



Република Србија
ПОТПРЕДСЕДНИЦА ВЛАДЕ
МИНИСТАРСТВО ГРАЂЕВИНАРСТВА,
САОБРАЋАЈА И ИНФРАСТРУКТУРЕ



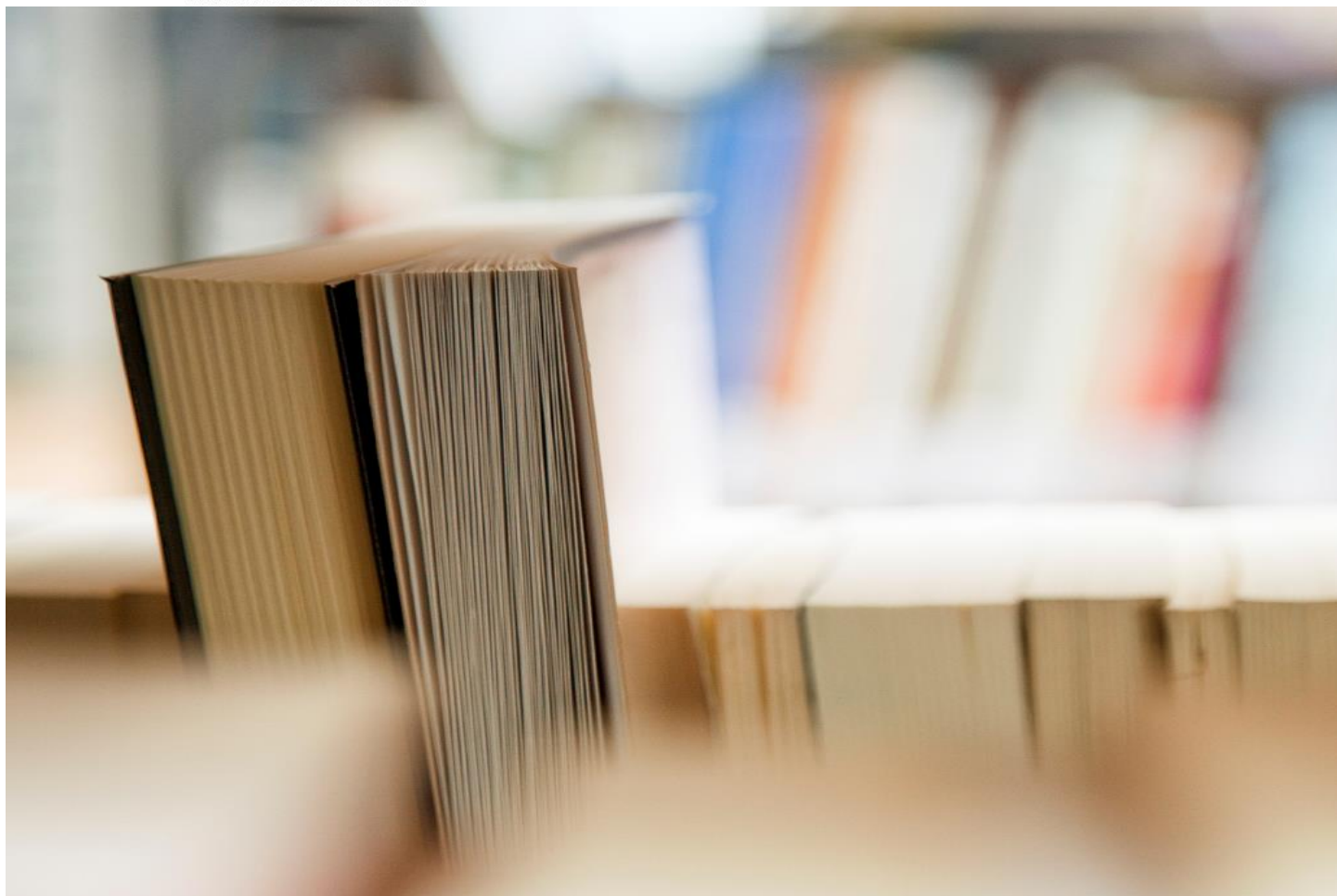
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Sprovedeno od strane:

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
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CENTAR ZA DEMOKRATIJU



Reintegration of Returnees in the Western Balkans

A summary of good practices

Table of contents

ABBREVIATIONS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
Part 1	5
Defining a good practice	5
Socio-economic context and institutional, legal and policy framework	7
Part 2	9
Good practice 1	9
Good practice 2	11
Good practice 3	14
Part 3	17
Conclusions and recommendations	17
Weaknesses and threats	17
Strengths and opportunities	22
Possible follow up	24
Bibliography	28
ANNEXES	30
Annex 1: List of institutions, organizations and experts approached by e-mail and/or telephone	30
Annex 2: List of identified relevant projects and public policies in the Western Balkans	31

ABBREVIATIONS

AROPE	At risk of poverty or social exclusion
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development
CoE	Council of Europe
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EC	European Commission
EHO	Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation to Serbia
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HRBA	Human Right-Based Approach
IDC	Initiative for Development and Cooperation
IDP	Internally displaced person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
MEI	Ministry of European Integration
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
TARI	Technical Assistance for Roma Inclusion
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	Western Balkans

INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared by the Center for Democracy Foundation with the support of GIZ Serbia, within the BMZ-funded project “**Inclusion of Roma and other marginalized groups in Serbia**” (hereinafter referred to as: the InR project) the aim of which is to improve the framework for the implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2025. The overall objective of this strategy is the improvement of the socio-economic status of the Roma ethnic minority in the Republic of Serbia, and, at the same time, to ensure full enjoyment of all minority rights, eliminate discrimination and achieve a greater social inclusion of Roma men and women into all segments of society. It recognizes returnees as one of the specific target groups and contains respective measures, such as the advancement of the system of reintegration of returnees and the provision of educational support to children who have returned to Serbia pursuant to readmission agreements. Additionally, the InR project aims to contribute to the enhancement of public policies in Serbia specifically dealing with the reintegration of returnees, in particular of the Strategy for the Reintegration of Returnees Pursuant to Readmission Agreements. The previous strategy was adopted in 2009 and has expired (the new one is drafted and set for adoption in 2020). It envisaged a wide range of measures in the fields of housing, employment, social protection, health and education¹. These measures match the obligations of Serbia arising from the Action plan for the Chapter 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, such as the one to develop systemic models of support to returnee children and pupils through programs of the Serbian language as a non-mother tongue and support to learning during summer holidays.

Given the need to ensure “the effective implementation of readmission and return policies”², as emphasized by the latest Enlargement Strategy, the report aims to enable the transfer of knowledge in the field of reintegration of returnees in the Western Balkans by identifying and presenting good practices implemented through successful public or private (or mixed) project interventions. Additionally, having in mind the European Commission’s assessment in the 2019 report on Serbia that an increased attention was required for the successful reintegration of returnees, “especially the most vulnerable such as the Roma that represent a large number of returns”³, its findings will hopefully be relevant for both the implementation and the redesign of relevant strategic framework in

¹ Government of Serbia, Strategy for the Reintegration of Returnees Pursuant to Readmission Agreements, 2009.

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans, 2019, p. 11.

³ Commission Staff Working Document, Serbia 2019 Report, p. 40.

Serbia, such as of the above mentioned strategy for social inclusion of Roma, as well as of the new strategy for the reintegration of returnees.

