

**MID TERM EVALUATION REPORT OF THE
PROJECT: „ PREVENTION OF VIOLENT
EXTREMISM THROUGH LOCAL VOICES
AND INITIATIVES IN THE WESTERN
BALKANS”**

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Abbreviations

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CCCVE	Coordination Center for Countering Violent Extremism
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CT	Countering Terrorism
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DOS	Department of State
etc.	et cetera
EU	European Union
FTF	Foreign Terrorist Fighters
IT	Information technologies
IKT	Information-communication technologies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LSC	Local Security Council
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NRP	National Reintegration Plan
NSCVE	National Strategy on Countering of Violent Extremism
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCRC	Post Conflict Research Center
P/CVE	Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism
PPR	Public-Private Partnerships
RAN	Radicalization Awareness Network
TNT	Training Needs Assessment
TOR	Term of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UK	<i>United Kingdom</i>
USAID	United States Agency for International Development j
WB	Western Balkans

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings and conclusions of the mid-term evaluation of the Project: *Prevention of Violent Extremism Through Local Voices and Initiatives in the Western Balkans* led by the International Organization for Migration, funded by the Bureau of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State. The project runs in six countries in the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia¹ and Kosovo*². The thematic area of the Project is prevention of violent extremism, while the implementation covers period: 28 September 2018 – 27 September 2020. Due to an extraordinary situation caused by the Pandemic of COVID -19 and increasing the number of COVID-19 cases throughout the Western Balkans region, the request for extension of the Project for an additional 12 months (until October 2021) was initiated. The proposed project's main goal is to contribute to the efforts of civil society and central and local authorities in the Western Balkans to prevent radicalization, recruitment and inspiration of individuals to violent extremist ideologies and groups. In order to achieve this goal, this project is coordinated with relevant ministries and national coordinators for P/CVE. This 24-month project, which is built on IOM's knowledge, experience and partnerships gained through the extensive engagement in P/CVE in the WB, was prepared in consultation with key actors and considered a broad range of interventions and partners. The Project beneficiaries are central and local authorities and civil society in six countries involved in the Project.

Having in mind own experience and partners' expressed needs, the International Organization for Migration has created the Project with focus on two components:

- A. Reviewing existing knowledge on online radicalization and counternarrative approaches to establish a baseline and inform the project implementation; capacitating civil society, journalists and media partners to pilot the Redirect Method – a method developed by Moonshot CVE³ and using online tools work on redirecting internet users which are attracted to violent extremist messages and
- B. Providing the P/CVE Coordinators and other relevant institutions in Albania and North Macedonia with expertise, technical support and learning opportunities to advance the coordination and implementation of the two countries' C/PVE efforts; advancing the implementation of the Strategies and

¹ The Project was signed during at the time when an official name of the state was the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

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

³ The Moonshot CVE uses the *Redirect Method* which is developed in partnership with Google and uses public, open source data to connect individuals searching for information indicating risk to themselves or others with service providers or information resources.

Action Plans in Albania and North Macedonia by strengthening the capacities of relevant authorities at the central and local level.

The Project outcomes followed a structure, based on the components. The purpose of this mid-term evaluation is to examine and provide feedback on the implementation processes given the prevailing in the six countries participating in the project and to determine the extent of results achieved. The overall objective of the mid-term project evaluation is to generate knowledge from the project experience and will be focusing on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the Project. Particularly, the midterm evaluation should assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of all project components; the impact of activities in the six countries participating in the project; whether there are difficulties in implementation of Project, and what could be done to resolve those difficulties.

The evaluation has been taken in according to 'IOM Evaluation Guidelines' of January 2006. The evaluation has employed a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative research tools in an integrated design to enrich the process, and provided more insightful understanding. The evaluator has been limited in selection of tools, because of the pandemic COVID-19 which blocked freedom of movement globally and therefore direct observations through field visits were limited. The evaluator has applied the traditional evaluation tools: review of project documents; consultations with key IOM staff, detailed documentation review, particularly review of periodic reports and the reports on implementation some planned activities and interview with states stakeholders. The evaluation findings are divided into sections related to the evaluation criteria and the evaluation questions around project design, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, conclusions and recommendations.

The introduction of the evaluation findings follows the component structure, because of distinctions between components related to their outcomes, outputs, partners, methods, territorial areas covered by the Project, and challenges which they have met during implementation. This is a particular visible in the implementation of the Component A whose activities have faced serious delays in implementation.

The Project document has designed that the Component A has three outcomes from which IOM is responsible for Outcome 1 and Outcome 3 in cooperation with PCRC, while for implementation of the Outcome 2 IOM has subcontracted Moonshot CVE. The component B is focused on two countries North Macedonia and Albania. It aims to provide the P/CVE Coordinators and other relevant institutions in Albania and North Macedonia with expertise, technical support and learning opportunities to advance the coordination and implementation of the two countries' C/PVE efforts; advancing the implementation of the Strategies and Action Plans in Albania and North Macedonia by strengthening the capacities of relevant authorities at the central

and local level. The evaluation showed there significant progress in implementation of activities under those three outcomes.

The action of states to date in preventing violent extremism has shown that partial and ad hoc responses to some individual and isolated problems cannot prevent the spread of radicalization. The spectrum and dimension of the problems that radicalization and violent extremism poses to a society requires a comprehensive, synchronized, strategic approach that includes planned measures to prevent radicalization and violent extremism, but also prevention by acting on the causes that generate and promote radicalization (pull and push factors), as well as measures acting on instruments used to mobilize in the area of violent extremism where information technology plays a key role. In this context, it can be concluded, that the design of the Project is very relevant to the needs of the target states and the WB as whole. It should also be noted that the Project is in line with national priorities and in line with engagement of other donors. The fact that IOM implements the Project regionally in six countries of WB is also very relevant. The implementation in different geographical areas which are affected by radicalization and violent extremism is very important, having in mind that this approach is also used by extremists in the process of mobilization. Furthermore, it can be used strategically in future for continuation and further development of cooperation, as a sustainable model.

There are deviations in implementation of target outputs in terms of quantity, quality and particularly timeliness. Having in mind the Project document and timeframe, it can be concluded that there wasn't properly planned time for the starting phase. This is particularly related to a proper preparation regarding the staff recruitment, communication and setup relationship with partners, particularly Moonshot CVE. This is very relevant taking in account complexity of the Project, a geographical territory covered and a number of states involved in its implementation, and particularly a diversity of design activities. It can be also concluded that there is more effectiveness in the implementation of activities in which seconded staff and beneficiaries have been involved. Support to the secondment of officials and provide short-term expertise and technical assistance to the offices of National Coordinators for P/CVE in Albania and North Macedonia and the Albanian Center against Violent Extremism for carrying out their mandates has showed as a good model. It contains double results what contributed to effectiveness of the Project: firstly, provide support to national mechanisms for P/CVE, in Albania and North Macedonia in implementation of their national strategies and secondly, provide timely cooperation and coordination with IOM, particularly with management of the Project.

The Project impact can be assessed only in the context of what the Project has delivered compared to what it meant to deliver as set out in the original planning

documentation. In this context, there are some activities which produce some results, which are still not a final and their real impact is not possible to assess fully. The evaluator assessed very valuable impact of implemented activities, related to coordination among stakeholders, donors and other actors involved in P/CVE, particularly from the perspective of their role in society. The field perspective is very relevant for further action related to P/CVEs and should be continued.

By the implementation of the Project activities, there has been established cooperation and networks among national mechanisms for P/CVE and mobilized professionals from local communities, through workshops, coordination meetings and trainings and their active engagement to national P-CVE mechanisms. This is a cornerstone of sustainability for P-CVE. From the perspective of sustainability, it is preferable to ensure further support of this cooperation, because of importance to have a forum for exchange experience, views and information. In this context, it is also important to establish a connection between valuable documents produced under the Outcomes with national activities, particular related to revision of national strategic documents.

During implementation of the Project, on top of delays in implementation the planned activities, particularly those under responsibility of the Moonshot CVE, as a partner, IOM has met with many other difficulties which have serious impact on the Project implementation over which the IOM has no influence. In this context, influence of return FTF in states covered by the Project should be mentioned, what have changed priorities. The return and reintegration of the FTF from conflict areas became priority and the work of all stakeholders was focused on this issue. All national capacities focused on finalization of the return and reintegration plans and relevant protocols and/or operational procedures with aim to define steps and responsibilities for each actor. This fact has required changes of operation modes, having in mind that circumstances on filed requires reactive approach, while the Project proposal dominantly is focused on prevention as a proactive approach. In the given circumstances, the IOM staff, particularly seconded staff has adjusted own approach, reconsolidating with the Project objectives. Since March 2020, IOM has met an additional challenge in the Project implementation. The COVID-19 outbreak has delayed a number of activities, as the restrictions on travel and group gatherings made most types of field activities impossible, including trainings, workshops, field visits, meetings, etc. The outbreak has made planning very difficult, as the duration and severity are hard to predict, as such, flexible planning schemes are recommended, such as by preparing needed documentation for an activity and procuring goods and services in advance, while agreeing with vendors to deliver at a later date. The Project management has took steps to implement alternative work arrangements so that activities which do not require physically meeting up could progress, and continues to adapt implementation plans to the changing context.

There is also an influence of some processes in countries covered by the project activities, such as elections, replacement of national coordinator, etc.

The Evaluator recommends concentrating on progress tracking to maintain strategic focus. It will be important to assess remaining (and new) needs in countries covered by the Project before embarking on support of new activities. This assessment should also take in consideration opinion of beneficiaries. The issue of sustainability requires stronger engagement of national partners. A possible option given the current circumstances related to the COVID-19 opens space for the transfer of the project results' ownership to national mechanisms for further usage. In this sense, it is important to strengthen the dialogue with the authorities in all six countries in order to deliver the results of the project. This approach is very relevant for sustainability, and especially for the development of measures related to P/CVE. This need should be seen in the light of the status of national strategies and action plans in each country individually. Consideration may be given to establishing an advisory or similar body of representatives to national P/CVE mechanisms that will be actively consulted on the issue of creating transfer modalities.

2. INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1. Background

Prevention of Violent Extremism Through Local Voices and Initiatives in the Western Balkans is a Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) project (hereafter: Project) led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), funded by the Bureau of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State (DOS). The project runs in six countries in the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia⁴, and Serbia. The thematic area of the Project is prevention of violent extremism, while the implementation covers period: 28 September 2018 – 27 September 2020. Due to an extraordinary situation caused by the Pandemic of COVID -19 and increasing the number of COVID-19 cases throughout the Western Balkans region, the request for extension of the Project for an additional 12 months (until October 2021) was initiated. The Project beneficiaries are central and local authorities and civil society in six countries involved in the Project. The budget of the Project is USD 1,678,750. This 24-month project is built on IOM's knowledge, experience and partnerships gained through the extensive

⁴ The Project was signed during time when an official name of the state was the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

engagement in P/CVE in the Western Balkans (WB) since 2015 and in consultation with key actors and considered a broad range of interventions and partners.

