

## **Draft Guidelines on Governance, Coordination and Reporting for Consolidated Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans Six**

These Guidelines on Governance, Coordination and Reporting for Consolidated Multi-annual Action Plan for a regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans Six (hereafter: Guidelines) are put forward by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and CEFTA Secretariats to ensure efficient management of the MAP process. The Guidelines provide a blueprint for the future work of beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans Six (MAP).

### **Background**

The Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans Six (MAP) was adopted on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at the occasion of the Trieste Western Balkan Summit.

MAP has been developed upon the request of the Western Balkans Six Prime Ministers to prepare a “proposal for a joint approach to furthering economic cooperation in the Western Balkans”<sup>1</sup> in the context of the Berlin process and the Trieste Summit.

It puts forward a structured agenda for regional economic integration, along the lines proposed by the Leader’s Meeting, namely promoting further trade integration, introducing a dynamic regional investment space, facilitating regional mobility, and creating a digital integration agenda.

The MAP stems from the commitments undertaken within the framework of the Central European Free Trade Agreement and SEE 2020 Strategy and is based on EU rules and principles as reflected in the Stabilisation and Association Agreements and it foresees implementation of actions at the level of each of the participating economies and at the regional level in the period between 2017 and 2020 (with some actions extending until 2023).

WB6 economies acknowledge that successful implementation of MAP will require solid governance with clear lines of communication and regular monitoring of progress. The institutional structure supporting MAP implementation is two-fold - first: authorities, ministries and institutions which are leading the implementation effort at the level of each participating economy (in that context, WB6 economies commit to put in place one single coordinator for each economy to manage the implementation of the Action Plan) and second: the existing regional structures that are charged with coordination of activities and monitoring of progress.

The principle of ‘all-inclusiveness’ should be promoted in all structures involved in the coordination and monitoring of the activities within the MAP. This MAP does not foresee establishment of any new institutions or organizations. Implementation of MAP also does not restrict WB6 economies’ ability to lead autonomous trade policy nor it implies harmonization of partners’ external tariffs.

Implementation of a comprehensive agenda put forward by MAP requires a strong partnership between the WB6 governments, the private sector, the regional and international organizations and donors active in providing support in the policy areas of the MAP, and the European Union. These Guidelines, put forward by the RCC and CEFTA Secretariats to the representatives of the beneficiary economies, are intended to set the framework for governance, coordination and monitoring of MAP implementation, and define the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> *Statement from the WB6 Prime Ministers Meeting, Sarajevo, March 16, 2017*

## MAP Implementation and Governance

The implementation of activities detailed in the MAP lies within the realm of responsibility of the National Authorities (NAs), with the support of the regional and international organisations active in the specific policy areas. NAs also provide overall guidance on the MAP, as well as conduct regular reviews and, if necessary, adopt possible amendments.

In order to ensure sustainability, the implementation of MAP should be closely aligned and streamlined with the existing economic policy coordination mechanisms in participating economies.

The overall coordination for MAP implementation at the level of each participating economy will be the responsibility of the **MAP Coordinator**, a senior official appointed by each of the NAs to ensure high-level cross-sectoral coordination and 'all of a government' approach and commitment.

In addition to MAP Coordinator each economy will designate **MAP Component Contact Points** for each of the four MAP components to steer the work of various working mechanisms within Trade, Investment, Mobility and Digital Integration areas of MAP REA.

To enable coordination at the regional level, MAP Coordinators will meet in **regional MAP Coordinators' meetings** at least twice per year to review progress. The regional MAP Coordinators' meetings will be facilitated by RCC.

Each of the actions in the four policy areas covered by MAP are also coordinated at the regional level. For some of the actions, specific regional expert working groups/platforms or other functioning mechanisms are already established and these will continue to contribute to the implementation of the MAP. Should one regional mechanism be required to cover other areas of MAP implementation beyond its original mandate or purpose (due to constraints on administrative capacities or other reasons), the composition, scope and mandate of that mechanism will be modified to fit the purpose of MAP coordination.