The report was prepared on the basis of data collected through desk-research and communication with the representatives of institutions and organizations from the selected countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia) and with individual experts (Annex 2). In relation to this, two important methodological remarks must be made. Namely, both the criteria for the identification of good practices and information about their implementation (in particular about successes and failures) are usually derived from official evaluations dealing with a given project or public policy. However, the desk research phase showed that there is virtually not a single available evaluation conducted specifically on the practices identified⁴. Furthermore, given that the research was conducted mostly in July 2020, there were significant difficulties in reaching out to the persons in charge of identified projects and public policies. In the majority of occasions, they were either not responding to numerous repeated attempts through e-mail and by telephone, or another representative of the institutions/organization provided information about their absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic or annual leave. These limitations dictated the need to turn to alternative sources of information, such as independent experts and research done by international organizations, which ultimately shaped the part on conclusions and recommendations of this report to a large extent. It is also worth noting that the relative scarcity of good practices for the reintegration of returnees in the Western Balkans in relation to those designed and implemented in Serbia maybe should not come as a surprise – an expert opinion given by telephone by the representative of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of Serbia indicated that Serbia was by far the most experienced and advanced country in the region in this area and that it had even shared its respective experiences with neighboring countries.

The report is divided into three parts: the first part deals with the issue of defining what makes a good practice and with the relevant socio-economic context and institutional, legal and policy framework in selected WB countries; the second part is dedicated to presenting the good practices identified through the research within the sample of projects and public policies presented in Annex 2; in the third part conclusions and recommendations to relevant stakeholders are formulated on the basis of desk research,

⁴ A wide range of databases was searched in order to establish the relevant list of resources, including: the database of the European Commission (DG NEAR) on monitoring and evaluation, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/monitoring-and-evaluation_en; the database of the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) on projects and programs funded by it in the Western Balkans, such as in Albania, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/countries/albania.html>; the database of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) on projects and programs funded by it in the Western Balkans, such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, <https://www.sida.se/English/where-we-work/Europe/Bosnia-Herzegovina/examples-of-results/>, etc.

information gathered from representatives of institutions and organizations and individual experts and data on identified good practices.

Part 1

Defining a good practice

Usually, a good/best practice refers to a method or modality of work that yields particularly good results against desired outcomes. The Cambridge Dictionary defines “best practice” as “a working method or set of working methods that is officially accepted as being the best to use in a particular business or industry, usually described formally and in detail”⁵.

When it comes to public policy or project assessment, among the most common methodological approaches for establishing the “best” working method(s) in the abovementioned sense are the OECD DAC criteria and the human rights standards of the UN. Therefore, for the purpose of this report, good practice will be defined as “a public, private, or mixed intervention (project or public policy) for the reintegration of returnees which stands out beyond the regular practices against one or more key criteria” (the criteria are given in the Table 1).

Table 1: Criteria for the verification of good practices

Criteria	Key questions ⁶
Relevance	To what extent have the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries’, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continued to do so if circumstances changed? Is there any particular feature that makes it stand out beyond the regular practice against this criteria?
Coherence	How compatible the intervention has been with other interventions in the country, sector or

⁵ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/best-practice>

⁶ The questions have been adapted on the basis of: OECD DAC criteria, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>, Cost-effectiveness analysis, https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/evaluation_guidelines/wiki/cost-effectiveness-analysis-0, Frequently Asked Questions on a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf>, Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, <http://unevaluation.org/document/download/2107>.

	institution? Is there any particular feature that makes it stand out beyond the regular practice against this criteria?
Effectiveness	To what extent the intervention has achieved its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups? Is there any particular feature that makes it stand out beyond the regular practice against this criteria?
Efficiency	To what extent the intervention has delivered results in an economic and timely way? Is there any particular feature that makes it stand out beyond the regular practice against this criteria?
Impact	To what extent the intervention has generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects? Is there any particular feature that makes it stand out beyond the regular practice against this criteria?
Sustainability	To what extent the net benefits of the intervention have continued, or are likely to continue? Is there any particular feature that makes it stand out beyond the regular practice against this criteria?
Cost-effectiveness	Has the intervention been implemented in the economically most efficient way? Is there any particular feature that makes it stand out beyond the regular practice against this criteria?
Scale up, replication and multiplying potential	Has the intervention been expanded to other parts of the country or to other countries, or has the number of beneficiaries and/or the scale of benefits surpassed the interventions' targets? Is there any particular feature that makes it stand out beyond the regular practice against this criteria?
Human rights-based orientation	Has the intervention been designed using the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)? Is there any particular feature that makes it stand out beyond the regular practice against this criteria?
Gender sensitiveness	Has the intervention intentionally yielded benefits for and advanced the rights of women? Is there any particular feature that makes it stand out beyond the regular practice against this criteria?

Socio-economic context and institutional, legal and policy framework

Given that the OECD recommends that DAC evaluation criteria be contextualized, as well as the importance given by the EU to the socio-economic situation as a factor of sustainable reintegration of returnees⁷, a snapshot of selected indicators of the Western Balkans countries covered by this report is given in the Table 2.

Table 2: Socio-economic indicators of selected Western Balkans countries

Country	Purchasing power adjusted GDP per capita	Unemployment rate (%)	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (%)	Absolute poverty rate, 3.1 PPP \$ line ⁸
Albania	9,700	13.7	/	6.8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10,000	20.7	/	0.5
Montenegro	15,400	15.2	33.7	2.5
North Macedonia	12,000	17.3	41.1	8.7

Sources: EC reports accompanying the Enlargement strategy 2019; Eurostat, 2017, 2018 and 2019 data; Gordana Matković, “The Welfare State in Western Balkan Countries”, Center for Social Policy, Belgrade 2017.

According to available data, the countries covered by this report are lagging behind the EU average in terms of GDP per capita⁹ and have much higher unemployment¹⁰ and poverty and social exclusion rates¹¹. These features continue to represent the so called “push” factors that are hampering a sustainable integration of returnees in their societies of origin¹², particularly when combined with the number of returnees returned from the

⁷ European Parliament, *Reintegration of returning migrants*, 2017, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/608779/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)608779_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/608779/EPRS_BRI(2017)608779_EN.pdf), p. 3.

⁸ PPP \$ or purchasing power parity dollars or international dollars. 1 PPP\$ can buy the same amount of goods and services as 1 dollar can buy in the USA.

⁹ According to the latest Eurostat data for 2019, Albania’s GDP per capita in PPS makes only 31% of the EU27 average, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s 32%, North Macedonia’s 38% and Montenegro’s 50%. Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&pcode=tec00114&language=en>.

¹⁰ According to the latest Eurostat data for 2019, the EU27 unemployment rate was 6.7%. Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00203&plugin=1>.

¹¹ According to the latest Eurostat data for 2018, the estimated EU27 AROPE rate was 21.6%. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=t2020_50&language=en.

¹² “Returnees emphasize that they migrate to escape poverty, lack of housing, unemployment, the lack of or insufficient access to social security, and a consistent struggle and inability to provide a basic standard of living for themselves and their families.” Source: World Bank Group, *Supporting the Effective Reintegration of Roma Returnees in the Western Balkans*, 2019, VIII.

EU to the Western Balkans which is estimated to be at around 60 thousand in 2016 (from the top sending countries – Germany, France, Austria and Belgium – alone)¹³.

