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Comparative Report on Integrated Case Management for Employment and Social Welfare Users in the Western Balkans

(Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia)

November 2017 (Update April 2018)

* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council
Resolution 1244 (1999).

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Executive Summary

This comparative report on integrated case management for employment and social welfare users analyses the legal, policy and institutional framework for collaborative approaches and the practices applied by national and local actors as a basis on which to build up an integrated case management system in the Western Balkans. Integrated case management is understood as innovative practice employed by the Public Employment Service and Centres for Social Welfare in the countries and territories collectively to serve the most vulnerable with all available resources from both the labour market and the social assistance system.

Champions are identified and recommendations provided that should help partnerships to flourish at the interface of labour market and social policy. The report shows that there is a lack of well-established partnerships practising integrated case management in the Western Balkans and that Territorial Employment Pacts are a model well-suited to providing an overall frame for an integrated case management system in the Western Balkans.

Introduction

Integrated case management is described within the UNDP/ILO-project '*Promoting Inclusive Labour Market Solutions in the Western Balkans*' as a method which can support the creation of an integrated package of social and labour market policy activities, involving several state and non-state actors delivering services that result in the inclusion in the labour market of individuals with complex needs.¹ The project aims to assist key stakeholders in the Western Balkans in their efforts to enhance the inclusiveness of their labour markets by applying integrated case management, in particular in Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo,*² Montenegro and Serbia.

There are certain key elements employed widely in case management across Europe. These elements include the linking of users to service systems, the coordination of the various components of the system to achieve a successful outcome, and the deployment of case managers responsible for arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the package of services best tailored to meet the needs and wishes of individual users. The following five activities are used for implementing case management within the project:

- ❖ *Needs assessment* in cooperation with the user;
- ❖ *Planning* (i.e. the creation of *individualised action plans*);
- ❖ *Linking* (i.e. bringing needed service providers together and agreeing on who is going to do what and when, with which inputs to achieve the overall goal);
- ❖ *Monitoring* (a representative of one agency, or *case manager*, is in charge of monitoring the timeliness, adequacy and quality of the services provided, in cooperation with a user); and
- ❖ *Advocacy* (the case manager is also an advocate for the user's needs, with other actors involved).

In the Western Balkans, case management is relevant for Public Employment Services (PES) and Centres for Social Welfare (CSWs), as both institutions work with users with complex needs requiring a range of services. Neither the PES nor the CSWs can deliver these services on their own. In addition, the PES and CSWs often 'share' the same users (i.e. clients) and could therefore easily agree on the rationale for joining forces

¹ See Terms of Reference provided by UNDP.

² References to Kosovo* shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

within integrated case management, which is to best serve the most vulnerable with all available resources (know-how, measures, services). In general, there exist different degrees of interaction between institutions, ranging from loose networking to formalised cooperation, collaboration and, finally, partnership (see chapter 3.2).

- **PES and CSWs often ‘share’ the same users and could therefore easily agree on the rationale for collaboration, which is to best serve those in need with all available resources (know-how, measures, services)**

This Comparative Report on Integrated Case Management for Employment and Social Welfare Users in the Western Balkans is based on a literature review and guided expert interviews conducted by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (the European Centre) in the period from June to August 2017. The Report comprises five chapters. After describing the methodology applied in analysing the implementation of integrated case management across the Western Balkans (Chapter 2), the Report presents the current status of cooperative approaches applied by stakeholders. Chapter 3 presents the legal, policy and institutional framework, unfolds the current situation regarding partnership organisations and their formation, highlights innovative methods used jointly by PES and CSWs, and highlights practices deployed in the Western Balkans with civil society organisations (CSOs) and municipalities. Chapter 4 presents information regarding the practical application of case management, including state-of-the-art needs assessment, individual plans and social mentorship, as well as identifying champions of case management in the Western Balkans. Chapter 5 concludes the report, summarizing the findings of the comparative research and presenting recommendations for actors in the Western Balkans (and beyond) that should serve to improve applied practices.

Identifying good practices is necessary in order to enable learning from the experiences of others, i.e. ‘benchlearning’. The practices highlighted in this report cover various aspects of the Integrated case management system of the Western Balkans. The practices presented here can serve only as guidelines, however, in view of the significant variations in actors, contexts and settings across the regions researched in this report. It should be noted, therefore, that we do not recommend implementing a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach for integrated case management throughout all of the Western Balkan territories. While social mentoring, for instance, is a valuable tool for integrated case management, this tool may not be of great use in those territories where the most vulnerable already receive individual support via other methods that have proven to work successfully at local level. Thus, local/regional/national and international readers of this report are instructed to choose methods from a rich tool-box which best fit their local/regional/national

contexts³. To enhance learning across the Western Balkans and to ensure cross-country comparisons, specific aspects for the implementation of integrated case management are recommended, as presented in Chapter 5.

Methodology

This report is based on primary and secondary sources. It especially builds on data and analysis from background reports provided by local experts contracted by UNDP from the six Western Balkan economies of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYR Macedonia), Kosovo,* Montenegro and Serbia. In addition, the report incorporates the findings of a comparative analysis provided by UNDP (Şener, 2017), and of the World Bank publications (World Bank, 2013a, b, c, d) entitled *Activation and Smart Safety Nets: Constraints in Beneficiary Profile, Benefit Design, and institutional Capacity*. UNDP and its network of experts provided further documents for desk review. The European Centre's project team conducted a thorough desk review for each country, including a review of the respective legislative frameworks, the policy measures implemented in employment and social welfare, the agreements signed between the PES and CSWs, good practices, and other relevant publications.

To complement the findings of the desk research and to identify the most relevant practices in the Western Balkans, guided expert interviews were conducted in Albania, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo,* Montenegro, and Serbia during the period from June to August 2017.⁴ Experts were consulted about the rationale for interaction between PES and CSWs, the history and nature of collaboration, and the distribution of roles and responsibilities. The experts identified strengths, weaknesses and obstacles to cooperation. Innovative methods and interventions implemented by institutions and current forms of collaborative work, especially in terms of structures, methods, processes and systems were identified. Information about collaboration with other stakeholders beyond standard measures was also collected. The second

³ Please also see UNDP (2018) Integrated Case Management of Employment and Social Welfare Users in the Western Balkans – Guidelines and Good Practices.

⁴ The following interviews were conducted: Interview with Ms. Irma Lutovac, Mr. Pavle Golicin and Jelena Tadzic (UNDP national expert on Serbia) on 07 July 2017; Interview with Ms. Milika Mirkovic (UNDP national expert on Montenegro) on 05 July 2017; Interview with Mr. Levent Koro (UNDP national expert on Kosovo*) on 29 June 2017; Interview with Ms. Delina Nano (UNDP national expert on Albania) on 20 July 2017; and interview with Ms. Blagica Petreski (UNDP national expert on FYR Macedonia) and Ms. Valentina Nushkova (national UNDP Country Office of FYR Macedonia) on 07 July 2017.

part of the expert interviews focused on case management as a specific method. Necessary information was gathered about commitment, working definitions, procedures, plans, monitoring and evaluation concerning all stakeholders of integrated case management including PES and CSWs. Information related to Bosnia and Herzegovina has been obtained through a separate report and relevant information was extracted and incorporated into this comparative assessment (Babic, 2018).

The findings from the desk research and expert interviews were analysed by comparing the partnership practices in place and the case management approach employed. Good practices in implementing collaborative actions were identified, successful components and tools used within case management were reviewed, and the potential for transferring practices was assessed.

1.Cooperative approaches applied

1.1. Legal, policy and institutional framework

A wide range of laws and policies are in place in the Western Balkans addressing broad issues such as employment, unemployment and social insurance, as well as specific categories of “hard-to-employ” persons such as minorities (including Roma), women, persons with disabilities, and victims of domestic violence and/or trafficking. In terms of promoting employment there are a variety of laws, governmental programmes, strategies, and action plans that simultaneously address this issue. The various categories of “hard-to-employ” persons are covered by measures in both overall and specific strategies. FYR Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia have separate laws on the employment of persons with disabilities, and Kosovo* also has a strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities. In Albania there is a national action plan on the employment of persons with disabilities and another one on the socio-economic integration of women and girl victims of trafficking, as well as a governmental decision on the employment of unemployed job-seekers in difficulty, while a law on promoting the employment of hard-to-employ individuals, including persons with disabilities, is currently being drafted.

The importance of collaboration between PES and CSWs is emphasized in the legal and policy frameworks of all the countries and territories researched, although the forms of cooperation differ. In Albania, despite an extensive legal and policy

framework, there are no concrete provisions outlining the types of cooperation to be adopted, or the types of agreements to be made between the two public institutions. In the FYR Macedonia, cooperation is regulated by Article 56 of the Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment. In Kosovo* there is an Administrative Instruction stipulating procedures for the registration, certification, and requirements for active job-seeking of unemployed persons applying to the social assistance scheme, according to which PES and CSWs should join forces to manage cases. Kosovo*'s Standard Operation Procedure (SoP) for protection from domestic violence also refers to the PES. In Montenegro there is a rulebook about the content and form of individual plans of activation and the manner of implementing measures for the social inclusion of beneficiaries of family material support who are capable of work, which also describes the role of collaboration between CSWs and the national PES. In Serbia there are two protocols of cooperation between the ministry representing the CSWs and the PES, although the national Protocol of Cooperation has not yet been signed.

■ Collaboration between the PES and CSWs is stipulated in each of the legal and policy frameworks, though the forms of cooperation differ

Despite the legal and policy framework, there is a clear division of competences between CSWs covering 'social aspects' and PES covering 'employment aspects'. This has meant that collaboration is often reduced to an exchange of information between the two state agencies, sometimes indirectly since it is the beneficiary who takes the certificates from one agency to the other without the agencies communicating directly at any stage. Where case management does exist (e.g. in Montenegro and Serbia), it is conducted by CSWs who then involve other actors such as the PES in individual plans of activation when they consider such involvement necessary. The background reports reviewed for this study identify the following key factors behind the low quality and level of collaboration between CSWs and PES: the inadequate organisational structures of the two institutions and their dependencies, financial constraints and insufficient human resources.

Further information on the legal, policy and institutional framework of each country and territory is described below. (See Table 1 for an overview of the legal, policy and institutional frameworks of each country).

