

## Project Proposal:

### WESTERN BALKANS JOINT ACTIONS AGAINST SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS AND TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Project type:	Immigration and Borders (IB)
Secondary project type:	Protection and Assistance (PX)
Geographical Coverage:	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo <sup>1</sup>
Executing agency:	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Beneficiaries:	Ministries of Interior/Security, Prosecutor's Offices, National Task Forces for countering smuggling of migrants (SOM) and trafficking in human beings (THB) in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo
Partner(s):	n/a
Management site:	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Duration:	36 months
Budget:	15,026,751 DKK

#### Summary

The overall objective of the intervention is to **contribute to better migration management of mixed migration flows in the Western Balkans (WB) through strengthening effective counter-smuggling and counter-human trafficking practices**. The increasingly complex mixed migration dynamics in the WB, coupled with the operational challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic since the beginning of 2020, have revealed important institutional needs and gaps in the field of border management, and in particular in the context of smuggling of migrants (SOM) and the trafficking in human beings (THB).

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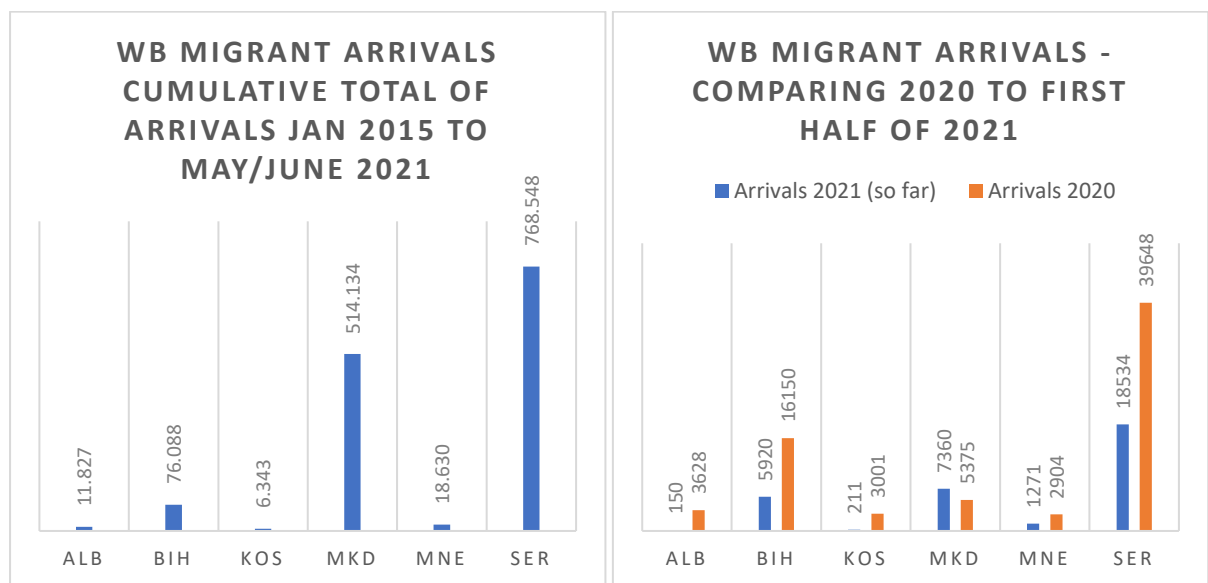
<sup>1</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

These include the need to expand and strengthen regional cooperation and coordination, address the lack of interpretation services during investigations, bridge gaps in key stakeholders’ operational, technical, and strategic capacities at both regional and national levels, and support direct assistance to vulnerable categories. This project therefore builds its interventions around three outcomes:

1. **Regional cooperation and coordination** amongst key actors in countering SOM and THB in the Western Balkans is enhanced at strategic and operational/technical level;
2. Front line actors in the WB have **enhanced human and technical capacities** for proactive identification, protection and assistance to victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants, as well as for enhanced criminal justice response to SOM and THB cases
3. Enhanced **protection, direct assistance** to and **empowerment** of vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking following a rights-based and victim-sensitive approach.

## 1. Rationale

Since the beginning of 2015, the Western Balkans (WB) region has emerged as a major transit hub for migrants attempting to reach the EU. Mixed migration movements which previously impacted mostly North Macedonia and Serbia, have now shifted to the Western Balkans coastal road, through Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo\* and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Comprehensive data on migrant arrivals in the region remain scarce but IOM data shows that a total of 1.4 million migrants were registered by authorities in the region between January 2015 and June 2021.<sup>2</sup>



Although authorities have improved border and immigration processes, structures and capacities, the management of migration continues to pose challenges in the WB. Increased and more complex mixed migration movements have placed additional pressure on the already strained capacities of WB authorities to effectively manage borders, and address the needs of migrants in transit, especially the most vulnerable. Based on its 2019 “Regional Mapping of Smuggling of Migrants in the Western Balkans”, IOM has worked with partners to address some of the most pressing needs for the WB.

<sup>2</sup> IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, Flow Monitoring – Arrivals to Europe, available at: <https://migration.iom.int/europe?type=arrivals>

Considerable progress has been made in **cross-border communication and exchange of information**. IOM also contributed to operationalize the **inter-institutional Task Forces** for identifying, referring and assisting victims of organized crime, amongst other is in the form of mobile teams composed of border police officers, social workers and civil society organizations in Republic of North Macedonia (RNM) and the informal network of prosecutors and investigators in BiH. However, gaps remain in the capacities of law enforcement authorities to counter SOM and THB.