As regards the relevant institutional framework, the focal points for the issue of readmission and reintegration of returnees in the WB countries covered by this report are:

- **Albania** – Interinstitutional Committee on Measures against Organized Crime, Trafficking and Terrorism, chaired by the Prime Minister, with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities performing the role of technical secretariat of this committee;
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** – a governmental coordination body under the leadership of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees;
- **Montenegro** – Ministry of the Interior;
- **North Macedonia** – a governmental coordination body under the leadership of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

When it comes to the relevant legal and policy framework, all of the WB countries listed above have signed readmission agreements with the EU. The agreement with Albania entered into force on 1 May 2006, while the agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia entered into force on 1 January 2008¹⁴. It is also worth noting that these countries have adhered to the major international human rights standards, namely, the UN and CoE instruments, with the only exception being the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families which was not ratified yet by Montenegro and North Macedonia¹⁵. Lastly, with regard to the relevant strategic framework, all of the countries covered by this report adopted some kind of strategic public policy document setting out measures for the reintegration of returnees:

- **Albania:** Strategy on Reintegration of Returned Albanian citizens 2010-2015 (adopted in 2010);
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Strategy for the Reception and Integration of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Nationals who Return under Readmission Agreements and Action Plan for the period 2015-2018 (adopted in 2015);
- **Montenegro:** Reintegration Strategy for Persons Returned on the Basis of a Readmission Agreement for the period 2016-2020 (adopted in 2016);

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 6.

¹⁴ Source: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/irregular-migration-return-policy/return-readmission_en.

¹⁵ Source: <https://indicators.ohchr.org/>.

- **North Macedonia:** Program for Assistance and Support for the reintegration of Returnees in the Republic of Macedonia (adopted in 2010).

Part 2

Good practice 1

Project title	Integrated support program for the reintegration of returnees under readmission agreements (phase III)
Country	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Context¹⁶	The implementation of the visa-free regime with the EU is smooth. There has been a decreasing trend of abuse of the visa-free regime by unfounded asylum applicants from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU and Schengen associated countries. The country has made significant efforts in border control and raising public awareness on negative effects. Increased attention should be given to a successful reintegration of returnees. This applies in particular to the most vulnerable, such as Roma, which represent a high proportion of returns. Coordination among all levels of government need to be enhanced to strengthen implementation and improve monitoring. Cooperation with international organizations and NGOs active in the reintegration of returnees needs to be stepped up.
Period of implementation	2017-2019
Area of implementation	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Source of funding	Swiss Confederation
Budget (EUR)	/
Beneficiary/Lead institution	Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees
Target groups	Returnees of all ages (individuals and families)
Description	Overall Objective: To enhance the capacities of the system for admission and integration of persons under readmission on the basis of real needs. Outcome 1: Institutions at all levels efficiently coordinate the integration measures and ensure a sustainable support in the readmission process.

¹⁶ Source: Commission Staff Working Document – Analytical Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Commission – Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s application for membership of the European Union, 2019, p. 66-67.

	<p>Outcome 2: Returnees upon readmission obtain access to their rights and get adequate support for reintegration</p> <p>Results and activities (selected):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 flats are made available to serve as temporary shelter; • 36 families have been supported with socio-economic integration measures; • Cantonal readmission coordinators appointed in 10 cantons; • 10 local readmission teams established; • 10 local action plans for the reintegration of returnees in the period 2019-2022 are adopted; • Protocol on responsibilities of authorities in charge of admission and temporary care of vulnerable returnees; • Members of local readmission teams and cantonal readmission coordinators trained to implement implementation acts regulating the readmission of returnees; • Readmission teams are using IT system on social housing data; • Two handbooks, one guide and one information sheet are updated, printed and disseminated to returnees.
<p>Elements of good practice</p>	<p>Coherence: The project proved to be the national platform for the establishment of a comprehensive and coherent system for the readmission of returnees, thus contributing to the implementation of the Strategy for the Reception and Integration of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Nationals who Return under Readmission Agreements. It made a crucial contribution to the enhancement of coordination between key entities (primarily between the national, federal and district authorities). Furthermore, it provided a flexible and open platform for coordination and involvement with other implementing partners, namely Catholic Relief Services and GIZ (the support of which enabled the creation of local readmission teams in the canton of Tuzla).</p> <p>Cost-Effectiveness: The project approach towards housing solutions for returnees obtained a high degree of cost-efficiency, given that resources of several local communities were pooled and by doing so a housing fund made of available flats in local authorities' property was created. The project funds were used for the adaptation of these flats, whereas the resources for the</p>

	<p>payment of rent is provided by local authorities and co-funded through the project budget. This sheltered housing approach yielded multiple benefits for the same investment. In addition to enabling the returnees to enjoy their right to housing, it prevented further deterioration of existing local housing stock and made possible the increase of the number of functional housing units at the local level.</p>
<p>Conclusions & Recommendations</p>	<p>The project's design and reach are very ambitious thanks to a strong political support by the EU. As such, it provided crucial contribution to the enhancement of the coherence of the country's strategic and institutional framework for the reintegration of returnees. It also applied a smart approach towards local resources pooling them around joint interventions which led to sustainable housing solutions. On the basis of these conclusions, two key takeaways are relevant for GIZ: first, secure a strong support from the EU at the very early stage of designing an intervention for the reintegration of returnees; second, make the partnership with local communities a tangible one and embedded as a core principle in the project design and implementation with the aim of securing its cost-effectiveness.</p>

Good practice 2

<p>Project title</p>	<p>Social Inclusion of residents and returning Roma migrants in Macedonia</p>
<p>Country</p>	<p>North Macedonia</p>
<p>Context¹⁷</p>	<p>The readmission agreement with the EU is being implemented in a satisfactory manner in regards to own nationals. The return rate, which remains above 100%, shows that citizens who are ordered to leave the EU are effectively returned, with a high share of Roma. The country needs to develop services for returnees and to revive the coordinating body on returnees. In 2018, the number of third country nationals who returned to their country of origin remained low. Assisted voluntary returns procedures were carried out for 21 migrants. The country needs to put in place a return mechanism for irregular migrants, in line with the acquis. More effort is needed to successfully reintegrate returnees, especially the most vulnerable such as Roma - who</p>

¹⁷ Source: Commission Staff Working Document – North Macedonia 2019 Report, p. 41.