IOM's engagement in P/CVE in the WB started in BiH in late 2015, where IOM, supported by USAID, UK and the Italian governments, have piloted community-based approaches aimed at reducing young peoples' susceptibility to radicalization and violent extremist influences, particularly through increasing youth community engagement and strengthening community resiliency and capacities to respond. Based on this pilot in BiH, IOM expanded the programme to selected targeted at-risk communities in the Republic of North Macedonia (hereafter: North Macedonia) and Kosovo* in 2017, and in Albania in 2018, adapting and piloting tested approaches to the local context. Additionally, IOM used the experience from the training and mentorship programme to support young local leaders, influencers, bloggers, and journalists to create their own alternative and counternarrative social media campaigns which implementing in partnership with the Post Conflict Research Center (PCRC) in BiH. Through this programme and drawing from research and global counternarrative practices, participants learned the basic theory and examples of how to design campaigns and construct messages to provide alternatives to divisive narratives, hate speech and violent extremist messages; to research target group profiles; and how to apply available Facebook advertisement and Google Analytics tools to target, measure and evaluate their campaigns. Moreover, through IOM's Bosnia and Herzegovina Resilience Initiative, supported by the USAID's Office for Transition Initiatives, IOM is supporting a number of research initiatives relevant to alternative and counternarratives to violent extremist messaging. As of 2017, IOM, supported by the UK and Norwegian governments, is also working closely with government institutions and the National Coordinator for P/CVE in BiH to establish a formal referral mechanism for potential cases of radicalization that may lead to violent extremism. As of spring 2018, IOM is supporting a similar endeavour in the Republic of North Macedonia. Finally, since 2017, IOM, working closely with the Kosovo* Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted a research on the reintegration of families of returning foreign fighters to identify the specific vulnerabilities, risks and immediate, medium and longer-term reintegration needs, including medical and psychosocial support, legal aid, financial assistance, and other re-socialization assistance. The research represented the first serious effort to investigate the living conditions of family members of foreign fighters in Kosovo*, their attitudes and needs towards reintegration, and the state-level and community responses to-date. Following this experience, in early 2018, IOM was requested by the National Coordinator for CVE in Albania and the National coordinator of North Macedonia to provide support to strengthen and reinforce the implementation of the National Strategy generally, and efforts aimed at facilitating the reintegration and re-socialization of families of foreign fighters, specifically.

Having in mind own experience and partners expressed needs, IOM is created the Project with focus on two components:

- A. Reviewing existing knowledge on online radicalization and counternarrative approaches to establish a baseline and inform the project implementation; capacitating civil society, journalists and media partners to pilot the Redirect Method – a method developed by Moonshot CVE and using online tools work on redirecting internet users which are attracted to violent extremist messages and
- B. Providing the P/CVE Coordinators and other relevant institutions in Albania and North Macedonia with expertise, technical support and learning opportunities to advance the coordination and implementation of the two countries' C/PVE efforts; advancing the implementation of the Strategies and Action Plans in Albania and North Macedonia by strengthening the capacities of relevant authorities at the central and local level.

2.2. Objective/s

The proposed project's main goal is to contribute to the efforts of civil society and central and local authorities in the Western Balkans (WB) to prevent radicalization, recruitment and inspiration of individuals to violent extremist ideologies and groups. In order to achieve this goal, this project is coordinated with relevant ministries and national coordinators for P/CVE. This 24-month project, which is built on IOM's knowledge, experience and partnerships gained through the extensive engagement in P/CVE in the WB since 2015, was prepared in consultation with key actors and considered a broad range of interventions and partners.

2.3. Target beneficiaries

This Project will be implemented the following countries of Western Balkans: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia. The beneficiaries of the Project are central and local authorities, including the National Coordinator for CVE and CT office in the North Macedonia, the Coordination Center for Countering Violent Extremism in Albania and the office of the Albanian National Coordinator on CVE, and local NGOs/CSOs in the six countries of WB, involved in the Project.

2.4. Outcomes

The Project outcomes are defined under **Component A** - Alternative and counter narratives in the WB (hereinafter: Component A) and **Component B** - P/CVE Strategy implementation in Albania and North Macedonia (hereinafter: Component B):

The **Outcomes of the Component A** are:

- 1. Research and ongoing expert advice inform alternative and counter narrative campaigns.*
- 2. Internet users with a demonstrated appetite/consumption of violent extremist online content are exposed to alternative and counter narratives through targeted pilot campaigns.*
- 3. Moderate voices provide positive alternatives to divisive and conflict-inciting narratives online, and a diverse set of multidisciplinary stakeholders is equipped with the tools necessary to counter violent extremist narratives and terrorist recruitment online.*

The **Outcome 1** (*Research and ongoing expert advice inform alternative and counter narrative campaigns*) of the Component A should be realized through following activities:

- ❖ ***Conduct a desk review of existing research on online radicalization and the role of alternative and counternarratives (A.1.1.1.)*** This desk review will also look at the specificities of radicalization narratives in the WB region. A mapping of the main counternarrative initiatives in the region will be included in the final product to serve as a baseline for the project;
- ❖ ***Develop a strategy, methodology and monitoring and evaluation system for regional and local alternative and counternarrative campaigns A.1.1.2.)*** In the initial stage of the project, IOM will bring together all project partners involved in the implementation of the three areas of engagement under Part A to develop a joint strategy and methodology, and set-up a project-specific monitoring and evaluation system for regional and local alternative and counternarrative campaigns. By streamlining data collection and performance monitoring and organize simultaneous launching of online campaign, the project will be able to conduct comparative analyses conducive for the identification of good and effective practices, cost sharing, and coordination of potential synergies

The **Outcome 2** (*Internet users with a demonstrated appetite/consumption of violent extremist online content are exposed to alternative and counter narratives through targeted pilot campaigns*) is basically the Redirect Method – a methodology developed by Moonshot CVE and Google – represents one of the recent year’s most promising efforts counter violent extremists online. The aim of this outcome is to introduce and train civil society, local journalists and/or media professionals in the WB in the Redirect Method. The specificity of this method is that directs individuals attracted to online violent extremist content to playlists with alternative video content, which discredit or undermine such beliefs. IOM will partner with Moonshot CVE to capacitate local civil society, journalist, media and/or tech companies’ representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia in the Redirect Method, thus empowering them to increase and better focus the outreach of counternarrative content and campaigns through use of modern technology tools. The outputs related to this outcome are: civil society, local journalists and/or media professionals across the WB are introduced to and trained in the Redirect Method implementing and Identified alternative and counternarrative videos are curated.

This outcome is covered by the following activities:

- Engage local implementing partners to be trained in the Redirect Method (A.2.1.1.)
- Organize capacity building workshops on the Redirect Method for civil society, local journalists or media professionals across the WB (A.2.1.2.);
- Expand and refine database of online indicators of violent extremism, particularly but not exclusively in Albanian and BSC languages (A 2.2.1.);
- Identify successful and promising alternative and counternarratives (A 2.2.2.)
- Organize a second training for the development and curation of playlists (A 2.2.3.)
- Setup of campaign infrastructure across pilot countries (A 2.3.1.)
- Extension of campaign infrastructure into Albania, Montenegro and Serbia (A 2.3.2.)
- Maintain and manage the Alpha campaign (A 2.3.3.)
- *Produce an evaluation report (A 2.4.1.)*

The Outcome 3 (*Moderate voices provide positive alternatives to divisive and conflict-inciting narratives online, and a diverse set of multidisciplinary stakeholders is equipped with the tools necessary to counter violent extremist narratives and terrorist recruitment online*) should be achieved by the following activities:

- Train WB civil society actors engaged in reconciliation and PVE to develop simple social media campaigns and utilize social media tools for targeting and evaluation (A 3.1.1.).

- Facilitate interfaith and multi-confessional dialogue platforms to identify new forms of engagement able to reach out to a young and tech-savvy audience at risk of radicalization (A 3.2.1.).
- Support targeted pilot initiatives using the web and social media to promote interfaith dialogue in the WB (A 3.2.2.).

The **Outcomes of Component B** are:

- 4. Strategic planning, coordination and monitoring of C/PVE Strategies and Action Plans in Albania and North Macedonia is advanced as a result of available expertise, enhanced capacities and knowledge of the P/CVE National Coordinators, and opportunities for cooperation with government actors and the private sector.*
- 5. Target institutions, civil society actors and representatives of the private sector advance the implementation of the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism in the North Macedonia.*
- 6. The National Coordinator for P/CVE, the Center against Violent Extremism and other competent authorities advance the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan for Countering Violent Extremism in Albania.*

The activities that lead to **Outcome 4** (*Strategic planning, coordination and monitoring of C/PVE Strategies and Action Plans in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is advanced as a result of available expertise, enhanced capacities and knowledge of the P/CVE National Coordinators, and opportunities for cooperation with government actors and the private sector*) are:

- Support the secondment of officials and provide short-term expertise and technical assistance to the offices of National Coordinators for P/CVE in Albania and North Macedonia and the Albanian Center against Violent Extremism for carrying out their mandates (A 4.1.1.);
- Provide ad hoc subject-matter expertise (SME) to assist the National Coordinators in the implementation of specific activities within the C/PVE Action Plans (A 4.1.2.);
- Provide complementary support to the organization of donors and stakeholders coordination meetings in Albania and North Macedonia (A 4.1.3.);
- Support peer-to-peer exchanges of key stakeholders in Albania and North Macedonia on the implementation of specific components of the P/CVE strategies (A 4.2.1.);

- Organize workshops to increase the understanding of violent extremism dynamics and identify opportunities for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for engagement in P/CVE efforts (A 4.2.2.)

The **Outcome 5** (*Target institutions, civil society actors and representatives of the private sector advance the implementation of the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism in the North Macedonia*) is planned to be achieved by the following activities:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing capacity and training needs of key government and non-government actors (A. 5.1.1.);
- Organize agency-specific and specialized trainings for relevant agencies and institutions on prevention interventions (A.5.2.1.);
- Organize inter-agency trainings on cooperation on prevention activities, including within the education system and the reintegration of returning foreign fighters and their families (A 5.2.2.).

