Member States and EU/regional/international law enforcement organisations, through the support of international investigations and prosecutions, the promotion of secured exchange of

information and intelligence, the use of modern communication technology and data protection mechanisms aligned to EU standards.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Establishment of a system of secure data exchange between central International Law Enforcement Coordination Units (ILECUs) and police liaison officers (LOs) in the region, to foster cross-border information and intelligence exchange using modern European communication systems, such as SIENA.
- Evaluation of a Case and Document Management and Analysis System, (already developed for Italian DNA, and also adopted as a framework for developing the CMS under the European Pool against organized crime (E-POC) projects and currently adopted by EUROJUST and by other national members) in order to establish a secure and repeatable data exchange among beneficiaries and between Beneficiaries and EU/international organizations and agencies.
- Establishment of IPA working groups and joint working groups with the participation of representatives of the Prosecutors' Network, and other experts.
- Identification of a number of investigations/inquiries concerning transnational crimes and/or trafficking.
- Preparatory activities for the investigations.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY– JUNE 2015)

- Project teams operational and first cases supported by the project.
- First steering committee held and agreements made with Prosecutors' Network project about operational cooperation. Inception Report approved.
- IPA 2013 Project Working groups operational and joint (with Prosecutors Network Project) working groups operational.
- Assessment for the implementation of the of the Case and Document Management and Analysis System in Serbia performed.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Regional operational workshop on the overcoming potential difficulties that could slow down the development of the investigations and on the priority to activate the investigations.
- Regional workshop together to Prosecutors Network Project as a follow up to the workshop which will take place in Podgorica.
- Workshops on scientific and forensic police in the Beneficiary Countries, verifying common interest's areas and foreseeing bilateral and multilateral cooperation.
- Follow-up on the selected investigations.

- Identification of regional criminal threats.
- Steering Committee.
- Establishment of a system of secure data exchange between central International Law Enforcement Coordination Units (ILECUs) and police liaison officers (LOs) in the region, to foster cross-border information and intelligence exchange using modern European communication systems, such as SIENA.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2012/022-966
Project title:	Cooperation in Criminal Justice: Witness Protection in the Fight against Organised Crime and Corruption (WINPRO II)
EU contribution:	EUR 7,00 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Delegation agreement with Northern Ireland Co-operation Overseas (NI-CO)
Contract reference:	CN 2012/305-554
Duration of activities:	01/12/2012 – 30/11/2015
Links:	http://www.nico.org.uk
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

To reinforce the institutional capacity of the Witness Protection Units (WPU) and other relevant agencies in the beneficiary countries to offer protection to witnesses and collaborators of justice, before, during and after a trial, within and/or outside their territory.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- International cooperation initiatives - a joint visit of the representatives of prison services and WPU from Croatia to Italy was held in February 2015. WINPRO II supported beneficiary units in the participation in a conference on international co-operation in witness protection that was held in Antalya (Turkey) in March 2015 as well in the annual Europol's conference held in Warsaw (Poland) in May 2015. A further meeting of the Balkan Network, hosted by the Albanian WPU was held in Tirana in May 2015.
- WINPRO II Regional Meeting and Regional Judicial Conference, was held in Skopje on 24-25 March 2015.
- A series of seminars promoting simplified guidelines on application of WP procedures for other police departments (investigators) and prosecution services were held in Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.

- The work continues on the guidelines on procedural and non-procedural protection measures for the judiciary and prosecution services for Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania.
- Further work on organisational and operational structures of the WPU in the region was pursued, including issues of financial autonomy, confidentiality and media relations.
- Training on management of collaborators of justice and ‘special units’ in prison systems was conducted for prison services in Kosovo*, Serbia and Albania.
- Training courses for WPUs on legend building, client assessment, operational & personal security, intelligence and open sources research and risk/threat assessment continued. WPU skills were tested through practical exercises.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Co-ordination meeting with EUROPOL and with the other project on the Fight against organised crime and corruption, dealing with the Prosecutors and managed by CILC and GIZ – July 2015.
- Finalisation of the training programme for WPUs and stakeholders – August/October 2015.
- Finalisation of Guidelines on procedural and non-procedural protection measures for the judiciary and prosecution services in Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania – September/October 2015.
- Delivery of the IT equipment for 6 units in the region (equipment for Kosovo WPU has been provided by the EU Office with technical assistance from WINPRO).
- Preparation and delivery of the Final cross-border exercise, involving all WPUs in the region as well as some stakeholder organisations (where relevant) August/October 2015.
- Organisation of the Final Conference of the project - Nov 2015.

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

PURPOSE

The implementing partner will carry out an institutional ‘health check’ in the Western Balkans and Turkey on the readiness of the countries to address corruption threats. This will

be undertaken in form of the so-called National Integrity Systems (NIS) assessments, a methodology already tested in around 100 countries worldwide. In addition, a monitoring mechanism will be developed to track developments in each country in their fight against corruption.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- This implementation period focused on the research phase, including desk research, interviews and field tests. All seven project partners, namely Transparency International (TI) Bosnia and Herzegovina, TI Kosovo, TI Macedonia, MANS (Montenegro), TI Serbia, TI Turkey, and TI Albania (excluded from the project since May 2015) conducted research in line with the National Integrity Systems (NIS) methodology.
- Based upon the research all project partners commenced drafting NIS assessment reports.
- A regional workshop on advocacy and communications was held 2-4 March 2015 in Belgrade, Serbia. Fourteen participants from seven project partners participated in a three day workshop which aimed at establishing a framework for the outreach and advocacy phase of the NIS project. To this end, the agenda focused on the following topics: Developing a common understanding on findings of the national assessments, agreeing on a common framework for the NIS recommendations, mapping national level advocacy priorities, and developing plans for dissemination of results and report launches.
- The draft methodology of the tracking mechanism has been developed in participatory manner involving all partners. This methodology aims at tracking corruption as follows: (a) the extent to which levels of corruption at the national level have changed over time; (b) the extent to which each country is utilising the legal mechanisms at its disposal to prosecute and sanction corruption; and (c) the uptake of key recommendations emerging from the baseline National Integrity Assessments. The draft methodology will be finalised in a consultative manner by end 2015.
- All implementing partners have monitored anticorruption legislation and practice during the first year of project implementation. Based on this ongoing monitoring, all implementing partners (apart from TI Albania) provided input to EC annual reports.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Awareness of stakeholders on anti-corruption increased through their involvement in 227 of interviews, 98 meetings and two Advisory Group meetings held in Kosovo and Albania, respectively.
- Seven draft NIS assessment reports prepared by all project partners.
- Capacity of project partners to effectively communicate and conduct advocacy increased.
- Draft methodology for tracking anti-corruption developments in the beneficiary region developed.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- National launch events to be conducted in all beneficiary countries in order to present the results and recommendations of the NIS assessments and to disseminate the NIS reports widely.
- Regional workshop on tracking mechanism and innovation in anti-corruption to be held.
- Targeted national advocacy activities in line with the NIS assessment conducted.
- Tracking mechanism finalised and data collection process commenced.

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

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Provided information to the European Commission regarding the continuation of the Action for the period 2015-2016.
- New contract for the period 2015-2016 signed on 22 May 2015.

Visiting National Prosecutors component

- Visiting National Prosecutors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia continue their work in the OTP.
- The OTP supported the Visiting National Prosecutors during searches for investigative material.

Visiting Young Professionals component

- The first group of 6 young legal professionals started their internship on 12 January 2015 and finished it on 26 June 2015.
- The feedback on their work from the respective teams and supervisors continues to be positive.
- In the evaluation of the Action one of the young professionals said that the fact that she shared an office with 9 other interns from 9 different countries and 9 different legal backgrounds helped her, through discussion and sharing of experience, to better understand different legal concepts. Others mentioned the team work and how they learned how to tackle with multiple tasks they were dealing with. One of the interns stressed that because of the diversity of assignments and lecture series that she attended the internship was very stimulating and educating.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Visiting National Prosecutors component

- 122 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 ICTY trials.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- The second group of Visiting Young Professionals is planned to start their internship in July 2015.
- Either new or the current Liaison Prosecutors will continue their participation in the Action as of July 2015.
- Activities regarding the Action for 2015-2016 will continue.

2.2 TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Programme reference:	Multi-country Programme, IPA 2014/031-603.
Project title:	Strengthening Regional News Exchange from the International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC)
EU contribution:	EUR 0.2 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with SENSE News Agency
Contract reference:	CN 2015/355-097
Duration of activities:	01/02/2015 – 31/01/2016
Links:	www.sense-agency.com
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Srebrenica in Eight Images - Eight chapters of the ICTY 'Srebrenica story' compiled in four video works broadcast in June and July 2015 on major TV networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia;
- Preparation of audio-visual [presentation](#) 'The ICTY's investigation, reconstruction and prosecution of crimes committed in Srebrenica in July 1995' [presented](#) in Zagreb in July 2015 (in cooperation with [Documenta](#) - Center for Dealing with the Past) and Belgrade in September 2015 (in cooperation with [The Humanitarian Law Center](#)). This presentation is part of the permanent display of the SENSE [Documentation Centre](#) in the Memorial Center in Potočari. It contains the most important parts of the judicial record of the events in Srebrenica from July 1995;
- Preparation of the interactive narrative [Storm in The Hague](#) presented in Zagreb in August 2015 and available [online](#). The interactive narrative lists the key arguments from the prosecution and defense cases corroborated by key exhibits including footage from the Croatian generals' trial for crimes during and after Operation Storm in August 1995, authentic military orders, as well as contemporaneous government and political documents. This project was prepared in cooperation with [Documenta](#) - Center for Dealing with the Past and [SNV - Serbian National Council](#);

- Over 250 daily reports and analysis in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian and English on four ongoing trials at the ICTY (Mladic, Hadzic, Karadzic, Seselj) and other Tribunal's proceedings; production of close to 30 weekly TV updates entitled "The Tribunal", on trials and other developments at the ICTY;
- Continued digitalisation of SENSE audio-visual trial archive;
- Participation in educational and media events and regional and international conferences about war crimes trials, transitional justice and the role of media.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY– JUNE 2015)

SENSE multimedia presentations, exhibitions and interactive narratives show how the crimes committed during the war in the former Yugoslavia 1991 - 1995 were investigated, reconstructed and prosecuted by the ICTY. These audio-visual documents are not only the source of information for the general public and researchers but also serve as a unique memorial to the victims of the atrocities committed in the Balkans.

For the media and general public in the region, SENSE daily reports and weekly TV programmes are the main source of information on trials for war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and the work of the ICTY. [SENSE website](#) is a reference for international justice and human rights "watchers", journalists, lawyers, academics, diplomats and general public.

SENSE [documentaries](#) are used by many NGOs, Institutes, Universities and individual researchers all around the world in the course of lectures, conferences, seminars and symposiums on international criminal justice. SENSE documentaries were also added to the research material at dozens of universities all over the world.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Reporting on the remaining trial and appeals proceedings and judgments at the ICTY; transfer of the archive, equipment and the activities to the SENSE Transitional Justice Center in Pula, Croatia.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	ICTY Outreach programme 2014/2015 - International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
EU contribution:	EUR 0.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with ICTY
Contract reference:	CN 2014/342-964
Duration of activities :	21/08/2014 – 20/08/2015
Links:	http://www.icty.org/action/outreachnews/7
Contact :	Henk Visser, henk.visser@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Produced a web feature dedicated to 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, and a short documentary “ICTY Remembers: The Srebrenica Genocide 1995 – 2015”.
- Organised four screenings of the latest ICTY Outreach documentary “Crimes before the ICTY: Central Bosnia” in Serbia, Croatia and BiH.
- Continued negotiations on establishment of ICTY information centres with the City of Sarajevo and the Memorial Centre Potocari-Srebrenica.
- Organised visits to the ICTY for students and professionals from the region and beyond.
- Developed a proposal, obtained funds and initiated implementation of the next round of Youth Outreach project, which will reach thousands of students in the former Yugoslavia.
- Held workshops for elementary school pupils from BiH on the topic of war and justice.
- Continued development of a publication on 15 years of the ICTY Outreach programme.
- Coordinated broadcast of Outreach Programme’s documentaries by TV stations in BiH and regional TV networks covering BiH, Serbia and Croatia.
- Completed the production and initiated post-production of the documentary entitled “Crimes before the ICTY: Visegrad”.

- Initiated the production and completed rough cut of the documentary entitled “Crimes before the ICTY: Dubrovnik – Destruction of Cultural heritage”.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Over 120,000 people viewed the documentary “ICTY Remembers: The Srebrenica Genocide 1995 – 2015”, on ICTY website and social media; close to 50,000 people viewed information from the web feature dedicated to 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide; more than 25 major news websites and NGOs from the region re-posted the web feature and documentary dedicated to 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide.
- Tens of thousands of citizens viewed ICTY Outreach produced documentaries, broadcast by more than 20 TV stations in BiH and regional TV networks covering BiH, Croatia and Serbia.
- Submitted an advanced version of a memorandum of understanding on establishment of ICTY information centre to the City of Sarajevo, and sent a letter of intent to the Memorial Centre Potocari-Srebrenica.
- More than 3,500 Tribunal’s visitors received briefings on the ICTY and attended trials.
- At the screening of the Outreach documentary in the town of Vitez (BiH), for the first time after the war victims groups from both sides of the conflict in Central Bosnia gathered and exchanged experiences.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Organising high school presentations and university lectures about ICTY in BiH, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Kosovo.
- Holding training on delivery of high school presentations about ICTY to members of the NGO “Youth Initiative for Human Rights Croatia”.
- Signing of a memorandum of understanding with the City of Sarajevo on the establishment of the ICTY Information Centre in Sarajevo, and formalising intent to establish an information centre in the Memorial Centre Potocari-Srebrenica.
- Completing the post-production of the documentary “Crimes before the ICTY: Visegrad”, publishing the DVD and its launch in the countries of the former Yugoslavia.
- Completing the production and post-production of the documentary “Crimes before the ICTY: Dubrovnik – Destruction of Cultural heritage” and publishing the DVD.
- Organising the premiere in English of the documentary “Crimes before the ICTY: Central Bosnia” in The Hague.
- Completing, publishing and launching the publication on 15 years of the ICTY Outreach programme.
- Organising visits to the ICTY (including tailored briefings for visitors and attending of a trial) for 3,000 - 4,000 students and professionals.

- Provide information and explanations to the people of the former Yugoslavia, of the high-profile ICTY judgments, in particular in the case against Radovan Karadzic.

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

PURPOSE

Although the contract for the second phase of the project was signed only in August 2015, the activities in the reporting period continued thanks to the support of other donors.

Establishment of the Regional Commission for the facts about war crimes and other serious human rights violations in the former Yugoslavia (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 (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Correspondence with the region’s newly elected leaders (the new Croatian President and the new B&H Presidency members) aimed at securing their support for the Amendments to the RECOM Statute and their help in meeting the necessary conditions to initiate the procedure to establish RECOM.
- Correspondence with the Serbian Prime Minister concerning public support for the establishment of RECOM.
- Presentation of the Mapping the Prison Camps and Other Detention Sites in B&H, 1991 – 1995 project.
- Presentation of the findings of the evaluation of the Kosovo Memory Book (KMB)
- Presentation of the new REKOM.link webpage.

OUTPUTS

By the end of June of 2015, only the Serbian Prime Minister had replied and invited the RECOM Coalition to meet with him.

The Association “Transitional Justice, Accountability and Remembrance in B&H” (TJAR) and the Center for Democracy and Transitional Justice (CDTJ) held press conferences in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, where they presented the information on the 150 prison camps they had documented as part of a joint project “Mapping the Prison Camps and Other Detention Sites in Existence During the B&H War”.

A pool of senior experts on quantitative analysis of human rights violations perpetrated during armed conflicts presented the findings of their evaluation of the KMB Database at two press conferences held in Pristina and Belgrade in February 2015. Both conferences were attended by the professional public, numerous journalists and members of victims’ families. The experts’ shared assessment was that the HLC and HLCK had created the most complete registry of war victims in Kosovo in existence, and that it provided a reliable account of the circumstances of death of each registered victim.

In May of 2015, the Coalition for RECOM launched its new web site which, apart from a well-organized archive of the whole consultations process, also contains numerous victim testimonies, and regularly covers new research dealing with the theory and practice of reconciliation in post-conflict societies.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Meetings with the newly elected Croatian President and B&H Presidency members aimed at gathering support for the establishment of RECOM.
- Meetings with the OSCE aimed at gathering support for the establishment of RECOM.

- At least four public debates aimed at promoting RECOM as an official mechanism for the establishment of facts about war crimes perpetrated in the former Yugoslavia and the creation of a fact-based culture of memory and reconciliation in post-Yugoslav states.
- At least five lectures on transitional justice based on war crimes research and the whole RECOM Process, to be held in high schools across Kosovo.
- Four press conferences, to be held on the occasion of the International Day of Human Rights (December 10th, 2015) to give a presentation on the outputs of the Human Losses During the Wars in the Former Yugoslavia and the Mapping the Prison Camps and Other Detention Sites in B&H projects.

Programme reference:	2013 / 024-091 - Multi-beneficiary programme under the IPA-Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013- part DG ELARG
Project title:	Joint History Project Phase II - Extending the proven tool for Reconciliation to the sensitive recent history of Southeast Europe
EU contribution:	EUR 0.6 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant
Contract reference:	2014 / 350-782
Duration of activities:	01/11/2014 – 31/10/2016
Links:	http://www.cdsee.org/projects/jhp
Contact:	Karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

Enhancing reconciliation and mutual understanding of the recent past in the Western Balkans and Turkey by means of multiperspective research and analysis on the last 60 years of history in the Western Balkans. The purpose is to trigger reform of education in Southeast Europe, promoting historical analysis that is constructive and critical and that can be utilised for reaching a more holistic understanding of the recent history. The region benefits from a shared democratic effort, working towards a future-oriented history education that nurtures the emergence of citizens who are empowered to defend and promote such values.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Activity Cluster 1: Inclusive multi-stakeholder process for producing teaching materials: A Southeast European team of historians and education experts was recruited comprising four

Editors, one Editorial Consultant, 14 Source Committee Members and 10 Source Contributors. Team members from all the countries of the region started their work on the compilation of historical sources for the multi-perspective teaching materials to be produced within the Joint History Project series: “Cold War” and “Transition in Southeast Europe”.

Activity Cluster 2: History teachers' training and participation in the evaluation phase of the teaching materials: Three regional teacher training activities took place in Vukovar, Mostar and Bujanovac; the location cities were selected to reflect the sensitivity of the history of the past 60 years and the multi-ethnic culture of the region. A total of 89 history teachers took part in the training sessions and engaged in elaborating a comparative analysis of selected history textbooks in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Croatia, Cyprus, Kosovo, Romania, Slovenia and Serbia as well as a comparison of teaching the history of post-1945 and post-1989.

Activity Cluster 3: Outreach to the general public multiplying a multi-perspective state of mind: Although the production of the new materials is still in an early stage, the initiative was advertised in the media. Additionally, the project was advertised at 5 international conferences and is already widely known amongst international organisations.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- A draft version of the two new volumes of teaching materials presenting the history in Southeast Europe of the past 60 years in a multi-perspective way with more than 400 original historical sources from Southeast Europe compiled around key topics.
- Wide-ranging consultations with Southeast European Academia for the production process through the source committee members and their peers.
- A total of 89 teachers increased their competences for using and propagating new history teaching methodologies, while at the same time learning how approaches to teaching the history of the past 60 years differ in their region.
- Two articles in international media: in the Japanese daily newspaper Asahi Shimbun on 03.03.2015 and in the Italian Corriere della Sera on 06.05.2015. Six articles in regional media.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- During the next semester, editors and source committee members will continue consultations with academia, with ministries, with teachers and teacher associations.
- A regional teacher training for 50 teachers will take place where the final draft of the teaching materials will be evaluated
- Work with the media will continue and TV appearances will be arranged. The Joint History Project is appeared at the Vienna Western Balkans Summit in August 2015.

Programme reference:	2013 / 024-091 - Multi-beneficiary programme under the IPA-Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013- part DG NEAR
Project title:	Balkan Transitional Justice
EU contribution:	EUR 0.3 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant
Contract reference:	2014 / 350-410
Duration of activities:	02/11/2014 – 01/11/2016
Links:	http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/page/balkan-transitional-justice-home
Contact:	Karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to contribute to reconciliation processes in the Western Balkans through professional and objective journalistic reporting on transitional justice issues, as well as to advance the state of media in the Western Balkans by securing continued support to investigative media production on transitional justice issues.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Online publishing of news articles, radio programme and cross-regional multi-media investigations on transitional justice issues and dissemination.
- Production of documentary film and its promotion.
- Awareness raising on transitional justice issues and the role of media in that process.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- More than 500 news, analysis, interviews and opinions published on Balkan transitional Justice web site in English and local languages (Albanian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Macedonian) covering war crimes trials and other transitional justice issues.
- At least 500 republications of BTJ articles in media outlets across the region.
- Six radio episodes of radio programme “Roads to justice” produced in local languages and broadcast by more than 100 radio stations across the Balkan region.
- A cross-regional multimedia investigations produced and republished by local media.
- Documentary film “The Unidentified” (which reveals who were the commanders responsible for some of the most brutal attacks of the Kosovo war) produced and premiered in Belgrade on 27 April and Pristina on 7 May, 2015, both premieres were followed by round tables which hosted former prosecutor at the ICTY in the case of Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia’s chief war crimes prosecutor, Kosovo’s Ombudsman and head of the EULEX Special Prosecution Office among others.

- The documentary has been selected to compete at the Sarajevo Film Festival and Dokufest in Prizren.
- BTJ journalists have participated at Oxford University Workshop on Innovative Media for Change and at the Global Media Forum held in Bonn.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuous promotion of the documentary film at film festivals and TV stations across the region.
- Filming of the new documentary film on human resettlement - an exchange of populations between Serbia and Croatia during the war.
- Creation of an on-line war crimes verdicts map.
- Internships for journalism students at BIRN country offices.

Programme reference:	2013 / 024-091 - Multi-beneficiary programme under the IPA-Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013- part DG ELARG
Project title:	Historija, Istorija, Povijest – Lessons for Today
EU contribution:	EUR 0.38 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant
Contract reference:	2014 / 351-243
Duration of activities :	07/11/2014 – 06/05/2017
Contact:	Karl.giacinti@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The action aims to raise awareness and encourage discussion about the recent history in the Western Balkans region that has divided and generated conflict over the past century. By promoting critical thinking about historical events and their relevance for contemporary challenges, the Anne Frank House with its local partners seeks to generate dialogue about the common past, thus fostering reconciliation.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Selection of 12 key persons for creation of local exhibit panels and lesson plan materials.

Organizing Croatian Memory Walk seminar with 18 youth from ten Croatian towns (June 17 – 21, 2015).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Creation of local panels and lesson plans that will accompany the Anne Frank exhibition in Bosnia, Serbia and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Three produced Memory Walk videos in Croatia, featuring a forgotten monument (of Ustashe crime in World War II), a controversial square name (Marshal Tito, in Zagreb), and a non-existing monument initiative (naming a street after Aleksandra Zec, twelve year old Croat-Serb girl executed by Croatian police in Zagreb in 1991).
- Networking and cooperation established with various existing initiatives and experts in the region, seeking to multiply the impact of the HIP project.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Regional Peer Guide Training of Trainers (Zagreb, July 06 – 10, 2015);

Memory Walk Serbia (Belgrade, August 20 – 24, 2015);

Memory Walk former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (October 22 -27, 2015);

Finalization of Anne Frank exhibitions, with local panels, for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;

Finalization of lesson plans on Yugoslavia history;

Finalization of Memory Walk manual and dvd, including translation to all the languages.

2.3 HUMAN RIGHTS AND MINORITY PROTECTION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2011/022-964
Project title:	Promoting Human rights and minority protection in South East Europe
EU contribution:	EUR 3.60 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement with the Council of Europe (CoE)
Contract reference:	CN 2011/277-251
Duration of activities:	29/11/2011 – 28/12/2016 (suspended July – December 2013)
Contact :	Liane Adler, Liane.adler@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

During the reporting period, the implementation of activities begun at the local level.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- All 36 selected small grants for local governments in the 7 beneficiary countries are operational, with various activities on minority promotion and protection already carried out and good practices are already visible on the ground.
- The baseline study relating to the 36 small grants was completed.
- 6 workshops on the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages were held a local level with the aim to sensitize over 200 civil servants on the rights of minority communities.
- Additional policy advice on legislation was provided to Kosovo and Serbia upon request.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Continuation of implementation of small grants support to municipalities, including, for example, opening of community centre in Gracac, Croatia and the publication of a Croatian magazine in Montenegro.

Third Steering committee meeting to take place on 4 November 2015.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2012/022-966
Project title:	Regional support for Inclusive Education
EU contribution:	EUR 4.64 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with the Council of Europe (CoE)
Contract reference:	CN 2013/308-048
Duration of activities :	01/01/2013 – 28/11/2015
Links:	http://pip-eu.coe.int/web/inclusive-education
Contact :	Liane Adler, liane.adler@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project drives efforts to enhance social inclusion and social cohesion in the education sector within the region. In order to achieve the objective, the project promotes the concept of inclusive education as a reform principle that respects and caters for diversity amongst all learners with a specific focus on those who are at a higher risk of marginalisation and exclusion.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Activities continued during the reporting period obliging to the set timelines.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- The implementation of the 49 school projects and day-day support to the participating schools continued.
- A final survey was carried out to measure awareness on the benefits of inclusive education.
- An 8 minute video report on the positive effects of inclusive education using the project as a successful model was produced for coverage and aired in May 2015 by Euronews 15 times.
- PolicyNet, TeacherNet and SchoolNet workshops on the endorsement of regional policy recommendations were organized in three beneficiary countries between April and May 2015.
- A workshop and study visit on teacher training for inclusive education was hosted by the University of Edinburgh in May 2015.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Additional grants to pilot schools will be made available in order to organise peer learning.
- Additional day-to-day support will be offered.
- 35 new schools will be added to the existing regional network.
- The Policy Action Plans for inclusive education will be finalized by the beneficiary countries.
- A report with the results from the final survey on measuring perception on inclusive education will be produced.
- Inclusive Day –events will be organized in each of the 7 beneficiary countries.