	represent a large part of returns. Increased cooperation, communication and coordination is needed between central level governments, among central and local authorities and with international organizations and NGOs active in the reintegration of returnees. The government should consider reviving and reinforcing the coordination body of returnees under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.
Period of implementation	2016 – 2018
Area of implementation	North Macedonia (Kumanovo, Stip, Kocani, Veles, Prilep, Kicevo)
Source of funding	We Effect (Sweden)
Budget (EUR)	/
Beneficiary/Lead institution	National Roma Centrum, Kumanovo (North Macedonia)
Target groups	Returnees of all ages (individuals and families)
Description	<p>Overall objective: To combat the segregation of Roma minorities and facilitate the reintegration of returning Roma migrants in Macedonia</p> <p>Results and activities (selected):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for reintegration provided to 500 families and 800 children (1,557 beneficiaries in total); • 600 school packages awarded to Roma first grade students (crayons, markers, pencils, erasers, plasticine and notebooks); • 200 newborns received packages for necessary care; • Provision of services by subcontracted NGOs in six cities through the establishment and equipping of three service providing centers and three open nurseries; • Provision of legal aid and representation in administrative procedures in access to land privatization procedures, access to housing, social and health protection, employment, administrative procedures for personal documents (199 procedures conducted; 1.273 Roma received advice); • Support for reintegration in education and VET; • Provision of trainings on business planning, marketing and entrepreneurship; • Provision of trainings on fundamental rights;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of a documentary¹⁸ and short videos for the promotion of social inclusion, gender equality and entrepreneurship; • Organization of fairs of Roma food.
<p>Elements of good practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact: The project seems to have achieved a high impact on targeted communities. The service provision centers which were established through the project act as a bridge between the Roma communities and the local community. This stands for particularly with regard to the provision of free legal aid, as assessed by the Swedish donor. In the words of one of the project beneficiaries, to overcome administrative burdens when seeking for the enjoyment of rights, one must often rely on “a friend”, and the National Roma Centrum proved to be an effective agent providing this kind of friendly support to Roma returnees. The project sought to provide a comprehensive support to targeted communities, hence striving for a long-lasting impact. Children were provided with space for daily activities and with school equipment, whereas their parents were equipped with new skills relevant for enhancing their job generation opportunities. Additionally, work with the recipient community was carefully designed and implemented, ranging from intense communication and facilitation with local administration to organization of promotional activities aimed at fighting stereotypes and discrimination against Roma. • Human Rights-Based Orientation: The project donor, the Swedish organization “We Effect” puts strong emphasis on HRBA, as a central part of its activities and of those of its partners. The project has applied this approach by making the provision of free legal aid the central pillar of its design. This was coupled with trainings on fundamental rights which enabled the empowerment of the project beneficiaries in relation to their understanding of human rights they are entitled to by the law. By applying this practical support with knowledge generation, the project triggered a lasting change in the lives of its beneficiaries, helping them not only to overcome daily obstacles for acceding essential services such as social protection, but also

¹⁸ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rd27wlKFPk>

	equipping them with knowledge about their rights pursuant to the legal framework.
Conclusions & Recommendations	The project, although designed and implemented on a much smaller scale than the other two good practices identified, proved to be even more effective in terms of its impact, given that it operated on a micro-level. It meticulously targeted the weakest links hampering the sustainable integration of Roma returnees in the selected six municipalities (such as lack of respect for the right to access to justice) and by doing so, it was able to yield focused results and benefits to its beneficiaries. Strong and open relation with the donor and a shared values platform contributed to this success. On the basis of these conclusions, two key takeaways are relevant for GIZ: first, put special focus on identifying the municipalities where a comprehensive cycle of support comprising all essential services and the beneficiaries of all ages can be implemented in close partnership with local authorities; second, make HRBA an essential feature of the project design and implement it through activities such as the provision of free legal aid and generation of knowledge among the beneficiaries about their own rights.

Good practice 3

Project/Policy/Program title	Regional Housing Program (RHP)
Country	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia
Context	RHP is an integral part of the “Sarajevo Process on refugees and displaced persons” initiated in 2005 at the Regional Ministerial Conference on Refugee Returns. The initiative is endorsed by the international community, including the European Union represented by the European Commission, the United States of America, the Council of Europe Development Bank, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.
Period of implementation	2012-2022
Area of implementation	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia
Source of funding	The European Union, the United States of America, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Turkey, Luxembourg, Spain, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic.

Budget (EUR)	584,000,000.00 EUR
Beneficiary/Lead institution	Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care (Croatia), Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (Montenegro), Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (Serbia)
Target groups	Vulnerable refugees and displaced persons
Description	<p>The Overall Objective is to contribute to the resolution of the protracted displacement situation of the most vulnerable refugees and displaced persons following the 1991-1995 conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia, including internally displaced persons in Montenegro from 1999.</p> <p>Results and activities (selected):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19,000 vulnerable persons have been provided with decent housing (target value: 36,000) • 31 projects approved to Partner Countries • 20 events took place across the four Partner Countries to mark the delivery of keys to beneficiaries or launch of construction, and were promptly highlighted via press releases and social media posts. Four films which summarized the impacts of the Programme in each Partner Country were also released
Elements of good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness: The RHP combines the provision of assistance for housing projects with the enhancement of institutional capacity in the partner countries to design and implement housing solutions. It must be also noted that the implementation of the RHP in Serbia continued during the COVID-19 pandemic, given that the majority of construction sites remained open operational. This points to the resilience of the program’s essential operations, namely, the provision of housing to vulnerable groups, including returnees. • Scale up, replication and multiplying potential: The RHP has been recognized as a “model” for other programs. In November 2019, the RHP was one of 114 projects selected – out of approximately 700 applications worldwide – to be showcased at the Paris Peace Forum, an event which convened 33 heads of state and civil society representatives from approximately 140 countries with a view to advancing global governance solutions.

Conclusions & Recommendations	<p>The project is one of the biggest ODA-funded interventions in the Western Balkans so far. It was the result of a comprehensive political initiative under the auspices of the EU. As evidence shows, this achievement is a rare example of a coordinated and joint approach of donors and implementing agencies in solving a socio-economic challenge in the Western Balkans. Furthermore, the project smartly combined infrastructure support with policy support, thus creating ground for a sustainable and long-lasting change of housing and living conditions of its beneficiaries in the targeted regions. On the basis of these conclusions, two key takeaways are relevant for GIZ: first, efforts in both designing and implementing interventions aiming for the reintegration of returnees should be coordinated to a much greater extent with the donors and implementing agencies active in the same field; second, any kind of policy support cannot pay off the same as the one combined with concrete benefits for targeted municipalities and beneficiaries, therefore, the design of future interventions should pay attention to having this feature embedded in its design, no matter its thematic focus.</p>
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Part 3

Conclusions and recommendations

On the basis of the sample of projects and public policies identified for the purpose of this report (Annex 2), good practices that were selected on the basis of it and the review of relevant literature, weaknesses and threats, strengths and opportunities, as well as possible follow up can be formulated for the benefit of current and future interventions for the reintegration of returnees in the Republic of Serbia.

Weaknesses and threats

Evidence show that the approach of the EU (and of other donors) towards the readmission of returnees to the selected Western Balkan countries suffers from **lack of systematicness** leading to sustainable integration of returnees in the social and economic life of their home countries. Coupled with this structural deficiency, the **inertness of the countries** on the receiving side leads to the perpetuation of the phenomena of illegal migration. Furthermore, the issue of knowledge generation and data collection continue to haunt the actors striving to achieve durable results for the benefit of returnees. Although evaluation is a key prerequisite for enabling the creation of an informed basis for future projects dealing with the issue of returnees' reintegration, there is a scarcity of available documents in this regard; available research data show that **rarely are these types of interventions evaluated** and feedback loops created¹⁹ and that, consequentially, significant important aspects of this phenomena (such as evidence on the role of the migrants themselves in ensuring the success of reintegration and sustainable return²⁰) remain untackled. On top of that, Western Balkan countries rarely perform well when it comes to post return data collection, which occurs at the very beginning of their arrival with gaps in their registration²¹. This calls for increased attention of all decision-makers involved in the reintegration process given that the findings of some research show that the successful return rate is very low²².

¹⁹ A study by IOM concluded that return projects in Austria “are not evaluated at all, or if so, then only unsystematically”. Source: Khalid Koser, Katie Kuschminder, *Comparative Research on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Migrants*, International Organization for Migration, 2015, p. 80.

²⁰ *Reintegration – Effective approaches*, International Organization for Migration, 2015, p. 21.

²¹ World Bank Group, *Supporting the Effective Reintegration of Roma Returnees in the Western Balkans*, 2019, p. 11.