In 2020, Europol noted a growth of migrant smuggling activities in the WB, with criminal networks employing increasingly exploitative measures to defeat controls<sup>3</sup>. Officials at Points of Entry (PoE) are often insufficiently trained and ill-equipped to detect **identity and travel document fraud**. Except for BiH, standardized administrative data collection systems to facilitate statistical reporting and analysis of THB cases remain to be established in all countries of the WB, thus drastically limiting the capacities of authorities to effectively address regional and global transnational organized crime challenges.

**Cultural and linguistic barriers** are further exacerbating issues of identification and referrals, due to the low number of available cultural mediators and access to sustainable interpretation. The lack of first contact translation services further hampers the ability of the law enforcement and prosecutor offices to investigate SOM and THB as the first interview with (potential) victims is often crucial, as victims may no longer be present for future interviews, due to the dynamics of mixed migration flows.

Moreover, operative work of the law enforcement agencies is often suboptimal due to challenges in information flow and lack of coordination, both on **national and especially at regional level**. Such issues require systemic operational solutions bringing together actors involved in the process of SOM prevention, detection, and prosecution. The **cross-border nature of crimes** further emphasizes the need for greater regional cooperation and systematic exchange of operational information between all relevant actors in order to effectively address SOM and THB.

Systems for **direct assistance to and empowerment of victims of trafficking (VOTs) and migrants in a vulnerable situation** are present in the region, but there is both room for improvement of the level of services available, and a notable lack of exchange of best practices and lessons learned between the actors in territories and across the region. Despite successes in past projects, this area of response to SOM and THB is **particularly underdeveloped** in the context of the WB, as different rules apply for actors to be allowed to provide direct support to victims – based on national legal regulations. As such, flexible approaches between direct support and capacity building are key for a successful intervention.

### **Cross-cutting issues: migration management, human rights, gender, and the COVID-19 context**

The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken by governments to prevent and control the spread of the virus have had an unprecedented impact on mobility. The pandemic has affected around 21,000 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers currently present in the region, putting registration, referral and reception systems under additional pressure. For example, large numbers of migrants are stranded and need access to health information and services including COVID-19 related services.

IOM recognizes the need to streamline gender and rights-based approaches as key cross-cutting issues in migration management projects. Border management, SOM and THB institutions, and civil society in the region require further assistance in gender- mainstreaming in cooperation mechanisms, statistical monitoring of trends, direct assistance to (potential) VOTs, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/emsc\\_4th\\_annual\\_activity\\_report\\_-\\_2020.pdf](https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/emsc_4th_annual_activity_report_-_2020.pdf)

Through IOM's project Western Balkan Integrated Border Management Capacity Building Facility (WBIBM), border management authorities will be supported to develop internal mechanisms and capacities that facilitate monitoring of fundamental rights' compliance within border control and management as part of their EU accession process. IOM will ensure complementarity with the WBIBM efforts throughout this project. While the project is focused on migration management aspects of SOM and THB, when addressing the latter, the project will contribute to IOM's Regional Strategy Countering Trafficking of Human Beings in the Western Balkans, and in particular with the priority areas of strengthening the evidence base and enhancing effective investigation and prosecution.

## 2. Project Description

The **overall objective** of the proposed project is to **contribute to better migration management of mixed migration flows in the Western Balkans through strengthening effective counter-smuggling and counter-human trafficking practices, in line with protection sensitive approaches to assisting VOTs**. The project is designed to support key stakeholders at the local, national and sub-regional levels through three distinct but inter-connected outcomes:

### Outcome 1. Enhanced regional strategic and operational cooperation, coordination, and technical capacities to identify, investigate and prosecute SOM and THB, in line with EU and international practices and standards.

IOM will build on previous efforts to continue to **support and enhance regional cooperation and capacities in criminal justice response to SOM and THB** through stakeholders coordination meetings on strategic cross border cooperation and exchange of operational information facilitating cross border joint operations; capacity building at the regional level through design and delivery of victim-centred and trauma informed approach in proactive identification, investigation and prosecution trainings (training of trainers (ToT), simulations/desktop exercises); and mechanisms for enhanced cooperation in investigations through, inter alia, sustainable interpretation solutions.

### **Output 1.1. Regional cooperation and coordination procedures amongst key actors in countering SOM and THB in the Western Balkans are enhanced at the strategic and operational/technical levels**

Countering SOM and THB requires a coordinated and joint approach to identification, investigation and prosecution of networks of smugglers and traffickers. WB authorities have limited capacities and experience in conducting joint operations and investigations, as well as limited opportunities to exchange information and evidence on cross-border cases, including new trends and modus operandi especially in view of the COVID-19 impact. To address this, the project will facilitate increase in exchange of information, enhanced institutional cooperation and improved practical cooperation between counter-SOM and counter-THB taskforces at the regional level. By facilitating annual meetings between Task Forces on countering SOM/THB of the 6 WB countries, the project will foster regular cooperation and information exchange at a strategic/tactical level. Cooperation will focus on EU MS on the migratory routes such as Croatia, Hungary, Greece and Romania. Moreover, the project will strengthen institutional cooperation by facilitating the signature of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)/Protocols<sup>4</sup> on cooperation between the Task Forces. To enhance operational cooperation amongst key actors, the project will also facilitate *ad hoc* bilateral and/or multilateral operational meetings (including with the EU neighbouring MS) to discuss joint investigations and operations.