2.4 REGIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programmes, IPA 2011/023-537, IPA 2012/024-133 and 2013/024-134,
Project title:	Regional Housing Programme (RHP)
EU contribution:	Contributions to the RHP Fund: EUR 110 million Implementation costs: EUR 28.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreements with CEB, UNHCR
Contract reference:	CN 2012/307-562; CN 2013/325-468; CN 2013/325-470; CN 2012/297-405; CN 2012/ 305-516; CN 2013/314-991
Duration of activities:	30/11/2017 (end date)
Contact :	Liane Adler, liane.adler@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Regional Housing Programme (RHP) addresses in a regional framework the housing needs of the most vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons from the armed conflict in the 1990s in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. The RHP contributes to a satisfactory resolution of the protracted displacement situation in the four Partner Countries (PCs). It does so by providing durable and sustainable housing solutions, with full respect for the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons still in need and of the mutual obligation of the signatories to closely cooperate and synchronise their activities. The durable housing solutions will take place through voluntary return and reintegration, or local integration.

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

Until June 2015, donors pledged in total EUR 268.3 million to the RHP Fund, out of which 148.1 million have been committed and 119.5 million paid. Out of these, the European Commission disbursed EUR 84 million.

Funds committed to the RHP Fund will be spent on reconstruction of destroyed and damaged houses purchase of village houses, buying of flats or building of pre-fabricated houses. The European Commission has in addition paid EUR 27 million to offer technical assistance and direct support to the Partner Countries.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Until June 2015, the Assembly of Donors approved 18 sub-projects which aim to provide durable housing solutions for 6,488 beneficiaries. This equals 24% of the originally estimated overall figure of beneficiaries in need. The total approved fund requests amount to EUR 133 million. EUR 71 million have been contracted, EUR 20,6 million so far disbursed and incurred costs amount to EUR 2 million. During the reporting period the implementation of the RHP programme picked-up speed with an increasing amount of tender dossiers launched and several new constructions sites opened.

OUTPUTS

- A study on the needs for cross-border verification was completed and additional resources approved in line with the identified needs.
- To reflect on the progress made thus far and on the operation capacity of the programme, two evaluations were launched in July 2015. The EC commissioned a Mid term evaluation (MTE) on the beneficiary selection and sustainability aspects of the RHP, while the CEB contracted a Midterm review on the set up of the RHP and its technical aspects.
- The replaced Montenegrin government implementing body was verified and became fully operational.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, delivery of 20 building material packages in Republika Srpska was completed in March 2015.
- In Serbia, 125 packages of building material were delivered and the contract for 66 pre-fabricated houses signed.
- In Montenegro, the first construction of a new building with 62 flats in Niksic has begun in July 2015.

- A new building with 29 flats in Korenica, Croatia was almost finalized and for the 44 flats which had previously been purchased, 25 beneficiary families have already moved in.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Starting of works for a home of elderly in Glina, Croatia in September 2015.
- Delivery of 29 housing solutions in Korenica, Croatia in September 2015.
- Additional EUR 11,3 million EU funds will be contracted to the benefit of the RHP.
- The results of both the MTE and the MTR will be finalized by end 2015.
- Meetings: Technical Committee: 27/28 October 2015,
Assembly of Donors: 2 December 2015, Regional Coordination Forum: 15 September
and 16 November 2015.

CHAPTER 3: PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

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

3.1. WESTERN BALKAN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION FACILITY (WB EDIF)

Programme reference :	Multi-beneficiary Programmes for the years 2011-2013, IPA 2011/021-964; IPA 2012/022-966 and IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Western Balkan Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WB EDIF)
EU contribution:	EUR 64.60 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution agreements (CA) with OECD (TA) CA with European Investment Fund (EIF) (coordination) CA with EIF (Guarantee Facility) Delegation agreement with EIF (ENEF) Delegation agreement with EIF (ENIF)
Contract reference:	CA with World Bank (Support to TA) CN 2012/295-825; CN 2012/306-154; CN 2012/306-653; CN 2013/319-472; CN 2012/306-667; CN 2013/333-444; CN 2013/318-776; CN 2013/331-504 ; CN 2014/334-654
Duration of activities:	05/12/2012 – 30/11/2025
Links:	www.wbedif.eu
Contact :	eleni.vossou@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

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

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Platform level

EIF ensured coordination and facilitated the EDIF governance, including organisation of the Platform Advisory Group (PAG) meeting on 15 June in Rome (hosted by the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance), back to back with the Steering Committee of the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF). One EDIF Working Group meeting was organised prior to the PAG.

In terms of Communication efforts, and as indicated at the December 2014 PAG meeting, the EIF continued to work on the website improvements in collaboration with the EIB (as Support Services coordinator) in order to:

- a. develop a WB EDIF interactive map
- b. develop a PAG members log-in area
- c. develop a form to be used for PAG registrations as well as for events registrations

EIF also continued to update the WB EDIF presentation – available on the www.wbedif.eu website and carried out work to update the WBEDIF leaflet to be further distributed among

the partners and events. Furthermore, the EIF continued its distribution of the WB EDIF quarterly leaflet to the PAG members and, at the request of the EC, also to the relevant EUDs.

During the June 2015 PAG meeting the EIF presented a proposal in order to address the the governance issues,[†] essentially in order to resolve the balance of voting members between the public and private investors and the WB beneficiaries themselves to maintain a transparent and equal balance of decision-making between the two groups – thus enabling a subsequent balanced forum for relevant EC decisions. The consensus at PAG was to further adjust this proposal and to return to the next PAG meeting with a final structure. This will also formally be incorporated in the updates of EDIF procedures (which includes the incorporation of the Support Services presentations).

EIF sent representatives to several events to raise awareness of the WB EDIF platform and its underlying pillars, including the ‘Improving Access to Finance for SMEs conference in March, hosted by the Serbian Chamber of commerce (the ENIF Fund Manager was also present on this occasion) and the Senior Officials Workshop for EU-REPARIS in May (involving some 30 senior officials - led by deputy-ministers of finance - from the six countries.

ENIF

EIF, as part of its responsibilities as Platform Coordinator has been charged with the selection of the private sector Fund Manager for ENIF. Following the selection of the Fund Manager in 2014 there has been extensive negotiations followed, mostly concerning commitments from KfW and the beneficiaries.

Following the December 2014 PAG meeting, when the EIF proposed a 2-stage closing scenario (at EUR 25m and then at full EUR 38m size) in order to subscribe the fund and thus allow ENIF to become operational in earlier, further discussion and coordination among the investors (led by EIF) took place in order to:

- Revise the LPA and subscription agreement taking into account the most recent changes.
- Closely follow the fund manager in order to ensure fundraising progress (whereby commitments of approximately EUR 5m were secured) as well as to further explore the interest of IFC to join as an investor.

[†] The evolution of EDIF requires a different approach than that at the set-up, also taking into account the growing number of participating parties around the table, including new financiers, this has to importantly be balanced with representation of the WB beneficiaries to ensure ownership.

As at the end of June 2015, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia were close to finalising their commitments, with the other WB countries to enter at second closing.

To be noted that the total contribution of EC and EIF is committed (EUR 14.1 million), although a proportion will be held back until second closing so as not to allow for a majority contribution to the fund. Together with KfW's commitment and the envisioned entry of IFC into the Fund it is expected that the EUR 40m will be reached and possibly also exceeded.

ENEF

The new COO of ENEF began working out of the Belgrade office in early 2015 and, together with the teams on the ground, is working on the pipeline for ENEF operations – including marketing, cross country allocation of resources and important referrals from SBS.

ENEF's second closing subsequently took place in February 2015, thereby taking the fund to a total of EUR 48.5 million and noted the entry of the Austrian Development Bank (OeEB) with an EUR 5 million investment.

The Fund saw its first operation signed on 1 June 2015 with Viva Fresh Kosovo[‡], the second largest retail chain in the country, for a total amount of EUR 6.5 million.

ENEF held two Board of Directors meetings, on 19 March and 16 June to increase the Board members following the entry of OeEB, to sign off on the relevant capital call for the first investment, as well as to review prospective investments, operational matters and other administrative matters.

The ENEF Investment Committee continues to screen prospective projects in the region and has several at advanced stages of negotiation. During the first 5 months of 2015 alone, some 181 companies were visited to discuss ENEF financing and have been entered into the database.

Guarantee Facility

The sixth and final transaction under the current budgetary allocation of EUR 20 million was signed in April 2015 with Raiffeisen Croatia for a loan portfolio of EUR 20m. The remaining 5 transactions, 3 of which signed in December 2013 and the remaining two in August and September 2014, are experiencing very good absorption results as reported to the PAG in June 2015.

[‡] See press release via

<http://www.ebrd.com/cs/Satellite?c=Content&cid=1395244785027&d=Mobile&pagename=EBRD/Content/ContentLayout>

The negotiation between the EIF and EC with regards to the replenishment of the Guarantee Facility is ongoing, some complexity is involved here due to the triggering of the FR/FAFA requirements under the new budget and therefore a new FAFA-compliant contract is to be negotiated and signed before the end of the year. The additional EUR 17.5 million will bring new resources to the market, notable for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia where a GF remains to be signed. Furthermore, and following market test results presented to the PAG in June 2015, the EIF has indicated further market appetite and has requested a further indicative allocation of up to EUR 30 million, to be approved at the December PAG.

Support Services

OECD: SME Policy Index & Triple Helix

OECD supports two projects on the WBEDIF value chain; the first being Triple Helix aimed predominantly at the pre seed and seed stages of SME growth, and the second working on monitoring of policy reforms across the regions.

The Triple Helix project, focusing on early stage SMEs, was launched in Kosovo, Croatia and Albania. After the country launch in January 2015, desk reviews and local expert interviews were conducted, followed by in country interviews and questionnaires to identify what works. Currently identifying and motivating the key stakeholders through the competition process – these pilot projects create the forum for discussion between the stakeholders to exchange ideas and cooperate.

EU Small Business Act (SBA) monitoring: a review of the methodology was carried out and Dedicated monitoring dimensions have been added in order to monitor and assess the achievements on the identified EDIF policy reform priorities. The 4 main areas of priority have been integrated within the methodology and data analysis process. The review of the methodology is currently in the finalisation of the second phase of data collection from local governments and other stakeholders. The next step will pertain to evaluating data and holding final meetings with stakeholders, followed by the drafting and publication of the findings.

The next steps for SBA EDIF monitoring will see further regional stakeholder meetings, with recommendations to be discussed with key stakeholders thereafter. The draft report will be prepared towards the end of the year and finally a high level event will launch the SBA and its final results in April 2016.

EBRD: Small Business Support (SBS)

This project aims at improving the bankability of clients. Progress in the regions is already ahead of plan, with some very positive financial results, including 73% of clients increasing their turnover, 53% of clients increasing their number of employees, 60% of clients improving their productivity and 22% of clients securing external financing. Delivery of

advisory services is progressing well with more than 166 projects started at the end of May, with a complementary strong pipeline as well as a large team of over 30 working in the 6 countries.

The current programme requires approximately EUR 5m per year, whereby the EC will be contributing EUR 9 m of the EUR 15 m over the coming years, other national funding sources have also been secured.

World Bank: Venture Capital and Investment Readiness update on activities

The project has two major activities; the first component is to provide an assessment of the ecosystem of the venture capital market in the beneficiary countries as well as to provide advice on institutional and policy reforms. Secondly to provide support to increase investment readiness of entrepreneurs in the region by means of providing a pilot mentorship assistance programme providing hands-on training.

The VC ecosystem assessment (1st component) is undergoing a major review on how the assessment will be conducted. Over the next 6 months the World Bank will conclude its selection of international experts and will start its analyses in Serbia and Croatia, whilst also tailoring those of Albania and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

With regards to the second component - the Investment Readiness programme – and following extensive discussion on its scope within the steering committee, it has been decided to scale up this initiative in order to reach 50-100 firms throughout the region and to compare the impact of a lower cost intervention (including online tools). There has furthermore been a client capacity building training for government officials held in Istanbul.

World Bank : EU REPARIS: update on activities

The EU-REPARIS has 5 units:

- Institutional Frameworks and Regulatory Environment incl. Accounting and Auditing Standards.
- Education and Capacity Development at the Profession and University Level.
- Access To Finance and Financial Sector.
- Regional Cooperation and Knowledge Sharing.
- In-country Implementation Support.

In May a senior officials workshop was held in Vienna to mark the launch of the EU-REPARIS programme, whereby workshops were also held to identify the short, medium and long term objectives for the countries concerned. These included notably audit regulation, a simplification agenda and SME focus, and stronger engagement with the local business community and stakeholders.

Furthermore, an ‘Education Community of Practice Workshop’ was recently held in Skopje, the first organised under the new EU-REPARIS programme. For this component an education benchmarking exercise is being carried out in order to align accreditation standards and identify ways of closing gaps in this respect. In parallel to the survey there is also a profiling tool which allows universities to compare syllabus content with other internationally recognised benchmarks (as a self-diagnosis tool).

OUTPUTS

Platform level

With the six PAG meetings held since December 2012 (and relating Working Group meetings in preparation for these), EDIF governance arrangements are being well consolidated. Enough experience has also been gathered to draw lessons for the future operations and streamlining of the EDIF Terms of Reference and Rules of Governance which EIF has endeavoured to carry out; furthermore EIF has delivered measures for the improvement in EDIF communications with items such as the quarterly newsletter, presentations, website improvements etc.

ENIF

ENIF operationalisation is still in progress.

ENEF

The first operation under ENEF was signed on 1 June 2015, with further operations at advanced stages of assessment and expected to be signed before the end of the year.

Guarantee Facility

Implementation continues with five banks reporting 1,150 loans for an aggregate loan volume of EUR 66.2 million as at 30 April 2015[§]. Operations under Raiffeisen Croatia (signed in April 2015) expect to commence during in the following months.

Support Services

In the context of the Triple Helix Partnership the OECD delivered best practice sharing seminars and “study trips” for the beneficiaries. Regarding SBA, the new SME Policy Index Methodology was finalised.

The 2015 work programmes for WB’s REPARIS and EBRD’s Small Business Support (SBS) were finalised.

[§] NB this is unofficial data as presented at the PAG meeting of June 2015

The operational principles on the management and administration of the Pillar were agreed among the parties. The Support Services Working Party discussed new proposals for targeted TA measures presented by the EIB.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Platform level

The next PAG meeting is indicatively scheduled for 17 December 2015 in Paris (to be jointly hosted with the OECD), with WB EDIF and WBIF secretariats coordinating on logistics. A PAG Working Group meeting is expected to take place approximately 5 weeks prior in conjunction with the Support Services Working Party (SUPWP). The Platform Coordinator PAG semi-annual report Q1 2015 will also be prepared.

EIF's work during the 2nd half of 2015 will focus on finalising the governance restructuring to reflect the evolving nature of EDIF and new investors, incorporating the comments received during the June 2015 PAG. In addition EIF will continue to roll out its quarterly newsletters and will review the EDIF leaflet as well as implement ways of improving the interactivity of the www.wbedif.eu website.

ENIF

The first stage of closing at approximately EUR 25 million is expected before the end of the summer and will act as a bridge solution for 3-6 months in leading up to the second stage of closing at approximately EUR 40 million. Further negotiations with additional institutional investors will continue. EIF will also endeavour to assist and support the Fund manager in marketing and visibility efforts.

ENEF

Further signatures are expected before the end of the year following the relevant screening within the investment committee.

Guarantee Facility

The signature of the new FAFA-compliant Delegation Agreement is expected to be signed before year end and a call for expression of interest launched in parallel.

Support Services

Within the Multi-country Programme 2014 the two remaining Support Services agreements will be finalised, one with EIB for the coordination of the Support Services Facility and one with EBRD for the inclusion under EDIF of the SBS programme.

The existing projects with the OECD will continue, with SBA data collection, evaluation and verification and with the formulation of comprehensive and sustainable Triple Helix frameworks.

The REPARIS, VC Ecosystem Assessment, Investment Readiness Pilot and SBS programmes will begin the implementation phase.

3.2 EUROPEAN FUND FOR SOUTHEAST EUROPE (EFSE)

Programme reference:	CARDS 2006/018-264 and Multi-beneficiary Programme IPA 2007/019-344, IPA 2008/020-300, IPA 2009/021-373 and IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	European Fund for Southeast Europe (EFSE)
EU contribution:	EUR 83.9 million
Beneficiary region:	14 countries including Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution agreements with the European Investment Fund (EIF)
Contract reference:	CN 2006/124-240; CN 2008/154-338, CN 2009/201-622, CN 2009/222-012, CN 2011/268-296
Duration of activities:	04/08/2006 – 23/10/2017
Links:	http://www.efse.lu/
Contact :	Eleni Vossou, eleni.vossou@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

By 31 December 2014, the outstanding investment portfolio in the EFSE amounted to EUR 940.5 million, thereof EUR 563.4 million in the Western Balkans and Turkey**. During Q1 2015, EFSE signed 10 investments totalling EUR 96.9 million, of which EUR 56.5 million with 8 Partner Lending Institutions (PLIs) were in the Western Balkans and Turkey. This brings the total number of PLIs with active investments to 73 and an outstanding investment portfolio by 30 June 2015 of EUR 949.2 million – EUR 569.5 million in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

** Includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey.

In terms of the sub-loan portfolio, by 30 June 2015, the outstanding sub-loan portfolio amounted to EUR 877.5 million, including EUR 578.7 million in the Western Balkans and Turkey. This translates into an on-lending rate of 93% for the total Fund and 102% for the Western Balkans and Turkey by 30 June 2015.

On the TA side, EFSE had 33 ongoing projects in the Western Balkan region and Turkey with a total volume of EUR 1.7 million. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina the EFSE Development Facility is currently supporting a microfinance institution in implementing a MSE product segment in order to reach out to more small enterprise clients in a responsible manner, whilst establishing itself in a competitive market environment. In Serbia, EFSE, in cooperation with the Serbian banking association, held a workshop on Agricultural Financial Services in February 2015.

By the end of Q1 2015, EFSE successfully raised additional EUR 52 million in funding from private investors. This was enabled by the Fund's strong performance also in the Western Balkan region and Turkey. Overall, Ffund's performance remains very solid with continuously low impairment levels, very good financial performance, and continued further moderate growth leveraging the Fund's C Shares.

OUTPUTS

EFSE investment portfolio figures as at end Q1 2015*	
1. Total Invested Portfolio (Q4 2014 figures)	EUR 949.2 million
2. Number of current Partner Lending Institutions (Q4 2014 figures)	73
4. Type of Partner Lending Institution (Q4 2014 figures)	70% Commercial Banks, 16% Micro-finance Institutions, 14% Non-Bank Financial Institutions
EFSE sub-loan figures as at end Q3 2014*	
5. Active End Borrowers (Q3 2014 figures)	151,646
6. Reached End Borrowers since inception (Q3 2014 figures)	661,164
7. Average sub-loan outstanding (Q3 2014 figures)	EUR 5,786
8. Disbursed sub-loans since inception (Q3 2014 figures)	EUR 4.7 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

For Q2 2015, EFSE is facing a solid investment pipeline, for example, in Turkey and also in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, EFSE TA will further increase its activities covering a broad variety of topics to support sustainable financial sector development. One of the planned activities in Q2 2015 includes, for instance, the development of a detailed business plan for the establishment of a national Financial Literacy Center in Kosovo, in close cooperation with the Central Bank of Kosovo.

3.3 CRISIS RESPONSE PACKAGE

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

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

MSME Finance Window - During the period, the successful cooperation with the Turkish Credit Bureau (KKB) and the Partner Banks (PB) continued regarding transfer of CAP tool

(TARDES) and agricultural lending capacity building activities. TARDES-user banks continued to receive trainings in order to increase their efficient usage of TARDES and maintain it. In the context of marketing/promoting activities for TARDES, an introduction meeting with Albaraka Turk (an Islamic participation bank) and follow up meetings with Sekerbank, DenizBank, Vakifbank and Yapi Kredi Bank were organized. A new section in TARDES in relation to small cattle farming is in test-phase to be subsequently opened to TARDES-user banks. The consultants and KKB are also working to design a more user-friendly screens/mechanism of TARDES.

The period has been intense in terms of data collection activities. In addition to collecting agronomic data for crop production in Turkey, the consultants had site-visits to assess mushroom production as well as goat farming. During the visits, the consultant team also had the opportunity to collect agronomic data on broiler production. Additionally, upon some news about observation of bird flu cases especially in the western part of Turkey, an ad-hoc Bird Flu Report has been prepared and shared with KKB and PBs.

The official project website (www.msmeturkey.com) was regularly updated. The total number of visitors visiting the project website since February 2012 reached 11,673.

The payment of EUR 162,931.95 was made to Vakif Bank under the Credit Enhancement Support (FLCR) on 17 February 2015. A partial refund of EUR 21,932.31 of the FLCR payment was received from Vakif on 5 June 2015.

Energy Efficiency Window - The first phase of TurSEFF was successfully finalised in early 2013, having disbursed EUR 200 million to finance 370 sustainable energy measures in Turkey through 269 sub-loans. The sub-loans under TurSEFF are now being verified. Under MidSEFF, three new projects were requested in the first half of 2015: two geothermal and one hydro.

Small Business Support (SBS) - EGP started 1 project in the first half of 2015 and one project was completed, bringing the total implementation to 18 projects started and 9 projects completed. BAS started 13 projects and all projects were completed during the semester. The total number of BAS projects implemented is 165, of which all have been completed and 135 have undergone a one year completion evaluation. In order to increase demand for local consultancy services, improve their quality and consolidate the industry, as well as to disseminate success stories and best practices, fourteen market development activities (one in the reporting period) and one sector development activity were undertaken.

OUTPUTS

MSME Finance Window - As of June 2015, TARDES is used by seven banks: Isbank, Akbank, Fibabanka, Bank Asya, ABank, Garanti Bank and Kuveyt Turk Participation Bank. Total number of applications at TARDES reached 75,978 as of end-June. As a complementary programme to Basic Agricultural Lending Trainings, a new 3-day Agricultural Investment

Loans Training Programme has been designed and offered to PBs. The total number of bank staff who received classroom trainings increased to 2,602 including extensive ToT training and coaching sessions and gender awareness workshop; whilst the total number of training days hiked to 315.5. Additionally, 183 bank staff received agricultural on-the-job trainings on top of classroom training session. The total number of tech-cards in TARDES reached 3,937 including the tech-cards for animal husbandry, and 3,124 of them were updated. The number of agricultural products in the system is 153.

KKB and the consultants have integrated Farmer Registry System (CKS) of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock into TARDES. PBs will be able to benefit from CKS records with no obligation of using TARDES. DenizBank, for instance, started to use CKS records without using the loan assessment capacity of TARDES. This integration obviously created another business line for KKB. During the period, a new VCF scheme was established with the participation of Isbank.

Energy Efficiency Window - Of the EUR 700 million in EBRD funds allocated for MidSEFF, EUR 175 million had been reserved for direct risk participation in selected transactions. Due to the difficulty in implementing these types of transactions, there had been no use of the direct risk funds under MidSEFF so far. Therefore, in the second half of 2014, EBRD cancelled the direct risk participation allocation. These funds have been reallocated in 2015 in two repeat transactions with existing MidSEFF banks: Garanti (USD 100 million / EUR 89.37 million equivalent) and Yapi Kredi (USD 80 million / EUR 71.5 million equivalent).

SBS /EGP - Out of the 135 BAS projects that have already been evaluated, 93% have been rated as successful or highly successful. In addition, 89% of enterprises increased their turnover with a median increase of 20%, 33% of enterprises increased their productivity, with a median increase of 17%. 70% of BAS assisted enterprises report an increase in labour force, and BAS interventions contributed to the creation of over 956 (net) new jobs. Furthermore, 21% of BAS-assisted enterprises received external investments within one year after completion of activities, for a total of Euro 18 million. Lastly, BAS interventions further contributed to raising demand for external advice. 97% would consider using a local consultant again, whereas 41% of beneficiary enterprises have in fact already engaged another consultant within one year after completion of the BAS project.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

MSME Finance Window - The consultants will continue assisting KKB in marketing and promotion activities of TARDES in order to attract new financial institutions for the use of TARDES. TARDES will continue to be updated with further agronomic data i.e. small cattle breeding and mushroom productions are expected to be added into TARDES.

Agricultural product reports will be updated for all the agricultural products within TARDES and shared with non TARDES user PBs (TEB, Yapi Kredi Bank, Vakifbank). The consultant

team will deliver Agricultural Risk Management training programme to Yapi Kredi Bank. Vakifbank and Isbank will continue receiving support in agricultural organizational structure, opening of agri-oriented branches, agricultural risk monitoring, strategic orientation & overall evaluation through regular monthly meetings. The regional agronomic data (i.e. average yield, sales price, working capital requirement, production processes and related costs etc.) collection for the year 2015 from 81 provinces of Turkey will be finalized. Regional visits will be conducted in order to monitor the existing VCF schemes.

Energy Efficiency Window will continue to encourage the development of MidSEFF sub-projects from non-mainstream renewable technologies. The MidSEFF Project Consultant will work on developing projects for the recently signed transactions with the aim of allocating all MidSEFF funds by the end of 2015. It will also continue to monitor the implementation of active MidSEFF projects. The final verifications of the TurSEFF sub-loan portfolio are expected to be complete in H2-2015.

Planning is underway for the next phases of TurSEFF and MidSEFF which are expected to start implementation later in 2015/early in 2016. These next phases will have expanded eligibility criteria compared to earlier phases.