²² For example, according to some estimates, the success of return rate in Kosovo* is less than 20%. Source: European Commission, *Thematic Evaluation on IPA Support to Roma Communities – Final Report*, 2015, p. 75.

When it comes to **relevance**, nearly all of the identified good practices are relevant in terms of their linkages with appropriate measures and activities envisaged by the respective national policy documents. However, major interventions in the field of reintegration of returnees or Roma inclusion identified through this research lack a strategic approach to including a wider CSO-based platform for achieving the desired nationally-defined aims. Other researchers have also identified a similar lesson learnt related to the need for a continuous capacity building of CSOs acting as service providers²³.

As regards **coherence**, evidence point out to the lack of coordination between donors when it comes to programming and implementation of interventions for the reintegration of returnees in the Western Balkans, which leads to parallel projects being implemented on the ground without any exchange of information and lessons learnt between them²⁴. The same goes for the coordination between NGOs and governments, and central governments and local authorities. This risk might present an opportunity for ODA-funded interventions to act as interlocutors between different levels of governance. The best practice identified in this regard through this report is the “Integrated support program for the reintegration of returnees under readmission agreements” project implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, given that it, on top of heavy infrastructure investments, successfully addressed policy coordination in line with the recommendations made by the EU, through the support for the preparation of necessary legal framework (e.g. protocols on cooperation and local action plans) and for the enhancement of the institutional framework (e.g. local readmission teams).

With regard to **effectiveness**, the World Bank assessed that existing frameworks in the Western Balkans don’t offer practical reintegration solutions or don’t implement them effectively, which leaves returnees with inadequate and inconsistent support for their reintegration²⁵. This calls for a nuanced approach to designing future interventions in this field. A good practice in this regard is the Regional Housing Program implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia given that it provides not only concrete support for infrastructure building but also technical assistance in terms of design of housing solutions. Some researchers proposed that ODA-funded projects be entailing two types of interventions – the ones for providing immediate support and the others aiming for a more systemic change and creation of a “sustainable institutional support”²⁶.

²³ Irma Lutovac, *Lessons learned on social and economic (re)integration of returnees*, GIZ 2018, p. 7.

²⁴ World Bank Group, *Supporting the Effective Reintegration of Roma Returnees in the Western Balkans*, 2019, p. 46

²⁵ *Ibid*, VIII.

²⁶ Irma Lutovac, *Lessons learned on social and economic (re)integration of returnees*, GIZ 2018, p. 24.

When it comes to **efficiency**, evidence shows that central governments haven't been responsive neither in adopting nor in implementing national-level policies on readmission of returnees. Unfortunately, the local-level policy-making has not been focused on this aspect either. Unlike in Serbia, as assessed by the World Bank, no local policies focused on returnees have been adopted in Albania, North Macedonia, or Montenegro²⁷.

As regards the aspect of **impact**, it is clear from some of the good practices observed that a lasting impact on the reintegration of returnees can best be obtained by combining measures on macro- and meso-level, on the one side, with those at micro-level, on the other. As assessed by the World Bank, evidence shows that lack of psychosocial support and of access to counselling services can act as a "reintegration barrier"²⁸. When it comes to effects on the macro-level, some researchers point out to the lack of macroeconomic assessments of the impact of return migration and the effectiveness of return policies²⁹. Furthermore, given that the readmission and reintegration process involves a substantial financial burden for the reception countries, it was argued that financial assistance could be quite efficient as a leverage, provided "the money offered is substantial and comes on top of what has already been programmed or promised under the relevant EU geographic programs"³⁰.

With regard to **sustainability**, continuous support to returnees, especially in terms of regular financial payments, may contribute not only to the sustainability of the intervention, but also to enabling the monitoring and follow-up contact with returnees. In order to contribute to greater sustainability, the follow up of returnee families should be systematic and enable to verify to what extent the provided assistance has contributed to achieving a "viable assimilation to the local context"³¹. This also calls for the analysis of the sensitive issue of relations between returnees and recipient communities. Some evaluations have indirectly pointed to the risk of tensions between these groups as to one of the key factors hampering the sustainability of interventions aimed at long-term reintegration of returnees³². Therefore, projects like "Improving access and (re)integration

²⁷ World Bank Group, *Supporting the Effective Reintegration of Roma Returnees in the Western Balkans*, 2019, p. 13.

²⁸ Monica Robayo-Abril, Natalia Millán, *Breaking the Cycle of Roma Exclusion in the Western Balkans*, the World Bank 2019, p. 47.

²⁹ Priyanka Debnath, "Leveraging Return Migration for Development: The Role of Countries of Origin – A Literature Review", 2016, p. 18.

³⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Evaluation of EU Readmission Agreements, 2011, p. 8.

³¹ Thematic Evaluation of EU's Support to Refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia, 2014, p. 5, 11.

³² For example, the authors of the evaluation of the project "Support the Reintegration of Roma Returnees", implemented in Serbia by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the financial support of the Government of Turkey stated in that document that Roma belonging to domicile communities refused to participate in the survey conducted in the process of the preparation of this evaluation, because they had

in education, employment and social services of returned migrant children, youth and families” show that durable solutions can be achieved only by engaging the local community (in this case, through the creation of community groups for the development of children’s key competences) in providing support to returnees and advancing their social and economic integration. In addition to this, it seems that the more integrated an intervention is, the highest the duration of its results can be achieved. This calls not only for the integrated approach as defined in the EU framework in 2011³³, but also for combining measures dealing with the multiple facets of exclusion: social, economic and political³⁴. This also calls for the need to institutionalize measures and approaches through further strengthening of ownership of the authorities, as argued by some authors³⁵.

The aspect of **cost-effectiveness** called for an attention in the wake of the economic crisis in 2008, given that, as assessed by the World Bank, the respective policies for the reintegration of returnees haven’t been implemented, inter alia, due to budget constraints³⁶. Even more so, it calls for an increased attention now due to the expected long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As pointed out by IOM, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to reintegration approaches³⁷. However, although tailor-made projects strongly enhance the reintegration prospects of each returnee, as pointed out by IOM, they might not represent the most cost-effective approach³⁸. That is why the “Integrated support program for the reintegration of returnees under readmission agreements” project implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina might serve as a good practice to decision-makers in Serbia. It successfully combined available local resources (flats in local authorities’ property) with donor funds towards the creation of a housing fund in a cost-effective manner.

As regards **scale up, replication and multiplying potential**, this aspect calls for a prudent assessment of available practices. IOM recommends that reintegration projects

felt revolted due to the fact that the project targeted only Roma returnees. Source: *Analytical Paper on Roma Returnees*, UNDP, 2017, p. 13, fn. 7.

³³ The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 set out standards of an integrated approach including housing, education, health, social affairs, employment and security, and desegregation measures. Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52011DC0173>

³⁴ Success of some interventions, such as of the “Social inclusion and improvement of living conditions for Roma in Serbia”, implemented by the Swiss HEKS-EPER Foundation and the Serbian Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, is attributed to addressing all these three aspects of exclusion. Source: *Report from the final evaluation of the project “Social inclusion and improvement of living conditions for Roma in Serbia”*, Secons, Belgrade 2015, p. 22.

³⁵ Stephan Müller, *Roma in Serbia and the Situation of Romani Returnees from Western Europe*, GIZ, 2018, p. 27.

³⁶ World Bank Group, *Supporting the Effective Reintegration of Roma Returnees in the Western Balkans*, 2019, p. IX.