- ❖ **Albania:** The legal framework in Albania comprises laws on various categories of persons with disabilities, including the law on 'Social Assistance and Services' and the law on 'Social Insurance' and their by-laws. There is also a specific law 'On the promotion of employment' in force since 1995, and a series of Decisions of the Council of Ministers on incentives programmes for

the employment of various categories, such as special groups, women, persons with disabilities and youth. A recent draft of a new law 'On the promotion of employment' incorporates all the categories not covered by the various existing decrees. There is also a set of national strategies and action plans that stem from the National Strategy for Development and Integration.⁵ Social assistance is provided for persons with disabilities for up to two years after the commencement of employment as an incentive to look for work, while persons in other categories can benefit from social assistance only when they are unemployed. In terms of minorities, in addition to the National Strategy for Development and Integration, there is a specific National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians. This plan foresees the enrolment of members of these communities in Vocational Education and Training (VET), career counselling, participation in active labour market measures, inclusion in formal employment, social enterprises and self-employment. Although social protection and employment are both under the purview of one ministry (the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth⁶), the competences for implementation are distributed, so that social protection is under the State Social Service and employment and skills are under the National Employment Service and the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualification, along with the corresponding regional and local offices of each institution. The strategies all call for collaboration between state agencies and civil society organizations, as well as for support from international donors for the implementation of measures. However, details of the forms of collaboration are lacking.

- ❖ **FYR Macedonia:** The legal framework in the FYR Macedonia is based on the 'Law on Employment and Insurance' in the case of unemployment, and on the 'Law on Social Protection', which covers preventative and reparative measures by addressing social risks. There is also a set of policies that aim at addressing high rates of unemployment, and these policies provide the framework for active labour market measures for "hard-to-employ" citizens.⁷ The institution responsible for implementing the Operational Plan on Active Employment Programmes and Measures and Labour Market Services is the Employment Service Agency (hereafter referred to as the PES) and its local offices, which are under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Cooperation between the PES and CSWs is regulated by Article 56 of the 'Law on Employment and Insurance' in the case of unemployment, which stipulates that beneficiaries of social financial assistance and their household members must register with the 'unique client evidence system' used by both the PES and CSW and must accept to engage in active labour market

⁵ The issues comprise social protection (National Strategy for Social Protection), employment and skills (National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2020 [Republic of Albania, 2014]), women victims of trafficking (National Action Plan for the Socio-Economic Re-Integration of Women and Girls Victims of Trafficking), and persons with disabilities (National Action Plan: Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020).

⁶ There has been some restructuring with the new Government formed in September 2017, as a result of which the Ministry for Social Welfare and Youth no longer exists, and social protection and the Social Services Agency are now under the new Ministry of Health and Social Protection, while employment and the National Employment Service are under the Ministry of Finance and Economy. As a result, these two services are no longer under the same ministry.

⁷ E.g. the National Strategy for Employment of the Republic of Macedonia 2016–2020, the Operational Plan for active programmes and measures for employment and labour market services 2017, and the Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016–2020.

measures such as public work or work of public interest. For the period 2011-2014, 'Local Plans for Social Inclusion' were implemented by Macedonian municipalities with UNDP support. There are also a number of strategies and operational plans that aim to actively enhance the employability of various vulnerable groups, such as youth and Roma. In the case of Roma, apart from active labour market measures and vocational education and training, the strategy also envisages the creation of Local Coordination Bodies in ten municipalities where there are high concentrations of the Roma population. The mandate of these bodies includes the design and implementation of strategic plans for the inclusion of Roma at municipal level.

- ❖ **Kosovo***: A law on social and family services covers the integrated support offered to victims of domestic abuse, requiring CSWs to conduct a needs assessment and appoint an official to manage cases by offering services and referring the person to other public entities for reintegration. There is an administrative instruction on procedures for the registration, certification, and active job seeking of unemployed persons who apply for the social assistance scheme. This instruction makes CSWs responsible for reviewing applications for social assistance, while the PES certifies the unemployed status of applicants, offers them employment services and refers them to active labour market measures. There are also a number of strategies targeting specific hard-to-employ groups such as persons with disabilities, members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, and victims of domestic violence. These strategies and their action plans aim at increasing the employment level of individuals through employment mediation services, vocational education and other active labour measures, in-house training, public employment, internships, salary subsidies, and self-employment. In addition, Standard Operation Procedures (SoPs) for protection from domestic violence and an SoP for trafficked persons have been put in place. Although the SoPs do not refer to the PES (since employment issues are regulated by shelter officers), these procedures could serve as a starting point to better connect CSWs with PES (currently, there is no coordination between the institutions regarding the SoPs). The General Council for Social and Family Services also has no link to labour policies or to the local PES. The decentralization process that started in Kosovo* in 2009 led to the separation of CSWs from the responsible ministry and their transferral under municipality management, while the PES remained under the purview of the ministry.
- ❖ **Montenegro**: The legal framework in Montenegro is based on the 'Law on Employment and Exercising Rights against Unemployment', the 'Law on Social and Child Protection' and the 'Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities'. The first of these laws stipulates the engagement of unemployed persons in public works in order to preserve and improve their skills and the professional rehabilitation of "hard-to-employ" citizens. The law on child protection takes a holistic approach through measures such as providing support for parents through the 'Family Material Support Scheme' and an 'Individual Plan of Activation'. This has led to the adoption of a rulebook about the content and form of individual plans of activation and the manner of implementing measures for the social

inclusion of beneficiaries of family material support who are capable of working. The adopted rulebook details the process of individual activation and stipulates the need for negotiation and coordination of work between a CSW worker and an authorized person from the PES. Whereas the law on the professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities focuses on persons with disabilities. The assessment of their ability to work is conducted by a separate body called the 'Commission for Professional Rehabilitation', which is responsible for assessing both the medical and social determinants of individual cases. Montenegro has also designed several national strategies that address the employment, inclusion and integration of different categories of hard-to-employ citizens, such as persons with disabilities or members of the Roma and Egyptians communities. Montenegro's 'Employment and Social Policy Reform Programme 2015-2020' also provides measures for including marginalized groups in the labour market. The national strategies emphasise the need for collaboration between CSWs and the PES. In the period 2011-2014, 'Local Plans for Social Inclusion' were implemented by municipalities with support provided by UNICEF and UNDP.

- ❖ **Serbia:** The legal framework in Serbia stipulates collaboration. The Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance prioritises hard-to-employ persons for active labour market policy measures. This law, as well as the Law on Social Protection and Social Security, requires that beneficiaries of social assistance take a pro-active role. The Law on Social Protection and Social Security stipulates the adoption of practice of individual plans of activation and includes protocols of cooperation between CSWs and the PES. Although the national protocol has not yet been signed, several protocols have been signed at local level. The 'National Employment Strategy 2011-2020' stipulates financial support for disadvantaged job-seekers but does not offer specific labour market policy measures for jobseekers receiving social assistance. Nonetheless, specific strategies are provided, such as the strategy for the social inclusion of Roma, which aims at registering Roma jobseekers as the key step in preparing the Individual Employment Plan foreseen by the Serbian Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance. In addition to measures on a range of training, such as active job search training and participation in active labour market measures, the strategy also includes integrated case management for the reduction of early school dropouts and encouragement to pursue further education, adult and vocational education, and the promotion of anti-discrimination in the labour market, with a particular focus on a number of vulnerable categories. At the level of local CSWs, case management was introduced in 2008. The CSW regulation stipulates the role CSWs must play in assessing individuals' needs and in designing plans of services involving other providers. Recent regulatory changes have also introduced workfare obligations for social assistance recipients in 'publicly useful' jobs. The Serbian Ombudsman has submitted this case to the Constitutional Court, alleging human rights violations due to the fundamental differences between workfare and activation. In addition to the overall protocol of cooperation, specific protocols have been signed for the reintegration of victims of domestic violence into the labour market.

- ❖ **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Employment, insurance, rights of PwD, social and health protection schemes are regulated by the entities – Republika Srpska (RS) and Federation BiH, and Brcko District. In FBiH, these services fall under the responsibility of 10 Cantons, each with specific cantonal law. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, state-level documents provide frontline institutions and coordinating bodies with guiding principles and framework documents in service provision. At federal level, the State strategy on employment for the period of 2010-2014 adopted by BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs based on EU principles recognized two hard-to-employ groups: PwD and ethnic minorities. This expired document is yet to be replaced by the Draft BiH Employment Strategy for period 2017-2020. At the entity level, RS Government adopted the RS Employment Strategy for the period of 2011-2015 underlining the need to invest in employment of marginalized and hard-to-employ groups including youth, PwD, minorities, women, persons over 50 years of age. In FBiH, the draft Strategy on Employment for the period of 2017-2020, the Labor Law adopted in 2016 and Law on pensions and disability Insurance remain fundamental legal resources. In Brcko District, the only relevant strategic document is the Development Strategy of Brcko district adopted for the period of 2008-2017 and Brcko District Labour Law adopted in 2006.

Regarding social and health protection laws, in RS there is a Law on professional rehabilitation, re-qualification and employment of PwD adopted in 2012 and amended in 2015, as well as the Law on protection of persons with mental problems, adopted in 1994. Social protection is defined under the RS Law on social protection dated 2012 and amended in 2016. Under this Law, social rehabilitation of PwD has been envisaged, but there is no direct connection with employment or any specific fields of cooperation with PES. In FBiH, there is a Strategy for equalization of opportunities for PwD valid from 2010-2015, as well as two laws regulating this field: the Law on professional rehabilitation, re-qualification and employment of PwD was adopted in 2010 and amended in 2013, and the Law on protection of persons with mental disabilities from 2001. Further, social and health protection is regulated at the cantonal level. There is no record of any of these cantonal laws stipulating cooperation among CSW and PES on the employment of hard-to-employ groups. Brcko District has its own Law on protection of persons with mental disabilities adopted in 2006. The Law on social protection stipulates also the rehabilitation and training of persons with disabilities; however, there is no direct connection with PES.

As to the Institutional framework, the Labor and Employment Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in 2003 as an independent administration at the federal level. In entities and Brcko district, there are public employment agencies: Employment and Labour Agency of FBiH, RS Employment Agency and Brcko District Employment Agency. Additionally, in FBiH, there is a separate employment agency for each of the 10 Cantons, as well as 74 municipal employment bureaus. In RS, PES is organized in six regional branch offices and 63 municipal bureaus. In Brcko district, the employment agency is organized within the mayor's cabinet.