SBS/EGP - No EGP and BAS projects, as well as no market development activities are planned under the Facility in the second half of the year as all available funds are now committed.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2009/021-373
Project title:	Private Sector Support Facility for the Western Balkans – Crisis Response Package
EU contribution:	EUR 31.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with EBRD
Contract reference:	CN2009/229-273
Duration of activities:	23/12/2009 – 30/11/2015
Links:	http://www.sme-finance.mk / http://www.cropssf.hr / http://www.webpssf.com
Contact :	Eleni Vossou, eleni.vossou@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The EU/EBRD programme “Private Sector Support Facility for the Western Balkans” (PSSF) provides loans, supported by grants and technical assistance (TA) to the WB Region for (i) industrial investments for SMEs to be in line with acquis and (ii) energy efficiency investments in the private sector. The Facility includes three windows: (i) the SME Competitiveness Support Window (SME-CSF – EUR 21.5 million), (ii) the Energy Efficiency Window (SEFF – EUR 5.0 million), and (iii) the EBRD SBS (formerly TAM/BAS) Programme Window (EUR 5.0 million).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

SME-CSF Window - to date EBRD signed 13 loan agreements with Participating Banks (PBs) for financing of EUR 107 million in 4 countries. Out of the 13 projects, one is related to SEFF sub-window, whilst the remaining 12 fall under SME-CSF. The third tranche of EBRD financing for Unicredit Serbia was signed in February 2015. No additional incentives were allocated for this increase.

Energy Efficiency Window - The first tranche of EUR 50.0 million of investment funds under WeBSEDF, to which the PSSF EUR 5.0 million contributed, were fully committed to 12 projects by September 2012. Limited progress was made with their implementation in the first half of 2015, with the second part of an additional project completed and verified during the period. This leaves the total at 9 (out of 12), including the projects supported by sources other than the PSSF. Of the remaining three projects, one should be completed by the end of 2015, one would not receive incentive payments (due to payment default) and the third one has not started disbursement on the loan, it had to be restructured due to significant delays in resolving administrative issues.

SBS Window - Under SBS, the Enterprise Growth Programme (EGP) has started 47 projects in the region and 1 sector development activity. Out of 47 projects in total: 28 have been completed (including the sector development activity), 10 cancelled and 9 are under implementation. Business Advisory Services (BAS) delivered 317 projects, of which 11 have been completed and 18 cancelled. 275 projects have already been evaluated one year after completion with 7 being evaluated during the reporting period. On average, beneficiaries contributed 46% of project costs. In total, 18 projects have been implemented in Albania, 67 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 94 in Croatia and 49 in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 37 in Montenegro and 52 in Serbia. Furthermore, 9 market development activities have been implemented to provide training to local enterprises and consultants and to consolidate the consultancy industry in the region.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

SME - CSF Window: There were no disbursements from EBRD to Participating Banks (PBs) in the period. The last remaining tranche of EUR 2 million is due to be disbursed in July 2015. The cumulative disbursements under the Facility total EUR 105 million. The current sub-loan portfolio is 280 at value of EUR 102 million. 26 sub-projects were successfully verified in the period. Cumulatively 183 sub-projects have been successfully verified by the end of reporting period (Croatia 71, FYR Macedonia 46, Bosnia and Herzegovina 10 and Serbia 56). EUR 953,629 was disbursed in Investment Incentives to sub-borrowers and EUR 142,324 in Admin Fess to PBs in the first six months of 2015. The cumulative utilisation of IPA funds for incentives under this window stands at EUR 11.3 million. Till the end of reporting period EUR 3.04 million were disbursed for consultancy services. The Facility is also supported by grants from the EBRD Special Shareholders Fund (SSF).

Energy Efficiency Window – During the period, no additional projects qualified for incentive payments from the PSSF. As a result the number of verified projects under the PSSF remained at 4 (out of 7). The cumulative amount of incentive payments to these 4 verified projects under the PSSF reached EUR 2.64 million (of which EUR 0.84 already paid out). Among the verified projects there are two small hydropower projects in Albania and in Kosovo, as well as one biomass-fired cogeneration facility in Croatia. Of the remaining 3 projects that are supported under the PSSF, one has encountered significant difficulties and may not be completed (the incentive payment would not be disbursed), the other one has not been initiated yet (which may mean that it might also lose its entitlement to an incentive payment), while the third one is close to completion and is expected to be verified in the second half of 2015. The two projects that face implementation difficulties are being closely monitored; the PSSF funding committed to them is EUR 1.3 million.

SBS Window - 67% of evaluated projects have been rated as successful or highly successful. In addition, 70% and 49% of BAS assisted enterprises report an increase in turnover and labour force, respectively, and BAS interventions contributed to the creation of over 315 (net) new jobs. Furthermore 26% of BAS-assisted enterprises received external investments within one year after completion of activities, with a median investment of around EUR 250.000. Lastly, BAS interventions contributed to raising demand for external advice. 97% would consider using a local consultant again, whereas 35% of beneficiary enterprises have in fact already engaged another adviser within one year after project completion.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

CSF-SME activities will focus on final disbursements and verifications of eligible sub-projects. Implementation of projects under WeBSEDF will continue. It is anticipated that the verification of one more project will be initiated in the second half of 2015 and incentive

payments to two projects that have been already verified may be paid out, if the outstanding conditions are fulfilled. Whereas no new project is planned to start during next period, SBS will continue completing and evaluating projects under WB PSSF where applicable.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2009/021-373
Project title:	SME Recovery Support Loan for Turkey – Crisis Response Package
EU contribution:	EUR 30.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement with EIB
Contract reference:	CN2009/228-929
Duration of activities:	22/12/2009 -22/12/2016
Links:	http://www.eib.org/projects/pipeline/2009/20090580.htm http://www.eib.org/projects/press/2010/2010-131-eib-provides-eur-150-million-innovative-recovery-support-loan-to-smes-in-turkey.htm
Contact :	Carlo Coppola, carlo.coppola@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The two facilities were fully disbursed between October 2010 and April 2011.

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

Main activity in the period January-June 2015: monitoring of the repayments from the final beneficiaries (as indicated in the Annual Report submitted in June 2015 the first TRY loan repayments from the FIs are expected in October 2015). The EIB and DG NEAR were in contact on the required decision as set out in Article 6 (4) of the Contribution Agreement on

“The remuneration on the positive balance of the SME SUPPORT 2009 Special Account in Turkish lira will be determined and agreed by the Parties.”.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

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

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The 2015 monitoring mission is planned in October/November 2015: a final decision on date and modalities is expected during the Steering Committee on September 10th 2015. The discussion on the reutilization of the funds (second round of the funds) which was kicked off at the Steering Committee in June 2014, continued between EIB and DG NEAR in Brussels as well as with the EUD in Ankara. The success of the first operation, particularly its attractiveness and efficient implementation has been broadly appreciated and various follow-up scenarios are being considered. Even though Turkey is out of the financial crisis and has been experiencing some credit expansion in successive years, there are still niches, for example geographical, where access to finance for SMEs is very critical such as provinces in Eastern and South-Eastern Turkey. The EIB is preparing the related communication to formally kick start the discussions on a possible second round of utilization of the EU funds before forwarding them to the Turkish Treasury. Similarly, the EIB has approached the Turkish Treasury so to allow all parties of the Steering Committee to be duly informed ahead of the next SC meeting where the “second round” is to be considered for approval.

3.4 COMPETITIVENESS

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Next Generation Competitiveness Initiative (NGCI)
EU contribution:	EUR 4.9 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with OECD
Contract reference:	CN 2013/ 316-772
Duration of activities :	22/04/2013 – 31/12/2015
Links:	http://www.oecd.org/investmentcompact/
Contact :	Gabriela Negut, gabriela.negut@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Next Generation Competitiveness Initiative (NGCI), aiming to improve the competitiveness of the Western Balkan economies by addressing structural economic challenges. The programme has two main components: the Competitiveness Outlook which monitors policies that affect competitiveness across 15 different areas and provides recommendations going forward, and the Sector Component seeking to foster the competitiveness in two key economic sectors for the SEE region: food and beverage processing as well as tourism.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY –JUNE 2015)

Competitiveness Outlook:

The activities consisted of completing the reconciliation phase and advancing in the drafting phase of the project: during February and March, the project team travelled to all beneficiary countries to present the draft results and consult with the local government and private sector stakeholders, as well as academics and local experts. Between April and August the publication was drafted and underwent numerous internal and external review processes.

Sector Component:

Activities in the first half year 2015 aimed at identifying and reviewing good policy practices and developing initial policy recommendations in the three project work streams: addressing key skills gaps as the main barrier to sector competitiveness, increasing value-added and fostering regional integration.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Competitiveness Outlook:

In mid-March, 'Competitiveness Outlook Week' was held in Paris, which brought together regional expert organisations to consult further and to agree on the final version of the Competitiveness Outlook. The draft has been finalised and it is now subject to further internal consultation.

Sector Component:

Two pilot projects were launched: the creation of online training modules for priority skills in the food and beverage processing sector and the development of a regional tourism brochure targeting the high-value cultural and historic tourism segment. For both sectors, Expert Group Meetings with representatives from the public and private sector from across the region were organised to validate the initial recommendations and pilot project concepts as well as to provide direction for the further work.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

In the second half of 2015 the Competitiveness Outlook is to be published. A high-level conference to promote and discuss the work accomplished and results obtained under the NGCI is planned at the end of the contract.

3.5 HUMAN CAPITAL

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2012/022-966
Project title:	EC/RCC/World Bank/Western Balkans Countries Partnership on Employment and Social Inclusion
EU contribution:	EUR 1.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans (except Croatia)
Type of contract:	Administration Agreement with World Bank
Contract reference:	CN 2013/325-267
Duration of activities:	16/10/2013 – 15/01/2016
Links:	https://collaboration.worldbank.org/groups/jobs-challenges-western-balkans (registration obligatory)
Contact :	JKoettl@worldbank.org Bo.Caperman@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

Support to the development of regional learning networks on employment and social inclusion, to the RCC and national administrations in strengthening the capacities of countries to achieve the headline targets for the inclusive growth pillar of the SEE 2020 Strategy.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The website to host a regional learning network on employment and social inclusion (South East Europe Jobs Gateway) was successfully continued with three additional events: (i) a virtual seminar on the experience of four OECD countries with recent labour market reforms; (ii) a four-day follow-up online discussion where policy experts from OECD countries further elaborated on lessons learned on the political economy of labour market reforms in Germany, Italy, Spain and Korea; and (iii) live coverage of a conference in Vienna on skills development in Europe and Central Asia. In addition, a first draft of a paper analysing the experience of labour market observatories in Europe and other world regions was completed.

In former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the field work for the STEP employer survey on skills demand was finalized and the analysis, jointly with the skills household survey, was initiated (and partially presented at the Vienna skills conference). The support to the government—provided jointly with ILO and UNDP—in developing a new National Employment Strategy continued in the form of three workshops. By now, a draft of section 1 of the strategy on analytical underpinnings and priorities is finalized.

In Montenegro, a final workshop was organized in May and attended by government stakeholders (Ministries of Labor, Economy, Finance and Education) for the draft of the Human Development and Employment Strategy 2016-2020.

In Serbia, the survey firm to conduct the STEP employer and household skills surveys underwent the training-of-trainers course in Washington and finalized the sampling strategy (including for a Roma booster sample), the instrument (in Serbian language), and the National Survey Design Planning report (NSDPR). Regarding the poverty map, the World Bank team, after an extensive exchange with the National Statistical Office, was granted future access to a small sample (3 to 5 percent) of the census in order to compile a poverty map. In addition, a series of workshops were held with the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MoLEVSA) and the National Employment Service (NES) to finalize a reform program for the NES, but also to introduce a possible new in-work benefit for low-wage earners. For the latter, an expert from the United Kingdom presented the UK experience to MoLEVSA and NES.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

More than 100 stakeholders are now connected via the SEE Jobs Gateway Community of Practice (CoP) and actively exchange ideas and opinions. In the past months, the SEE Jobs Gateway has consistently ranked among the 5 most active CoPs (out of a total of 183) in the Collaboration for Development (C4D) platform. A first draft of a review on the worldwide experience of employment observatories has been completed.

In former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the government has completed a first draft of the analytical section of the new national employment strategy as well as a section on policy priorities. The data collection for the STEP employer survey has been completed. In addition, a comparative study on skills mismatches among various European transition countries has been completed and includes first results from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia STEP household survey.

In Montenegro, the government has completed the draft of the Human Development and Employment Strategy 2016-20. In Serbia the government committed to a comprehensive reform of the National Employment Service and a significant improvement of the quality of their services and the targeting and design of active labour market program by finalizing negotiations for a World Bank loan that links loan disbursements to achieved results from these reforms. The loan agreement also includes a commitment to further study improvements in the design of social assistance to increase activation of beneficiaries. Instruments, sampling strategies, and training for the STEP household survey has been completed.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Further knowledge exchange events on the online platform are planned over the coming months, focusing exchanging experience with recent reforms among policy makers in the region. Currently, two events are under preparation, one on Serbia presenting its recent reform program of the National Employment Service, and a second one on region-wide reforms regarding health insurance for the unemployed. The first draft of the report on employment observatories will be revised and finalized. In former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the national employment strategy will be finalized in an additional workshop, with a focus to draft the section on policy recommendations and finalizing the document. The joint analysis of skills demand and supply (skills mismatches) will be finalized. No further activities are planned in Montenegro, other than scoping out the government's needs and interest for additional technical assistance. In Serbia, the focus will now shift to build on the reform program for the National Employment Service and link it to drafting a new comprehensive National Employment Strategy.

To this end, various workshops will be held with the government and analytical reports presented. The fielding of the STEP employer and household surveys will start and data

collection finalized by the end of the year. The Bank team will analyse the census data at the Statistical Office (data can only be accessed on-site) and compile a poverty map; should the results not be satisfying and of acceptable statistical quality, the map will be complemented by another one based on aggregate census and SILC data.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Developing the entrepreneurial society in Western Balkans and Turkey – support to the South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning
EU contribution:	EUR 2.55 million and EUR 0.85 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with SEECEL
Contract reference:	CN 2013/316-501; CN 2013/334-013
Duration of activities:	01/05/2013 – 30/04/2016; 01/01/2014 – 31/12/2016
Links:	www.seecel.hr
Contact :	Bo Caperman, bo.caperman@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

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

- Continuation of piloting at all ISCED levels and TTA institutions, Implementation of pilot activities among 97 pilot schools (ISCED 1,2,3) and 7 TTAs, with each pilot institution organising planned EL activities. Implementation of activities by 17 pilot universities (ISCED 5/6), including workshops, lectures, study visits and development of EL materials.
- Entrepreneurial Learning Student Club (ELSC) forum launched for 80 members on SEECEL's Community of Practice (CoP) Platform; finalisation of 2nd ELSC newsletter.
- Experience and good practices sharing through SEECEL's CoP platform with aim of increasing entrepreneurship level in pilot institutions.

Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

- Quality Assurance Workshop organised and carried out.
- Quality Assurance criteria further developed and harmonised via CoP.
- Data analysis for the TNA/QA publication finalised; publication drafted.
- Collection of working group members and pilot institutions final reports.
- Ongoing on-line exchanges and networking of experts in regards to the Training Needs Analysis and Quality Assurance publication.

Small Business Act Assessment Methodology

- Cooperation with ETF on finalisation of indicators for SBA Dimensions 1 and 8a.
- Collection and analysis of self-assessments for each country by national expert teams.
- Leading two-day SBA stakeholder meetings (with ETF) in eight SEECEL countries to assess progress in SBA implementation (around 200 participants in total).
- Peer-reviews of SBA assessment organised and conducted between SEECEL member states (each national SBA team to peer-review one other country).
- Drafting of preliminary results of the SBA assessments for each country with ETF.
- Presentation of preliminary results with ETF at stakeholder meetings in each country.
- Ongoing on-line exchanges and networking of SBA experts via the CoP.

Other activities

- Contribution to EU developments in entrepreneurial learning as member of ET2020 Working Group on Transversal Skills, Expert Group on Entrepreneurship Key Competence Framework (DG JRC) and EU Danube Region Strategy. SEECEL is also one of 4 lead partners of the *Entrepreneurship Education Experts Network* (EE HUB).
- Contribution to policy development in Croatia through national Expert Working Group for Development of Curriculum (Cross-Curricular Theme: Entrepreneurship).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- 97 pilot schools (ISCED 1: 32; ISCED 2: 33; ISCED 3: 32), 7 TTAs and 17 higher education institutions implemented entrepreneurship as a key competence instrument.
- 30 training modules developed and delivered by TTAs to 750 EL members of institutions trained (teachers and school managers).
- 970 EL lesson plans uploaded onto SEECEL's Teacher Knowledge Base.
- 121 pilot institutions submitted reports (including interim, in-service, mentoring, etc.) and 291 individual teacher development plans.
- 901 active members of the CoP regularly participate in information dissemination and sharing knowledge, which is an increase of 69% compared to previous report.
- 40 articles submitted so far by students for publication in ELSC newsletter.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuation of piloting in ISCED Levels 1, 2, 3, 5/6 and TTAs, with special focus on peer learning activities; preparation of analysis and reporting on piloting impact.
- Issuing of the Training Needs Analysis and Quality Assurance publication and second and third ELSC newsletters.
- Providing inputs for the SME Policy Index publication (SBA assessment).

3.6 TRADE

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2011/022-964
Project title:	Support to CEFTA Secretariat
EU contribution:	EUR 0.6 million; EUR 282,623.00
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Moldova
Type of contract:	1 contribution agreement and 1 operating grant with the CEFTA Secretariat
Contract reference:	CN 2014/350-131; CN 2015/356-713
Duration of activities:	01/12/2014 – 31/03/2015; 01/04/2015 – 31/03/2016
Links:	http://www.cefta.int/
Contact:	Alberto Costa alberto.costa@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

The CEFTA Secretariat assisted the CEFTA Parties in the implementation of priorities outlined in the 2015 Work Programme and facilitated the organisation of all planned meetings of the CEFTA Structures, namely a) the CEFTA Steering Committee, where it presented the annual report and the Work Programme 2015); b) a CEFTA Special Joint Committee meeting to discuss trade issues among CEFTA Parties; and c) 3 meetings of CEFTA Subcommittees particularly to discuss fundamental issues, such as i.e. the modalities of the reporting to the

newly established CEFTA Committee of Trade Facilitation, the coordination between CEFTA Parties regarding modification of bilateral FTAs, to adjust CEFTA structures according to the priorities of implementation of CEFTA.

In February the CEFTA Secretariat organised a donor coordination meeting in Brussels to discuss and possibly identify the areas of trade facilitation where participant international organisations can best contribute, while in April and May the CEFTA Secretariat contributed to the organisation of 2 TAIEX events on simplification of border procedures and exchange of data and on the main open issues in the revision of the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean Convention on preferential rules of origin.

The CEFTA Secretariat organised the third session of the CEFTA Negotiating Group on Trade in Services (Brussels, 26-27 February, 2015), focused on temporary entry of natural persons for business purposes and on negotiations on business and professional services.

Moreover, the CEFTA Secretariat contributed to the organisation of the CEFTA RCC Joint Working Group on Investment Policy and Promotion which aimed at discussing preliminary draft results of the Investment Policy and Promotion Chapter of the Competitiveness Outlook and regional program on investment policy and promotion, to be realized in 2016.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

- Bi-annual and annual Reports on activities of CEFTA Structures.
- Ministerial Decisions adopted in November 2014 and entered into force in January 2015.
- Establishment of the Subcommittee on Trade in Services and its subordinate bodies.
- Establishment of the Committee on Trade Facilitation.
- Regular meetings of the CEFTA Subcommittees and Working Groups.
- Technical workshops in cooperation with TAIEX, IFC, WTO and GIZ.
- CEFTA Joint Position Paper on PEM – full cumulation and drawback.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The CEFTA Secretariat will continue assisting the CEFTA Parties in drafting all the work programmes of CEFTA Structures, in the organisation of all the regular meetings of the CEFTA Subcommittees, of the Working Groups and of the Joint Committee, and in conducting negotiations. It will also organise a number of thematic workshops, the CEFTA Week. The CEFTA Secretariat facilitated the negotiations of the regional trade facilitation agreement through providing its technical proposal to the draft text of the Agreement. Furthermore, the Secretariat coordinated Ministries of Trade of the CEFTA Parties to highlight the importance of trade facilitation with the cabinets of their Prime Ministers which then turned into a clear statement in the Vienna Summit of August 2015 on the Western Balkans . Furthermore, the Secretariat conceptualised SEED +, which would play a substantial role in exchange of data.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2014/031-603
Project title:	Strengthening the CEFTA Structures and their implementation capacities (2015 – 2017)
EU contribution:	EUR 2,579,700.00
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Moldova
Type of contract:	1 action grant with the CEFTA Secretariat
Contract reference:	CN 2014/356-738
Duration of activities:	01/04/2015 – 31/03/2018
Links:	http://www.cefta.int/
Contact :	Alberto Costa alberto.costa@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Action aims to strengthen the capacities of CEFTA structures and supporting their efforts in implementing provisions of the Central European Free Trade Agreement in a way to enhance relevant capacities of the private sector and public administrations.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

The Decision No 4/2014 on National Seconded Experts entered into force on 28 January 2015. In preparation for the Secondment Programme the CEFTA Secretariat organised a briefing meeting with the CEFTA Ambassadors in Brussels giving their role as vital in regulating the Seconded' status in Belgium. In the meeting relevant procedural steps were discussed in order to ensure the smooth implementation of the Programme. A representative of the Protocol Service of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs joined the meeting providing more detailed explanations regarding the Protocols' requirements.

Two seconded national experts (from Montenegro and Serbia) joined the Secretariat already in the first Semester. The other two seconded national experts from Moldova are expected to join the CEFTA Secretariat in July.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

Seconded national experts are directly involved in the work of the Subcommittees and technical preparations in relevant workshops which are to take place by the end of the year.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Seconded national experts are actively involved in the work of the CEFTA Structures for the upcoming period and are planned to join the CEFTA staff in missions.

The Secretariat will also contract a procurement officer as a service provided to the Secretariat not only to strengthen tendering and contracting activities of the Secretariat but also start its preparations for the pillar assessment.

Furthermore, it is expected that the tender for CEFTA MIS is to be launched and contracted by the end of 2015.

The CEFTA Secretariat will also extend the technical assistance contract for IT consultant who acts as IT advisor to the negotiation of the framework agreement. Furthermore, the Secretariat considers mobilising technical assistance to support the coordination between regional and national projects in the field of trade policy falling under the areas of trade facilitation and liberalisation of trade in services, and visibility and outreach of CEFTA.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	CEFTA Project Facility II
EU contribution:	EUR 0.44 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Moldova
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with the CEFTA Secretariat
Contract reference:	CN 2013/335-161
Duration of activities:	18/12/2013 – 17/12/2015
Links:	http://www.cefta.int/
Contact :	Alberto Costa alberto.costa@ec.europa.eu

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 is needed.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

The tendering and contracting stage under CPF II was completed in 2014. 2015 is entirely dedicated to implementing the contracted tenders. During the reported period four tenders remain in the implementation stage.

The part-time project assistant (PA) to the CEFTA Project Facility assisted in the implementation of seven events and performed monitoring missions in Podgorica and Belgrade. Additionally, the PA contributed to the preparation of the CEFTA Trade Statistics Brochure 2014 and its Half Year Update 2015.

The CEFTA Secretariat signed an agreement with ITC to assist the CEFTA Parties in reviewing the current level of their administrative capacities and processes in trade policy formulation, coordination and implementation in responding to multilateral, regional and bilateral obligations stemming from the WTO, EU and CEFTA, at present and in the future. The kick-off meeting of the project “Trade Policy Capacity Building in CEFTA” to be implemented by the ITC was held in Brussels in February.

The CEFTA Secretariat also organised the kick-off Meeting of the project “Technical Assistance to CEFTA Structures to Develop MIS Capacity”, which was held in February in Podgorica. The objective of the Project is to support CEFTA Parties in the negotiation process of signing a Framework Agreement in Customs, in particular, assisting the Parties in negotiating the scope of the Agreement in a way to utilise all existing and future capacities of regional and bilateral IT systems of which the Customs authorities and other border agencies are users.

The Project’s Steering Committee Meeting and First round of Negotiations of the Framework Agreement in Customs were held in May in Podgorica, where the first Draft of the Agreement was presented. Negotiations are conducted within the work of three CEFTA Subcommittees.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

Through the technical assistance activities, and workshops financed by the CPF II, the CEFTA Parties received technical assistance on IT during the negotiations of the Regional Framework Agreement. The IT Consultant prepared the technical annexe of the Agreement which is about exchange of information and data models. Furthermore, the IT consultant will draft the technical specifications of CEFTA MIS. In addition, CEFTA Parties initiated the process of coordinating donors in the area of trade facilitation. Through the workshops financed the CPF II CEFTA Parties were able to produce their regional position on the PEM Convention which is now presented to all official meetings of PEM by the CEFTA Parties.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

There will not be any contracting and tendering by December 2015; all the contracts currently under implementation will be concluded by that date. The Secretariat will do all the necessary monitoring to ensure successful implementation of the contracts signed.

CHAPTER 4: TRANSPORT AND ENERGY

INFRASTRUCTURE, NUCLEAR SAFETY

One of the priorities for IPA assistance is to help Beneficiaries to overcome the economic and financial crisis and to prepare for sound recovery by jointly working on increasing competitiveness and investments in infrastructure. Interventions in this sector have the ultimate goal of supporting the modernisation of their economies, also with a view to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy. Under the Municipal Window of the Infrastructure Projects Facility, grant co-financing is provided investment projects in the fields of environment (water supply, wastewater collection and treatment), energy (district heating) and transport (urban transport). Close coordination with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) is essential.

4.1 WESTERN BALKANS INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK (WBIF)

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

Since its launch five years ago, the WBIF has developed a pipeline of priority investments in the accession countries valued at approximately EUR 13.5 billion. To date, the WBIF Steering Committee has approved 186 grants with a total value of approximately EUR 310 million. These grants are used for project preparation, implementation and co-financing of investments in infrastructure for which financial support is provided by the partner IFIs - EIB, EBRD, CEB as well as KfW, with the World Bank as an associated IFI.

