

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

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	Strengthening protection and food security for migrants and refugees in the Western Balkans	
Total cost	Total estimated cost: EUR 12 000 000 Total amount drawn from the Trust Fund: EUR 12 000 000	
Duration	15 months	
Country	Serbia possibly other countries in the Western Balkans	
Locations	Mainly Serbia (nationwide)	
Implementing Partner(s)	Consortium of NGOs (CARE, Caritas, Oxfam, Serbian Red Cross) International Organisation for Migration	
Main Stakeholder(s)	Serbian Commissariat for Migrants and Refugees Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs Ministry of Health Ministry of Education	
Aid method / Method of implementation	Project Approach: Direct management – direct award Indirect Management – Delegation Agreement with IOM	
DAC-code	52010 72050	<u>Sectors:</u> Food aid/Food security Relief co-ordination, protection and support services
Objectives	The Overall Objective of the proposed Action is to strengthen protection and resilience of migrant or refugee populations in the Western Balkans, in particular in Serbia, and improve the capacity of authorities to manage migration flows in a protection sensitive manner. The specific objectives are to: – To provide food to address the immediate needs of migrants and refugees in reception centres housing migrants. – To improve the protection services and assistance for migrants and refugees.	
Main Activities	– Provision of three cooked meals per day (breakfast, lunch and dinner), ensuring that food is safely prepared and distributed in line with the menus provided by the Serbian Commissariat for Migrants and Refugees (KIRS); – Ensuring proper storage and warehousing of food items; checks on quality, hygiene and nutritional values; – Improvement of the physical infrastructure associated with the provision of food in terms of serving, preparation and storage; – Provision of Individual Protection Assistance, including Accompaniment, Legal Assistance and Case Management with a particular emphasis on psycho-social support, child protection, especially in the case of unaccompanied minors, and gender-based violence.	

2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

2.1. Summary of the action and its objectives

The EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis (The Madad Fund) defines its overall objective as to provide a coherent and reinforced aid response to the Syrian crisis on a regional scale, responding primarily to the needs of refugees from Syria in neighboring countries, as well as of the communities hosting the refugees and their administrations, in particular as regards resilience and early recovery. The Action is also in line and is based on the Strategic orientation of the Madad fund.

The action will ensure continuity of EU support to Serbia in meeting the needs of migrants that are stranded in Serbia and staying for longer periods, so-called mid-term stays (longer than six months). It will ensure food security for migrants and refugees in reception centres housing migrants, strengthen identification and referral mechanisms and improve protection services and assistance for migrants and refugees specific to the new context of longer stays, in particular in terms of psycho-social support.

The proposed Action builds on the lessons learnt from humanitarian assistance projects funded by DG ECHO in the Western Balkans, and from recent and ongoing projects funded under the Madad fund and the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA).

The Action will support Serbia to address the exceptional circumstances and needs of a migrant population that finds itself stranded in the country and staying for mid-to long-term periods of time. Current and future IPA support should serve to contribute to a robust asylum and migration management in Serbia capable of adequately addressing the needs of migrants and asylum seekers after support from the Madad fund has ended.

The **Overall Objective** of the Action is to strengthen protection and resilience of migrant or refugee populations in the Western Balkans, in particular in Serbia, and improve the capacity of authorities to manage migration flows in a protection sensitive manner.

The **Specific Objectives** are to:

- To ensure food security for migrants and refugees in reception centres housing migrants.
- To improve protection services and assistance for migrants and refugees.

In line with the Madad Fund Overall Objective *"to provide a coherent and reinforced aid response to the Syrian crisis on a regional scale, responding primarily to the needs of refugees from Syria in neighbouring countries, as well as of the communities hosting the refugees and their administrations, in particular as regards resilience and early recovery"*, the Action will contribute to the Specific Objective 3 Regional Resilience and Local Development; *"To mitigate the destabilising effects of the refugee crisis"*; 3.2 'Local and national systems and service delivery capacities in target areas strengthened' of the current Result Framework¹.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/eutf_madad_results_framework.pdf

2.2 Context

2.2.1 Country context

The refugee and migration crisis along the Western Balkans route has exerted a particularly high pressure on Serbia. With the closure of the Western Balkans route in 2016, the number of persons stranded in Serbia increased and feature stays for longer periods of time. The situation has thus evolved from an emergency crisis situation to one of a more protracted nature that requires additional efforts from the authorities and donors to meet more medium to long term needs, in particular addressing specific needs during winter time and the respective increased caseload.