The **Outcome 6** (*The National Coordinator for P/CVE, the Center against Violent Extremism and other competent authorities advance the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan for Countering Violent Extremism in Albania*) is covered by the following activities:

- Support the Albanian National Coordinator for P/CVE in establishing Local Security Councils with a P/CVE mandate and build their capacities to fulfil this role (A 6.1.1.);
- Assist the P/CVE National Coordinator and the Center against Violent Extremism in designing and piloting a mechanism to support innovative approaches to countering VE messages (A 6.2.1.);
- Conduct an assessment identifying institutional capacity gaps to receive and reintegrate returning foreign terrorist fighter families (A 6.3.1.);
- Support the government of Albania to develop a Guidance Paper outlining the strategy and necessary actions for addressing the immediate needs of family members of foreign fighters in view of their reintegration and resocialization (A 6.3.2.);
- Organize a validation workshop for the inter-ministerial working group on the Assessment and Guidance Paper (A 6.3.3.).

3. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this mid-term evaluation is to examine and provide feedback on the implementation processes given the prevailing in the six countries participating in the

project and to determine the extent of results achieved. Particularly, the midterm evaluation should assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of all project components; the impact of activities in the six countries participating in the project; whether there are difficulties in implementation of Project, and what could be done to resolve those difficulties. Project level midterm evaluation also helps to identify obstacles to performance. Finally, the evaluation should provide a programme manager with a basis for identifying appropriate actions to address particular issues or problems in design, implementation and management, and reinforce initiatives that demonstrate the potential for success.

4. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The goal of the evaluation is to review project performance in order to provide greater insight into the operations and enable efficient and cost effective project delivery and management. In according of the TOR, the overall objective of the mid-term project evaluation is to generate knowledge from the project experience and will be focusing on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project Prevention of Violent Extremism through Local voices and Initiatives in the Western Balkans. It will provide a good indication to the Project Management and the Donor that the project is progressing according to the work plan and that the implementation and approaches demonstrate the potential to lead to lasting and desirable changes as per the defined project objective. Given the scarcity of evidence and broadly recognized best practices of alternative and counter narratives, evaluation will constitute an integral part of component A of the project with the aim to generate new insights, learning and identified best practices. All initiatives related to alternative and counter narratives will be evaluated using innovative but robust evaluation methodologies. Qualitative and quantitative data on the performance of online campaigns in terms of audience reach and engagement will be collected regularly and systematically throughout the implementation of all campaigns, and a solid data-driven analysis of the target group, their characteristics and online behaviour will guide the audience targeting of online campaigns.

4. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation has been taken in according to 'IOM Evaluation Guidelines' of January 2006. The ToR contained a group of questions to guide the evaluation of the project. The evaluation methodology was designed with aim to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project delivery. The mid-term evaluation primary research included key stakeholders and staff. The evaluation includes three parts: content evaluation—an assessment of what it is the Project delivering, compared to what it meant to deliver as set out in the original planning documentation; implementation evaluation—an assessment of the extent to which the Project is delivering activities as originally

intended, including whether the Project is delivering the quantity and quality of activities initially planned; whether the activities and services are being used for the optimal effect; and whether management arrangements are facilitating the delivery process to the extent possible and other implementation features—an assessment of the key drivers and barriers to delivery that have positive and negative effects on the performance of the Project.

Throughout the inception phase, the evaluator communicated daily with IOM any changes or concerns related to the design of the evaluation. IOM and implementing partners provided the evaluator with all relevant documents. The evaluation has employed a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative research tools in an integrated design to enrich the process, and provided more insightful understanding. The evaluator has been limited in selection of tools, because of the pandemic COVID-19 which blocked freedom of movement globally and therefore direct observations through field visits were limited. Potential limitations and constraints have been addressed or mitigated with the support of the IOM staff and by triangulating information gathered from various sources, particularly partners involved in the implementation of the Project and cross-checking facts and elements in order to provide stronger evidence-based conclusions. The evaluator has applied the traditional evaluation tools: review of project documents; consultations with key IOM staff, detailed documentation review, particularly review of periodic reports and the reports on implementation some planned activities and interview with states stakeholders. The mid-term evaluation was conducted by means of:

- ✚ An examination of the documents and reports listed in the Annex I of the Evaluation report;
- ✚ Personal and/or telephonic interviews with IOM staff and some beneficiary representatives. The List of interviewed persons is introduced in the Annex II of this report.

The documentation review provides useful baseline information and an historical perspective of implemented activities and includes written documentation, but also electronic data. The documentation related to the Project is very well filed. The evaluator has made interview with the IOM staff, seconded staff and representatives of some beneficiaries to get information on implementation of the project with particular focus on achievements and obstacles appeared during of implementation of activities and proposals of measures to remove that obstacles. In-country meeting was not possible to use as methodological approach due the COVID 19 pandemic restriction of movement, with exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore the evaluator used information-communication technologies (IKT) to interview stakeholders and the IOM field staff with to identify achievements and concerns related to the project implementation. The evaluator asked participants to identify

areas that are most critical to the success of the Project and areas that they are most interested in learning more about. Also, through this phase, the evaluator got information what partners hoped to learn from the evaluation.

The evaluation findings are divided into sections related to the evaluation criteria and the evaluation questions around project design, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, conclusions and recommendations.

7. EVALUATION FINDINGS

7.1. Overall Assessment

Prevention of Violent Extremism through Local Voices and Initiatives in the Western Balkans is a Countering Violent Extremism project led by IOM, funded by the Bureau of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State. The project runs in six countries in the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. The Project has been implemented through two components:

- ✚ Component A - *Alternative and Counter-narratives to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Western Balkans* and
- ✚ Component B: *Operationalization and implementation of national strategies and action plans for the prevention of violent extremism in Albania and North Macedonia.*

The evaluator assessed that the most appropriate way to systematically introduce the evaluation findings is to follow the implementation of the activities under the Project components A and B. This evaluator's approach is based on the fact that there are several different parameters between those two components, such as outcomes, outputs, partners, methods, and territorial areas covered by the Project etc., what has a serious impact on the implementation process. Finally, led indicator for decision to use this approach is the fact the components have met different challenges during their implementation, particularly Component A which has faced serious delays, particularly Outcome 2.

COMPONENT A

The Project document has designed that the Component A has three outcomes from which IOM is responsible for Outcome 1 and Outcome 3 in cooperation with PCRC, while the Moonshot CVE, as a partner is responsible for Outcome 2. IOM has subcontracted Moonshot CVE to deliver Outcome 2 with the following two objectives:

1. To reinforce positive and alternative narratives through the redirection of online users looking for violent extremist content, specifically jihadism, to such narratives;
2. To build the capacity of civil society to produce digital CVE campaigns.

Outcome 1

The activity - *The expert engaged to carry out the desk review of existing research on online radicalization and the role of alternative and counternarratives (A.1.1.1.)* under the Outcome 1 was planned to be finished in the period of October-November 2018, while the expert engaged to carry out the desk review submitted a research paper to IOM in September 2019. There have been many difficulties in implementation of this activity, primarily related to the establishment of expert capacities capable of implementing the activity that will result in the expected result. Since this particular output presents a backbone for the further project activities, a careful approach in its implementation has been undertaken. Setbacks were regarding to recruitment of a Desk Review Expert, which has been called two times. First round of call has been extended in the pre-interview phase, due to a lack of applications of qualified applicants. The call has been extended in the post-interview phase, since the interviewed applicants have not shown enough capacity and experience in the field to conduct the task in the required context. Learning from these past experiences, it has been concluded, in coordination with the Moonshot, that the best way to finalize this activity would be to approach the potential applicants via experts in this field. The suitable potential candidates were identified and contacted and the most fitting candidate has been selected. The desk review of existing research on online radicalization and the role of alternative and counternarratives, submitted by the expert contain information on collected relevant and online accessible research reports by research institutes, NGOs, universities, and international organizations on radicalization trends and CVE in the Western Balkans. In according to reviewed documentation this activity is still in the process of implementation due the IOM comments on the draft Report submitted by the consultant hired in the previous period. IOM still insists that Report should be improved by focusing more on concrete projects that exist in the Western Balkans and to briefly highlight main results and achievements of these activities. Particularly, having in mind that different types of violent extremist narratives are present online, IOM asked consultant to include these into the review as well, under the section on social media and online radicalization on these specific violent extremism phenomena.

In according to the project timeframe the activity - *Development of a strategy, methodology and monitoring and evaluation system for the alternative and counternarrative campaigns, both in region and locally (A.1.1.2.)* was planned to be finished by the first quarter. The regional IOM team was agreed to postpone the time for implementation of this activity, since this activity requires the participation of the stakeholders which will give their contribution to the project in the later activities, and especially activities which are implemented together with Moonshoot CVE. The IOM team assessed that their consultation in this matter will fruit much more

successful implementation and would set up very well infrastructure for activities that follows. In according to reviewed documentation, the evaluator determined that the activity to develop a strategy, methodology and monitoring and evaluation system for regional and local alternative and counternarrative campaigns has been implemented. The implementation of this activity is important set-up a project-specific monitoring and evaluation system for regional and local alternative and counternarrative campaigns.

Outcome 2

In according to the Project timeframe, there was planned to start implementation of activities under the Moonshot CVE responsibility (hereafter: Moonshot activities) on the end of the first quarter of the Project's implementation (December 2018), but it wasn't happened. The reason why the Moonshot CVE was selected as a partner contains in a new, innovative methodologies which they use in their work. In continuity, the Monnshot CVE uses the *Redirect Method* which is developed in partnership with Google and uses public, open source data to connect individuals searching for information indicating risk to themselves or others with service providers or information resources. The Moonshot CVE utilises online tools to connect individuals attracted to extremist content with compelling and credible alternative messages. Insights on the volume and nuances of online searches provides empirical data on first of all the appetite for consuming violent extremist content online, and second, receptivity to alternative and counter narratives among that specific audience. Insights into non-performative online behaviour - i.e. the difference between an individual's Google search and a publicly shared Facebook post - offer valuable insights into the online journeys of at-risk individuals. The Redirect Method was first piloted between August 2015 and March 2016 to test a new approach to tackling violent extremism online. By engaging with ISIS defectors and experts in the field, key ISIS narratives were identified that, together with YouTube videos, aimed at dismantling radical ideologies. The most engaging videos were organised and showcased in specially designed YouTube playlists curated for the campaign, which were then directed at individuals globally whose search patterns suggested sympathy and affiliation with ISIS. Since then, the Redirect Method has been deployed globally in multiple languages to tackle a variety of topics from violent extremism to gender-based violence, to irregular migration.

