

EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the 'Madad Fund'

Action Document for EU Trust Fund to be used for the decisions of the Operational Board

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	EU SUPPORT TO SERBIA IN MANAGING THE MIGRATION/REFUGEES CRISIS / BALKAN ROUTE		
Total cost	Total estimated cost: EUR 15.000.000 Total amount drawn from the Trust Fund : EUR 15.000.000		
Aid method / Method of implementation	ACTION 1: Direct management - grant to the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia – EUR 5,500,000 ACTION 2: Indirect Management with IOM – EUR 9,500,000		
DAC-code	93010	Sector Refugees in donor countries	

2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

2.1. Summary of the action and its objectives

The proposed project has been developed as a response to the need to provide continuation of support to the influx of migrants and refugees which is expected in the first few months of spring 2016 and also to tackle the challenges coming from the unpredictable and evolving situation on the field. Based on obtained data, similar intensity of migration flow from 2015 might be expected to occur during the second half of 2016. So far the Republic of Serbia used all available public resources with the aim of supporting migrants and asylum seekers and committed to provide 6,150 places as reception capacity. The support provided by the previous and on-going donor assistance proved efficient and effective and is therefore to be continued within the new project framework. This new framework involves activities that will address the most urgent needs of migrants and refugees population throughout their stay on the territory of Serbia.

Adequate response of the Serbian authorities to the increase of migrant flows included accommodation and provision of basic living conditions to asylum seekers and migrants, registration as well provision of all other necessary services in the field, such as social workers services, translation, health services, psychologist, etc. Beside regular asylum centres, Government of Serbia, based on the developments in the field and changes in migrant's routes, is establishing new/additional centres, however lacks resources for their equipment, refurbishment and (re)construction. All relevant government offices such as Commissariat for Migrants and Refugees, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs showed readiness to mobilise all necessary capacities to address the migrant crisis. However, the capacities are becoming overstretched, both in terms of provision of necessary assistance in the field of enabling basic living conditions and adequate accommodation capacities in asylum centres, but also enabling efficient and effective work of the administrative workers in the asylum and transit centres.

Furthermore, migrants from various countries of origin including Central Asia, Middle East, and Northern and Eastern Africa have been increasingly trying to access EU countries through the Western Balkan migration route as other routes are posing growing challenges and dangers. The flow of extra regional migrants along this route has grown from a trickle in 2011 to becoming one of the most

"popular" migration routes into the EU as recently published figures suggest, due to a perception that crossing the Western Balkan route is less dangerous, less expensive and quicker. At present, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia constitute the countries most affected by the mass flow along the Western Balkan route, as has been the case for a number of years. In Serbia, the mass flow has reached a plateau in the last quarter of 2015 with an average of 5,000 persons per day, after which weather conditions in cold winter months have led to reduced mobility and flow. Although as of January 2016, the flow has been reduced due to the policy decisions by some of the countries along the Western Balkan route to limit the entry into their territories to person from certain nationalities only, nevertheless the flow might again be higher than expected in the coming days, with the risk of reaching up to 3,000 persons transiting the country.

The outlook for 2016 is that once the weather conditions improve, the mass flow might again increase even though some countries along the Western Balkan route have imposed limitations on entry. The limitations on entry can also lead to possible increase in irregular migration including smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, especially for those migrants coming from other countries than the three nationalities that are currently allowed entry, namely Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. The latest development, the limitations on entry were extended to include Afghani nationals, which may create further pressure for irregular migration, including smuggling.

Migration policies introduced by some of the countries have affected the routes and modalities of the mass flow, such as the closure of green borders for mass arrivals in Hungary followed by similar temporary border closures of several EU and non-EU countries and temporary introduction of border checks in Schengen area, as well as the above mentioned decision to limit the right of entry to migrants belonging to the two nationalities only (Syria and Iraq). Within this context, and as supported by evidence gathered through various IOM assessments including those on migrant vulnerabilities and on smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings in the Western Balkans, the challenges presented above add to the risks of abuse for migrants along the Western Balkan route. The mass flow currently transiting Serbia is comprised of vulnerable migrants such as forced migrants, victims of trafficking, stateless and undocumented persons, and unaccompanied and separated migrant children (UAMC). Furthermore, those migrants, not from Syria or Iraq, are currently being readmitted, and are also increasingly becoming vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and abuse, as they often rely on smugglers and other criminal groups that facilitate continuation of their journey. The analysis of the most recent flow shows that there is a continuous increase of women, UAMCs and single headed households in the mass flow and these categories are more prone to possible abuse and exploitation.

To mitigate the identified issues, and in order to ensure adequate accommodation, IOM can improve the conditions of transit reception center in Aleksinac, and is able to increase accommodation and processing capacities for irregular migrants through the reconstruction of the existing one and establishment of additional two mobile accommodation facilities, as well as provide assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) assistance to irregular migrants and rejected asylum seekers opting to return to the countries of origin.