In Serbia, the estimated number of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants is currently around 4,700 with over 90% accommodated in government-run centres across the country². According to the latest figures from the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrants, 4,415 persons were being accommodated in the 18 government-run reception centres in Serbia. Of these, nearly half are under 18 years of age and 757 are unaccompanied minors. The top five nationalities are Afghanistan (66.6%), Iraq (11.5%), Pakistan (9.8%), Syria (4.12%) and Iran (2.88%). While recent months indicate a consistent downward trend, the numbers of migrants that are likely to be present in Serbia in the coming year are difficult to predict as decisions taken in one country along the route can have a direct effect on the border of each of the countries downstream and on the number of persons stranded along the route. Recent experience also indicates seasonal fluctuations with the numbers of migrants going down in spring and summer but rising in fall and winter when travel is most difficult.

Currently, most migrants stay in Serbia for more than six months, and there are cases in which some are staying more than a year. The Serbian authorities have made considerable efforts to strengthen the capacity for the reception and care of migrants and prepare up to 6,000 places for the reception of migrants. However, many remain sheltered in temporary structures or hard-shelters which are often overcrowded and do not meet international standards.

Despite these efforts, Serbia lacks the resources to cover the necessary equipment, refurbishment and (re)construction, provision of food, basic services and adequate staffing of existing centres. The Government has mobilised all necessary and available capacities to address the needs of migrants in Serbia but their capacities are becoming overstretched. Moreover, the prolonged stay of migrants has created additional pressure on similarly overstretched institutions at the local level.

2.2.2 Sector context: policies and challenges

Since 2015, ECHO has provided nearly EUR 29,000,000 worth of support for food provision, protection, shelter, NFIs, health services, etc., for migrants and refugees in the Western Balkans. However, ECHO will withdraw from the region in early 2018 and will progressively reduce its support in vital areas such as the provision of food and protection services.

A joint ECHO/NEAR mission took place in July 2017 to assess how the EU could continue to support Serbia once ECHO discontinues its activities in the country at the end of the coming winter, beyond March 2018.

The mission confirmed the need to maintain continuity with the approach used to date by ECHO of relying on external partners for the provision of food, in particular in the transit and temporary centres, an approach that has proven successful.

² UNCHR Serbia update 07-13 August 2017

Food security

The migration crisis has placed a significant financial burden on the Serbian government and resources available from the Serbian state budget for the provision of food for the centres are limited. The remainder are currently covered by international donors foremost of which is the EU via ECHO and the EUTF Madad. EUTF Madad is currently supporting food provision to the five permanent asylum centres in Serbia (Bogovadja, Banja Koviljaca, Krnjaca, Sjenica, Tutin) while ECHO is providing food via NGO implementing partners to ten temporary reception centres across the country. ECHO is preparing a final package of support for food provision with a consortium of NGOs which are implementing ECHO projects in Serbia and will ensure the provision of food in nine temporary centres across the country (Adasevci, Bujanovac, Kikinda, Obrenovac, Pirot, Principovac, Presevo, Sombor, Subotica) until the end of March 2018. This support should be accompanied by a rationalisation in the coming months of the occupation of the centres, including the (temporary) closure of those which are not suitable for long term stays or are no longer needed.

The proposed Action will ensure continuity in EU support for the provision of food to reception centres accommodating migrants and refugees in Serbia after ECHO withdraws its support in March 2018, ensuring food security for the period April 2018 to April 2019. It will fill in the gaps, primarily in the temporary and transit centres that are not covered by state resources or other donors. In line with the Governmental planning on closure of the temporary centres, Madad is expected to fill a temporary support. In the case of permanent asylum centres, the Serbian government has given its commitment to funding the provision of food for three asylum centres (Banja Koviljaca, Bogovadja and Krnjaca) while the EU would continue support for food provision for the remaining two asylum centres (Sjenica and Tutin).

