



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

Project Document:

WESTERN BALKANS READMISSION CAPACITY BUILDING FACILITY (WBCAP)

Project type:	Immigration and Borders (IB)
Secondary project type:	Choose secondary project type if applicable
Geographical Coverage:	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo*
Executing agency:	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Beneficiaries:	Ministry of Interior of Albania, Ministry of Interior and Service for Foreigners' Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Interior of Montenegro, Ministry of Interior of North Macedonia, Ministry of Interior of Serbia, Ministry of Interior of Kosovo*, Ministry of Interior Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco and returnees as indirect beneficiaries
Partner(s):	n/a
Management site:	Skopje, CO, NORTH MACEDONIA
Duration:	36 months
Budget:	DKK 22,400,000.00 / EUR 3,000,000.00
Danish Reference:	2020 - 42524

* References to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

Summary

The overall objective of the intervention is to **contribute to enhanced national migration management and readmission systems in the Western Balkans, and strengthened cooperation with relevant countries of origin and EU Member States on readmission**, through the establishment of a Western Balkan Readmission Capacity-Building Facility (WBCAP).

Currently there are limited or no technical level readmission-related communication channels between the Western Balkans (WB) and Countries of Origin (CoOs). Therefore, in the frame of this project, IOM will provide technical expertise and operational support to project beneficiaries in negotiating readmission agreements or arrangements between WB and priority CoOs, as identified by authorities in the WB, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Morocco and Pakistan. Building on the findings of a regional assessment of readmission frameworks in WB, conducted by IOM¹, under the WBCAP Facility, IOM will organize bi-lateral meetings between WB authorities and CoO readmission practitioners and will support the development of at least two readmission arrangements or agreements.

Additionally, challenges remain in the effective return and readmission of WB and third country nationals within the WB, despite existing readmission agreements (RA) among WB beneficiaries. Therefore, IOM will strengthen the implementation of readmission agreements within the WB in order to facilitate the return of WB and third country nationals. IOM will develop or update at least three Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or implementing protocols regulating bi-lateral return and readmission processes within the WB region. This activity will be complemented by three expert regional trainings for return officials on rights-oriented return and readmission and effective case management. To ensure adequate exchange and retention of readmission- and return-related knowledge in the region, IOM will establish a Regional Group of Readmission Specialists, previously requested by WB authorities in readmission forums organized by IOM in the region.

Finally, paper- or email-based communication of readmission requests is still common between WB and EU Member States (MS). For this reason, IOM will strengthen return and readmission cooperation between the WB and EU MS through the rollout of innovative and sustainable digital readmission case management systems (RCMS). Concretely, IOM will support the implementation of at least two RCMS system in the WB. IOM has a readymade model RCMS already implemented in EU MS and CoO, in the form of a toolkit package that can be adapted, replicated and rolled out in different contexts. Based on a targeted digital maturity assessment, IOM will aim for the RCMS to be seamlessly integrated in the national IT architecture and will be accompanied by the development of protocols and trainings on its use and sustainability.

Conceptualized as a Capacity Building Facility, this intervention will provide sufficient flexibility and adaptability to meet the specific, evolving needs of the beneficiaries, while ensuring complementarity and inter-operability with existing readmission structures. In order to access the Facility, WB counterparts will need to express interest in receiving technical support in an area covered by the WBCAP Facility through a formal request. At the same time, a strategic mechanism will be established to review and decide on the requests and allocation of support. All throughout the process, IOM will

¹ The *Regional Functional Analysis on Readmission Frameworks and Capacities in the Western Balkans* is being conducted under the auspices of the project “Regional Support to Protection Sensitive Migration Management in the Western Balkans and Turkey” – Phase II, funded by the EU, and jointly implemented by IOM, Frontex, EASO, and UNHCR. The Functional Analysis will be finalized by March 2021. For more info on the project, please see: <https://serbia.iom.int/node/669>

ensure complementarities and synergies among the individual projects and actions supported by the Facility, as well as with all other relevant, ongoing initiatives in the region.

1. Rationale

The return of irregular migrants and failed asylum seekers is an important aspect of migration management that contributes to guarding the integrity and credibility of asylum and migration policies and systems. Effective readmission policies, in full respect of international law and standards, are hence central aspects of migration management that address irregular migration in a way that helps to discourage people from risking their lives undertaking dangerous migration routes.

Since the beginning of 2018, the WB region has re-emerged as a transit route for migrants towards the EU. While in 2015-2016 the main countries facing the mixed migration movements were North Macedonia and Serbia, since 2018 migrants have been increasingly transiting through Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo* and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many have been left stranded along the route and consequently, the region has continued being exposed to significant migration challenges. This situation revealed an immediate need to further support a comprehensive migration management framework in WB, including the safe and orderly return and readmission of irregular migrants which is essential to enhance the effectiveness of policies in the field of international protection and legal migration.

In response to this, and with the support of the EU and other partners, including Denmark, IOM has worked on developing effective Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) policies and programs in the region as an essential element of return management. However, in order to ensure a holistic approach to migration management, further support is needed in the region to ensure other complementary and essential elements of return, including readmission. In this context, the authorities of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo* expressed need to further efforts in the area of readmission, especially in terms of establishing cooperation with the CoOs of irregular migrants, supporting a regional dialogue to further streamline and strengthen the implementation of the existing RAs concluded among the WB beneficiaries and finally, the RAs concluded with the EU MS.

Regarding **readmission cooperation with CoOs**, at the *Regional Meeting on Readmission in the Western Balkans* organized by IOM and the Migration, Asylum, and Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), which was convened under the MARRI Readmission Cooperation Network in Sarajevo on 14 May 2019, the WB authorities pointed out that the key readmission-related challenges in the region were the lack of readmission agreements and cooperation with relevant CoOs, as well as the inadequate and slow processing by relevant CoO authorities of identity verification requests. Such lack of cooperation has left WB authorities without legal mechanisms to apply non-voluntary return options to migrants in irregular situation, thus facing a situation where further irregular movements within the region or towards the EU continue. The priority CoOs, as identified by WB authorities based on the number of irregular migrants present in the region and their presumed nationality are Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Morocco and Pakistan.

All six WB beneficiaries have made attempts to initiate negotiations on readmission with some of these priority countries (for example, Bosnia and Herzegovina with Afghanistan, and Kosovo* with Afghanistan and Pakistan, respectively), some have shared draft texts of readmission agreements with select CoOs (for example, Serbia with Afghanistan in 2015), and some have recently concluded a readmission agreement (Bosnia and Herzegovina with Pakistan). However, CoOs' responses to these calls for cooperation have remained limited. For this reason, the WB authorities have recognized the need for a regional approach towards establishing cooperation and initiating negotiations on readmission cooperation with priority CoOs, building on the experience in the development of the EU RAs, and utilizing IOM's operational and technical capacities in this area.