In sum, there are sporadic references to the need for collaboration between PES and CSWs in the legal and policy documents at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina; yet, there are no concrete measures that outline the type of collaboration or any agreements between the two public institutions. Collaboration is often reduced to the exchange of information between the two agencies, mainly indirectly, as it is the beneficiary who transfers and declares information from one another. Notwithstanding, there are protocols of cooperation signed in municipalities where Territorial Employment Pacts are enacted⁸. Social Protection and Inclusion (SPI) Commissions were established in these municipalities to practice collaboration between PES and CSWs.

⁸ As part of the Project entitled *Promoting inclusive labour market solutions in the Western Balkans*, UNDP BiH office, with the support of the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, has completed the Territorial Employment Pact (TEP) for five Birac region municipalities: Bratunac, Milici, Srebrenica, Vlasenica and Zvornik. Consistent with the project goal, TEP foresees closer cooperation between PES and CSW through the platform of Social Protection and Inclusion (SPI) commissions created at municipal level, which, in addition to PES and CSWs, include additional stakeholders in the provision of social protection and employment services: municipal administration, NGOs, education and health providers, and the private sector.

Table 1 *Overview of the legal, policy and institutional framework regarding integrated case management in the Western Balkans*

	Legal, Policy and Institutional Framework			
	Laws	Policies	Institutions responsible & Co-partners	PES – CSW agreements (including level)
Albania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Law 'On social assistance and services' (Law No. 9355, amended) ❖ Law 'On social insurance' (Law No.7703 amended) ❖ Law 'On the promotion of employment' (Law No. 7995 amended) ❖ Council of Ministers Decisions (various programmes, such as the programme for encouraging the employment of unemployed job-seekers in difficulty, persons with disabilities, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ National Strategy for Social Protection ❖ National Strategy for Employment and Skills (NESS) 2020 ❖ National Action Plan for the Socio-Economic Re-Integration of Women and Girl Victims of Trafficking in the Republic of Albania ❖ National Strategy for Development and Integration 2014-2020 ❖ National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians in the Republic of Albania, 2016-2020 ❖ National Action Plan: Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020 	Respective ministry (MoSWY), PES and State Social Service	No: multi-partite established or ad hoc committees at municipal level, where CSW takes the lead for the management of urgent cases
Bosnia and Herzegovina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Several RS laws (e.g. RS Law on Social Protection from 2012, RS Labour Law from 2016, RS Law on professional rehabilitation, prequalification and employment of persons with disabilities adopted in 2012 and amended in 2015) ❖ Several FBiH laws such as the law on professional rehabilitation, prequalification and employment of persons with disabilities, on protection of persons with mental disabilities and on labour. ❖ By-Laws regulating the work of entities' Public Funds for rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities (Decisions and rulebooks for obtaining prescribed rights in both entities) ❖ Brcko District Law on protection persons with mental disabilities from 2016 ❖ In FBiH, social, health protection, as well as labour and employment are under responsibility of Cantonal Governments. Thus, each of 10 cantons has separate lawse aligned with relevant FBiH Laws. 	<p><u>State level:</u></p> <p>Policy on disability adopted in 2008 by BH Council of Ministries, State strategy on employment for period 2010- 2014</p> <p><u>Entity/District Level:</u></p> <p>FBiH Strategy for equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities valid from 2010-2015, RS Employment Strategy for period 2011-2015, Development Strategy of Brcko district for period 2008-2017, City and municipal development strategies, Local Action Plans for Strengthening social inclusion of marginalized groups (existing in five Birac municipalities)</p>	<p>State level: BiH Council of Ministries, BiH Ministry of civil affairs, PES of BiH</p> <p>Entity/District level: RS Ministry of health and social protection, RS Ministry of labour and veterans, FBiH Ministry of labour and social policy, FBiH PES, RS PES, Brcko District Government, Brcko District PES</p> <p>Municipal/city authorities signing Protocols on cooperation at local level</p>	<p>NOPES – CSW agreements at State and entity level</p> <p>Three Protocols of Cooperation in the field of employment of hard to amply groups signed at local level among members of SPI Commissions in Birac municipalities: Zvornik, Bratunac and Srebrenica. These Protocols were signed not only between CSW and PES, but involves also other sectors: education, health, NGO, media, etc (members of the SPI Commissions). In remaining two partner municipalities (Vlasenica and Milici), similar initiative started.</p>
FYR Macedonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Law on Social Protection ❖ Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment ❖ Law on Employment of Persons with Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ National Strategy for Employment of the FYR Macedonia 2016-2020 ❖ Operational plan for active programmes and measures for employment and labour market services 2017 ❖ Action plan for youth employment 2016–2020 ❖ National Programme for development of social protection 2011–2021 ❖ Local plans on social inclusion ❖ Strategy for Roma in the FYR Macedonia 2014–2020 	Respective ministry (MLSP), Employment Service Agency	Yes: a unique client evidence system, but there is insufficient cooperation between local PES and CSWs

Kosovo*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Law on Social and Family Services ❖ Law on Vocational Ability, Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities ❖ Law on the Social Assistance Scheme ❖ Administrative Instruction Nr.03/2013, on procedures for the registration, certification, and active job seeking of unemployed persons who apply to the social assistance scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sectoral Strategy 2009–2013 ❖ National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2013–2023 ❖ Action Plan on The Implementation of the National Strategy for the Rights of People with Disabilities 2013–2015 ❖ Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosovo* 2009–2015 ❖ Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo* on the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities 2009–2015 ❖ National Strategy on Protection from Domestic Violence and its 2016–2020 Action Plan ❖ Standard Operation Procedures for protection from domestic violence ❖ Standard Operation Procedures for trafficked persons 	Respective institutions CSW, PES	Yes, but poorly implemented
Montenegro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Law on Employment and Exercising Rights against Unemployment ❖ Law on Social and Child Protection ❖ Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ National Strategy for Employment and Human Resource Development 2016–2020 and Strategy of Integration of Persons with Disabilities 2016–2020 ❖ Employment and Social Policy Reform Program Montenegro 2015–2020 ❖ Local Plans for Social Inclusion 2011–2014 ❖ The Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2016–2020 ❖ 2016 Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2016–2020 ❖ Rulebook about the content and form of individual plans of activation and the manner of implementing the measures of social inclusion of beneficiaries of family material support who are capable of work 	Respective ministry (MLSW), PES, Commission for Professional Rehabilitation, CSWs	Yes, at national level: rulebook on Individual Plans of Action, which provides information on the exchange of information regarding clients between CSWs and PES. However, there is no regular exchange taking place in practice
Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance, Law on Social Protection and Providing Social Security of Citizens, Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, and Law on Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities ❖ Regulation on the Organization, Norms and Standards of CSW from 2008 ❖ Regulation on the Measures of Social Inclusion for Financial Social Assistance Beneficiaries ❖ Various regulations aimed at the enforcement of the laws on the rehabilitation and prevention of discrimination of Persons with Disabilities (e.g. No 97/2009, No 36/2010 and 97/2013, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ National Employment Strategy for the period 2011–2020 ❖ National Employment Action Plans (yearly) ❖ Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma in the Republic of Serbia 2016–2025 ❖ Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma in the Republic of Serbia 2017–2025, for the period 2017 to 2018 	Respective ministry (MoLEVSA), PES, CSWs	Protocols of Cooperation: some signed, but others not (e.g. between PES and the respective Ministry as a representative institution of all CSWs – unsigned; between CSW and PES – signed at the local level)

1.2. Partnership organisation & formation

The formation and organisation of partnerships between state and non-state actors is not a new practice in the territories under review, though the implementation of such partnerships is very limited and fragmented. Although the PES and CSWs work under the same umbrella in most territories (with one ministry overseeing both institutions, as for example in FYR Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania), formal communication is often not established between staff.⁹ As described above, however, there are a number of laws in place that stipulate collaboration, as is the case in Kosovo*, Serbia and Montenegro. In Montenegro, both the PES and the CSWs are even obliged to cooperate in the implementation of measures for the social inclusion of beneficiaries of financial support who are capable of work (Article 28 of the 'Law on Social and Child Protection'; Government of Montenegro, 2015). Nevertheless, collaborative approaches are rarely adopted in practice.

■ Partnership organisation and formation is not a new practice, but the implementation of partnerships is very limited and fragmented

The PES and CSWs partly follow different aims and implement different management practices. The PES in Kosovo*, for instance, follows a “management by objective” approach that is embedded in a performance management frame which - although working well - does not focus on vulnerable groups. The institutions work independently from each other and are often clearly separated. The PES seem to follow a top-down approach, often with a clearer structure and more resources than the more decentralized CSWs.

The different levels of decentralization of these institutions is reported to be a factor that hinders cooperation. Only in FYR Macedonia are the PES and CSWs partly located in the same buildings (as a legacy from previous times). In all other countries under review, the offices of the PES and those of the CSW are often located at different geographical locations.

With few exceptions, communication between these institutions is absent at local level. Information exchange and discussion between the two institutions appears not to have taken place. Often the PES and CSWs do not know what the other organisation does or which measures and services they offer. The two

⁹ Except for in cities and large municipalities, PES and CSW offices are often not located in the same geographical area (e.g. in Kosovo*).

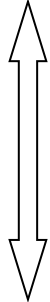
communication systems (i.e. the register databases) are not connected with each other, so that the staff from one institution lack sufficient access to obtain information from the system of the other institution (Golicin, 2017). Where communication does take place, it does so on an ad-hoc basis through informal calls. Except for some programmes that require collaboration between institutions in FYR Macedonia, cooperation in municipalities is mainly informal. In general, there is no formalized cooperation established apart from some infrequent and limited communication between local PES and CSWs. In Montenegro the degree of interaction varies from municipality to municipality and there seems to be no internal institutionalised processes of collaborative work in place. The experts interviewed in Serbia ranked the degree of integrated services provided as being at “level 2” of the integration ladder, defined according to Taylor (2009, citing Munday 2007)¹⁰ as ad hoc, limited and reactive co-operation in response to crises or other pressure.

■ **With a few limited exceptions, communication between PES and CSWs is missing at local level. Where cooperative approaches are practised, they are often ad hoc and reactive.**

The relationships between the two institutions range from loose networking to formalised cooperation, collaboration, and - in very exceptional cases - partnership. Table 2 describes these forms of relationship by distinguishing between arrangements of two or more partners and multi-stakeholder activities with strategic and operative orientation. The characteristics of ‘coordination’ thus include some joint planning, while the characteristics of ‘collaboration’ comprise joint decision-making, shared commitment and developed partnership. The aims of different relationships also vary. The aim of cooperation, for example, as the weakest form of relationship, is exchanging information (e.g. about services) and updating knowledge. The operative aims of collaboration, as the most intense form of relationship, are to jointly improve specific services, enhance employment options and increase social inclusion. According to this concept, only a few relationships between PES and CSWs can be grouped under the category of “cooperation” in the Western Balkans (e.g. in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia).

