REPORT

ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE

REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

For the period 15 October 2019 – 1 March 2020

BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL

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Executive Summary

New decade is bringing new challenges and new opportunities. The Strategy and Work Programme (SWP) 2017-2019 has phased out, and SWP 2020-2022 entered into force. The Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area (MAP REA) is being prepared for an upgrade, in close consultations with the European Commission and regional economies. From October 2019 to March 2020, the RCC has been taking stock of the achievements and lessons in the regional agenda so far, and beginning to mould the contours of a comprehensive vision for the future.

For the year ahead, the RCC is committed to facilitate concrete deliverables for the upcoming Summits in Zagreb and Skopje/Sofia. Regional Roaming Agreement had been a notable success in the previous year, proving that the region can work its way around bilateral disputes when concrete benefits for the citizens are at stake. The regional agenda requires this momentum to grow – enhanced cooperation, greater delivery, and more tangible results.

Regional initiatives which complement the common path toward the EU on which the region has set are therefore welcome. Indeed, they have the potential to boost regional ownership of the process. But the success of these initiatives can only be ensured if they are all-inclusive – if all six Western Balkans (WB) partners are involved.

In 2019/2020 Kosovo[*] is for the first time chairing the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the key platform for regional cooperation. This Chairmanship in its own shows that cooperation and compromise are possible and necessary when we turn our sights to the common regional benefit and the prospect of EU accession.

RCC, guided by the SEECP political guidance and agreement, has succeeded in facilitating important processes in the reporting period.

In the component of **skills and mobility,** an instrument on delivering the Declaration on Recognition of Academic Qualifications has been proposed and endorsed, whereas the consultations on resuming the negotiations on an agreement on Recognition of Professional Qualifications are ongoing. Efforts are being dedicated to approximating education, research and innovation standards to those of the EU.

In enhancing the **connectivity**, preparations are in full swing for the 3rd Western Balkans Digital Summit, to be held in Tirana. The region is awaiting the entry into force of the Roam Like at Home regime, by July 2021. This will be the prerequisite for the reduction of roaming prices between the EU and the WB. The region is currently embarking on concrete actions to improve interoperability and align with EU best practice. In addition, among other activities related to the Digital Agenda, the RCC is supporting the preparation of digital skills strategies in WB, as well as fostering regional cooperation to respond to new challenges, such as the cyber resilient environment and recognition of trust services.

In the **competitiveness** flagship, the region has taken steps towards strengthening their negotiating position and protection when it comes to International Investment Agreements.

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[*] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

To tap into the underutilized regional potential of the non-banking sector, a regional agenda for diversification of financial markets could offer just such opportunity.

The work toward economic integration of the region is still being buttressed by RCC support to **security and rule of law**. In this past period, regional security cooperation platforms have seen changes or additions to their *modus operandi*, to include workshops, trainings and exchange of know-how. In that way they will benefit in more concrete terms from regional cooperation.

The **projects,** financed by the EU and implemented by the RCC are likewise continuing as planned. Triple P Tourism team has been supporting the development of a regional tourism offer, as a sector with enormous potential for all regional economies. Roma Integration project has developed a methodology to map Roma houses in the region, whereas the Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP) has launched its second phase. Both of the latter projects continue to enhance and promote inclusivity within regional economies.

In terms of novelties, there are some exciting expansions ahead.

As of April 2020, the Internal Integrative Security Governance (IISG) – the unique and only WB counter-terrorism platform – will be hosted by the RCC. The IISG is financed by the EU with the aim to allow cooperation among WB partners along three pillars: Counter-Terrorism, Counter-Serious Crime and Border Security. The IISG coming under the RCC umbrella is a real example of streamlining regional cooperation and initiatives, and will undoubtedly boost efficiency in this crucial area.

European Commission has in December 2019 also granted the RCC the implementation of a new project: Western Balkans Youth Lab. Through this project, as per the conclusions of the 2018 EU-WB Sofia Summit, the youth policies of the region will be addressed to help greater involvement of youth in decision-making structures, support their socio-economic integration and prevent high levels of brain drain.

Moreover, following the RCC Board decision of October 2019, RCC signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Economic Forum's (WEF) to establish the first regional Competitiveness and Innovation Accelerator, to be developed in partnership between WEF and the RCC. The Accelerator is set to promote the diffusion of innovative technologies and business models, and thus improve the innovation ecosystems which are currently underdeveloped.

Finally, with a vision of widening the scope of political engagement in the process of regional cooperation, potential of parliamentary dimension has come to the fore. The RCC has been recognized as an organization which could assist the enhancement of this dimension, and so the Conclusions of the 16th Conference of the Parliamentary Committees on European Integration/Affairs of the States Participating in the Stabilisation and Association Process in South East Europe (COSAP) called on the RCC to support COSAP's efforts toward establishing a regional parliamentary dialogue, in line with Poznan Chair's Conclusions.

We therefore begin 2020 with ambition, commitment and optimism – aware of the challenges, but ready to face them together.

Cooperation and coordination of the RCC with partners and stakeholders

The RCC retained its close cooperation and communication with all of its key stakeholders, partners, and friends. This has facilitated excellent coordination among them, as well as leading to the expansion of the RCC Board.

After talks and consultations, France has decided to re-join the RCC Board as a full-fledged participant. The decision was announced in January 2020 and has been accepted by the Board following the rules of silent procedure. The RCC welcomes France warmly, as an important signal by the EU Member State in support of regional cooperation agenda. France and the RCC share a vision for the Western Balkans and their full integration in the European Union.

SEECP

The coordination with the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office (C-i-O) and the EU is being carefully cultivated to strengthen the synergy of priorities and activities, through the statutory Coordination meeting as well as through daily communication. The RCC continues to assist and support the Kosovo* C-i-O in implementation of its calendar of activities. In January the C-i-O and the RCC co-hosted in Prishtina the Seminar for Young Diplomats, an annual event which seeks to involve a younger generation of diplomats into the processes of regional cooperation.