Furthermore, **readmission among WB countries** is regulated through bi-lateral readmission agreements which all WB countries have signed with each other. The only exception is Kosovo* which currently does not have a RA with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. A key challenge regarding readmission among WB countries, as highlighted by relevant authorities, is the readmission of third country nationals transiting through the WB region, which currently represent the greatest percentage of the migrant caseload. Some of the WB authorities, including in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, have indicated that there are delays in the processing of readmission requests due to them often being rejected by neighboring countries, including Albania, because there is no proof that migrants have transited through their territory. Such procedural delays and documentation issues hamper the effectiveness and efficiency of readmission within the WB and increase risks of rights violations, absconding and onward irregular movements. This highlights the need for increased practical cooperation, effective policy dialogues, and development of tools that ensure the timely and protection-sensitive implementation of RAs in the region.

In terms of **readmission cooperation with EU MS**, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia² have all signed multilateral RA with the EU, so-called EU RAs, which are complemented by bi-lateral implementation protocols regulating specific technical aspects of the readmission procedure between the WB countries and EU MS.³ In order to monitor and ensure the uniform implementation of the EU RAs, bi-lateral Joint Readmission Committees (JRC) have been established between the European Commission (EC) and each of the five WB countries. The JRCs meet annually and have been positively evaluated by the WB administrations as useful platforms for direct information exchange between the EC and the WB administrations on readmission and visa issues. Kosovo* has regulated the readmission procedure through bi-lateral readmission agreements. At present, Kosovo* has concluded 18 readmission agreements with 20 EU MS⁴, and additional four agreements with Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Turkey. Additionally, Kosovo* has adopted the Law on Readmission which regulates readmission with countries with which there is no RA.

Publicly available and official data on readmission of WB nationals within the region by the respective WB authorities remains limited. However, statistics published by Eurostat indicate a large number of returns of WB nationals by EU MS in the past six years. Eurostat reports that the total number of WB nationals who have returned from EU MS to a third country following an order to leave in the period 2014-2018⁵ is a total of 305,215 WB nationals, with 37,980 returned in 2018.⁶ This number includes both non-voluntary and assisted returns, as well as voluntary departures. While this number does not clearly indicate if the concerned WB nationals returned to the WB, it does give an indication of the general caseload of WB returnees.

² The EU RA with Albania came into force on 1 January 2006, while the EU RA's with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, came into force on 1 January 2008.

³ The bilateral implementation protocols are foreseen in Article 19 in each of EURA. There is no obligation for the WB countries to conclude implementation protocols with each EU Member State or vice versa. In practice, bilateral implementation protocols have been developed between select WB countries and EU Member States based on mutual interest and need.

⁴ Kosovo* signed one readmission agreement with the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxemburg).

⁵ Data for 2019 is not available at the time of writing.

⁶ Eurostat, *Database, Asylum and Managed Migration Data (migr)*, *Enforcement of Immigration Legislation (migr_eil)*, *Third country nationals returned following an order to leave (migr_eirtn)*, available at:

https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_eirt_agr&lang=en

More specifically, in the period 2014-2019, EU MS have returned 15,100⁷ persons who are nationals of one of the WB countries under EU RA procedures. This figure has been steadily increasing through the years with 4,640 WB nationals returned in 2019 under an EU RA procedure.⁸ In the same period, an additional 45,920 WB nationals were returned under other RAs or return procedures.⁹ It is important to note that not all EU MS report data on this specific indicator and these statistics do not indicate the country to which the persons were returned but rather the citizenship of the persons returned.

Moreover, the processing of readmission requests between EU MS and WB is regulated through EU RAs and bi-lateral readmission agreements, as noted above, and further clarified through bi-lateral implementation protocols. Readmission requests are communicated between the responsible ministerial units of the requesting and receiving state by email or fax, and there is no information if this procedure is uniform across the WB. Currently, there are no specialized or tailored electronic RCMSs or other similar tools which facilitate the communication of readmission requests between the EU MS and WB.

Additionally, as mentioned above and confirmed by EU and WB administrations¹⁰, while the readmission of WB nationals to the region has been conducted without significant obstacles in the past decade, the 2019 and 2020 Country Reports on the WB published by the EC, highlight that readmission remains challenging due to the insufficient cooperation and operational capacities of the national migration management systems. As a result of the lack of robust return and readmission frameworks, irregular cross border movements and push backs have continued in the region. Taking into consideration the countries' path to EU-accession, the ability to effectively return migrants to their CoOs or countries of transit in a dignified, safe and protection-sensitive manner in line with EU standards, in particular Directive 115/2008 on "common standards and procedures for returning illegally staying third-country nationals", remains a key aspect of migration management framework that needs to be further developed and strengthened in the region.

Finally, movement restrictions in the WB in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 have shown that migration management procedures may be delayed beyond legally-mandated deadlines, thus further increasing migrants' vulnerabilities and impeding the fulfilment of migrants' rights, particularly in return procedures. This has brought to the forefront the need for developing appropriate digital solutions for return and readmission management, in order to expedite administrative procedures, ensure effective communication between concerned parties, and allow authorities to continue necessary operations in times of restricted movements.

For these reasons, IOM proposes to establish a regional readmission capacity building facility for the WB region that will comprehensively address the deficiencies of the national migration management systems related to readmission and provide sustainable protection-sensitive solutions to the challenges identified by the WB administrations and the EU.

⁷ Source: Eurostat, *Database, Asylum and Managed Migration Data (migr), Enforcement of Immigration Legislation (migr_eil), Third-country nationals who have left the territory to a third country by type of agreement procedure and citizenship (migr_eirt_agr)*, available at: https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_eirt_agr&lang=en

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Statements by WB administrations during *Regional Meeting on Readmission in the Western Balkans*, 14 May 2019, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. These claims are supported by the information provided by the European Commission in the Annual Country Reports for the WB within the Annual Communication on Enlargement Policy, so-called "EU Progress Reports". All EC reports on enlargement can be accessed at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/package_en

2. Project Description

The proposed Western Balkan Readmission Capacity Building Facility (WBCAP) is envisaged as a 36-month intervention, with sufficient flexibility to tailor country specific approaches to arising trends, priorities and needs. The overall objective of the Facility is to **contribute to enhanced national migration management and readmission systems in the Western Balkans, and strengthened cooperation with relevant countries of origin and EU Member States on readmission**. The objective will be achieved through four main outcomes:

1. Successful implementation by WB authorities of the readmission actions funded by the WBCAP Facility, as adapted to their needs and in line with international and European migrant protection standards.
2. Improved functional communication, negotiations and cooperation channels on readmission between WB and priority CoOs
3. Enhanced protection-sensitive practices on return and readmission of WB and third country nationals in the WB
4. Strengthened and digitalized readmission cooperation between the EU and the WB, in line with international and EU standards

Taking the form of a facility, this intervention will provide sufficient flexibility and adaptability to meet the specific needs of the beneficiaries, ensure complementarity and inter-operability with existing readmission structures, and synergy with ongoing efforts and activities in the region. For this reason, while the WBCAP will promote and further regional cooperation and solutions to the identified common readmission challenges in the region, the specific activities and interventions in each beneficiary will be tailored to their context and needs. In order to achieve this, beneficiaries will express interest in receiving technical support in an area covered by the WBCAP Facility through a formal request, in the form of a project proposal, while a strategic mechanism, with a representative of Denmark as one of the members, will be established to review and decide on the requests and allocation of support.