¹⁰ Brian Munday (2007): Integrated social services in Europe. ISBN 978-92-871-6209-0

Table 2 *Forms of relations of PES with other actors such as CSWs*

			Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration
			Loose Relationship		Close Relationship
			<i>Characteristics:</i> information is shared, informal or formal	<i>Characteristics:</i> some joint planning, intensified communication and closer working relationship	<i>Characteristics:</i> joint objectives and decision-making, shared commitment, developed partnership
Multi-stakeholder arrangements 	Strategic Orientation	Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To share information ❖ To discuss topics ❖ To network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To jointly develop policy areas ❖ To solve (cross-policy) problems ❖ To elaborate future partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To improve strategic planning and policy delivery ❖ To contribute to systemic change by sharing responsibility
		Forms of agreement	Informal: Mutual agreements	Informal/formal: Memoranda of Understanding, Codes of Conduct, Guidelines	Formal (legally binding): partnership agreements, pacts, multilateral contracts
		Examples	<i>Policy Forums, Strategic Platforms, Networks, Consultations, etc.</i>	<i>Involvement in Social Dialogue, Councils, Committees, Boards, etc.</i>	<i>Strategic partnerships such as the Structural Fund Partnerships in Sweden and the Territorial Employment Pacts in Austria</i>
	Operative Orientation	Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To exchange information about particular services ❖ To update knowledge ❖ To integrate skills into PES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To coordinate services ❖ To explore possibilities ❖ To balance options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To jointly improve specific (employment) services ❖ To enhance employment options ❖ To boost social inclusion
		Forms of agreement	Informal/Formal: mutual agreements, contracts in the case of contracting out services	Informal/formal: Agreements between parties	Formal (legally binding): partnership agreements, pacts, multilateral contracts
		Examples	<i>Meetings between parties, contracting out, outsourcing of government employment services, etc.</i>	<i>Coordination of skill supply and demand in a territory, etc.</i>	<i>Service partnerships such as the Local Employment Partnerships in the UK and Public-Private Partnerships of various kinds</i>

Source: Scoppetta, A. (2013) (adapted).

In Albania, demand for cooperation is nonetheless identified at local and national level and trust is reported to exist between the partners. In Serbia, agreements are established and their cooperative approaches are monitored by local PES. In addition to the number of joint meetings (223 meetings were arranged in 2016 in 24 PES branch offices), the content and the annual work plan of local PES reflect cooperation. In Montenegro, a wide range of cooperative approaches are practised at local level. A formalised agreement between the PES and the CSW is set to be established at central (national) level in the near future. This new agreement, however, can only be regarded as a first step towards an institutionalised form of cooperation. Whether or not cooperative approaches are adopted in practice currently still depends largely on the staff.

■ Only a few relationships between PES and CSWs in the Western Balkans are grouped under the category “cooperation”.

Formalised cooperative approaches that take the form of signed partnership agreements between institutions at local level are rare. In Serbia, where cooperative approaches are favoured, partnerships are not fully implemented at local level. The ‘Law on Social Protection and the Provision of Social Security to Citizens’ in Serbia “[...] gives opportunity for cooperation between CSWs and PES under Article 86. By the law, individual plans of activation are envisaged, as well as Protocols of Cooperation with PES to enhance possibilities for the employment of FSA beneficiaries able to work” (Golicin, 2017, p. 1). While the Protocol of Cooperation has never been signed at national level between the central PES and the respective ministry, protocols are in place at local level. In contrast with Serbia, Albania faces difficulties in setting up partnerships at local level.

Cooperative approaches mainly comprise referrals between services and joint projects or measures implemented for specific target groups. Referrals between services, for instance, take place in the form of the mandatory registration of unemployed social assistance applicants in Montenegro (World Bank, 2013c, p. 39). The (draft) ‘Law of Social and Child Protection’ thereby guarantees the ‘right of activation’ and defines a joint responsibility of PES and CSWs to implement this right (World Bank, 2013d, p. 35). The work of PES and CSWs in Montenegro was linked for the first time by the Law on Social and Child Protection, which states: “*The Social Welfare Centre is obliged to forward to the Employment Agency a notice on recognized right to financial support for an unemployed beneficiary capable of work, within eight days as of the day when a decision on recognition of the right is rendered. The Employment Agency is obliged to inform the Social Welfare Centre within eight days from the day when it finds that the beneficiary of financial support able for work has found employment, refused employment or vocational training, re-training or*

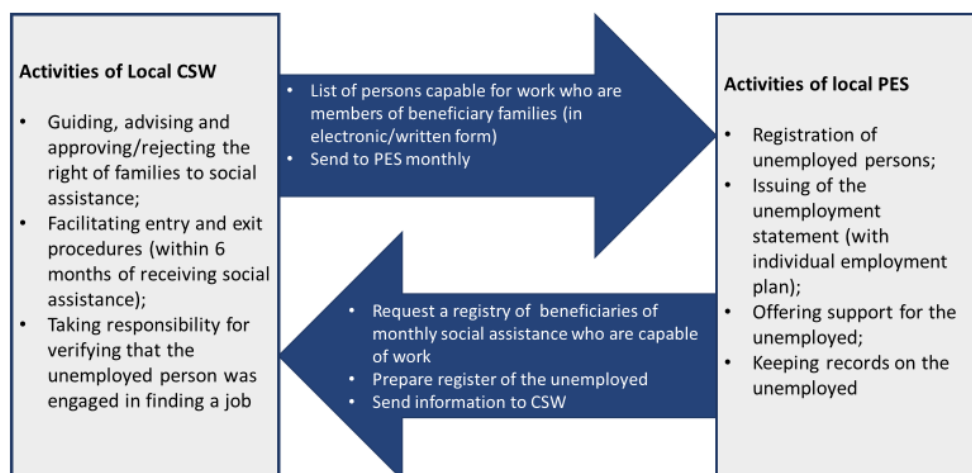
additional training offered to him” (Government of Montenegro, 2015). Whilst the law on social and child protection allocates the responsibility across the two institutions for the social inclusion of recipients of financial assistance who are capable of work, other countries in the Western Balkans, such as FYR Macedonia, do not have a uniform rule on the registration and referral of unemployed beneficiaries of social assistance (World Bank, 2013b, p. 50). Although referrals should be the rule, the actual incidence of referrals in practice is low. For example, in Serbia the incidence of referrals from the PES to social transfers and service and vice versa amounts 3 percent and 0.5 percent respectively (World Bank, 2013d, p. 47).

**■ Cooperative approaches include referrals
between services and some (few) joint projects
implemented for specific target groups**

Register databases are set up in most countries and territories (e.g. in Serbia, Kosovo*, and Montenegro); however, the information provided in the databases is reported not to be up-to-date. Consequently, these communication systems are not used as a main source of information. Moreover, different databases are maintained in the same countries/territories that are not connected with each other. In Kosovo*, for example, digitized databases exist for social assistance recipients served by both the CSWs and PES).

Moreover, information is only shared by local PES with CSWs in some cases, such as in Kosovo* (The information flow in Kosovo* is illustrated in Figure 1 below.) According to the administrative instruction guidelines, while CSWs in Kosovo* are responsible for sending a list of members of beneficiary families who are capable of work in electronic/written form to the PES on a monthly basis, the PES compile a registry of beneficiaries of social assistance who are capable of work and prepare a register of the unemployed that is sent to the CSWs on a monthly basis.

Figure 1: Information flow between PES and CSWs in Kosovo* concerning referrals according to the administrative instruction



(Procedure according to the administrative instruction; Kosovo*, 2013a)

Whilst in theory a monthly data exchange takes place, practice tells a different story, as can be seen in Experience Box 1 below. There is no exchange of lists between PES and CSWs on category II social assistance beneficiaries.¹¹ According to Koro (2017, p.4): “Families are eligible for Category II SA when one able-to-work family member is officially registered with the PES (more specifically with the Employment Office-EOs) as unemployed and is actively seeking for work through EOs. The unemployment certificate issued by the EOs and renewed upon regular visits to EOs, on the other hand, is accepted by the CSW as evidence that the unemployed members of the SA family have maintained regular contact with EOs and the labour market.”

Experience Box 1: Database usage in Kosovo*

In theory: monthly data exchange

In practice:

- **No regular exchange on data for the target group (social assistance beneficiaries)**
- **Limited interaction between these two databases**

¹¹ “Category II are families in which there is one member of working age who is capable of working while the family is raising at least one child under 5 years old or an orphan under 15 years old. Families are eligible for Category II social assistance when one able-to-work family member is officially registered at the PES as unemployed and is actively seeking for work through PES” (Koro, 2017, p.4).

The PES and CSWs in the countries/territories under review only implement a few joint projects that go beyond referrals. In Montenegro the two institutions jointly implemented a project on “*Cooperation between Employment Agency and Centres for Social Work*” (Mirkovic, 2017) aimed at improving the situation of vulnerable groups. Beneficiaries of social assistance were activated to enter the labour market. One project outcome comprised a formalised agreement between the PES and the CSWs at central (national) level. This agreement is currently planned to be implemented by local PES and CSWs (see also Experience Box 2).



Experience Box 2: PES/CSW cooperation in Montenegro

The main goal is the provision of training for employees of PES and CSWs to support “hard-to-employ” persons, specifically persons with disabilities and persons from the Roma/Egyptian population, in their integration into labour market.

The partners sign agreements of cooperation.

When asked about the strengths of the current cooperative approaches applied between the two institutions, positive feedback was gained by the experts on pilots and initiatives established at local level. Current strengths in Albania, for instance, include the “*Committees in municipalities*”, since these seem to have the capacity and opportunity to offer solutions to cases. Weaknesses mainly include the high workload of the two institutions, as well as financial constraints and institutional barriers. In addition, existing disincentives lead to a lack of motivation to find jobs. Challenges for further cooperation include financial constraints, as described in the case of Serbia: “*Regardless of the fact that the National Employment Strategy 2011-20 envisaged a continuous increase of funds for ALMPs [active labour market policies], allocations in the budget of the Republic of Serbia for these purposes in the last couple of years remained at approximately EUR 23 million, i.e. only 0.07 % of the Serbian GDP*” (Golicin, 2017, p. 12). As a result, and also because of the heavy workload arising from the very high client-staff ratio, the focus of the PES is on “easy-to serve” clients and general screening and profiling is weak (Golicin, 2017).