³⁷ *Reintegration – Effective approaches*, International Organization for Migration, 2015, p. 10.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 23.

be linked to existing structures and schemes, “be it institutional frameworks, programs run by the State or local development initiatives, including those by the private sector, as these enhance reintegration prospects”³⁹. A good practice in this regard is the Regional Housing Program, implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Montenegro and Serbia given that it was internationally recognized as a model of good governance.

Concerning **human rights-based orientation**, it was argued that involving relevant NGOs and international organizations to Joint Readmission Committees could improve their monitoring of the application of human rights standards in the framework of EU readmission agreements, enabling them to “draw much more on relevant information of the situation ‘on the ground’ that can be gathered from NGOs and international organizations”⁴⁰. Additionally, it was suggested that efforts towards reintegration of returnees should be accompanied with anti-discrimination measures, in particular when it comes to returnees of Roma origin, given that evidence show that this particular group faces additional reintegration challenges as compared to other groups and communities, such as higher level of discrimination⁴¹. Some authors point out even more specifically to the need to recognize and combat antigypsyism as “the root cause for migration and the major obstacle to the reintegration of returnees”⁴². In any case, lessons learnt from implemented projects point out to the need to introduce respective trainings, including for public administration staff at the local level⁴³. It must be noted that there have been some proposals concerning the introduction of conditional right to social assistance on the basis of school enrolment and attainment⁴⁴. However, this is not in line with the standards of the Revised European Social Charter which prescribes that state parties have the obligation to provide to children and young persons “a free primary and secondary education” as well as “to encourage regular attendance at schools”⁴⁵.

When it comes to **gender sensitiveness**, some evidence point to direction that gender differences may play a role in achieving sustainable reintegration⁴⁶. Additionally, lessons

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 27.

⁴⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Evaluation of EU Readmission Agreements, 2011, p. 10. In another study it was noted that OSCE had “a valuable independent monitoring role for displaced/returnees”. Source: Thematic Evaluation on IPA Support to Roma Communities – Final Report, 2015, p. 87.

⁴¹ Thematic Evaluation of EU's Support to Refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia, 2014, p. 34.

⁴² Stephan Müller, *Roma in Serbia and the Situation of Romani Returnees from Western Europe*, GIZ, 2018, p. 6.

⁴³ Irma Lutovac, *Lessons learned on social and economic (re)integration of returnees*, GIZ 2018, p. 15.

⁴⁴ See: Slobodan Cvejić, *Istraživanje o položaju i potrebama povratnika u Srbiji po Sporazumu o readmisiji 2019. godine*, GIZ.

⁴⁵ Revised European Social Charter, Article 17.

⁴⁶ A study comparing Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* found that young men were more likely to be able to find employment upon return. Source: Khalid Koser, Katie Kuschminder, *Comparative Research on*

learnt from implemented projects emphasize the need to target men as potential opponents to increased participation of women in project activities⁴⁷. However, the identified good practices don't seem to be excelling in gender sensitiveness, nor are there adequate monitoring mechanisms specific for this purpose.

Strengths and opportunities

The EU should pay much more attention to supporting the measures for the reintegration of returnees both through **targeted and mainstream interventions** in the domain of social inclusion. The design of these interventions could be introduced on the basis of the Sector Budget Support principles (designed under IPA II), namely, through providing both incentives to the receiving countries budgets for other policy reforms and sanctions in the case of non-compliance with EU standard pertinent to the rule of law. In any case, GIZ and other implementing agencies and donors should avoid falling into a “success trap” guided by positive bias towards good practices, by revisiting the political economy and social context around them and comparing it with the key factors and desired outcomes in Serbia.

Both the concerned EU Member States and donors, on the one side, and the receiving countries, on the other, should **invest heavily in the production of data** pertinent to the implementation of readmission agreements. An example of good practice in this regard is the Global Programme Migration for Development (PME) implemented by GIZ through which a comprehensive set of support measures has been provided to Serbian institutions since 2016 and will be continued up to July 2023. One of the focuses of support relates to improving the present data management system on readmission, established by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (CRM). The aim is to systematize the existing data on returnees upon the Readmission Agreement, so that they can be searchable and used for development and implementation of policy related to return and reintegration. For this purpose, a software was re-designed which now enables the CRM to collect and manage data on returnees, which will in turn facilitate the creation of appropriate programs of support, enable better coordination and creation of synergies between different programs and initiatives for them. Additionally, PME supported the CRM to establish remote IT support to local trustees and equipped them with 25 lap top computers (a training for them on using the enhanced CRM database is also planned). On the basis of such investments, the current strategic framework relevant for the reintegration of returnees should be evaluated and short-term policy documents should be designed, able to reflect the needs of returnees in a more flexible and efficient manner.

the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Migrants, International Organization for Migration, 2015, p. 54.

⁴⁷ Irma Lutovac, *Lessons learned on social and economic (re)integration of returnees*, GIZ 2018, p. 16.

CSOs should be involved at the very early stage of programming of ODA interventions concerning the reintegration of returnees. In Serbia, the governmental Human Resources and Social Development Working Group is the official channel for this purpose, managed by the Ministry of European Integration. Another platform which could be updated with new members coming from the CSOs dealing with the reintegration of returnees is the SEKO platform⁴⁸, tasked with providing inputs from the civil society for ODA programming in Serbia. In addition to this, CSOs could take part in the implementation of future ODA interventions not only in terms of infrastructure or education related activities, but also as relevant actors in providing inputs for policy design, for example with regard to laws and policy documents related to sustainable housing, and as providers of social services to returnees, in particular of psychosocial support.

Public-private partnerships could be a viable way out of the pressing consequences of austerity in the previous period, on the one side, and of the forthcoming impact of the COVID-19 crisis, on the other. Serbian law in this area provides a good framework for combining public and private funds for investing in local-level infrastructure and the provision of essential services (such as health and social protection), as well as in green jobs. GIZ could become an advocate of this approach offering creative solutions for the reintegration of returnees, in particular given the (un)expected positive impact of the COVID-19 crisis reflected in the redirection from offshoring to nearshoring, meaning that the EU and its Member States could retreat their production from global destinations back to its surroundings, including the Western Balkans.

Targeted approach should become ingrained in the design of future GIZ interventions with a view of maximising the benefits for local communities and for individual returnees, including their families. The identified good practices offer a palette of modalities in this regard, in particular the CSO National Roma Centrum, the work of which with direct beneficiaries was recognized by the European Commission⁴⁹.

Human Right-Based Approach (HRBA) became the cornerstone for defining successful donor-driven interventions aiming to achieve the status of a good practice. Vast knowledge base has been created by international actors in this regard, notably by the United Nations⁵⁰, but also by other public and private entities, including implementing agencies in the context of ODA⁵¹. This approach serves also as a powerful leverage to

⁴⁸ <http://sekomehanizam.org/>

⁴⁹ Source: <http://nationalromacentrum.org/en/news/award-for-roma-integration>

⁵⁰ For further information please refer to the HRBA portal: <https://hrbaportal.undg.org/>

⁵¹ For example: the Danish Institute for Human Rights, <https://www.humanrights.dk/our-work/human-rights-based-approach> and NIRAS, <https://www.niras.com/development-consulting/news/rights-based-approach-rba-and-gender-equality/>

push for the execution of duties on the side of governments, given that it is founded on the international human rights standards, on the one side, and on the power of excluded communities which are being empowered and given a voice for defending their human rights. It is also worth reminding here that gender mainstreaming became a must in all phases of project cycle management and that all implementing agencies should be very much aware of the latest developments in this field⁵².