Outcome 1 - Successful implementation by WB authorities of the readmission actions funded by the WBCAP Facility, as adapted to their needs and in line with international and European migrant protection standards

IOM is currently developing a *Regional Functional Analysis on Readmission Frameworks and Capacities in the Western Balkans*, supported by a regional migration management project funded by the EU-IPA II in the Western Balkans. The functional analysis, which in turn is a follow up to the 2017 study by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) "Mapping of Return Capacities in WB" developed under the same regional project, will provide a regional overview on the return and readmission related gaps and challenges in the WB, including limitations on readmission cooperation with CoOs, EU MS and other WB countries. In addition, the functional analysis will provide beneficiary-specific recommendations on addressing the identified readmission challenges. The functional analysis is expected to be finalized by March 2021. The WBCAP Facility will utilize the study as a baseline in identifying and assessing the specific needs of the beneficiaries. In particular, IOM will seek to support local level actions that aim to address the challenges and operationalize the recommendations outlined in the report, thus ensuring adequate complementarity and continuation of existing interventions in the region. IOM will take due considerations to ensure that all supported

activities are rights-compliant and protection sensitive, and aligned with international and EU standards.

Output 1.1 - The WBCAP Facility is set up and procedural mechanisms are developed for effective implementation and monitoring of activities on migration management and readmission

The WBCAP Facility will be managed by IOM through a Project Management Team (PMT) located in Skopje and Belgrade and will be supported by national project coordinators (NPCs) in each WB beneficiary. Additionally, WBCAP will engage part-time national staff (NPS) in the relevant countries of origin where support actions will be implemented. The PMT will draft guidelines for the functioning of the WBCAP Facility, including the eligibility criteria and priorities for support actions; workflow of the submission and approval process; mechanisms of coordination with other projects, facilities and networks in the region; recruitment process for experts; and related templates to be used. The guidelines will be approved by the WBCAP Steering Group and reviewed regularly to ensure flexible and efficient deployment of assistance. The WBCAP Steering Group may include, among others, the Special Envoy on Migration of Denmark, the PMT, and IOM Regional Thematic Specialist on Immigration and Border Management for South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. To present the aim and approach of the WBCAP Facility, IOM will organize a regional kick-off meeting with all WB beneficiaries, PMT, NPCs, and the Danish Special Envoy on Migration or their representative.

The PMT will be responsible for project monitoring, administrative support and coordination for the project management and field-based activities. Part-time finance and IT staff will provide the necessary support functions to the project structure. In the final year of implementation, a Junior Project Assistant will support reporting and preparation of the internal project reviews. The WBCAP will also draw on the expertise of IOM specialists in readmission capacity building and return in other IOM Regional and Country Offices, in particular IOM Regional Offices in Vienna and Brussels, to support the development and implementation of complementary support actions through contributions to staff and travel costs for specific tasks. The role of the NPCs will be, in particular, to administer the complementary support actions locally, including liaison, technical assistance, procurement and logistic support. At the end of the implementation period, IOM will organize a regional closing conference to present the outcomes and lessons learned from the WBCAP Facility.

Output 1.2 - The needs and interests of participating WB beneficiaries on migration management and readmission are collected and considered for future financial support through the WBCAP Facility.

At the start of the implementation period IOM will organize consultations with the national authorities to assess and identify the key needs and priorities of the beneficiaries. Following the initial assessments, the PMT will provide support to the NPC and the beneficiaries in conceptualizing and developing the requests for complementary support actions into a project proposal with a results-oriented log frame and budget. All complementary support actions will be formulated in close coordination and with the consent of the relevant authorities. Targeted needs and technical assessments will be undertaken as a first activity under each of the proposed outcomes and support actions proposed to ensure adequate tailoring of activities and interventions.

To maximize its added value and avoid overlap, the WBCAP Facility will seek to ensure synergies and complementarities with the working methods and priorities of existing relevant support projects, facilities, and networks active in the Western Balkans. The support provided by the WBCAP will be implemented through a results-based approach and supported by a WBCAP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to assess individual actions as well as the overall functioning of the Facility.

Sustainability will be further ensured by seeking linkages with relevant migration strategies, programmes, and action plans in each of the beneficiary.

In assessing the complementary support action requests, priority will be given to activities that focus on technical assistance and dialogue on return and readmission among beneficiaries, while also promoting engagement and facilitating cooperation with EU and CoO counterparts. The actual readmission of persons, including forced returns, will not be financed by the WBCAP Facility. All actions supported by the WBCAP Facility will be fully compliant with international human rights treaties and standards, and will mainstream gender. Good practices will be promoted for sustainable and rights-based models of returns and to respond to the particular needs of returnees in a vulnerable situation.

Considering the depth, complexity, and time required to develop effective return and readmission management in the WB, the WBCAP Facility will prioritize support interventions that aim to establish strong and sustainable foundations on return and readmission management. Particular attention will be paid to the expansion and replicability potential of the support actions in the other WB beneficiaries in later phases of the Facility or through additional external funding.

Outcome 2 - Improved functional communication, negotiations and cooperation channels on readmission between WB Countries and priority CoOs

One of the key obstacles to readmission cooperation between WB and relevant CoOs is the lack of established working relations and technical readmission-related communication channels. WB administrations have made numerous attempts to initiate negotiations on developing and operationalizing readmission agreements with CoO's, however, there have been limited responses and interest from the latter. Under the proposed action, IOM will facilitate the establishment and strengthening of the technical cooperation and dialogue on readmission between the WB and selected CoOs, and provide the necessary technical support in developing readmission mechanisms.

Output 2.1 - WB and CoOs have established operational readmission cooperation and negotiation channels

Initiating readmission cooperation and dialogue requires political motivation, in addition to technical expertise and operational support. To achieve the proposed output 2.1, IOM will seek to build on existing efforts by WB administrations in establishing readmission cooperation with CoOs and utilize lessons learned by EU MS in developing effective mechanisms for readmission with CoOs. For this reason, the WBCAP Facility will focus on fostering dialogue and cooperation with four priority CoOs, identified by the WB beneficiaries, that have established readmission cooperation with the EU, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Morocco and Pakistan. Of these countries, Pakistan has an EURA since 2010, Afghanistan and Bangladesh agreed on readmission arrangements with the EU in 2018 and 2017 respectively, and Morocco has a Mobility Partnership with the EU since 2013 and bilateral readmission agreements with individual EU MS.

