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ANNEX

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the Individual Measure to Strengthen Management Systems of Irregular Migration and Fight Against Organised Crime in the Western Balkans for 2024

Action Document

MEASURE

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and annual and multiannual action plans and measures in the sense of Article 9 of IPA III Regulation and Article 23(3) of NDICI - Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

Title	Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the Individual Measure to Strengthen Management Systems of Irregular Migration and Fight Against Organised Crime in the Western Balkans for 2024
OPSYS	OPSYS business reference: ACT-62844
ABAC	ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1579247
Basic Act	Financed under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)
Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)	No
EIP Flagship	No
Team Europe	No
Beneficiary(y)/(ies) of the action	The action shall be carried out in the Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Republic of Serbia)
Programming document	IPA III Programming Framework ¹
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
Window and thematic priority	Window 1: Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy Thematic priority 4: Migration and Border Management Thematic Priority 3: Fight against Organised Crime/Security

¹ Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)8914 of 10 December 2021 on the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) Programming Framework for the period 2021-2027.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and, where appropriate, targets:			
DAC code(s)	15190 – Facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility 15210 - Security system management and reform			
Main Delivery Channel	Indirect management with the entities to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1 Direct management through grants			
Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity			
Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective
EIP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIP Flagship		YES <input type="checkbox"/>		NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tags:		YES		NO
Transport		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Energy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Environment and climate resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Digital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Human Development (incl. human capital and youth)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Health resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Migration and mobility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Agriculture, food security and rural development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rule of law, governance and Public Administration reform	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Digitalisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES	NO	
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES	NO	
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Migration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduction of Inequalities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUDGET INFORMATION

Amounts concerned	<p>Budget line: 15.020101.01</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 29 500 000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 29 500 000</p> <p>Budget line: 15.020101.03</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 17 500 000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 17 500 000</p>
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	Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 47 000 00
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	
Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)	Indirect management with the entities to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1 Direct management through grants
Final date for concluding contribution / delegation agreements, procurement and grant contracts.	At the latest by 31 December 2025
Indicative operational implementation period	72 months following the adoption of the Financing Decision

1.2. Summary of the Action

Supporting the capacities of the Western Balkans to effectively manage migration by pursuing a comprehensive approach, including border management, reducing cross-border crime and tackling irregular migration are key priorities. The geographical location of the region vis-à-vis the European Union (EU), as well as the region's European perspective are particularly relevant in this respect. In support of the 2023 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy², the EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans³ and in line with the IPA III Programming Framework⁴, this Action aims to contribute to strengthening the capacities of the Western Balkan beneficiaries to combat irregular migration while respecting international human rights standards and to improve border management systems in line with EU standards.

This Action is designed to respond to the priority needs of the Western Balkan beneficiaries with regards to border management and management of irregular migration. It is based on the expressed needs of the countries involved according to the current situation and the priorities arising. Proposed support will dovetail with both ongoing and planned IPA funded activities at both the bilateral and regional levels. The Action should be seen as in tandem with the regional action adopted in May 2024⁵, which aims at strengthening institutional systems and capacities to lead effective and rights-based return management operations, strengthen cooperation on return, readmission and reintegration, including with key Countries of Origin (CoO) and increase access of migrants to return and reintegration assistance and information before and after return.

The Action is an important component within the wider enlargement process and EU accession negotiations under Chapter 24 of the EU *acquis* to support the development of effective border management systems and migration management capacities. It will contribute to the enhancement of EU migration management

² COM(2023) 690 final

³ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/eu-action-plan-western-balkans_en

⁴ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-01/C_2021_8914_F1_ANNEX_EN_V5_P1_1462290.PDF

⁵ C(2024)3105 final

assistance in line with the Pact on Migration and Asylum⁶, the Western Balkans Action Plan and the EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration. The Pact recognises the importance of the Western Balkans for the EU's migration and asylum policy and that the cooperation with the region is already long-standing, tailor-made and comprehensive. The Action will align with EU and international standards on migration and border management and will promote respect of the rule of law and fundamental rights of migrants. The measure is to complement the Frontex activities under the existing status agreements [MNE, MK, SRB] (and those under negotiation [BiH + the new Status Agreement with SRB]). As the individual measure covers only bilateral actions, donor co-ordination will be carried out between EUDELS and national authorities.

The part of the Action concerning Montenegro consists in support to the authorities for the destruction (shredding) of tobacco products that have been seized in 2022 and that are stored in the Port of Bar. The destruction of the cigarettes is a critical measure in the fight against smuggling of illicit goods, which will have a positive impact on the overall border management and fight against organised crime in Montenegro.

1.3 Beneficiaries of the Action

The Action shall be carried out in the following Western Balkans partners: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

Rule of law is a key benchmark against which progress of Western Balkan partners on their European path is assessed. Organised crime, migration management, asylum and border management are all important elements of the broader rule of law area, covered by Chapter 24 of the EU *acquis*. The IPA III Programming Framework Window 1 - Thematic Priority 4 - Migration and border management recognises the importance of enhancing IPA III beneficiaries' capacities in migration management, asylum and border management. As such, these are central to the EU's engagement with the Western Balkans.

The management of mixed migratory movements in line with international obligations remains one of the key challenges for the Western Balkans. The challenges are inherently shaped by the region's geographical position along key migratory routes to the EU and its European perspective. Alongside an overall increase in irregular migratory flows, changing patterns in the Western Balkan routes demand constant vigilance as regards the illegal activity of networks involved in migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. There is progress on migration management capacities in the Western Balkans region. The implementation of the EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans presented by the Commission in December 2022 to address the then increasing flows of irregular arrivals to the EU via the Western Balkan route has brought first results with a decrease of migratory pressure on the Western Balkans route in 2023, confirmed and even accelerated since the beginning of 2024, thanks in particular to an increased political, financial and operational engagement between the EU and the Western Balkan partners.

Moreover, the interdependence between the EU and the Western Balkan partners necessitates particularly close cooperation and co-ordination within the region and with the EU to ensure coherent approaches for their mutual benefit. In this context, there is a continued need to further align institutional set-ups, legislation and policies in the Western Balkans with the EU and to strengthen systems and capacities to allow effective management of migration while ensuring international protection standards and human rights.

The comprehensive approach to migration, outlined in the Pact on Migration and Asylum adopted by the EU in 2024, builds on and amends previous reform proposals relating to migration, offering a comprehensive

⁶ COM(2020) 609 final

approach that aims at strengthening and integrating key EU policies on migration, asylum, border management and integration. It is based on four pillars: secure external borders; fast and efficient procedures; effective system of solidarity and responsibility; and embedding migration in international partnerships that frames cooperation on migration with third countries as an integral part of the EU's overall relations and focuses on building partnerships with third countries in preventing irregular departures, fighting migrant smuggling, promoting legal pathways and fostering better cooperation on readmission.

This is supported by the EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans which underlines the EU commitment to strengthen the operational capacities of the Western Balkan partners in terms of border management, asylum procedures and reception, fight against migrant smuggling, readmission cooperation and returns as well as visa policy alignment. Reinforcing EU engagement on security and migration in the Western Balkans is emphasised as a priority in the Council conclusions on enhancing cooperation with Western Balkans partners in the field of migration of 9 February 2023⁷.

The Action will build on and complement bilateral and regional IPA assistance, in particular the ongoing IPA 2021 “EU regional support to protection-sensitive migration management systems in the Western Balkans” - PHASE III (2022-2025) and the “Individual Measure to Strengthen Return Management Systems in the Western Balkans”. The latter was adopted by the European Commission in May 2024 and amounts to EUR 13 million. The Action will also complement the activities of Frontex in the region, on the basis of status agreements and working arrangements with these partner countries. Other programmes the Action will seek complementarity with are the ongoing regional programmes “EU Regional Support to Strengthen Border Security Capacities in the Western Balkans” and “EU support to strengthen the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings in the Western Balkans” (EU4FAST).