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<sup>4</sup> The project will capitalize the positive results of its previous regional PRM whereas it supported the conclusion of bilateral protocol between the Task Forces of Serbia and North Macedonia. Other countries Expressed an interest in such protocols, and the project will facilitate such initiatives.

- *Activity 1.1.1 Organize annual regional meetings between counter SOM and THB taskforces to facilitate cooperation and exchange of information and best practices*
- *Activity 1.1.2 Support institutional cooperation through MoUs between national task forces (up to 2 bilateral meetings supported, with target of signing of up to two 2 MoUs)*
- *Activity 1.1.3 Strengthen operational cooperation between the Task Forces and other key SOM and TIP actors through facilitation of bilateral and/or multilateral (including the EU partners) operational ad hoc meetings*

**Output 1.2. Regional capacities to identify, investigate and prosecute THB and SOM, especially in view of challenges posed through mixed migration flows, are strengthened through tailored trainings (ToT, simulations/desktop exercises)**

The regional ToT will address beneficiary led thematic/technical areas. In this regard, IOM will build further on the initiative taken within previous counter SOM project by facilitating the adaptation and further rollout of the counter SOM ToT training curriculum developed by UNODC for Republic of Serbia. In addition, based on previous best practices and lessons learned, IOM will utilize simulations as a substitute to learning-by-doing approaches which have similar educational and skill transfer values, but do not necessitate the disclosure of real case material. The simulations will be focused on operational level counter SOM and THB officers at a bilateral and/or multilateral level. By performing mock operations together, officers will obtain the needed capacities to cooperate in the future and particularly, they will have the first-hand experience of utilizing existing cooperation mechanisms and gain an understanding of EU best practices. Following key recommendations from past simulation/desktop exercises conducted, focus will be placed on specialist interview and profiling training (possibly Frontex debriefing training), specialist training in Social Media and Financial Investigation (including Hawala banking and money-laundering), cultural mediation, etc.

- *Activity 1.2.1 Design and deliver regional ToT on countering SOM and THB*
- *Activity 1.2.2. Design and deliver up to three simulation-based bilateral and/or multilateral exercises on identification and investigation of SOM and THB*

**Output 1.3. Adaptable and sustainable interpretation services are available to regional SOM and THB agencies to support investigative efforts**

Stakeholders identified the limited access to translation and cultural mediation services as the primary obstacle for identifying cases of SOM and THB among mixed migration flows, and for screening and referral of VOTs and other migrants in vulnerable situations to relevant services. This is particularly relevant in the context of the mixed migration flows when local authorities (e.g. municipal social welfare center) in small or rural areas have a temporary increase in the number of migrants, but their resources often remain constant. The lack of sufficient interpreting services for various languages detected in the mixed migration flows, often hampers effective investigation efforts, thereby posing one of the most significant challenges, especially during the first interview with a potential migrant in need which has proven to be a key element for further investigative efforts and targeted service provision. IOM will utilize and base the interventions on previous and current initiatives targeting support to the beneficiaries in finding sustainable interpretation solutions executed under the IPA II Regional Support to Protection Sensitive Migration Management project, to ensure complementarity and align with the wider initiative. By further supporting stakeholders to take the initiative in working jointly to improve translation services, IOM aims to strengthen intra-regional cooperation while allowing for victim-centered services to expand to under-resourced areas.

- *Activity 1.3.1. Map technical gaps in existing capacities and resources at national level in terms of interpretation services in investigative context to ensure further activities are relevant, targeted and effective.*

- *Activity 1.3.2. Develop technical solutions based on the findings of the mapping exercise to enhance interpretation services in the context of investigations and further communication and service provision.*
- *Activity 1.3.3. Pilot the identified technical interpretation services as a proof-of-concept*

**Output 1.4. Improved knowledge on trends and analysis of SOM and THB through exchange of experiences and best practices with key EU institutions, Member States and international actors**

IOM will support the organization of two high-level sub-regional conferences that will gather prominent counter smuggling and counter trafficking stakeholders, such as EU institutions, member states, academic partners and other high profile experts that can contribute to improve knowledge on SOM and THB in the WB to provide regional actors with the most up-to-date information on the trends and flows, and to raise awareness on international best practices. Law enforcement and officials of line ministries of the Kingdom of Denmark will be invited share their best practices and lessons learned in the fields of counter smuggling and counter trafficking.

- *Activity 1.4.1. Planning with counterparts and organization of up to two conferences enabling exchange of information on recent migration and THB trends in the wider EU and international context between regional Task Forces and key international actors*

**Outcome 2. Strengthened prevention, protection and prosecution efforts to counter SOM and THB in all WB jurisdictions.**

IOM will build on joint experiences working bilaterally with the WB6 to **strengthen counter SOM and THB mechanisms at the national level**, by working with relevant state agencies to further strengthen their technical capacities. Through a consultative process, each state partner will be able to determine, in line with the project's priorities, the areas of programming, training, technical equipment most needed to improve their prevention, protection and prosecution efforts. In addition to creating new opportunities for state and non-state actors to cooperate through trainings and implementation of existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the project will also support standardized SOM and THB administrative data collection protocols, further building on current efforts in BiH.