Either the IFIs or the European Commission implement the grant assignments. For the implementation of the EU grants, the Commission has awarded technical assistance contracts under the Infrastructure Project Facility (IPF) and has signed contribution agreements with the IFIs for implementation of the Municipal Window.

The European Commission is the largest contributor to the WBIF and has channelled a total of around EUR 260 million in grants to the WBIF. Of this, almost half – 48% – has gone to finance traditional Technical Assistance; IPF: EUR 82.5 million and the European Western Balkans Joint Fund (EWBJF): EUR 38.3 million. The last contribution by the EC to the EWBJF was made in November 2012. In addition to this, the EC has financed under the WBIF several blending and financial instruments such as REEP (EUR 20 million), Municipal Window (EUR 57.2 million) and EDIF (EUR 58.6 million)

Between 2008 and 2014 bilateral donors have in total contributed more than EUR 45 million to the EWBJF and the partner IFIs have set aside EUR 10 million each in grant contributions. Grants provided to the WBIF from bilateral donors and from the IFIs are implemented directly by the IFIs through various technical assistance assignments.

PURPOSE

The WBIF has three objectives:

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

The identification of priorities is a result of consultation with the other relevant DGs (Environment, Climate change, Move, Energy, Regional Policy, Economic and Financial Affairs) and ensures coordination with their activities in the region.

ACTIVITIES

Key issues under the WBIF work programme for the first part of 2015 included in particular the 13th call for proposals for WBIF TA support, the identification of mature projects for co-financing under the connectivity agenda, the development of co-delegation methodology together with IFIs, the transposition of the NIC framework by the beneficiary countries and the launch of a "new MIS".

In December 2014, the call for project proposals – round 13 – was launched and overall 9 project applications were received. The Project Financiers' Group (PFG) met in May 2015 in Brussels to assess the grant applications.

The 12th Steering Committee (SC) meeting of the WBIF took place in Rome on 16-17 June 2015 and was hosted by the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance, Italy being the co-chair of the SC. Based on the recommendations from the PFG, the SC approved 7 WBIF grants for a total of approx. EUR 8.77 million. All of the applications approved were for technical assistance grants.

The 12th WBIF Steering Committee took place at a time where the WBIF is undergoing a major revamp through the "new methodology" launched in December 2014. The objective was to prepare WBIF for new challenges under IPA II. A parallel development to the "new methodology" is the "Connectivity Agenda" embedded in the so-called Berlin process, for which the WBIF is seen as one of the main delivering tools – via IPA II financing together with IFI loans.

2015 is largely considered to be "a transition year", with gradually firmer and more transparent and systematic structures from 2016 and onwards. The foreseen IPA II funding is about € 100-150 M per annum for both TA and grant co-financing. The programming for 2015 and the identification of potential projects for co-financing required from the beneficiaries to submit to the COM, via the NIC, a list of prioritised projects for co-financing by the end of July.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The indicative work programme for the second half of 2015 includes the launch of the next round for TA project applications (round 14) with similar eligibility criteria as the previous three rounds - projects that 1) are strengthening or unblocking a concrete project of the pipeline and/or 2) have a clear regional impact. The deadline for applications is 4 September 2015.

The next PFG will be held in Podgorica in November 2015. The next SC meeting will take place in Paris on 16 December 2015, hosted by CEB the current co-chair of the PFG.

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4.2 HORIZONTAL SUPPORT TO IFI COORDINATION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Horizontal Support to Coordination with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) – IFI Coordination Office
EU contribution:	EUR 3.88 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Service contract with Mott MacDonald Limited
Contract reference:	CN 2014/340-622
Duration of activities:	01/04/2014 – 31/03/2016
Link:	www.wbif.eu/
Contact :	Wolfgang.SCHLAEGER@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY– JUNE 2015)

- Preparation and follow-up of the WBIF Project Financiers' Group and Steering Committee meetings.
- Support in the identification of mature connectivity infrastructure projects to be financed from IPA 2015 Multi-Country envelope.
- Assistance to the beneficiary countries with the implementation of the new WBIF methodology, the setting-up of National Investment Committees (NICs) and the preparation of Single Project Pipelines.

- Participation in various working groups (Reduced Task Force on the WBIF New Methodology, EUBEC platform).
- Update of the WBIF Public Private Partnerships Strategy.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Draft WBIF Project Fiches for connectivity projects to be financed under IPA 2015.
- Development and implementation of action plans for the establishment of National Investment Committees and operationalization of the Single Project Pipeline.
- Review of the existing pipeline and identification of a list of projects potentially eligible for co-financing in 2015 and 2016.
- Maintenance of the existing WBIF MIS and development of the new MIS (MIS²).
- Support to beneficiaries with their applications for call for project proposals Round 13.
- Drafting and submission of Terms of Reference for IPF4.
- Delivery of WBIF Annual Report 2014, bi-annual Monitoring Report May 2015, bi-monthly reports of active WBIF projects.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Support the preparation and organisation of WBIF related meetings, in particular the 13th WBIF Steering Committee in December 2015.
- Support the Road Map implementation, in particular with view to the revision of the legal and contractual arrangements as well as revision of the founding documents of the WBIF.
- Screening of applications from call for project proposals Round 14.
- Maintenance of the WBIF website, update of databases of investment and IPA flows, operationalization of the new MIS.

4.3 WBIF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS FACILITIES (IPF)

Programme reference:	CARDS Regional Action Programmes for the years 2005 and 2006, CARDS 2005/017-628, CARDS 2005/017-886, CARDS 2006/018-474; Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2010/022-028
Project title:	Infrastructure Projects Facility 1 – Technical Assistance Window
EU contribution:	EUR 30.24 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Service contracts with WYG International Limited
Contract reference:	CN 2008/157-799; CN 2008/157-807; CN 2008/158-121; CN 2010/241-182
Duration of activities:	18/06/2008 – 31/03/2015

Programme reference :	Multi-beneficiary programmes, IPA 2011/022-964, IPA 2012/022-966
Project title:	Infrastructure Projects Facility 3 – Technical Assistance Window
EU contribution:	EUR 22.42 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Service contract with Mott MacDonald Limited
Contract reference:	CN 2012/293-208; CN 2013/331-494
Duration of activities:	20/06/2012 – 19/06/2018
Links:	www.wbif-ipf.eu
Contact:	Élodie LOPPÉ, Elodie.LOPPE@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Infrastructure Projects Facilities (IPF) under the Western Balkans Infrastructure Framework (WBIF) refer to consultancy service contracts awarded by DG Enlargement to assist beneficiary institutions in the Western Balkans with project preparation for priority investments in transport, environment, energy and the social infrastructure.

The core task of the IPF teams is to carry out assignments for the projects approved by the WBIF Steering Committee and which are allocated as IPF projects (i.e. EU-funded). The IPF facilities provide technical assistance for project preparation (feasibility studies, designs and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), etc.) and implementation (tender dossiers, works supervision).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Initiated in June 2008, IPF 1 came to an end in March 2015. If originally IP1 was also providing support to the WBIF Secretariat like for the preparation of meetings of the Project Financiers Group, to the NIPACS for example for the preparation of the Project Grant Application Form (PGAFs) or for the development of terms of references for the grants approved by the WBIF Steering Committee, over the reporting period, IPF 1 activities were dedicated to the execution of sub-projects and to the final delivery of the WBIF Compendium 2009-2014. IPF 1 thus completed the last of the 37 sub-projects assigned by the WBIF Steering Committee for a total value of EUR 23.2 million which were implemented for a total cost of EUR 18.5 million.

IPF 3 portfolio reached 25 assignments by the WBIF Steering Committee for a total value of EUR 17.45 million. IPF 3 activities were in full swing with five sub-projects completed and 15 under implementation.

OUTPUTS(JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

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

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuation of IPF 3 active sub-projects

4.4 MUNICIPAL WINDOW

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2008/020-300
Project title:	Municipal Window of the Infrastructure Project Facility
EU contribution:	EUR 13.2 million
Beneficiary region:	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement to CEB-KfW
Contract reference:	CN 2009/216-156
Duration of activities:	11/08/2009 – 31/12/2015
Contact :	Elodie Loppé, elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project covers the following:

- Albania: Water supply and sewage Gjirokastra, Fier; Wastewater system Pogradec
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Water supply and sewerage collection Banja Luka
- Serbia: Water supply and sewerage systems for 8 municipalities

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The Loan and Financing Agreements for the sub-projects in Gjirokastra and Fier in Albania were signed in December 2010. Since September 2011, one consultant has been on-site to support the water utilities to improve their performance, develop tariff adjustment plans and draft business plans. Tendering construction services was delayed as the municipalities needed more time to meet the performance milestones, but works contracts were awarded and the purchase of the construction material with EU funds will be completed by December 2015.

As regards the sub-project in Pogradec, the Loan and Financing Agreement was signed in December 2010 with the Government of Albania and the Project Executing Agency. The implementation consultant submitted the final design and tender documents in July 2012. The original project needed to be revised during the inception phase due to the bad state of existing infrastructure and local soil conditions. Contracts were awarded in Q2 2013. Completion of the project has been postponed to Q4 2015.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, concerning the sub-project in Banja Luka, the Loan and Financing Agreement was signed in 2009. Since then, all necessary support measures have been taken as scheduled with the assistance of a consultant. Following the signature of the work and supply contract in December 2011, the contractor started works. Several delays related to problems with land acquisition, weather conditions and contractual issues were reported, construction works were finalised at the end of 2014. The technical acceptance procedure will be finalise in Q4 2015.

All investments and consultancy services for the water supply and sewerage system programme in the municipalities of Kraljevo, Losnica, Sabac, Pancevo, Smederevo and Sombor in Serbia were completed.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Improved quality of service, infrastructure management and financial performance

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Completion of activities

Programme reference :	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2008/020-300
Project title:	Municipal Window of the Infrastructure Project Facility
EU contribution:	EUR 16.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement to EIB
Contract reference:	CN 2009/225-383
Duration of activities:	28/11/2009 – 28/12/2015
Contact :	Elodie Loppé, elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project covers the following:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina: rehabilitation and construction of water and wastewater infrastructure in 6 municipalities;
- Montenegro: Rehabilitation and construction of water and wastewater infrastructure in 5 municipalities;
- Serbia: Reconstruction of two roads in the city of Belgrade

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The Bosnia and Herzegovina sub-project, part of a larger WATSAN project, originally covered seven municipalities. Due to considerable delays to complete project preparation documentation and the decision not to extend the implementation period of the Action, the Action was reduced to five work contracts to be completed in four municipalities (Bosanski Petrovac, Tomislavgrad, Siroki Brijeg and Orasje) by the end of 2015.

Regarding the Montenegro sub-project, the inception report was provided in September 2011 but the municipalities faced significant delays when preparing the design documents. Resulting from these delays and the decision mentioned above not to extend the implementation period of the Action, the project was reduced to the municipalities of Pljevlja and the Old Royal Capital of Cetinje.

The Serbia sub-project is well advanced. Works on Boulevard Kralja Alexandra were completed in August 2010. Early results show that the traffic flow has improved and the travel time for tramway passengers has decreased, resulting in a significant increase of the number of tramway users. Regarding the second road, Vojvode Stepet, after finalising all preparatory activities in 2012, construction works are ongoing and planned to be completed in 2015.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Improved quality of service, infrastructure management and financial performance

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Completion of activities.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary programme, IPA 2008/020-300
Project title:	Municipal Window of the Infrastructure Project Facility
EU contribution:	EUR 3.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement to EBRD
Contract reference:	CN 2009/225-824
Duration of activities:	30/11/2009 – 31/12/2015
Contact:	Élodie LOPPÉ, elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project is part of Bijeljina Wastewater System – Phase II and covers the construction of the wastewater treatment plant.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

After a period of inactivity due to a change of contractor, the implementation of this project is now progressing well. The works of the wastewater treatment plant were completed in April 2015 and followed by the testing phase.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Improved quality of service, infrastructure management and financial performance

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Project closure.

Programme reference:	Annual Programme 2008 II for Kosovo, IPA 2008/020-454
Project title:	Municipal Window of the Infrastructure Project Facility – Kosovo Window
EU contribution:	EUR 25.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Kosovo
Type of contract:	Delegation Agreement to KfW
Contract reference:	CN 2009/221-084
Duration of activities:	11/12/2009 – 31/12/2015
Contact:	Élodie LOPPÉ, elodie.loppe@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project covers the following:

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

For the water and sanitation sub-project in Pristina, all works and supply contracts were signed in 2013 but are facing delays in implementation. Construction works are now expected to be concluded during 2015.

Concerning the Pristina district heating sub-project, detailed studies on the component cogeneration showed that investment costs for cogeneration were higher than originally expected. In order to cover them, the scope for the project has slightly changed as compared to the Contribution Agreement – the district heating system will only be rehabilitated and upgraded, but will not be extended. The consultant responsible for overseeing implementation started his assignment in April 2012. Though the tender bids evaluation was completed, no contract was signed until the Governments of Kosovo and Germany reached, in June 2013, an agreement guaranteeing sustainable heat supply after the decommissioning of Kosovo B. Contracts were eventually signed in June and December 2013. Completion of the sub-project is now expected for the beginning of 2016.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

Improved quality of service, infrastructure management and financial performance

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Amendment to the contract to extend the implementation period for one year as allowed by the Commission Financing Decision; Continuation of construction works.

4.5 ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN FOR GROWTH

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

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

EIB: The Turkish component of the EIB credit line counts 15 sub-projects for a total grant amount of EUR 4.3 million. At the end of June 2015, 13 sub-projects were positively verified. The Croatian component counts 7 sub-projects allocations for a total grant amount of EUR 2.6 million and as at the end of June 2015, three sub-projects were positively verified. So far, under both components, most sub-projects concern RE investments.

As at 30 June 2015, EIB had disbursed EUR 3.9m of grants to verified sub-projects including EUR 3.4 million of investment incentives to the sub-project promoters.

CEB/KfW: The KfW credit lines (partly refinanced by CEB) continued to advance in Serbia. UniCredit Serbia and ProCredit Serbia showed great commitment to placing the credit lines. KfW closely monitored the progress of the Programme and is in frequent exchange with the partner banks to promote disbursements and pipeline development.

During the reporting period, the partner banks signed eight new loans to end borrowers. Three IPA grant payments were disbursed to the end clients. Since the start of the programme, a total of 30 sub-projects loans have been signed by the two partner banks and a total of nine IPA grant payments have been disbursed to end clients. The overall grant amount disbursed to end borrowers and partner banks was EUR 4.1 million.

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

The PBs have on-lent more than EUR 59.8 million (or 99.6% of the credit line) in energy efficiency and renewable energy loans. It is expected that Halkbank Macedonia will fully allocate the credit line by H2-15.

The number of signed sub-projects has reached 134 (supported by 137 sub-loans) for a cumulative sub-loan portfolio of just over EUR 59.8 million. Corresponding incentive payments to sub-borrowers amounting to EUR 8,917,105 have been committed by 30 June 2015.

Further savings were identified and official decommitment memo submitted to EU to release funds to refund EBRD Special Shareholders Fund and to fund a further extension of PC (approved amount of up to EUR 180,000) to wrap up WeBSEFF activities and lead the Facility to its successful conclusion.

In May 2015 the Project Consultant contract was extended in time to 30 April 2016 to wrap up remaining project preparation / make ready for verification activities. In June the Verification Consultant contract was also extended in time to 31 July 2016 in order to facilitate successful verification of the sub-projects under the facility.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

EIB: Under the Turkish component, the consultant will verify one of the remaining two sub-projects in the portfolio; the other sub-project is still pending final ministry approval before the verification process can be carried out. As the EIB loan is fully utilised, new project agreements with the participating banks are being amended to include the EEFF; the signature is scheduled for H2 2015. There are currently no new sub-projects in the pipeline; the consultant and the EIB are following up on pipeline development with the participating banks.

The Croatian component is expected to reach full allocation in the second half of 2015, after inclusion of two EE sub-projects that have been assessed as eligible by the consultant. In H2 2015, another four sub-projects are expected to be verified by the consultant..

CEB/KfW: For ProCredit Bank, it is expected that the remaining loan amount under the programme will be fully placed with the end borrowers. For UniCredit Bank, the consultants

will continue to verify the remaining projects in the portfolio and will assist the partner banks in further pipeline development.

EBRD: Continue credit line utilisation to ensure remaining credit lines with Halkbank and Societe Generale are fully allocated and signed. Continue sub-project implementation, completion and verification. Project Consultant to provide clarification as necessary on the Final report, submitted to EBRD for review and approval.

Programme reference:	Management of Participation in the Green for Growth Fund (GGF)
Project title:	Green for Growth Fund (GGF)
EU contribution:	EUR 56.6 million
Beneficiary region:	13 countries including Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Trusteeship Agreements with the European Investment Fund (EIF)
Contract reference:	CN 2009/228-008;2009/228-006/ 2011/267-146; 2010/257-202; 2010/257-202
Duration of activities:	17/12/2009-30/11/2015
Links:	http://www.ggf.lu
Contact:	Davor Kunc, Davor.kunc@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

During first half of 2015, the GGF signed 1 investments totaling EUR 20.0 million in Serbia, bringing the total number of Partner Institutions with active investments to 27. Significantly, this Partner Institutions figure includes 2 direct investments in hydropower projects, one in Albania and one in Georgia.

GGF continued to build upon the strong momentum of the previous year, increasing the environmental impact of the Fund through considerable on-lending and outreach. GGF's cumulative sub-loan portfolio crossed the EUR 200 million threshold for the first time due to very strong on-lending activity by its Partner Institutions and reached EUR 233.5 million by the end of June.

On the funding side, FMO finalized its follow-on investment of USD 17 million in A Shares and EUR 3 million in B Shares and GLS Bank invested in EUR 22 million private Notes, bringing total capital commitments to EUR 359.5 million. The investment of GLS Bank brings private capital to 9% of the subscribed capital, representing a significant step towards the achievement of GGF's public-private partnership model and providing a sound capital base for investment activities.

The Fund was active in TA as well, with 7 projects for a total budget of EUR 241,671 approved during the first half of 2015. The current funding of the GGF TAF amounts to EUR 12.4 million. As the majority of this funding is already allocated to existing or planned projects, the TA Facility is actively seeking additional donations to secure its activities through 2015 and beyond.

Further increasing awareness of GGF, the Fund attended in May the International Climate Finance Day in Paris and is regularly participating in the Energy Community - Energy Efficiency Coordination Group meetings. The active participation in this group has become an important knowledge sharing platform for the Fund to exchange ideas on new initiatives in the region and establish productive contacts with national agencies and bodies of the contracting parties, as well as to engage in policy dialogues with key EU stakeholders. The GGF also participated in the Renewable Energy Coordination Group meeting to further build up contacts in the project finance/RE sector in the region. The 2014 Annual Report has been finalized and published which will further promote the GGF.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

GGF figures as at end Q1 or Q2 (are aggregate for both, the region of Southeast Europe and the European Eastern Neighbourhood Region):

1. Total Invested Portfolio (Q2): EUR 246.5 million.
2. Number of active Partner Institutions (Q4): 27.
3. Number of target countries (Q2): 13.

4. No asset impairments have been accorded.
5. Measures financed (Q2): 37% improvement in processes, process related equipment, 31% buildings, 19% use of RE for commercial energy generation, 3% agri-equipment, 4% use of RE by households and businesses, 6% Others.
6. Sectors financed since inception: Households 32%; Manufacturing 33%; Services 21%; Commercial 8%; Agriculture 3%; Transportation 1%; Other 2%.
7. CO2 Savings / CO2 Reduction: 298,000 tCO2/yr / 50%.
8. Energy Savings: 1,158,000 / 48%.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The Fund will enter H2|2015 with a strong pipeline, with investments in process in Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey (in addition to several planned investments in the European Neighbourhood Region). The Fund is seeking additional private capital to further leverage the investments of the donors and IFIs. At the same time, additional funding, particularly for C Shares and TA are being sought, given the GGF's growing portfolio and expanding activities. GGF is exploring the expansion of the target region into the ENR-South region, specifically Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, the Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, and Jordan. Among others the key drivers for expanding GGF are an increased development impact through emission and energy use reduction in a region of high fossil fuel consumption, the opportunity to leverage know-how from the existing region, and the positive impact on the Fund's sustainability.

During the second half of 2015, the GGF TAF facility will continue to support the GGF investments particularly in Serbia and Turkey with several projects supporting the RE lending activities of the partner institutions. In addition, it is planned to start a new initiative to further strengthen the Energy Audit service quality delivered to the Fund's partners.

Programme reference :	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2012/022-966
Project title:	Regional Energy Efficiency Programme for the Western Balkans
EU contribution:	EUR 20.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution agreement with EBRD
Contract reference:	CN2013/311-406
Duration of activities:	24/06/2013 – 31/12/2019
Links:	http://: www.wb-reep.org
Contact :	Davor.kunc@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The overall aim is to establish a sustainable market for energy efficient financing of private and public sector. It will enable the public sector to take leadership in energy efficiency investments and facilitate access to medium and long-term credits for municipalities needed to implement infrastructure investments and improve the investment climate for business development.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

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

Theme 1 ESCO Support

ESCO legislative work (policy dialogue)

Policy dialogue assignments are on-going in Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ESCO project preparation work

REEP supported the preparation of street lighting tenders in Croatia and Serbia. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the tender preparation of an ESCO energy efficiency project in a large cantonal hospital and a biomass ESCO project in district heating are under preparation. Two new assignments have been launched in the reporting period for street lighting, one feasibility study for a project in Pristina, Kosovo, and a scoping study in Montenegro.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue

Several new assignments were launched in H1 2015: i) Assistance to Serbia Regarding Alternatives to Heating System Inspection, ii) support for Development of Albania's National Energy Efficiency Action Plan, iii) EPBD Assistance to Republika Srpska on Inspections and Calculation Software (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

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

All Participating Financial Institutions (PFIs) have signed under the Facility. Two further tranches for EUR 1.5 mln each are expected to sign with Ohridska Banka and NLB Tutunska Banka, Macedonia in H2-2015.

- The Project Consultant (PC) assessed a total of 137 projects during the period.
- 29 verification site visits were successfully conducted
- 37 news stories have been published on the website
- 4 New Case Studies have been developed/uploaded on the website
- Marketing activities were intensified with a total of 23 workshops / seminars held in 14 cities in Croatia, 2 workshops in Macedonia and 1 in Serbia
- WeBSEFF training was held for Komercijalna Banka staff in Belgrade at the premises of Association of Serbian Banks; over 80 staff attended

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility:

In the reporting period, there was one new project approved for construction of three biogas plants of 1.95 MW in Serbia. It would qualify for up to EUR 0.45 mln of incentive payments under the REEP.

There have been further efforts to build the pipeline of potential projects, including two advanced small hydropower plant projects in BiH and Montenegro, respectively for a total of up to EUR 9.2 mln. These may be approved by the end of 2015.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

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

Theme 1 ESCO Support

ESCO legislative work (policy dialogue)

In Serbia the ESCO bylaw was adopted which effectively transposes the ESCO related aspects of EU2006/32/EC and parts of EUR 2012/27/EU. Finalised contract templates for street lighting and for buildings were delivered to the legislatures in Montenegro and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ESCO project preparation work

Street lighting tenders were completed and delivered to 5 municipalities in Croatia and 4 in Serbia. These street lighting projects are now in different stages of procurement and implementation. Expected electricity savings are up to 70%, depending on the installed technology prior to technical upgrades. In Bosnia and Herzegovina detailed energy audits and technical analysis' were completed and delivered to a cantonal hospital and to a municipal district heating company.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue

All assignments under theme two are long-term multi-year assignments and are progressing well.

In the EPBD Domain, headline outputs delivered to relevant countries cover final regulations and policy recommendations covering implementing minimum energy performance standards, national calculation methodologies, energy performance certification, the regular inspection of heating and air-conditioning systems finalisation of software specification and design.

In the Procurement domain, all planned outputs have been completed: Finalisation of procurement rulebook and guidelines for Montenegro and delivery of associated training and capacity building; Development of procurement rulebook for Serbia (but still pending final approval).

All activities under the NEEAP support are delivering on schedule. Notable outputs include: Development of policy papers and regulation for the design of an energy efficiency obligation scheme in Croatia; Policy recommendations for the design of an energy efficiency obligation scheme and for using energy efficiency criteria in network tariffs and market regulation for Montenegro.

Window 2 Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

All PFIs have signed to the credit line for a total of EUR 89 mln; EUR 75 mln is committed and available for disbursement.

116 sub-projects have been approved and loans signed for a cumulative total of EUR 29,416,004. Of those, 82 were signed in Q1-Q2/2015 for EUR 14,223,500 - (2 in the Public sector (in Croatia (ESCO) and FYR Macedonia) and 80 in the Private sector (5 in BiH, 3 in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 22 in Croatia and 50 in Serbia). 1 Esco project has been signed to date in Croatia.

29 sub-projects were successfully verified in H1-2015. To date EUR 638,256 has been paid in investment incentives to sub-borrowers, of which EUR 452,572 was paid in H1-2015. To date the total (equivalent) primary energy savings is 193,200 (MWh/y), with CO₂ emissions saving of 111,749 (tonnes/y).

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

As of the end of June 2015, the EBRD had approved four projects under the second phase of the WeBSEDF: two small hydropower plant projects in Albania and FYR Macedonia, a biomass project in BiH and a biogas project in Serbia. The amount of finance provided is EUR 17.9 mln. Their implementation will add 16.1 MW of electricity generation capacity, with

annual production of 209.1 GWh and will lead to estimated CO₂e emission reductions of 308,606 tonnes a year. Of these four projects, one has been completed and two are expected to be commissioned for operation in the coming six months. In total, they will qualify for up to EUR 1.79 mln worth of incentive payments.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

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

Theme 1 ESCO Support

ESCO legislative work (policy dialogue)

In Serbia it is considered to support the State Commission in its review of ESCO street lighting project proposals. Bosnia and Herzegovina – in conjunction with the pilot in the Federation BiH the implementation of ESCO enabling legislative elements is planned on the basis of the project in the cantonal hospital.