In this context the proposed project will be focused on securing varied forms of support and social protection services which shall be continued including:

- **ACTION 1:**
 - to cover the running costs (such as heating, electricity, water, etc.) of the existing reception/asylum centres;
 - to cover the employment of the staff (i.e. translators, cleaners, doctors, etc.) working in the asylum centres.
- **ACTION 2:**
 - to improve the humane treatment, information provision, interviewing, counselling on the AVRR and accommodation capacities for irregular migrants;
 - to facilitate the humane and dignified *return and reintegration* of rejected asylum seekers, and persons residing irregularly in the Republic of Serbia, who wish to return voluntarily to their country of origin;
 - the refugees and migrants access medical services and have proper interpretation services;

- support to works and refurbishment of facilities in Aleksinac, Banja Kovljaca, Tutin, Irig and Kikinda - The overall objective is to achieve the 6.000 places.
- provision of furniture and supply of equipment for facilities in Aleksinac, Vranje, Banja Kovljaca, Tutin, Irig and Kikinda - such as containers, furniture for kindergarten, etc.

2.2 Context

2.2.1 Country context

Since the beginning of 2015, the number of migrants from the countries of Asia and Africa, passing through Serbia to Western Europe is constantly growing. Migratory trends in 2015 clearly pointed to a rapid increase in the number of migrants and refugees. In 2015, over 700,000 migrants have been detected on the territory of the Republic of Serbia (this number represents the sum of the number of expressed intentions to seek asylum and the number of filed misdemeanour charges for illegal crossing of the state border). The number of illegal migrants is 22.8 times more in comparison to the number of irregular migrants detected in 2014 (23,373 in total). Majority of irregular migrants detected on the territory of the Republic of Serbia are citizens of Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. So far, people from 107 countries expressed their intention to seek asylum in our country.

During the first two months of 2016, 94.265 persons entered the territory of the Republic of Serbia out of which for 92.841 persons certificate for entry into the territory of the Republic of Serbia was issued, 896 persons have expressed an intention to seek asylum, and 528 persons were charged for illegal crossing of the state border.

Although Serbia is a transit country, in which migrants stay for short period of time (in 2015 the average stay has been for just a few days) the Republic of Serbia has been putting enormous efforts to ensure humane and adequate response to the needs of migrants. On 18 June 2015 the Government of the Republic of Serbia established the Working Group for Solving Mixed Migration Flows, chaired by Mr. Aleksandar Vulin, Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, with the task to monitor, analyse and discuss questions of mixed migration flows in the Republic of Serbia, in a coordinated manner. Members of the Working Group are also Minister of Interior, Minister of Defence, Minister of Health, Minister without portfolio responsible for European integration and the Commissioner for Refugees and Migration.

On 4 September 2015 the Government adopted the Response Plan in case of an increased influx of migrants during the winter 2015/2016. In order to respond to the increasing influx of migrants and to ensure adequate conditions for migrants' registration and additional accommodation along the migrants' route and in case of need for long-term shelter, the following centres were established: Preševo, Šid, Sombor, Subotica, Bosilegrad, Dimitrovgrad, Negotin, Pirot, Zaječar, as well as several that are under preparation: Bujanovac, Vranje and others.

All migrants have been registered; they get health screening and are provided necessary medical care. They receive humanitarian aid, as well as information about the asylum procedure in the Republic of Serbia.

Since the beginning of increased influx of migrants to the territory of the Republic of Serbia, one of the most important tasks is to ensure sufficient accommodation capacity for persons in transit, but also preparing of sufficient accommodation capacity in the event of changes in practice countries on their route and possibly a longer stay in the country. The problem is further complicated by the arrival of winter and cold weather. To this end, and in accordance with the plan of response in case of an increased influx of migrants which the Government adopted on 4 September 2015, has taken a series of measures to expand the old and open new facilities.

In accordance with the Plan, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the existing capacity of the five regular centres for asylum seekers increased by 25%, from 810 to 1010. These centres are located in Belgrade (Krnjača with 350 seats), Banja Koviljača (150 seats), Tutin (150 seats), Sjenica (200 seats) and Bogovadja (210 seats). In addition, the plan envisages the creation of new reception-transit centres intended for short stays or longer retention of migrants, especially in the border municipalities. Although the Plan envisages additional places for 3.000 people, after the meeting of the

the Western Balkan route leaders, in October 2015, it was agreed to provide capacity for 6,150 persons.

In order to ensure the agreed capacity, the accommodation facilities are open in the following municipalities: Presevo, Bujanovac, Pirot, Bosilegrad, Dimitrovgrad, Kikinda, Sid (objects in Sid, Adaševci and Principovac), Sombor, Subotica, Zajecar, Negotin, and accommodation facility in Vladicin Han is under preparation. Special efforts have been invested in ensuring sufficient capacity at the entry and/or exit points at borders, in Presevo and in Sid. At the moment only these two points are available for accommodation of 3.000 people in the case of emergency.