Protection

In the case of protection, the mission concluded that the EU should stay engaged in support of the provision of protection for persons of concern in Serbia. The services should involve a structured system encompassing outreach, accompaniment, legal assistance and case management, with the two prior reaching the largest number of people and the latter requiring the highest staff intensity and focusing on the protection needs of unaccompanied minors (UAMs), without neglecting other issues such as gender based violence (GBV) and psycho-social support (PSS).

Outreach should serve a dual protection purpose, namely to act as a protection monitoring system as well as an entry point for case identification and referral to other services (medical, psycho-social support, legal assistance and case management). In addition, outreach can be integrated with informal education/social/recreational/vocational activities – these should be diversified to also target adolescents and adult men and could include language training.

Accompaniment, as already existing today, should continue. There will continue to be a need for information provision on services and legal options as well as translation, and in addition there is a need to reinforce the provision of transport to secondary and tertiary health care and education opportunities. Case management capacities for UAMs should be strengthened.

The above protection activities should include relevant capacity building and training for State authorities, local communities and NGOs in order to build sustainability and ensure that migration flows are managed in a protection sensitive manner.

2.3 Lessons learnt

- There is a need for greater sharing of information among donors, the relevant authorities and other actors (UN agencies, NGOs, etc.) and improve coordination across sectors (e.g. provision of food, shelter, child protection, health, education, etc.).
- Need to adjust the current response plan to the current context of longer stays.
- Flexibility is needed in the implementation phase in order to be able to adapt actions to a rapidly changing situation or to new needs that could arise in the course of implementation. The need for quick adaptation to an evolving and unpredictable situation is therefore essential.
- Local host communities need to be involved in order to promote social cohesion and build stronger relations between them and migrants and refugees
- Actions involving a wide range of activities and a variety of partners must have a proper, functioning governance structure in place with clearly defined roles and responsibilities of each participating institution in order to ensure the proper implementation of the project.

2.4 Complementary actions

The International Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations which will implement the Action are key players in the provision of protection, humanitarian relief, and access to basic life services to migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and host communities in Serbia with a strong presence in the field and complementary relations with a large number of Serbian stakeholders.

The proposed action will coordinate with all relevant ongoing actions and actors dealing with migration and protection issues in Serbia and, in particular, with the EU-funded projects under the *Madad Trust Fund* implemented by the Government of Serbia and IOM, previous ECHO projects, IPA, etc.

In particular, the action will benefit from the results of the project *"Support to the Information Management, Communication and Planning Capacity in Addressing the Migration Management Challenges in Serbia"* funded under Special Measure 4 and implemented by IOM which will strengthen the capacity of the lead Serbian authorities such as the Commissariat for Migrants and Refugees in planning and accurately assessing key needs, prioritizing them and ensuring a coordinated response. As such, the Serbian authorities will be better able to define the needs for the protection measures to be carried out in Component 2.

2.5 Donor co-ordination

The Government of Serbia has established a Working Group for Resolving the Problem of Mixed Migration Flows, with the aim of coordination and directing the work of competent state authorities in addressing migratory flows. The Working Group is composed of the following Ministers: Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Minister of Interior, Minister of Defence, Minister of Health, Minister for EU Integration and the Commissioner of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration.

To date, three High-Level Donor Coordination Meetings have been organised by the Government since 2015, the latest on 15 December 2016, the main purpose of which was to

present the Government's Response Plan for the period April-December 2017, with the aim to enable the provision of international assistance in accordance with the needs in Serbia.

Regular sector/specific coordination meetings are organised by the Government that bring together donors, relevant authorities and other actors (UN agencies, NGOs, etc.) in order to share and exchange information on the evolving situation and identify needs.