By reviewing of periodic reports and other relevant documentation and through interviews, the evaluator determined that there were delays in implementation of all Moonshot activities caused by delay in formalization of the Moonshot's engagement. There is incomprehensible why the cooperation agreement between IOM and Moonshot CVE was not signed on time. During the negotiation process with Moonshot some issues mostly related technical aspects were opened, such as

"Where will the database be hosted? Who will own the data?"; "What personal information will it have?"; "Does the reference for project participants include IOM staff or beneficiaries who will register to upload content?". It is not clear why it took such a long period of time to answer on these and other questions. Finally, all negotiations with the Moonshot CVE and Internal IOM units were clarified and the agreement with the partner was signed in October 2019 (on the beginning of the fifth quarter). This allowed the Moonshot to move forward with implementation of its activities. This included a kick-off meeting between IOM and two representatives of Moonshot CVE, which was held on 5 December 2019; a work plan was developed and updated with Moonshot CVE; and Moonshot CVE hired seven national and international consultants to scope and curate existing online resources. Implementation of those activities created opportunity to intensify activities on drafting the M&E plan for alternative and counternarrative campaigns. The cooperation with the Moonshot CVE was intensified from the beginning of 2020. During a visit by two Moonshot CVE representatives from 3rd to 6th March 2020 the main key topics were jointly developed for the training workshops originally planned to be held during the first half of April 2020. However, due to COVID-19 outbreak, all activities related to those trainings were adjusted in accordance to the Moonshot CVE personnel and technical capacities, as well as those of local partners. In order not to be delayed with other activities, the Moonshot proposed and developed a new work plan for the upcoming period, in line with the new circumstances and challenges. This new work plan includes slightly shifted timelines for activities, starting with postponing training workshops and implementation of other activities, such as the Alpha and Beta campaigns, which in according to the project document were planned to be implemented during of the quarter 4 (July-September 2019).

The implementation status of the Moonshot CVE activities is the following:

The implementation of the activities related to Output 2.1 – *Civil society, local journalists and/or media professionals in the WB are introduced to and trained in the Redirect Method* is still in progress and faces difficulties related to delays in previous phases of the project implementation and particularly due the COVID-19 outbreak. There two activities under this output: 1. Engage local implementing partners to be trained in the Redirect Method (A.2.1.1.), and 2. Organize capacity building workshop on the Redirect Methods from civil society, local journalists and/or media professionals across the WB (A.2.1.2.). In according to the Project timeframe, the implementation of those two activities was planned on the beginning of the Project implementation (Dec. 2018 –January 2019). Based on gathered information, all six project locations (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo*) CSO's and NGO's have been identified, and the selection of potential participants for this training has been finalized. As requested, all proposed

counterparts have been approved by CT representatives in U.S. Embassies of each country. However, this activity has been postponed due to a current situation with the COVID-19 outbreak. In this regard, the Moonshot CVE suggested that training of trainers (ToT) be conducted instead of the originally planned two two-day workshops, which will include one person per country, which will ensure that each country builds the capacity to conduct the workshops on its own after the situation with COVID-19 is resolved. In accordance to the request of the IOM, the Moonshot CVE developed a detailed plan and program for ToT, taking into account the donor comments received on the Scoping report, including a tailored approach to designing training programs based on the findings on the drivers of radicalization identified during the scoping exercise. In accordance of the Moonshot CVE document: „*Training of Trainers, Digital CVE Campaigns*“, a proposal is that Moonshot works with a smaller number of individuals - to be identified and selected by IOM - in order to build their capacity as trainers in digital CVE campaigns. By building a cadre of instructors for each of the six countries in the Western Balkans, hyper-localised workshops can be delivered to civil society members of each country in the local languages, and addressing local issues. Training packages will cover common themes and skills, but will be tailored to the six specific local contexts. Moonshot CVE will involve local consultants as well as ensuring collaboration with IOM to ensure local sensitivity and relevance. Following the implementation of Moonshot's ToT modules, participants will be able to: understand the key pillars of digital campaign creation and delivery for CVE purposes; deliver sessions that introduce participants to multiple aspects of digital CVE; campaigns and up skill participants in these areas; promote learner engagement, reflective practice, critical thinking, and skill acquisition through techniques such as brainstorming, exercises and role plays. By the end of the Project this group of trainers will be equipped to deliver in-person capacity building across their respective countries following the relaxation of current restrictions. The selection process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo has been finished.

✚ With aim to achieve Output 2.2. - *Identified alternative and counternarrative videos are curated*, the Moonshot CVE completed the assessment and submitted in February 2020 *the Scoping and Curation Report*, which was shared with the donor. This Report on the online violent extremist landscape in the Western Balkans provides information on bespoke digital campaigns, deployed using the Redirect Method. Related to subject matter and in conjunction with regional experts, Moonshot conducted an extensive literature review exploring the drivers and underlying grievances of audiences at risk of violence extremism, and the online landscape of violent jihadism in Western Balkans countries. The *Scoping Report* was produced as a working literature review to inform programming. The *Scoping Report* concludes that while the profiles of individuals at-risk of violent extremism vary across and within the region, and while the path to extremism is

often highly individualised, commonalities are nonetheless apparent. Young adults have shown to be at higher risk of radicalisation than other demographic groups. Unemployment and economic marginalisation, both at the individual and community level, also appear to increase vulnerability, as well as ongoing political grievances and political distrust. Finally, historical trauma, including local and international conflicts within the region and beyond have also shown to increase the risk of individuals in the face of radicalisation to violent extremist movements. Due to the region's shared geography, history, cultures and languages, the *Scoping Report* also identifies similarities in the online violent jihadism landscape. The region can be categorised according to language: Albanian-speaking (Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia) and Bosnia/Serbian/Croatian/Montenegrin-speaking (BiH, Serbia and Montenegro). Accordingly, each group of countries share online violent extremist platforms, influential personalities, narratives, and communication strategies. Although many of the online platforms, personalities and narratives identified are not currently active, they still play a significant role in the radicalisation of at-risk individuals. A main value of the Scoping Report is that give relevant information which is a necessity for strategic planning of measures and activities for P/CVE. This is very relevant taking in account current status of strategic and documents related to P/CVE in countries involved in the Project implementation. The Scoping Report research, on top of the main aim, also found that the existing body of research on violent extremism in the region is largely outdated, having been conducted in the immediate aftermath of the foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) phenomenon in 2013-2014. As such, the data generated via the Redirect Method will provide valuable insights into the current situation across the Western Balkans region and within each country. Related to this Report, the Project management received several comments and inquiries for clarifications, which were addressed during a call with the donor representatives. In according to received information this activity is ongoing.

✚ With aim to insure implementation of the Output 2.3. - *Targeted audiences in Albania, BiH, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo* are reached with positive alternative and counternarrative content*, the Moonshot CVE has taken the following activities:

- In April 2020, Moonshot CVE introduced the *Campaign Set-up Report*. This report provides a technical overview of the design and set-up of the Alpha Redirect Campaigns in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, deployed as part of Objective 1. The elements of the Report are: 1. Scoping and research; 2. Database expansion and coding; 3. Playlist creation; 4. Account

creation and micro-targeting; 5. Deployment of Alpha Campaigns and preparation of Beta Campaigns;

- In period of two months (April-June) 2020, the Moonshot implemented *the Alpha Campaigns* by which deployed six Redirect campaigns in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. These campaigns were aimed at providing alternative and counter narratives to individuals seeking content classified as violent extremist in nature. Within Alpha Redirect campaigns, there has been deployed a tailored, localised risk assessment framework that enables the Moonshot to achieve a very high level of specificity in targeting, helping the campaigns reach only those individuals who are genuinely at risk. Valuable impact of this campaign is the fact that the at-risk audience was segmented by location and age, while geographical breakdowns enable extraction of localised data of online behaviour as well as generating insights at a national level. The demographic segmentation enables assessment of how different age groups interact with online deradicalization campaigns. Additionally, the data derived from the Alpha Campaigns provides useful empirical insights into the impact of alternative and counter narratives in the Western Balkans. There is no a doubt that the Alpha campaigns have provided useful empirical insights into the search behaviour of at-risk audiences in the Western Balkans, as well as how these audiences engage with the alternative content delivered through the campaigns, but the fact that numbers of involved in the Campaigns open a question of effectiveness this activity, particularly if there is no information on profile of audience and a level of their vulnerability to violent extremism. There is no a proper measurable indicators of success. Also, there is a question of connection between internet penetration and persons vulnerable to violent extremism, particularly if vulnerability is related to poverty and life conditions.

- ✚ The activity –*Maintain and manage the Beta Campaign* under the Output 2.3. was planned to be realized in the quarter 4 (Sept. 2019). The Beta Campaigns is further development findings of the Campaign Alfa and includes expanded risk indicators, the introduction of additional dialects and languages, and more tailored playlists. Video content includes a variety of genres, including religious, nasheed and music, news, and content from influential personalities. Also, all playlists were reviewed by internal and external subject matter experts to ensure relevance to the at-risk audience. The plan is that the Beta Campaigns have been implemented in the period from 29 June 2020 till the end of September 2020.

- ✚ In according of available documentation, the implementation of activities related to Output 2.4. - *The impact on vulnerable audiences in Albania, BiH, Montenegro, Kosovo* and Serbia is demonstrated and shared* is planned to be implemented in September 2020, based on all documents and information gathering during of implementation of other outputs.

Outcome 3

In the frame of the Outcome 3 - *Moderate voices provide positive alternatives to divisive and conflict-inciting narratives online*, the activity - Key reconciliation actors in the WB have the skills to effectively reach a targeted audience with professional alternative and counternarrative campaigns addressing violent extremist and divisive narratives has not been yet implemented. (3.1.1.) The implementation of the activity - Facilitation interfaith and multi-confessional dialogue platforms to identify new forms of engagement able to reach out to a young and tech-savvy audience at risk of radicalization has noted limited results. (3.1.2.) Both activities have faced obstacles in implementation due the situation related to COVID -19, and delays in implementation of other project activities. The planned period for the implementation of this activity was Mart-December 2019, while support targeted pilot initiatives using the web and social media to promote interfaith dialogue in WB was planned to be implemented in the period July 2019- June 2020. The focus of this activity is on facilitations of a dialogue among religious communities' representatives/theology academics via multi-confessional platforms and, where existing, interreligious institutions, to identify capacity building needs to conduct such activities and explore potential forms of engagement. The plan has been that through dedicated workshops, raise participants' understanding of the importance of online communication and provide brief trainings on the key tools available for engagement online, their functioning and potential.