In order to ensure an effective approach and identify specific challenges and capacity gaps, IOM will conduct three targeted technical assessments on the legal and operational challenges of readmission cooperation between specific WB beneficiaries and CoOs that have expressed interest in further developing readmission cooperation among them. Furthermore, based on this analysis and with the aim to initiate constructive dialogue on readmission cooperation between the WB and CoOs, bi-lateral and multilateral thematic meetings will be organized, serving as forums for facilitating the establishment of initial communication, negotiations and cooperation channels on readmission. Supported by relevant IOM and EU experts, these thematic dialogues will focus on identifying specific

opportunities and challenges towards establishing effective readmission cooperation mechanisms between the WB and CoOs.

Output 2.2 - WB and CoOs develop better understanding of readmission procedures and challenges, and establish readmission mechanisms (arrangements or agreements)

Based on the expressed interest for assistance by the beneficiaries, and following the initial meetings between WB and CoOs on readmission to be conducted within WBCAP, IOM will provide technical support in the development of two readmission mechanisms between selected WB beneficiaries and CoOs, and in establishing appropriate procedural frameworks for readmission, in line with international and European standards. The readmission mechanisms can take the form of readmission agreements or less-formalized readmission arrangements, depending on the political will and motivation of the concerned administrations. Furthermore, in the process IOM will provide technical support in the drafting of the framework for the readmission mechanism, build capacities towards the effective implementation of readmission procedures, and streamline a rights-oriented approach in the process. Additionally, in order to ensure effective exchange of knowledge and experience between the relevant WB beneficiaries and CoOs, IOM will organize two working study visits for relevant readmission officers from the CoOs to the WB. Finally, in supporting the development of readmission cooperation mechanisms between the WB and selected CoOs, IOM will in parallel explore the interest and possibility to extend the readmission cooperation between the select beneficiaries in the long term with the development of an electronic RCMS.

Outcome 3 – Improved protection-sensitive practices on return and readmission of WB and third country nationals in the WB

Despite the intensification of regional cooperation on migration management in the WB since the onset of the mixed-migration movements in 2015, challenges remain regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of return and readmission among countries in the region. Most WB countries have concluded readmission agreements with each other¹¹, however operational cooperation is limited regarding third country nationals, particularly on prompt processing and response to readmission requests, exchange of identity or evidence verification, and conducting protection-sensitive return and readmission. Most discussions on readmission cooperation in the WB have been conducted on the bi-lateral level. The first regional event that hosted readmission officers from all six WB administrations was the *Regional Meeting on Readmission in the WB* that was organized by IOM in Sarajevo in May 2019. In addition to the specific challenges highlighted by each WB authority regarding readmission with specific EU MS, CoOs and within the WB, during the meeting WB readmission officials concluded that many of the individual issues they are facing are similar to those of neighboring countries. As a follow-up, the WB representatives highlighted that attempts should be made to develop regional solutions to the common challenges in the field of readmission.

Therefore, under this expected outcome, IOM will provide support to the WB authorities towards strengthening migration management capacities and improve intra-regional operational cooperation on readmission in the WB. In the course of the implementation, IOM will provide thematic input and recommendations towards improving return-related policies and procedures (guidelines and SoPs) in the WB and, most importantly, strengthening systematic and technical coordination between the WB migration management authorities. At the same time, IOM will provide capacity-building assistance to WB readmission officers, adapt existing training materials to the WB and local context, and establish

¹¹ As noted above, Kosovo* does not have an agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

a Regional Group of Readmission Specialists to sustain the capacity-building and intra-regional cooperation efforts.

Output 3.1 – Gender- and protection-sensitive operational guidelines or SOPs on readmission are available across the WB.

Under this output, IOM will build on the upcoming *Functional Analysis on Readmission Frameworks and Capacities in the WB* and develop two national follow-up analyses on legal and operational challenges in the implementation of readmission agreements between specific WB beneficiaries. In order to foster regional dialogue and common understanding among WB administrations on readmission challenges and good practices in the region, IOM will organize two regional and four bi-lateral meetings. While the regional meetings will be aimed at a wider exchange of experiences and discussions among WB practitioners on readmission challenges and solutions, the bi-lateral meetings between readmission officers will focus on resolving specific operational challenges between the two administrations. Based on the expressed need by the authorities, IOM will provide support to the beneficiary governments in developing gender- and protection-sensitive appropriate guidelines or standard operating procedures (SOPs) in up to three beneficiaries that will regulate the readmission procedures in detail, thus ensuring that rights-oriented and protection sensitive approaches are streamlined into the readmission processes in line with relevant EU and international standards.

Output 3.2 - Readmission officers across WB have the skills and knowledge to conduct effective, gender- and protection-sensitive and rights-oriented return within the region

To further strengthen WB readmission capacities and build knowledge on protection-sensitive return and readmission on the operational level, under this output the WBCAP Facility will support the delivery of joint regional trainings for WB readmission officials on relevant migration management aspects related to irregular migration, including fraud detection of travel documents, protection-sensitive readmission procedures and rights-based return, while mainstreaming specific protection aspects related to gender and vulnerability. In order to ensure effective retention of skills and transfer of knowledge among WB readmission officers, IOM has developed and will deliver trainings into training packages that can be rolled out on beneficiary level or transposed into national training programs of the administrations. Considering that the trainings will be tailored and cover specific areas of return and readmission standards, IOM will also adapt existing international and EU return and readmission case management training curricula to the WB context and languages in up to three beneficiaries, thus providing authorities with a readmission training resource that can be quickly and effectively utilized in their own training and capacity development efforts. Considering that regular communication and experience exchange among readmission practitioners in the Western Balkans is an important aspect in identifying and resolving practical readmission challenges, and at the same time to ensure sustainability of the established cooperation channels during the WBCAP Facility interventions, IOM will establish a Regional Group of Readmission Specialists in cooperation with existing regional initiatives and mechanisms.

Outcome 4 – Strengthened and digitalized readmission cooperation between the EU and the WB, in line with international and EU standards

While readmission between the EU MS and the WB has been well regulated through the adoption of EURAs, and individual readmission agreements in the case of Kosovo*, readmission communication between the EU MS and WB authorities is conducted through paper-based forms exchanged through email or fax. These forms and the accompanying procedure are delineated in the bi-lateral

implementation protocols signed by the EU MS and WB countries, and there is no information available publicly if these procedures are harmonized across the region. WB authorities have not reported major issues regarding the communication of readmission requests for WB nationals by the EU MS, aside from occasional delays and insufficient information about the returnee's social and health circumstances. One of the key preconditions for a more effective readmission procedure is the establishment of an inter-operable electronic system and mechanism which allows governments to easily communicate and exchange case related information in a compatible and secure manner.