**Output 2.1. Front line actors in the WB jurisdictions have enhanced human and technical capacities for proactive identification, protection and assistance to VOTs and other migrants in vulnerable situations, as well as for enhanced criminal justice response to SOM and THB cases**

This specific output is focused on improving human and technical capacities of the relevant authorities to proactively detect SOM in mixed migration flows, and identify potential victims of trafficking among migrants in transit. In response to the convergence between SOM and THB, increasingly flexible and sophisticated operations of migrant smugglers, the project will build on previous efforts delivered in WB to further enhance the capacity of law enforcement authorities and the judiciary to apprehend, investigate and prosecute smuggling cases; allow for national coordination efforts, and build knowledge of key actors on victim-centered and gender-sensitive screenings, and facilitate referrals to better protect migrants along the WB coastal route. Throughout these interventions, IOM will build upon the SOPs and toolkits it has developed to equip partners with the tools required to effectively conduct their activities, while also striving to uphold international standards by mainstreaming them into training curricula and discussions. IOM will develop specific guidelines on thematic areas such as victim-centred approach to investigation and prosecution, nonpecuniary compensation to victims, non-punishment of victims of trafficking, sanctioning demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking, etc..

- *Activity 2.1.1. Design and deliver national sectoral and intersectoral trainings/workshops/meetings for front liners on specific thematic areas for enhanced identification and investigation of SOM and THB as well as facilitation of furthering exchange of international and EU best practices and standards (up to two per country)*
- *Activity 2.1.2 Identify specific thematic areas with stakeholders, develop guidelines and organize validation workshops between practitioners in criminal justice response and civil society experts on SOM and THB, focused on recent SOM and THB trends in WB*

**Output 2.2. Key actors are provided with tools for standardized administrative data collection and analysis, as well as essential equipment for improved identification and investigation of SOM/ THB**

There is a systemic lack of evidence and research for the development of national policies and programs to combat SOM and THB based on quantitative and qualitative data. This is largely due to the lack of available data on human trafficking, which is a complex, clandestine crime designed to be undetected in a dynamic, fast paced environment. Without a robust, accurate and systematic evidence base, governments and other actors face challenges mobilizing the evidence and data to inform and reinforce targeted interventions both related to detection and investigation of these crimes, as well as provision of necessary protection and assistance to victims. Capitalizing on the joint endeavor of IOM and UNODC in the development of international standards in human trafficking administrative data collection, as well as recent support provided by IOM in BiH in setting up the first database for THB case management that aligns with the EU Commission request through GRETA, the project will support the development and/or review of up to two new such databases for harmonized and standardized collection, processing, analysis and use of *non-personal* statistical data on THB/THB.

To facilitate the collection, analysis, and sharing of statistical data, as well as to enhance controls at the Port of Entry and inland, to detect perpetrators, and facilitate identification of victims, the project will also procure equipment to operational stakeholders. IOM will further build on the roadmaps conducted in the region on migration statistics to ensure complementarity of this wider initiative by developing solutions to enhance capacities to collect, analyze and utilize administrative data on SOM and THB. This output will be implemented with close alignment with the output 1.2, and in particular, if and when feasible, will be linked to the ToT activities.

- *Activity 2.2.1. Mapping of existing systems in place to facilitate enhanced collection of administrative data on SOM and THB as well as essential equipment to identify and investigate SOM and THB.*
- *Activity 2.2.2. Support in developing and establishing databases and front-user applications for standardized collection, processing, analysis and use of administrative statistical data on SOM and THB (in up to two countries)*
- *Activity 2.2.3. Liaise with counterparts to identify gaps in front-line actors' equipment needs and procurement of prioritized equipment for enhanced performance as well as improved mobility of key actors.*

**Outcome 3. Enhanced protection and empowerment of vulnerable migrant categories following a rights-based and victim-sensitive approach.**

IOM will provide **direct assistance to particularly vulnerable categories** (e.g. victims of trafficking (VOTs), unaccompanied migrant children (UAMCs)) whose needs are not met through regular assistance programs, and support public authorities in the WB as well as other stakeholders such as international organizations and NGOs working with the target population to do so. To promote a victim-centred, rights-based and gender-sensitive approach to vulnerable categories, IOM will map key services available, and work with front-line delivery partners in bridging direct assistance gaps.

### **Output 3.1 Supporting active frontline stakeholders in providing protection assistance to vulnerable categories<sup>5</sup>, especially VOTs and UAMCs, in line with international standards**

Through this project, IOM will coordinate with relevant stakeholders, service providers and health institutions to provide appropriate and tailored direct assistance to vulnerable categories, based on individual case assessment. Precisely, to ensure that targeted assistance is provided, IOM will publish a call for proposal and provide grants for relevant actors to provide direct assistance. IOM will choose state and/or non-state certified service providers who are trained to help victims of trafficking or are appointed by authorities. This collaborative approach will ensure that the services provided address the needs of the persons assisted, and aligns with relevant national and international standards. Working on the principle of an integrative and comprehensive approach, IOM will provide counselling on voluntary return assistance as an option for those migrants who can and want to return to their countries of origin.

- *Activity 3.1.1. Conduct a rights-based assessment on protection and gender sensitive assistance to victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants in the region*
- *Activity 3.1.2. Build the capacities of key actors in addressing observed shortcomings and enhancing their system to ensure direct assistance is provided in accordance with international standards and best practices through tailored trainings and enabled platforms for information sharing and best practices (focusing on both state and non-state service providers)*
- *Activity 3.1.3 Provide direct assistance to victims of trafficking and vulnerable categories of migrants such as mental health and psychosocial support, access to health, nutrition, non—food items and other support, and potentially return services where and when appropriate*

#### **Theory of change and key assumptions**

##### *Objective-level theory of change*

**IF** the strategic and operational cooperation, coordination, and technical capacities to identify, investigate and prosecute SOM and THB are enhanced in the WB, in line with EU and international practices and standards, and **IF** the prevention, protection and prosecution efforts to counter SOM and THB in all WB jurisdictions are strengthened, and **IF** the protection and empowerment of vulnerable migrant is enhanced; **THEN** the migration management of mixed migratory flows in the WB will be improved; **BECAUSE** the WB authorities will continue prioritizing migration management and counter smuggling and trafficking in their political agenda, and at the same time allocating sufficient human and financial resources at local level to ensure the durability of the regional intervention and maximise its impact.