2.2. Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Migration Response partners helped some 54,000 beneficiaries (of whom 93% were men – and 79% were single men, while 7% women) in 2023 in the Temporary Reception Centres (TRC) alone, and some 13,000 outside the TRCs through mobile teams. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and partners assisted some 6,000 children on the move (Boys 86%, Girls 14%), including 4,200 unaccompanied and separated children (Boys 99%, Girls 1%). This included the distribution of around 970,000 meals and over 435,000 non-food items. IOM supported the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) to maintain an optimal shelter and assistance capacity for up to 3,000 beneficiaries, and a maximum capacity of just over 4,500 in case of need. In 2023, the highest daily occupancy rate in TRCs was 3,043 beneficiaries. The year was also marked by rapid movement and a high turnover rate, with migrants spending an average of 8 days in TRCs, compared to 12 days in 2022 and 61 days in 2021. This change in trends led to a higher pressure on certain sectors and services in the TRCs, especially registration, medical screenings, as well as food and non-food items stocks and distribution.

During the first three months of 2024, 6,154 migrants were registered in the TRCs, a 17 per cent increase compared to arrivals in the same period in 2023. The highest daily occupancy this year so far was 3,405 beneficiaries. Based on the trend so far this year, IOM estimates that the number of arrivals in 2024 could exceed those of 2023. The BiH route has become the main route in the WB. With continued pressures on reception systems and capacities of BiH, authorities will need support to effectively address mixed movements and provide direct assistance to people on the move, while the transition to a State-owned migration response continues to advance. On 30 March 2023, the BiH Council of Ministers (CoM) adopted the Action Plan accompanying the Migration and Asylum Strategy 2021-2025, the Law on Amendments to the Law on

⁷ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/02/09/european-council-conclusions-9-february-2023/>

Foreigners has been adopted and entered into the force in September 2023. On 7 May, the CoM adopted “Information on the development of the transition plan in managing migration and taking over Temporary Reception Centres from the International Organisations”, The Ministry of Security has prepared the by-law, “Book of Rules on the Temporary Reception Centres for Accommodation of Aliens” necessary for the opening of the TRC Lipa Detention Unit. Rulebook is pending approval by the Council of Ministers).

The current proposal recommends keeping reception capacities to a contingency of 3,000 beneficiaries and to have this figure decrease over time as to reduce accommodation capacities only for cases that do not foresee an immediate solution (such as returns, asylum, other forms of humanitarian protection) and to put a greater emphasis, in close co-operation with the authorities, on processing cases and ensure solutions identified in BiH and beyond. Conditionality on access and stay in reception facilities should also be introduced to discourage extended stays and prioritise stays to the most vulnerable applicants. In addition, the work of mobile teams outside of the centres should be enhanced to ensure all those who are in a vulnerable situation can swiftly access shelter and basic services.

North Macedonia is located at one of the main sub-routes of the Western Balkans route for irregular border crossings and smuggling of migrants coming from Middle East and Africa towards the European Union Member States. The number of irregular arrivals in 2023 in North Macedonia was 13,954 persons, mostly from Syria, Morocco, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Moreover, 111 cases of migrants smuggling were detected in 2023, which represents a 2% increase compared to 2022. People in irregular movement remained targets of organised criminal groups engaged in people smuggling, that often extort money and abuse them in various ways. The country needs support in the management of the migration flows, primarily strengthening the institutional and technical capacities for detection of smuggling of migrants, trafficking in human beings and other forms of cross border crime, as well as enhancement of the institutional capacities and the border management infrastructure in line with EU standards. Moreover, there is a need to further strengthen the protection system for the most vulnerable categories of migrants in line with EU standards, as well as the return options to the countries of origin for the migrants who are not in need of international protection.

The action will boost the reforms towards EU standards by further alignment of the migration legislation, protection system, and border management infrastructure. The Action will support the country in upgrading its technical and institutional capacities to prevent, investigate and detect trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, and other forms of cross border crime. The action is tailored through a strong consideration of the activities foreseen in the regional anti-smuggling programme, as well as through an in-depth assessment of the specific country gaps and needs. It builds upon the previous EU funded projects that supported strengthening of the response capacity to manage migration flows in North Macedonia and aims to further enhance the capacities of the country in the area of humanitarian border management, including poly-criminal modus operandi which is not provided under the regional anti-smuggling action. It will contribute towards the implementation of the main strategic goals set in the key policy documents of North Macedonia in the area of migration management, European integrated border management, trafficking in human beings, and irregular migration, as well as the EU strategic approaches in the area of migration and border management.

Serbia is at the core of the so-called Balkan route utilised by criminal groups for illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons and explosives, hazardous chemical and biological substances goods, as well as other cross-border crimes posing the risk for national and international security. Since 2015 this route has become one of the main migratory paths into Europe.

Serbia continues to make substantial efforts contributing to the management of the mixed migration flows towards the EU and to implement the EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans. Supported by the EU, Serbia efforts focus on meeting the essential reception and protection needs of migrants passing through or remaining on its territory. Moreover, Serbia is gradually increasing border management capacities in order to prevent illegal border crossing, improve effectiveness of border surveillance with the view to facilitate early identification of vulnerable groups, reduce cross-border crimes and illegal movements, including the activities of smuggling groups. The Action will support Serbian institutions in addressing reception and border management needs identified through extensive dialogue with Authorities, starting from the accommodation, medical assistance and social

protection for migrants and refugees in reception and asylum centres, and institutions for accommodation of unaccompanied minors (UAM), to capacities for enhanced border control and surveillance. The action will support Serbia to strengthen the domestic operational capacities of law enforcement authorities to effectively combat smuggling of migrants and to identify, investigate and dismantle smugglers and smuggling networks.

Important entry points of the irregular migration flow in Serbia are at the borders with North Macedonia and Bulgaria. When irregular migrants are intercepted either at the border or within the territory, they are accommodated in reception centres, which are located throughout the country. In the case that some beneficiaries cannot be accommodated in regular centres (disabled persons dependent in daily activities, victims of SGBV, very young UAMs etc.), they can be accommodated in social protection institutions for accommodation.

In 2022, the Ministry of Interior reported that 12 852 irregular migrants had been apprehended within Serbia, the majority of which originated from Afghanistan and Syria. In 2023, a total of 43 475 irregular border crossings were prevented, 51 017 migrants were prevented from entering at the border and 317 criminal complaints against 417 persons for the crime of illegal border crossing and migrant smuggling were filed by police officers.

Following several incidents of violent armed conflicts between gangs of smugglers in 2023, the Serbian police launched a large-scale operation which resulted in a substantial number of apprehensions and the consequent reduction of irregular movements and border crossing towards Hungary. The intensified control continued in 2024. In order to maintain an adequate level of monitoring over its territory and borders, Serbia should continue to strengthen its human, financial and technical capacities in the area of border control, border surveillance (for green and blue borders), and infrastructure at border crossing points, in accordance with the priorities set in the Government Strategy for European Integrated Border Management 2022-2027 and its Action Plan. Furthermore, support is required to strengthen Serbia's capacities to effectively crack down on smuggling networks and to detect and intercept irregular migrants at borders, identify victims of smuggling or trafficking as well as criminals engaging in such activities.

Serbia accommodates substantial numbers of third-country nationals. According to the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) which is in charge of the reception and asylum centres, the total number of migrants who passed through the asylum and reception centres in Serbia during 2023 was 108 828, and during the first quarter of 2024 an average of 1000 migrants were hosted every day in reception centres. The length of the average stay continued to go down compared to previous years and corresponds to less than one week. Currently, all residents of the reception and asylum centres have access to health care, including mandatory screening during admission. Specialised protection services such as child-friendly spaces and mother-baby corners are provided where needed. The SCRM, established standards in the field of social support, non-formal education, educational support and legal assistance for all service providers. Efforts of all institutions involved in migration management (Ministry of Interior, SCRM, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education) have contributed to improve the reception system. However, also due to the unpredictable nature of the migration flows, Serbia continues to lack adequate and sustainable resources to host irregular migrants and to sustain the adequate level/standards of protection, social, educational and health services provided to the migrant population.