By limited implementation of this activity, it has been established informal platform for interfaith and multi-confessional dialogue through which representatives of interfaith institutions and multi-confessional platforms have identified own role in countering online VE narratives and actively engage in these activities. Based on the findings and inputs from discussions with various stakeholders, ideas for the best potential approaches and alternatives to divisive and conflict-inciting narratives in regards to misconceptions about religious radicalization have being developed. In this context, a promotion of platforms of youth gathering and communication within the religious communities has been advocated through the channels of the partner institutions on the regular basis, namely BiH Ministry of security and Advisory body for the implementation of the BiH Strategy on prevention and combating terrorism

2015-2020. The implementation of activities related to Outcome 3 has been intensifying in the seventh quarter. The IOM has signed a Service Agreement with the Post-Conflict Research Center (PCRC) which will be responsible for the implementation of the development of the training on the topic of positive alternative narratives on social media. The PCRC has been implementing a multidisciplinary training and mentorship program "WB4Change: Western Balkans Against Extremism". This program will equip ten community leaders from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Kosovo* with the tools and knowledge necessary to address issues related to preventing/countering violent extremism and radicalization and overcome everyday social issues by creating and launching alternative and counter-narrative campaigns on social media. Furthermore, IOM initiated a contact with Inter-Religious Council (IRC) in Bosnia and Herzegovina with whom the workshops aiming at increasing their presence on social media will be organized and implemented.

Component B

This component is focused on two countries North Macedonia and Albania. It aims to provide the P/CVE Coordinators and other relevant institutions in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with expertise, technical support and learning opportunities to advance the coordination and implementation of the two countries' C/PVE efforts; advancing the implementation of the Strategies and Action Plans in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by strengthening the capacities of relevant authorities at the central and local level. This component has three outcomes defined by the Project. The evaluation showed there significant progress in implementation of activities under those three outcomes.

Outcome 4

The activities that lead to Outcome 4 (*Strategic planning, coordination and monitoring of C/PVE Strategies and Action Plans in Albania and North Macedonia is advanced as a result of available expertise, enhanced capacities and knowledge of the P/CVE National Coordinators, and opportunities for cooperation with government actors and the private sector*) are:

- Support the secondment of officials and provide short-term expertise and technical assistance to the offices of National Coordinators for P/CVE in Albania and North Macedonia and the Albanian Center against Violent Extremism for carrying out their mandates (A 4.1.1.);
- Provide ad hoc subject-matter expertise (SME) to assist the National Coordinators in the implementation of specific activities within the C/PVE Action Plans (A 4.1.2.);

- Provide complementary support to the organization of donors and stakeholders coordination meetings in Albania and North Macedonia (A 4.1.3.);
- Support peer-to-peer exchanges of key stakeholders in Albania and North Macedonia on the implementation of specific components of the P/CVE strategies (A 4.2.1.);
- Organize workshops to increase the understanding of violent extremism dynamics and identify opportunities for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for engagement in P/CVE efforts (A 4.2.2.)

Through the implementation of the activity 4.1.1.1., IOM has supported the offices of the Albanian National Coordinator for P/CVE, the Coordination Center for Countering Violent Extremism (CCCVE) of the Government of Albania and the National Coordinator for CVE and Counterterrorism of the North Macedonia with targeted expert/s and technical support, including in the area of strategic budgeting, M&E, administration and outreach. The expected outputs of this assistance are that Action Plans are revised in order to add estimated costs for each activity, in consultation with relevant actors; coordination and monitoring of the implementation of Action Plans is improved.

In Albania seconded staff supported the national mechanisms for P/CVE in creation of tools for monitoring and evaluation of implementation of strategies and action documents. It was developed a comprehensive results-based monitoring and evaluation system for the Albanian's CCCVE, including costs, using a consultative and all-inclusive methodology. Based on the M&E document drafted including indicators and its desegregation, an Excel spreadsheet to use for recording of the data was prepared. The initiative of seconded staff in implementation of this activity is recognized and in some way colours its implementation. This example shows importance of the seconded staff work in Albania and presents valuable input. With aim to assist the CCCVE technical team in order to understand the importance of the progress report of the implementation of the CCCVE action plans, the collection process and data reporting through indicators, the M&E Consultant designed a manual for the CCCVE Monitoring and Evaluation.

In Albania, based on the request of the National Coordinator it has been also supported the strengthening the Albanian CCCVE capacities, through the development and maintenance of a dedicated website by a contracted company. The CCCVE was further supported to establish Local Security Councils with a P/CVE mandate and build their capacities to fulfil this role. Support for improved design and maintenance of the CCCVE website <https://cve.gov.al/> has been continued till March 2020. IOM has supported the CCCVE with a Communication Media Expert to develop a strategic communications plan for the CCCVE in line with the Action Plan.

The evaluator noted that national authorities in Albania emphasize that IOM is a valuable partner. Also, it was stressed the value of the cooperation's modality, which is very flexible and allows to ask support, based on the field need. A concrete example for this is possibility to ask expert support for some issues, as it was the request for IT expert. The importance of the support through engagement of the seconded staff which has provided administrative support to the Office of National Coordinator and CCCVE has been recognized by the National Coordinator. IOM regularly has provided national authorities with relevant information, knowledge etc. from the Region and keeps them updated. The national coordinator expressed need for continuation of the support through engagement of seconded staff and experts for some issues. The priority is the revision of the Strategy and further strengthening local security councils, which are the best tool for reintegration and prevention, having in mind that different actors are involved in their work.

In North Macedonia, the seconded international and local experts to the Office of the National Coordinator for CVE and CT have continuously provided, sector specific expertise, support and assistance to the Office of the National Coordinator for CVE and CT. Some engagements of the seconded staff have been directed by circumstances in the country. In this sense, considering that reintegration has been the top priority of the Government, among the many completed tasks, the international expert surveyed the available resources on regional and global lessons learned and best practices on repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation for supporting the development of the National Reintegration Plan by the National Coordinator. The international expert designed a Draft Framework for the National Reintegration Plan (NRP) that contained various tools to help shape and collate information from the many different institutions involved in the process. This Draft Framework was presented at the initial meeting of the Reintegration Working Group and circulated to all of the relevant institutions for filling in and submitting their information for collation before the planned retreat. Finally, the NRP was adopted by the Government of North Macedonia on 30 June 2020. In continuity, the international seconded expert has provided support to the Office of National Coordinator to deal with all issues related to P-CVE, in according to requirements from the National Coordinator Office. At the same time, seconded administrative assistant has provided support to the office of National Coordinator through the performance of administrative tasks, having in mind limited human resources of the Office. In according to information, received through the interview with the National Coordinator this type of support is very important, having in mind that it has been received at the beginning of the implementation of the National Strategy for P-CVE and the establishment of the Office. A current situation related to P-CVE requires continuation of the IOM support.

With the aim to provide implementation of the Activity 4.1.2. – *Provide ad hoc subject-matter expertise to assist national Coordinator in the implementation of specific activities within the C/PVE*, IOM has had meetings with the CVE and CT National Coordinator regarding the ad-hoc subject-matter expertise. The National Coordinator of Albania requested and explained the need of CCCVE for IT expertise. This specific expertise should contribute to increase the CCCVE online presence in the internet and social media, spread awareness and show the achievements to the general public and contribute to the successful implementation of this Regional Project. IT expert Terms of References were prepared and shared accordingly and the selection process of the candidate is on-going, in accordance with IOM HR procedures, in coordination with Project Manager and on the recommendation of the National Coordinator, due to the sensitive nature of the information that will be accessible to the expert.

Furthermore, IOM provided support with financial expertise, following the identified need and request to assist the National Coordinator of Albania related to assessment and capacity building for CVE staff for increasing their skills. The expert support was implemented in the period 30 March – 30 April 2020.

Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, April/May 2020 was the preferred period for the engagement of two international experts for a period of five days each. However, this activity is delayed until COVID-19 related preventive measures are relaxed by the Government and allow for the engagement of the experts.

In the two countries, P/CVE donor and stakeholder coordination meetings often take place within projects implemented by international and civil society organizations, which means they are dependent on availability of funding and projects' cycles. This has resulted in a gap, why the national coordinators have requested to help fill, in order to ensure continuity of coordination among all involved stakeholders. With aim to provide *complementary of donors and stakeholders, through coordination meetings* (A.4.1.3.), IOM supported organization the First National Conference: "*First-Line Actors Countering Violent Extremism*" which was organized on 30 April 2019 in Albania. This conference gathered together more than 1800 first-line actors from all ministries and state agencies, central and local government, representatives of diplomatic corps accredited in Albania, international organizations, religious communities, media, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The real-life stories from the first-line practitioners, teachers, police officers, social workers or others were very telling. It clearly highlighted the crucial role first-line practitioners play in their work with vulnerable individuals or groups at risk of radicalization. The forum provided an opportunity to discuss and respond to the current situation regarding P/CVE in its full cycle, from radicalization to reintegration within the Albanian context. Also, on the Conference were introduced activities of the

Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN), co-founder of the working group for families and family communities, structure of the European Union. The RAN's objectives are focused on facilitation exchanges between professionals and other stakeholders and support the EU and its member states through recommendations for policy making, trainings, advices etc. The evaluator assessed importance of organization of this type of event, from the perspective of the participants and their role in society and opportunity that they meet each other in-person and exchange information and views related to P/CVEs, particularly taking in account that they come from different institutions and P/CVE requires strong multisectoral approach. The meeting created opportunity to hear a voice from the field, especially experts who are in daily contact with citizens and have the occasion to learn about the situation on the ground or identify certain phenomena that can have a negative impact on society. The presentation of the real-life stories colored the meeting and in some way introduced needs of society. Coordination meetings have been organized with donors and organizations involved in implementation activities related to P-CVE three times per year.

Also, this is important from the perspective of donors and stakeholders to ensure their better coordination and synchronization of work. The introduction of RAN showed the importance of creating a strong network, both at the national level and beyond, among different actors. Also, such meetings create possibility for participants to create of an informal network in future.

There have been planned to implement two activities in the period between quarter 2 and quarter 5 with aim to ensure achievement of the Output 4.2. Those activities are: *Support peer-to-peer exchanges of key stakeholders in Albania and North Macedonia on the implementation of specific components of the P/CVE strategies (A.4.2.1.)* and *Organization of workshops to increase the understanding of violent extremism dynamics and identify opportunities for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for engagement in P/CVE efforts (A.4.2.2.)*.

The activity: Support peer-to-peer exchanges of key stakeholders in Albania and the North Macedonia on the implementation of specific components of the P/CVE strategies has been implemented through two peer-to-peer exchanges in the region between North Macedonia and Albania as well as Kosovo. The first exchange took place in Skopje between North Macedonia and Albania's delegation focusing on education as part of the "Peer-to-Peer" information and experience sharing activities. This meeting was highly evaluated by participants. They considered that in order to improve the process, transparency and open communication on the regional level among the offices of the respective national coordinators about their 'good practice' activities and lessons learned should be practiced. A second peer-to-peer exchange took place in Albania, Tirana, in October 2019. The main topic of discussion on the

meeting was reintegration of foreign fighter returnees and their families. This topic was proposed by the national coordinators of Albania, North Macedonia and Kosovo*. During the meeting specialists from Kosovo* presented their experience.