##### *Outcome-level theory of change*

#### **Outcome 1**

**IF** the regional cooperation and coordination procedures are enhanced, and **IF** WB agencies with cross-border mandates receive practical training on how to operationalize and implement these procedures on SOM and THB, and **IF** adaptable and sustainable interpretation services are available to regional SOM and THB agencies to support investigative efforts, and **IF** the relevant WB agencies have access to up-to-date knowledge on trends and analysis of SOM and THB, and establish a dialogue and

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<sup>5</sup> IOM uses the definition of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of *vulnerability* as per the Principles and Guidelines on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations: “Vulnerable migrants are migrants who are unable effectively to enjoy their human rights, are at increased risk of violations and abuse and who, accordingly, are entitled to call on a duty bearer’s heightened duty of care.”



exchange with their EU counterparts on best practices; **THEN** the regional strategic and operational cooperation, coordination, and technical capacities to identify, investigate and prosecute SOM and THB, in line with EU and international practices and standards will be enhanced; **BECAUSE** the relevant WB agencies will continue demonstrating a strong political will to counter smuggling and trafficking in the region, and, at the same time, understand the value in adopting a sub-regional and bilateral approach in these matters, **BECAUSE** the WB officials trained under the project will remain committed to apply the new knowledge, skills and lessons learned in their everyday work, **BECAUSE** the interpreters will be committed to deliver quality interpretation services as part of the network, and **BECAUSE** the transfer of knowledge and best practices from EU and international experts will continue being applicable to the WB context and structures.

If these assumptions are correct, then it is plausible to think that that the expected outputs will lead to the *Outcome 1. Enhanced regional capacities and partnerships to combat SOM and THB*, and will contribute to the overall objective to improve migration management in the Western Balkans.

### **Outcome 2**

**IF** the relevant WB agencies and front-line actors involved in the fight against SOM and THB have the necessary knowledge, tools and mechanisms to cooperate towards a more proactive identification, protection and assistance to VOTs and other migrants in vulnerable situations, and **IF** they have better capacities to collect and analyze administrative data on SOM and THB; **THEN** the prevention, protection and prosecution efforts on SOM and THB will be strengthened in all WB jurisdictions; **BECAUSE** stakeholders will continue showing a political will in cooperating and sharing information with all necessary stakeholders, and **BECAUSE** decision-makers will have at their disposal accurate and timely data about current trends in the region, which will allow them to make informed policy and operational decisions to fight against THB and SOM.

If these assumptions are correct, then it is plausible to think that that the expected outputs will lead to the *Outcome 2. Strengthened national prevention, protection and prosecution efforts to counter SOM and THB*, and will contribute to the overall objective to improve migration management in the Western Balkans.

### **Outcome 3**

**IF** frontline workers providing protection and empowerment services to vulnerable migrants have improved knowledge and skills on protection assistance to vulnerable categories, especially victims of trafficking and UAMCs, in line with international standards, in the region; **THEN** the protection and empowerment of vulnerable migrant will be enhanced, **BECAUSE** the importance of the civil society organizations assisting vulnerable migrants will continue being recognized by the relevant authorities in the WB, and **BECAUSE** vulnerable migrants will have better access to specialized services (e.g. mental health and psychosocial support, medical services, etc.). This assumes that standard operational procedures are in place to provide proper registration, identification and referral procedures in the TRCs and other service points, and that potential/confirmed victims are willing to engage with services providers.

If the assumptions above are correct, then it is plausible that the expected output will lead to the *Outcome 3. Enhanced protection and empowerment of vulnerable migrant categories following a rights-based and victim-sensitive approach*, and will contribute to the overall objective to improve migration management in the Western Balkans.

### 3. Partnerships and Coordination

IOM has a strong and long-standing presence in the Western Balkans and has extensive experience in implementing migration management projects with a view to EU accession. Since 2015, IOM has been the leading organization in promoting protection-sensitive migration management in the WB. As part of its Immigration and Border Management (IBM) portfolio, IOM is providing technical support to all WB authorities in border management and border security cooperation and capacity building, including the WBIBM funded by the Danish MFA. The project will utilize and further build upon partnerships established throughout the implementation of several regional projects, such as with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), Europol, Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and will further advance achievements and good practices by supporting the implementation of bilateral protocols on countering SOM and THB signed between North Macedonia and Serbia.

The proposed project will be managed by IOM Sarajevo; and it will be implemented in coordination with the authorities and technical level stakeholders of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Serbia and Kosovo\*. The project will ensure complementarity and coherence with its regional and national interventions in areas concerned, particularly with the two facility instruments funded by the Danish MFA.