Output 4.1. - Electronic readmission case management systems are established between EU Member States and Western Balkan authorities

Under this output, IOM aims to improve the readmission cooperation and procedures between the WB authorities and EU member states, and support the establishment of up to two electronic RCMS between WB beneficiary and EU MS. In order to ensure an adequate and targeted approach, a tailored and targeted digital maturity assessments will be developed by IOM in order to assess the readiness and inter-operability of the institutional IT systems on migration management, in the interested beneficiaries. The assessment will be conducted by experienced experts in readmission-related systems, using the existing IOM Digital Maturity Assessment Methodology.

Based on the assessment and expressed interest by the WB beneficiaries, IOM will provide support to pilot up to two mechanisms, compatible with existing national systems, between WB authorities and EU MS in the form of a Model RCMS. The RCMS is envisaged as an electronic case management platform which will allow the requesting and receiving country to easily initiate readmission procedures, verify the identity of the migrant and share the necessary personal or travel documents needed for the return. Developed with the aim to strengthen return management in a protection-sensitive manner, the RCMS is a tool that contributes to the transparency of return and readmission procedures and to the accountability of the actors involved. In addition to significantly improving the efficiency of return and readmission procedures, the advantages of using a RCMS are numerous compared to other types of procedures and include:

- Facilitation of compliance with legal frameworks and agreements (e.g. time limits) through predefined custom processes;
- Facilitation and speeding-up of the readmission process for the benefit of all parties involved;
- Higher data quality allowing improved data analysis;
- Simplified interface and user dashboard to manage the readmission processes including tracking of activities and status information;
- Clear workflows, notifications and alerts to comply with the agreed processing deadlines;
- Integrated tools to support the readmission process including remote interviews, request for additional information and management correspondence;
- Supporting documentation, guidelines and frequently asked questions to facilitate the use the platform;
- Increased accountability and transparency of the procedure.

In addition to the procurement of equipment and customization of the system, the operationalization of the RCMS can only be ensured if the end users receive adequate training. Thus, the RCMS package will include a testing period, roll-out and trainings for practitioners. IOM will provide a series of capacity building activities for the involved authorities to support the transition to the electronic system. This will include the provision of trainings and development of instruction manuals to help end users get accustomed to the platform. The central objective of the training workshops will be to familiarize WB and EU MS authorities with the electronic system for readmission. Additionally, IOM will provide support for necessary adjustment of data protection safeguards, protocols for effective and safe storage and transfer of data, and the ICT infrastructure. To ensure that the newly established

model RCMS is in line with the relevant legal framework, namely the EU RA, IOM will provide support in revising and updating the EURA Implementation Protocols in the beneficiaries where the electronic RCMS will be deployed.

Throughout the development and in order to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the proposed RCMS, bi-lateral meetings will be organized between the concerned EU MS and WB authorities to jointly ensure the inter-operability of the systems, adequacy of the operational procedures, and absorption capacity of the responsible operational units. In order to identify regional solutions to existing common challenges and mechanisms on readmission between the WB and EU MS, under the WBCAP Facility IOM will also organize one regional meeting with relevant WB readmission officers and members of the EU JRCs.

3. Partnerships and Coordination

As part of its Immigration and Border Management (IBM) portfolio, IOM is supporting its Member States in the implementation of readmission agreements. In particular, IOM has over 15 years of experience in supporting EU neighborhood and candidate countries in readmission cooperation and capacity building, predominantly funded by the EU. IOM has implemented readmission-related projects focused on capacity building and cooperation in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. On the basis of this cooperation between the EU and IOM and experience in South Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe, IOM developed the first RCMS system in Georgia. Additionally, as mentioned above, IOM is currently conducting a *Regional Functional Analysis on Readmission Frameworks and Capacities in the Western Balkans* which, once finalized in March 2021, will significantly inform and provide strategic direction for this intervention.

Furthermore, through the European Readmission Capacity Building Facility (EURCAP)¹² IOM facilitates practical cooperation on readmission between EU Member States and selected CoOs including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iraq, and The Gambia. Under this DG HOME-funded Facility, IOM has effectively supported the development of readmission cooperation mechanisms at both policy and operational levels. In the aforementioned partner countries, IOM has strengthened institutional capacities on readmission and established joint readmission case management systems, which allow for the seamless processing of readmission requests. Namely, the EURCAP Facility is developing a Model RCMS in the form of a toolkit package that can be easily replicated and deployed in different contexts. With an RCMS toolkit package and IOM's experience in rolling such systems, the establishment of the RCMS between the WB and EU MS will specifically focus on ensuring the compatibility and seamless integration of the RCMS into the local systems and legal framework of the beneficiary administrations.

IOM has a strong and long-standing presence in the WB and has extensive experience in implementing projects that have served to enhance migration management within the WB with a view to EU accession. Since 2015, IOM has been the leading organization in promoting protection-sensitive migration management in the WB of which return management is a significant aspect. Streamlining migrant protection practices and standards in return management would significantly improve the WB capacities to effectively implement return procedures in line with EU standards. In this context, IOM has been implementing the "*Regional Support to Protection Sensitive Migration Management in the Western Balkans and Turkey*" program since 2016, which also covers voluntary and non-voluntary

¹² IOM, European Readmission Capacity Building Initiative (EURCAP), available at: <https://eea.iom.int/eurcap>

return management in the region. The implementation of this project has led to the enhancement of migration management mechanism in the WB, closer contact and cooperation with beneficiary institutions at national level as well as to closer cooperation with external regional stakeholders such as MARRI, the EU Delegations in the WB and relevant Consular and Diplomatic Missions. Therefore, it is deemed that further enhancement of the established cooperation with the above interlocutors would certainly lead to the achievement of this project's objective.

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 national stakeholder institutions' needs as it has been designed in direct response to their advocacy for IOM to continue engaging in this area. IOM will also ensure coordination and harmonization of the WBCAPs activities with EURCAP as well as with other partners, identify and utilize synergies and lessons learnt. Close consultations with the key national 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.

Finally, with a strong focus on prioritizing migrants' rights and protection, the WBCAP Facility will consider cross-cutting issues by addressing gender, vulnerabilities and human rights related aspects, thereby improving rights situation for migrants on one hand and national and regional policies to be implemented on the other. The project activities will take into account gender related considerations which is expected not only to raise awareness and increase the knowledge of beneficiary institutions, but also to improve readmission related procedures thereby reach the target audience, i.e. readmitted persons. Gender-disaggregated statistics of readmitted nationals may reveal certain causes for specific demographic movements, hence the area to be tackled with in future as to reduce these causes. On the other hand, gender disaggregated data of training participants will indicate on the gender balanced approach of beneficiary institutions in this work domain.