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The **Overall Objective** of the Action is to strengthen protection and resilience of migrant and refugee populations in the Western Balkans, in particular in Serbia, and improve the capacity of authorities to manage migration flows in a protection sensitive manner.

The **Specific Objectives** are to:

- To ensure food security for migrants and refugees in reception centres housing migrants.
- To improve and consolidate access to protection services for migrants and refugees.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

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

Component 1

3.2.1 Food security needs of migrant and refugee populations in Serbia are met

Main activities include:

- Provision of three cooked meals per day (breakfast, lunch and dinner), ensuring that food is safely prepared and distributed in line with the menus provided by the Serbian Commissariat for Migrants and Refugees (KIRS) and meeting a defined set of daily nutritional standards (SPHERE standard);
- Identifying suppliers for procuring necessary food items;
- Ensuring proper storage and warehousing of food items;
- Monitoring of food distribution with regular checks on quality, hygiene and nutritional values;
- Improvement of the physical infrastructure associated with the provision of food in terms of serving, preparation and storage;
- Special attention will be given in providing food that is culturally accepted by the migrants, in particular during the month of Ramadan (mid-May to mid-June 2018).
- Training for relevant staff on how to respect food safety and quality in food preparation, warehouse management and cleaning;
- Special attention will be given to involving local communities (e.g. suppliers, providers, businesses, volunteers, vulnerable groups, NGOs, etc.) in order to build stronger relations between host communities and migrants and refugees;
- Ensure that particularly vulnerable groups of migrants with special needs are taken care of.

Component 2

3.2.2 Improved access to protection services for refugees and migrants

Indicative list of activities:

- Provision of Individual Protection Assistance in line with DG ECHO Internal Guidance Notes, including Accompaniment, Legal Assistance and Case Management with a particular emphasis on child protection, especially in the case of unaccompanied minors and gender-based violence. Activities could include the provision of information, translation services, transport support, protection monitoring, legal aid and counselling, individual case management;
- Specific focus on psycho-social support and its link with recreational, occupational and vocational activities;
- Strengthening the capacity of relevant actors in the above areas such as State authorities, local communities and NGOs, in particular with regard to case management and psycho-social support, in order to ensure capacity to manage migration flows in a protection-sensitive manner.

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 remain fully committed towards securing an adequate response to the increased needs of migrants in the region;
- The EU and international community continue to provide support to address the increased migration flows in the Western Balkans region;
- Efficient coordination with all relevant institutions and service providers in securing adequate response to migrants needs is ensured;
- Local level authorities, communal services and service providers are interested and willing to support the Government in managing the migration influx in their country;
- High level of cooperation with local self-governments (LSGs) is ensured;

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;
- 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;
- Delays and difficulties in implementation due to an unclear division of roles and responsibilities among the participating institutions.

Mitigating measures have been considered, including:

- The Working Group for Resolving the Problem of Mixed Migration Flows in Serbia is regularly meeting and following development of the situation in the field;

- Regular contacts with neighbouring countries to exchange information on migration flows and trends are ensured;
- Regular meetings with the donor community in order to secure emergency response and support upon need are organized;
- 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;
- The lessons learned from the projects in the region funded under ECHO, Special Measures and the Madad Fund will be applied to this Action.

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 Action will target the specific needs of women and minor migrants and refugees, in particular unaccompanied minors, who represent a significant proportion of migrants/refugees in Serbia. 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 governments and EUD regularly and frequently engage with local and international civil society organisations on the issue of migration. CSOs are invited to and actively participate in sector specific coordination meetings (shelter, accommodation, provision of food, health, children's rights, etc. The EU has funded two projects through EIDHR to strengthen the capacity of local CSOs in Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in monitoring, reporting, advocacy and networking in the field of migrants' rights.

3.5. Stakeholders

In Serbia, 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, Ministry of Education, Science, Technological Development and Minister 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.

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, referred to in Article 184(2)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 .

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 15 months, latest date of implementation 14/12/2019. An implementation period beyond 14/12/2009 is subject to authorisation yet to be granted by the Commission to the EUTF Manager.