With respect to the action in **Montenegro**, the Port of Bar in Montenegro has reportedly been the main hub for tobacco and drugs smuggling in Montenegro. The Free Zone in the Port area has been exempted from customs duties and inspections. A 2019 report from the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime stated that the port was the main hotspot in Montenegro for smuggling so-called "cheap white" cigarettes. Organised crime groups, with indicated support of Montenegro's prior governments and in collusion with the customs office, have been using the Free Zone as an intermediate storage for tobacco products imported from across the globe before being smuggled to black markets across Europe.

In several large-scale police and customs operations in recent years, Montenegro has seized several hundreds of tons of smuggled cigarettes in the port of Bar. In 2021, Montenegro announced the start of a legal process

to prohibit the storage of tobacco products in Bar as part of measures to prevent tobacco and cigarette smuggling. This process culminated in May 2022, when Montenegro seized up to 1.45 billion cigarettes stored at the port. While this is an undoubted success of law enforcement agencies, it has posed logistical problems as this huge number of smuggled cigarettes needs to be disposed of.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action

The action will mainly target relevant migration and border management authorities in the Western Balkans. The ultimate target group of the action are migrants who do not have specific needs requiring temporary protection.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, migration management is the competency of the state. The following ministries, administrative organisations and bodies have responsibilities directly related to migration management: BiH Ministry of Security, BiH Border Police, Service for Foreigner's Affairs, State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), Intelligence and Security Agency (OSA), BiH Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, BiH Ministry of Foreigner Affairs, BiH Ministry of Justice, BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, Directorate for European Integration, Court of BiH, BiH Constitutional Court, RS Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Administration and local self governance, Federation BiH Ministry of Interior, Cantonal Ministries of Interior, Republic Secretariat for Displaced Persons and Migration of the Republika Srpska. The main stakeholders in the area of social protection of the migrant population are Centres for Social Welfare at the municipal level. The main stakeholders in the area of health provision are Entity Ministries of Health, Cantonal Ministries of Health, various health care institutions comprising the public health care system and primary, secondary and tertiary level and private health care providers. The main stakeholders in the area of education are cantonal ministries of educational and local government.

Civil society and international organisations are also stakeholders involved in the area of migration management in BiH. The Ministry of Security has to take steps to improve coordination of the assistance provided by civil society and international organisations. Civil society organisations are also stakeholders involved in the area of migration management.

The responsibilities in the area of migration management in **Serbia** are divided among several state authorities and levels. The main actors involved are: the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the Commissariat for refugees and migration (SCRM), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MoLEVSA), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) and the Ministry of Health (MoH). The main stakeholders in social protection of the migrant population are: the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs competent for social policy, employment and social policy of social inclusion of vulnerable groups; the Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography assigned for protection of family and children, the Centre for social work – guardianship authority and main social protection institution, centres for accommodation of UASC (under MoLEVSA), the Centre for Human Trafficking Victims' Protection, Republic Institute for Social Protection and others.

The primary direct beneficiaries of the action in **North Macedonia** are border management authorities of North Macedonia; the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Department for Border Affairs and Migration (i.e. Border Police) and the National Coordination Centre for Border Management (NCCBM). The Ministry of Interior (MoI) is the main policy maker in the home affairs sector, also responsible for the coordination and supervision of implementation and reporting of the sector reforms. The Department for Border Affairs and Migration, within the Ministry of Interior, is the main responsible department of the national border control officers. Other relevant entities include the Unit for Organised Crime Intelligence and data analysis and (OKRA), National Unit for Suppression of Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings (Task Force), Unit for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Migrant Smuggling (UCTHBMS). The National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Irregular Migration (NCCBM) is a body of the

Government of North Macedonia in charge of coordination and cooperation with the border institutions and authorities. In the area of combating organised crime in addition to the law enforcement, the direct beneficiaries will be the members of the judiciary and the representatives of the social protection system. The main stakeholders in the area of social protection of the migrant population are the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth and the Centres for Social Work at the municipal level. The main stakeholders in the area of health are the Ministry of Health, Institute for Public Health and the public health care institutions at primary, secondary and tertiary level.

Main stakeholders for the action in **Montenegro** are the Customs Administration, law enforcement bodies, the judiciary, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Finance.

2.3. Lessons Learned

The Action foresees reinforced support to border management as well as the bodies managing reception centres for migrants in Serbia and BiH in addition to ongoing EU-funded projects in the region. It is therefore important to consider lessons learned from ongoing and previous engagements. The main lessons learned which are reflected in the design of the action and its specific pillars include:

- Built-in coordination and consultations with EU Delegations, line DGs and relevant JHA-linked EU agencies.
- Clearly defined and agreed methodology to ensure more efficient implementation, also relying on findings of evaluations and Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reports where available.
- Consideration of existing support and actions, avoiding duplications and ensuring complementarities, ensure sustainability for beneficiaries and policy coherence across actions and actors and ensure local ownership. Continuous coordination will take place to ensure complementarity with future support⁸.

⁸**Serbia:** the EUD co-chairs (jointly with MoI and SCRM) monthly coordination meetings with relevant Beneficiary Institutions (MEI, MoI, SCRM, MoLEVSA, MoESTD, MoH) as well as implementing partners with the aim to share information on progress and address bottlenecks. Coordination meetings in the area of Home Affairs organised twice a year by the Ministry of European Integration are co-chaired by the EUD. The aim is to inform donors about the ongoing and planned assistance in the area of migration and border management, reduce the risk of duplication, and ensure synergies and complementarity. **North Macedonia:** Continuous coordination will take place with the Cabinet of the Minister of Interior, Department for European Union and International Co-operation in the Ministry of Interior and the Border Police to ensure complementarity with future support. This ongoing effort will involve regular meetings, updates, and collaborative planning sessions. By maintaining open lines of communication and fostering a spirit of cooperation, the strategies and resources will be aligned effectively. This will be also achieved through meticulous planning, monitoring, and coordination processes. The Action progress will be regularly assessed and necessary adjustments will be made to stay aligned with the set goals and priorities. **BiH:** The EUD in Sarajevo was in the lead of the migration donor coordination at Ambassador level since the beginning of the migration crisis in BiH in 2018. Since the beginning of 2024, the EUD started donor coordination meetings with EU MS and EFTA states to share information of all on-going and planned projects, initiatives. etc. Information is shared with all those interested and the EUD is actively seeking information from the BIH government, all donors and their implementing partners. There is active participation in the preparation and follow up of all EU-funded projects in the area of migration, asylum, IBM. The EUD ensures through direct communication with the final beneficiary, donors and implementing partners that we are not double funding same activities. The EU is the key donor in funding running and staffing costs of temporary reception centers what is the key objective of this AD. There are some small sporadic isolated donor contributions by single MS or organisations to assist in the running of the reception centers, but nothing systematic. The EUD can ensure that there will be no overlaps in this area thanks to the good bilateral cooperation with all donors. Continuous cooperation will take place through donor coordination meetings with MS and EFTA states. The EUD is attending steering committees of all regional projects, sharing insights and providing opinions if any potential overlaps are noticed.

- Need to continue political engagement with the beneficiaries. This is particularly pertinent when working to ensure the sustainability of measures which will require a transfer of financing from the EU to partner country, in particular concerning reception centres for migrants.
- Ongoing and previous projects have revealed that the authorities' capacities in different beneficiaries vary significantly. Some require more support to enhance their skills in certain areas, while others have very limited capacities. The upcoming action will reflect this in its design to ensure tailored supported to all the beneficiaries.
- Ensure that EU funded support of the technical assistance is in line with up-to-date EU legislation and standards, in order not to confuse stakeholders and possible conflict with overall enlargement process.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Intervention Logic

The **Overall Objective (Impact)** of this action is to support the four countries concerned in effectively managing migration by pursuing a comprehensive approach, including border management, reducing cross-border crime and tackling irregular migration. It will at all times ensure alignment with EU standards and full respect of fundamental rights in line with international standards.