'Mini-Schengen' initiative

The RCC was invited by hosts of the so-called 'mini-Schengen' initiative to observe the meetings of the Western Balkans Leaders in Ohrid (10 November) and Tirana (21 December). The RCC made clear its position that it supports any regional, all-inclusive (comprising all WB6 partners) initiative which builds upon or complements (i.e. does not replace) previous commitments made within the Berlin Process.

Consultations

The SG maintained the good practice of strengthening the work of the RCC and regional agenda by holding important consultative meetings with participants and stakeholders.

On 11 November, the SG met with the Prime Minister of Croatia in Zagreb for consultations on cooperation between the RCC and the 2020 Croatian Presidency of the EU Council. Deliverables in regional cooperation in time for the Zagreb EU Summit in May 2020 were discussed, spanning the fields of digital connectivity, promotion of women empowerment and launch of the youth project.

In Ankara, on 10 February the SG met the Foreign Minister of Turkey, in the context of the Turkish Chairmanship of SEECP which it will assume in the summer. The SG updated the Minister of the upcoming activities and plans of the RCC, whereas the Minister expressed his anticipation that Turkey and the RCC will develop an even deeper cooperation, enhance the all-inclusiveness of SEECP programs and build visibility of the regional agenda.

The SG exchanged the views also with Oliver Varhelyi, the EU Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement, and Mariya Gabriel, EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, in Brussels on 30 January. Commissioner Varhelyi affirmed his full supports regional cooperation as a tool of accelerating economic

development and EU integration, while the RCC remains a reliable partner of the region and the EU.

Implementation of regional programmes

A.1 Skills & Mobility

Removal of obstacles to mobility of students and highly skilled workers in the region: mutual recognition of academic qualifications

The RCC has been led by the conclusions of the MAP REA coordinators to speed up and deliver on the MAP REA commitments in regard to operationalizing and advancing the automatic recognition of academic qualifications, underpinned by the quality-assured higher education institutions.

The process of facilitating the implementation of the Declaration on Recognition of Academic Qualifications has been started. A reporting mechanism and an operational plan have been endorsed by the relevant Working Group. The first implementation report will be prepared by the RCC by May 2020.The Joint Information System (JIS), as the key tool of implementation, is being set up by the Steering Group and should be fully operational and open to public by December 2020. Technical assistance will be provided on comparison of National Qualifications Framework, including guidelines for recognition of pre-Bologna and third cycle/PhDs qualifications. External evaluation of quality assurance standards against European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Western Balkans will be launched, in order to provide economy specific recommendations and joint guidelines to meet the objective of full alignment with ESG by 2021.

Removal of obstacles to mobility of professionals: mutual recognition of professional qualifications

WB6 Sherpas meeting on 11 December brought about a re-energized commitment to relaunch the negotiations on an agreement on a mutual recognition of professional qualifications. The basis of the way forward is jointly to be proposed by RCC and CEFTA, with an extended scope (more professions and irrespective of duration of stay). Sherpas proposed the Agreement to be one of the deliverables for the upcoming WB Summits.

Meanwhile, RCC has prepared a proto-type of the Database on Regulated Professions in the Western Balkans, fully aligned with the EU Database on Regulated Professions. The data-base will support the negotiations and is in line with the actions outlined in the MAP REA.

Removal of obstacles to mobility of researchers

In line with the Poznan Summit Conclusions, the RCC has been assisting the region to support and promote research and innovation. In the preceding period, through the work of the relevant Working Group, the RCC helped raise regional administrative capacities for mapping the regional research infrastructure, whereas a Protocol on Open Access to Research Infrastructure is in the pipelines and is expected to be concluded by the end of April.

A.2 Connectivity

Digital integration agenda

The focus of RCC activities has in the preceding period been on the co-organization of the 3rd WB Digital Summit, to be held in Tirana on 2-3 April, 2020. Preparations are currently in the phase of determining key deliverables and working out organization and logistics. The Digital Summit is an opportunity for regional economies to take steps toward integrating fully in the 4th industrial revolution. This was the case at the last Summit in Belgrade with the signing of the Regional Roaming Agreement, which set the goal of introducing a Roam Like at Home (RLAH) regime by July 2021. By principle and model, steps like these approximate the region to the standards of the European Union.

Moreover, establishing a harmonized roaming space in WB fulfilled the key prerequisite for pursuing EU-WB roaming reductions. It was agreed at the WB Roaming Policy Meeting in January that elements for a roadmap on EU-WB roaming charges reduction will be prepared by DG Connect until the end of February and discussed with the WB economies as a potential deliverable of WB Digital Summit 2020. To support this endeavour, RCC as always stands ready to facilitate the consultations needed and is fully committed to assist the legislative assessment and analytics if requested by the economies.

Sectoral support in environment, energy and sustainable development

Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, supported by the European Commission and recognized as a potential deliverable for the EU-WB Zagreb Summit, remains a priority of regional focus in the environmental sector. Unfortunately, the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action in WB had to be postponed last minute due to the devastating earthquake in Albania. It is planned to take place in April.

In the preceding period RCC developed a study on the Convergence of Digitalisation and Environmental Sustainability, which analyses positive but also negative impacts on environment that digital transformation may bring. The study also provides recommendations for policy makers in WB in order to support sustainable development and minimize negative consequences.

A.3. Competitiveness

Investment integration

Under RCC coordination, the region has reached the final phase of adoption of the common regionally accepted standards for negotiating International Investment Agreements (IIAs). These are based on EU and best-practice standards and will help the region to advance and align the investment policy framework. They will strengthen the negotiations position of WB economies vis-à-vis third (non-EU) countries to impose certain standards when re-/negotiating IIAs.