4.3. Implementation components and modules

Component 1 of the Action will be implemented via direct management through the direct award of a grant to a consortium, not exclusively, composed of NGOs (Oxfam, Caritas, CARE and the Red Cross of Serbia) who will implement the last tranche of ECHO support for food provision for the period 10/2017-04/2018 prior to the present Action. These organisations have been at the forefront of aid delivery and protection measures in Serbia since 2015 and have a wide protection/migration experience.

Under responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified as the EUTF Madad is an emergency/post-emergency Trust Fund according to Art. 187 of the Financial Regulation (FR) and thus allows for relevant provisions of the FR on crisis situations to be used.

Component 2 of the Action will be implemented via indirect management in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 with an IO such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in partnership with other IOs such as UNHCR and UNICEF and/or Non-Governmental Organisations with relevant protection/migration experience in the region.

The entrusted entity would carry out budget implementation tasks as described in the section 3.2.2 above.

4.4. Indicative budget*

Module*	Amount of total budget
Direct grant to consortium of INGOs	10 000 000
Indirect management	2 000 000
Total	12 000 000

* *The costs of Evaluation and audit and Communication and visibility will be included in the projects' budgets as per contractual conditions and/or contracted separately via service contract(s).*

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 is launching 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 would be to assess, across various levels, the degree to which the Overall Objective of the Trust Fund has been achieved.

Partners implementing this Action will comply with the ad hoc Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed for the Madad Fund as well as with the quarterly progress reporting requirements and tools being developed by the EU Trust Fund.

The monitoring and evaluation exercises mentioned above will represent milestones in the implementation of the activities. These regular assessments will constitute a basis for a possible decision of suspension or revision of activities, should the conditions on the ground not allow for their proper implementation.

4.6 Evaluation and audit

Projects shall carry out an obligatory final evaluation, and external audits as per contractual conditions. 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

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU. Beneficiaries, host communities and administration in Syria's neighbouring countries, the European public, Members States and other stakeholders of the Trust Fund need to be informed about the EU's efforts as the leading donor in the Syria crisis response. Insufficient visibility of the EU's actions weakens the EU's political traction in the region and its standing in Europe. Unsatisfactory recognition of knowledge of EU assistance also has a potential to

negatively affect the EU's political efforts to resolve the Syria crisis and its future role in a post-peace agreement transition.

The global objective of the communication and visibility campaigns of the implementing partner, in line with the EU Madad Trust Fund's communication and outreach objectives, is to improve the recognition, public awareness and visibility of the comprehensive and coherent EU support to address the consequences of the Syrian and Iraqi crisis, by highlighting its real-life impact and results among defined target audiences in the affected region but also vis-à-vis the general public, donors and stakeholders in the EU Member States.

Therefore, communication and visibility is an important part of all EU Madad Trust Fund programmes and must be factored in to underline the programme's importance at all stages of the planning and implementation. Each implementer is required to draw up a comprehensive visibility, communication and outreach plan for their respective target country/community and submit a copy for approval to the EU Madad Trust Fund's Communication and Outreach Lead. 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 EU Madad Trust Fund shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

The EU Madad Trust Fund Visibility and Communications strategy provides concrete guidance to the implementers. All communication and outreach campaigns must be people-oriented and easily understandable. All regional outreach and communication must be conflict sensitive, strategic, do no harm and mindful of the differentiation in messaging for Syrian, Lebanese, Jordanian and Iraqi beneficiaries. The campaigns must place the beneficiaries at the center and thus ensure adequate ownership. Messaging should have a human face, be empathic, honest, transparent, direct, unambiguous, neutral and conducive to a highly sensitive human and political environment, in addition to being gender-sensitive and gender-balanced.

To instill trust amongst beneficiaries in the European Union and its partners, campaigns should also include components of participatory and engaging communication, where the beneficiary becomes a key actor. This in turn will support the EU Madad Trust Fund's programmes in promoting social cohesion, inclusion, dialogue and help mitigate tensions and misperceptions between refugee and host communities.