- **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

The Specific Objective(s) (Outcomes) of this action are to:

1. Strengthen capacities of authorities to lead the response to mixed migratory flows and to provide reception assistance in line with EU and international standards
2. Strengthen capacities of authorities in the area of European Integrated Border Management and surveillance in line with EU standards

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1)

- 1.1 Improved sectorial policies, strategies and coordination mechanisms on migration, in line with EU standards
- 1.2 Improved technical and operational capacities of responsible authorities and institutions to provide reception and protection-sensitive assistance in and out of reception facilities
- 1.3 Cost-efficient temporary reception structures available for migrants and asylum seekers, with an increased proportion of assistance delivered by a diversified range of State and local partners in and out of the reception facilities
- 1.4 Improved social cohesion in communities affected by mixed migratory flows to enable successful and mutually beneficial integration of migrants and refugees

contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2)

- 2.1 Improved technical and operational capacities for European Integrated Border Management

Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Advancing the **policy and legislation reforms** required for the transition (*for BiH, this would include, but would not be limited to, Strategy on Migration and Asylum for 2023-2026 and Action Plan; revising the TRCs management model from SFA to multi-partner; and necessary legal and administrative amendments*)
- Supporting the **workforce systemisation** and filling of the all relevant positions supporting State-led migration response
- Concluding the development of plan to improve **systemic solutions for unaccompanied children**
- Supporting the work of the **working group on the transition of the TRC management** in BiH through facilitation of meetings of the working group and providing them with the necessary facilitation and provision of expertise for decision making.

Activities related to Output 1.2.

- Providing **expertise**, on-the-job **training** and supply of **equipment**, integrated into a **sectoral approach to transfer of responsibilities**. For example, the transfer of interoperable information-management systems (i.e. database Smart Camp) and procedures for camp coordination and camp management sectors such as shelter, food, non-food items, water, sanitation and hygiene.
- **Capacity building** of staff working in the field of the **provision of protection services** for refugees and migrants
- **Trainings** on topics such as prevention of **gender-based violence** and violence **against children**, as well as the **prevention of trafficking** in children / human beings
- Preparing institutions for a possible future **budget support**

Activities related to Output 1.3:

- Supporting **running costs** and adequate **staffing**⁹ of temporary reception centres
- Providing **food assistance** for migrants hosted in the centres
- Provide **protection** and **MHPSS**, and maintain a pool of **translators, interpreters and cultural mediators**
- **Support to social welfare work** in the field (also ensuring adequate staffing for social welfare institutions)
- Support of the **identification** of migrants and the **processing** of asylum applications
- Monitoring **registration and processing** of migrants in view of solutions in and out of BiH
- Procurement of basic **non-food items, equipment and personal protective items**
- Ensuring temporary reception **infrastructure maintenance and upgrades**, including through delivery of the **works/refurbishments/equipment**
- **Providing resources for operational costs** for the **care of Unaccompanied Single Children (UASC)**

⁹ Ensure sustainability of the staff in the future is to request from all relevant agencies (Service for Foreigner Affairs, Sector for Asylum, Border Police etc.) **to amend their rulebooks on internal organisational systematisation** in order to be able to properly deal with increase migratory trends that have significantly change since early 2000 when all of the above mentioned agencies have been formed and when their rulebooks on internal organisations were written and adopted. All relevant agencies have to amend their rulebooks and request increase of staff and do internal re-organisation of staff in order to meet the challenges of today's world. The ruling parties will need to strengthen state level institutions by employing additional staff and allocating additional funds to ensure proper security of the BiH and therefore EU borders. The EUD will participate in all working groups regarding the transition process to ensure that transition plan reflects real needs steaming from the situation on the ground.

- Providing **professional assistance to teachers, educators**, professional associates and providing **small grants to schools providing education to migrants**
- Engagement of experts for the work of the project unit and necessary **medical and other staff** to work in the outpatient centres at the centres for migrant accommodation
- Supporting the local health systems in ensuring provision of health assistance (Local BiH Health authorities)
- Supply of **drugs and medication** (oral therapy on prescription, modern contraceptive, medical devices, supporting medical devices for disabled persons)
- **Sanitary and hygienic surveillance** of accommodation facilities

Activities related to Output 1.4:

- Continue to enhance **social cohesion**¹⁰ in host communities based on their priorities to enable successful and mutually beneficial integration of migrants and refugees

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Provision of **specialised equipment**¹¹ for border control and border surveillance in order to better perform official tasks related to securing the state border and in order to combat irregular migration
- Provision of **trainings** in usage of the specialised equipment

• NORTH MACEDONIA

The Specific Objective(s) (Outcomes) of this action are to:

1. Strengthen capacities in the area of border management and surveillance and combating organised crime in line with fundamental rights
2. Improve migrants' access to safe legal pathways and prospects as well as the sanctioning of smugglers.
3. Facilitate access to protection and assistance services for all migrants

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1)

1.1 Border and migration management institutions have enhanced capacity for border control, including check and surveillance, for countering migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and other types of transnational organised crime in full respect of the rule of law and fundamental rights.

The Action will improve further harmonisation with EU standards in border management and surveillance through modernisation of the border crossing points, the equipment and IT systems and mechanisms, to enable quicker passenger and vehicle control and flow, video surveillance and mobility, mobile surveillance systems, mechanisms and other. In addition, provision of preparatory and other support and equipment as well as

¹⁰ The Action will include the reconstruction and/or upgrades of infrastructure in communities hosting migrants. It will invite youth-led or social enterprises to become more actively engaged in delivering services in TRCs that aim to bring host communities in contact with residents in TRCs. This may, for example, include the organisation of sports events, art workshops, and small social enterprises servicing the Centers. The Action will also support migrant inclusion and integration in host communities by providing skills training and mentorship by local businesses, institutions and civil society organisations (CSOs).

¹¹ This includes the procurement of mobile travel document readers, mobile routers and other technical equipment, as well as the creation, installation, testing and use of the "Border Control" application. It also will support to equip the BiH Border Police with five mobile multi-sensor systems for medium- or long-range border surveillance.

infrastructure for increasing the integrated border management reaction capability is foreseen in detecting, preventing, and combating irregular migration and cross-border crime and contributing to the protection and saving the lives of migrants. Moreover, advisory and capacity building support will be provided to the Ministry of Interior and the national border police officers/border management officials on border management and migration, humanitarian border management, in line with EU and international standards. In the area of combating cross-border organised crime, the action will strengthen the capacities of the specialised law enforcement units and the border police, especially in the areas of improving mobility, training of personnel, and modernisation of equipment. In the area of combating cross-border organised crime, the Action will strengthen the capacities of the specialised law enforcement units and the border police, especially in the areas of improving mobility, training of personnel, and modernisation of equipment.

contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2)

2.1. Strengthened protection and referral system for the people on the move, as well as sanctioning of the smugglers in line with the EU and other international standards.

The Action will improve operational capacities to address migrant smuggling and trafficking and improve the alignment with EU and other international standards in these areas. Mechanisms for migrants' identification and referral will be put in place and implemented by trained, qualified, and competent authorities and other personnel, including child welfare authorities, in line with a multi-disciplinary, child-sensitive, and gender-responsive approach.

contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3)

3.1. All migrants receive adequate protection and access to accommodation and to social, educational and health services and vulnerable groups and unaccompanied children receive adequate assistance.

The Action will further improve the existing capacities, both material and human, to enable the institutional stakeholders to respond adequately to the migration influx and its complex nature. Social protection will be supported with upgrading of the IT and other technical needs to enhance their case management system in the migrants' protection area. The Action will support the functioning and maintenance of the temporary transit centres (TTCs), as well as provision of accommodation to migrants, social protection and services, food and non-food items, healthcare support, information and psycho-social counselling, as well as securing hygienic conditions in the TTCs through measures aiming at preventing the possible outbreak and spreading of infectious diseases will need to be continuously addressed.

Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Provision of support for further alignment of the national by-laws, strategies, and legislation in the migration management, border management and combating organized crime areas in line with the EU acquis and international standards.
- Provision of specialised support, equipment (both software and hardware) and mechanisms for border management, control and surveillance, such as upgrade the Passenger and Vehicle Control System (PVCS), establishment of API/PNR Systems, establishment of infrastructure for increasing the capability in detecting, preventing and combating irregular migration and cross-border crime through setting up and/or upgrading of IT technology and facilities (office equipment) to align with the European Coordination Centres. This support will contribute to further alignment of the national border management system with the EU standards at the level of a candidate country; IT and mobility systems and mechanisms for border control for the green and blue borders, including provision of

different surveillance range cameras, scanners, mobile surveillance systems; and other support needed for further modernisation of the Border Police and Border Police Crossing Points; etc.