In addition to setting up the investment policy framework, the region has also advanced in enhancing transparency and thereby strengthening investors' confidence. The most comprehensive investment incentive inventories have been compiled and are ready to be published.

A significant outcome in investment outreach initiative has been the generation of investment leads, although the campaign started only recently. So far, the initiative included selecting target markets and priority sectors and holding a series of extended capacity building sessions for WB Investment Promotion Agencies, helping them to improve services to investments throughout the cycle, including promotion, facilitation and after-care services.

Looking forward, the potential of developing, diversifying and integrating some parts of financial markets has been recognized as an opportunity to unleash significant growth prospects. A regional agenda for the implementation of regional measures in view of diversification of financial markets could boost this process. Therefore, a regional diagnostic will be used as a basis for developing such agenda.

B Good governance, Rule of Law and Security Cooperation

Security Cooperation

The preceding period was focused on reinvigoration, future modus operandi and strategic focus of the RCC's security led cooperation formats. The most important development was certainly the decision of the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) Board Meeting for the IISG to come under the RCC umbrella as of April 2020. This is a crucial step in mainstreaming regional security efforts and providing effective response to security challenges. The first drafts of the Document of Action and IISG Budget have already been prepared.

In terms of SEENSA, at the Directors' meeting held under Albanian Chairmanship it was agreed that 2020 will be devoted to further strengthening the capacities of the National Security Authorities in industrial security and cyber security. A novelty in the modus operandi of this platform will be the organization of training programs, as part of three Working Groups: on Cyber, Industrial and Education.

SEEMIC Conference, chaired by Slovenia, turned its focus for 2020 on the impact of illegal migrations on SEE security. However, in line with the conclusions of the previous OSINT assessment on the role of intelligence services in the cyber domain, the SEEMIC Chairman (held in 2020 by Turkey) together with the RCC will seek to identify ways of assisting those SEEMIC participants who have not yet developed military cyber capabilities.

Another highlight in the preceding period was the 4th Regional Conference on Prevention of Security Risks, co-organized by the RCC and the Ministry of Interior of Italy, with four leading partners:, MARRI, SEESAC and the SEE Check - Regional Network against Disinformation and Media Manipulation. For the first time, students and professors were invited to participate, as part of the overarching aim to increasingly include academic community, strengthen the holistic approach and provide a real multi-sectoral endeavour to mapping the needs and defining the answer to contemporary security challenges.

Good governance and Rule of Law

Rule of law remains the key dimension and a fundamental of the WB journey to EU accession. In recognition of this fact, RCC in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice of Albania organized the high-level Regional Conference "It's all about Justice". The

Conference brought together Ministers, high-level officials and representatives of key civil society organizations in the area of rule of law in the Western Balkans, with the aim to address the highly pertinent topics of meeting the European standards in justice reforms.

RCC supports regional parliamentary cooperation as a prospect of including legislature in the process of regional agenda implementation. Parliament of Albania, as the chairmanship in office of COSAP, invited the RCC to support the organisation of the 16th COSAP conference as well as to support COSAP's efforts towards the establishment of a parliamentary dialogue covering all the key areas of the region's political, economic, social, cultural and security cooperation in line with the Chair's conclusions of the Western Balkans Summit in Poznań. The latter invitation was formally adopted in the joint declaration.

C Horizontal and supporting activities

Monitoring activities

In this reporting period, the RCC launched the preparations for the sixth edition of Balkan Barometer (BB) for 2020, aligning the questions to those of Eurobarometer and overseeing the conduct of surveys to ensure highest professional standards. Next steps regarding monitoring activities will include the finalization of the fieldwork for the BB Survey 2020 and the commencement of the analysis of the findings.

The SEE2020 Monitoring Committee officially kick-started the monitoring cycle for 2020. The Committee also expressed full support to the development of the process of monitoring the post-2020 Strategy, currently being defined by the RCC.

Coordination activities, grants

Following the conclusions of the SEE 2020 Coordination Board in March 2019, the RCC commenced the preparations for the development of the post-2020 Strategy. The process relies on the analysis and assessment of existing strategies, national targets and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All relevant stakeholders, from national administrations, key international partners, European Commission and Regional Dimension Coordinators will be consulted in order to ensure alignment and synergy.

Horizontal activities related to the MAP REA

In the preceding period, MAP REA Component Contact Points (CCPs) and MAP REA Coordinators, respectively, met to reflect on Poznan deliverables and discuss possible deliverables for the upcoming 2020 Summits; a list of such deliverables was proposed by CCPs for each of MAP REA components. The key deliverable will be the upgraded MAP REA. The RCC pledged its support to facilitate an all-inclusive process to formulate new regional economic vision in close cooperation with CEFTA.

Communication

The RCC remains vigilant in implementing an effective and comprehensive communications strategy in order to enhance further the relevance of the RCC at all levels and to disseminate the messages of RCC and regional agendas. All available tools of mass communication are being mobilized to that end, since the preceding period including audio and video podcasts and Instagram live. Tailor-made campaigns continue in support of particular

accomplishments and projects, such as the Regional Roaming Agreement, Women Empowerment (WE), Tourism, Roma Integration, and Youth.

Extended communication and PR activities have led to a significant increase of our social media followers, website visitors, and article published in traditional media.

Projects

Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP)[1]

Phase 1 of ESAP, jointly implemented by the RCC and ILO and financed by the EU, had been completed in February 2019 after a three-year period, at which point it entered a no-cost extension phase until 31 October 2019. ESAP has been a part of the Inclusive Growth pillar of the SEE2020 Strategy, supporting WB6 economies in labour market, employment and social policy reforms. In its first phase, ESAP helped to increase the performance and service quality of the Public Employment Services, raised the capacities of regional Ministries of Labour to design Active Labour Market Policies and provided demand-driven technical assistance and analytical support to WB administrations.