To sum up, whilst Kosovo*, Serbia and Montenegro have established formal agreements between the PES and CSW, the other territories do not have formalised cooperation established at central level. At local level, partnership agreements between the two institutions are signed in Serbia only in some territories, whilst all other countries/territories do not practice institutionalised cooperative approaches (apart from in projects implemented in some territories, or in the practices of municipalities). A further “push” from the central level regarding cooperation could

lead to integrated case management, especially in those countries/territories without such top-down policies, such as Albania. Since responsibility for cooperative approaches must be taken by actors at all geographical levels, however, the initiative for setting up partnerships is also at local level.

**■ Responsibility for cooperative approaches need
to be taken by actors at all geographical levels**

The practices scrutinised thus show that the rationale for developing partnerships is not clear to all involved. Undoubtedly, local PES and CSWs must take over an enhanced active role in offering integrated services. The two institutions could share the same aim of serving those in need. When acting in concert to improve the situation of vulnerable groups, and especially “hard-to-employ” persons, a richer portfolio of services could be offered at local level.

Bosnia Herzegovina reflects a distinctive picture in PES-CSW partnership. Partnership among key actors (PES and CSWs as state actors), as well as with non-state actors remain very limited. Information flow among PES and CSW at local level refers to the exchange of formal documents, usually done by final beneficiaries on a case-by-case basis. Register databases are not connected with each other. In small communities, very often communication is taken place in the form of informal phone calls. Some communities have taken small steps forward to creation of partnerships among local institutions, mainly due to presence and activities of international donor organizations and support: UNDP, ILO and UNICEF in Birac region, as well as USAID project on employment of marginalized groups implemented in several BiH municipalities.

Within Birac region Advancement and Cooperation project implemented in period 2013-2017 by UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and ILO, in five municipalities cooperation among institutions at local level has been established: in Zvornik, Milici, Vlasenica, Bratunac and Srebrenica. In each of these municipalities, Social protection and Inclusion (SPI) Commission has been established as municipal coordination bodies on social protection and inclusion, as well as the municipal Operations’ Teams. While the SPI Commissions are accountable for evidence-based planning, coordination and management of social protection and inclusion at municipal levels, as well as advocacy and mobilisation of resources, the Operations Teams are dealing with the case management and improved service delivery.

These pioneer steps are limited to local level, since they are not a part of entity laws, PES plans and programs from central level. Protocol of Cooperation has never been signed at the entity level between the central PES and the respective ministries.

Further support and dedication from entity to strengthen cooperation could foster further integrated case management implementation.

1.3. Jointly developed measures of PES and CSWs

In general, measures jointly developed and applied (i.e. innovative methods) by PES and CSWs are rare. As institutions working independently, the PES and CSWs have their own sets of services. PES are reported to target the “easy-to-employ”, whilst CSWs focus on families and individuals who are often hard-to-employ due to various obstacles faced¹² in integration. Nor are there any incentives that would encourage the employees of these institutions to enlarge their scope of activities. According to the remark of a local PES: *“When EOs [remark: Employment Offices] were asked why able-bodied social assistance recipients are not offered placement services in general, they usually stated that the recipients are not interested in placements in those jobs. Staff members are not specifically motivated to deal with difficult cases. There is no system that assesses EO employees’ performance and rewards extraordinary efforts. Nor are there any financial incentives for placement of difficult-to-place clients”* (World Bank, 2013a, p.46). Although both institutions share the aim of increasing the “social inclusion of vulnerable groups”, the current overlap in the target group is small (see 3.2 above).

Innovative methods used by partnerships at the interface between labour market and social policy can be clustered as follows:

- ❖ **Methodological innovations:** e.g. new and interlinked measures, integration chains, mix of actions and target groups (holistic approaches).
- ❖ **Process innovations:** e.g. modifications in communication (effective, transparent information flows between actors) and adaptations in project and programme management to achieve efficient operations and services.
- ❖ **Systemic innovations:** e.g. restructuring data and interface management for social welfare beneficiaries.
- ❖ **Structural innovations:** e.g. pilots for One-Stop-Shops (single support points) for persons concerned (pioneering demand-oriented minimum wages) developed by partnerships such as Territorial Employment Pacts.¹³

¹² Obstacles include employability, adequate education and skills, health disorders and constraints in capabilities of finding appropriate workplaces amongst others.

¹³ This categorisation was developed and used by the Coordination Unit of the Austrian Territorial Employment Pacts (Scoppetta, 2015).

Only a limited number of innovative methods were found when reviewing practices in the Western Balkans. These include the categories of “process innovation” and “methodological innovation”. The coordination mechanism dealing with victims of domestic violence in Kosovo*, for instance, can be regarded as a methodological innovation. The expert from Montenegro identifies the “*PES/CSW working groups*” as an example of “methodological innovation” (see also below). These joint working groups include representatives from the PES, CSWs, businesses and NGOs, and are involved in creating the Strategic Development Plan of Montenegro. In some municipalities, when focusing on services for people with disabilities, these groups also involve beneficiaries. This is the only activity found where beneficiaries are integrated, although the extent of their involvement, roles and degree to which their voices are heard when designing new measures is not known to us.

**■ The involvement of beneficiaries is needed
when designing and implementing measures**

The approach taken in Kosovo* for referrals could be classified as “process innovation”; however, the practical implementation of this approach tells a different story. When cooperation is implemented, the PES and CSWs practice non-formal cooperation, and there are no jointly developed solutions that go beyond standard measures of a single institution through the involvement of partners in project development and implementation. The study found no examples of PES and CSWs extending their individual institutional scopes, offering new services or adopting measures for new target groups such as the Roma community. There is an evident demand, therefore, for institutionalised methods of collaborative work with solutions to meet the needs of diverse groups. Different measures could thereby be combined, with mixed-method approaches applied and integration chains implemented.

SPI Commissions in Bosnia Herzegovina’s five municipalities i.e. Zvornik, Milici, Vlasenica, Bratunac and Srebrenica reflect clear signs of “methodological innovation”. Situation analyses (SitAn) undertaken in each municipality covering data collected through questionnaires from CSWs, public health institutions, educational institutions, internal affairs, judiciary and civil society organizations constitutes a comprehensive baseline concerning the status quo of social protection and inclusion. The data analysis helps identify vulnerable groups in the given municipality and informs municipal action plans (MAPs) addressing most vulnerable groups. The process continues with focus group discussions organized by SPI Commission members with representatives of defined marginalized groups. Based on the SitAn findings, as well as on conclusions of the focus groups discussions, Municipal Action Plans (MAPs) with the focus on increasing opportunities for the employment of the most vulnerable groups have been developed in the mentioned five municipalities.

The MAP defines precise measures to be undertaken by SPI Commissions during the two years period (2017-2018) with the aim of expanding employment opportunities for vulnerable groups. To ensure that the planned measures correspond to real needs, focus groups discussions with representatives of those groups were organized in all five municipalities. In total 85 representatives of defined vulnerable groups were involved in shaping MAPs 2017-2018. After being publicly discussed, all five MAPs were adopted unanimously by Municipal/City Assemblies during 2017.

1.4. Practices with civil society organisations and municipalities


A range of cooperative practices that go beyond interaction between PES and CSWs are applied in the countries/territories under review, including cooperation with municipalities and non-state actors such as CSOs and companies. It is noteworthy that cooperative practices with such actors are mainly developed separately by PES and CSWs. The aim of this cooperation primarily relates to organising and delivering services for hard-to-employ groups, and especially for persons with disabilities. A brief description of these practices is cited as follows.

Cooperation with CSOs:

- ❖ Cooperation with CSOs and employers is implemented in some municipalities in FYR Macedonia within the “Social Mentoring Programme” (an IPA funding project; see section 4.3).
- ❖ In Montenegro, some PES and CSWs are partnering at local level, i.e. cooperating on a voluntary basis without formal agreements. The degree of interaction varies between territories. CSOs are involved in developing the strategic plans of municipalities (The IPA is funding projects in regional/municipality development). Some weak cooperation is also implemented with PES offices regarding persons with disabilities.
- ❖ In Serbia, CSWs are cooperating with some CSOs but without any link to PES. However, several examples on the involvement of CSOs for the labour market inclusion of vulnerable groups do exist (as cited in Golicin, 2017).
- ❖ In Albania, cooperation with CSOs is established when projects are funded by donors, such as for Roma and Egyptian integration. These practices, however, are not set up regularly and thus frequently end when the project is finished.
- ❖ In BiH, CSOs provide trainings to final beneficiaries from vulnerable groups that increase their opportunities for labour market inclusion: computer literacy, language courses, practical skills e.g. sewing, agriculture, accounting, as well as CV writing, interview behaviour.

Cooperation with municipalities:

- ❖ In BiH, cooperation with municipal authorities (beneficiaries of donor-funded projects) has been established through their participation in SPI Commissions. The Commission is established by mayor's decree and reports its work directly to the mayor and to the municipal/city assembly. Municipal Action Plans (MAP) is submitted to the municipal/city assembly for adoption, and reports on its implementation have been regularly submitted at the end of the year to the municipal/city assembly. Where applicable, municipality co-funds some of the MAP initiatives from the municipal budget.
- ❖ Cooperation has not yet been institutionalised in Albania, though it exists in the form of “*Committees in municipalities*”. The work of these committees depends on the capacity and personal inputs of the employees of different municipalities. The PES and CSWs are working together case-by-case and when emergencies need to be tackled (e.g. when problems are to be solved for vulnerable families). The committees have been initiated top-down. Local CSWs are the leading partners of the committees, which further consist of people from other social services, the police and law, civil society organisations and the PES, depending on the case. The cooperation of the parties in the committees varies from municipality to municipality: in large municipalities the committees meet on a more regular basis, while in smaller ones there is less often a need for cooperation because of the good informal connections of the staff. The Municipality of Kukës in Albania serves as an example of good practice in this regard.



Experience Box 3: Municipal committees in Albania

The PES and CSWs are working together case-by-case and when emergencies are to be tackled, such as when problems are to be solved for vulnerable families.

The committees have been initiated top-down. Local CSWs are the leading partners of the committees, which further consist of people from other social services, the police and law, civil society organizations and the PES, depending on the case.