All asylum and transit centres facilities meet the minimum accommodation standards and were prepared for their reception and stay during winter conditions. The support was provided by budget funds as well as by significant international assistance funds. The Government will continue with the adaptation and reconstruction of facilities designated for this purpose, as well as with the improvement of living conditions and services for migrants.

IOM has a long established presence in Serbia and in the Western Balkans, profound experience on the ground and carries out ongoing analysis of the migration flows and overall migration situation within the region. Based on this, IOM has identified **several key gaps in addressing mass migration flows** in the region which are manifested in a number of closely interlinked challenges that include but are not limited to:

- a) Difficulties in identification of vulnerabilities of persons on the move as well as nationality determination,
- b) Difficulties in referring the migrants to appropriate response mechanisms including assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR).
- c) Insufficient capacities for accommodation and processing of irregular migrants

Due to the current practice of nationality screening and allowed entry and transit of nationals of certain countries only, there is a potential for increased demand for smuggling services. Furthermore, some of the local authorities voiced concern on potential increase in smuggling of migrants once the hotspots in Greece become fully operational, as they would identify those with genuine protection needs, whereby economic migrants would not be allowed to continue the journey which might again increase the demand for smuggling services. A similar pattern may arise in case that destination or transit countries further limit the flow or start putting fences or technical barriers on borders. This intervention aims at enhancing management of mass migration flow in the Republic of Serbia by facilitating mid- and long-term responses by ensuring appropriate assistance and protection to migrants during their transit, stay, and voluntary return from Serbia.

IOM has recently carried out an Assessment¹ of the Reception Center for Foreigners in Padinska Skela, with the current capacity of 70 beds. The conclusions from the assessment point out that although the Centre was recently renovated, this has only partially improved the detention accommodation standards and sanitary facilities. Furthermore the play room for children has been allocated, however remains unfurnished and unequipped. Overall, the main recommendations of the IOM Assessment are:

- The Centre in Padinska Skela should further improve conditions of accommodation and sanitary in facilities in line with improvements to the premises conducted in 2015, in the remaining areas designated for the accommodation of both men and women;
- The Centre capacities should be increased by construction additional block for the accommodation of 100 people, fully equipped in line with international standards.;
- The Centre should ensure provision of a systematic support for assisted voluntary return (AVR);
- Access to protection services should be better documented in the Centre and closer monitoring practices established through credible and verifiable internal practices.
- Oversight via independent bodies, such as the Ombudsman through the National Preventive Mechanism should be continued;

¹ IOM, Current Capacities of the Reception Center for Foreigners in Padinska Skela – Belgrade, 2016.

- The residents should also be provided with copies of the House Rules in languages they understand. The right to seek asylum should be included in the document. This would help to minimise misunderstandings in determining the status of foreigners.

2.2.2 Sector context: policies and challenges

As the field of migration management is multi-sectorial in its character, a variety of Serbian ministries and institutions are in charge of different categories of migrants which are defined by numerous sector strategies, laws and plans. The present project draws on this regulatory framework extensively and is in accordance with it. Sector strategies, directly related to the migrants and migration management system, are: The Strategy for Combating Illegal Migration in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2009-2014 ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 25/2009); The Strategy of Reintegration of Returnees Based on the Readmission Agreement ("RS Official Gazette", No. 15/2009); Strategy for Integrated Border Management in the Republic of Serbia ("RS Official Gazette", No. 11/2006); Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking in the Republic of Serbia ("RS Official Gazette", No. 111/2006). In order to develop an umbrella strategy to integrate policies and improve existing framework for migration management, the Migration Management Strategy ("RS Official Gazette", No. 59/2009) that foresees establishment and implementation of mechanisms for comprehensive and continuous monitoring of migration flows in the Republic of Serbia, the completion of the strategic, legal and institutional framework for joint migration management was adopted in 2009. Furthermore, the adoption of the Law on migration management ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 107/2012) at the end of 2012 established a coordinated system for migration management and defined the basic concepts of migration. Law on social welfare (2011) recognizes unaccompanied minors as potential recipients of social protection in the country. The most recent addition to this list is the Response Plan in Case of Mass Influx of Migrants and Assessment Needs adopted by the Government of Serbia on 4 September 2015 from which the present project is a direct result.

2.3 Lessons learnt

One of the major lessons learnt from previous EU funded programmes aiming at the support of persons on the move, and the management of mass migration flows is that confidence building and close collaboration among the various stakeholders involved, including governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and civil society actors is crucial for the success of any intervention. This Action will benefit from synergies and past partnerships built with IOM the Governmental Working Group on Mixed Migration Flows of Serbia, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Ministry of Interior, UN partners, Red Cross, CRS and a wide range of other key actors.

This action is building on the previous assistance deployed in Serbia in particular on the Special Measure adopted on 7 October 2015, where EUR 7 million were allocated to Serbia to cover running costs, increasing accommodation capacities and improve the equipment of the institution more under pressure.