4. Monitoring

Monitoring will constitute a critical element of the project, with the systematic collection of data in order for project management to receive feedback and indication from stakeholders and beneficiaries to respond to needs and adapt programming accordingly. 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.

In addition, IOM will perform an annual Project Performance Review (PPR) to measure progress in implementing activities and reaching results as per the agreed indicators, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks and workplans. The PPR will also assess the implementation of the identified activities, the current progress and alignment of chosen activities, and their results, with broader objectives.

IOM will provide annual narrative and financial reports to the Contracting Authority, as well as final narrative and financial reports covering the entire project period. The reports will present challenges encountered, actions taken and progress made in achieving outcomes, outputs, using the indicators,

and an update of the risk mitigation plan, including new potential risks, and project expenditures. Interim reports will be submitted to the Contracting Authority up to 60 days after the reporting deadline and a full final narrative and financial report will be submitted up to 90 days following the project's end date.

5. Evaluation

Within this 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 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 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 its 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 return and readmission interventions in the WB and beyond. The evaluation will be expected to assess also intra-regional and inter-regional partnership levels and will deliver recommendations for existing and advisable partnerships in the future. The final evaluation should deliver notes and recommendations on monitoring and overall coordination mechanism of the project.

At the same time, as outlined in the monitoring section, IOM will perform a Project Performance Review (PPR) annually attached as an annex to the annual reports to measure progress in implementing activities and reaching results as per the agreed indicators, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks and workplans.

6. Results Matrix

	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data Source and Collection Method</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Assumptions</i>
<p>Project Objective:</p> <p>To contribute to enhanced national migration management and readmission systems in the Western Balkans, and strengthened cooperation with relevant countries of origin and EU Member States on readmission</p>	% of participating WB authorities reporting improvements (efficiency, ease and inter-state cooperation) in migration management and readmission systems and procedures	Interviews with key authorities and informants, final project evaluation report	0	80%	
<p>Outcome 1:</p> <p>Successful implementation by WB authorities of the readmission actions funded by the WBCAP Facility, as adapted to their needs and in line with international and European migrant protection standards.</p>	Number of complementary activities on migration management and readmission identified to be carried out under the WBCAP Facility with the financial support of the donor (disaggregated by site, and activity type/area)	Facility reports, List of complementary activities on migration management and readmission identified to be carried out in the WB	0	6	<p>Readmission remains a key policy priority for the WB authorities.</p> <p>The WB authorities are committed to implement the selected complementary activities on migration management and readmission in the proposed conditions, funding and timeframe</p>
	% of recommendations from the Functional Analysis on Readmission Frameworks and Capacities in the WB addressed by the complementary support actions	Documentation and policy review, monitoring report on the implementation of the Functional Analysis on Readmission Frameworks and Capacities in the WB, List of complementary support actions	0	50%	

Output 1.1: The WBCAP Facility is set up and procedural mechanisms are developed for effective implementation and monitoring of activities on migration management and readmission	Existence of the WBCAP Facility	Procedural mechanisms of the WBCAP Facility (procedures, guidelines and templates), project reports	No	Yes	The donor is committed to provide financial support to carry out complementary activities on migration management and readmission, following the identified needs
Activities that lead to Output 1.1: 1.1.1. Establish the WBCAP Facility, including the action approval and advisory mechanisms. 1.1.2. Develop procedures, guidelines and templates on the functioning of the WBCAP Facility and allocation of support 1.1.3. Develop gender-sensitive communication and visibility materials 1.1.4. Organize a project kick-off meeting (online) 1.1.5. Organize a closing conference to disseminate the outcomes and lessons learnt of the project					The relevant authorities in the WB support the establishment of the WBCAP Facility and are willing to contribute actively to the project implementation, including to the launch event and closing event
Output 1.2: The needs and interests of participating WB beneficiaries on migration management and readmission are collected and considered for future financial support through the WBCAP Facility.	Number of assessments completed to identify priority projects	Assessment reports	0	6	The identified activities are fully aligned and will contribute to the WB policies and priorities on migration management and readmission The identified activities are in line with international and European migrant protection standards
	Number of proposals developed and approved through the WBCAP Facility	Project documents, minutes of the meetings to assess, develop and approve the proposals	0	6	
Activities that lead to Output 1.2: 1.2.1. Conduct initial consultative meetings to assess and discuss challenges, gaps, needs and interest in readmission-related procedures, systems and cooperation in selected WB beneficiaries to identify priority projects 1.2.2. Support WB authorities in developing proposals and expressions of interest for project support actions 1.2.3. Organize meetings between IOM and the donor for the assessment of proposals and subsequent approval and funding of proposed support actions					Relevant WB authorities are willing to identify priority projects on the field of migration management and readmission.

					The WB focal points have the necessary basic skills on project development, migration and readmission
Outcome 2: Improved functional communication, negotiations and cooperation channels on readmission between WB and priority CoOs	Number of WB beneficiaries reporting improved communication and cooperation channels with at least one priority CoO.	Interviews with key authorities in the WB, Structured interviews and surveys	0	2	Readmission remains a key policy priority for the WB authorities, as well as for the priority CoOs.
	Number of newly developed readmission mechanisms between WB and CoOs that are developed	Policy review, interviews with key informants (authorities from WB and CoOs, and experts in the field of migration and readmission)	0	2	The overall diplomatic relationship and international cooperation between authorities in the WB and priority CoOs remain unchanged.
Output 2.1: WB and CoOs have established operational readmission cooperation and negotiation channels	Number of assessments carried out on the state of readmission cooperation frameworks between WB and CoOs	Assessment reports	0	3	WB and CoO have the prerequisite systems and channels to negotiate and set up cooperation mechanisms.
	Number of multilateral and bilateral meetings organized between WB and CoOs to facilitate the establishment of channels on readmission	Meetings agendas, List of participants, Minutes of the meetings with main results and recommendations	0	6	CoOs are sufficiently interested and invested in readmission cooperation with the WB authorities.
Activities that lead to Output 2.1: 2.1.1 Conduct follow up technical assessments on the legal and operational challenges of readmission cooperation between specific WB beneficiaries and CoOs that have expressed interest to further developing readmission cooperation among them (up to three assessments) 2.1.2 Organize up to 4 bi-lateral and up to 2 multi-lateral meetings between WB and CoOs aimed at facilitating the establishment of negotiation and cooperation channels on readmission.					Knowledgeable experts are available to conduct the follow-up technical assessments. Venues are available to conduct the meetings and COVID-19 restricted measures are lifted.