- Furthermore, in the area of combating organised crime, the provision of specialised equipment, including software for tracking transnational organised crimes; hardware and other IT equipment; specialised vehicles for operations of the law enforcement units combating organised crime; and other support for improvement of the relevant Ministry of Interior departments, sectors, units, etc work in the area of combating organised crime.
- Finally, trainings on the use of the provided equipment will be organised; advisory and capacity building support will be provided to the police officers to detect organised crime at the borders; trainings on poly-criminal modus operandi; and other support for enhancement of the educational and training capacities of the relevant Ministry of Interior departments, sectors, units, etc.

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Training programmes for relevant stakeholders will be delivered to build their capacities in the area of protection and referral of migrants in line with the EU standards and addressing migrant smuggling and trafficking including improving the implementation of the UN Protocol on Smuggling of Migrants and UN Protocol against Trafficking in Persons. Moreover, law enforcement training centre technical and other capacities will be improved; as well as the national capacities for identification of migrants in need of protection; Standard Operating Procedures for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration will be updated; assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration outreach will be conducted, information sharing, counselling, strengthening of the case management and return and reintegration arrangements. Expert support will be provided for assessment of the existing national legislation regarding access to the legal and safe migration pathways and protection system of the vulnerable categories of migrants and prevention of unauthorised entry, transit and stay.

Activities related to Output 3.1:

- Provision of protection services for the migrants at the Transit Reception Centres, including psychosocial, medical assistance, educational activities, food and non-food items, maintenance and coverage of the running costs, as well as trainings, visits and equipment for upgrading of the case management system; and support for the Ukrainians in North Macedonia through the establishment of a Direct Assistance Fund in coordination with the Ministry of Social Policy, Demography and Youth.

- **SERBIA**

The Specific Objective(s) (Outcomes) of this action are to:

1. Strengthen capacities in the area of border management and surveillance;
2. Strengthen law enforcement capacities to combat migrant smuggling;
3. Ensure adequate and sufficient level of reception and protection services of migrant and refugee population.

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1)

- 1.1 enhanced surveillance capacities for green and blue borders (infrastructure and equipment)

contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2)

2.1 strengthened law enforcement capacities to identify, investigate and dismantle smugglers and smuggling networks

contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3)

3.1 Provision of reception and protection services (accommodation, healthcare, social protection and education) in accordance with EU and International standards

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that the enhancement of the capacities to regularly monitor green/blue borders will increase the country's control over illegal movements, including prevention of cross-border crimes, early identification of smugglers and vulnerable groups. Improved capacities will also be available to monitor, analyse, plan and consequently make a more efficient use of resources.

The provision of adequate reception and protection services to migrants and refugees will allow the migration management system to continue upholding the EU and international standards, and at the same time contribute to further develop inter-institutional coordination.

Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1

Output 1.1 will be delivered through an indirect management contribution agreement with an entrusted entity to be selected, who will procure and manage the following outputs:

- Refurbishment of the Police facility in Pirot-Dimitrovgrad to be utilised as a police station for the service of surveillance of green border with Bulgaria.
- Stable surveillance systems with dedicate monitoring centres to be installed along the green borders
- Special protective equipment for police units assigned to countering criminal activities of groups of smugglers of human beings
- Border surveillance equipment, including aerial, land and maritime equipment as relevant

Activities related to Output 2.1

Output 2.1 will be delivered through a direct grant to the Ministry of Interior in order to support:

- operational cost of law enforcement authorities to conduct police operations to identify, investigate and dismantle migrant smugglers and smuggling networks in key hotspots

Activities related to Output 3.1

Output 3.1 will be delivered through a direct grant to the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) in order to provide:

- support to the SCRM for the running costs of reception and asylum centres offering accommodation, food and non-food items for migrant and refugee population
- provision of healthcare services and medicines to migrants and refugees
- provision of social protection including accommodation and psychosocial support for minors and vulnerable groups
- contribute to support the inclusion efforts of educational institutions hosting migrants and refugees

- **MONTENEGRO**

After the inspection of the storage site in the Free Zone of the Port of Bar and of the list of seized tobacco products, the experts conclude that the estimated volume of the seized tobacco products amounts to approximately 12.600 cubic meters. The seized tobacco products are presently under the control of both the customs authority and the Special Prosecution Office on the storage site. The risk that the stored tobacco products might be misappropriated and transferred to the black market is nevertheless considerable, especially in case a final destruction solution is not found and implemented in the near future.

Through this action, the EU will finance only the destruction (shredding) of tobacco products in the Free Zone. This is the most important and visible action as the debris of the shredded tobacco products is unusable for (legal or illegal) commercial purposes. Indeed, the only security sensitive part of this option is the destruction (shredding) phase.

The Overall Objective(s)/(Impact(s)) of this action is to:

1. Improve Border Management and Fight against serious and organised crime

The Specific Objective(s) (Outcomes) of this action is to:

1. Fight against smuggling of illicit goods, cigarettes and tobacco products

The Output to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objective (Outcome) 1 is:

Cigarettes and tobacco products in the port of Bar are destroyed (shredded) and therefore unusable for illegal and criminal commercial purposes. This is contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1).

3.2. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

This action does not pursue specific objectives as regards the environment and climate change. Environmental protection and climate change shall however be actively mainstreamed throughout this Action. In procuring equipment, it will be ensured, as far as possible, that environmentally friendly equipment, that causes as little harm and discrepancy to the environment and nature where it will be used, will be prioritised. It will also be assured that new equipment is more energy efficient, produces less waste material and uses less resources to operate.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that gender equality is not a specific objective of the programme.

In the migration context, women and minors are particularly vulnerable. This will be fully considered throughout the support provided through this action. The strengthening of border and migration management, including identification and registration of migrants, returns and detention will improve capacities of relevant officials to detect and identify victims of trafficking in human beings and ensure these vulnerable groups, who are often women and minors, are referred to the relevant services and have their protection needs met.

Throughout the implementation of the action, equal participation of women will be prioritised, and gender perspectives will be integrated as a cross-cutting priority. The action will work with partners to ensure a

balanced representation of women and men among action beneficiaries to the greatest extent possible (e.g. the action will not propose or accept single-gender workshops, panels, etc.). At project levels, gender specific indicators will be developed, and all quantitative project data will be disaggregated by gender. In particular with regard to provision of pre- and post-return assistance and counselling, gender perspective will be considered, and support will be adapted the specific needs of women.

Human Rights

The Action will ensure that human rights are always respected and that activities follow a human rights-based approach. Fostering the respect for human rights, particularly in their intersection with migration considerations, is central to the Actions’ and its outputs’ approach. Law enforcement operations foreseen should also be human rights compliant.

Migrants and asylum seekers will receive the information they need to be able to apply for asylum or other protection entitled to them under international law.

Disability

As per OECD-DAC Disability markers identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. Nevertheless, considerations aimed at increasing the inclusion of persons with disabilities will be mainstreamed across all relevant activities, coherently with the rights-based approach of the action.