In Phase II, ESAP will build on the results so far as well as expand the focus of its activities to cover undeclared work, tripartite and bipartite social dialogue and engagement of WB institutions with EU-wide networks and processes.

Undeclared work presents one of the key regional challenges. At the regional workshop on tackling this form of employment, held in October 2019, participants recognized the need for a holistic approach, a structured regional network inspired by the European Platform on Tackling Undeclared Work, and committed to continuing regional cooperation through the ESAP 2 framework.

The second Phase of the project was officially launched in January 2020 at the high-level regional conference "Employment - Shades of Grey in the Western Balkans: Regional Perspectives on Creating More and Better Jobs". National consultations have been held in WB6 since the Phase II had started.

Triple P Tourism[2]

Implementation of the Triple P tourism project is continuing on track towards developing a regional tourism offer. Marketing and brand strategies WB Crossroads of Civilizations and The Balkan Monumental Trails routes are being overseen by the Tourism Expert Group (TEG), whereas the launch of the Illyricum trail (archaeological heritage and the sub-trail of the CoE-certified European Cultural Route of Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route) has been scheduled for early March 2020.

The Via Dinarica Regional Coordination (VDRC) meeting in November 2019 confirmed Country Lead Organisations (CLOs) for Albania, Kosovo* and Serbia into full member

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[1] This project has been financed by the European Union and implemented by the RCC, grant number VS/2016/0054 (March 2016 to February 2019), VS/2019/0094 (March 2019 to October 2019) and VS/2019/0348 (November 2019 – October 2022)

[2] This project is funded by the European Union and implemented by the RCC, grant number 2017/392-591

status, and the same is expected shortly for the candidate CLO for the Republic of North Macedonia. Confirmation into full member status of these CLOs strengthens VDRC and consolidates the environment for further coordinated development and promotion.

TEG has furthermore endorsed the tourism policy assessment and recommendations focusing on the four policy areas: ease of border crossing, industry data and statistics, workforce skills and mobility and sustainable tourism practices. In the upcoming quarter, consultations on the recommendations will be held with each economy.

On the grant component, the 16 grants that have been awared from the 2nd Call for Small Grant Proposals are currently being implemented. The 3rd Call for Small Grant Proposals was launched on 25 November 2019 and is expected to be contracted with April 2020.

Roma Integration 2020, Phase II[3]

As the key accomplishment of the project in the preceding period, Roma Integration 2020 has developed a methodology to map Roma houses in the region. The methodology provides for collecting existing relevant data from local and other institutions and the Roma community. By implementing the methodology, geographic data are provided on each Roma settlement, along with basic information on the level of development of the settlement. The mapping should feed into the decision making processes, and particularly the decision on legalization of the individual houses, as well as on renovating the housing. The mapping should be completed by the end of 2021 for the whole territory of Western Balkans.

In line with the Poznan Declaration, the Roma Integration Project will organize a Ministerial meeting in Tirana, in cooperation with the Government of Albania, to discuss and prepare deliverables to be endorsed at the Sofia Summit:
- Data collection methodology on Roma piloted in the Republic of North Macedonia;
- Guidelines for Roma Responsive budgeting, to be endorsed to ensure political commitment for the process;
- Making significant process on the civil registration issue;
- Legalization of informal settlements that will be based on piloting the methodology for mapping Roma housing.

Youth Lab Project[4]

The EU Commission contracted RCC in December 2019 to implement the 3-year long Western Balkans Youth Lab Project, as part of the youth component of the 2018 Sofia Summit Conclusions. This project was designed through a thorough consultative process involving key stakeholders: WB governments, youth organizations, the EC and other international organizations supporting youth policies in the WB region. The project aims to develop a structured and concrete policy dialogue between WB governments and youth, strengthen youth councils to substantial participation in decision-making, WB youth participation in European and regional fora, as well as mini-mobility scheme of EU-WB youth.

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[3] This project is co-funded by the European Union, grant number IPA/2018/400-736
[4] This project is co-funded by the European Union, grant number IPA/2019/409-790

Project design had already started with a Workshop organized by the RCC in Podgorica in November 2019, where representatives of national administrations, WB youth, European Commission and international organizations supporting youth policies discussed the needs and instruments relevant for the project.

Annex I: RCC Annual Work Plan 2019 state of implementation

RCC Annual Work Plan 2019							
Description of action	**Type of intervention**	**Timeframe for implementation**				**Activities**	**Expected outcomes**
		Q1	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**		
COMPONENT A - Implementing the SEE 2020 through the flagship approach							
1. Skills and Mobility							
1.1 Increased (labour) mobility in the WB							
1.1.1 Removal of obstacles to (short-term) mobility of professionals in the region (MAP III.2.1.)							
1.1.1.1	Negotiation meetings (min. 6 meetings, monthly to the Summit or every second month to the end of the year)	Events/confe rences	x	x	x	x	Skopje, 22-23 January 2019 2nd Negotiations meeting of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Brussels, 20-22 February 2019 3rd Negotiations meeting of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Brussels, 14 May 2019 5th Negotiations Meeting on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Brussels, 28 – 29 March 2019 4th Negotiations Meeting on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications	*Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualificatio ns signed by the Prime Ministers in July 2019, Poland; Database on Professional Qualificatio ns launched*
1.1.1.2	Technical assistance to the negotiations (legal, expert on Health and Construction, mediator)	Professional services	x	x			Expert on Education and Training of Doctors of Medicine	
1.1.2 Creating preconditions for automatic recognition of qualifications (MAP III.3.1)							
1.1.2.1	Meetings of the International Expert Group on Automatic Recognition of Qualifications back to back with an ENIC/NARIC network meeting (March, May,	Events/confe rences	x	x	x	x	Brussels, 27 March 2019 5th Meeting of the joint ERI SEE Brussels, 14 May 2019 5th Negotiations Meeting on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Tirana, 9-10 December 2019 Seminar on Quality Assurance Systems in the Western Balkans back to back with the Working Group on Recognition of Academic Qualifications	*Statement on Automatic Recognition of Academic Qualificatio ns in the Western Balkan Six signed by*