Related to activity - Organization of workshops to increase the understanding of violent extremism dynamics and identify opportunities for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for engagement in P/CVE efforts, IOM had meetings and planning is on-going for organizing round table with private sector. In North Macedonia, IOM had meetings with the representatives of the business community in order to get their feedback on what would be the best modus for the Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for engagement in P/CVE efforts. They were ready to provide input during the workshops and even be engaged as a moderator. The idea was conceived to organize a several- day workshop with business community representatives, local self-government authorities as well as CSO representatives on how to create successful public-private partnerships for the purposes of combating violent extremism and achieving CVE-positive outcomes. In Albania there was discussion with National Coordinator / CCCVE for the best approaches on how to engage in PPP.

Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, the March –June 2020 was the discussed as the period for the organization of this activity but this activity is delayed now until the situation returns back to normal. This activity is a particular relevant for integration of FTFs, but indirectly for P-CVE. Its aim is to mobilize businessmen to deploy return FTFs or vulnerable persons to prevent their radicalisation. There are communications with Chamber of Commerce related to this issue.

Outcome 5

In North Macedonia, the training needs assessment (TNA), based on the draft outline of the TNA prepared by the seconded International PVE Expert, was finalized during the quarter 5, although this activity was planned to be done during the quarter 2 (January-February 2019) (A.5.1.1.). The purpose of the TNA report was to provide an overview of the current and previous capacity building initiatives and programmes for the various actors and stakeholders in engaged in P/CVE activities in the Republic of North Macedonia. The TNA identified the main gaps in knowledge and capacity in the full framework of partners in the “Whole of Society Approach” and determined that state-employed social workers and mental health practitioners were the most in need of systematic capacity building. Filling such a gap would be crucial for any P/CVE work in prevention, intervention, and reintegration. It was obvious from the beginning that the greatest need for trainings is noticed with the social welfare and mental health professionals. This segment of the population was certainly in need of more training and engagement and had been overlooked thus far by donor activities. The National Coordinator also acknowledged the fact that specialized trainings for social workers and mental health professionals are a national priority at this stage.

These changing circumstances that have occurred in the implementation of the project require the fine tune of the project provisions according to the developments, due their influence on the budget. The budget for this activity should be increased in order to implement the developed training program, what also requires that administrative measures are taken.

Based on TNA assessment there was approached to the implementation of the following activities - *A.5.2.1. Organize agency-specific and specialized trainings for relevant agencies and institutions on prevention interventions* and *A 5.2.2. Organize inter-agency trainings on cooperation on prevention activities, including within the education system and the reintegration of returning foreign fighters and their families*. The output (5.2.) of those activities is that selected representatives of key institutions in North Macedonia have specialized knowledge and mechanisms for inter-institutional cooperation to advance the implementation of the National CVE Strategy. Based on extensive research and discussions, the foreseen capacity-building training on P/CVE for social workers and mental health practitioners was re-formulated and focused in order to find the most appropriate and effective avenue to achieve the desired results of forming a select group of professionals available to work on prevention, intervention and reintegration P/CVE. It was decided to train the two groups of professionals together (social welfare and mental health professionals), starting from large groups for introductory seminars and then selecting the most promising professionals to move on to the intermediate and advanced sessions of the training. The training will then culminate with a specialized table-top exercise that would include other actors with complementary profiles to act out that which they have learned in the previous sessions in a multi-agency environment. The seconded PVE Expert had extensive discussions with the potential international training providers in order to develop this new approach together with the Project Focal Point. Proposals from the potential providers were obtained. Online discussions with various experts were held and the options were narrowed down to two: the Edmonton, Canada-based Organization for the Prevention of Violence (John McCoy) and the London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue. Through these elaborate discussions, the approach and scope of the work of social workers and mental health professionals in providing services for secondary and tertiary prevention of VE was made more precise. Furthermore, several members of the National Committee from the Ministries of Health and Labor and Social Policy were contacted to obtain their recommendations of a local expert that would be qualified for a short-term consultancy of doing a focused needs assessment, curriculum development, co-training with an international expert. The ToR was shared with various national experts who could help expand the training needs assessment (when it comes to social welfare and mental health). Several were interviewed and the preferred one was identified. Further implementation of Activity 5.2.1. and Activity 5.2.2. has been stopped due to COVID-19 related measures. It should be

mentioned that in according of the timeframe those two activities were to be implemented in Q4 and Q5 (December 2019). It can be concluded that delays in their implementation led those two activities in the period when their implementation is stopped due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The evaluator noted that the National Coordinator of North Macedonia expressed importance that IOM will continue to provide support at the same manner, included engagement of the seconded staff, taking in account that the Office still does not have sufficient staff. There is also a question of the position of the Office of National Coordinator which is currently in the office of the General Secretary of the Government. It is logically to have this office directly under responsibility of the Government of North Macedonia. Particularly, the IOM support should be focused on assistance in the revision of the Strategies and providing trainings for relevant authorities, while social workers, workers in the area of the mental health and psychologists should have priorities. Also, prevention of radicalisation through IKT, primarily through internet is crucial and therefore it is important to get, as much as possible relevant information, particularly gathered through implementation Outcome 2 of the Project. In this context, there is a need to develop the communication strategy. Strengthening local communities, coordination among different actors (NGOS, international organizations, donors) and the regional cooperation should be continued.

Outcome 6

With aim to achieve the Outcome 6 - *The National Coordinator for P/CVE, the Center against Violent Extremism and other competent authorities advance the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan for Countering Violent Extremism in Albania*, IOM has supported the Albanian National Coordinator for P/CVE in establishing Local Security Councils with P/CVE mandate in target locations and strengthening their capacities to carry out prevention role in local communities (A.6.1.1.). This activity has been implemented based on the National Coordinator request and its complement the OSCE's support in the establishment of LSCs in line with the Action Plan Activity. In fact, despite the operational support of the OSCE, due to the large number of local communities, this process required additional support for establishing LSCs the regions where they are missing. Wit aim to achieve goal, there have been conducted four workshops in the period 27 Feb-2 March 2019 in Permet, Gjirokaster, Saranda and Himara and three workshops in Lushnja, Fier and Vlora municipalities on 18-20 December 2019 during which constructive and open dialogues and discussions were held. This activity has a special significance for the Center due to the importance role which the local government bodies have in the establishment of the referral mechanism. Participants included CCCVE staff from education sector, civil society, line ministries, local government, budgeting etc. In

these multidisciplinary meetings, Local Security Councils highlighted the importance of prevention work with youth and local implementation of reintegration components of the Albania as envisioned by the Action Plan. The implementation of this activity resulted with establishment of additional Local Security Councils in target locations and their members have increased capacities to carry out their prevention role in local communities.

The identification and piloted innovative approaches in promotion of alternative messages aimed at countering violent extremism and radicalization is defined as Output 6.2 in the Project document. Achievement of this output has been planned to be achieved through *assistance to the P/CVE National Coordinator and the Center against Violent Extremism in designing and piloting a mechanism to support innovative approaches to countering VE messages (A.6.2.1.)*. This activity is also in according to the National Action Plan and IOM role is to assist the National Coordinator to design a mechanism for gathering the best and innovative ideas in this field, from youth, NGOs that are well-versed in PVE, tech experts and other motivated individuals and groups. These innovative models may in fact bring together teams made up of a mix of young people with research skills, experience with most vulnerable communities, CVE SMEs and technology savvy young entrepreneurs, to compete in devising monitoring tools and responses to online radicalization. In according the project document , the successful teams should be awarded start-up style grants, to enable them to put their counter-messaging campaigns into practice and whenever deemed necessary, IOM will provide additional expertise, mentoring and technical support. The implementation of this activity has been delayed due to other priorities in the country and in the focus of the National Coordinator and CCCVE.

With aim to achieve Output 6.3. - *Knowledge on vulnerability factors that contributed to the decision of Albanian foreign fighters to join extremist armed groups and on the challenges to the deradicalization and reintegration of their family members is available and informs policy making*, IOM has followed the field situation and requirements of national authorities. All the processes were conducted in close coordination with IOM, US Embassy, EU Delegation and the Embassy of the Netherlands. The CCCVE prepared a strategy document during the period December 2019 – March 2020 outlining the specific priorities and actions needed to ensure appropriate reception and reintegration of foreign fighter family members. The document addressed, inter alia, the following topics: necessary steps and the minimum standards in terms of security and vetting procedures; longer-term risk-assessments; child-specific assessment; mental health and psychosocial support; humanitarian assistance; medium-term financial assistance/income generation support; legal aid; and community stabilization. A specific Protocol was also prepared

by the CCCVE. Support by the project through Peer to Peer opportunities was highly valuable for planning of the lessons learned of Kosovo* and BiH concrete experiences.

Coordination and synergies between different projects implemented by IOM were ensured and effort to maximize the impact prioritized. In this regard specific coordination was ensured between the present project and the project entitled "Supporting WB Governments in preventing and responding to challenges related to violent extremism and returnees from conflict zones" as they are complementary in ensuring the support for development of a solid reintegration action plan. Activity delegation from Albania lead by the National Coordinator visited Prishtina to have meetings with counterparts focusing on the finalization of Plan for the Return of Albanian Citizens from Conflict Zones 16-18 January 2020. A round table with key stakeholders was organized and the experience of the authorities in Kosovo* in these matters was highly regarded, and has positively impacted the CCCVE plans in drafting the return and reintegration action plan and the way forward in reflecting necessary changes and updates to the action plans. Between 29-30 January 2020, the project supported a team of five representatives from Kosovo Division Unit, led by the CVE Coordinator, to come to Albania on 4 February 2020 to have meetings with each ministry working group to share their concrete experience and expertise for the way how processes were managed during the first 72 hours, and after these first 72 hours. Delays in implementation of the activities related to Output 3 should be looked in the context of the field situation. Their implementation has followed requirements of national authorities. An additional value of those activities is that they produce procedures for treatment of FTF what can be used for such and similar cases in future. With aim to ensure improvement of created procedures, it can be organization their assessment and/or evaluation.

a. Relevance

The key factor of radicalization is the constant mobilization and expansion of the circle of people gathered around the idea of violent extremism, which results in the construction of a network and a certain formalization of structures. Modern communication technologies, especially the use of the Internet, social networks, etc. have become the perfect instrument used in this process. Given the above, the current methods of prevention through the education sectors, the religious communities, and through grass-roots community initiatives provide limited results.

The problem related to radicalization, violent extremism, their influence on people in poor and non-development societies is a challenge which has required adequate and relevant actions.