In particular on running costs, the calculations serving as a basis for this Action have been made on the actual costs incurred by the authorities in the last few months. The amounts have been planned to be able to cover a number of scenarios, and also reflecting the outcome of the inter-institutional mission organised by NEAR which took place at the end of November 2015.

Implementing lessons learned from the past, ECHO has been consulted both on the ground and in Brussels, in order to avoid any overlap in the assistance deployed through IPA and humanitarian aid.

While a number of short-term humanitarian actions have been underway since the outset of the emergency, further actions need to include medium and long-term perspectives.

IOM will build on the synergies between the programme and other ongoing projects, most pertinently the IPA II *Regional Support to Protection-Sensitive Migration Management in the Western Balkans*

and Turkey, to ensure constant and consistent exchange of best practices and lessons learned and avoid overlapping.

Furthermore, IOM's assessment of the Centre in Padinska Skela and daily consultations with the national partners have provided baselines and recommendations on the needs for the accommodation and processing of irregular migrants, in order to assure humane and dignified treatment of irregular migrants. Furthermore, the lessons learnt through the assessment will feed into the establishment of new mobile centres for irregular migrants.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS), through local partners (the Balkan Center for Migration and Humanitarian Activity (BCM) and the Divac Foundation) have supported translation services and distributions of non-food items for refugees and migrants along the northern border with Croatia (Vojvodina), eastern border with Bulgaria (Dimitrovgrad) and Belgrade.

CRS has drawn upon its experience serving more than 144,871 direct beneficiaries, and 232,200 indirect beneficiaries of refugees and migrants in Serbia as part of the response thus far, including:

- Feedback from current beneficiaries states that Farsi and Arabic translation services are in high demand as the majority of refugees and migrants are coming from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Currently CRS and BCM have 19 interpreters: 6 Farsi and 13 Arabic (11 women and 8 men). Due to the significantly increase of Farsi speaking refugees, additional shifts were added to accommodate the demand by staffing two interpreters, one for Arabic and one for Farsi, especially during the medical services shifts.
- Although there is an Arabic language department at the University of Belgrade, the only Farsi language department in the region is at the University of Sarajevo. CRS and BCM adopted a strategy to meet the challenges of recruiting local Farsi speakers. CRS recruited Farsi translators from Bosnia and Herzegovina on short-term consultancies to meet this need. This is not a permanent solution but it is addressing the immediate needs. Also by recruiting translators from the region, migrants and refugees are able to access local services as these translators translate from Arabic and Farsi into Serbian, rather than English. Feedback from current beneficiaries also highlights the need for more female translators, particularly when accompanying female migrants and refugees to receive medical services.
- Due to the fluid nature of the emergency with border closures possible at any given time, CRS and partners continue to adapt a flexible approach to programming and implementation.
- BCM's MILC (Medical, Information, and Legal Center) Model is broadly recognized by government representatives and humanitarian actors as essential to smooth operations in Šid, Preševo, and Kanjiza Centers. BCM employs translators, health professionals, information officers, and legal advisors in order to carry out activities in these areas. The key strength of MILC is its capacity to adjust to the needs. BCM staff is renting accommodations near the transit sites; they are able to respond to emergencies on an on-call basis and to adjust to the migration path to move as migrants change locations.

CRS-Europe has extensive experience with social housing and integration projects, including valuable lessons learned on the importance of accompanying building construction/ rehabilitation with a focus on medium to long term operations and management that can be adapted for this response.

2.4 Complementary actions

The donor community has provided significant support to the Government of the Republic of Serbia in addressing the capacity and the humanitarian and urgent needs of the migrants during the previous period, such as:

- European Commission (EC) has approved a Special Measure to the Republic of Serbia for the amount of 7,000,000 EUR, which is intended to strengthen the operational capacity of the Serbian authorities, to support needs of refugees and migrants and to increase the capacity to coordinate the assistance offered by the reception centres across Serbia. The costs covered are the following: Works

and refurbishment; Running costs of existing centres such as heating, electricity, water, etc.; Fuel for vehicles; Police uniforms. Supplies of vehicles for a value of €2.5 million for the Ministry of Interior and Commissariat for Refugees and Migration are also foreseen and will include vehicles (vans, buses, passenger vehicles, etc.) to help Serbia deliver the necessary services to refugees

- In addition, from Multi-beneficiary IPA for 2015, 8,000,000 EUR is intended as regional aid for capacity building to support the establishment of a system for migration management and information sharing in the region.

- The EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated in September 2015. The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Social and Veterans' Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration submitted to the DG ECHO list of necessary equipment and goods in the field of migration, which includes mobile showers, toilets, kitchens, beds, mattresses, pillows, blankets, bedding, sleeping bags, containers for accommodation, gloves and masks, generators and water pumps, without the budget estimates for the listed items. The total value obtained through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism is approximately 735,000 EUR.

- Out of the annual IPA 2014 program 3,200,000 EUR has been secured for the construction of asylum centers. Financial agreement was signed in December 2015.