3.3. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
Planning, processes and systems	Risk 1: Equipment procured will not be properly maintained/used following end of the Action	Medium	Medium	All procurement activities should be accompanied by necessary capacity building, as well as service contracts to ensure proper maintenance of equipment. All procurement of equipment will be preceded by a thorough assessment of specific needs to ensure against duplication.
People and organisation	Risk 2: Fundamental rights of migrants seeking international protection are not fully respected	Medium	High	The Action will at all times support the targeted Western Balkan beneficiaries to ensure the highest fundamental rights standards of treatment of migrants in line with international and EU standards. Activities will be closely coordinated with ongoing regional support programmes as well as with EUAA and implementation will be followed on the ground by EU Delegations/Office and relevant organisations and institutions. Necessary capacity-building will ensure sustainability of results. Political/policy dialogues between the EU and the Western Balkan partners

				will also address issues of non-respect of such rights.
People and the organisation	Risk 3: Lack of institutional knowledge, management and capacity skills, exacerbated by high turnover of personnel	Medium	Medium	Develop clear capacity building plan with beneficiary.
External environment	Risk 4: Increase in migration flows	Medium	High	Maintain a flexible approach to be able to adapt to the evolving needs and sustained close contact and coordination with officials. Have contingency plans in place and prepare for the different scenarios that could arise. Follow developments and statistics related to migratory routes closely.
Political environment	Risk 5: Lack of coordination between competent government authorities in migration management process.	Medium	High	Continue regular coordination at the operational level between main stakeholders in the permanent and hoc groups involved in migration management. Organise regular meetings with the donor community in order to ensure alignment, coordination and coherence of international assistance and secure emergency response and support upon need.
Planning, processes and systems	Risk 6: Changes and restrictions to border controls at each stage of the route including at destination countries could have a significant impact as bottlenecks may be created, more people may feel compelled to seek alternative routes, and others may become stranded	Medium	High	Continue capacity building for contingency planning to adequately address the increased influx of migrants. Maintain a flexible approach and adapt to evolving needs. Ensure close contact and coordination with local authorities' officials.
External environment	Risk 7: The overall situation can dramatically change depending	Medium	High	Ensure regular contacts with neighbouring countries, EU Institutions and MSs to exchange

	on the migration trends from Turkey and Greece, with unpredictable duration, leading to an open-ended crisis. Closure of existing border crossings in different countries and potential new migratory routes may require additional resources for the implementing partners.			information on migration flows and trends.
	<i>Montenegro</i> : The debris of the shredding is not soon destroyed by Montenegrin Authorities	Medium	Low	The action will be coordinated since the beginning with Montenegrin authorities in order to ensure security measures during the shredding and the destruction of the debris. However, shredded tobacco/cigarettes are unusable for illegal and criminal commercial purposes
	<i>Montenegro</i> : The owners of the cigarettes requests compensation	Very low	High	The cigarettes are seized and expired. It is very unlikely that owners will claim them. The owners should also pay the storage fees to Pacorini Groups.

External Assumptions

- Relevant staff continue to be adequately trained and regularly use new equipment, IT tools, instruments, knowledge and skills in everyday operations;
- Relevant authorities involved in the action dispose of the needed resources (human, administrative, technical, and financial) and demonstrate the necessary political will to coordinate and monitor across institutions and various levels of government;
- Interest and commitment of the stakeholders is maintained, adapted and developed throughout the evolution of the political context;
- Ownership of beneficiaries is respected in implementation.

3.4 Logical Frameworks

Logical Framework Matrix BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (2024)	Targets (2028)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to manage irregular migration in line with EU standards.	Level of country's preparation to implement the EU acquis on irregular migration, border management, international protection and legal migration.	Some level of preparation (2023)	A higher level of preparedness (2028)	European Commission annual report	
Outcome 1	Strengthened capacities of authorities to lead the response to mixed migratory flows and to provide reception assistance in line with EU and international standards	Level of participation of authorities on the management of the reception assistance and of the overall response	To be assessed during the project inception period	An increased level of participation (2028)	Project reports Beneficiary reports European Commission annual report	All relevant institutions are fully committed to ensuring an adequate response to the needs of protection of migrants and refugees.
Outcome 2	Strengthened capacities of authorities in the area of European integrated border management and surveillance in line with EU and international standards	Number of criminal reports filed by police for border-related crimes including illegal border crossings and smuggling of migrants	To be assessed during the project inception period	Decrease in number of reports (2028)	Project reports Beneficiary reports	All relevant institutions remain committed to advance their border and migration management technology, systems, equipment and skills.
	Tailored social cohesion actions implemented	Number of social cohesion CSO initiatives supported per community (Cumulative)	0 (March 2025) within project	3 (2025) 5 (2026) 4 (2027)	Project reports Local media reports	Community members and local stakeholders are active in the identification, development and implementation of social cohesion initiatives Community members and local stakeholders are active in the identification,
		Number of socio-economic / infrastructure initiatives supported per community (Cumulative)	0 (March 2025) within project	3 (2025) 5 (2026) 4 (2027)	Project reports Local media reports	

						development and implementation of social cohesion initiatives
Output 1.1 related to Outcome 1	Improved sectoral policies, strategies and coordination mechanisms on migration, in line with EU and international standards	Number of legislative, operational, procedural documents developed/ revised and implemented with support of the project	0 (2024)	To be defined during project inception period (2028)	Project reports Beneficiary reports	All relevant institutions remain committed to align the legal framework, procedures and coordinate their activities.
Output 1.2 related to Outcome 2	Improved technical and operational capacities of responsible authorities and institutions to provide reception and protection-sensitive assistance in and out of reception facilities	Percentage of participants to project activities that reported increased knowledge relevant to their work following the participation	0% (2024)	75% (2028)	Project reports – participant surveys following the project activities	The relevant institutions are willing to make their staff available for project trainings and activities. The training participants are proactively participating in the activities delivered by the project.
Output 1.3 related to Outcome 3	Cost-efficient temporary reception structures available for migrants and asylum seekers, with an increased proportion of assistance delivered by a diversified range of State and local partners in and out of the reception facilities	Up-to-standards reception services (accommodation, food and non-food items), healthcare, social protection for minors, vulnerable groups, and education.	Acceptable standards of services (2024)	At least the same standards of services (2028)	European Commission reports/EUAA assessments Beneficiary reports UN agencies and independent watchdog organizations	All relevant institutions show commitment to step up participation on management of temporary reception centres and relevant service delivery.

					reporting	
Output 2.1 related to Outcome 2	Improved technical and operational capacities for European integrated border management	% of procured equipment introduced into regular procedures and used for its purpose 6 months after the procurement, and by the end of the project	0% (2024)	90% (2028)	Project reports Beneficiary reports	Beneficiaries continue to regularly use new knowledge and skills in everyday operations
		Percentage of participants to project activities that reported increased knowledge relevant to their work following the participation	0% (2024)	75% (2028)	Project reports – participant surveys following the project activities	Equipment is used properly and beneficiaries are committed to maintain the equipment provided by the project after the project end

Logical Framework Matrix NORTH MACEDONIA

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (2024)	Targets (2028)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To enable North Macedonia to manage irregular migration in line with EU standards.	Level of country's preparation to implement the EU acquisition irregular migration, border management, international protection and legal migration.	Some level of preparation (2023)	A higher level of preparedness	European Commission annual report, Specialized EU agencies reports, Reports from the international organizations, national reports	

Outcome 1	Strengthen capacities in the area of border management and surveillance and combating organised crime .	Irregular border crossings rate.	22% (2017)	<5% (2028) ¹²	Border police database extract	National stakeholders remain committed to advance their border and migration management technology, systems and equipment.
Outcome 2	Migrants access to safe legal pathways and prospects is improved, as well as the sanctioning of smugglers.	Number of developed and implemented advancements on safe legal pathways, protection migrants and sanctioning of the smugglers, including combating of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.	0 (2023)	At least 3 (2028)	Project reports	National stakeholders implement the aligned legal framework, procedures and coordinate their activities, resources and efforts.
Outcome 3	All migrants have facilitated access to protection and assistance services.	% of migrants and refugees of all genders and ages reporting satisfaction with the reception conditions and provided services.	0 (2024)	At least 70% of the surveyed	Project reports, survey among the sample of migrants and refugees	The national authorities are fully committed to ensuring adequate response to the need for protection and assistance of migrants and refugees.