2. Case management in practice

Integrated case management is understood as an innovative practice that is applied jointly by local PES and CSWs (together with other relevant stakeholders) in order to

serve the most vulnerable with all available resources from the labour market and the social assistance system. As described above, the extent to which case management is practiced in the Western Balkans is limited. According to Şener (2017, p. 4): *“Integrated case management remains a straightforward solution to profile labour market setbacks faced by work-able social benefit recipients.”* However, Koro (2017) points out, any link between the social assistance system and the labour market system is driven by legal requirements rather than by case management, which indicates that the two systems work like silos.

■ Integrated case management is understood as an innovative practice applied jointly by the PES and the CSWs to serve the most vulnerable with all available resources from the labour market and the social assistance system.

Thus, whenever case management is referred to as it is practiced at present, it refers either to the labour market or to the social assistance system only. In Kosovo*, case management is implemented for all users of social services, including victims of domestic violence and trafficking. There is no link created to employment, however, due to the high workload and lack of resources of local PES, together with other factors (Koro, 2017). In Montenegro, collaborative case management is not in place because the organisations work independently: the established social cards in CSWs, on the one hand, miss the link to the profiling of the PES. Social Card is an electronic system for processing, approval, record-keeping, payments and monitoring with the help of which all procedures related to social protection are covered by the CSWs. Individual employment plans implemented by local PES are practised without any collaboration with the CSWs. Integrated case management is practiced neither in Albania nor in Serbia, although the reformed organisational and methodological framework in Serbia could provide a sound basis for cooperation and integrated case management (Taylor, 2009). While CSWs use needs assessments and action plans as tools (the regulation for CSW¹⁴ includes a referral system to other services as well as case conferences and ‘client’ teams), the PES develop individual employment plans. Neither sets of measures are connected and both serve their own purposes.

The review has found no evidence of the implementation of a *collective* and thus *integrated* case management system that makes best use of all available resources in helping the client during the entire integration and inclusion process. Only in five pilot regions of FYR Macedonia are any elements found of integrated case management

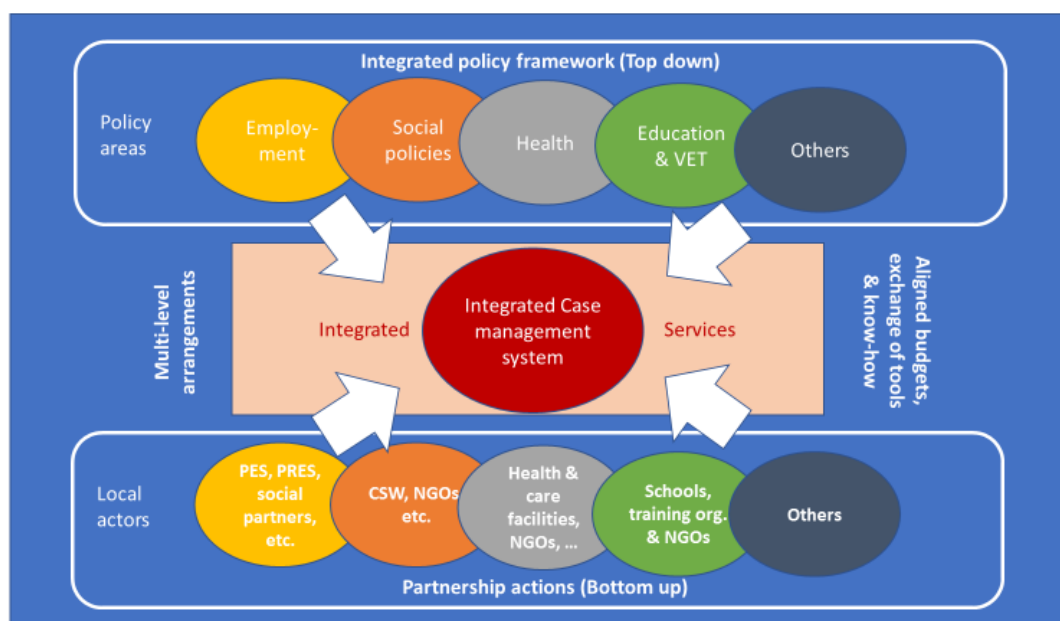
¹⁴ The CSW introduced case management with the *Official Gazette of RS* 59/2008.

practices, i.e. within the Social Mentoring Programme (see section 4.3). These practices may serve as model for other territories in the Western Balkans.

The implementation of an “Integrated case management system in the Western Balkans” that provides integrated services requires an integrative policy frame, well-functioning partnerships, multi-level arrangements, aligned budgets, and regular exchanges about what works and what does not work (see Figure 2).

■ **The implementation of an “Integrated case management system in the Western Balkans” that provides integrated services requires an integrative policy frame, well-functioning partnerships and multi-level arrangements.**

Figure 2 Multi-level arrangements for an *Integrated case management system in the Western Balkans*



This report focuses on the setting-up of well-functioning partnerships to deliver integrated services, highlighting the importance of an integrative policy frame and the need for multi-level arrangements (see Chapter 5). Apart from these general elements we do not recommend implementing a one-size-fits-all approach for integrated case management throughout the Western Balkans, since actors, contexts and settings vary (see Chapter 1). Local actors should learn from practices experienced in their own territories, exchange know-how on practices with others and build up their own area-specific integrated case management systems that take regional requirements into account and makes best use of local potentials (know-how, resources, etc). Thus, partnerships to be established at local/regional

geographical scale should serve as the basis for discussing and selecting the most appropriate tools for integrated case management in each territory.

Experiences with tools already used in the Western Balkans include activities in the area of needs assessment, individual employment plans and social mentorship, as well as established cooperation between PES and CSWs and other relevant actors, as described in the following sub-chapters.

2.1. Needs assessment

Although needs assessment is applied by PES and CSWs (see Experience Box 4 below), it is not implemented consistently. The PES use needs assessment in the development of individual plans (see section 3.2), while some CSWs apply this tool as a mechanism in combination with action plans. These uses of needs assessment are not connected with one another, however, and serve their own purpose. The observed gap in implementing needs assessment has been identified to be arising from the lack of activation measures of the CSWs. It seems that further clarification is needed on the joint goal of these institutions. According to Golicin (2017, p.13: *“The clients need to see that both institutions work towards the same goal.”* Once the two public institutions are clear that they share the same aim, i.e. of best serving those in need, both institutions should combine their sets of activities so as to jointly assist the social inclusion of vulnerable groups. Needs assessment is an important tool and thus should be applied jointly by the organisations throughout all the regions.



Experience Box 4: Needs assessment in Serbia

Both organizations, the PES and the CSW, implement needs assessment in Serbia.

While the CSW works with the tools of needs assessment and action plans, the PES develops individual employment plans which also include needs assessment. These actions are not connected to one another, however, and serve their own purposes.

2.2. Individual employment plans

While needs assessment and action plans are common tools used by CSWs, the majority of PES work with the instrument of “individual employment plans”. These plans are a valuable tool of case management, with the help of which the PES counsellor and the client agree on the next integration steps. Often the client (or both parties) sign the individual employment plan to be eligible for receiving services offered by the PES.

■ **Individual employment plans are a valuable tool of the case management system, with the help of which the PES counsellor and the client agree on the integration steps to be taken.**

Only in the five pilot regions of the mentoring project in FYR Macedonia are individual employment plans jointly implemented PES and CSWs as part of a case management system (see Section 5.3). They thus serve as examples of good practice. The Macedonian experts state that such implementation depends primarily on the degree of interaction between the PES and CSWs. Second, it is reported that the plan cannot be implemented easily due to insufficient motivation, high caseload and inadequate capacities. Suggestions for improvements in the plans for those regions where the Social Mentoring Programme does not work well concern the way individual plans are implemented: it is recommended that regular meetings (and not only meet ad-hoc) be organised and that local PES should also be given priority and time to work on the plans (to motivate them to work on the individual plans).



Experience Box 5: Employment plans applied in FYR Macedonia

Employment plans are applied in in five pilot regions FYR Macedonia as part of case management by the local PES and CSWs within the Social Mentoring Programme.

Suggestions for improvements:

- Enhance the degree of cooperation between PES and CSWs
- Organise regular meetings
- Give priority (and allocate time for PES staff) to employment plans

Although the implementation of individual employment plans is still subject to constraints in practice (in Kosovo* such plans have not yet been implemented, though a manual for employment officers exists), these plans could be a valuable tool to help both PES and CSWs to achieve their goals. This is because both institutions already make use of the tool, albeit not to serve the common goal of helping the most vulnerable but rather to serve their own purposes, as is the case in Serbia for example. The consultant for Montenegro informs that rather than the individual employment plans (used by PES) the social cards (implemented by CSWs) *“would be a starting point to relate the two approaches to each other”*.

While individual employment plans have strengths in terms of activation, the joint use of this tool by PES and CSW could be strengthened when adapting the tool to meet integration goals rather than activation goals.

- **To enhance the joint use of individual employment plans by the PES and CSWs, the scope of these plans must be expanded from activation to social inclusion.**

According to Petreski (2017), there is no clear division of responsibilities regarding the employment prospects of beneficiaries of social assistance beneficiaries and there is an expectation on the part of each institution that the other institution will perform that job for them. Petreski further states (2017, p.4): *“Moreover, professionals from CSW and PES transfer responsibility between institutions for the persons who are capable of work and use social assistance. Each of them believe that these persons should be clients of the other institution.”* Rather than shifting responsibilities back and forth, individual employment plans could help both institutions to improve their performance if implemented together under one common goal, i.e. that of helping the most vulnerable with all available resources. However, expanding the scope of the individual employment plans may be constrained as a result of legal and regulatory issues.

2.3. Social mentorship

Social mentorship is used for social and labour market inclusion to *“support the workplace retention of new workers with no or very limited work history”*.¹⁵ It is not

¹⁵ See the Terms of Reference provided by UNDP.

widely used in the Western Balkans but practiced in FYR Macedonia by the Social Mentoring Programme as well as the Mentoring Roma project.