- The remaining funds after the implementation of the IPA 2012 project in the amount than 490,000 EUR, will be redirected to support shelters and accommodation for migrants, in Bujanovac.

2.5 Donor co-ordination

Furthermore, in order to institutionally and most effectively organise the response to humanitarian crisis and needs, the Government of Serbia established a Working Group for Resolving the Problem of Mixed Migration Flows, with an intention to provide coordination and directing the work of competent state authorities in terms of increased migratory pressure. The Working Group is composed of following Minister's: Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Minister of Interior, Minister of Defence, Minister of Health, Minister without portfolio responsible for EU Integration and Commissioner of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration. In order to assess and priorities the most urgent needs Serbian Government drafted an Operational Response Plan in case of an increased number of migrants in the winter period 2015/2016, with expressed needs assessment, as one of the requirements made by the EC. The ORP was adopted 4th of September 2015 and shall concretise the list of needs for overcoming the migration crisis and help the donor community to transfer and focus the assistance.

The First High-Level Donor Coordination Meeting was held on 30 September 2015, followed by several operative, working meetings with the development partners / donors within the framework of the already introduced development assistance coordination system, all with the aim of ensuring the synergy and effectiveness of the support being provided or assistance announced by the development partners. Second high-level donor coordination meeting was held on 22 February 2016 with the aim to summarise and review the state of affairs in managing and implementation of activities targeted at addressing the migratory crisis and influx of migrants in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, as well as to present current and future needs in this area which are closely related to unpredictability of the situation in the field.

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The **overall objective** of the project is to ensure and expand direct operational capacities of national authorities to effectively resolve and respond to increased migration flows in order to secure adequate functioning of the asylum system in the Republic of Serbia; to facilitate mid- and long-term responses to the mass migration flow by ensuring appropriate assistance and protection to migrants during their transit, stay, and voluntary return; and to ensure adequate facilitation of medical services available to the beneficiaries. In case of need, support will be ensured to other Western Balkans countries as well.

Specific objectives (SO)

SO 1 is to strengthen the operational capacity of the Serbian authorities involved in the migration/refugees crisis to provide accommodation facilities and basic living conditions and to efficiently respond to emergency needs of migrants and asylum seekers.

SO2 is to improve conditions for processing and accommodating irregular migrants and refugees, to facilitate the humane and dignified return and reintegration of rejected asylum seekers, and persons residing irregularly in Serbia and the region, who wish to return voluntarily to their country of origin; to provide medical examinations and interpretation services.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

Expected **Results** related to Specific objectives are as follow:

ACTION 1

- **Asylum and reception/transit centres sufficiently staffed for field work in order to address various needs of migrants and asylum seekers;**
- **Direct Grant operations efficiently and effectively managed**

Direct grant shall support Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (MLEVSA) in financing basic running costs of asylum centres functioning; additional staff to work in newly expanded and/or established centres, as well as it will provide consumables for national authorities to provide accurate support to migrants and refugees on the ground.

Main activities which will support the accomplishment of identified results are:

- Asylum and transit/reception centres shall face challenges in terms of securing minimum accommodation quality and basic living conditions in asylum and transition centres in Serbia. The direct grant will be used to support MLEVSA in financing the running costs relating to the centres. Due to the unpredictable fluctuation in the number of people present at different centres, it is very hard to define precisely at this stage the exact locations and centres which will be targeted by direct grant. Therefore, a certain level of flexibility is required in order to enable MLEVSA to finance basic running costs of centres where most urgent.

- The MLEVSA is responsible for financing salaries of staff employed to ensure functioning of Asylum Centres (i.e. translators, cleaners, doctors). The salary levels are defined based on the Law on salaries of civil servants. Due to the increase of number of asylum seekers and migrants in the Republic of Serbia, their average time of stay, worsening of weather conditions and consequently increase in the number of asylum and temporary transit/reception centres, existing MLEVSA staff is not sufficient to ensure effective functioning and management of centres as well as to secure basic living conditions for migrants in centres. Since the increase of the number of migrants and asylum seekers is on a temporary basis, and it is not possible to predict tempo, dynamic and trends of migratory flows, MLEVSA have the urgent need to employ additional staff who will be responsible to enable regular management and functioning of centres and to provide basic services to migrants and asylum seekers, such as translation, hygiene, reception services, etc. on the short notice. Due to the temporality and changeability of the number of staff to be employed in the long run MLEVSA will employ all additional staff on temporary contracts. Due to daily fluctuation of the number of asylum seekers and migrants, as well as changes in migration routes, weather conditions, variations in number of asylum seekers in the centres are frequent and therefore, it is not possible to determine the exact number of necessary staff and their profile per centre/per month. MLEVSA will based on the situation in different centres employ and shift staff upon need. All staff will be employed within the MLEVSA.