The active participation and influence of all relevant stakeholders in the planning, implementation, evaluation, and monitoring of activities will constitute a critical element of the overall action, in order to ensure that the project reflects the needs and priorities on the ground, as well as to enhance the project sustainability. Importantly, the proposed intervention is in line with the needs of WB authorities as it has been designed in direct response to their advocacy for IOM to continue engaging in this area, as established through past interventions as well as a rapid stakeholder outreach during the project current proposal stage. Close consultations with the key stakeholders in the WB will be ensured through a set of regional meetings planned to be organized throughout the project implementation, which will enable their participation and increase their ownership over the project deliverables. Coordination and cooperation with European and international partners will be ensured, including Frontex, OSCE, UNODC, UNOCT, SELEC, PCCSEE, MARRI and others.

### 4. Monitoring

Monitoring will constitute a critical element of the project, with the systematic collection of data for project management to receive feedback and indication from stakeholders and beneficiaries to respond to needs and adapt programming accordingly. During the initial phase of the project, IOM will develop a project monitoring plan. IOM will regularly monitor project activities against the workplan, financial expenditures, and transactions of the project to ensure timely, transparent, and responsive implementation. Overall, close monitoring of the project will serve to review progress in achieving results against indicators as set out in the project document (results matrix) and Results Monitoring Plan; ensure observance of the contractual obligations as indicated in the contract, project document, the work plan and the budget; and facilitate monitoring of financial aspects of the project, including expenses versus budget. All monitoring activities will be coordinated and supervised by the Regional Project Manager following IOM standards and using the IOM corporate project management application, PRIMA FOR ALL. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark shall have the right to carry out any technical or financial supervision mission that is considered necessary to monitor the implementation of the project.

## 5. Evaluation

At the end of the project, IOM will conduct a final external evaluation, in accordance with the IOM evaluation policies, and with technical support and guidance from RO Vienna. The final evaluation will follow the established IOM evaluation methodology outlined in the IOM Project Handbook and criteria defined by Development Assistance Committee Expert Group of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD DAC). The evaluation methodology will be designed with close guidance from the IOM Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. The purpose of the final evaluation is to observe and evaluate how effectively the activities were carried out and how the challenges in operational and coordination level have been handled. The evaluation process will use systemic analysis to gather data and reveal the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and coherence of the action, while also looking at cross-cutting issues of the project implementation.

The ultimate purpose of the evaluation is to assess the project impact and determine the entire range of effects of the project, including the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. The results of the evaluation will provide insights and guidance for further development of IBM-related projects in the field of border management and border security in the WB and beyond. At the same time, the evaluation will assess intra-regional and inter-regional partnership levels and deliver recommendations for existing and advisable partnerships in the future. The final evaluation should deliver notes and recommendations on monitoring and overall coordination of the project. After the termination of the project support, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark reserves the right to carry out evaluations in accordance with this article.

## 6. Results Matrix

	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Data Source and Collection Method</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Assumptions</i>
<b>Objective:</b> Contribute to better migration management of mixed migration flows in the Western Balkans through strengthening effective counter-smuggling and counter-human trafficking practices, in line with protection sensitive approaches to assisting VOTs	% increase in total of initiated investigations of SOM and THB cases where more than 1 project country is involved	Records provided by relevant government authorities	0	10%	
	% WB officials in SOM / THB fields who agree the project improved cooperation in the region	End of project survey	0	80%	
<b>Outcome 1. Enhanced regional strategic and operational cooperation, coordination, and technical capacities to identify, investigate and prosecute SOM and THB, in line with EU and international practices and standards.</b>	# of MoU on cooperation between Task Forces signed	Copy of signed MoUs/Protocols	1	2	Governments allocate sufficient resources to ensure that the activities of the project have a demonstrable impact.
	# joint counter SOM and THB operations conducted as a result of project activities under this outcome	Quarterly and annual reports on joint patrols	0	TBD (target to be defined by end of year 1 of implementation)	
<b>Output 1.1:</b> Regional cooperation and coordination procedures amongst key actors in countering SOM and THB in the Western Balkans are enhanced at the strategic and operational/technical levels.	# of regional meetings on exchange of best practices	Attendance list	0	3	Willingness of trafficking taskforces to exchange information and experiences as well as implement counter smuggling efforts.  Government stakeholders have the political will and see the
	Drafting of MoU on cooperation between Task Forces initiated	Meeting records	no	yes	
	# of operational meetings of informal network of			4	

	prosecutors and investigators held	Attendance list	0		value in regional, bilateral activities.
<b>Activities that lead to Output 1.1:</b> <i>Activity 1.1.1 Organize annual regional meetings between counter SOM and THB taskforces to facilitate cooperation and exchange of information and best practices</i> <i>Activity 1.1.2 Support institutional cooperation through MoUs between national task forces (up to 2 bilateral meetings supported, with target of signing of up to two 2 MoUs)</i> <i>Activity 1.1.3 Strengthen operational cooperation between the Task Forces and other key SOM and THB actors through facilitation of bilateral and/or multilateral (including the EU partners) operational ad hoc meetings</i>					MoUs can pass needed level of approval  Diplomatic relations remain stable  COVID-19related travel restrictions do not impede regional travel
<b>Output 1.2.:</b> Regional capacities to identify, investigate and prosecute THB and SOM, especially in view of challenges posed through mixed migration flows are strengthened through tailored trainings (ToT, simulations/desktop exercises)	# of Task Force officials trained on identification, investigation and prosecution of SOM and THB cases	Attendance lists	0	36 – (6 from each WB6, at least 2 women per delegation)	Officials trained under the project apply new knowledge and lessons learned in their everyday work.
	# of WB6 participate in bilateral and/or multilateral simulation/desktop exercise	Attendance lists	2	4	Equal participation and women’s professional development is supported by participating institutions.
<b>Activities that lead to Output 1.2:</b> <i>Activity 1.2.1 Design and deliver regional ToT on countering SOM and THB</i> <i>Activity 1.2.2. Design and deliver up to three simulation-based bilateral and/or multilateral exercises on identification and investigation of SOM and THB</i>					ToTs will be used by stakeholders in future  Stakeholders have needed human resources to attend activities  COVID-19 related travel restrictions do not impede regional travel