	June, Oct)						Tirana, 20 December 2019, support to kick-off meeting of the Leadership Group of the World Economic Forum's Competitiveness and Innovation Accelerator	*the Prime Ministers in July 2019, Poland; Joint Information System launched; Joint Exercise on Recognition of Academic Qualifications completed*
							Brussels, 13 May 2019 6th Meeting of the joint ERI SEE - RCC Working Group on Recognition of Academic Qualifications	
1.1.3 Mobility of high-skilled labour (PhD, researchers, academics) in SEE (MAP III.1.1.)								
1.1.3.1	Meeting on mobility of PhD, researchers and academics in SEE back to back with training of EURAXES contact points (September 2019)	Events/conferences		x			Vienna, 9-10 July 2019, WB Meeting on Research and Innovation co-organised with DG Research and Innovation and Austrian Federal Ministry of Science	*Mapping of Research Infrastructure initiated in all WB6; Enhanced capacities of EURAXESS offices and increased regional cooperation between the EURAXESS offices in WB6*
1.1.3.2	Meeting on Mapping RI in WB6 (March 2019)	Events/conferences	x	x	x	x	Ulcinj, 8-9 April 2019, Mapping Research Infrastructure in WB 1st Forum 'Science and Innovation 2030 Vision for WB	
							Tirana, 9-10 December 2019 Seminar on Quality Assurance Systems in WB back to back with the Working Group on Recognition of Academic Qualifications	
1.1.3.3	Technical Assistance on RI in WB6	Professional services	x	x	x	x	Diagnostics Report on Competitiveness and Innovation in the Western Balkans Six	
1.2. WB Open and Connected Science								
1.2.1	Meeting of the Working Group on Open Science back to back with WB6 and EU MS NCP Meeting (November 2019)	Events/conferences	x				Brussels, 30-31 January 2019 EU NPR on Open Science meeting	*Discussions on Open Access Protocols for Research Infrastructure launched (to be endorsed by Prime Ministers in 2020).*
1.3. Youth policy								
1.3.1.	Conference on Youth in the Western Balkans	Events/conferences		x			Bucharest, 28 – 29 May 2019 European aspirations of the young generation in the WB	*Enhanced dialogue on creating*

	under the Romanian Presidency of the EU (30-31 May 2019)						*opportunities for youth in the Western Balkans*

2. Connectivity

2.1. Digital integration

2.1.1	Meetings on the implementation of Digital Agenda	Events/conferences		x		x	Brussels, 13 May 2019, Conference Costs	*Reduced intra WB6 roaming charges through a new Regional Roaming Agreement (RRA); Advanced level of implementation of Western Balkans Digital Agenda (WB DA) – prioritized measures defined, agreed within MAP REA Component Contact Points for digital; Maintained high level dialogue on WB digital transformation - DS 2019 organized; Strengthened cybersecurity capacities and extended CB for WB Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs); Sustained dialogue*
							Tirana, 24-27 June 2019, ITU Regional Radio-communication Seminar for Europe (RRS-19-Europe)
							Brussels, 10 July 2019,Western Balkans Digital Component Contact Points (CCPs) Meeting
							Warsaw, 11-12 June 2019, EU BCO Network
2.1.2	Meetings on Western Balkan Roaming Policy	Events/conferences	x	x			Brussels, 24 January 2019 Roaming Policy Meeting
							Brussels, 8 February 2019, Roaming Policy Meeting
2.1.3	WB Digital Summit Steering Committee (SC) Meetings (one SC for DS 2019 and two SC for DS 2020)	Events/conferences	x		x	x	Belgrade, 18 February 2019 3rd Steering Committee Meeting
							Berlin, 13 December 2019, Western Balkans Digital Summit 2020 – 2nd Steering Committee Meeting
							Tirana, 8 October 2019, WB Digital Summit 2020 preparatory meeting
2.1.4	2019 WB Digital Summit (DS 2019)	Events/conferences		x			Financial Support for the organization of the Western Balkans Digital Summit 2019 4th and 5th April 2019, Belgrade
2.1.5	Regional meeting on CSIRTs information exchange platform and extended capacity building	Events/conferences			x		Regional Cybersecurity Conference: "CSIRTs and Cyber Resilience" 5th and 6th June 2019, Ohrid
2.1.6	Technical assistance on Digital Agenda implementation and Roaming Policy	Professional services		x			Legal Screening of the Regional Roaming Policy/translation
							Assessment of the level of approximation of WB legislation with EU eIDAS regulation and interoperability readiness in WB
							Translation of the documents in WB6 local languages referring to Decision on roaming regulation
							Legal Screening of the Regional Roaming Policy