ACTION 2

To facilitate the humane and dignified *return and reintegration* of rejected asylum seekers, and persons residing irregularly in the Republic of Serbia, who wish to return voluntarily to their country of origin

- *Provide direct AVRR support for up to 300 rejected asylum seekers, and irregular migrants wishing to voluntarily return to their country of origin.*

The action will ensure provision of assisted voluntary return and reintegration support, aimed at rejected asylum seekers and persons migrants stranded in Serbia, who wish to return voluntarily to their country of origin. The action will ensure the provision of travel arrangements; flight tickets; and direct assistance at airports of departure, transit, entry, and reintegration assistance. In order to safeguard an informed decision for voluntary return, the action will ensure that all beneficiaries are provided with comprehensive counselling from a legal, security and social perspective. An expert on AVRR will be engaged to provide guidance on AVRR counselling and to liaise with the AVRR activities provided under other projects. The AVRR beneficiaries will be selected among persons residing in the Centre for foreigners in Padinska Skela, as well as other locations where irregular migrants stay and transit. The potential clients will be identified through the mobile teams.

- *Establishment of mobile teams to inform irregular migrants in detention of the assisted voluntary return and reintegration assistance.*

Five mobile teams will service the reception Centre for foreigners in Padinska Skela, Border Police Station Srem, two mobile centres for irregular migrants, and other relevant locations and ensure counselling of clients and information provision on the availability of the AVRR assistance, its benefits, country of origin information, protection mechanisms in place, reintegration packages available, eligibility criteria, and procedures needed to comply with and other relevant information. The mobile teams will utilize rented vehicles in order to reach potential beneficiaries at identified locations, while also being able to adapt to changing conditions on the ground. The teams will consist of one driver, an AVRR officer, and interpreters and will work in two shifts. Furthermore, the teams will be established in a gender and culturally sensitive way, including all female teams, if deemed feasible. 5 interpreters will be engaged to accompany mobile teams (Arabic, Farsi and Pashto as key languages spoken by extra-regional migrants). Building upon the lessons learnt from the previous and ongoing projects, the action will engage teams of interpreters to facilitate communication between migrants and the relevant authorities, and will feed into culturally sensitive interview conduct, ensuring dignity and respect of migrants.

The action will also explore the scope to utilise and build upon existing structures within Serbia, in order to enhance cost-effectiveness and self-sustainability, such as involving students and faculty in the Arabic Language department at the University of Belgrade.

Additionally, the activity will involve the dissemination of information materials, namely leaflets and posters in a range of languages spoken by migrants on the AVRR assistance and its modalities in locations frequented by the target group, such as asylum facilities, train stations, and bus terminals.

To improve the humane treatment and accommodation standards of irregular migrants.

This action will increase the capacity of facilities in Padinska Skela Reception Centre through construction of additional block; and purchase and distribution of furniture and equipment needed for its full functioning. This will lead to increased accommodation capacity of the centre for 100 more beneficiaries. This action will benefit irregular migrants, including vulnerable groups, ensuring humane and dignified treatment of the beneficiaries. This newly built facility will allow irregular migrants to have access to services available to them according to international standards, including access to IOM AVR mobile team and interpreters.

In addition, the facility with limited reception and interviewing capacity currently used by the border police in Sid (Border Police Station Srem) will be refurbished/reconstructed by adding extra space for the first contact and interview with migrants.

- *Establishment of two mobile centres for irregular migrants, capable of quick deployment at key areas affected by mass migration flows, ensuring adequate accommodation standards and humane and dignified treatment of irregular migrants.*

The action will support the establishment of two open (i.e. with possibility of free movement) mobile centres for irregular migrants with accommodating capacity of 200 migrants in total (each one with the capacity of accommodating 100 people) capable of quick deployment to key border areas: West – Sid (towards the border with Croatia), East – Dimitrovgrad (towards the border with Bulgaria) or South – Presevo (towards the border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), depending on the most urgent needs in particular areas at a particular time. The mobile centres will consist of fully furnished and equipped containers, which can be redeployed, as needed. The mobile centres will provide separate zones for families and unaccompanied minors.

Migrants and refugees fully benefit from available medical services.

- *Qualified medical professionals provide medical examinations to migrants and refugees.*

BCM's MILC (Medical, Information, and Legal Center) model helps to ensure medical examinations and necessary treatment will be provided by doctors and nurses both at transit sites and at public health centers. The doctors are accompanied by the female interpreters/information officers for Arabic and Farsi. As the number of migrants and refugees are expected to increase during the warmer spring months, it is expected that there will be an increase in number of people who will also need medical assistance. CRS and BCM will support the salaries for local doctors and nurses at the existing government-run health clinics in Šid and Vranje for additional shifts. The doctors and nurses are employed by the health clinics that belong to the Serbian health system, while CRS and BCM pay their salaries and facilitate their communication with refugees using their Arabic and Farsi translators. Currently there are only female doctors employed at BCM-sponsored medical facilities as informal feedback with current beneficiaries show that male migrants and refugees do not have any issues with seeking medical advice from female doctors, whereas female migrants and refugees will only see female medical staff.