<b>Output 1.3:</b> Adaptable and sustainable interpretation services are available to regional SOM and THB agencies to support investigative efforts.	# of national chapters in the assessment of available capacities available	Copy of the document	0	6	High level of stakeholder buy-in can be secured.  identified interpreters are available and interested to participate in the network
	Technical specifications report for network for interpretation services developed	Copy of the document	No	Yes	
	# of Interpreters of languages common in mixed migration flows who are willing to be included in the network	List of contacts	0	At least 6	
<b>Activities that lead to Output 1.3.:</b> <i>Activity 1.3.1. Map technical gaps in existing capacities and resources at national level in terms of interpretation services in investigative context to ensure further activities are relevant, targeted and effective.</i> <i>Activity 1.3.2. Develop technical solutions based on the findings of the mapping exercise to enhance interpretation services in the context of investigations and further communication and service provision.</i> <i>Activity 1.3.3. Pilot the identified technical interpretation services as a proof-of-concept</i>					Interpreters for needed languages are available  Stakeholders have needed human resources to support the process of establishing the network
<b>Output 1.4:</b> Improved trends monitoring and analysis of SOM and THB through exchange of experiences and best practices with key EU institutions, Member States and international actors	# of WB and EU government officials participating in regional workshop on exchange of best practices	Attendance lists	0	41 (6 per WB country, up to 5 from the EU, at least 33% women in total)	Transfer of best practice from EU and international experts is applicable to the WB context, available technology and institutional structures and procedures.
<b>Activities that lead to Output 1.4.:</b> <i>Activity 1.4.1. Planning with counterparts and organization of up to two conferences enabling exchange of information on recent migration and THB trends in the wider EU and international context between regional Task Forces and key international actors</i>					Stakeholders have needed human resources to attend conferences COVID-19 related travel restrictions do not impede regional travel

<b>Outcome 2. Strengthened prevention, protection and prosecution efforts to counter SOM and THB in all WB jurisdictions.</b>	% of SOM and THB officials who report using some of the skills learned through intervention per location	follow up questionnaire to officers	0	75%	Improving national structures and capacities, prioritized based on needs, is a pre-requisite to better regional cooperation and coordination
	% of SOM and THB officials who report improved victim centered approach in their unit attributable to activities under this outcome	follow up questionnaire to officers	0	75%	
<b>Output 2.1.</b> Front line actors in the WB jurisdictions have enhanced human and technical capacities for proactive identification, protection and assistance to VOTs and other migrants in vulnerable situations, as well as for enhanced criminal justice response to SOM and THB cases	# of officials participate in national capacity building activities	Attendance lists	0	36 (at least 33% women) from WB6	Local frontline actors have political will to engage in dialogue with communities
<b>Activities that lead to Output 2.1.:</b>  <i>Activity 2.1.1. Design and deliver national sectoral and intersectoral trainings/workshops/meetings for front liners on specific thematic areas for enhanced identification and investigation of SOM and THB as well as facilitation of furthering exchange of international and EU best practices and standards (up to two per country)</i> <i>Activity 2.1.2 Identify specific thematic areas with stakeholders, develop guidelines and organize validation workshops between practitioners in criminal justice response and civil society experts on SOM and THB, focused on recent SOM and THB trends in WB</i>					Gender norms on activity participation can be overcome by active encouragement for the participation of women Relevant stakeholders and authorities are willing and able to participate
<b>Output 2.2.</b>	# of databases developed	Stakeholder report	0	1	Improved data collection and analysis leads to

Key actors are provided with tools for standardized administrative data collection and analysis, as well as essential equipment for improved identification and investigation of SOM and THB cases	# of key actors who have improved equipment for enhanced performance in data collection, identification, and other SOM / THB activities	Handover reports	0	6	better protection, prevention, and prosecution efforts to counter SOM and TIP
<b>Activities that lead to Output 2.2.:</b>					Stakeholders can allocate enough human resources to participate and provide inputs for development of databases and front-user applications  Equipment purchased will be used for intended purpose
<i>Activity 2.2.1. Mapping of existing systems in place to facilitate enhanced collection of statistical data on SOM and THB as well as essential equipment to identify and investigate SOM and THB.</i>					
<i>Activity 2.2.2. Support in developing and establishing databases and front-user applications for standardized collection, processing, analysis and utilization of statistical data on SOM and THB (in up to two countries)</i>					
<i>Activity 2.2.3. Liaise with counterparts to identify gaps in front-line actors' equipment needs and procurement of prioritized equipment for enhanced performance as well as improved mobility of key actors.</i>					
<b>Outcome 3. Enhanced protection and empowerment of vulnerable migrant categories following a rights-based and victim-sensitive approach.</b>	# of vulnerable persons / victims who are supported directly or indirectly through the project	IOM / partner reports	0	240, disaggregated by gender and type of assistance	Enhanced protection leads to better systems for countering SOM and THB in general
	# of service providers to vulnerable persons that are supported	Project report	0	30	
<b>Output 3.1</b> Supporting active frontline stakeholders in providing protection assistance to vulnerable categories, especially victims of trafficking and UAMCs, in line with international standards	# of trainings delivered to service providers	Project reports, attendance lists	0	6	Support to NGO service providers leads to a stronger role of civil society, which leads to better long term outcomes of counter – TIP and SOM efforts
	Regional meeting for service providers organized	Attendance list	No	Yes	
<b>Activities that lead to Output 3.1.:</b>					COVID-19 restriction do not impede activities