			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
								among ICT ministries on digital transformation.
2.2 Sectoral support in environment, energy and sustainable development								
2.2.1	Regular meetings of the RWG Env (operational and Ministerial)	Events/conferences	x	x	x	x	Tirana, 2 July 2019, 9th Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Environment in the framework of the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy Tirana, 26-27 November 2019 The 4th Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action in the Western Balkans	*Two new projects to be implemented under the RWG Env. umbrella. Analytical study with recommendations (air pollution).*
2.2.2	Technical support for sector environment/sustainable development	Professional services		x			Development of a Study - The Convergence of Digitalization and Environmental Sustainability	
3. Competitiveness								
3.1 Investment Integration								
3.1.1	SEEIC Ministerial meeting (co-shared/co-organised with Tourism)	Events/conferences				x	Vienna, 16 December 2019, South East Europe Investment Committee (SEEIC) plenary meeting	*Regional Investment Policy Reform in its full implementation phase meaning the simplification and improvement of business procedures, reforms of investment related legislation in place. Capacity of Investment Promotion Agencies improved through tailor made training programmes for investment*
3.1.2	24th and 25th SEEIC Plenary meeting (co-shared/co-organised with tourism);	Events/conferences		x		x	Brussels, Belgium, 18 June 2019, South East Europe Investment Committee (SEEIC) plenary meeting	
3.1.3	11th and 12th meetings SEEIC-CEFTA Joint Working Group on Investment meeting	Events/conferences	x		x		Brussels, 22 May 2019, Workshop on the Investor State Disputes Settlements; Brussels, 23 May 2019, Meeting of the SEEIC-CEFTA Joint Working Group on Investments Vienna, 21 November 2019, BIT/IAA Workshop; Vienna, 22 November 2019, Meeting of the SEEIC-CEFTA Joint Working Group on Investments	
3.1.4	IPAs workshops – full investment capacity building cycle (co-shared/co-organised with WB project);	Events/conferences		x		x	Podgorica, 28-29 May 2019, Team of Experts for delivering training for Investment Promotion Agencies on Image Building and Investment Generation Brussels, 22 May 2019, Workshop on the Investor State Disputes Settlements; Brussels, 23 May 2019, Meeting of the SEEIC-CEFTA Joint Working Group on Investments	
3.1.5	Investment policy focus	Events/conferences	x		x		Workshop of the JWGI Sarajevo, 7 May 2019	

	groups workshops;						Brussels, 22 May 2019, Workshop on the Investor State Disputes Settlements; Brussels, 23 May 2019, Meeting of the SEEIC-CEFTA Joint Working Group on Investments	*promotion agencies and Joint Investor Promotion Initiative developed and agreed upon with promotion of the WB6 implemented as a single investment destination. Concrete international investors targeted and investor outreach executed in agreed sectors. Regional guide/toolkit for capital markets development (strategy) developed which will enable Regional programme for financial markets development to be put forward. All of these activities will bring more sustainable and more quality investments, including improved access to finance and diversified financial products for the business activities, with positive spill-overs*
3.1.6	Support to business/investment conferences	Events/conferences		x		Sarajevo, 17-19 April 2019 ,10th Sarajevo Business Forum	
				x		London, 18 June 2019, FT Western Balkans Forum - Investment Opportunities in a Fast-Growing Region	
					x	Global Market "Euromoney" 2019 EBRD special edition	
3.1.7	4th and 5th meetings on Working Group on Financial Markets	Events/conferences		x		Vienna, 14 June 2019 Meeting of the WB6 Working Group on Financial Markets	
					x	Vienna, 12-13 December 2019, WB6 Regional Investment Promotion and Outreach Training	

							to the region and ultimately offer more jobs.
3.2 Industrial Development							
3.2.1	SEEIC WG on Industrial Policy meeting	Events/confe rences			x	Vienna, 16 December 2019, SEEIC plenary meeting	*Smart specialisatio n strategies (S3) will be aligned in order to bring the region closer to the EU standards. Measures and mechanisms for implementa tion of industrial strategic documents developed and implemente d, which will enhance industrial competitive ness of the region, and stimulate higher value added production, developmen t of regional industrial value chains and better utilisation of EU programme s..*
COMPONENT B - Governance, Rule of Law and Security Cooperation							
4. Justice							
4. 1 SEE networks, regional trainings and Western Balkans working group on justice							

No.	Activity	Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Description	Outcome
4.1.1	Regional Working Group on Justice	Events/conferences	x	x	x	x	Sarajevo, 12 March 2019, 11th Meeting of the Working Group on Justice	*RCC functioning as depository of regionally relevant data (and projects) in the area of justice (in co-operation with GIZ ORF, SEELS, MoJ, EJTN and WB JTIs)*
4.1.2	SEE JTI Network Meeting, 1 meeting	Events/conferences		x			Justice conference, end of May 2019 (SEECP format)	
						x	Tirana, 4 October 2019, High-Level Regional Conference on Justice	
4.1.4	Technical assistance for preparation of Guidelines in cross-border court annexed mediation	Professional services					Expert on Judicial Training	
				x			Towards creating E-environment in justice - common standards on promoting quality of judicial training and regional cross-border cooperation in SEE	*Regional multilateral agreement on cross-border co-operation in civil, commercial and family matters – final version Improved quality of media reports regarding justice reforms Cross-border alternative dispute resolution used more often as a tool to improve efficiency of courts Improved cross-border co-operation and mutual trust among all the participants in judicial processes in the region*
4.1.6	2nd SEE Conference ''Rule of Law'	Events/conferences			x		Justice conference, end of May 2019 (SEECP format)	
						x	Tirana, 4 October 2019, High-Level Regional Conference on Justice Reform	
5. Security Cooperation								

5.1 Traditional RCC's regional security cooperation formats							
5.1.1	SEENSA Working grooup	Events/conferences	x				Tirana, 9 April 2019 SEENSA working group meeting	*RCC-led specialized regional (SEECP) security cooperation formats such as SEE P/CVE-FTF NFP Group; SEENSA and SEEMIC: To build upon achieved level of mutual trust and cooperation among the participants ; To support streamlining regional engagement in the field of P/CVE and CT Development of result-oriented cooperation between the national security authorities and military intelligence services in the region, including through identification of common security threats and addressing them by coordinated actions;* *VERLT: Efforts to support main challenges at regional*
5.1.2	SEENSA Director's Level meeting	Events/conferences			x		Tirana, 24 October 2019, SEENSA Conference	
5.1.3	SEEMIC EWG	Events/conferences		x			Ljubljana, 28-30 May 2019 SEEMIC Working Group	
5.1.4	SEEMIC Main Conference	Events/conferences				x	Ljubljana, 5-7 November 2019, SEEMIC Directors' conference	
5.1.5	SEE P/CVE-FTF NFP Group	Events/conferences	x	x	x		Tirana, 22-23 April 2019, 7th Meeting of the SEE National Focal Points' Group for P/CVE	
				x	x	x	Trieste, 4-6 December 2019, Meeting of the NFP Group	
						x	Workshop on Developing Strategies on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of FTF with RACVIAC	
5.1.6	Regional expert workshop on prevention and conutering of online radicalization	Events/conferences		x			Budva/Podgorica, 12 April 2019, Prevention and countering of online radicalization	
5.1.7	Jumbo P/CVE Regional Conference	Events/conferences				x	Trieste, 4-6 December 2019, Jumbo P/CVE Regional Conference	
5.1.8	Regional Train the trainers P/CVE	Events/conferences			x		Belgrade, 1 October 2019, "Train the trainers" regional P/CVE seminar	