States affected by radicalization and violent extremism seek to meet this security challenge, which also contains a component of human rights, often facing a number of constraints, especially due to the level of development, economic opportunities, adequacy of legislation, capacity of institutions and citizens' awareness of the problem dimension. This can be especially observed in the countries of the Western Balkans, which are especially affected by the radicalization and spread of the idea of national extremism. Extremists, using the Internet, propaganda and messaging campaigns, available in Albanian and BSC languages are directly targeting the WB's Muslim population. Having in mind this methodological approach, previous methods of prevention give very limited results.

The action of states to date in preventing violent extremism has shown that partial and ad hoc responses to some individual and isolated problems cannot prevent the spread of radicalization. The spectrum and dimension of the problems that radicalization and violent extremism poses to a society requires a comprehensive, synchronized, strategic approach that includes planned measures to prevent radicalization and violent extremism, but also prevention by acting on the causes that generate and promote radicalization (pull and push factors), as well as measures acting on instruments used to mobilize in the area of violent extremism where information technology plays a key role. Authorities in WB states have developed national strategies and action plans for the P/CVE, each articulating a vision to prevent, protect, respond to and prosecute terrorist-related engagement within or outside the countries. These documents also include the monitoring, reintegration and resocialization of returning foreign terrorist fighters and their family members.

Adopting strategic and implementation documents requires also insurance of their effective implementation in all segments covered by the documents. A prerequisite for this activity is the ability of institutions, especially national mechanisms established for P/CVE to initiate, coordinate and monitor the implementation of measures defined by national strategies and action plans. The key challenge is how to ensure a balance between a reactive and proactive approach, where a reactive approach primarily involves action against the consequences of radicalization, which includes action against returning foreign terrorist fighters and their families, while a proactive approach focuses on recruitment prevention. It is in this segment the most urgent need of national authorities to get support for the strengthening of national mechanisms capacities in the implementation of strategic and action documents, and to develop instruments for preventing the recruitment of citizens, especially young people. When it comes to prevention of recruitment, it should be borne in mind that research shows that thousands of online searches for violent extremist content are taking place in BiH and Kosovo on a monthly basis, and as the interest for PVE has grown, 'non-traditional research actors', such as tech companies, have stepped up their efforts to counter extremism through new data-driven online methodologies.

The design of the Project is very relevant to the needs of the target states and the WB as whole. It should also be noted that the Project is in line with national priorities and in line with engagement of other donors. The fact that IOM implements the Project regionally in six countries of WB is very relevant. The implementation in different geographical areas which are affected by radicalization and violent extremism is very important, having in mind that this approach is also used by extremists in the process of mobilization. Furthermore, it can be used strategically in future for continuation and further development of cooperation, as a sustainable model. The project paved the way for important complementarities, synergies, cooperation and partnerships.

Priorities to ensure implementation of strategic and action documents, with particular focus on prevention of mobilization through informational-communicational technologies has been also recognized by beneficiaries, as one of key priorities during the consultation process, which IOM had organized in the process of creation of the project proposal.

The evaluator concludes that development priorities of the Project at the level being targeted have been achieved. The Project was design to support the WB, with particular focus on North Macedonia and Albania in implementation of strategic measures related to P/CVE. The selected area and the project design are very relevant, due that fact that covers P/CVE, as security and human rights issue. The value of the Project is its focus, particularly under the Component B, on strengthens the capacities of relevant government agencies, private sector entities and civil society organizations to initiate, participate and sustain development initiatives in P/CVE. The Project was designed to capitalize on IOM expertise and experience in capacity development at the particular level of intervention and areas of focus described above. The Project recognized the needs of the direct beneficiaries, who are the direct recipients of support aimed at strengthening their capacity to undertake development tasks related to P/CVE which are directed at individuals or/and groups at high risk of radicalisation. Related to address specific issues, the project has two approaches, which has required different structure, process, linkages that affect performance of planned activities, and involvement of beneficiaries. In this context, the Outcome 2 which has implemented in the partnership of the Moonshot CVE is totally independent and from beneficiaries isolated activity. In implementation of the activities under the Outcome 2, results in the form of reports and campaigns which contained very valuable information have been achieved. An open question for IOM is how to use this information and connect them with actions which implement stakeholders and other organizations involved in P/CVE. This issue should be discussed with the beneficiaries, taking in account that the Project proposal was created in consultations with them. The evaluator did not recognize that the Project has taken in consideration the gender aspect, particularly taking in

account the radicalisation, very rare directly affect women, but indirectly, and as family relatives they are so often affected.

Also, there is an observation related to the lack of flexibility to change modalities of implementation of some activities, particularly having in mind that this Project is regional and circumstances in all six countries are not same and are very changeable. This can be seen through influence of return process of FTFs on implementation of the Project activities. The situation in 2017 when the Project was created is not the same, as it is in years of the project implementation. The long period has passed to receive answers on the requests for changes in implementation of the Project activities, submitted by the IOM field staff. Finally, all requests were rejected.

b. Effectiveness

There are deviations in implementation of target outputs in terms of quantity, quality and particularly timeliness. Support for the secondment of officials and provide short-term expertise and technical assistance to the offices of National Coordinators for P/CVE in Albania and North Macedonia and the Albanian Center against Violent Extremism for carrying out their mandates has showed as a good model. It contains double results what contributed to effectiveness of the Project: firstly, provided support to national mechanisms for P/CVE, in Albania and North Macedonia in implementation of their national strategies and secondly, provided timely cooperation and coordination with IOM, particularly with management of the Project. Engagement of seconded staff to national mechanisms for P/CVE has also value due the fact that seconded staff preparing very contained and useful reports for beneficiaries and IOM, what is relevant from monitoring of implementation national strategies and action documents, but also the project activities. Those reports contain information on recognized obstacles in implementation and recommendations for their overcoming. This can be particular visible through quarterly narrative periodic reports. Related to engagement of seconded staff to national P/CVE mechanisms in Albania and North Macedonia, there are two issues. The first issue is the lack of the time synchronization between two activities: the recruitment of seconded staff and signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IOM and Albanian national authorities. The recruitment of the seconded staff member was in January 2019, while MoU was signed in April 2019. It is logically to have firstly signed MoU which a part engagement of the seconded person. The second issue is related to a different profile of seconded expert, in Albania is a national, and while in Macedonia is an international. It has been visible initiative of seconded staff, particularly in Albania to improve performance of activities and reconciliation them with appeared field needs.

Having in mind the Project document and timeframe, it can be concluded that there was not properly planned time for the starting phase. This is particularly related to a proper preparation regarding the staff recruitment, communication and setup relationship with partners, particularly Moonshot CVE. This is very relevant taking in account complexity of the Project, geographical territory covered and a number of states involved in its implementation, and particularly diversity of design activities. It can be also concluded that there is more effectiveness in the implementation of activities in which seconded staff and beneficiaries have been involved. Finally, the biggest influence on the effectiveness in implementation of the Project has had the COVID-19 outbreak. All activities related to any field work and direct contacts have been stopped until relaxation of preventive measures. The fact that the Project implementation was in a peak (crucial) stage on the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak and also taking in account delays in implementation of activities in previous phases, there is no a doubt that there is a need for an additional time to have implemented the Project outcomes. It should be also discussed among staff and beneficiaries the question if it is realistic to keep the same activities and methodically approaches for their implementation having in mind current situation related to COVID-19. During the current phase of the Project implementation it can be concluded that a big number of outputs have been achieved and some of them are very useful for the beneficiaries, particularly those related to Outcome 4, 5 and 6. The issue of effectiveness the activities implemented under the Outcome 2, particularly campaigns should be looked in the context of limited information related to profile of audience and a level of their vulnerability to violent extremism. There are also no proper measurable indicators of success. Also, there is a question of connection between internet penetration and persons vulnerable to violent extremism, particularly if vulnerability is related to poverty and life conditions what is so often in WB related to rural areas which is not adequate covered by internet. This can be put also in context of their impact and sustainability. The discussion of the work continuation should include the issue how those outputs which have not been achieved yet make more useful for beneficiaries, taking in account all circumstances. Particularly, the discussion should refer on the Outcome 2 results and how integrate them to national strategic documents and activities taken for P/CVE.

c. Efficiency

The efficiency of the Project should be looked in conjunction with effectiveness. In implementation of the project, resources to produce target outputs have been used in according to the plan. The delays in the implementation of some activities have stopped achievements of some outputs. Related to the project inputs related to achieve outputs, the evaluator recognises that their quality and quantity is adequate.

d. Impact

The impact can be assessed only in the context of what the Project has delivered, compared to what it meant to deliver as set out in the original planning documentation. In this context, there are some activities which produce some results, which are still not a final and their real impact is not possible to assess fully. Such activity is the expert engaged to carry out the desk review of existing research on online radicalization and the role of alternative and counternarratives (A.1.1.1.). The expert had produced the report, which has not been finalized yet. In according to the Project document, there was planned to use this document as a baseline for the project. It was delay in its creation what raises a question of its impact on other activities and the Project as whole. There is no a doubt that the Report contains very relevant and useful information and can have impact on other activities, particularly related to creation of strategic actions by national authorities. The similar situation is with outputs of Outcome 2 which have been achieved until this evaluation. Concretely, the main value of the Scoping Report, produced by the Moonshot CVE is that give relevant information which are very useful, among others, for strategic planning of measures and activities for P/CVE. This is very relevant taking in account current status of strategic and documents related to P/CVE countries involved in the Project implementation: in Albania, the National Strategy on Countering of Violent Extremism (NSCVE) was approved in 2015 and expired in 2019; in North Macedonia, the National Strategy for Countering Violent extremism was adopted in 2018, for the period 2018-2022; in Serbia, National Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Terrorism is adopted for the period 2017–2021; in Bosnia and Herzegovina the Strategy for Prevention and Combating Terrorism is expiring in 2020; in Montenegro - Countering violent extremism strategy was adopted for the period 2016-2018 and Kosovo* the Strategy on Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism was adopted for the period 2015-2020. Taking in account this information, most states involved in the implementation of the Project should take in consideration revision of strategic documents due the expiration of the period for which they were enacted. For this process, update of relevant information is very important. In this context, it should be taken the Scoping Report research, which on top of the main aim, also found that the existing body of research on violent extremism in the region is largely outdated, having been conducted in the immediate aftermath of the foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) phenomenon in 2013-2014. It is similar situation with other outputs achieved by the implementation of the Moonshot CVE activities. To conclude, results from those activities are very valuable, but their impact will be visible only if will be establish connection button with national efforts in P/CVE. This is also very relevant for sustainability. All interviewed persons agreed that from the perspective of sustainability is important to provide a tool for monitoring and evaluation the P-CVE strategies and action plans in all countries

involved in the Project. Revision of those documents is highly related to impact assessment.