<p><i>Activity 3.1.1. Conduct a rights-based assessment on protection and gender sensitive assistance to victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants in the region</i></p> <p><i>Activity 3.1.2. Build the capacities of key actors in addressing observed shortcomings and enhancing their system to ensure direct assistance is provided in accordance with international standards and best practices through tailored trainings and enabled platforms for information sharing and best practices (focusing on both state and non-state service providers)</i></p> <p><i>Activity 3.1.3 Provide direct assistance to victims of trafficking and vulnerable categories of migrants such as mental health and psychosocial support, access to health, nutrition, non—food items and other support, and potentially return services where and when appropriate</i></p>	<p>Service providers have needed human resources to attend meetings and events</p>
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## 7. Work Plan

Activity	Responsible Party	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
<i>Setting up project structure, internal sub-regional planning meetings, hiring/training of staff</i>		X											
<i>Activity 1.1.1 Organize annual regional meetings between counter SOM and THB taskforces to facilitate cooperation and exchange of information and best practices</i>	IOM		X				X						X
<i>Activity 1.1.2 Support institutional cooperation through MoUs between national task forces (up to 2 bilateral meetings supported, with target of signing of up to two 2 MoUs)</i>	IOM				X						X		
<i>Activity 1.1.3 Strengthen operational cooperation between the Task Forces and other key SOM and TIP actors through facilitation of bilateral and/or multilateral (including the EU partners) operational ad hoc meetings</i>	IOM		X		X		X		X		X		X
<i>Activity 1.2.1 Design and deliver regional ToT on countering SOM and TIP</i>	IOM						X			X			
<i>Activity 1.2.2. Design and deliver up to three simulation-based bilateral and/or multilateral exercises on identification and investigation of SOM and TIP</i>	IOM					X	X			X	X		
<i>Activity 1.3.1. Map technical gaps in existing capacities and resources at national level in terms of interpretation services in investigative context to ensure further activities are relevant, targeted and effective.</i>	IOM		X	X									

Activity	Responsible Party	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
Activity 1.3.2. Develop technical solutions to enhance interpretation services in the context of investigations and further communication and service provision.	IOM				X	X							
Activity 1.3.3. Pilot the identified technical interpretation services as a proof-of-concept	IOM						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Activity 1.4.1. Planning with counterparts and organization of up to two conferences enabling exchange of information on recent migration and THB trends in the wider EU and international context between regional Task Forces and key international actors	IOM				X				X				

Activity 2.1.1. Design and deliver national sectoral and intersectoral trainings/workshops/meetings for front liners on specific thematic areas for enhanced identification and investigation of SOM and THB as well as facilitation of furthering exchange of international and EU best practices and standards (up to two per country)	IOM		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Activity 2.1.2 Identify specific thematic areas with stakeholders, develop guidelines and organize validation workshops between practitioners in criminal justice response and civil society experts on SOM and THB, focused on recent SOM and THB trends in WB	IOM		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Activity 2.2.1. Mapping of existing systems in place to facilitate enhanced collection of statistical data on SOM and THB as well as essential equipment to identify and investigate SOM and THB.	IOM		X	X									

Activity	Responsible Party	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
Activity 2.2.2. Support in developing and establishing databases and front-user applications for standardized collection, processing, analysis and utilization of statistical data on SOM and THB (in up to two countries)	IOM				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Activity 2.2.3. Liaise with counterparts to identify gaps in front-line actors' equipment needs and procurement of prioritized equipment for enhanced performance as well as improved mobility of key actors.	IOM		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Activity 3.1.1. Conduct a rights-based assessment on protection and gender sensitive assistance to victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants in the region	IOM				X	X	X						
Activity 3.1.2. Build the capacities of key actors in addressing observed shortcomings and enhancing their system to ensure direct assistance is provided in accordance with international standards and best practices through tailored trainings and enabled platforms for information sharing and best practices (focusing on both state and non-state service providers)	IOM						X				X		
Activity 3.1.3 Provide direct assistance to victims of trafficking and vulnerable categories of migrants such as mental health and psychosocial support, access to health, nutrition, non—food items and other support, and potentially return services where and when appropriate	IOM		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

## 8. Budget

See annexed budget document.

## Annex 1. Risk Assessment Plan

<i><b>Risk Factor</b></i>	<i><b>Consequence</b></i>	<i><b>Likelihood and Timeline</b></i>	<i><b>Risk Treatment Plan</b></i>
COVID-19 mitigation measures disrupt IOM's ability to carry out project activities.	4	D: Has occurred before in IOM, or could occur within months to years	Change the consequences of the risk
Government authorities of beneficiary countries withdraw their interest in engaging with the project.	5	B: Has occurred elsewhere, or could occur within decades	Change the likelihood of the risk
Legislative pre-conditions for interpretation services are not met in the duration of the project	5	D: Has occurred before in IOM, or could occur within months to years	Change the consequences of the risk
Unfavourable market conditions to incentivise interpreters' participation	3	D: Has occurred before in IOM, or could occur within months to years	Change the likelihood of the risk