- *Refugees and migrants are provided essential medicines by medical personnel at transit sites*

Currently medical staff at the transit site clinics are providing essential medicines if available but there is no reliable stock and shortages are common. CRS will work with BCM to procure essential medicines, medical supplies, and medical equipment to the ad-hoc clinics established at the transit sites in Presevo and Šid if procuring large quantities on the local market becomes challenging.

Cross-cutting IR: CRS and partner interpreters facilitate communication between migrants/refugees and government/key medical service providers.

- *Translation services are provided for refugees and migrants at transit camps and at medical centers*

BCM's translators, called Information Officers, provide refugees with general orientation on the available services and processes at the site; information on where they are and where they are heading to; and basic information on their rights and responsibilities. The Information Officers are organized in shifts to provide translation services 24 hours a day, seven days a week at the three current sites: after arriving in at the border with Croatia at Šid, a nearby town in Adaševci while waiting to continue to Šid, and Principovac, where a small reception center is located, on

the border with Croatia. BCM will increase the number of translators to meet demand and to have sufficient number of translators to expand operations to Preševo and the eastern border crossing at the border with Bulgaria using contingency funds based upon evolving needs. Information Officers will be trained by protection officers/legal advisors on refugees and migrants' basic rights, asylum procedures in Serbia, and humanitarian and protection principles. BCM will ensure to recruit both male and female Information Officers, in order to meet gender sensitivity requirements in serving the refugees and migrants, however only female interpreters will be used to during medical consultations.

Migrants and refugees benefit from protected and dignified shelter at key locations

IOM and CRS improve conditions in the transit shelters to migrants and refugees at target locations

- IOM enables reconstruction and refurbishment of the reception center in Aleksinac (capacity of 600-800 people with all necessary services available in the center)
- IOM implement necessary procurement procedures for the needed supplies in the reception centers in the target locations (Aleksinac, Vranje, Banja Kovljaca, Tutin, Irig and Kikinda), as per the recommendation of the Working Group.
- CRS and partners will renovate and refurbish the infrastructure of housing and sheltering units in reception/asylum centers at the locations prioritized by the Serbian government as per recommendation of the Working Group. Sites can include Vranje, Banja Kovljaca, Tutin, Irig and Kikinda to meet the Sphere Shelter and WASH

The project can be expanded to the neighbouring countries facing the same difficulties.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

The assumptions for the success of the project and its implementation include:

- The Government of Serbia and all public institutions fully committed towards securing adequate response to increased needs of migrants in Serbia.
- Continuation of support from EU and international community in addressing the increased migration flows in the Western Balkan region
- Efficient coordination with all relevant institutions and service providers in securing adequate response to migrants needs in Serbia
- Interest and willingness by local level authorities, communal services and service providers to support GoS in managing migration influx in Serbia
- High level of cooperation with LSGs
- Irregular migrants and rejected asylum seekers are willing to voluntarily return to the country of origin
- Government counterparts are willing to work together with IOM to ensure the improvement of facilities for irregular migrants
- Development of strong cooperation and coordination among regional (on the Balkan route) stakeholders and international partners providing direct assistance to migrants including both tracing and restoring family links and anti -human trafficking activities;

The main risks are:

- The overall situation can dramatically change depending on the migration trends from Turkey and Greece, with unpredictable duration, leading to an open-ended crisis;
- Changes and restrictions to border controls at each stage of the route including at destination countries could have a significant impact as bottlenecks may be created, more people may feel compelled to seek alternative routes, and others may become stranded;
- Relevant government counterparts and implementing partners may encounter difficulties in implementation as the mass migration flows strain the capacities of officials to engage in additional activities, which might delay planned activities or hindering their implementation.
- AVRR activities are dependent on the willingness of beneficiaries to engage in the activity, and may be difficult to anticipate the number of cases. Closure of existing border crossings in different countries and potential new migratory routes via Romania or other Western Balkan countries may require additional resources for the implementing partners;
- The main obstacle to faster realization of works on objects are unresolved property relations (often these are the objects that are owned by the state, and whose customers are SOEs in liquidation), as well as public procurement procedures, which, depending on the sources of funds takes between 15 days and two months.