								and national level: local (including online) radicalizatio n; cyber security; developmen t of efficient rehabilitatio n and reintegratio n programme s through whole of a society approach;
COMPONENT C - Horizontal and other cross-cutting issues								
6. Coordination, monitoring, programming and granting								
6. 1 Programming activities								
6.1.2	Support to SEE2020, MAP REA and IPA MC programming process	Events/confe rences	x	x			Western Balkans Digital Summit (WB DS)Steering Committee members	*Continuous support to implementa tion of SEE2202 and MAP REA provided.*
					x		Poznan, 4 July 2019, Stepping up the regional transformation efforts to advance the EU integration path	
				x			Tirana, 16-17 April 2019, 7th Western Balkans Civil Society Forum	
				x			Belgrade, 3rd April 2019 WB Regulators Meeting, in the margins of Western Balkans Digital Summit 2019	
6. 2 Monitoring activities								
6.2.1	8th and 9th meeting of the Monitoring committee	Events/confe rences		x		x	Podgorica, 31 May 2019, Eighth meeting of the SEE 2020 Monitoring Committee	*Enhanced monitoring on SEE2020, including successful data collection process and 5th issue of the BB; Enhanced monitoring on MAP implementa tion; Improved visibility on MAP results;*
						x	Vienna, 5 December 2019, Ninth meeting of the SEE2020 Monitoring Committee	
6.2.2	Balkan Barometer Survey 2019	Professional services	x	x	x		Balkan Barometer 2019	
6.2.3	Balkan Barometer 2019 launching event	Events/confe rences		x			Balkan Barometer 2020 launching event	
6.2.3	Support to the SEE2020 and MAP REA monitoring processes	Professional services	x	x	x	x	Support to SEE2020 and MAP REA monitoring processes	
6.2.4	WIIW data base - membership fee	Professional services	x				WIIW data base - membership fee for 2019	

								maintained reporting at WB PMs Sherpa and other high level events;
6.3 Coordination activities								
6.3.1	6th meeting of the SEE 2020 Governing Board	Events/conferences		x			Sarajevo, 8 July 2019, 6th SEE2020 Governing Board Meeting	*Strengthened strategic dialogue and coordination with MAP REA Coordinators and other partners on REA related activities; Better utilization of MAP CCPs network in MAP REA implementation; Improved monitoring of MAP REA related activities and increased visibility on results thereof; Maintained governance structure for the*
6.3.2	11th meeting of the SEE 2020 Coordination Board	Events/conferences	x				21 March 2019, Sarajevo, Coordination Board	
6.3.3	Meeting of the MAP REA coordinators	Events/conferences	x		x		Brussels, 26 March 2019, 4th Meeting of the MAP REA Coordinators	
							Brussels, 2 December 2019, 5th Meeting of the MAP REA Coordinators	
							Brussels, 21 May 2019, Working dinner with WB PM Sherpas and MAP REA Coordinators	
6.3.4	Meetings of the MAP REA component contact points	Events/conferences	x	x	x		Tirana, 19 March 2019, 3rd Meeting of the MAP REA	
				x	x	x	Brussels, 2 December 2019, 5th Meeting of the MAP REA Coordinators	
				x	x	x	Skopje 11 November 2019, 4th Meeting of the MAP REA Component Contact Points	
6.3.5	Technical support to the processes of MAP REA, SWP 2020-2022, SEE2020 Strategy and post2020 framework	Professional services		x			Expert on RCC Outline for the Strategic Working Plan 2020-2022 and Balkan Barometer 2019 analysis	
						x	Technical assistance for post 2020 in the WB	
			x	x	x	x	Technical assistance for post 2020 in the WB6 economies	
6.3.6	Coordination and cooperation with Brussels-based partners	Events/conferences	x	x	x	x	Brussels, 3 December 2019, High-level European Policy Summit "It takes two to tango: the Western Balkans between hope and reality"	