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

ESCO (project preparation work)

In Croatia and Serbia it is planned to continue preparing street lighting tenders, support tendering, contracting and implementation. In addition it is planned to initiate water supply and building ESCO energy efficiency projects. In Bosnia and Herzegovina it is planned to complete and publish the tender for ESCO project in the cantonal hospital.

Both in Montenegro and Pristina, Kosovo, the results of the scoping / feasibility studies will be discussed with stakeholders and subject to positive indicators the preparation of street lighting tenders would be started. Also, depending on additional interest, more street lighting tenders might be prepared.

Theme 2 Energy Efficiency Policy Dialogue

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

1. **EPBD Domain** – Complete all legislative streams for relevant countries, with final reports (where relevant) submitted and first drafts (at least) of secondary legislation issued; complete the roll-out of the software, including the completion of the testing and de-bugging of the delivered software, and complete the refinement of the regulatory drafts.
2. **Procurement Domain** – all procurement related activities were completed by end H1 2015, including completion of the official rulebooks, pilot applications and awareness raising and capacity building workshops.

3. Domain relating to **NEEAP implementation** – the aim is to have agreement on Policy Papers on energy efficiency obligations to Croatia and Montenegro as well as a Policy Paper on Network Tariffs to Montenegro.

Window 2 Sustainable Energy Credit Lines

- Continuation of project assessments and sub-loan signings by PC/PFIs
- Continuous update of the website with monthly graphical presentations and statistics, including “projects’ map” section, results / achievements and case studies (11 are currently in preparation - 3 BiH, 2 Macedonia, 4 Serbia and 2 Croatia)
- Finalisation of WeBSEFF Sustainable Energy Excellence Awards 2015, to be held in Zagreb, in October 2015. And subsequent production of 9 award films
- Follow up on meetings initiated in the previous period and continue with marketing / awareness raising activities in all four countries

Window 3 Sustainable Energy Direct Financing Facility

During the second half of 2015, efforts will be made to approve another couple of projects and identify additional projects for approval during 2016. Most likely there would not be any incentive payments released during the remainder of the year.

4.6 RADIATION PROTECTION

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

PURPOSE

This project includes 5 sub-projects/activities:

- Conditioning and secure storage of disused sealed radioactive sources in Serbia.
- Decommissioning of the degraded waste storage hangar No. 1.
- Radioactivity survey.

- Characterisation and conditioning of radioactive waste, and strengthening of radiation safety capabilities and infrastructure.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

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

However, the main challenge is the following: this contribution agreement is foreseen to run until September 2016. This deadline was agreed upon by the Commission after the relevant request by the IAEA. In the summer 2014, the Commission amended the Financing Decision to allow for an extension in the implementation by 2 years. This extension, now appears, is not sufficient for the completion of all the works. The Commission has announced that a further extension will not be possible. The national authorities and the IAEA have been informed accordingly. Discussions between all stakeholders are ongoing in order to find a workable solution.

Programme reference:	Horizontal programme on nuclear safety and radiation protection IPA 2008/020-350
Project title:	Enhancement of the technical capacity of nuclear regulatory bodies in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo
EU contribution:	EUR 1.2 million
Beneficiary region:	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement with the IAEA
Contract reference:	CN 2011/261-655
Duration of activities:	20/03/2011 – 19/02/2015
Contact :	eleni.vossou@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

This project is to enhance the technical capacity of the nuclear safety and radiation protection regulatory bodies to eventually transpose the Euratom Council Directives, as well as the international conventions to which the European Union is a signatory, into national legislation and regulations.

ACTIVITIES

This project is now completed. The IAEA is preparing the final report.

Programme reference:	Horizontal programme on nuclear safety and radiation protection, IPA 2010/022-503
Project title:	Further steps to approximate the Albanian legislation and regulations in accordance with the EU acquis in the field of radiation protection, nuclear safety and security
EU contribution:	EUR 0.2 million
Beneficiary:	Albania
Type of contract:	Framework contract with COWI AS
Contract reference:	CN 2013/328-365
Duration of activities:	21/10/2013 – 14/04/2015
Links:	http://www.atomforum.org.ua/eng/enconet
Contact :	eleni.vossou@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project aims at performing further steps forward to the approximation of the Albanian legislation and regulations with the EU acquis through three specific activities:

- Completion of the activities concerning the full approximation of the Albanian legislation and regulations with the EU acquis that were implemented in a previous IPA funded project;
- Reviewing of procedures for the application of regulations in order to be in full compliance with the EU acquis;
- Establishment of quality control (QC) standards and procedures for X-ray machines in Albania.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – APRIL 2015)

This project has been successfully completed.

OUTPUTS

-draft regulations and amended regulations, aiming to improve the regulatory framework governing the radiation protection in Albania

-increased knowledge of RPO staff on the relevant EU acquis, regulatory techniques and QC testing of medical radiological equipment.

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

PURPOSE

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

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

ACTIVITIES

This project is under implementation and is foreseen to be delayed. In order for the supplier to deliver and install the monitoring equipment, the Republic of Montenegro will have to take all necessary steps (including expropriations, licencing etc) in order to provide for the sites where the equipment will be replaced. The relevant authorities have requested 6- 8 months period to complete these procedure. currently, the end of this contact is foreseen for May 2016.

OUTPUTS

Supply of adequate pieces of equipment, staff trained and expert assistance delivered.

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

Reduction of the radiological risks in Montenegro.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Delivery is put on hold until the national authorities give clearance on the sites where the monitoring equipment will be installed.

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

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES

This project started in June 2015. The kick off meeting is foreseen to take place in September 2015.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Kick -off meeting in September 2015 and commencement of the activities.

CHAPTER 5: ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Assistance in this area focuses on strengthening regional cooperation, strategic planning and institutional capacities through the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN). Assistance also targets the development of capacities in the area of disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change.

5.1 ECRAN

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-094
Project title:	Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN)
EU contribution:	EUR 5.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service contract to Hulla & Co. Human Dynamics KG
Duration of activities:	October 2013 – October 2016
Link:	http://www.ecranetwork.org/
Contact:	Madalina Ivanica, Madalina.IVANICA@ec.europa.eu ,

PURPOSE

The project aims at enhancing regional cooperation in the Western Balkans and Turkey in the field of environment and climate change. The project also provides the services of Secretariat to ECRAN.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

Over the reporting period an important number of activities have been implemented.

General management activities: 2nd Annual Meeting Climate Component (January, Belgium); 2nd Nature WG Annual Meeting (February, Austria); 2nd IED/Chemicals WG Annual Meeting (February, Austria); 2nd ECENA Annual Meeting (February, Austria); ECRAN 3rd Steering Committee Meeting (April, Croatia);

Nature Working Group: Regional Training “Natura 2000 – from theory to practice” (May, Czech Republic); Regional Workshop on Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (June, Montenegro);

Water Working Group: 3rd Screening Workshop and 2nd Annual Meeting of Water Management Working Group (March, Montenegro); Regional Workshop on Marine Strategy Framework Directive (May, Turkey); Regional Workshop on Strategic Planning in Water Sector (June, Montenegro)

Waste Working Group: Regional Workshop on Cost Recovery in Waste Sector and 2nd Annual Meeting of Waste Management and Strategic Planning and Investments Working Groups (March Albania)

ECENA Working Group: Implementation of Guidelines for Inspection of SEVESO Establishments (National training) (April Serbia); Multi country Capacity Building workshop on compliance with environmental legislation (April Montenegro); Multi Country Workshop on compliance with the legislation on Trans Frontier Shipment of Waste (May Albania);

Environmental Assessments Working Group: National workshop on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (March Albania); SEA, procedure and bottlenecks, problems in implementation – national workshop Croatia (May Croatia); National workshop on Human health and climate change in SEA and EIA Directives (May, Croatia); National workshop on practical application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (June, Serbia);

Air quality Working Group: Regional workshop on NEC Directive (May, Albania);

Climate component: Expert Training on Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning – Water Management Sector (January, Turkey); Expert Training on Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning – Urban Planning and Development Sectors (February, Montenegro); ECRAN Modelling: Support Mission to Module 1 (Sub-regional workshop: Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo*) (March, Albania); Regional Training on INDCs - Contributions to the Global Climate Agreement II (March, Albania); Regional Seminar on ETS Implementation and ETS Strategy Development (March, Croatia); Support Mission on Emission Scenario Modelling (National training) (April, Serbia); Regional Training Seminar on assessment of GHG Inventories in the Forestry and Other Land Use (April, Bosnia and Herzegovina); Expert Training on Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Planning – Energy Sector (April, Albania); Advanced Technical Training Programme on the EU Verification and Accreditation Regulation (study visit of representatives of Turkey to Croatia) (April, Croatia); Regional Dialogue of the EU, the Candidate Countries and the Potential Candidates on Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to the 2015 Climate Agreement (April, Turkey); ETS Operators Serbia National Training (May, Serbia); Module 2 Climate and Energy Policy Modelling LEAP Training (May, Turkey); Workshop on National Climate Adaptation Policies and Legislation – Step B: Identification of Adaptation Options (June, Croatia); EU – Serbia High Level Conference on Climate Change (June, Serbia)

Environment and Climate NGOs Forum: ECF NGO 2nd round of Preparatory Meetings 2015 (April-May); ECRAN Environment and Climate Forum: Climate Change and Policy – 2nd Training Module (April, Croatia); ECRAN Environment and Climate Forum Regional Planning and Capacity Building Meeting (June, Belgium).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

Agenda, work plans and minutes of working group meetings available on the website.

For training needs assessments with training methodology, training programme and proposed training materials: www.ecranetwork.org.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Nature Working Group: Assessment of Readiness for Natura 2000 establishment in Albania and in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Regional workshop on Nature Inspection in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Subregional workshop on Pilot Appropriate Assessment in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in Serbia and in Turkey; Regional seminar on protected area management and development of tourism infrastructure in Turkey.

Water Working Group: Screening Workshop Drina pilot river basin in Albania and in Montenegro; Marine Strategy Framework Directive Initial assessment and GES training in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Workshop on Water Framework Directive in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Strategic Planning and Investments Working Group: Capacity building for IPA project fiche preparation in Luxembourg; Cost recovery and tariff setting in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Serbia.

ECENA Working Group: Regional Common Inspection Training with IPPC industry – oil production in Albania; Regional workshop REACH/CLP compliance in Croatia; Capacity building on the Integrated Risk Assessment Method (IRAM)/easy Tools in Croatia; Regional workshop REACH/CLP compliance in Turkey; Joint regional workshop for environmental inspectorate and permit writers on shipment of waste, management and landfilling of waste in Montenegro; Regional Common Inspection Training No 5 with IPPC industry – metal processing in Bosnia and Herzegovina; National IRAM training Kosovo.

Environmental Assessments Working Group: National training scoping workshop on 2nd SEA pilot in Albania; Joint regional study visit on SEA and Water Framework Directive in Czech Republic; Regional Train of Trainers in Turkey; SEA/EIA national workshops in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Montenegro; National workshop on EIA and permitting system in Albania.

Waste Working Group: Regional training on remediation of the landfills in the context of the regional waste management in Montenegro.

Air Working Group: Annual working group meeting and Workshop on specific air quality related topic in Turkey.

IED/ Chemicals Working Group: Regional IED/Chemicals training course in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Regional IED/Chemicals training course in Turkey.

Under Climate component: INDC Albania mission 2; INDC Montenegro mission 2; Regional Module 3 workshop in Croatia; A ETS training mission in Lithuania; National systems in the framework of the MMR: Minimum legal and institutional requirements in Croatia; ETS mission Serbia on verification in practice; Step B revisited in Croatia; Side event COP 21 in Paris.

5.2 INTERNATIONAL SAVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

Programme reference :	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-094
Project title:	Support to the International Sava River Basin Commission in the development of the Sava Geographic Information System
EU contribution:	EUR 150,000
Beneficiary region:	Sava River Basin area (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Montenegro)
Type of contract:	Direct grant to the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC)
Duration of activities:	October 2013 – October 2016
Contact:	Marija SIMUNOVIC, Marija.SIMUNOVIC@ec.europa.eu , DG Environment

PURPOSE

The project's aim is to provide support and assistance to the International Sava River Basin Commission and the countries cooperating under the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Slovenia) as well as to Montenegro in starting to implement the first Sava River Basin Management (RBM) Plan as well as in all joint activities targeted for subsequent RBM cycles by developing the necessary capacities and an information base – the Sava Geoportal.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Activity 1:

Supply of Operating system (OS) software, Relational Database management System (RDBMS), GIS Application Software, and Web GIS Application Software OS & RDBM software:

- OS software -2x MS Windows Server 2012R2 standard with 30x MS Windows Server Cal 2012 purchased and installed
- RDBMS - Open source PostgreSQL 9.3.5 installed

GIS Software:

- 1 x Esri ArcGIS Server 10.3. Enterprise Standard purchased and installed
- 1x Esri ArcGIS for Desktop 10.3 Standard Concurrent purchased and installed
- In addition, the open source GeoNetwork, was also installed, to enhance flexibility of the SavaGIS and to improve its compatibility with ICPDR's system which has been one of the goals of the project

Activity 2:

Establishment of the Sava Geoportal core functionalities:

- Sava GIS RBMP&FDR database models: Designed and structured in accordance to reporting requirements of the related EU directives and the existing Sava RBMP 2013 datasets harmonized and loaded into SavaGIS database
- Web application for editing, loading and retrieving data and metadata: Documents related to SavaGIS procedures for data sharing and validation prepared, SavaGIS Metadata and User authentication and user roles specifications prepared and tested
- Sava Geoportal: Working version of the SavaGIS Geoportal established and tested
- The training and the system's and user documentation: Several technical documents and specifications are already delivered and for the rest preparation is in progress

Activity 3:

In order to enable an efficient implementation of this project important for the whole ISRBC community the various meetings and events were organized. The purpose of these meetings was to present, review and provide recommendations, verification and approval of the project outputs. The following main meetings and events were held in the reporting period:

- 1 ISRBC session - February 2015
- 1 Project meeting (PM) – Ad hoc GIS EG - February 2015
- 3 Core working group (CWG) meetings – February, May and June 2015
- A numerous ad hoc meetings between ISRBC Secretariat and the Consultant
- 1st Sava GIS workshop – February 2015 - to present the project to a wider audience in the Sava River Basin;
- A short presentations of the project on the two ICPDR expert group meetings (GIS and RBM EGs –March and May 2015.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The following main activities are planned for the next reporting period:

- 2nd Sava GIS test – August – September 2015
- Updates of database and procedures documentation as required – October 2015
- Final integrated user acceptance testing and UAT acceptance – September – October 2015
- Trainings - October 2015
- SavaGIS final documentation delivery - October 2015

The following meetings & events are planned:

- CWG meeting – 24th August 2015
- PEG FP meeting 09-10 September 2015
- PM (Ad hoc GIS EG) group meeting - 22nd September 2015
- ISRBC meeting - 6th October 2015
- PEG RBM meeting – October 2015 (tbc)
- 2nd SavaGIS workshop – 22nd September 2015

5.3 CIVIL PROTECTION COOPERATION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2012/ 023-626
Project title:	Civil Protection Cooperation with the candidate countries and potential candidates - phase II
EU contribution:	EUR 2.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service contract
Contract reference:	ECHO/SER/2013/662411
Duration of activities:	05/11/2013 – 04/11/2015
Links:	http://www.ipacivilprotection.eu/
Contact:	Marieta.KOLEVA@ec.europa.eu , DG ECHO

PURPOSE

- To increase Beneficiaries' capability to further develop effective national civil protection systems and collaborate regionally, including through drawing on the best European and regional practices.
- To increase Beneficiaries' ability to effectively interact with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, its participating states and relevant institutions in the EU dealing with civil protection and emergency response.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

- 2 planning conferences for the regional IPA Campeks exercise in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- Regional field IPA Campex exercise on camp management after earthquake (15-19 June 2015) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 700 participants;
- 1 Exchange of experts event organised in Germany covering the topic of preparations for operation missions;
- 4 Table-top exercise on Host Nation Support in Kosovo*, Serbia, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;

- 4 training courses on management of staff of emergency response teams;
- Fact finding mission for the two trainings in Turkey;
- Fact finding mission for the table-top exercise on Host Nation Support in Kosovo*;
- Participation of the beneficiary countries in the EU Civil Protection Forum (6-7 May 2015).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Newsletters 4 and 5; Third Progress report.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

3 table top exercises on Host Nation Support; 1 exchange of experts event, Last steering group meeting.

CHAPTER 6: CIVIL SOCIETY

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

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

Media freedom and freedom of expression are also seen as important in this context. In 2013 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! 2 conference (June 2013) were finalised in March 2014.

Link to the guidelines:

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

Civil society facility

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

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

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

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

6.1 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (TACSO)

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

PURPOSE

TACSO gives support to beneficiary Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) by increasing their capacity, improving their democratic role and promoting networks of CSOs across regional borders.

TACSO's activities include:

- Identification of priority needs of the civil society sector in the region
- Design and delivery People 2 People (P2P) events
- Design and delivery of Training of Trainers (ToT) activities as well as mentoring and coaching CSOs
- Increasing activities for rural area organisations
- Advice to individual CSOs on an ad hoc basis
- Support to networking and partnership-making at both national and regional level
- Facilitation of dialogue and cooperation between governments and the CSO environment, including study tours
- Support to contact and cooperation between the CSO environment, the media and private sector
- Evaluation of the impact of donor-funded actions

- Advice on further actions (Calls for Proposals) and support for the implementation of grants
- Design and delivery of the monitoring of the EU Guidelines for support of the CSOs 2014-2020
- Development of communication tools, e.g. Web site and database and publication and dissemination of project results.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

From January to June, TACSO was working with the Resource Centers (RCs) on conducting the initial Organizational Assessment/Self-Assessment (OA) of the RC, which has been identified as one of the preliminary actions to be taken with the purpose to diagnose, jointly with the RCs, organisational matters, in order to get a comprehensive base for planning and designing a tailored capacity building program for RCs to be delivered over the period of TACSO duration.

Over 90 stakeholders participated in the regional event titled “Monitoring of the EU Guidelines for the Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Countries, 2014-2020 – Year 1” which took place in Belgrade (April), followed by the monitoring training for the Resource Centres with the objective to plan the next wave of the monitoring exercise.

Needs assessment with FPAs was carried out with the aim to identify possible TACSO support for FPAs.

The major events that TACSO through P2P organised and/or contributed to with CSO participation were:

- Anti-Discrimination and Equality on the way to the EU, organised in Ankara, Turkey (March 12-13, 2015);
- EESC – 5th Western Balkans Civil Society Forum, organised in Belgrade, Serbia (June 2-3, 2015);
- Access to Rights and Services and anti-discrimination – the disability perspective, organised in Albania (11-12 June, 2015);

During the reporting period total of 11 P2P events were organised with over 450 attendees, the full list of events is available on [TACSO Web site](#).

TACSO Turkey

TACSO Turkey focused on the integration with RC STGM in the reporting period. TACSO supported STGM to develop CSO Help Desk concept and resource materials also coached for standardization of help desk supports. The thematic meeting “Right to Peaceful Assembly for CSOs” focused on upcoming draft law was held in February 2015 with 30 representatives from 24 CSOs. TACSO facilitated and supported development of concept for participatory design of IPA II Civil Society sub-sector with RC STGM and LAG Member TUSEV, and also supported EU Ministry to conduct a focus group meeting on the concept with 24 participants

from CSOs. Dialogue of 15 CSOs with EU, was supported, in the reporting period with two events. Two P2P events were organized: “Anti-Discrimination and Equality on the Way to EU” (Ankara, March) gathered 94 participants; while the Conference “Independent Civil Monitoring of Elections and Equal Access of Disadvantaged Groups to Electoral Rights” (Istanbul, April) had 49 participants representing 34.

TACSO Montenegro

TACSO MNE organised a round table discussion on relations between Government and NGOs in Montenegro, in relation to Strategy for development of NGOs. Regional peer-to-peer event was organised in May 2015 on the topic of possible models of management of public funds and related challenges (56 participants). Training on citizen participation in decision making process at local level was attended by 33 representatives from 19 CSOs. Workshops for representatives of CSOs and contact persons in state bodies: “Existing mechanisms of CSO participation in public policy development and implementation on state level” were organised (44 participants). Working group meetings for preparation of amendments on the Law on NGOs were organised.

TACSO the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Training on preparation of EU applications was held for 25 participants representing 18 CSO. Basic project management training was held for 39 representatives mainly from small and new CSOs or CSOs unexperienced in project preparation. Social media workshop was implemented for 11 participants coming from CSOs based outside of Skopje who are responsible for communication and public relations in their organisations.

TACSO Albania

Within the frame of CB component, TACSO Albania conducted a series of trainings and events on array of topics (communication, organisational development, project writing totalling to close to 200 participants. Organization of three consultative meetings with CSOs in collaboration with Council of Ministers of Albania and the Ministry of European Integration for presenting the final draft of the Road Map for Albanian government policy towards more enabling environment for civil society development.

TACSO Serbia

During the period between January and June 2015 TACSO Serbia, via Resource Center has provided technical assistance to 177 CSOs’ activists from 118 CSOs. TACSO by Civic Initiatives (the RC) organized two CSO fairs with over 220 representatives from 45 CSOs from 12 cities participating.

Ten two-day seminars throughout Serbia were organized on the cooperation of the public administration and CSOs, improve their understanding of transparent financing of CSOs from LSGs/LGs’ budgets and present examples of good practices. Total of 101 Serbia municipalities were included in this program with 211 representatives. The Conference “CSOs and Social Service Delivery – EU Legislation and local practices”, (June) organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Issues of the Republic of Serbia, gathered 79 participants.

TACSO Kosovo

TACSO Kosovo with Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) as TACSO RC organised number of activities: two workshops with CSOs on the EU Guidelines; two training sessions on project and financial management; seven information sessions; strategic planning workshop for Kosovo Anti-Poverty Network (KAPN) and Models, Modalities of Public Funding- A joint workshop with members of the Council, officials from the Ministry of Finances, Kosovo Treasury and civil society to discuss issues related to public funding for CSOs and implications in Kosovo context.

TACSO Bosnia and Herzegovina

Six workshops on various topics focused on strategic management and positioning were held totalling to 74 participants. Three conferences were held: 1). "Women with disabilities in global women's movement in BiH" (March) with 34 participants; 2). "Position of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the process of LAG establishment" (May) with 52 participants; and 3). "BH CSOs in Social Entrepreneurship-public policies, legislation, practices" (June) with 59 participants.

Four PCM trainings were held with 83 CSO participants. Study visit on Social Entrepreneurship (SE) was conducted during May in Croatia, Slovenia and Austria, including six CSOs.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

During the first year of their operations, among different activities, selected RCs (apart from KCSF, it is expected that they will complete this exercise in fall 2015), under the guidance of TACSO, have completed the self-assessment process.

The outputs from "Monitoring of the EU Guidelines for the Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Countries, 2014-2020 – Year 1" Conference are: a comparison of the indicators per country for the entire enlargement region; draft inputs for the 2015 Progress Report per country; actions to be taken by DG NEAR, the EUDs, CSOs, TACSO, Resource Centres (RCs), and Governments; and an overview of the main elements of and requirements for the national monitoring systems for 2015. Next monitoring wave is planned in close cooperation with Resource Centres.

255 of representatives of the FPAs have expressed their need for TACSO support for training; while 341 representatives of the FPAs has expressed need for TACSO support in a form of exchange of information among FPAs. It was concluded that TACSO will focus on providing support to FPAs in increasing their capacities in area related to the best practices in advocacy and lobbying.

As a result of the P2P consultation carried out at the end of 2014 the P2P calendar for 2015-2016 was developed. Four topics emerged as additional priorities at the regional level: Access to Education, Anti-Corruption, Human Rights and Environmental Protection.

TACSO Turkey and STGM RC launched STGM CSO Help Desk and received 31 inquiries from CSOs in the reporting period. TACSO Turkey updated the Funder Guideline for CSOs with RC (over 700 downloads). Thematic Workshop on Freedom of Assembly by TACSO Turkey on draft Internal Security Reform stipulated three CSOs to launch their positions with campaigns and contribute to policy development discussion.

After TACSO BiH workshops three CSO networks (MARA, Birdwatchers and ORC) produced policy briefs on the particular issues important for these networks and further consolidated advocacy actions; Security network produced a strategic positioning document.

TACSO BiH also conducted comprehensive analysis regarding the social entrepreneurship legislation in BiH related to all forms of social entrepreneurship with comparative analysis with legislation in Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Italy and England was produced and was subject to on-line consultations with CSOs and discussed at the Social entrepreneurship national Conference.

The main output of the TACSO Montenegro trainings on citizen participation in decision making process at local level were four action plans for advocacy campaigns.

Macedonian TACSO Office developed comparative analysis was prepared of the tax frame for CSOs in regard to personal income tax and profit tax in United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Croatia.

TACSO Albania trained 62 CSO representatives on developing communications strategy, while 65 CSO representatives were introduced with newly applied application procedures for sub-granting under IPA/CSF 2013.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

TACSO Regional Office will focus on preparing a number of regional events: *Community Building and CSOs' Communication* (November, Sarajevo); CSR and Philanthropy and Image of CSOs (November, Belgrade); regional LAG Conference (October, Bečići). Additional 16 P2P events are foreseen in the next semester.

In addition, TACSO Regional Office is planning to organise regional meeting for Local Advisory Groups (October, Bečići); deliver training for FPAs on Advocacy and lobbying (October – March), as well as conference for FPAs (January, Brussels) focusing on their sustainability; conduct biannual needs assessment of the countries in the WBT, conduct research on regional networks and their capacities; conduct next wave of the monitoring against the EU Guidelines and work on improvements of monitoring report against the EU Guidelines..

Number of national conferences are also planned: National Conference on Voluntarism-Law and practice (BiH); Conference EU Guidelines BH Kick off (BiH); Conference on Quality Assurance Systems and Self-Regulation for CSOs (Turkey); CSO Fairs (Montenegro).