Mitigating measures have been considered, including:

- The Working Group for Resolving the Problem of Mixed Migration Flows is regularly meeting and following development of the situation in the field
- Regular contacts with neighbouring countries (Greece, FYR Macedonia, etc.) and exchange of information on migration flows and trends
- Regular meetings with donor community in order to secure emergency response and support upon need
- SCRM continues to build capacities to adequately address increased influx of migrants in Serbia
- Donor coordination meetings on migration regularly organised in order to inform donor community on current needs
- Regular donor coordination meetings ensures alignment, coordination and coherence of international assistance
- Maintaining a flexible approach to be able to adapt the evolving needs, close contact and coordination with government officials.
- To tackle the identified potential risks, the IOM will continue to coordinate with the Serbian authorities to ensure implementation of activities is in line with the capacities for counterparts to participate.
- The implementing partners will keep regular interaction throughout the course of the implementation of the programme to ensure coordination in case of such events. Potential issues will be discussed, problems identified and suggest remedial measures in order to provide the requested flexibility in implementing the Actions.
- Make sure that the existing resources, both human and logistics/material, are swiftly relocated to potential new migratory entry points in case of opening of new migratory routes due to closure of the existing entry points;

3.4. Cross-cutting issues

The project will be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner with equal opportunities observed and firm guarantees that distinctions will not be drawn on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, religion or other possible grounds in any regard. Gender equity principles will be respected in the implementation of all project activities.

The expected outputs of the Project will enable all vulnerable groups to live in a secure environment, and to assure that their full scope of rights is preserved and respected.

The project anticipates utilization of domestic building materials that are acceptable according to current criteria and standards for environmentally safe practices.

3.5. Stakeholders

Key stakeholders of the Action are institutions represented in the Working Group for Resolving the Problem of Mixed Migration Flows as follows: Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health, and Minister without portfolio responsible for EU Integration. In addition, all other relevant national institutions, such as local self-governments on whose territory asylum and transit centres are located, other service providers such as NGOs in the field, donor community, etc. are also participating and are important for successful implementation of the Action.

All the above mentioned stakeholders have an active role in the response to migration crisis and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs has already established the system of coordination with all of them.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

4.2. Indicative operational implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3.2 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 42 months from the approval of this Action Document by the Operational Board.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's authorising officer responsible by amending this decision and the relevant contracts and agreements; such amendments to this decision constitute technical amendments in the sense of point (i) of Article 2(3)(c) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014.

4.3. Implementation components and modules

ACTION 1: Direct award to the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (MLEVSA). Such a direct award is justified because the beneficiary is in a legal or factual monopoly situation.

ACTION 2: Indirect management with IOM in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. This implementation is justified because the IOM is mandated to deal with the migration management. The IOM will sub-delegate some of the budget implementation tasks to Catholic Relief Service (CRS).

4.4. Indicative budget

The total EU contribution under this Programme will not exceed EUR 15,000,000. A breakdown between the implementing entities is provided below, and it is indicative.

ACTION 1	Amount in EUR thousands
Support to the Serbian Government, running costs and staff)	EUR 5,500
Running costs	3,000
Staff costs	2,500
TOTAL	EUR 5,500
ACTION 2	Amount in EUR thousands
Indirect management with IOM	EUR 9,500
TOTAL	EUR 15,000

* Communication and visibility funds will be included in the various components

4.5 Performance monitoring

Monitoring shall be ensured primarily through EU Delegations in-country and in particular with the assistance of specific Trust Fund field & liaison officers posted within the EU Delegations. In addition, the EU Trust Fund will launch an independent M&E exercise to accompany all Fund programmes and ensure that targets are met and lessons learnt can be incorporated into other EUTF actions.

The purpose of the Madad EUTF Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is to assess, across various levels, the degree to which the Overall Objective of the Trust Fund has been achieved.

The Madad Trust Fund M&E Framework will assess the effective delivery of programmes, contribute to improved project design, and develop a knowledge base of 'what works' to allow for continuous improvement of aid delivery. Above all and in the spirit of the Agenda for Change, the Madad Trust Fund M&E Framework aims to ensure upward and downward accountability and transparency of EU support towards the Madad Trust Fund Board and end beneficiaries, respectively.

The Trust Fund and actions financed by it are subject to the monitoring and evaluation rules applicable to EU external programmes, in order to ensure the respect of the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, as per Article 13 of the Agreement Establishing the Madad Trust Fund.

4.6 Evaluation and audit

On project level a budget for monitoring, evaluation and audit will be foreseen. Projects shall carry out an obligatory final evaluation, and one external audit per year. Whenever possible, evaluations will be jointly carried out by partners.

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

4.7 Communication and visibility

While communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU, to date the visibility of the EU's support to the Syrian crisis, in particular in neighbouring countries affected by the crisis, has been insufficient. The public perception is that the EU is not addressing the Syrian crisis, when in fact it is the largest donor. The lack of visibility to the EU's actions weakens the EU's political traction in the region and its standing in Europe.

Therefore, communication and visibility is an important part of all Madad Fund programmes factored into the implementation in order to underline its importance at all stages of the planning and implementation of the Programme.

All visibility actions by Madad Fund implementing partners outside areas of conflict should be stepped up. Each implementer will have to draw up a comprehensive visibility and communication plan for their respective target country/community and submit a copy for approval to the Madad Fund and relevant EU Delegation. The related costs will be covered by the budgets of the contract as part of the project.

The measures shall be implemented by the implementing consortium/ia, its contractors, and/or its grant beneficiaries. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, procurement and grant contracts.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action together with specific requirements to highlight the Madad Fund shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.