



MARRI - Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative
STABILITY PACT
FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

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Overview of Resources Requirements

1. Regional Forum/Regional Center

The first meeting of the *Regional Forum* was convened by the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) in Herceg Novi, Montenegro, 5-6 April 2004. The ministerial SEEC meeting decided to establish a political and professional Regional Forum for the five SAP countries. Under the auspices of the first Presidency of the Regional Forum, the Republic of Albania, a Memorandum of Understanding confirming this commitment to this regional process, was consequently signed by all five states in Tirana on 2 July. The Regional Forum is composed of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for migration, asylum, border management, visa and sustainable solutions for displacement. It aims at exchanging information, experiences, lessons learned, best practices as well as to discuss and resolve issues of common interest and concern and develop a common vision for the region. The Regional Forum seeks support and advice of the International Community through the *Friends of the Regional Forum*, which should be convened twice per year.

At the first Regional Forum it was decided to establish an administrative/supportive structure - the *MARRI Regional Centre* - to support the Regional Forum. The Regional Centre will be located in Skopje and the Government of Macedonia will provide facilities, running costs and the required institutional framework for the centre. It was agreed that the Regional Centre should be composed of a majority of experts from the region. The establishment of MARRI Centre in the region is scheduled for October 2004 with the preparatory works well underway. The MARRI Regional Center should be fully operational by January 2005. It will also host the *Regional Information Exchange* (RIE) and *Access to Rights* (ATR) Initiatives.

Required Funding: Pending the establishment of administrative and financial rules and regulations, the overall operational budget (without secondments) is estimated at some € 530,000.- until December 2005. With over € 330,000.- in contributions received the funding shortfall is estimated at some € 200,000.- for the coming 18 months. In 2006 governments in the region are expected to contribute to the budgetary requirements (beyond the running costs covered by the Government of Macedonia).

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2. Regional Information Exchange

Cross-border data exchange is a core condition for the effective management of population movements. Following a request from Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia Montenegro, MARRI, in close coordination with relevant partners, established the Regional Information Exchange (RIE) Initiative, which aims to find means and ways to fill identified gaps.

Objective

Since its launch early summer 2003, the RIE Initiative continues paving the way for secure and efficient management of data related to displaced populations including cross border exchange. While the objective of this program is regional data exchange, it also includes a strong capacity building component for the national level and promotion of data protection legislation. In addition, at the national level RIE assists in the transfer of data previously managed by international players to the national governments (so far Bosnia Herzegovina).

At the first ministerial Regional Forum meeting on 5 April 2004, the RIE initiative received re-confirmation for its political and operational aims. The establishment of the Regional Forum is part of the current handover of responsibilities of the MARRI secretariat to the SEE region and is hosted in the context of the SEECF (South-East European Co-operation Process). In a technical meeting of government experts from all five countries on 8-9 July 2004,

In a technical meeting of government experts from all five countries on 7-8 July 2004 in Herceg-Novi, Montenegro, concrete next steps have been agreed upon: Immediately, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Serbia will implement a pilot project for the exchange of information. For the first time, the states in the region will exchange case specific data on population movements in a systematic manner, taking data protection requirements into careful consideration. The states will use the RIE facilitation unit as an interim central processing unit while agreeing to integrate data management and competence in the MARRI Regional Centre, as the RIE initiative recommended in the MARRI-RIE Strategy 2004-2005. This approach will be extended geographically to the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Montenegro, and thematically to promote the exchange of information related to migration, asylum and visa liberalisation in SEE.

Required funding: The RIE initiative is only financed until the beginning of August 2004. Therefore, RIE urgently requires additional funding of some € 750,000 until mid 2005.

For more information please refer to: www.marri-rie.info

3. Regularisation and Upgrading of Informal Settlements

According to estimates about 60% of all settlements in SEE are informal. The strong social, ecological and economic dimension of this problem has led to the recognition that regularisation and upgrading of informally-developed settlements in and around the major urban centres will have to be a central part of any housing programme in South Eastern Europe during the next 5-10 years.

Under the auspices of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, a process has been launched to sustain governmental and municipal efforts in SAP countries to address informal settlement issues. With its regional two-level approach, the Stability Pact/MARRI intends

- to catalyse the creation of policy frameworks, programmes and institution-building at the national level and
- to support capacity building to improve policy- and project implementation at the municipal level.

In line with its regional two-level approach, the Stability Pact / MARRI Housing secretariat invited high-level Ministry representatives from South Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, fyro Macedonia, Kosovo/UNMIK, Serbia and Montenegro) to a one-day *Working Session on Informal Settlements in South Eastern Europe* in May 2004 in Vienna. A draft inter-ministerial 'Vienna declaration' on national policy and programs regarding Informal Settlements was drafted. There was support for the planned *Ministerial conference on informal settlements in South Eastern Europe* to be held from 28 September to 01 October 2004. The objective of this conference will be (a) to officially sign the Vienna Declaration, (b) to exchange experiences and approaches from South Eastern Europe on a technical level and (c) to discuss the creation of a regional capacity building instrument for housing and urban development.

Furthermore, the need for Housing and Urban Management/Planning capacity building for national and municipal officials was confirmed. The development of a regional capacity building concept, the *South Eastern European Centre for Housing, Urban Management/Planning & Tenure Regularisation (SEEREG)* was supported. This concept will build on existing Housing and Urban Management/Planning capacity and ongoing activities. An assessment has been commissioned by the Stability Pact / MARRI housing secretariat.

Required funding: Budget line A (creation of a regional capacity building institution), € 50,000 / Budget line B: Ministerial Conference on Informal Settlements in South Eastern Europe (with approx. 80 participants), remaining € 30,000. Other donors/contributors involved are: SDC/DEZA, OSCE, City of Vienna.

4. Access to Rights

More than one million refugees and displaced persons in the Western Balkans are still in need of a sustainable solution. Furthermore, many of the 1.5 million persons who have returned or decided to settle elsewhere since the end of the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Kosovo have not found sustainable solutions to their plight.

The Access to Rights program aims at achieving *unimpeded and non-discriminatory access* to all those still displaced citizens of the region (5 SAp countries) to their basic human, economic and social rights in the five years to come and eventually expand to larger groups of vulnerable citizens in the region.

Objectives

- Identification of shortcomings and gaps in the legal framework, the relevant implementation instruments and the level of access of the citizens to these with specific attention to property rights, social rights such as pensions, health and education, employment and citizenship.
- Agreement and consensus on the status, gaps and adequate action through a consultative process on national and regional level, bringing state and non-state actors, including civil society, to cooperate.
- Introduction and implementation of sustainable national and regional mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the progress of implementation.

As a result of extensive consultations with governments, international organizations and civil society, a first project proposal has been developed. It outlines the necessary steps and proposes to establish a project team (2-3 persons) with a research component (1-2 persons). The facilitator for the financial management of the program is the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Initial funding of 1,000,000 EUR from Denmark and 300,000 EUR from Ireland have been secured.

Required funding: Additional funding for 2005-2006 will be required.

2. **Best practices of sustainable solutions for displacement: the role of municipalities and municipal development (Follow Up and Finalization of Handbook)**

On 23-25 June 2004 a conference on best practices at the municipal level took place in Fojnica with about 80 participants from civil society and local authorities from former Yugoslavia (a list of participants is available on request). The conference was complimented by a research component, which entailed a collection of best practices from the municipal level.

As a follow up it is planned to finalize a handbook with best practices as well as to organize a follow up conference next year on the theme of best practices with a focus on economic revitalization and job creation.

Objective

- To share best practices of sustainable solutions in the context of municipal development (with focus on economic and housing issues) and make them available for use elsewhere.
- To encourage municipalities, local NGOs and citizen associations to work on sustainable solutions for displacement.
- To strengthen regional networks of municipalities, local NGOs and citizen associations.

The overall costs for the three-day conference with 80-100 participants of 50,000 EUR was financed by the Municipality of Fojnica, Municipality of Prijedor, Dutch Inter Church Peace Council and the Citizen's Pact for SEE.

Required funding for research and handbook & follow up conference in 2005:
Additional funding will be required for 2004-2005