Macedonian TACSO will continue supporting CSOs' lobbying activities for changes of the tax laws and will organize workshop for CSOs to formulate proposals and agree on further advocacy steps.

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

6.2 FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

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

PURPOSE

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

The global objective of the FPAs is to bring together Western Balkans, Turkey and EU based CSOs into operational partnerships to deliver their own specific objectives and at the same time the collective aim to support 'a dynamic civil society actively participating in public

debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law and with capacity to influence policy and decision making processes.

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

ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST SEMESTER AND PLANNED FOR THE NEXT

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

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

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

1. GOVERNANCE

Civil society coalitions built up within the project **Advocacy for Open Government (2014/351- 527 continuation of 2012/306-656)** continued to work with officials tasked with implementing Action Plans within the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Project partners released studies and organized public discussions that helped maintain the momentum of previous successes in engaging authorities and citizens. Results from polling in the six project countries were released, revealing that military institutions are the most-trusted institutions in the Western Balkans. Work began on creating a follow-up survey for the fall of 2015. Creation of a methodology for scorecards that will measure and compare levels of governmental transparency in the six project countries began. Plans were made for the first “Western Balkans OGP Dialogue” for fall 2015, expected to draw hundreds of participants for a two-day event focusing on effective initiatives to further open government in the region.

The project **“Towards Efficient Public Procurement Mechanisms in the EU (potential Candidate Countries (2014/351-493 continuation of 2012/306/161)”** is managed by the Balkantenderwatch coalition (BTW) which consists of six organizations from five countries (Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovakia and Bosnia & Herzegovina). The project aims at strengthening the civil society pressure on the authorities in view of establishing an efficient and accountable system for the use of public funds. It also seeks to raise the level of understanding of the EU requirements concerning the management of public procurement, and to increase the capacity development in this sector through the creation of a simple tool that will allow greater involvement of civil society and other stakeholders in decision-making and management control of public expenditure. The project partners carried out “The

comparative analysis of the legal and institutional framework for public procurement" in four Western Balkan countries as well as analysis of concrete public procurement cases within 14 different fields common for the respective countries. This led to increasing awareness of the need for introducing a completely new area in the monitoring of public finances: the performance assessment or the examination of the purposefulness of public procurement. During January-June 2015, trainings for trainers were organized for members of the BTW coalition, followed by trainings for representatives of civil society and media (over 120 participants from different types of CSOs and media).

By the end of the project implementation, the BTW coalition will analyze at least 100 specific cases of public procurement in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Macedonia (25 per country), in relation to both regularity and purposefulness. The findings of such an analysis will feed into our efforts for advancing towards a comprehensive and high-quality planning and management of public funds, all in accordance with the interests and the real needs of the citizens of the region.

During the first half of 2015, **SELDI project (2014/351-414 continuation of 2012/307-476)** concluded the publication and local presentations in the Western Balkans capitals of the nine national Corruption Assessment Reports. In February 2015, SELDI presented the key findings and policy recommendations from the first two years of the initiative in Brussels at a Policy Forum. On 28 April 2015 SELDI kicked off its second biannual cycle of activities in Belgrade at a policy advocacy workshop dedicated to Countering Corruption and State Capture for Transparent Energy Governance in SEE. The energy sector has been identified in SELDI's Regional Anti-Corruption Report as one of the highest corruption risk areas in the region, with many state capture practices, affecting negatively the economic development and security of the region.

Main expected results or activities planned for the next semester are: 1) expansion of the SELDI network and strengthening the cooperation with national CSO networks and grass-roots initiatives, including joint anti-corruption activities and preparation of a Civil Society Strategy and Joint Strategic Programme for Good Governance and Anti-Corruption until 2020, and; 2) Implementing the second round of good governance monitoring (including CMS surveys, production of analyses, Western Balkans and Turkey Corruption Assessment Reports) and coverage of key related risk areas, such as energy governance, state capture, and hidden economy.

In the first quarter of the second phase of the "**SIGN for Sustainability**" project (2014/351-410 continuation of 2012/306-172) partners continued advocating for a more favorable framework for philanthropy, either as a part of relevant working groups/councils set to draft necessary amendments or by inserting their recommendations into relevant Strategies and policy proposals that are currently in the decision-making process. Following the success of the first cycle of the Sustainability Academy, where partners built capacities of CSOs to mobilize resources on the local level and enabled them to raise more than 92 000 EUR from

individuals and companies in their communities, partners held the Regional Academy gathering representatives of 25 most successful Sustainability Academy organizations from 5 countries of the region in Zlatibor, Serbia.

In the following period, based on this newly acquired knowledge and skills, participants will design and implement their fundraising campaigns, looking to raise a minimum of 100 000 EUR from local sources that will be matched by SIGN Network partners. These funds will be used for the implementation of their community development initiatives as well as the continuation of their fundraising campaigns, ensuring that they diversify their sources of funding and become more sustainable long term. The forthcoming period is also reserved for the development of a Manual for Implementation of Standards for Fundraising.

The period from January to June saw the **Triple A for Citizens project (2014/351-417 continuation of 2012/306-166)** expand to include Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, while the Croatian partners ceased participation in the project due to the country's accession to the EU. Upon the launch of the second phase, a questionnaire from 2013 was updated, translated, and sent out by the local partners in Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania. The information collected from the surveys will be used as a basis for the Advocacy Roadmaps which will be released at the Regional Conference in Pristina in November along with the Roadmaps for Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia and Turkey. An Emergency Fund of EUR 5000 was also given to the [Foundation of Local Democracy](#) (FLD) in Bosnia after a call for proposals which was only open to pilot projects from the first phase was published. FLD plan to draft a strategy to improve free legal aid in the Sarajevo canton, amongst other work.

The second half of 2015 will see a Steering Group Meeting take place in early July, the launch of the updated [Triple A website](#), and the selection of six new pilot projects in Macedonia, Montenegro, and Albania (two per country).

The project **South East European Media Observatory: Building Capacities and Coalitions for Monitoring Media Integrity and Advancing Media Reforms (2014/351-607 continuation of 2012/306-658)** organized the following activities: 30 participants from seven countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey – took part in the advocacy workshop in Skopje. At the workshop, seven national coalitions for media integrity developed action plans for advocacy actions in each country. Two sub-granting schemes – for investigative journalists and for civil society organisations in the beneficiary countries – have been launched for the second time to complement media integrity research and advocacy of the SEE Media Observatory.

In the next semester, a seminar on practicing and protecting integrity of journalism will be held at the Guardian in London for investigative journalists working on stories on media integrity in the countries of Western Balkans and Turkey, and for media integrity advocates in ten SEE Media Observatory partner organisations. New research reports on media ownership and state-media financial relations in seven countries will be released.

Balkan Civil Society Acquis – Strengthening the Advocacy and Monitoring Potential and Capacities of CSOs (2014/351-412 continuation of 2012/306-577). After the extensive monitoring of the operating environment for CSOs in Enlargement countries through the jointly developed Monitoring Matrix, the new [Regional Report for 2014](#) was published. Presentations of national reports took place in 8 Enlargement countries by BCSDN members throughout spring complementing the first cycle of EC Progress Report consultations. The Regional Report was presented at the [17th April workshop in Tirana](#) and at the European Parliament to MEPs and other key EU stakeholders, at the [4th June Brussels debate](#) hosted by Ms. Ulrike Lunacek - Vice-President of the EP. Advocacy on specific issues identified also commenced. In Albania, meetings with relevant ministries took place for presentation of the social procurement policy paper. In Macedonia, presentation of the state of affairs on the [Implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society \(2012-2017\) in Macedonia](#) for the period June 2012 to December 2014 was organized to prompt its slow implementation. BCSDN has been monitoring EU's support to civil society in the Western Balkans through the IPA CSF instrument. This year, a policy brief outlines how the EU assistance was used, the trends in implementation, the use of the IPA Cross-Border Instrument by CSOs, and provides a comparison of state funding in Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia and is available [here](#). Through an open call of the Balkan Public Policy Fund (SBPPF) 12 organizations received grants from BCSDN members on developing targeted policy and advocacy papers on key enabling environment issues in their countries, thus building collaborative tools and civil society advocacy platforms.

By the end of 2015, the focused research of the study on the economic value of civil society will be published to shed first light on the size and main economic parameters of the sector in the Enlargement countries and the regular monitoring process and development of Government self-assessment tool on the state of enabling environment will be launched.

2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND RECONCILIATION

The Balkans ACT (Against Crime of Trafficking) Now! (2014/351-406 continuation of 2012/306-193) project in the period January-June 2015 focused on the refinement of the monitoring tool developed in the first phase of the Action, its adjustment for local needs and preparation of practical instruments for data collection and analysis, that should result in regional and national monitoring reports. One segment of monitoring has been started, i.e. observance of trials for trafficking offences in 4 IPA co-applicants' countries. The monitoring is done by researchers trained and recruited from law students and CSO activists and based on specifically developed questionnaires designed to assess the practical state of victims' rights in court proceedings and compliance with international human rights and trafficked persons' rights instruments and standards.

In the next six months, the monitoring tool will be put into use, after being shared with relevant CSO stakeholders in every country. The regional and national advocacy campaign in

the area of improving victims' access to compensation will be continued building on the results achieved in phase 1, which includes designing the model laws on the compensation funds for victims, conducting the studies of financial feasibility of such a fund and mobilizing CSO actors to continue advocacy campaign. Further, in cooperation with judicial academies, a professional development curriculum will be developed for judges and prosecutors on practical aspects of access to compensation for trafficked persons, which should support other advocacy efforts within the Action in the sense of providing capacity building methodology for judicial professionals.

Improving the provision of Social Service Delivery in South Eastern Europe through the empowerment of national and regional Civil Society networks (2014/351-393 continuation of 2012/ 306-530). During the first half of 2015 (27-29 April, Sarajevo) the project team organised an advocacy and strategic planning session for the future work of the IRIS Network based on the previously signed Declaration of Principles. One of the strategic goals is to develop IRIS network in becoming the key regional Resource Centre for definition of standards and criteria concerning social services and respective licensing in the field of social services in SEE. In the 3rd week of June 2015, the first IRIS Academy was organised in Rijeka, Croatia in close cooperation with City of Rijeka and its University. The participants were students and postgraduates of social welfare and affine universities, employees and/or volunteers from CSOs providers of social services. The representatives of IRIS Network decided to introduce Academy as annual event considering ideas and suggestion from the first Academy in Rijeka.

In the coming period the project team will focus its activities on the implementation of the following activities: a) Preparing and publishing of the Annual Monitoring report on social services which this year will include a chapter on the refugee crisis which has affected the Balkan region; b) Organisation of a European round table in the EU parliament during the 2nd week of November 2015 on a similar topic; c) Publishing, selecting and implementing the Small Grants Facility programme and d) provide mentoring support though licensing, ISO standardisation and trainee programmes to IRIS grass-root network members in the region.

Coordinated efforts - toward new European standards in protection of women from gender based violence (2014/351-409 continuation of 2012/306-568). The inclusion of three women's CSOs from Montenegro to the partner coalition was the first successfully performed task. The most important activities were focused on drafting amendments and organizing the public advocacy campaign for the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Violence against Women. The majority of processes for law changes are still in process. In Croatia the criminal offence of domestic violence has been introduced to the legal system, and in Serbia police has established a new line of work for domestic violence. The advocacy campaigns involved citizens and representatives of the parliament, and there were more than 150 media appearances. Local CSOs, in addition to direct work with victims, have been advocating for improvement of local support services. Partner organizations were also active in advocacy at the international level: Shadow Reports were drafted and

submitted to the CEDAW Committee (Slovenia, Croatia and B&H) and UN Committee for Human Rights (Croatia), as well as contributions to the Progress Report (Serbia and Montenegro).

Results of the utmost importance are: representatives of relevant bodies in Montenegro shall report to the Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality on the implementation of the Convention in accordance with the list of indicators which were developed by the partner coalition; the CEDAW Committee recommended to Croatia to ratify the CoE Convention on VAW; member of the Autonomous Women's Center were one of three Serbian candidates for the CoE Expert Group (GREVIO) for monitoring implementation of the Convention.

Key activities for the next semester include common regional campaign and preparation of an online database on the implementation of the Convention in 6 countries of the region.

Partnership to Ensure Reform of Supports in Other Nations - PERSON (2014/351-686 continuation of 2012/306-649). The PERSON partnership began its second action in the first 6 months of 2015. Its first major achievements during this period included a training session for pools of experts that have been drawn from the various partner countries. Representatives from Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia came together to receive expert training on the implications of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for their home countries. Second, our latest IPA country-partner, Albania, who is represented by the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation and the Albanian Helsinki Committee, hosted a kick-off meeting for our second action as PERSON, to introduce Albanian stakeholders to the aims of the partnership. An unexpected achievement during this period was the commencement of the online campaign on the 'Right to Act' which was initially scheduled for the second half of 2016. However, the timing of this activity was moved earlier to coincide with the first anniversary of the adoption of General Comment 1 on the right to legal capacity by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In the second half of 2015 the main activities of the action will include a face-to-face meeting of the partners in Istanbul and a joint training of ombudsman offices on the right to legal capacity. Our Serbian partner, MDRIS will present its work on the right to legal capacity as part of a shadow reporting process to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Bosnian partner, SUMERO, will also host a roundtable workshop with national stakeholders to discuss options for legal capacity law reform.

Corporate Social Responsibility for All - CSR for ALL Project (2012/306-569 and 2014/351-680). For the 2015-2016 period CSR for ALL Project is working to create awareness and build capacity in the area of Sustainability Reporting by organizing trainings at partner employment organizations (EO's) and conduct sustainability reporting survey at national level. More generally the Project will continue to contribute to playing an active role in the

decision making process, by influencing governments towards developing CSR favorable policies both at national and international levels and enforcing them.

During the first half of 2015 CSR for ALL Project concluded its activities as it was foreseen in the TOR. These activities are: (i) National Review Study (NRS) which was piloted at each partner country. The aim with this study was to estimate and evaluate the Reporting and CSR awareness within in the partner countries. (ii) Round Table Discussion where the results of the NRS was discussed with the participants of national and international experts on CSR / Reporting. Speakers from UN SHIFT, Business Europe, Global Compact, Project Partners and Associates, Company Representatives participated to the RT and their inputs were included in the Supporting Package. (iii) Supporting Package which includes the training modules and agendas have been prepared. These finalized activities will shape the coming CSR / Reporting trainings that both EO experts and member company representatives will take. The purpose of the trainings are to increase the capacity of EO to guide their enterprises to integrate CSR into their core strategy.

In the first six months of the second phase, **Partnership for Reconciliation through Early Childhood Education and Development in Europe – PRECEDE (2014/351-609 continuation of 2012/306-585)** helped a new partner Djeca prije svega (Children First) from Montenegro create its national network of CSOs and other members, and provided several trainings to them in the field of research, peace-building work with young children and quality management enhancement. Regional strategies for research, monitoring, advocacy and toolkit implementation have been further fine-tuned to suit each local country needs. Interested and selected local NGOs have been trained for self-evaluation in their management quality, so that they could start the processes for improvement and international certification (one of them has already obtained ISO 9001/2008 Management Quality Certificate). In all partner countries, the Regional Toolkit for Respecting Diversity with Young Children has been implemented.

In the next six-month period, a training programme for preschool teachers will be accredited at national levels in the partner countries, capacity building for the partners in sub-granting will be held and national calls for small grants for advocacy will be launched.

Citizens' Network for Peace, Reconciliation and Human Security (2014/351-549 continuation of 2012/307-468). The first six months from January 2015 through June 2015 correspond to the final month of the previous phase/contract, and to the first five months of the second phase/contract of the project ran by the partnership for the Citizens' Network for Human Security. Citizens' Network for Human Security organized the 2nd Regional Conference on Human Security, under the title of “Citizenship & Human Security” in Istanbul Bilgi University, during 23-25 January. In March, a group of representatives from the partnership attended the World Social Forum in Tunisia, to present the project aims, proceedings and outputs, to expand outreach & networking and to improve visibility.

Moreover, the project partners issued chronicles on terrorism in BiH, on public security & radicalization in Kosovo, on inefficient state policies in responding to natural disasters and on road accidents in Bulgaria – www.cn4hs.org hCa launched a quarterly periodical on HS in Turkey.

Main activities for the next semester are: Index working meetings in July & in Sep/Oct, Summer School in Kosovo (relocated from Serbia) in August, possible attendance to Sabir Meydan on Mediterranean citizenship in Sicily in early October (for visibility & networking), policy briefs and the launch of regional research on public trust in fall.

3. ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY

Advocacy NGOs networks for sustainable use of energy and natural resources in the Western Balkans and Turkey – ETNAR (2014/ 351-683 continuation of 2012/306-573). Two position papers on [energy](#) and [river management](#) were published and presented on behalf of SEENET. At the second open call for proposals for sub-granting we have approved 10 out of 41 applications. A regional seminar called “Energy and natural resources in the Western Balkans and Turkey” was organised with 37 representatives from 25 CSOs. In August 2015, we have organised a meeting of young environmental leaders, developing a plan for regional youth climate change campaign.

Starting from September 2015 National seminars about legal tools and EU environmental horizontal legislation and public advocacy tools, Monitoring and mentoring of the implementation of advocacy campaigns and sub-grants are being organised in different countries.

In the first semester of the second phase of the **ESSEDRA project** (2014/351-624 continuation of 2012/307-143), the partnership refined and shared a fundraising strategy and planned capacity building activities including specific training on selected funding instruments, theory of change methodology and budgeting. On the advocacy side, new IPARD programs have been analyzed to verify if the specific measures we advocated for were included. Based on the results, we planned the advocacy strategy for IPA countries for the forthcoming months. It focuses on actions at country and EU level for the correct implementation of flexibility provisions. With regard to the grassroots level, the partners identified the Presidia projects to be implemented. Albania selected the Mishavin cheese from Kelmend region, Bulgaria the Kurtovo Konare pink tomato, Croatia the Varenik, a concentrated grape juice, Macedonia the stanushina grape variety, Romania the bazna pig breed, Serbia the shopsko sir cheese from Dimitrovgrad and Turkey the gravyer cheese from Bogatepe. 5 field visits have been realized respectively in Bulgaria (April 2015), Croatia (July 2015), Romania (May 2015), Serbia (June 2015), and Turkey (June-July 2015). As for Okusi Hercegovinu's Slow Food Planet mobile application, the association started to select the area

of intervention (Herzegovina) and the single places. Regarding the awareness raising side, in line with the communication plan, the partnership organized a number of events such as the launch of the Slow Food Chefs' Alliance in Albania and the Goat Milk Festival in Bulgaria.

The ENV.net project - Development of the ENV.net in Western Balkans and Turkey: giving citizens a voice to influence the environmental process reforms for closer EU integration (2014/351-610 continuation of 2012/306-642) in the new phase, started in 2015 organises joint initiatives of ENV.net partners especially aimed at informing citizens about the benefits of being compliant with EU environmental legislation and enable their active participation in the process. In the past 6 months, it focused on establishing proper communication strategy to keep key stakeholders informed about the monitoring exercise and have a solid ground of discussion with the national authorities, local media, CSOs and EU institutions. This was done especially through the elaboration of a bi-monthly bulletin, also to stimulate a rich debate with the Commission to identify key events, which is deemed relevant to alert key actors. In the next months, the ENV.net partners will work on a monitoring matrix web platform aims at giving an overview on the approximation process to the EU environmental acquis in the countries covered by the ENV.net network. To know more, visit the [ENV.net blog](#).

South East Europe Sustainable Energy Policy (SEE SEP) Program (2014/351-623 continuation of 2012 / 307 – 460). In the past six months, the main activities of the SEE SEP programme were dedicated to the launch of the [South East Europe 2050 Energy Model](#). In March 2015, we initiated a public consultation process - [Call for Evidence](#), and invited stakeholders to review the data of the energy models for 7 countries of the SEE region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia). In June 2015, as part of EU Sustainable Energy Week, we hosted a policy session [A fair, clean and efficient energy system in South East Europe and the Neighbourhood: Launch of the 2050 Energy Model for South East Europe \(and beyond?\)](#), bringing together important stakeholders from the SEE region and the EU, and presenting the first glimpse of the energy model.

In the coming months we will be launching the next phases of the energy model – an online technical database containing all information from the energy models, and an online animated video game that will graphically present the solutions on how to reach 2050 climate goals and targets in SEE.

6.3 OPERATING GRANTS

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility Programme and Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-081
Project title:	CSF, Operating grants
EU contribution:	EUR 1.67 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Grants
Duration of activities:	01/12/2014 – 31/12/2015
Contacts:	Bo Caperman, Bo.CAPERMAN@ec.europa.eu Maria Esposito, Maria.ESPOSITO@ec.europa.eu Olga-Elena Fimin, Olga-Elena.FIMIN@ec.europa.eu Henk Visser, Henk.VISSER@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

Operating grants contribute to the general expenses of operating an organization whose overall mission and objectives correspond to the policy priorities of the European Commission. The current operating grants provide structural support to 10 regional partnerships of CSOs working on topics such as youth policies, social dialogue, rule of law, promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and LGBTI persons. The operating grants were concluded following a call for proposals for a period of 12 months with the possibility of extension for up to 48 months. In the second half of 2015 an evaluation will take place in order to select those operating grants that can be renewed for one more year.

Regional CSO platform advocating social innovation under employment policies that guarantees security for youth at risks (2014/351-917). The project is designed to create a CSO platform enabling regional response to challenges stemming from the implementation of socio-economic policy reforms affecting youth. At the beginning of the project, a qualitative research was foreseen in each country on the unemployment of youth groups that face marginalization. The research results and policy recommendations are collected through stakeholders meetings (that have already been held or will be held shortly - 2 in each of the 7 countries). An analysis of European policies with regard to social innovation for youth employment has also been made during the first six months. Future activities that will be implemented by the end of the first year are: publication of Regional Policy Brief document (comprising results and recommendations from the National Baseline Reports); preparation of thematic chronicles on social innovation practice; setting-up of a national and regional advocacy campaign to promote a Policy Agenda on social innovations; organization

of a three-day regional conference on youth marginalization risks that will strengthen political dialog and cooperation among key stakeholders.

Regional Youth Exchange Association (2014/351-845). The Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) focuses on developing the preconditions for the establishment of governmentally supported youth exchange programmes in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Croatia. Following national conferences organized in May and June in each of the targeted countries, the YIHR created a regional network of more than 200 civil society organizations which advocate for the institutionalization of youth exchange programmes going beyond the settled aim of five countries by also including Macedonia, Albania and potentially Slovenia. The YIHR closely cooperated with the representatives of ministries in charge of youth politics in the region as well as with the Franco-German Youth Office. Those are the stakeholders that contributed to the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office of the Western Balkans at the Summit on Western Balkans held in Vienna on August 27th. In October, the YIHR will organize a regional conference that will gather more than 150 participants aiming to contribute to the process of defining the necessary steps for the operationalization of the Declaration signed at the Vienna Conference.

Young With A Voice (2014/351-938). During the first project semester a series of activities aimed at promoting evidence-based policy making and greater visibility of the project objectives were implemented. A regional conference was organized in Serbia with the aim of showing how the results of the ChildPact's Child Protection Index are compared among countries and of fostering regional learning and cooperation. Furthermore, in each of the 5 project countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia) a Simplicity Workshop was implemented to identify ways for simplifying the legislative and bureaucratic hurdles that prevent youngsters from breaking the cycles of social and economic marginalization. At the same time, a framework for the development of a youth-led Youth Wellbeing Index was created and, through a consultation process, conducted jointly by a group of marginalized young people and experts, an indicators framework was elaborated. The piloting of the Index was planned for the second project semester during which parliamentary hearings/high-level events will also be organized in each project country in view of sharing simplification ideas defined through the Simplicity Campaign and the Youth Wellbeing Index.

Balkan regional platform for youth participation and dialogue (2014/351-922). The project seeks to contribute to structuring regional cooperation between civil society and public authorities in the Western Balkan in view of improving the environment for youth activism and participation, in particular of young people with fewer opportunities. The main activities focus on creating a Balkan Network for Local Democracy comprising CSOs and local/regional authorities that can provide a framework for strengthening the capacities of CSOs and youth

groups for creating a regional co-operation platform promoting active citizenship and participation in the reform process towards EU integration. The project partners adopted a Regional Co-operation Platform engaging Local Democracy Agencies and their host cities in the Western Balkans; conducted a capacity building programme for eight local Youth Task groups, a training seminar in Knjazevac, Serbia and a study visit and meetings with MPs of the Parliament of Montenegro; launched the Youth Art workshops and photo exhibitions organised in eight host cities; and conducted a comparative analysis of the legislative and institutional framework related to youth public policy making in the Balkan countries. Future activities comprise: organisation of the Regional Youth Forum gathering all the project partners, LAs, relevant government bodies in Subotica, Serbia; coordination of an youth group for additional volunteering activities providing aid to the migrants in city of Subotica; dissemination of key findings from the comparative research.

Towards a Western Balkans and Turkey LGBTI Human Rights Regional Association (2014/351-960). During the first half of 2015, a Regional Feasibility Study has been conducted, encompassing all seven IPA beneficiary countries. The study provides a comprehensive and multi-dimensional insight into the actual situation of LGBTI population, LGBTI CSOs and attitudes of relevant stakeholders. In addition, a Regional LGBTI Strategic Planning Meeting took place in Belgrade, gathering more than 30 LGBTI activists from the region. During the meeting, and based on the results of the Regional Feasibility Study, a four-year Strategic Plan and 2016 Annual Work Program of the Regional LGBTI Association for Western Balkans and Turkey has been discussed and formulated. In the next semester, the Founding General Assembly of the Regional LGBTI Association will take place in the National Parliament of Serbia in Belgrade and the Regional LGBTI Association will be formally established. In addition, the coming period will also be used for finalizing internal procedures and documents of the Association, and for recruitment of executive staff members.