The evaluator assessed very valuable impact of implemented activities, related to coordination among stakeholders, donors and other actors involved in P/CVE, particularly from the perspective of their role in society. The field perspective is very relevant for further action related to P/CVEs and should be continued.

e. Sustainability

The most important for sustainability is that the capacities of beneficiaries- civil society, central and local authorities in the WB to prevent radicalization, recruitment and inspiration of individuals to violent extremism ideologies and groups are strengthened. The mobilization of professionals from local communities, through workshops, coordination meetings and trainings and their active engagement to national P-CVE mechanisms is a cornerstone of sustainability for P-CVE. To ensure sustainability in prevention of CVE is important to have policy documents (strategies, action plans etc.), strong institutional mechanisms and procedures. In this stage of the Project implementation, achieved outputs create a base of this cycle and for sustainability it is important to ensure implementation of the remaining activities. Also, there should be established connection with valuable documents produced under the Outcome 1 and 3 with national activities, particular related to division of strategic documents.

Additionally by the implementation of the Project activities, there has been established cooperation and some networks among national mechanisms for P/CVE. From the perspective of sustainability, it is preferable to ensure further support of this cooperation, because of importance to have a forum for exchange experience, views and information.

7. Conclusions

The evaluation of the Project has been conducted to identify points of strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the Project and recommend alternatives. From this viewpoint, based on the information available, additional information collected during the evolution process, the evaluator was able to identify important aspects related to the implementation of the IOM Project.

The main value of the IOM Project aimed to prevention of violence extremism is that has been implemented in six countries in the WB: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia and targeted beneficiaries

from central and local authorities and civil society. Also, in creation of the Project, IOM used own experience and partners expressed needs, what has contributed that interventions in societies based on the project activities were very relevant. This is particular visible in implementation of activities focused on the strengthening national capacities in Albania and North Macedonia. Particular value of the project is its respect of geographical and thematic aspects. Thus it created an environment for further broader cooperation of the beneficiaries. The IOM activities motivated them to work together.

During implementation of the Project, on top of delays in implementation the planned activities, particularly those under responsibility of the Moonshot CVE, as a partner, IOM has met with many other difficulties which have serious impact on the Project implementation over which the IOM has no influence. In this context, the influence of return FTF in states covered by the Project should be mentioned, what have changed priorities. The return and reintegration of the FTF from conflict areas became priority and the work of all stakeholders was focused on this issue. All national capacities focused on finalization of the return and reintegration plans and relevant protocols and/or operational procedures with aim to define steps and responsibilities for each actor. This fact has required changes of operation modes, having in mind that circumstances on filed requires reactive approach, while the Project proposal dominantly is focused on prevention as a proactive approach. In the given circumstances, the IOM staff, particularly seconded staff has adjusted own approach, reconsolidating with the Project objectives. This was possible for two countries involved in the implementation of the Project through the Component B, particularly Outcome 5 and Outcome 6, while other countries covered by the Project did not have this opportunity, although they also were exposed to return process of FTF and their families. This is because of the fact that the project did not plan seconded staff for their national mechanisms for /CVE.

Since March 2020, IOM has met an additional challenge in the Project implementation. The COVID-19 outbreak has delayed a number of activities, as the restrictions on travel and group gatherings made most types of field activities impossible, including trainings, workshops, field visits, meetings, etc. The outbreak has made planning very difficult, as the duration and severity are hard to predict, as such, flexible planning schemes are recommended, such as by preparing needed documentation for an activity and procuring goods and services in advance, while agreeing with vendors to deliver at a later date. Waiting for the lifting of travel and gathering restrictions, however, has remained the only option in many cases. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, all activities related to training and similar gatherings have been delayed until preventive measures are relaxed. The Project management has took steps to implement alternative work arrangements so that activities which do

not require physically meeting up could progress, and continues to adapt implementation plans to the changing context.

Project management continues to operate in all countries, often with Alternative Working Arrangements, e.g. telecommuting, which reduced the spread of the virus. Non-contact work continues when possible, such as the development of alternative educational programmes, designing a playlist for Alpha and Beta campaign, reporting, etc.

There is also an influence of some processes in countries covered by the project activities. As example, in North Macedonia, there was plan to have the National Reintegration Plan, by the Government by the end of March. This deadline was especially crucial due to the uncertainty that would follow from the national parliamentary elections scheduled for 12 April 2020. The work schedule for March was full but looked promising. However as of 11 March 2020, the whole country was put on general lockdown and a state of emergency was declared a week later due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This disrupted many consultative activities of the National Coordinator and delayed preparation of the National Reintegration Plan. The Government of North Macedonia adopted a decision that no decisions will be taken that are not directly connected to the state of emergency. Therefore, the NRP's deadline for submission to and adoption by the Government has been delayed. In such circumstances, the Project team including the National Coordinator have adapted their work practices to the lockdown conditions and continue to work on track though on a modified schedule. Consultations with relevant key stakeholders and partners are being held online. Progress is continuing to be made and constructive work continues. Other planned meetings and trainings have been put on hold and it should be re-thought how to approach such types of activities in the near and long-term future. Finally, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia adopted a new National Plan for Reintegration, Resocialization, and Rehabilitation of Returnees from Foreign Armies and Members of the Families (woman and children) on 30 June 2020.

In Albania, due to the priority of the return and reintegration of the FTF from conflict areas the work of all stakeholders was focused on this issue, to finalize the return and reintegration plan as well as a Protocol for defining steps and responsibilities for each actor. The COVID –19 outbreak had its impact in the return process as well as in the implementation of the other activities. In coordination with the National Coordinator/ CCCVE steps are undertaken to integrate the project planned activities in the broader plan for the upcoming period. A detailed planned is being prepared for the upcoming period prioritizing what could be implemented in the context of COVID-19 situation.

8. Recommendations

The Evaluator recommends concentrating on progress tracking to maintain strategic focus. It will be important to assess remaining (and new) needs in countries covered by the Project before embarking on support of new activities. This assessment should also take in consideration opinion of beneficiaries. The issue of sustainability requires stronger engagement of national partners. A possible option given the current circumstances related to the COVID-19 opens space for the transfer of the project results' ownership to national mechanisms for further usage. In this sense, it is important to strengthen the dialogue with the authorities in all six countries in order to deliver the results of the project. This approach is very relevant for sustainability, and especially for the development of measures related to P/CVE. This need should be seen in the light of the status of national strategies and action plans in each country individually. Consideration may be given to establishing an advisory or similar body of representatives to national P/CVE mechanisms that will be actively consulted on the issue of creating transfer modalities.

1. Corrective actions should be taken related to the Project, if timeframe for its implementation will be extended. The focus should be on non-implemented activities, taking in account the situation related to the COVID-19 outbreak and related preventive measures in force. The situation in states covered by the Project should be also taken in consideration, particularly related to the status of the nationals' strategic documents and how much outputs from the implemented Project activities can contribute to revision of those documents.
2. From the perspective of effectiveness, IOM in consultations with beneficiaries and donor should consider an option to redesign activities which have not been yet implemented, including methodological approaches for their implementation due the identified obstacles. In this area greater flexibility is highly recommended.
3. Taking in account impact of the seconded staff engagement, this activity should be continued.

Annex I – List of reviewed documents

1. 1. Proposal Narrative - Final - CLEAN
2. List of Partners
3. B Timeframe and activity plan - Final
4. C Logical framework – Final
5. D Monitoring and Evaluation Plan – Final
6. D Monitoring and Evaluation Plan - Final1
7. 1nd Quarterly narrative progress report
8. 2nd Quarterly narrative progress report
9. 3rd Quarterly narrative progress report US CT last
 - a. Annex 2 - Minutes - National Conference - 30 April – CVECenter
 - b. Annex 3 - Results Based M&E system - Passport of Indicators
 - c. Annex 4 - M&E recording system
 - d. Annex 6 - Monitoring and Evaluation Template
 - e. Annex 7- Field Manual for CCVE M&E
 - f. Annex 8 - Final report April 24, 2019- M&E
 - g. Annex 9 - MEYS Exchange - Experience - RNM - ALB
- 10.4rd Quarterly narrative progress report
- 11.5th Quarterly narrative progress report
- 12.6th Quarterly narrative progress report
- 13.7th Quarterly narrative progress report
 - a. Annex 1. Training of Trainers modules
 - b. Annex 2. Redirect Method Handbook
 - c. Annex 3. Moonshot Campaign Set-up Report
 - d. Annex 4. Moonshot Preliminary Campaign Report
 - e. Annex 5. Alpha Campaign Result Report
 - f. Annex 6. Reintegration Research Baseline Assessment 2020
- 14.IOM Balkans CVE mo301219
- 15.IOM Balkans CVE (003) mo121219 UPDATED
- 16.Agenda CCCVE Security Councils__27Feb-2Mar2019
- 17.Costing CCVE Action Plan
18. MINUTES OF THE DONOR COORDINATION MEETING – TECHNICAL LEVEL,
22 January, 2019
- 19.Report on the costing of the National Strategy on Countering Violent
Extremism, 31.03.2019.
- 20.Annex 1- IOM_Deliverable Plan COVID UPDATE (3)
- 21.Annex 2 - Indicator Reference Sheet (3)
22. Prevention of violent extremism through local voices and initiatives in the
Western Balkans Scoping report, Moonshot CVE, February 2020
- 23.Moonshot CVE_Campaign Set-up Report, April 2020
- 24.Alpha Campaigns Report_Moonshot CVE, July 2020

25. Preliminary Results Report_Moonshot, Maj 2020
26. Online Capacity Building
27. Training of Trainers_Moonshot, Digitala CVE Campaigns
28. Moonshot Western Balkans Scoping Report v2_IOM, February 2020

Annex 2 - List of interviewed persons

A. IOM STAFF

1. Ms. Klaudia Kuljuh, Program Manager
2. Mr. Mirza Omerhodžić – Project coordinator
3. Ms. Alena Velagić – Project coordinator
4. Ms. Alketa Gaxha, CT & P/CVE Project Coordinator in Albania
5. Ms. Erda Qazim Beqiri, National Project Coordinator in Macedonia
6. Ms. Natasa Vidova, National Project Coordinator in Macedonia

B. PARTNERS

7. Ms. Lejdi Dervishi Coordinator CVE/ New Director of CVE of Albania
8. Ms. Rozana Baci, Expert on Civil Society and Security, CCCVE of Albania
9. Mr. Borce Petrevski National Coordinator CVE/CT of North Macedonia
10. Ms. Celia Davies, Moonshot
11. Ms. Irrum Ali, Moonshot
12. Tatjana Milovanović, Programme Director | Post-Conflict Research Center (PCRC)