Possible follow up

- **Recommendation 1:** The right timing to design a significant intervention in Serbia on the basis of the findings of this report is the start of IPA III programming which has taken place in spring of 2020. A potential modality of financing could be the Sector Budget Support, envisaged under IPA II for Roma inclusion interventions. GIZ should prepare a concept note in this regard and address either the European Commission directly (directorate in charge of IPA funds for Serbia within the DG NEAR) or the Ministry for European Integration, along with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Coordination Body for Roma Inclusion and the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs. GIZ should pay particular attention to advocating for the design of IPA and other ODA interventions with a view of combining direct support for the reintegration of returnees with the technical assistance aimed at the improvement of legal and strategic framework and the enhancement of the institutional framework. Furthermore, the design should be based on an evaluation of country-level projects and programs covering the aspect of effectiveness and the participation of both returnees (e.g. through focus groups) and decision-makers (e.g. through semi-structured interviews) should be secured as it represents a core element of the Human-Rights Based Approach. In this regard, GIZ could advocate for the performance of cost-effectiveness analysis (CBA) using the official EU methodology in order to inform the project design process with both knowledge and arguments for fundraising⁵³. Lastly, GIZ is well positioned to propose to the Republic Secretariat for Public Policies, as the institution in charge, to initiate an *ex ante* impact assessment of the effectiveness of return policies in Serbia in cooperation with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration. Its findings would be extremely beneficial for the programming of substantial interventions for the reintegration of returnees within the IPA III programming cycle. Particular attention should be paid to incorporating a targeted gender analysis of the desired outcomes in the project formulation phase, including through the participation of

⁵² A useful resource in this regard is the European Institute for Gender Equality: <https://eige.europa.eu/>

⁵³ A potential resource in this regard could be the EC's *Guide to Cost-Benefit Analysis of Investment Projects*.

female returnees of various ages, if appropriate, as well as to designing adequate measures to mitigate the risk factor in the form of opposing male returnees or members of the recipient community.

- **Recommendation 2:** In addition to current efforts concerning data production being made by the World Bank, pooling of global expertise for this purpose could be facilitated by GIZ and IOM, given the impact they achieved in diverse areas in the world featuring the same migration dynamics, e.g. in Central America, South-East Asia and Central Africa.
- **Recommendation 3:** GIZ should propose to the Ministry for European Integration that CSOs from the region be invited on an *ad hoc* basis to present their good practices for the reintegration of returnees at the meetings of the governmental Human Resources and Social Development Working Group (this initiative could be put forward jointly with the Swiss Development Cooperation, as the donor coordinating the work of this group)⁵⁴. Communication and exchange of lessons learnt should be established in particular with the identified good practices in the Western Balkans with the aim of gaining deeper knowledge about the successes and failures of these interventions. Additionally, GIZ could organize regular exchanges of lessons learnt between different actors at central and local level, including the donor community, under the auspices of the MEI and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration. Furthermore, mutual learning sessions could be organized at the Western Balkans level concerning the reintegration of returnees, under the auspices and with the support of the EC (e.g. through the TAIEX instrument⁵⁵). GIZ could propose to the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration to submit a proposal for a TAIEX event (workshop or expert mission) to the Ministry of European Integration.
- **Recommendation 4:** GIZ should propose either bilaterally to the leading institutions or to the Ministry of European Integration that the subcontracted CSOs under its interventions in Serbia be present at an early stage of IPA programming with the aim of enriching the perspective of national-level decision makers through presenting their experience and lessons learnt about what works when it comes to the reintegration of returnees.
- **Recommendation 5:** GIZ could support the recipient communities in Serbia to establish public-private partnerships (PPPs) pursuant to the Law on Public-Private Partnerships and create effective business models of economic ventures

⁵⁴ The added value of this initiative could be its contribution to shaping COVID-19 response measures. For example, the implementing CSO of one of the good practice identified by this report, the National Roma Centrum from North Macedonia, was awarded a grant recently by its long-standing Swedish donor, We Effect, to build food security resilience in the wake of the pandemics. Additional information about this initiative can be found on the website: <https://weeffect.org/news/building-food-security-resilience-in-north-macedonia/>

⁵⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/taix_en

aimed at employing returnees⁵⁶. In this regard, it should also support the mapping of available resources (both physical, such as housing stock, and human, such as governmental agencies) in both the public and private sector that could yield added value in the project implementation.

- **Recommendation 6:** GIZ should strive to provide targeted support to emigration and readmission hotspots in Serbia with the aim of streamlining the reintegration approach through local action plans, local development strategies and local budgets. Projects should be increasingly designed in such a manner as to enable a greater involvement of local communities in their implementation and a holistic approach to covering all the manifestations of exclusion. Coupled with that, project beneficiaries at the level of central and/or local governance should be obliged by legal terms to perform regular monitoring and the provision of follow up support to returnees financed by ODA. Furthermore, due attention must be paid to ensuring that project objectives, results and activities explicitly address the overall wellbeing of returnees, including through the provision of psychosocial support and that the benefit of it is spilled over in the recipient community to other vulnerable groups (including through awareness-raising activities aiming towards combatting stereotypes and discrimination).
- **Recommendation 7:** GIZ should initiate the involvement of relevant human rights watchdogs in the work of the Joint Readmission Committee of the EU and Serbia. Furthermore, it should pay particular attention to mainstreaming relevant HRBA standards in its interventions and overall business activities, including in the form of a capacity-building strand targeting both public and private sector (with modules containing specific antigypsyism curriculum). The introduction of any kind of conditionality on the side of returnees in their enjoyment of human right should be avoided and quality assurance in this regard should be established in cooperation with respective UN agencies (such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) in order to verify the alignment of project elements with international human rights standards. In this regard, GIZ should also ensure that its projects reflect the highest standards in terms of gender

⁵⁶ The Serbian law on public-private partnerships provides for the funding of both infrastructure and essential services (such as social protection and health services). Furthermore, as stated by the World Bank, in order to meet the SDGs agenda, governments will need creative solutions “to mobilize private sector investment and innovation, and blend commercial financing with public funding” and “the private sector needs to be incentivized in finding cost-efficient solutions to solve sustainable development challenges.” Several relevant initiatives under this framework have already been supported in Serbia, such as a waste treatment plant in Belgrade and a biogas plant in Vrbas. In times of austerity, PPPs can be particularly relevant given that they enable the mobilization of additional sources of funding. Sources: <https://pppknowledgelab.org/guide/sections/9-infrastructure-challenges-and-how-ppps-can-help> <https://pppknowledgelab.org/countries/serbia>. A relevant case study on the potential of PPPs in social inclusion (prepared by the Government of Brazil) can be found through this link: https://downloadapi.paperflite.com/api/2.0/shared_url/5d5dc7330b593a2b6eb3e252/asset/5d5dc7320b593a2b6eb3e251/download

mainstreaming⁵⁷, including: gender balance in its beneficiaries and members of project implementation team; use of gender sensitive indicators and language; fight against social and professional stereotypes; gender stakeholder consultations; use of gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation, etc.