Project “Strengthening NGO capacity and promoting public health and human rights oriented drug policy in South Eastern Europe” (2014/351-836). The first priority of the project was the creation of a Legal umbrella organisation in SEE. After three meetings with representatives of 14 organisations from the SEE region, the Drug Policy Network South East Europe (DPNSEE) was established at a meeting in Belgrade on 1 September 2015. Moreover, the Statutes were adopted, a board was elected and a preliminary framework for the work plan for 2016 was agreed on. Another successfully implemented activity was the public meeting on “Drug strategy and drug legislation” in Bosnia and Herzegovina which was part of a series of similar meetings (Sarajevo, Tirana and Belgrade). Two main activities will take place in the next project phase: a) the organisation of a Drug Policy Conference on 01-03 October about “The UNGASS 2016 and its significance for SEE”; b) the website of the DPNSE will be ready mid of November 2015.

Balkans Independent Disability Framework (2014/351-920). With this project, ACED and its partners - CIL in Serbia, UPCG in Montenegro and Polio Plus in Macedonia - will assist organizations dedicated to the fulfilment of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities (PWDs) to develop the organizational capacities of the Balkans Independent Disability Framework (BIDF), as well as to undertake policy and legislative advocacy, public education campaigns and other related activities at national and regional level. Upon completion of the inception phase, ACED and its partners conducted the BIDF membership Baseline survey and offered support for doing legislative analysis and collecting information from civil society organizations about the implementation of laws targeting issues relevant to PWDs. Based on the results of the Baseline survey, a training curricula and training methodology were defined, with special attention to the capacities and level of understanding of the potential trainees. A total of 8 Basic and 4 Advanced Capacity building trainings in 4 project countries for BIDF network members were organized as well as 2 Internal Capacity building trainings for BIDF national representatives to foster networking structure development. The BIDF Regional conference that will be organized in the next months is will be an opportunity to present the official registration of the BIDF Network as well as to bring to the public's attention the regional advocacy document "Guidelines and Recommendations on Harmonization of Legislation in accordance to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".

Stronger Social Dialog in Western Balkans Countries - SSD WBC (2014/351-846). The project aims at strengthening the capacity of social partners in participating countries to contribute to national and regional development of social dialogue and harmonization with EU regulations (Serbia, Montenegro, FYR of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania). It is implemented by the Montenegrin Employers Federation (main applicant) and its partners: the Association of Employers of FBiH, BusinessAlbania, the Business Confederation of Macedonia, the Serbian Association of Employers, the Union of Employers' Associations of Republika Srpska. During April 2015, workshops were organized on Social dialogue and the modernisation of labour markets in Podgorica, Belgrade, Tirana, Skoplje, Banja Luka and Sarajevo. These workshops aimed at assessing the state of social dialog in each country and future challenges, with a special focus on the work of local social councils. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the main issue was the establishment of a Social Council at state level. A Study visit to Brussels was also organized (11-14 May) and enabled meetings with BUSINESSEUROPE to discuss the importance of European social dialogue for national social dialogue, with other EU social partners to discuss EU social dialogue and its importance for national legislation, and also visits to EU institutions (Parliament, DG NEAR). The 24 participants (4 per country) also met with representatives of EU employer's federations (Poland and Germany). In the following period, project partners will prepare a publication about the state of social dialog in each country as well as at the EU level; will issue a declaration representing the official opinion of the employers' organization about needed

changes in the country; will organize panel discussions on social dialogue in Podgorica, Tirana, Skopje, Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Belgrade.

European Integration and the social dimension: strengthening regional cooperation of trade unions in the Balkans (2014/351-847). The project aims at strengthening the network of trade unions created in the region of the Western Balkans. Due also to the efforts of the network, in Serbia and Macedonia, trade union reform starts to be on the agenda, more particularly within the CATUS Confederation in Serbia and the SSM Confederation in Macedonia. In Montenegro, the “old” union seems to be aware of the urgent need for reform and has announced changes. The regional Trade Union network “Solidarnost” is working on its political visibility in the Western Balkans regional process. Solidarnost addressed a message, on the occasion of the Vienna summit, to EU Commissioner Hahn. In the coming period the project will focus on involving young trade unionists in the process (with a joint workshop “Young and Old” to be organized in Macedonia) and on ensuring workers representation at company level and the need to find a common approach with regard to EU standards.

Western Balkans Pulse for Police Integrity and Trust - POINTPULSE (2014/ 351-850) Purpose. The project seeks to contribute to increased trust and confidence in the law enforcement agencies in the Western Balkans by fighting police corruption and promoting police integrity, through activities of the regional civilian oversight network POINTPULSE. The network, launched in January 2015, comprises five civil society organizations (CSOs): the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP), Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), Centre for Security Studies (CSS), Institute Alternative (IA) and Kosovo Centre for Security Studies (KCSS). The capacities of the network to monitor and advocate for anticorruption policies in police services were strengthened through the organisation of three workshops, implementation of seven public events and public opinion survey and publication of seven policy articles. The activities were extensively covered by the media and spread via social networks (hashtags #BalkanCops and #POINTPULSE) and benefitted from the support of the Centre for the Study of Democracy, the Bulgarian think tank from Sofia, and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria. A civilian oversight system for benchmarking police integrity was also elaborated with support from the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). POINTPULSE managed to build new partnerships with the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Regional Anticorruption Initiative and the Delegation of the European Union in Sarajevo. Moreover, it disseminated the results of the public opinion survey „Police Integrity in the Western Balkans” and published analyses on the police crime statistics, role of parliamentary oversight in building police integrity, control of police officers assets, and migration and corruption. In the forthcoming period, efforts will be centred on: launching the POINTPULSE website; publishing four national reports on police integrity; organizing four separate presentations of national reports; producing five media feature stories; conducting regional conference in Belgrade.

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

PURPOSE

The Investigative Journalism Award scheme, announced in the EU Enlargement Strategy 2014-15, aims at celebrating and promoting outstanding achievements of investigative journalists as well as improving the visibility of quality investigative journalism in the Western Balkans and Turkey. National contests and award ceremonies are planned in 2015, 2016 and 2017 in all IPA countries. Investigative stories contributing to transparency and reporting on societal issues related to abuse of power and fundamental rights, corruption and organized crime that otherwise would not have been brought to the public's attention will qualify for the award.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The Operational Manual of the Award Scheme was compiled to establish rules and procedures for the regional scheme of EU awards for investigative journalism in Western Balkans and Turkey. It was developed in consultations between eight civil society organisations responsible for administration of the regional scheme, representatives of the European Commission and Advisory Board of the project.

Seven separate EU award contests were organised in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey, based on joint criteria and procedures.

Independent juries endorsed by EU Delegations selected one to three investigative stories for the award in each country. In total, 195 nominations were processed in seven countries.

In the reporting period, five out of seven award ceremonies were organised to deliver awards and celebrate the winners. Web site of the SEE Media Observatory was used for presentation and promotion of the regional EU award scheme.

OUTPUTS (IN THE PERIOD JANUARY – JUNE 2015):

In the reporting period, fifteen 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 five countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey – with individual prizes ranging between 3,000 and 5,000 euro. In many cases, more than one journalist contributed to the awarded story. The achievements of the winners, 22 journalists in total, were celebrated at five award ceremonies and promoted through dozens of media reports. The awards were delivered by high representative of EU Delegation in each country. Total amount of 50,000 euro was distributed to the winners from the funds established for the EU investigative journalism awards in Western Balkans and Turkey.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Final jury selection of investigative stories in Serbia and Albania. Announcement of the winners and organisation of award ceremonies in Serbia and Albania (July 2015). Regional announcement of the results of the regional scheme of EU awards for investigative journalism in Western Balkans and Turkey in 2015. Selection of “regional winner” from the absolute winners in seven countries. Organisation of study visit to the Guardian for the regional winner. On-going activities to promote the EU award winners in each country through events, lectures at the universities etc. Evaluation of the project activities realized in 2014.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2012/022-966
Project title:	Enabling the democratic role of public service media in the EU Enlargement region 'Start-up action plan: making a difference 2013-2014
EU contribution:	EUR 0.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with European Broadcasting Union (EBU),
Contract reference:	CN 2013/312-411
Duration of activities:	07/03/2013 – 06/11/2015
Links:	http://www3.ebu.ch/cms/en/services/member-relations/partnership
Contact:	Karl Giacinti, Karl.GIACINTI@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose is to improve public accountability and credibility of public service media in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The EBU works with its members in the region on strategies to

improve editorial independence, financial independence and sustainability, assistance in the shift from analogue to digital broadcasting, strategic and legal assistance, training, networking, mentoring and advocacy as methods to address these specific objectives.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Public service news training scheme – training in Albania (2-6 February)
- Fact finding mission in Kosovo – (2-4 March)
- Investigative journalism scheme –meeting with the mentors (Belgrade, 16 March)
- In house training on elections coverage for 10 journalists at RTSH (Tirana, 21-24 April)
- International conference on Independence of PSM in the EU enlargement countries (Brussels, 1 April)
- Regional meeting of the Heads of Archives (Belgrade, 11-13 May)
- Strategic meeting with RTSH and signature of an MoU with RTSH and OSCE (Tirana, 8-9 June)
- Meeting of the EBU Roma Task Force (Slovenia , 12-13 June).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Investigative stories in Kosovo and Albania broadcasted; huge breakthrough with launching investigative programmes in Montenegro.

In preparation for the local elections in Albania, 10 journalists from RTSH trained on election-coverage.

The conference “Independence of PSM in Enlargement countries” organised in Brussels, in cooperation with the EESC underlined the progress of investigative journalism, through the broadcast of stories for the first time in the region, following the EBU investigative journalism training scheme. It also provided platform for professional discussions on implementation of media legal framework, media environment, self-censorship, importance of EC involvement, etc.

A survey about the archiving situation in the Balkans was carried out by HRT and presented during the Heads of archives meeting. The survey provides unique data about the volume of archives, respective conditions and carriers.

Strategic and fact finding missions in BiH, Kosovo and Albania facilitated needed reforms of PSM and helped members to define important benchmarks in the reform process.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Conference on PSM and Parliaments, in collaboration with the European Parliament and the Croatian Parliament – Zagreb, 24-25 September
- Strategic work in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina – October.

Programme reference:	Civil Society Facility Programme 2011, IPA 2011/022-965
Project title:	Alignment to International Standards in the Media Sector for SEE Countries
EU contribution:	EUR 0.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement under joint management with UNESCO
Contract reference:	CN 2012/305-617
Duration of activities:	30/11/2012 – 29/11/2015
Contact:	Karl.GIACINTI@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project 'Media Accountability in South East Europe' aims to support the promotion of freedom of expression, press freedom and freedom of information, through awareness-raising and capacity building as well as to strengthen media accountability and transparency in the Western Balkan and Turkey.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- A 2-days training seminar for professional journalists has been organized in cooperation with P24 in Ankara on 10 and 11 April on the topic of access to information, media accountability and journalistic ethics
- The [Legal Leaks Toolkit](#) developed by Access Info Europe has been adapted, translated and printed for media professionals in Turkey
- Public knowledge on media accountability was supported and increased in 5 target countries thanks to national-tailored awarenessraising campaigns. The organization of public-hearing of press councils' complaints commission to explain their work or the creation of new website of press councils were other examples of such activities conducted in the framework of the Project
- In May 2015, representatives of press councils in South East Europe were invited to take part in the UNESCO organized World Press Freedom Day celebrations in Riga, Latvia and a specific side-event was dedicated to discussing their needs and challenges
- The needs of each media council in South East Europe have been assessed and a report published with specific recommendations to be used for follow-up activities.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- Around 30 journalists from all kind of media trained in Turkey on how to file freedom of information requests

- Media self-regulation mechanisms strengthened in 5 countries through national events featuring their role and importance among the media community and among the civil-society
- A [report assessing the needs of media councils in South East Europe](#) widely distributed to media stakeholders in South East Europe and local, regional and international organizations working in the field of media regulation and media self-regulation.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Sponsoring the participation of media professionals in South East Europe to the next AIPCE meeting to take place in Vienna in October 2015.
- Reinforcement of the existing press councils in South East Europe through national awareness-raising campaigns
- Final evaluation of the on-going Project
- Preparation of the new project “Building trust in media in South East Europe”.

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

PURPOSE

Aim of the project is to establish independent, sustainable, multi-layered, cross-country mechanisms for active media policy monitoring, advocacy and emergency response in South East Europe. This will be done through establishing mechanism for monitoring Media Clientelism and Politicisation Index and implementation of activities directed to enhancing cross-sector cooperation between journalists, public institutions and NGOs, as well as protection of journalists.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

Country-specific research using the tool for monitoring Media Clientelism and Politicisation Index conducted.

Fairpress.eu initiated and organized an unprecedented initiative, the [*Day of Silence*](#) (Media in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia have darkened their screens and stopped disseminating information in order to commemorate the victims of the terrorist attack in Paris, but also all others who were killed around the world because they advocated for the freedom of expression).

51 analytical articles were published in national languages; 23 [analytical articles](#) translated in English; 128 articles republished from other media outlets and 5 uncut video were published.

By 31 July 2015 Fairpress.eu received a total number of 64.617 Sessions; 105.327 Pageviews and 47.542 Users. 8.595 people have liked Fairpress Facebook Page and 371.163 people were reached by our activities on Facebook.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- 51 analytical articles written and published on national languages of the countries participating in the project; 23 analytical articles written and published on central portal in English; 5 uncut videos and 128 media related articles republished from other media outlets
- 3 project newsletter shared on more than 2500 e-mails.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Writing country specific reports and preparing for publishing
- Implement a Peer Evaluation and Advocacy Action Plan during a 3-day partners' meeting in Belgrade
- Implement an international presentation of the results of the research in Brussels.

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

PURPOSE:

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015):

- Research on employment conditions for journalists. Research reports launched locally in national workshops in all five countries. Regional report launched online on May 3rd, to celebrate World Press Freedom Day
- Advocacy training sessions (2days training in advocacy skills, legislation, coalition building) held in all the five countries in the project.
- Freedom of Expression and media monitoring. Country by country monitoring. First FoE reports – the Charlie Hebdo Effect in the Balkans (6 national reports and regional overview). A second wave of reports (Time Zero of Digital Switchover in the Balkans) was documented and is currently edited. Estimated launching time: end of September.
- Communication of the program in the participant countries and to possible partners or donors. Posts on SEENPM website.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015).

- 5 country reports on employment conditions of journalists
- 1 regional comparative report on employment conditions of journalists
- 5 national workshops on employment conditions of journalists
- 5 policy papers on labour conditions for journalists
- 5 training sessions on advocacy
- 6 reports on freedom of expression and media (1 for each of the five countries + 1 in Bulgaria) + 1 regional overview.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER:

- Regional conference on employment conditions of journalists, Tirana, October 29-30 2015
- Freedom of expression and of media monitoring. Participation in the global advocacy networks (IFEX, Global Forum for Media Development).
- Release of the second FoE reports (5 national reports + Romania and Bulgaria) and regional overview : Time Zero of the Digital Switchover in the Balkans
- Preparation of the third wave of FoE reports (due in December/January) - topic to be decided.

CHAPTER 7: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The strategic documents identify the support of reforms and regional cooperation in education as one of the priorities for IPA assistance. Support is mainly provided through established programmes such as “Erasmus Mundus” and “Tempus”, as well as the new “Erasmus+” programme (2014-2020). Good education accessible by all is key in developing a stable, peaceful and democratic society. Together with MB assistance in the area of cultural heritage they can promote regional cooperation, thus fostering reconciliation and mutual understanding.

7.1 TEMPUS

Programme reference:	IPA 2011/SI2. 596555, IPA 2012/SI2. 615827, 2013/SI2. 645034
Project title:	Tempus: Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies
EU contribution:	IPA 2011/SI2.596555, EUR 15.3 million IPA 2012/SI2.615827, EUR 14.9 million IPA 2013/SI2.645034, EUR 11.7 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans (except Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
Type of contract:	The programme is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
Contract reference:	n/a
Duration of activities:	n/a
Links:	http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/
Contact :	Bo Caperman, bo.caperman@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The Tempus programme facilitates the reform of higher education institutions by upgrading the quality and management of academic institutions, in line with changing political, social and economic needs and through voluntary convergence with higher education reform developments in the EU Member States.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY- JUNE 2015)

This reporting semester must be considered as a transition period between Tempus and the launch of the new Action 'Capacity Building in Higher Education' of the Erasmus+ programme, which succeeded the Tempus programme, for the period 2014-2020. Tempus activities during this period consisted mainly of monitoring on-going Tempus projects and closing a certain number of them (24 projects were closed during this semester). As of 1 January 2015, 61 Tempus projects are still operating in the Western Balkans.

The first Call for proposals for the newly established Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) action was launched at the beginning of October 2014, with a deadline on 10 February 2015. The overall number of applications were 515 out of which a 140 were recommended for funding including 65 applications covering the Western Balkan Regions out of which 15 were eventually funded.

During this reporting period 32 on-going Tempus projects in the Western Balkans were visited by the National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) and EACEA staff.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

The field monitoring visits showed that the Tempus projects in the Western Balkans are progressing well and achieving good results. A study on the achievements of the Tempus IV programme in the development of student support services at universities has been launched with the support of an external expert. The results are expected beginning of 2016.

The network of Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) in the former Tempus regions continues to be supported under the Erasmus+ programme. At the beginning of this year teams of HEREs, comprising old and new members, were finalised (following a nomination procedure where HERE candidates were proposed by the National Erasmus+ Office and the National Authorities responsible for higher education in the respective countries, with the endorsement of the EU Delegation). Altogether 47 HEREs were appointed for the Western Balkans. Delegations of several HEREs from each country attended various activities, including a conference in Istanbul (March 2015) on the relations between Higher Education and VET, a study visit in Berlin (May 2015) on internationalisation and mobility of students and staff and a study visit to Gent and Brussels (June 2015) on the organisation of international credit mobility.

A coordination meeting of all NEOs and ICPs (newly established International Contact Points in the EU) will be organised between 7th and 9th October 2015 in Brussels and focused on the implementation of the international dimension of Erasmus+. Furthermore a HERE seminar on ICT based learning will take place on 26-27 October 2015 in Petra/Jordan and the annual HERE conference on innovating learning and teaching in Tbilissi/Georgia on 3-4 December 2015.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The CBHE action of Erasmus+ will be presented by EACEA or EAC in the framework of national Infodays organised by the National Erasmus+ Offices and Erasmus+ National Agencies during the second semester of 2015. A regional conference presenting all actions of Erasmus+ will be held in Vienna on 17-18 December gathering over 250 stakeholders from the region and EU MS.

7.2 ERASMUS MUNDUS

Programme reference:	IPA 2013/935
Project title:	Erasmus Mundus Action 1 and Action 2
EU contribution:	Action 1: EUR 8.0 million – 2015 (n/a) Action 2: EUR 12.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Erasmus Mundus Action 1: (2014) Western Balkans (except Croatia) and Turkey Erasmus Mundus Action 2: Western Balkans
Type of contract:	The programme is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
Links:	http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/key-action-1-
Contact:	Bo Caperman, bo.caperman@ec.europa.eu Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency EACEA-EPLUS-JMD@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

[Erasmus Mundus Action 1](#)

Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes are operated by consortia of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from the EU and (since 2009) other countries in the world. They provide an integrated course and joint or multiple diplomas following study or research at two or more HEIs. There are currently 138 Erasmus Mundus Master Courses (EMMCs) and 42 Joint Doctorates (EMJDs) running.

As a novelty from the 2015 intake onwards, Programme country and Partner country students receive a contribution to their subsistence costs of EUR 1.000 per month (for previous editions, master students from Programme countries – including in 2014 the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey – had received a contribution to their subsistence costs of EUR 500 per month).

The students and fellows, who started their intake in 2014 have been implementing their second "mobility" in the framework of their respective EMMC and EMJD mobility tracks. Master students from the following countries had been selected in 2014 under "Western Balkans" window: Albania (11), Bosnia and Herzegovina (7), Kosovo (3), former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (19), Montenegro(8), Serbia (55) and Turkey (71). Moreover, Erasmus Mundus doctoral fellowships had been granted in 2014 to candidates from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (3), Turkey (6) and Serbia (4).

There has been no specific "Western Balkans/Turkey Window" under the different 2015 calls for Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMD) under the now Erasmus+ programme which has integrated all previous education and youth programmes. However, scholarships for students/fellows from these regions have been provided under Heading 1 Erasmus+ funds in the framework of Key Action 1 - Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMDs), Master Courses (EMMCs, previous generation) and Joint Doctorates (EMJDs, previous generation). Under the 2015 scholarships selections, Erasmus Mundus Master students from the following countries have been funded: Albania (4), Bosnia and Herzegovina (7), former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (5), Montenegro(3), Serbia (19) and Turkey (6).

Erasmus Mundus doctoral fellowships have been granted under the 2015 selection to candidates from Albania (2), Kosovo (1), Serbia (3) and Turkey (1).

[Erasmus Mundus Action 2](#)

Under Action 2, Erasmus Mundus Partnerships brought together HEIs from Europe on the one hand and those from a particular region in the world on the other. Together, the partnerships managed mobility flows between the two regions for a range of academic levels – undergraduate, master, doctorate, post-doctorate – and for academic staff.

The Western Balkans region was included in all selections from 2008 to 2014 and a total of 19 partnerships were selected under the Western Balkans lot. As of 2014, and the advent of the Erasmus+ programme, Erasmus Mundus Action 2 discontinued and no new projects/partnerships have been selected this year.

In February 2015, two out of the three partnerships selected in 2010 submitted their final reports and with this the assessment of all the 2010 projects was finalised. The total mobility achieved by this generation of projects is 747 (590 Non-EU and 157 EU mobility flows).

February 2015 was also the deadline for the three projects selected in 2012 to submit their third progress report. These partnerships have finalised their students' selections but may still organise selection of staff until the end of the eligibility period (July 2016). The reported 829 mobility flows (630 Non-EU and 199 EU) has shown that the three projects have already achieved the initially planned mobility.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

As an examples of good practice, it is important to mention the workshop on "Internationalisation and Erasmus+" (University of Zagreb, 25-27 March 2015), organised by 4 EM Action 2 coordinators from 13 different projects. This event was an occasion for drawing lessons, disseminating the project outcomes and exploring further opportunities for cooperation, also providing increased visibility of the Programme in the Western Balkans.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

By September 2015 all the Erasmus Mundus Action 2 projects selected in 2014 under the Western Balkans lot are expected to submit their first progress reports and the projects selected in 2011 – their final reports.

Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Courses (former Action 1 of Erasmus Mundus) continue under Key Action 1 of Erasmus+. The 2015 intakes of both, the former Erasmus Mundus actions (EM Master Courses and Joint Doctorates) and the Erasmus+ Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMDs) are about to start in the second semester of 2015.

The Erasmus+ call for proposals 2016 will be published at the beginning of October 2015 (deadline for submission of EMJMD proposals is 18 February 2016 to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency). However there is no specific window for Western Balkans (funded under heading 4) and applicants from the region will compete with others from all over the world for scholarships under heading 1 of this action.

The Erasmus+ EMJMDs will be presented by EACEA or EAC in the framework of national Infodays organised by the National Erasmus+ Offices and Erasmus+ National Agencies during the second semester of 2015. A regional conference presenting all actions of Erasmus+ will be held in Vienna on 17-18 December gathering over 250 stakeholders from the region and EU MS.

Programme reference:	IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Erasmus+ Youth in Action – Western Balkans Youth Window
EU contribution:	EUR 3.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	The programme is implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
Contact:	Bo Caperman, bo.caperman@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

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

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

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

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY –JUNE 2015)

The EACEA participated in the Western Balkan Contact Point Meeting held in February in Ljubljana, Slovenia (SALTO) to inform the staff of the Contact Points in Western Balkan

countries about the new Erasmus+ funding opportunities for youth organisations based in Western Balkan countries.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The 1st deadline for the Western Balkan Youth Window managed at centralised level under the Erasmus+ Programme – Key-Action 2 - Capacity Building in the field of youth was 3 April 2015.

Organisations from Western Balkan countries submitted 149 applications with a total grant request of EUR 6,700,813.68 (average grant request EUR 41,283.18). Serbian organisations submitted almost 60% (85) of the applications. 27 applications were submitted by organisations based in Albania, 15 by Bosnia and Herzegovina, 14 by Montenegrin organisations and 8 by Kosovo. The Evaluation Committee proposed to fund a total number of 43 projects representing a total grant request of EUR 1,797,099.96.

Among the organisations funded there are: 26 beneficiaries from Serbia, 7 from Montenegro, 5 from Albania, 4 from Bosnia and Herzegovina and 1 from Kosovo.

Selection results were published in July, grant agreements sent out in August. The pre-financings were launched in September.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The 2nd deadline for the Western Balkan Youth Window managed at centralised level (Erasmus+ Programme – Key-Action 2 - Capacity Building in the field of youth) was 2 September 2015.

Organisations based in Western Balkan countries submitted 176 applications with a total grant request of EUR 8,643,599.65 (average grant request EUR 49.111,36). The number of applications received by Albania (29), Bosnia and Herzegovina (16) and Kosovo (10) remained more or less stable compared to the 1st selection round. However, Serbia registered an increase of almost 10% (95 applications) and Montenegro of more than 50% (26 applications) compared to the first selection round. The Evaluation Committee will be held on 12th November 2015.

An information event on the funding possibilities for youth organisations within the Erasmus+ Programme will be organised by the SALTO South East Europe Centre and ADP-Zid (Montenegrin Contact Point) from 17 – 18 November in Podgorica/Montenegro. The EACEA will be involved in the event through various presentations. The presence of the EACEA in Montenegro will also be the occasion to closely monitor 1 or 2 funded projects through an on-site visit.