¹² Measured as the Ratio of people irregularly crossing the border and detected by the patrol border police in the green border over the people crossing the border and either found inside the country or in the area patrolled by the border police

Output 1.1 related to Outcome 1	Border and migration management institutions have enhanced capacity for border control, including check and surveillance, for countering migrant smuggling (SOM), trafficking in human beings (THB) and other types of transnational organised crime in full respect of the rule of law and fundamental rights.	Number of MoI Departments/Sectors/Units/etc provided with specialised equipment, upgrades and/or mechanisms, etc. in line with the Schengen Code.	0 (2024)	At least 4 (2028)	Project reports, receiving reports	The border police officers are committed to use the provided technologically advanced systems and equipment and to apply the acquired knowledge and skills.
		Number of trained stakeholders.	0 (2024)	At least 200 (2028)	Project reports, Lists of participants	The national border management authorities will continue to promote and respect all relevant standards, in particular fundamental rights and human dignity, in carrying out border management and migration activities.
Output 2.1 related to Outcome 2	Strengthened protection and referral system for the people on the move, as well as sanctioning of the smugglers in line with the EU and other international standards.	Number of persons reached with assisted voluntary return and reintegration and other relevant counselling about protection and safe legal migration procedures.	0 (2024)	At least 20,000 (2028)	Project reports	Willingness of the migrants to participate in the outreach and counselling activities and sessions.
		Number of trained stakeholders.	0 (2024)	At least 100 (2024)	Project reports, Lists of participants	The institutional stakeholders are committed to apply the knowledge gained.
		Number of legislative, operational, procedural	0 (2024)	At least 5 (2028)	Project reports	National stakeholders remain committed to align the legal
Output 3.1 related to Outcome 3	All migrants receive adequate protection and access to accommodation and to social, educational and health services and vulnerable groups and unaccompanied	Number of migrants and refugees receiving protection services, such as psychosocial	0	At least 35,000	Project reports, data statistics	All relevant institutions are fully committed to ensuring an adequate response to the need of

	children receive adequate assistance.	support, medical assistance, daily care and educational activities and other assistance at the TTCs.				protection of migrants and refugees.
		Number of technical upgrades in the protection and case management system.	0	At least 3	Project reports, receiving reports	All relevant institutions are fully committed to ensuring an adequate response to the need of protection of migrants and refugees.

Logical Framework Matrix SERBIA

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines	Targets	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to enable Serbia to manage irregular migration in line with EU standards.	Level of country's preparation to implement the EU acquis on irregular migration, border management, international protection and legal migration.	Some level of preparation (2023)	A higher level of preparedness (2028)	European Commission annual report	
Outcome 1	Strengthened capacities in the area of border management and surveillance	1.1 number of prevented irregular border crossings	1.1 prevented irregular border crossings in 2023	1.1 (2028) 25% increase compared to 2023	1.1 Commission reports/assessments Beneficiary reports	
Outcome 2	Strengthened law enforcement capacities to combat migrant smuggling	2.1 number of prevented irregular border crossings, and other cross-border crimes	2.1 prevented cross-border crimes in 2023	2.1 (2028) 25% increase compared to 2024	Commission reports / assessments Beneficiary reports	
Outcome 3	Adequate and sufficient level of reception and protection services of migrant and refugee population	3.1 level of compliance with EU and international standards for reception conditions, protection of minors and vulnerable groups.	3.1 level of compliance in 2024	3.1 (2028) at least the same level of compliance compared to 2024	3.1 Commission reports/EUA A assessments Beneficiary reports Implementing partner, UN Agencies and independent watchdog organisations reporting	
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	Enhanced surveillance capacities for green and blue borders	1.1 Green border: number of stable surveilla	1.1 (2024) Green border: stable surveil	1.1 (2028) Green border: 2 additional stable	1.1 and 1.2 monitoring reports of the European Commission,	

	(infrastructure and equipment)	<p>nce systems at the borders; adequate facility and equipment for monitoring and situation analysis; number of unmanned aerial vehicles; number of protective equipment for police officers</p> <p>1.2 Blue border number of available vessels (including trailers, vehicles and other related/specialised equipment)</p>	<p>lance systems at the border with Bulgaria not operational; inadequate facility and equipment for monitoring and analysis; inadequate protective equipment</p> <p>1.2 Blue border inadequate number of vessels to cover the conduct regular surveillance of blue borders.</p>	<p>surveillance systems at the border with BG; refurbished and readapted police station specialised in border surveillance, increased capacities for monitoring and analysis; 2000 specialised vests and helmets for police officers</p> <p>1.2 12 additional vessels including trailers, vehicles and other specialised equipment</p>	Implementing partners, and Beneficiaries	
Output 2 related to Outcome 2	Strengthened law enforcement capacities to identify, investigate and dismantle smugglers and smuggling networks	2.1 Number of police operations financed	A) 0	A(2 (1 per year)		
Output 3 related to	Reception and protection services provided	3.1 Average percentage of reception	Adequate standards (2024)	Adequate standards 80% (2028)	Commission reports/EUA	

Outcome 3	(accommodation, healthcare, social protection and education) in accordance with EU and International standards	standards met in asylum and reception centres 3.2 Number of reception staff dedicated to vulnerable categories per centre	average 1 per centre (2024)	average 2 per centre (2028)	A assessments Beneficiary reports on ARC results Beneficiaries' reports Migration profile of the RS Annual report of Center for the protection of THB	
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Logical Framework Matrix MONTENEGRO						
Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines	Targets	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Improved Border Management and Fight against serious and organised crime	Track record fight against Organised crime improved	Annual report 2023 (track record data are in the AR)	Annual report 2024	Annual report	
Outcome 1	Strengthened Fight against smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco products	Less cases of tobacco smuggling	Annual report 2023 (track record data are in the AR)	Annual report 2024	Annual report	
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	Destroyed (shredded) cigarettes and tobacco product in the port of Bar and therefore unusable for illegal and criminal commercial purposes	Quantity of cigarettes and tobacco product destroyed (shredded)	approximately 12.600 cubic meters	0	Report of the destruction	

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude financing agreements with the relevant IPA III beneficiaries.

4.2. Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 72 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3. Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures.¹³

4.3.1. Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity

A part of this Action (Outcome 1 and 2 related to Bosnia and Herzegovina, outcomes 1, 2 and 3 related to North Macedonia and Outcome 1 related to Serbia) will be implemented in indirect management with one or more pillar assessed entities, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: adequate operational and administrative capacity to implement the Action; capacity to respond quickly; proven track record of expertise in the areas of migration and border management, border control and surveillance; presence in the region as well as significant previous experience in the implementation of similar assistance, in particular in conducting complex projects comprising a mix of for example infrastructure works, supplies and capacity building measures.

4.3.2. Direct management through grants

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

A part of this Action concerning Serbia will be implemented via direct grants to:

- i. The Ministry of Interior to contribute to achieving objective 2, output 2.1 namely to support operational cost of law enforcement authorities to conduct operations aiming to identify, investigate and dismantle migrant smugglers and smuggling networks.
- ii. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM). in **Serbia** to contribute to the achievement of the specific objective 3. 'Ensure adequate level of reception and protection services of migrant and refugee population', in particular Output 3.1 and related activities as follows:

¹³ www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

- running costs for reception and asylum centres offering accommodation, food and non-food items for migrant and refugee population including different services aimed to provide psychosocial support
- provision of healthcare services and medicines to migrants and refugees
- provision of social protection including accommodation and psychosocial support for minors and vulnerable groups
- contribute to support the inclusion efforts of educational institutions hosting migrants and refugees

The activities for Output 3 are designed specifically for the aim to support the relevant competent governmental bodies (SCRM, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs and Ministry of Education) to manage reception and protection services for migrants and refugees, thus are supporting and directed only to the bodies who have these prerogatives. The SCRM will coordinate the grant to ensure that resources are effectively and efficiently allocated to competent governmental bodies as necessary.

The grant as part of this Action concerning **Montenegro** is aimed at shredding the cigarettes and tobacco products in the port of Bar, will be implemented via a direct grant to the Customs Administration of Montenegro.

b.) Justification of a direct grant

For Serbia under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to:

- i. The Ministry of Interior. The recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because, in accordance with the Financial Regulation Article 195(1), point (f) the action has specific characteristics requiring a specific type of beneficiary for its technical competence, specialisation or administrative power or nature of the action. The Serbian Ministry of Interior has a specific mandate in migration and border management, and operational and administrative capacity to implement the action, in particular for the prevention of illegal border crossings and combatting of migrant smuggling.
- ii. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM). Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified based on Article 195 (c) of the Financial Regulation namely to bodies with a de jure monopoly as the SCRM is the only responsible specialised government agency to operate all reception facilities in Serbia.