Output 2.2: WB and CoOs develop better understanding of readmission procedures and challenges, and establish readmission mechanisms (arrangements or agreements)	Number of readmission mechanisms developed between WB and CoOs	Readmission mechanisms (arrangements and agreements), Project reports	0	2	Relevant authorities in the WB and CoOs recognize the importance and prioritize the enhancement of bilateral and multilateral communication and cooperation channels in the field of readmission, and dedicate sufficient and appropriate human resources
	Number of technical workshops on developing readmission agreement/arrangement	Workshop reports with outcomes and recommendations, Agenda of the workshop, List of participants	0	4	
	Number of working study visits organized and undertaken during the project	Study visits reports, Attendance list	0	2	
Activities that lead to Output 2.2: 2.2.1. Provide technical support to develop readmission mechanisms (agreements or arrangements) between WB and CoOs (up to two mechanisms) in line with the relevant bilateral negotiation processes 2.2.2. Conduct national technical workshops with relevant government readmission and legal officers on developing the necessary technical frameworks for the readmission mechanisms (up to 4 workshops) 2.2.3. Organize working study visits for readmission practitioners from CoOs to the WB (up to 2)					WB and CoO have the prerequisite level of technical skills needed to develop, implement and maintain technical frameworks and readmission mechanisms.
Outcome 3: Improved gender- and protection-sensitive practices on return and readmission of WB and third country nationals in the WB	% of WB authorities using gender- and protection-sensitive operational guidelines or SoPs.	Interviews with relevant WB authorities; project evaluation report	0	60%	WB authorities are committed to implement the approved guidelines and SoPs WB authorities recognize the importance of applying a protection-sensitive approach during return and readmission
Output 3.1: Gender- and protection-sensitive operational guidelines or SOPs on	Number of national follow-up analyses drafted	Copy of analysis report	0	3	Operational guidelines and SoPs are adopted and strictly followed The operational guidelines and SoPs build upon the
	Number of regional meetings organized on readmission in the Western Balkans	Regional meetings reports, Agenda of the Regional Meetings, Attendance lists	0	2	

readmission are available across the WB.	Number of bi-lateral meetings organized on specific challenges and good practices.	Bilateral meeting reports	0	5	existing good practices and international standards in the field of readmission
	Number of guidelines or SOPs on readmission developed	Copy of SOPs, copy of guidelines	0	3	
<p>Activities that lead to Output 3.1:</p> <p>3.1.1 Conduct national follow up analyses on legal and operational challenges in the implementation of readmission agreements between specific WB beneficiaries (up to three analyses)</p> <p>3.1.2 Organize two regional meetings on return and readmission practices and challenges with the WB, fostering information and good practices exchange</p> <p>3.1.3 Organize bi-lateral meetings on specific challenges and exchanging good practices on readmission within the WB (up to five meetings)</p> <p>3.1.4 Develop guidelines or SOPs on Readmission in up to three WB beneficiaries, regulating the steps and processes that are constitutive in a gender- and protection-sensitive readmission procedure.</p>					<p>WB authorities are willing to provide information on challenges and good practices and share with their counterparts.</p> <p>Relevant authorities in the WB are interested in developing guidelines or SoPs on readmission.</p>
<p>Output 3.2:</p> <p>Readmission officers across WB have the skills and knowledge to conduct effective, gender- and protection-sensitive and rights-oriented return within the region</p>	Number of joint regional training sessions for migration and readmission officials	Training reports, Attendance lists, agenda of the regional training sessions	0	3	The trained readmission officers share their acquired knowledge and skills among their colleagues and peers
	% of trainees who have an increased knowledge after the training	Training evaluation, pre and post tests	N/A	75%	The trainees are engaged to use their acquired knowledge during readmission and return operations
	Number of return and readmission case management training curricula adapted to the beneficiary context	Training curricula, Project reports	0	3	
	Existence of a regional group of readmission specialists in the WB	Regional Group ToRs and Workplan, List of the Regional Group members, Project reports	No	Yes	
<p>Activities that lead to Output 3.2:</p> <p>3.2.1 Organize up to three joint regional training sessions for WB migration and readmission officials on gender- and protection-sensitive migration management, rights-oriented return and readmission policies, effective case management, and document fraud detection.</p> <p>3.2.2 Adapt existing return and readmission case management training curricula to the WB and local context (in up to three beneficiaries)</p>					Experts with the appropriate skills and experience are identified and available to deliver

3.2.3 Establish a Regional Group of Readmission Specialists in WB in cooperation with existing regional initiatives					<p>the regional training sessions.</p> <p>The authors of the existing training curricula agree with the adaptation of the training materials to the WB and local contexts</p> <p>There are sufficient numbers of readmission officers available to be trained.</p> <p>Readmission officers are interested in becoming members of the Regional Group of Readmission Specialists.</p>
Outcome 4: Strengthened and digitalized readmission cooperation between the EU and the WB, in line with international and EU standards	Number of WB authorities adopting and using a digitalized readmission cooperation platform	Policy, legislative and documentation review; final evaluation report	0	2	<p>The WB authorities are committed to improve their readmission cooperation with the EU MS, as well as digitalize their readmission procedures in line with international and EU standards.</p> <p>The overall diplomatic relationship and international cooperation between authorities in the WB and EU MS remain unchanged.</p>
Output 4.1: Electronic readmission case management systems are	Number of digital maturity assessments conducted	Assessments, list of recommendations for improvements	0	2	<p>Technical capability is at sufficient level and quality to allow digitalized systems to be established</p>

established between EU Member States and Western Balkan authorities	Number of electronic case management systems established	New electronic case management system, RCMS handover documentation	0	2	between EU Member States and the WB. The selected authorities in the WB and EU are committed to implement the revised Implementation Protocols, while recognizing the importance of good cooperation with the EU on the field of readmission
	Number of training sessions on the use and management of the RCMS organized	Training report, Attendance lists, Training evaluation, Pre and Post Tests	0	4	
	Number of regional and bi-lateral meetings organized	Meeting reports and agendas, Attendance lists	0	3	
	Number of EU Readmission Agreements Implementation Protocols Revised	Revised implementation protocols	0	2	
<p>Activities that lead to Output 4.1:</p> <p>4.1.1 Conduct targeted digital maturity assessments of the systems for return and readmission, and develop appropriate recommendations for improvement, in up to two WB beneficiary where electronic RCMS will be deployed</p> <p>4.1.2. Establish up to two model electronic readmission case management systems between WB and select EU MS, in line with international and European standards, based on the digital maturity assessment and expressed interested of beneficiaries. Sub-activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical deployment and installation of RCMS software and modules - Adaptation of RCMS toolkit to WB beneficiary context and systems - Technical system integration, ensuring inter-operability and effective workflow od RCMS system in existing MOI IT structure - Developing operational frameworks for RCMS (SOPs, guidelines, instructions) - Procurement of necessary IT equipment (servers, storage) - Development of digital security and data protection software and protocols <p>4.1.3 Organize training sessions on the use and management of the RCMS (up to two beneficiaries), ensuring sustainability and effective takeover of the system by the relevant institutions</p> <p>4.1.4 Organize one regional and up to two bi-lateral meetings between relevant EU MS and WB authorities regarding gender- and protection-sensitive readmission of WB and third country nationals</p> <p>4.1.5 Provide technical and legal support in revision of existing bilateral Implementation Protocols of EU Readmission Agreements in up to two WB beneficiaries where an electronic RCMS will be deployed</p>					<p>The selected WB beneficiaries are willing to participate in the digital maturity assessment and share the required information to identify appropriate recommendations.</p> <p>The participants to the training workshops have the right profile and position within their institution to attend the trainings and ensure the good use of the RCMS</p> <p>Relevant authorities in the WB and EU Member States are interested in revising the existing bilateral Implementation Protocols</p>