7.4 CULTURAL HERITAGE – LJUBLJANA PROCESS, HISTORY

Programme reference:	Preparatory actions for preserving and restoring cultural heritage in conflict areas in the Western Balkans for 2012, CARDS 2012/023-867
EU contribution:	EUR 3.0 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Single works contracts; Evaluation: Service Framework contract
Contract reference:	n/a
Duration of activities:	up to 24 months
Contact:	Petra Schlueter, petra.schlueter@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

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

The following three projects were selected:

- Rehabilitation of the Franciscan Monastery in Bač, Serbia
- Reconstruction of the Kastel Fortress, "Cultural centre with auxiliary services", Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Rehabilitation of the monastery of St. Mary for museum use and landscaping of the archaeological site of Apollonia, Fier, Albania

ACTIVITIES

The Beneficiaries of the selected projects prepare preliminary designs for the projects, so that the tenders for the complete design and works are ongoing.

OUTPUTS

Rehabilitation of 3 cultural heritage sites in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Implementation of the works contracts by the respective EU Delegations.

The evaluation component (EUR 0.2 million) will be implemented through a Service Framework contract foreseen in 2016.

CHAPTER 8: OTHER HORIZONTAL ACTIONS

8.1 EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title :	Preparatory measures for the participation of candidates and potential candidates in Community Agencies: Specific project for the participation of Western Balkan Countries in the work of the European Environment Agency 2014-2015
EU contribution:	EUR 0.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement
Contract reference:	CN 2014/338-534
Duration of activities:	01/05/2014 – 31/10/2015
Links:	http://eea.europa.eu/
Contact :	Agnieszka.IWANOWSKA-BIEL@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to further develop capacities in the West Balkans with a view to improve and increase data deliveries to the so-called priority data flows (see: <http://www.eionet.europa.eu/dataflows/pdf2014>) and to develop a strategy to prepare the countries for “technical readiness” for EEA membership.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

The West Balkans were represented in a large number of Eionet meetings both National Reference Centre (NRC) as well as National Focal Points (NFP) meetings. Where the NRC meetings focus on developing technical capacities, the NFP meetings are of a more strategic nature. The project also finances the assistants to the NFPs in order to provide continuity in the organisation, regardless of political issues.

In order to develop a strategy for technical readiness, an Interest Group West Balkans under the EPA Network (<http://epanet.pbe.eea.europa.eu>) has been set up. The Interest Group

(IG) consists of Heads of EPAs in the West Balkans plus a number of other countries. The purpose of the IG is to provide guidance on the process towards technical readiness.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

The IG has produced a scoping document for the West Balkans. This document describes a roadmap towards technical readiness by 2020.

The countries have been delivering data on a regular basis and there is a steady improvement over the last years in terms of data quality as well in terms of the number of delivered datasets. Progress can be monitored on the Eionet site (<http://www.eionet.europa.eu/dataflows>) and many WB countries are now on par with some of the “traditional” EEA member states.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The next phase will focus on maintaining the performance in terms of data delivery and to continue developing capacities to this end. From a strategic point of view the WBs will now focus together with the IG on SWOT analyses for each of the countries in order to develop a county-specific approach towards the “technical EEA readiness”.

8.2 EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title :	Participation of candidate countries and potential candidates in EIGE's work
EU contribution:	EUR 0.1 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Contribution Agreement
Contract reference:	CN 2014/343-490
Duration of activities:	01/07/2014 – 30/06/2015
Links:	http://eige.europa.eu/
Contact :	Agnieszka.IWANOWSKA-BIEL@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The aim of the project is to support EU candidate and potential candidate countries in aligning their gender equality work and practices with those applied in the European Union and in their preparation for their future participation in the work carried out by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

Several project events took place during the first half of 2015. The IPA country representatives were represented at: a stakeholder consultation meeting on a draft Europe-wide gender equality thesaurus and glossary “Mapping and remapping gender equality language”; a stakeholder consultation meeting on EIGE’s database on gender statistics; a meeting of the Informal Network of Officials from Candidate Countries and Potential Candidates.

EIGE started capacity building activities in Kosovo to support development of the national Gender Equality Index according to EIGE’s methodology for EU-28. EIGE also participated in the Inter-Parliamentary Seminar “Political Participation of Women in the Western Balkans and Turkey” organized by the European Parliament. The Institute continued to add IPA country resources in its Resource and Documentation Centre online database and the physical library (RDC).

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

The latter phase of the project produced several positive instances of closer cooperation with IPA countries and integration of their contributions in EIGE’s work. The meeting on the European gender equality glossary and thesaurus contributed to improvement of the initiative’s implementation plan, as information will be translated to and adapted in at least three languages used in the region. The gender statistics database meeting directly contributed to the section about IPA countries in the database which will be launched at the end of 2015 by EIGE and will contain gender statistics not only on EU-28, but also many EU neighbourhood countries. With support of EIGE, Kosovo has started a process that might lead to production of a national Gender Equality Index. Currently Kosovo and Serbia are the first two countries outside the EU that have taken practical steps to produce the Index. EIGE will continue to support the two mentioned and other IPA countries that aspire to have their national Gender Equality Index.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

As of 1 July 2015 EIGE starts to implement a new cooperation project with IPA countries. The project continues previous initiatives with IPA countries, but also seeks to deepen

cooperation in several work areas of EIGE’s operation, most notably the Gender Equality Index, the European Gender Statistics Database, and the Resource and Documentation Centre.

8.3 REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL

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

PURPOSE

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

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

The main activity of the project is to assist the RCC in implementing its strategic work programme (SWP) for 2014-2016. The RCC continues to work towards increasing the value and substance of regional cooperation, thus promoting issues of importance to the entire region and further mainstreaming regional cooperation in the countries’ political agenda. All RCC’s actions fit broadly into two main categories of activities: implementation of SEE 2020 Strategy, with a majority of resources being dedicated to this category and the Justice and Home Affairs and Security dimension.

The Strategic cooperation with the SEECF and the SEECF Chairman-in-office is being further strengthened.

RCC political agenda, key meetings: RCC Board (February and May 2015); Coordination Meeting between the RCC Secretariat – SEECP Troika and the EU (February and May 2015); RCC Annual Meeting (May 2015); SEECP Meeting of the Political Directors, Informal Meeting of the SEECP Ministers of Foreign Affairs (February 2015); SEECP Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (May 2015); SEECP Summit of Heads of State and Government (May 2015); SEECP Parliamentary Assembly Session (May 2015).

SEE 2020/RCC-SWP 14-16 implementation: key processes/events and planned technical assistance focused on programming, implementation and monitoring of SEE 2020 such as the meetings of the Monitoring Task Force, of the Programming Committee, SEE 2020 Coordination Board, the Donor Coordination meeting, the SEE 2020 Governing Board meeting, and several technical assistance programs implemented.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

The governance architecture of SEE 2020 was completed with the SEE 2020 Programming Committee, as well as the SEE 2020 Monitoring Task Force being set up. The set of Programming Guidelines was approved; The first annual programming cycle 2015 was initiated in February; The Balkan Barometer was finalised and published; Six SEE 2020 Round Tables were organized in Belgrade, Podgorica, Pristina, Sarajevo, Skopje and Tirana; the SEE 2020 Annual Report on Implementation was drafted and approved; the SEEDS (South East Europe Development Scoreboard) was prepared and published online. The drafting of RCC-SWP 2017-2019 is initiated. The initial proposal for the flagship approach of implementation of SEE 2020 was drafted, the small grant facility was established and launched.

The regional cooperation mechanisms in Justice and Home Affairs and Security dimensions have been further improved.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

Key political activities: SEECP Informal Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (September 2015); Informal Meeting of the Western Balkans 6 Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission (September 2015). RCC Board Meeting (October 2015); Coordination meeting between RCC Secretariat – SEECP Troika and the EU (October 2015); SEECP Political Director Meeting (November 2015).

SEE 2020/RCC-SWP 14-16 implementation key events: SEE 2020 Programming Committee meeting, SEE 2020 Monitoring Committee meeting, Flagship-based coordination consultations and meetings on implementation of SEE 2020. Finalisation of the Flagship approach for the implementation of SEE 2020, setting up of the procedure for the direct grant awards, planned technical assistance to be implemented.

8.4 CROSS-BORDER INSTITUTION BUILDING CBIB+

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2011/022-964
Project title:	Cross-border Institution Building – CBIB+
EU contribution:	EUR 2.4 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Service contract with GIZ International Services (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH)
Contract reference:	CN 2012/309-846
Duration of activities :	21/12/2012 – 30/11/2015
Links:	www.cbibplus.eu
Contact:	Dario Di Benedetto, dario.di-benedetto@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE.

This project is focused on the harmonisation but as well on the exchange and transfer of good practice in the implementation of the IPA component II 'Cross-border cooperation'. The goal is to generate and share knowledge among stakeholders contributing to the improvement of procedures and tools that would achieve high quality of programme implementation.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- organisation of the 3rd Regional CBC Consultative Forum in Durrës (25 and 26 June), where the following issues were discussed: the bilateral arrangements (BA) on IPA II CBC programme implementation between the participating countries under indirect mode, the terms of reference (ToR) and negotiation procedure for the direct award of a service contract to the OSs for carrying out the technical assistance (TA) priority of the CBC programmes, a standard application package for the future calls for proposals under the IPA II CBC and the state-of-play with entrustment of budget implementation tasks and setting the indirect management mode in the WB region;
- organisation of the 4th project Steering Committee meeting on 25 June 2015 in Durrës (back-to back with the 3rd CBC Forum) where the activities undertaken in the period spanning from 1 January 2015 to 25 June 2015, as well as the activities planned to be implemented until the end of the project's period of implementation were presented;
- supervision and moderation of three technical working groups (TWG), whose discussions are taking place through an on-line platform at the website of the project, on a draft text of the BA, a model set of ToR for contracting the TA thematic priority of IPA II CBC programmes and a model application package for IPA II CBC programmes. The first two TWGs (on BA and TA ToR) successfully finalised a written proposal;

- delivery of 10 capacity building sessions: 6 presentations and discussion workshops on ‘the workload analysis of the Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS) under IPA & IPA II’ for Operating Structures (CBC Bodies and where applicable national Contracting Authorities); 2 two-day training events on ‘procurement under CBC grants’ in Skopje for grantees of MK-AL and MK-XK programme (68 participants); on-the-job training on budget clearing and organisation of capacity building events for grant beneficiaries (participants: 4 staff of the JTS and antenna offices of the MNE-XK programme); a training event on the role of the JTS in the implementation of the CBC programme – highlights (participants: 6 staffers of the JTSs and antennae offices of the MNE-XK and AL-XK programmes);
- planning for drafting a CBC programme document between Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- logistical and technical support provided in the organisation of a visibility event in Struga (April): preparation of the concept, moderation of three discussion groups and presentation of an assessment on lessons learned from the implementation of projects contracted under the MK-AL programme;
- further update of the project website www.cbibplus.eu and social media accounts (Facebook page), distribution of project visibility items, including the design of a new project newsletter and the circulation of regular monthly flash-news.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

- CBC programme/project implementation issues regionally discussed under an agreed institutional framework for sharing of experience and lessons learnt amongst stakeholders;
- based on the proceedings of TWGs, regional agreement successfully reached on the standard texts of a BA and the ToR for contracting the TA priority under the IPA II CBC programmes;
- The Work Load Analysis methodology for the JTSs under the IPA 2007-13 and IPA II CBC 2014-20, under different management modes, finalised;
- the specific BA text for two programmes developed (RS-BIH and MNE-AL);
- a summary of the implementation of TA grant contracts for the IPA CBC programmes prepared;
- Draft rules of procedures (RoP) for the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) of the IPA II CBC programme MK-AL prepared;

- the Operating Structures (CBC Bodies and where applicable national Contracting Authorities) familiarised with the methodology to manage and estimated the workload of the JTS;
- enhanced technical capacity of the staff from the JTSs MN-XK and AL-XK in assisting for the administration of CBC programmes;
- beneficiaries from different CBC programmes are more confident in meeting the management requirements of EU-funded grant contracts;
- a set of templates and checklists that can serve as a toolkit in conducting procurement procedures and implementing CBC projects prepared;
- following the collection of answers to a questionnaire circulated amongst the grantees under the MK-AL programme, a report stressing recommendations and lessons learned from the implementation of the 3 calls under the programme drafted;
- a report summarising the actions taken and the events organised during the programming process of all 8 IPA II CBC programmes (June 2013 – August 2014) prepared;
- the 3rd issue of the project newsletter compiled, printed and distributed;
- continuous attention to information and publicity of the EU-funded CBC intra-WB programmes.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- possible organisation of the 4th CBC Regional Consultative Forum as well as several meetings or e-forums of a TWG (application package);
- delivery of several training modules: 6 workshops on ‘service contracts’ for managing the TA priority funds under IPA II CBC programmes (September and October); 2 training sessions on ‘practical management of CBC projects’ for grantees under MK-XK and GR-MK programmes (September); 2 training events on ‘reporting under CBC grants’ for grantees of MK-XK and GR-MK programmes (October) and 1 training event on ‘procurement under CBC projects’ for grantees of GR-MK programmes (November);
- provision of hands-on support for the drafting of the O&M for the submission of the tender on the TA service contract, based on the request by the OSs in the region;
- provision of support for the preparation of the programming document under the new CBC programme Serbia – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (if the two governments agree to proceed with the opening of this programming border this year);

- performing a public opinion survey on different topics related to the impact and perception of the importance of CBC programmes, targeting specific stakeholders and the general public in at least one eligible area;
- respond to any other ad-hoc requests posed by the Beneficiaries;
- organisation of a staff exchange in Zagreb between the Operating Structure of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as visitors and the Implementing Agency of Croatia as hosts;
- the publication of the fourth issue of the 'Yellow&Blue' magazine;
- updating the information and communication means available to the project team;
- submission of the draft final report of the project.

8.5 MONITORING

Programme reference:	Support Measure – Monitoring Programme 2014/031-607
Project title:	Multi-country Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) - Western Balkans & Turkey
EU contribution:	EUR 3.48 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Service Contract with Particip GmbH
Contract reference:	2015/361-031
Duration of activities:	03/6/2015 – 02/06/2017
Contact :	Petra Schlueter, petra.schlueter@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The contract provides an external independent Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) service for national IPA programmes and the multi-beneficiary programmes in the Western Balkans region. The purpose of ROM is to support the results monitoring activities of programmes (including budget support) and projects by the Operational Managers in the EU Delegations and at EC Headquarters. The scope of ROM covers on-going and ex post ROM reviews and end-of-project results reviews, all performed in accordance with the ROM Handbook.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

A new contract was signed on 3 June 2015. The programme is in the inception phase. The main activities were: setting up the Core Team office in Brussels, updating the technical guidance for ROM experts for the new ROM methodology, introducing an upgraded quality control system, establishing initial contacts with the EU Delegations and with Operational Managers who work with the multi-beneficiary programmes, the assembly of a pool of non-key ROM sectoral experts and preparation of a ROM workplan up to 30 April 2016.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

The first ROM review missions are expected in September 2015. Approximately 30 ROM Review reports are expected to be completed by the end of 2015. The new ROM methodology focuses on projects at risk and allows more time for a deeper analysis of performance to be made.

8.6 FOSTERING REGIONAL COOPERATION

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

PURPOSE

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

The objective of the project is to strengthen the networking and cooperation among the public institutions and stakeholders, as well as with other relevant regional bodies in order to accelerate the EU accession process of the WB candidate and potential candidate countries in the field of agriculture and rural development.

ACTIVITIES

The project activities started on June 2nd, 2015 and will be implemented in a period of 24 months. The implementation of the project will be done by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-East Europe.

The project will involve participation of policymakers in the dialogue process, together with major stakeholders including representatives of local self-governments, civil society, and representatives from business community, NGOs and other civil society groups as well as, academics, experts, and will stimulate a culture of dialogue and discussion on various important agriculture and rural development policy issues and issues on economic development of rural cross-border areas.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The expected outputs within the project are:

- Joint documents on agriculture and rural development issues (statements, positions, declarations) of the participating Western Balkan countries prepared based on the political and policy discussions organized by the SWG;
- Quality project proposals for economic development of rural cross-border areas which are submitted on different Calls for project proposals;
- Baseline Analysis and Strategic Development Plans for “Neretva”, “Prokletije” and “Pcinja” cross-border regions;

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Agriculture Policy Forum 2015 in the period 13th -16th October, 2015;
- 9th Annual Working Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture from South-East European countries in the period 11th – 13th November, 2015;
- Stakeholder Group Meetings in “Drina-Tara”, “Drina-Sava”, “Prespa” and “Sharra” cross-border region end of October and beginning of November;
- Support to stakeholders in the process of preparation of project proposals for different Calls for proposals (e.g. 3rd C-B-C Call for Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina; 3rd C-B-C Call for Serbia and Montenegro, IPRAD Call in Macedonia);
- Support to organization of people-to-people actions (e.g. Wine and Cheese Festival in Ohrid, Macedonia; Raspberry Day in Prizren, Kosovo*; Pljevlja Cheese Day in Pljevlja, Montenegro, Grape Festival in Ilok, Croatia etc.);

Finalization of methodology and start-up of the assessment of the situation and development potentials of “Neretva”, “Prokletije” and “Pcinja” cross-border regions.

8.7 AREA BASED DEVELOPMENT

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Preparation for the implementation of the Area Based Development (ABD) Approach in the Western Balkans – 2nd phase
EU contribution:	EUR 0.9 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	Grant Contract with the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-East Europe
Contract reference:	CN 2013/336-472
Duration of activities :	01/02/2014 – 30/04/2015
Links:	http://www.seerural.org/
Contact :	Dario Di Benedetto, Dario.di-Benedetto@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The overall objective of the second phase of the project is to further work on building capacities and structures within the SWG and “Drina-Tara”, “Drina-Sava”, “Prespa” and “Sharra” cross-border regions in order to be able to implement the forthcoming programmes related to regional and territorial cooperation.

The project objective is also to test the ABD in practice with the implementation of an integrated economic development approach in “Drina-Tara” and “Drina-Sava” cross-border regions.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – APRIL 2015)

The project activities in the period January-April 2015 were directed to finalization of fifteen month project.

Stakeholder activities have been ongoing, with organization of a Stakeholder Group meetings in each of the four cross-border areas in the reporting period.

With implementation of a set of capacity building activities, awareness and capacities of the members of the Stakeholders Groups (SHG) in all four target regions are strengthened in relation to creation of business networks and partnerships among value chain actors. The Project Management Units for each cross-border region were operational were responsible for coordination of the activities in the regions.

Implementation of pilot grant scheme “Enhancing competitiveness with small grants for renewal of production facilities and purchase of equipment for introducing new production processes to improve or innovate products” successfully was implemented in pilot cross-

border regions of “Drina-Tara” and “Drina-Sava”. In total twenty eight partners in the value chains of typical and traditional artisan food production and adventure tourism strengthened their networks and business cooperation.

People-to-people actions as a tool for strengthening networking, cooperation, promotion of the regions and their cultural, traditional, natural heritage and economic potential were implemented in all four target areas.

Project Steering Committee Meeting for presentation of the results and discussion of the way forward was organized in Brussels in April 2015.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – APRIL 2015)

- SWG Operational Manuals on Financial Management, Contracting and Procurement adopted by SWG Assembly;
- Unique logos for promotion of “Drina-Tara” and “Drina-Sava” products and services are developed;
- Proposal for integrated economic development of “Prespa” and “Sharra” cross-border regions is developed;
- Fund –raising strategy for Area Based Development in Western Balkan countries prepared;
- Training material on integrated economic development prepared in cooperation with FAO;
- In total nine projects which involve 28 partners were successfully implemented and the total amount for financing of small grants within the action is EUR 143.959.
- Forty one people to people actions in the reporting period with participation of more than 20.000 international participants and more than 100.000 visitors were supported in the reporting period.
- Set of promotional material for each of the target areas are designed, printed and distributed. The set of promotional material consist: general informative and promotional brochure for the region, set of specific promotional leaflets: accommodation and dining facilities, tourist attractions, culture tourism, gastronomy, adventure tourism routes etc.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Continuation of activities related to implementation of ABDA in WB cross-border regions;
- Finalization of proposal for the next phase on “Fostering regional cooperation and balanced territorial development of Western Balkan countries in the process towards EU integration - Support to the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South-East Europe”;
- Continuation of activities related to pillar assessment and accreditation of SWG;
- Continuation of fund-raising activities.

8.8 VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013, IPA 2013/024-091
Project title:	Enhancing the regional dimension of the pre-accession assistance by the improved visibility of IPA Multi-country projects
EU contribution:	EUR 0.357 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Type of contract:	Specific Contract under Framework Contract with JCP Srl
Contract reference:	CN 2014/350-489
Duration of activities:	01/12/2013 – 20/11/2016
Contact:	Agnieszka.IWANOWSKA-BIEL@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The global objective is to increase the visibility of the IPA MB Programme in the framework of overall IPA visibility, specifically of the communication campaigns ran by the Information and Communication unit of DG Enlargement for the visibility of EU pre-accession funds.

It will in particular focus on production of success stories, identification of synergies between programmes and projects, drafting communication guidelines and providing training seminars on its application, providing support and advice to staff on communication policy and events.

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

- extension of the initial phase of the project;
- reinforced second kick-off meeting aimed at the better understanding of the project's purpose and the preparation of the inception report.

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

There was a need for an extended inception phase of the project and closer cooperation involving the project team (Communication experts and the leading unit in charge of the regional cooperation in WBs and Turkey) and unit responsible for the communication. Combined efforts led to the revised methodology, finalisation and approval of the Inception Report and entering the second phase of the project implementation.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PLANNED FOR NEXT SEMESTER

- Communication expert's missions to Brussels and the Region aimed at elaboration of success stories, drafting communication guidelines and preparation of training seminars.
- Establishing cooperation with the EU Delegations and other stakeholders;
- Raising awareness among the project managers on the need to closely follow and share the visibility requirements with the project partners as well as on the readiness to share the results of the implemented projects.

Programme reference:	Multi-beneficiary Programme under IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2013 (IPA 2013/24-091)
Project title:	Provision of Technical Assistance on IT Interconnectivity Issues to candidates and potential candidates (extension)
EU contribution:	EUR 0.5 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans
Type of contract:	service contract to Lambard Management Consultants Ltd
Contract reference:	CN 2014/338-933
Duration of activities :	21/02/2014 – 20/08/2015
Contact :	Petra Schlüter, Petra.SCHLUETER@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The project provides specialised IT and management assistance to the customs and taxation administrations, in the framework of IT interconnectivity and interoperability. Under the supervision of Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union of the European Commission, the contractor provides coaching and training, as well as monitoring of the progress related to interconnectivity and interoperability on their road towards EU accession

ACTIVITIES (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

The Consultants have completed five monitoring missions. Six working sessions/workshops have been completed as well. .

OUTPUTS (JANUARY – JUNE 2015)

As an outcome of the workshop, the Customs administration in Serbia started to implement a discovery of Business processes and separately, requested the assistance for the creation of the road map towards EU accession. The Customs administration in Montenegro requested further support for the introduction of ITIL and Project management methodology. The implementation of the ITIL methodological approach started in both Customs and Tax administrations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In Kosovo, Tax and Customs administrations requested jointly the organisation of assistance in strategic support, support for the implementation of a management methodology (TEMPO), and of an IT methodology (ITIL). All these projects have been discussed with and approved by DG TAXUD. The Consultant issued a first draft the new IIS strategy for Customs and Tax administrations in enlargement countries. DG TAXUD is presently reviewing the document.

Programme reference:	Administrative and Technical Assistance Facility (ATA), IPA 2015/038-148
EU contribution:	EUR 3.452 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey: DG Enlargement and EU Delegations in the Western Balkans and Turkey
Programme reference:	Travel, Accommodation and Conference Facility (TAC), IPA 2015
EU contribution:	EUR 0.25 million
Beneficiary region:	Western Balkans and Turkey
Beneficiary Institutions:	European Commission services
Duration of activities :	1 year
Contact :	Nadejda Mecheva, Nadejda.mecheva@ec.europa.eu

PURPOSE

The ATA provides short-term technical assistance and studies to support the preparation and implementation of activities such as programming, monitoring, visibility, assessment, tender evaluations and general project supervision. ATA is primarily used by Delegations and to some extent by HQ.

The Travel, Accommodation and Conference (TAC) Facility is used to finance the logistical and venue costs of conferences in connection with enlargement and the pre-accession strategy organised by the Commission both in the EU and in beneficiary countries.

TAC funds cover the travel and accommodation costs of beneficiary participants at these conferences as well as the relevant costs for organisation of the meetings apart from interpreting services.

For an overview of who does what in DG NEAR please view this link:

<https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/dg/near/whoweare/Documents/NEAR-org-chart.pdf>

For an overview on multi-country financial assistance:

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
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
CN	Contract
CO	Coordination Office
CoE	Council of Europe
CoP	Community of Practice
CSF	Civil Society Facility
CSF	Classical Swine Fever
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Country strategy paper
CSR	Country Strategy Report
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officers

DG	Directorate General
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EAMLA	European Accreditation multilateral agreement
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EBU	European Broadcasting Union
EC	European Commission
ECAS	European Citizen Action Service
ECENA	Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network for Accession
ECS	Energy Community Secretariat
ECT(S)	European credit transfer (System)
EDIF	Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility
EE(FF)	Energy Efficiency Finance Facility
EEA	European Economic Area
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EETF	Energy Efficiency Task Force
EFSE	European Fund for Southeast Europe
EGP	Enterprise Growth Programme
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EIF	European Investment Fund
EJN	European Judicial Network
ELARG	Directorate General Enlargement
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
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
GB	Governing board
GF	Guarantee Facility
GGF	Green for Growth Fund
GHG	Green House Gases
GIS	Geo Information System
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEREs	Higher Education Reform Experts
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HLC	Humanitarian Law Centre
HOT	Hands-on training
HRM	Human resource Management
IACS	Integrated Administration and Control System
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IBM	Integrated Border Management
IC	Investment Committee
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia
IFC	International Finance Cooperation
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFICO	International Financial Institution Coordination Office
ILECU	International Law Enforcement Coordination Units
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPF	Infrastructure Projects Facility
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
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
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
SEECCEL	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
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