For Montenegro under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to:

The Customs Administration of Montenegro. Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified based on Article 195 (c) of the Financial Regulation namely to bodies with a de jure monopoly as Custom is the responsible Administration to operate in the Port of Bar and it has been officially charged by the Government with the task and responsibility of the full destruction process.

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Methods of implementation – cf. section 4.3	
<p>Indirect management with pillar-assessed international organisation – cf. section 4.3.1</p> <p><u>Bosnia and Herzegovina</u></p> <p>Outcome 1 Providing reception and services to manage mixed migration flows</p> <p>Outcome 2 European Integrated border management</p>	<p>EUR 38.5 million (total)</p> <p>EUR 11.5 million</p> <p>EUR 2 million</p>
<p><u>North Macedonia</u></p> <p>Outcome 1 Strengthen capacities in the area of border management and surveillance and combating organised crime</p> <p>Outcome 2 Migrants access to safe legal pathways and prospects is improved, as well as the sanctioning of smugglers.</p> <p>Outcome 3 All migrants have facilitated access to protection and assistance services.</p>	<p>EUR 10 million</p> <p>EUR 0.5 million</p> <p>EUR 3.5 million</p>
<p><u>Serbia:</u></p> <p>Outcome 1 Enhanced surveillance capacities for green and blue borders (infrastructure and equipment)</p>	<p>EUR 11 million</p>

Grants (direct management) cf. section 4.3.2	EUR 8.5 million (total)
<u>Serbia</u> Outcome 2 Strengthen law enforcement capacities to combat migrant smuggling	EUR 1 million
Outcome 3 Adequate and sufficient level of reception and protection services of migrant and refugee population	EUR 6 million
<u>Montenegro:</u> Strengthened fight against smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco products	EUR 1.5 million
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	Will be covered by another Decision
Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy – cf. section 6	Will be covered by another Decision
Totals	EUR 47 million

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The Action will be managed from the relevant EU Delegation/Office in each Western Balkan beneficiary. In designing and implementing activities related to specific procurement activities and Outcomes to be addressed by this Action, the implementing Agency/Organisation will closely co-ordinate with relevant counterparts and the Commission to ensure alignment with EU policy goals and the relevant EU acquis under Chapter 24 - Justice, Freedom and Security. Close consultation will be ensured with DG HOME.

A Steering Committee and/or other governance structure involving the Commission, beneficiary counterparts and the Action implementing partners will be set up to ensure overall management support and strategic guidance to the Action. This will enable the Commission to provide a political steer to the activities under the programme and discuss the latest trends and challenges. The Steering Committee will advise on major programmatic decisions, ensure appropriate circulation of information and harmonisation of best practices, and assess risks to individual activities within the cycle of the Action. The active participation of governmental partners in planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of activities will be a critical element, in order to ensure that activities reflect the needs and priorities on the ground, and to enhance sustainability of results. Each project will participate in relevant beneficiary-level coordination mechanisms as well as any IPA coordination meetings organised by the EU Delegation/Office.

With regards to coordination of activities in Serbia specifically, besides project-level steering committees, the EUD will co-chair (jointly with MoI and SCRM) monthly coordination meetings with relevant Beneficiary Institutions (MEI, MoI, SCRM, MoLEVSA, MoESTD, MoH), as well as implementing partners with the aim to share information regarding implementation, progress, and address bottlenecks. Donor coordination meetings in the area of Home Affairs organised twice a year by the Ministry of European Integration are co-chaired by the EUD. The aim is to inform donors about the ongoing and planned assistance in the area of migration and border management, reduce the risk of duplication, ensure synergies and complementarity. In

addition, regular exchange of information between the EUD and MSs about the ongoing and planned support to the sector occurs also in the context of the Migration Liaison Officer meetings, which is held on a quarterly basis at the premises of the EUD.

For the activities carried out in North Macedonia, during the implementation of the Action, a Steering Committee will be established that will ensure that there is no overlap of the activities during the implementation, ensuring close coordination and complementarity with the other initiatives and streamlining of the national capacities leading to sustainable impact. The EUD will facilitate the organisation of coordination meetings between the above Project steering committees, thus promoting synergies and maximising the impact of the projects. On an ad hoc basis, the EUD is participating in the Inter-ministerial working group on migration policy and National commission for combating trafficking in human beings and irregular migration and will ensure coordination through these mechanisms. Additionally, regular meetings will be held with organisations and donors on the migration thematic area ensuring coordination in the planning and implementation processes.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

4.7. Pre-conditions

The Commission reserves the right to take appropriate measures, including by re-directing activities in consultation with implementing partners, if it assesses that necessary accompanying measures by beneficiaries are not in place. The assessment of the Commission will rely on reporting by implementing partners, monitoring of the action and dialogue with beneficiaries.

5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annually) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its Outputs and contribution to the achievement of its Outcomes, and if possible, at the time of reporting, contribution to the achievement of its Impacts, as measured by corresponding indicators, using as a reference the logframe matrix.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Indicator values will be tracked on a country-by-country basis whenever relevant, while indicators intrinsically regional in nature will be tracked at an aggregated level.

Arrangements for monitoring and reporting, including roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

Contract execution will be monitored through regular reports (indicatively: inception, 6-monthly, final), with clearly identified results indicators linked to each output as well as updates on the overall logical framework. Regular meetings/video conferences between the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (Headquarters and EU Delegations/EU Office) and the implementing partners will further ensure that any issues are addressed in a timely manner so that results are achieved in due time. Additional tools

include ad hoc and on-the-spot visits will ensure monitoring of progress and a Result Oriented Assessment will be undertaken approximately mid-term.

The implementing partners will establish an effective structure at the central and IPA III beneficiary level for collecting and consolidating the data that are gathered throughout based on the indicators of the results framework.

All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is considering the principle of gender equality, human rights-based approach, and rights of persons with disabilities including inclusion and diversity. Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by sex.

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a mid-term evaluation may be carried out for this action or its components.

Evaluation reports produced shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision.

5.3. Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

All entities implementing EU-funded external actions have the contractual obligation to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the 2022 guidance document [Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions](#) (or any successor document).

This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU Member States. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and contribution agreements.

For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. The protection of fundamental rights of migrants will be also highlighted. Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and the EU Delegation/Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before the implementation. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

7. SUSTAINABILITY

The Action has been designed to ensure the long-term sustainability of its results. The sustainability of results of this Action will be achieved through the increased effectiveness of Western Balkan authorities at all levels of the administration to adequately implement migration policies and to regularly use new equipment, IT tools, instruments, knowledge, and skills in everyday operations related to migration, and more specifically return management.

The sustainability of the equipment supplied directly or indirectly through the Action will be guaranteed through the existence of long-term maintenance and other ancillary contracts accompanying the purchasing and capacity-building within or in complement to the present Action. Coupling capacity building with modernisation of equipment will improve the efficiency of the border management systems as a whole and ensure sustainable results. Furthermore, where possible, the Action will seek to streamline best practices in line with EU and international standards into the everyday technical operation of the different areas of the beneficiaries' migration management systems. Any ICT development should respect the existing standards or needs for interoperability of IT systems. The necessary technical specifications shall be consulted with the relevant authorities and ensured before the launch of the tender.

Support to returns will closely dovetail with ongoing regional programmes to ensure persons subject to return have access to necessary legal information, counselling, and voluntary return assistance. When possible, activities should be coordinated with relevant NDICI-GE programmes in countries of origin to support long-term sustainable reintegration of returnees. The long-term sustainability of results should be ensured by capacity-building initiatives and integrating relevant mechanisms and tools into everyday operations. Comprehensive policy dialogue should be maintained at all times between the Commission, EU Delegations and implementing partners to ensure strong political will to maintain equipment, infrastructure and training initiatives.

Appendix 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRIMARY INTERVENTION LEVEL FOR REPORTING IN OPSYS

A Primary intervention (project/programme) is a coherent set of results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Identifying the level of the primary intervention will allow for:

- ✓ Differentiating these Actions or Contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);
- ✓ Articulating Actions and/or Contracts according to an expected common chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure a more efficient and aggregated monitoring and reporting of performance;
- ✓ Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing Actions and Contracts.

The present Action identifies as:

Action level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Reporting will be carried out by implementing bodies.