7. Work Plan

Western Balkans Readmission Capacity Building Activity (WBCAP)												
Activity	Time Frame											
	2021				2022				2023			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Outcome 1: The WBCAP Facility supports complementary activities that are relevant and pertinent to the migration management and readmission needs in the WB, and in line with international and European migrant protection standards												
1.1.1 Establish the WBCAP Facility, including the action approval and advisory mechanisms.												
1.1.2 Develop procedures, guidelines and templates on the functioning of the WBCAP Facility and allocation of support												
1.1.3 Develop communication and visibility materials												
1.1.4. Organize a project kick-off meeting (online)												
1.1.5 Organize a closing conference to disseminate the outcomes and lessons learnt of the project												
1.2.1. Conduct initial consultative meetings to assess and discuss challenges, gaps, needs and interest in readmission-related procedures, systems and cooperation in selected WB beneficiaries to identify priority projects												
1.2.2. Support WB authorities in developing proposals and expressions of interest for project support actions												
1.2.3. Organize meetings between IOM and the donor for the assessment of proposals and subsequent approval and funding of proposed support actions												
Outcome 2: Improved functional communication, negotiations and cooperation channels on readmission between WB and priority CoOs												
2.1.1 Conduct follow up technical assessments on the legal and operational challenges of readmission cooperation between specific WB beneficiaries and CoOs that have expressed interest to further developing readmission cooperation among them (up to three assessments)												

2.1.2 Organize up to 4 bi-lateral and up to 2 multi-lateral meetings between WB and CoOs aimed at facilitating the establishment of negotiation and cooperation channels on readmission.												
2.2.1. Provide technical support to develop readmission mechanisms (agreements or arrangements) between WB and CoOs (up to two mechanisms) in line with the relevant bilateral negotiation processes												
2.2.2. Conduct national technical workshops with relevant government readmission and legal officers on developing the necessary technical frameworks for the readmission mechanisms (up to 4 workshops)												
2.2.3. Organize working study visits for readmission practitioners from CoOs to the WB (up to 2)												
Outcome 3: Improved gender- and protection-sensitive practices on return and readmission of WB and third country nationals in the WB												
3.1.1 Conduct national follow up analyses on legal and operational challenges in the implementation of readmission agreements between specific WB beneficiaries (up to three analyses)												
3.1.2 Organize two regional meetings on return and readmission practices and challenges with the WB, fostering information and good practices exchange												
3.1.3 Organize bi-lateral meetings on specific challenges and exchanging good practices on readmission within the WB (up to five meetings)												
3.1.4 Develop guidelines or SOPs on Readmission in up to three WB beneficiaries, regulating the steps and processes that are constitutive in a gender- and protection-sensitive readmission procedure.												
3.2.1 Organize up to three joint regional training sessions for WB migration and readmission officials on gender- and protection-sensitive migration management, rights-oriented return and readmission policies, effective case management, and document fraud detection.												
3.2.2 Adapt existing return and readmission case management training curricula to the WB and local context (in up to three beneficiaries)												
3.2.3 Establish a Regional Group of Readmission Specialists in WB in cooperation with existing regional initiatives												

Outcome 4: Strengthened and digitalized readmission cooperation between the EU and WB, in line with international and EU standards												
4.1.1 Conduct targeted digital maturity assessments of the systems for return and readmission, and develop appropriate recommendations for improvement, in up to two WB beneficiary where electronic RCMS will be deployed												
4.1.2. Establish up to two model electronic readmission case management systems between WB and select EU MS, in line with international and European standards, based on the digital maturity assessment and expressed interested of beneficiaries.												
4.1.3 Organize training sessions on the use and management of the RCMS (up to two beneficiaries), ensuring sustainability and effective takeover of the system by the relevant institutions												
4.1.4 Organize one regional and up to two bi-lateral meetings between relevant EU MS and WB authorities regarding gender- and protection sensitive readmission of WB and third country nationals												
4.1.5 Provide technical and legal support in revision of existing bilateral Implementation Protocols of EU Readmission Agreements in up to two WB beneficiaries where an electronic RCMS will be deployed												

8. Budget

Please see Annex 1, attached as a separate file within the package.

Annex 2: Risk Assessment

The proposed action is designed to engage with relevant authorities to identify priority activities under the facility. The identification of these activities will be supported by an initial assessment to identify available capacities, contextual constraints (such as COVID-19-related implications), needs, gaps and limitations. As such, the chosen activities and subsequent implementation under this project will go under pre-consideration and assessment of suitability, possibility and relevance, and commitment by relevant authorities prior to any implementation. As such, risks stemming from lack of stakeholder buy-in and other foreseeable operational shortcomings will be minimized.

Emerging risks will be addressed as they arise, supported by close coordination and communication between IOM, stakeholders and partners. Early identification of risks will allow IOM to work within the existing flexible nature of the facility and engage with authorities to adjust project implementation and activities flexibility and as necessary to ensure total project impact is unaffected. Additionally, the annual reports and evaluations will further serve as opportunities for a more detailed reassessment and readjustment to further minimize risks and overcome project challenges.

Annex 3: Target Groups and Stakeholders

Authorities of the WB (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo* and Serbia) will be the main beneficiaries of the project, in particular the entities in charge of readmission agreements' implementation, such as: Ministry of Interior of Albania (border police units responsible for readmission issues); Ministry of Security (Service for Foreigners' Affairs) and Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Montenegro; Ministry of Interior of the Republic of North Macedonia; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kosovo* and the Ministry of Interior and Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of Serbia.

Additionally, relevant authorities from the CoOs responsible for readmission cooperation will also be key stakeholders in the WBCAP Facility, including Ministry of Interior Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco. Given that readmission authorities in the WB have limited or no communication with CoOs as regards this specific domain of work, IOM is well positioned to facilitate the initial contacts and further developing partnership and coordination with the CoOs building on already developed good cooperation with different Consular and Diplomatic Missions.