- ❖ The IPA-funded *Social Mentoring Programme*, led by the CSO *Finance Think*, was piloted in five municipalities in FYR Macedonia. The pilot programme was implemented under the lead of the CSWs and addressed socially excluded persons such as the long-term unemployed. The programme includes training for staff of the PES and CSWs, as well as training for vulnerable persons and matching the CSW, the trainer and the mentor. Both PES staff and CSW staff act as mentors, but while the role of CSWs is to motivate clients, the PES is responsible for developing individual employment plans. Although the partners seem to cooperate well within the programme (e.g. the existing register database is used by both the CSWs and local PES for the mentoring project), cooperation is still not formalised. The mentoring project is reported to have worked best in the municipalities of Tetovo and Ohrid. 150 persons were trained in the five pilot regions. In addition, internships are scheduled for vulnerable persons and 20 persons have gained employment. The pilots and the impact evaluation ended in mid-July 2017. The experts expressed the wish that the programme should continue and be institutionalised. According to UNDP, the practice should become a regular measure used by municipalities throughout FYR Macedonia (this is not yet the case due to problems of efficiency and capacity).
- ❖ Another mentoring project, *Mentoring Roma*, has been implemented in FYR Macedonia for the target group of Roma (Here, the PES, CSWs and Roma Information Centres cooperate within projects funded by the Operational Programme on Active Labour Market Programmes and Services. In total, three mentors and six coaches (community workers) have been hired as community workers to carry out assessments and develop individual plans (identifying tools and assessing the needs of Roma).

To mainstream these practices, it will be necessary to develop guidelines and knowledge-sharing activities such as seminars. More flexible systems would help the practices to flourish. For example, social assistance should not be blocked when participating in activation-programmes or internships. Social mentoring is an important tool that could be applied across the Western Balkan territories within an integrated case management system.

2.4. Champions

This section highlights *good practices* and *applied tools* of value for future developments towards the “Integrated case management system of the Western Balkans”. By drawing attention to champions, practices can be studied in more detail.

Good practices may also assist in transferring know-how between the territories and lead to integrated case management in the long term.

The majority of good practices highlighted in this section were neither developed nor implemented by a well-settled partnership but were used by partners working more or less in isolation. These practices are not implemented throughout all regions of the Western Balkans but are scattered in some regions. The practices are applied as one part of an overall set of actions. When scrutinizing the tools for transfer, the context in which they are implemented (different contexts, laws, people) must be studied in detail. The following descriptions thus only serve as a preliminary guide.

Together with the *Social Mentoring Programme* (see Section 4.3), outstanding practices include the *Community Works Programme* in FYR Macedonia. This UNDP-programme targets the long-term unemployed and was first piloted five years ago in five municipalities. Today, 49 of the country's 80 municipalities apply this practice. The programme is now part of the Operational Employment Plan funded by the government (with co-funding provided by the municipalities). The aim is to improve service provision by increasing the collaborative work undertaken by municipalities, the PES, CSWs, and experts from the social care service. The programme first assesses the needs of vulnerable groups before defining priorities for social care and identifying those unemployed who can be activated (with the most vulnerable consistently targeted). A number of persons have been activated in home care and nursery work for six-month periods on a part-time basis (with training opportunities offered and curricula developed for homebased care). In addition to strengthening social services, the programme has helped to increase the self-confidence of clients and enabled them to compete in the labour market. The practice is regarded as a champion because of its wide partnership set-up. The idea (collaborative work, including needs assessment at local level, *for and with* the most vulnerable) has been taken up by a national programme/plan. The nationwide implementation of this successful practice is fostered by ensuring that the responsibility for action is taken by local actors, i.e. co-funding of municipalities.

■ Good practice: Social Mentoring and the broad partnership set-up within the Community Works Programme in FYR Macedonia

Good practices of cooperation between the PES and CSWs can be found in Montenegro within the project *Cooperation between the Employment Agency and Centres for Social Work* (see Section 4.2), and in Serbia where *PES/CSW meetings* take place on a regular basis in increasing numbers: approximately 100 meetings were held jointly between CSW and PES in 2015, while 100 meetings took place in the first quarter of 2017 alone. The topics discussed at these meetings varied over time: in

2015 these included “regulating the activities and mutual obligations of the two institutions based on the Protocols, informing CSWs staff on available PES measures, defining tasks and finding avenues for inclusion of financial social assistance in ALMPs as well as exchanging statistical data about those beneficiaries” (Golicin, 2017, p. 7). In late 2016 the meetings concerned the “realization of planned activities regarding implementation of the Regulation on the Measures of Social Inclusion for Financial Social Assistance Beneficiaries, reports about the activities regulated by signed Protocols, presentations of PES public calls to CSWs staff and potential employers, informing financial social assistance beneficiaries about possibilities and available ALMPs” (Golicin, 2017, p. 7). The major outcomes of these meetings were protocols signed by both institutions. The increasing number of meetings and the verified content goes hand in hand with the increase in the number of referrals and (individual) employment plans. While in 2015 only 539 employment plans were signed, 1336 were agreed in 2016 (see Table 3 below).

Table 3 *Number of CSWs referrals for the implementation of social inclusion measures in the period 1st quarter 2015–2nd quarter 2017*

Year	Number of referrals	Number of employment plans
2015	680	539
2016	1,871	1,336
2017 (up till now)	458	320

Source: Golicin, 2017, p. 7

This practice is regarded as a champion due to the potential for nationwide coverage of cooperation between the two institutions in implementing joint actions such as employment plans. The signed protocols confirm the formalisation of such cooperation, although broad partnership is missing.

■ **Good practice: Formalised cooperation between PES and CSWs in Montenegro and Serbia**

Another champion identified and recommended for further investigation are the *Social Care Plans* in Albania. Municipalities are asked to cooperate and develop these plans under a new legal framework. The plans were introduced during 2016 and have been developed by the social care departments of municipalities. The municipalities are accountable for the plans at national level. Local PES are not involved formally, but in cases where they are engaged they assist in the design of the plans. The agreement is not formalised due to a reported lack of human resources at the PES (PES staff cannot dedicate hours to the plans). The plans are reported to have been successfully implemented in municipalities in which a UNICEF project has been

funded, i.e. in Elbasan, Beret, Shkodra, Durrës, and Tirana (Nano, 2017). Although the Social Care Plans are not yet used properly in all regions, they serve as a champion due to their potential when combined with the work conducted by the existing committees at municipal level (see Section 3.4).

**■ Good practice: Municipal collaboration in
Albania with potential to extend their scope**

Conclusion

In studying framework conditions and actions taken by stakeholders regarding integrated case management implemented in the Western Balkans, three distinct levels have been analysed:

- 1) The *policy or macro level*, where systemic links between active labour market policy and social assistance (social policy) have been scrutinised from the legal, institutional and policy perspective;
- 2) The *organisational or meso level*, where stakeholders have experience of institutionalised methods of collaborative work (from loose networking to partnership) and jointly find solutions that meet the needs of diverse groups such as Roma; and
- 3) The *beneficiary or micro level*, where the clients of the institutions receive support via services and measures.

Integrated case management is understood as an innovative practice applied *collectively* by the PES and CSWs (together with other relevant actors, such as NGOs) to serve the most vulnerable with all available resources from both the labour market system and the social assistance system - and beyond. The report has reviewed both the easy-to-employ category and the hard-to-employ category, such as the long-term unemployed, persons with disabilities, vulnerable families, and members of the Roma and Egyptian populations.

The Comparative Report on Integrated Case Management for Employment and Social Welfare Users in the Western Balkans has shown that there is a lack of well-established partnerships in which integrated case management is practised. However, the PES and CSWs

- 1) *often 'share' the same users;*

- 2) *could have a common rationale for collaboration, i.e. to best serve the vulnerable with all available resources (know-how, measures, services); and*
- 3) *are supported by legal and policy frameworks in most countries.*

With a few limited exceptions of piloted programmes that may serve as champions (such as the Social Mentoring Program implemented in pilot regions in FYR Macedonia, which applies case management elements), even communication between the PES and CSWs is often absent at local level. Cooperative approaches include referrals between services and a few joint projects for specific target groups. These approaches are good practices that could serve as a starting point in the territories. Partnership organisation and formation, however, is still found to be very limited and fragmented in the Western Balkans. Research has revealed that the strengths of current approaches applies only to good piloted practices. Consequently, these should serve as basis for the establishment of area-specific integrated case management systems in the Western Balkans: *“While country-specific labor market dynamics do persist, the abovementioned framework (remark: integrated case management framework) outlines the prevailing impediments to achieve more inclusive labor markets through stronger social protection and labor market linkages”* (Şener, 2017).

Analysis at macro, meso and micro level has shown that much remains to be done in order for partnerships to flourish at the interface of labour market and social policies in the Western Balkans. To ensure an “Integrated case management system in the Western Balkans” that provides integrated services, it is recommended that the following aspects be considered: an integrated policy framework that helps interconnect the various policies, multi-level arrangements in which budgets are aligned and experiences shared, and local/regional established partnerships.

An integrative policy framework serves to enhance the development of well-functioning partnerships at local and/or regional level. In order to best help the most vulnerable, the various policy areas - especially labour market and social policy, but also health, education and local economic development - should be more closely linked. Integrated practices require integrated policy frames that help the local level to best choose from among the available resources. Labour market and social policy should become interconnected, instead of “policy silos”¹⁶ as they have been in practice to date. The two systems should become more flexible, and any barriers that hinder collaboration between the institutions should be removed. According to Koro (2017), the poor design of social assistance in Kosovo* is a potential reason for the

¹⁶ Munday refers to a continuum of integration that he calls an “Integration Ladder” (cited in Taylor, 2009, page 31).

lack of cooperation between PES and CSWs regarding social assistance beneficiaries, with the system creating disincentives for beneficiaries of social assistance to start working. This is because social assistance cannot be combined with employment since income is deducted and services are reduced. *“The current design features of the SA [social assistance] programme create many adverse incentives for establishing stronger linkages and integrated service provision between employment and social services for Category II SA beneficiaries”* (Koro, 2017, p.8). It seems easier for a beneficiary to remain within a single system rather than having to deal with the different institutions, services, processes and administrative burdens that go hand in hand with enhanced collaboration. To provide an example: *“Once the social assistance beneficiaries were engaged in the ALMPs, they were asked by CSW to completely renew their application process upon completion of their engagement even if it was only for one month. These rigid conditions applied during “entry” and “exit” of social assistance programs are believed to further weaken the interest and incentives of social assistance beneficiaries to engage in labour market integration measures”* (Koro, 2017, p. 12). Other experts recommend a change in the design of systems to make them more flexible in terms of retaining any financial support despite also being served partly by the other system (as in FYR Macedonia). The interviewee from Montenegro also asks for more flexibility and variety in offering services: social assistance beneficiaries should, for instance, be motivated to enter the labour market (e.g. via entrepreneurship). It is thus recommended that strong links be developed between the two systems in order to best help the most vulnerable. This can be achieved by *placing beneficiaries in the centre of any cooperative activity*. Partnerships between private, public and civil society organisations should extend their overall scope of activities via cooperation. If both PES and CSWs place beneficiaries at the centre of any cooperative activity, appropriate solutions may more easily be found. The characteristics, which are being identified as effective in the Austrian Territorial Employment Pacts (TEPs) include extending the scope of activities, overcoming obstacles by changing the conditions of the legal, financial, economic and institutional frames. Such partnerships are also expected to achieve the systematic linking of labour market and employment policies with structural and economic policies at local and regional levels (Co-ordination Unit of Austrian TEPs, 2000).