			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
6.3.7	**_Flexible Facility (ad-hoc assistance; PPF type of activites)_**	Facility	x	x	x	x	International Lawyer(s) - Doctors of Medicine, Dentists, Architects and Civil Engineers 3rd meeting of the LN and 7th Negotiations meeting Mapping of Youth Policies, Programmes and Mechanisms of Youth Participation in Decision Making in WB6 International Lawyer - Doctors of Medicine, Dentists, Architects and Civil Engineers Podgorica, 7-8 November 2019, WB Youth Lab Workshop Sarajevo, 8 July 2019, 6th SEE2020 Governing Board Meeting Workshops - Belgrade, Skopje, Pristina, Tirana, Podgorica and Sarajevo - 16-20 September 2019 and 23 September 2019 Tirana, 30-31 October 2019, Tirana Connectivity Forum 2019 New York Gender Event consultancy Data entry for Balkan Barometer 2019 on SEEDS Intern – update of SEEDAD Web Hosting Platform Brussels, 17-18 October 2019, Project design workshop – Western Balkans Youth Lab Sarajevo, 21-22 October 2019, "Population Dynamics, Human Capital and Sustainable Development in SEE Novi Sad, 22-24 November 20194th Regional Youth Leadership Forum Belgrade, Skopje, Pristina, Tirana, Podgorica 28.01.-01.02.2019 - Training and Awareness Raising Workshops on WBIF support for Digital Sector	_successful implementation of SEE2020; Developed strategic framework for post 2020 period._
7. Political dept activities								
7.1 Political coordination and support to SG's activities								
7.1.1	Meetings of the RCC Board and coordination meetings between SEECP Troika, RCC Secretariat and EU	Events/conferences	x	x		x	Sarajevo, 13-14 March 2019, Board and Coordination meeting Sarajevo, 11 April 2019, Financial Sub-Committee Meeting Working Breakfast - RCC Board participants - Ambassadors Sarajevo, 15-16 May, Coordination and Board Meeting Sarajevo, 17 September 2019, FSC Meeting Working breakfast meeting; RCC Board participating ambassadors	_Strategic coordination and further development of the regional cooperation process_
7.1.2	RCC Annual Meeting	Events/conferences		x			Sarajevo, 26 June 2019, RCC Annual Meeting	
7.1.3	Informal meeting of the MFAs	Events/conferences				x	New York, 24 September 2019, Working breakfast - WB6 Informal Ministerial	

	from the Western Balkans with the EU Commissioner						Meeting	
7.1.4	Consultations with RCC stakeholders	Events/conferences	x	x	x	x	USA, Slovenia, Moldova, Croatia, Turkey, Bulgaria and others	
7.1.5	Diplomatic Seminar (Co-organized with the Bosnian SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office)	Events/conferences	x				Sarajevo, 27 February - 1 March 2019 Seminar for young diplomats	

Annex II: State of Financial Contributions to the RCC Secretariat's Budget for 2019

Contribution	Commitments	Contributions	Date Received
Contributors (Donors)			
Austria	50,000.00	50,000.00	6-Mar-19
Czech Republic	50,000.00	50,000.00	20-Aug-19
Federal Republic of Germany	50,000.00	50,000.00	13-Mar-19
Hungary	50,000.00	50,000.00	7-Feb-19
Italy	50,000.00	50,000.00	25-Oct-19
Ireland	50,000.00	50,000.00	12-Aug-19
Latvia	50,000.00	50,000.00	13-Feb-19
Norway	50,000.00	49,107.00	3-Jun-19
Sweden	50,000.00	47,373.61	27-Jun-19
Switzerland	50,000.00	36,000.00	5-Aug-19
United States of America	60,000.00	68,421.50	9-Nov-18
Total contributing countries donors:	**560,000.00**	**550,902.11**	
European Commission	**2,500,000.00**	1,750,324.00	15-Jul-19
South East Europe Contributors			
Albania	60,000.00	60,000.00	28-Mar-19
Bosnia and Herzegovina	60,000.00	60,000.00	28-Feb-19
Bulgaria	140,000.00	140,000.00	6-Feb-19
Croatia	80,000.00	80,000.00	7-Mar-19
Greece	140,000.00	140,000.00	30-Apr-19
Kosovo*	40,000.00	39,918.00	19-Mar-19
Moldova	40,000.00		
Montenegro	40,000.00	40,000.00	19-Feb-19
Republic of North Macedonia	60,000.00	60,000.00	5-Aug-19
Romania	140,000.00	140,000.00	14-Feb-20
Serbia	80,000.00	80,000.00	18-Feb-19
Slovenia	80,000.00	80,000.00	22-Feb-19
Turkey	140,000.00	140,000.00	25-Feb-19
Total South East Europe Contributors:	**1,100,000.00**	**1,059,918.00**	
Total Committed Funds	**4,160,000.00**	**3,361,144.11**	

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

List of Abbreviations

BB	Balkan Barometer
BCO	Broadband Competence Offices
BIT	Bilateral Investment Treaties
CCPs	Component Contact Points
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
C-i-O	Chairmanship-in-Office
CLO	Country Lead Offices
CoE	Council of Europe
CSIRT	Cyber Security Incident Response Teams
CVE	Countering of Violent Extremism
CVE-FTF Platform	South East Europe Regional Platform for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Recruitment of Foreign Terrorist Fighters
DS	Digital Summit
EC	European Commission
eIDAS	EU regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the European Single Market
EJTN	European Judicial Training Network
ENIC/NARIC	European Network of Information Centres/ National Academic Recognition Information Centres
ERI SEE	Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe
ESAP	Employment and Social Affairs Platform
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
EU	European Union
EU MS	European Union Member States
EWG	Expert Working Group
FSC	Financial Sub-Committee
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IISG	Integrated Internal Security Governance
IIA's	International Investment Agreements
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JTI	Judicial Training Institutions
JWGI	Joint Working Group on Investments
MAP REA	Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NCP	National Contact Point
NFP	National Focal Point
NPR	National Point of Reference
NSA	National Security Authority
ORF	Open Regional Fund
OSINT	Open Sources Intelligence Assessment
P-CVE	Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
RI	Research Infrastructure
RLAH	Roam Like At Home
RRA	Regional Roaming Agreement

RWG Env	Regional Working Group on Environment
SC	Steering Committee
SG	Secretary General
SEE	South East Europe
SEE 2020	South East Europe 2020 Strategy: Jobs and Prosperity in a European Perspective
SEECP	South-East European Cooperation Process
SEEIC	South East Europe Investment Committee
SEELS	South East European Schools of Law Network
SEEMIC	South East Europe Military Intelligence Chiefs
SEENSA	South East European National Security Authorities
SWP	Strategy and Work Programme
TEG	Tourism Expert Group
VDRC	Via Dinarica Regional Coordination
WB	Western Balkans
WIIW	The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies