DCAF Support to the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) in the Western Balkans

Background and rationale

The Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism Initiative (WBCTi) was recognised and widely supported by EU, regional and international security actors active in the Western Balkans (*see separate briefing on WBCTi*). The concept of Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) in the Western Balkans was developed later and formally endorsed by the Council of the EU with the adoption of the »Council Conclusions on strengthening the EU internal security's external dimension in the Western Balkans including via the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG)« in late 2016. It was later supported by the ministers of the Western Balkan region at the EU–WB JHA Forum. The integrative and complementary approach was thus extended from the existing WBCTi Pillar to two other areas of internal security–WB Counter-Serious Crime Initiative (WBCSCi) and WB Border Security Initiative (WBBSi). The main aim of the IISG is to *integrate EU and international assistance* in the three prominent areas of Internal Security, to reduce duplications of action among the existing and planned efforts of various actors, and maximize the efficiency of achieving jointly agreed priorities – both in capacity-building and operational cooperation. On 8th September, the IISG Board – ministers of the Western Balkan Beneficiaries – officially established the IISG Support Group and divided the tasks among the Lead Partners of the respective PIllars – DCAF Ljubljana for WBCTi (Co-Lead Partners AT and SI), PCC SEE Secretariat for WBCSCi, and DCAF Ljubljana (Co-Lead Partner AT) for WBBSi. New Integrated Plans of Action (iPAs) are currently being developed for all three respective Pillars. The IPA II 2016 Regional Action "Support to Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) in the Western Balkans", granted to DCAF Ljubljana, UNDP, RCC and IOM, was launched 1st April; it contributes to the realisation of WBCTi and supports further development of the IISG.

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Target groups

IISG Partners, which includes: national security authorities from Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia with competence over counter-terrorism (CT), preventing/countering radicalisation and violent extremism (P/CVE), countering Serious and Organised Crime, and Border Security; international organisations, 3rd state donors, leadership of regional initiatives; relevant EU agencies and institutions; non-governmental organisations.

Main objective

The IISG will improve the governance of internal security cooperation in the region by integrating donor assistance efforts, preventing duplication and creating synergies by aligning objectives toward shared priorities, and upgrading the existing achievements of capacity-building in the area of internal security to enable WB countries to recognize and tackle security challenges.

Responsibilities/Tasks

1. IISG Partnership

IISG partnership extends to all relevant EU, international and regional actors, who are contributing to the development and cooperation as equal partners in the area of internal security in the Western Balkan region and are extending support to at least one activity in the framework of the 3 Pillars and their respective Integrated Plans of Action (iPAs). The approach also considers the differences in geographical formats of relevant participating initiatives with differing scopes, enabling some countries/entities to participate on an *ad hoc* basis.

2. Lead Partner roles

The Lead Partner (LP) is "the first among equals" when it comes to Pillar activities. All Lead Partners Co-Lead Partners have formally assumed their roles on 8th September 2017. Each LP is responsible for the following tasks:

- ➢ overseeing Pillar implementation;
- ➢ contribution to the common IISG monitoring & evaluation framework;
- ➢ preparation and overseeing the implementation of consecutive multi-annual iPAs;
- ➢ maintaining the network of partners;
- ➢ constant communication and coordination with all IISG partners and observers, incl. participation in relevant iPA-based events;
- ➢ reporting and contributing to the work of the IISG Support Group;
- ➢ transparent planning of financial needs in cooperation with Partners;
- ➢ external promotion and raising awareness.

3. IISG Support Group

DCAF Ljubljana has been designated as the host of the IISG Support Group, a technical body assisting with IISG implementation, chaired by IISG Chair. The IISG Terms of Reference was also endorsed by the IISG Board on 8th September and will guide the operation of the IISG Support Group.

4. IISG Board

A regional high-level committee with a programming, coordinative, monitoring and evaluating function; a political-level body governing the IISG implementation process, whose comprehensive membership and high-level participation aim for the achievement of transparency, efficiency and sustainability of implementation. IISG Board meetings are hosted by the Brdo Process ministerial forum led by the Slovenian Ministry of the Interior.

Main elements

Holistic approach
The integrated approach, expanded to all 3 IISG pillars, does not only enable intra-pillar coordination and alignment of efforts toward joint objectives, but also *inter-pillar* coordination, allowing for consideration of those internal security issues and hybrid threats that may cut accross 2 or more pillars, such as e.g. illegal arms trafficking (means to commit terrorist acts / object of trafficking (SOC) / cross-border activity-risk to border integrity).

Funding and fundraising
Financial support of IISG implementation is *not limited* to EU IPA II funding. The iPA methodology namely integrates the funding already available for activities/processes supported by IISG Partners' funding or external (incl. EU) donors merely investing in iPA objectives. Coordinating the financial planning of each iPA implementation is one of the main responsibilities of the Lead Partner, while all Partners report to donors in line with any existing formal requirements. The iPA also serves as useful reference to potential new donors. The Lead Partners are tasked to promote the iPAs to the donor community.

IISG supporting coordinative structure
The IISG Support Group involves *already existing* structures/initiatives appointed by the IISG Board. It is open to all IISG Partners. The IISG structure includes the IISG Board (high-level), IISG Support Group (involving Lead Partners) and IISG Chairmanship (operating out of DCAF Ljubljana). Other members may be appointed to the Support Group on part of IISG Partners who wish to support its work.
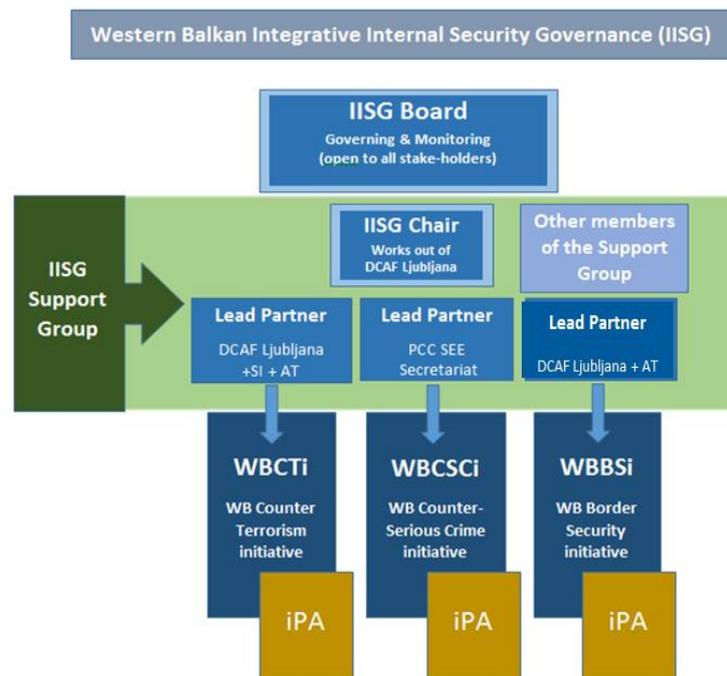
Long-term sustainability
The IISG functionally integrates existing instruments and developed tools, promoting coordinated solutions. The bulk of EU and international actors and donors have committed to not only contribute to the objectives and activities of the integrated plans of action, but to consult with the IISG tools and the Support Group before entering into the planning of any new initiatives and projects;

Toward a WB Policy Cycle against SOC
The iPA methodology is based on relevant existing threat and risk assessment reports. In addition, the IISG aims to develop own capacities to the benefit of the WB region – in cooperation with relevant regionally owned platforms – to guide operational policy in a more efficient manner, while also looking into national implementation of the regional policy cycle, usefully complementing corresponding EU tools.

Intervention logic to address main deficits

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