In addition to enhancing flexibility, there is a need for *multi-level arrangements* in which budgets are aligned and an exchange on what works and what does not work takes place vertically (i.e. between the local/regional and central levels) and horizontally (i.e. between practices across the Western Balkans). At present, for example, well-functioning local cooperation mechanisms for domestic violence are not exchanged with other municipalities and successful actions for improving workflow processes within the PES and CSWs are not up-scaled. In addition, the results and lessons of successful projects are typically lost after the funding ends.

Closer cooperation could achieve significant improvements by enabling the exchange of practices, including taking on board and mainstreaming the results and lessons learned from other projects. Knowledge transfer among the participants of various projects may also inspire new stakeholders to undertake greater collaboration (as pointed out by experts from FYR Macedonia).

It is recommended that mechanisms be developed for sharing knowledge of good practices at local level and for mainstreaming and upscaling such practices through exchange sessions, marts and fairs throughout and among the countries of the Western Balkan region. Knowledge-sharing and exchange of practices can be supported, for example, by the Operational Programs (IPA), whether this be implemented country/territory-specifically or multilaterally (Multi-country Programme/IPA).

■ A comprehensive capacity-building and training programme should be implemented on partnership-building and the setting up of integrated case management.

To assist the setting up of integrated case management systems, we recommend implementing a *comprehensive capacity-building, training and partnership programme*. This would include intensive training in integrated services. In addition, we recommend capacity-building for PES and CSWs at local level and the provision of training on the need for partnerships and effective ways to set up integrated case management. Responsible institutions should be empowered to undertake follow-up activities, with stakeholders at local level building on what is already available and taking actions independently from donor-funded projects and/or a directive from the central level.

A UN-funded pilot project on Youth, Employment and Migration in Serbia should serve as an example of current practices. This pilot project was implemented in six municipalities where partners developed partnership agreements. Training was offered in 2011, in which the two institutions got in touch with each other for the first time. In addition, a list of joint clients was developed and training was conducted for employees in local PES and CSWs. This project raised awareness of the need for cooperation and a working group for developing a law was formed. However, no further developments have since been achieved. It seems that all are waiting for outside support. Local authorities are rather passive and are following a strictly top-down approach. It is thus recommended that local actors be empowered to further take actions. This can be achieved by improving the framework conditions, by offering mechanisms of exchange to transfer know-how and, most importantly, by funding options that enable the actors to pilot actions and implement further actions.

The training offered by the UNDP-project on integrated case management can only provide a limited amount of support but may serve as a trigger for nationally or multi-laterally implemented programmes. (Again here, Operational Programmes may serve as a potential funding source for training on partnership-building and the implementation of integrated case management systems).

Partnership, i.e. collaboration at the interface of labour market and social policy, is of upmost importance for the establishment of an integrated case management system in the Western Balkans. Partnerships such as the Territorial Employment Pacts (TEPs), which have been set up in some regions in the Western Balkan countries within the UNDP project, not only involve the PES and CSWs but all other relevant partners in a territory and should make best use of all available resources of that territory. However, there is no evidence of the involvement of beneficiaries in designing and implementing measures, and ensuring such involvement is therefore strongly recommended. Partnership-building is not only about *who* is joining forces, however, but even more importantly about *why* they are doing so, i.e. the *rationale for partnership*. The reason for working in partnerships and the added value of collaboration must be clear to and understood by all. Experience has shown that partnerships best flourish if partners act in concert to achieve a clear common goal, such as the social inclusion of vulnerable groups. For the integrated case system to be established in the Western Balkans, the common goal could be to best serve those in need with all available resources (including know-how, measures and services). The *how* and the *what* of partnership is also important, meaning that *partnership agreements* need to be signed, including jointly agreed sets of actions. Some of these practices are already applied in the various territories under review, but these are fragmented. Consequently, it is strongly recommended to build up formalised collaboration between the PES and CSWs, as well as with other relevant actors at local/regional level, and to establish partnership agreements in all Western Balkan territories. TEPs are an institutionalised form of collaboration with clear responsibilities, procedures and standards of workflows. We regard partnership agreements as a necessity, not only for achieving optimal outcomes but also for enhancing the sustainability of cooperation between the PES and CSWs. Cooperation should be formalised, with improved institutionalised collaboration between PES and CSWs (as well as other relevant actors, such as NGOs) established in all Western Balkan territories. In addition to the development of joint databases between PES and CSWs (or at a minimum well-functioning referral mechanisms), this also implies that collaborative work tasks should be included in the job descriptions of employees and that working hours be planned and recorded for this task.

Partnership agreements comprise *jointly agreed sets of actions* that are applied to best assist the most vulnerable. Actions recommended for implementation throughout the Western Balkans include needs assessments, with the help of which

the most appropriate measures and services available can be tailored to the needs of clients. These sets of actions need to be jointly discussed and agreed by the partnership (and described in the partnership agreement), and the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the different actors for each single action taken also need to be agreed. At best, different measures will be combined, mixed-method approaches applied, and integration chains implemented. Sustainable outcomes for hard-to-employ users of PES and CSWs services must, thereby, be in the focus. Social mentoring, action plans/individual employment plans are valuable tools of a case management system that could easily be jointly agreed upon and applied by the partners. To enhance the joint usage of individual employment plans by the PES and CSWs, we recommend expanding the scope of the plans *from activation and integration into the labour market to social inclusion*. What is of upmost importance is that the partnership jointly plans the services and ensures their sound implementation.

As a basis for further discussion, the following *suggestions are given as starting points from which to build and tailor integrated case management systems* in the countries reviewed:

- ❖ **Albania:** The “Social Care Plans” as well as the “Committees in municipalities” can serve as starting points for building up partnerships at local level, since these committees seem to have the capacity and opportunity to offer solutions to individual cases. The cooperation practised with CSOs, such as in donor-funded projects for Roma and Egyptian integration, can serve as good practices on which future cooperation can be built in the various Albanian regions. A further “push” from the central level to encourage partnership-building is recommended to help establish an integrated case management system.
- ❖ **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** PES-CSW cooperation is constrained to internationally-funded pilot projects. Five Birac municipalities may serve as champions whose results, experiences and lessons learned may be replicated in other communities. SPI Commissions’ practices and working principles should be steered into strengthening PES-CSW collaboration and eventually case management. Nevertheless, reforms in legal and policy framework remain preconditions for institutionalizing the case management practice at local as well as central levels.
- ❖ **FYR Macedonia:** There are three potential starting points with the help of which integrated case management via partnerships can be strengthened. These include the Social Mentoring Programme, where elements of case management are already being applied. The experiences and lessons learnt from the Community Works Programme and the Mentoring Roma project should also be reviewed and considered when setting up an integrated case management system in this country.

- ❖ **Kosovo***: Whilst formal agreements have been established in law, the practice of cooperation is lagging behind. Cooperation is poorly implemented at local level and needs to be established almost from scratch. For example, links must be created to employment when implementing case management for users of social services, including victims of domestic violence and trafficking. The approach taken to referrals should be improved, since at present there are separate digitized databases for recipients of social assistance served by CSWs and the PES individually.
- ❖ **Montenegro**: Cooperation still depends to a large extent on local staff, since the PES and CSWs work independently. Social cards lack any link to the profiling of the PES, while the individual employment plans used by local PES are implemented without any collaboration with the CSWs. An example of good practice can be found within the “Cooperation between Employment Agency and Centers for Social Work” project, which aims to improve the situation of vulnerable groups. The case management applied by CSWs can serve as an anchoring point for the establishment of an integrated case management system in Montenegro.
- ❖ **Serbia**: Although the legal framework stipulates collaboration, including through signed protocols and laws, there is no evidence of partnerships in practice. Examples of good practice in Serbia include the monitoring of cooperative approaches by the PES (“PES/CSW meetings”) and the partnership agreements signed between the two institutions in some territories. The individual employment plans implemented are a valuable tool that could serve as a starting point for intensified cooperation. However, both institutions should define a common goal for the plans rather than serving individual goals, only.

The practices outlined above may serve as anchoring points in the countries/territories under review when setting up a system of integrated case management. What is of utmost importance, however, is that all partnerships and actions taken jointly through these partnerships need to be *monitored and evaluated* to ensure that the implementation of practices which prove successful can be sustained and lessons learnt from these practices (see the OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance, 2007). Measures must be adjusted over time, as actors come and go and funding sources vary. Transparency in sharing the results of evaluations is essential to build up trust and to foster openness within the partnership (and beyond).

■ Integrated case management includes establishing partnerships, identifying joint actions and monitoring and evaluating these partnerships and the actions they take.

Partnerships in the form of Territorial Employment Pacts are well suited to facilitate institutional changes at local level, as has been shown in the experience of Austrian

TEPs (Scoppetta, 2008). TEPs can also assist in the implementation of integrated case management, with verified priority-setting throughout the Western Balkan countries according to the needs of vulnerable groups in the diverse local/regional/national contexts. (Adaptation is needed to match the varying levels of social capital available in different regions, with diverse local actors and institutions at various locations, different legal frameworks and available sources of funding). Across the Western Balkans, TEPs can provide an overall framework for the implementation of regionally-modified integrated case management actions for the hard-to-employ in the various countries, as proved by the TEP implementation of priority 3b (labour market integration of vulnerable groups) of Austria's Operational Programme for 2007–2014.

According to the Vienna Action Statement on Partnerships (OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance, 2007, p.4): *“A solid, sustainable financial basis for operation is key to enabling partnerships to take a long-term view on local issues and problems and contribute fully to better policy outcomes.”* In addition, partnerships must connect to each other and develop multi-level and cross-sector collaboration. To achieve this, partnerships require there to be a receptive culture among policy-makers in regional, national and supra-national government institutions. Finally, well-established cooperation at the interface of labour market and social policy must not only be brought to life but will also require constant efforts to keep such cooperation alive. The advantages are obvious: when set up properly, the PES and CSWs working together with other partners will collectively best serve the most vulnerable with all available resources from both the labour market and the social assistance system. The “Integrated case management system of the Western Balkans” can then build on this established cooperation.

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