⁵⁷ The ultimate guide in this regard should be the conclusions and recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of institutions, organizations and experts approached by e-mail and/or telephone

1. Ana Majko, Initiative for Social Change ARSIS, Albania, ana87majko@yahoo.com
2. Caritas Serbia, secretariat@caritas.rs
3. Centre for Social Initiatives “Nadez”, North Macedonia, admin@csinadez.mk
4. Danilo Mihajlovic, International Organization for Migration, dmihajlovic@iom.int
5. Darko Docinski, Ministry of Labor of North Macedonia, ddocinski@mtsp.gov.mk
6. Dejan Milisavljević, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, dejan.milisavljevic@kirs.gov.rs
7. Dragan Dasic, Ministry of the Interior of Montenegro, dragan.dasic@mup.gov.me
8. Group 484, Serbia, office@grupa484.org.rs
9. HELP Montenegro, helphelp@t-com.me
10. Jamen Gabriela Hrabanova, ERGO Network, g.hrabanova@ergonetwork.org
11. Jelena Andjelic, Initiative for Development and Cooperation, Serbia
12. Marijana Jasarevic, World Bank, mjasarevic@worldbank.org
13. Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Albania, info@shendetesia.gov.al
14. Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, kabmin@mhrr.gov.ba
15. National Roma Centrum, North Macedonia, info@nationalromacentrum.org
16. Orhan Usein, Regional Cooperation Council – Roma Integration 2020, orhan.usein@rcc.int
17. Richard Allen, freelance consultant/evaluator, richard@richardallen.eu
18. Semir Jaha, „Mladi Romi“, Montenegro, mladi.romi@t-com.me
19. Toma Novovic, freelance consultant/evaluator, tomislav.novovic@gmail.com
20. Valeri Morica, World Bank, vstadbauer@worldbank.org
21. Zehra Kačapor Džihić, freelance consultant/evaluator, zkacapor@gmail.com

Annex 2: List of identified relevant projects and public policies in the Western Balkans

Albania

1. Project “**Coaching for Employment and Entrepreneurship (C4EE) for returned migrants**”⁵⁸, implemented by: Jobis Center, Initiative for Social Change ARSIS, Tree of Life Center, Integration Association, Code Partners, Albcontact Center, Association Gender, Peace and Security, IRCA;
2. Project “**Reintegration of returned migrant children in Albania and Kosovo**”⁵⁹, implemented by Terre des hommes;
3. Project “**Return to Thrive**”⁶⁰, implemented by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Albania;
4. Establishment of a **central database** at the Directorate of Migration Policy, Return and Reintegration for returned Albanian citizens. It enables identification of demographic features at prefecture level, as well as monitoring the reintegration assistance and its smooth functioning. In addition to this, in the migration counters at the local level a database is established on projects provided by local and international organizations, in the relevant region, to returned Albanian citizens;
5. Establishment of **migration counters** in 36 local and regional employment offices across Albania to provide advisory services in accordance with the needs identified in interviews conducted at the first visit. They perform the following tasks: interview returned Albanian citizens who voluntarily approach the counter; provide information on public and private services that match their need assessment (if any); refer them to public and private (if any) services and specific projects provided by civil society, according to their needs.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

6. Project „**Integrated support program for the reintegration of returnees under readmission agreements**“, implemented by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees;
7. Establishment of a **central database** at the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees on the number, status and needs of returnees under readmission agreements. The members of local readmission teams and of the institutions in the national coordination system are trained to access the database;

⁵⁸ <https://www.swisscontact.org/nc/en/projects-and-countries/search-projects/project-finder/project/-/show/c4ee-returning-migrants.html>

⁵⁹ <https://www.tdh.ch/en/projects/reintegration-returned-migrant-children-albania-kosovo>

⁶⁰ <https://adraelbania.org/past-projects/return-to-thrive/>

8. Establishment of **local readmission teams** providing support to the reintegration of returnees under readmission agreements in local communities. The teams prepare and implement local action plans which are adopted by local authorities. They apply a diverse set of supporting measures envisaged, inter alia, through: the Rulebook on providing support in achieving socio-economic sustainability, Questionnaire for quick assessment of market situation and conditions for social integration on the local level, Socio-economic card for identification of needs and possibilities of family members, etc.

North Macedonia

9. Project “**Social Inclusion of residents and returning Roma migrants in Macedonia**”⁶¹, implemented by the National Roma Centrum;
10. Project “**Reintegration of returnees from Netherlands**”⁶², implemented by the Centre for Social Initiatives “NADEZ”;
11. Project “**Support to sustainable return and reintegration of Roma families in Republic of Macedonia**”⁶³, implemented by the Centre for Social Initiatives “NADEZ”;
12. Introduction of a **conditional monetary compensation program** by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy as a measure for encouraging secondary education. It can be used by families (households) who use social financial assistance or whose right to social financial assistance is on hold and who have a child or children enrolled in high school. An additional requirement is that the student must not be a beneficiary of a child allowance. The student must attend at least 85 percent of the realized school hours in the current quarter. This measure was envisaged in the National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia 2010-2020, because, although free of charge, secondary education is not accessible to all under equal conditions, due to the poor geographical accessibility, i.e. the limited network of high schools⁶⁴;
13. Establishment of **the Agency for Social Financial Compensation** with the aim to intensify the implementation of the National Program for Development of Social Protection 2011-2021, especially in the area of institutional separation of social money transfers from social services and social prevention.

⁶¹ <http://nationalromacentrum.org/en/projects/project-in-realization/social-inclusion-of-residents-and-returning-roma-migrants-in-macedonia>

⁶² http://csinadez.mk/portfolio_page/reintegration-of-returnees-from-netherlands/

⁶³ http://csinadez.mk/portfolio_page/support-to-sustainable-return-and-reintegration-of-roma-families-in-republic-of-macedonia-vol-2/, http://csinadez.mk/portfolio_page/support-to-sustainable-return-and-reintegration-of-roma-families-in-republic-of-macedonia-vol-3/

⁶⁴ Nota bene: a relevant policy response in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic was the waiving of these conditionalities until the end of the school year. Source: Gordana Matkovic, Paul Stubbs, *Social Protection in the Western Balkans – Responding to the Covid-19 Crisis*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2020, p. 10.

Montenegro

14. Establishment of a central **database** at the Ministry of the Interior on returnees under readmission agreements.

Multi-country projects

15. Project “**Regional Housing Programme**”⁶⁵, implemented by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia;
16. Project “**Enhancing capacities in EU Member States and third countries to promote durable solutions for unaccompanied minors (through identification of good practices in family tracing and assessments as well as the provision of an enhanced reintegration approach)**”⁶⁶, implemented by the International Organization for Migration;
17. Project “**Fostering Sustainable Reintegration in Albania, Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, by reinforcing local NGO capacity service provision to returnees**”⁶⁷, implemented by the International Organization for Migration;
18. Project “**Support To Sustainable Return And Reintegration In Serbia And Albania**”⁶⁸, implemented by the Albanian Helsinki Committee and the International Aid Network, Serbia;
19. Project “**Supporting the Effective Reintegration of Roma Returnees in the Western Balkans**”⁶⁹, implemented by the World Bank.

⁶⁵ <http://regionalhousingprogramme.org/>

⁶⁶ <https://austria.iom.int/en/enhancing-capacities-eu-member-states-and-third-countries-promote-durable-solutions-unaccompanied>

⁶⁷ <https://austria.iom.int/en/special-programme-reintegration-returnees-albania-kosovo-and-macedonia>

⁶⁸ <https://ahc.org.al/en/portfolio/support-to-sustainable-return-and-reintegration-in-serbia-and-albania/>

⁶⁹ <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/541481560764323661/pdf/Supporting-the-Effective-Reintegration-of-Roma-Returnees-in-the-Western-Balkans.pdf>