In view of the expected intensified implementation of the MAP, NAs will officially update/confirm their mandated representatives in the existing regional platforms, no later than end November 2017.

In areas where no regional mechanism exists at the moment, the National Authorities will agree on the best model of cooperation and, if/where necessary, ensure official nomination of representative(s) to take active part in the functioning of adequate working mechanism. Currently, no functioning regional platforms/mechanisms have been identified for the following MAP areas/actions:

- Investment: (i) Capital Markets Integration; (ii) Smart Growth
- Digital Integration: (i) Digital skills, (ii) Trust and security in digital services, and (iii) Digitizing industry.

**Figure I: Overview of MAP Implementation and Governance**



### MAP Coordination and Monitoring

Coordination, reporting and monitoring at each participating economy is ensured at two principal levels. The first takes place between the representatives in the regional mechanisms and the MAP Component Contact Points, respectively, and second one among the Component Contact Points and the MAP Coordinator.

As per specific MAP Components, the regional coordination role for Trade component will be performed by CEFTA Secretariat, while the Investment, Mobility and Digital Integration components will be coordinated by RCC Secretariat.

RCC Secretary General is designated by the RCC Secretariat as the key contact point for overall communication related to MAP REA.

For the purpose of overall communication related to Trade component of MAP REA, the CEFTA Secretariat designates the Director of CEFTA Secretariat.

MAP Coordinators and MAP Component Contact Points of each of the beneficiaries will be duly informed about all activities and meetings organized in relation to MAP, in order to maintain efficient flow of information. RCC and CEFTA Secretariats stand ready to assist in facilitating the coordination processes in participating economies, if and when such requests are put forward by the MAP Coordinators.

Other regional and international organizations, such as the Chamber Investment Forum (CIF) and the World Bank (WB) will be involved in the MAP implementation in accordance with provisions of MAP REA's chapter "Partnership for Implementation".

### MAP Reporting

Reporting on MAP implementation will be done in biannual cycles:

- (i) the Annual Progress Report prepared mid-year to include a detailed annual assessment of progress made in each of the policy areas against the set objectives and timelines; and
- (ii) an abridged Interim Progress Report developed at the end of each calendar year.

Reports will be prepared by RCC Secretariat based on inputs received from MAP Coordinators and Component Contact Points. The monitoring will also be informed by the expert inputs generated through the existing and future regional working groups/mechanisms (including those referenced in *Figure 1*), as well as the relevant working platforms operated under the auspices of other regional and international organizations.

Reports on Trade Component of MAP will be adopted by the Committee of CEFTA Contact Points.

Further to the MAP biannual monitoring reports, RCC Secretariat will report to the PMs' Sherpas on implementation of MAP REA at the regular Sherpas' meetings convened by the European Commission.

If required by National Authorities and as agreed by all MAP Coordinators, the Annual Progress Reports on MAP REA implementation will be considered within annual Berlin process meetings.

Detailed methodology on monitoring and reporting of MAP REA will be developed by RCC/CEFTA Secretariats in close cooperation with MAP Coordinators. The initial MAP stock-taking report will be produced by RCC Secretariat towards the end of 2017.

### Next steps

Task	Responsible	Deadline
Nominate one MAP Coordinator in each beneficiary economy	NAs	October
Nominate/Communicate Component Contact Points for each of 4 areas of MAP in each beneficiary economy	NAs	November
Initiate first meeting of Component Contact Points	RCC and CEFTA Secretariats	November

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Confirm representation in existing WG/platforms	NAs	November
Maintain up to date contact list of representatives involved in MAP implementation and monitoring and share it every time the change is made	RCC Secretariat	Continuous
Maintain up to date Calendar of activities related to implementation of MAP	RCC Secretariat	Continuous
Initiate first meeting of MAP Coordinators	RCC and CEFTA Secretariats	October
Confirm the configurations of the required sectoral ad hoc working mechanisms in areas in which no regional platforms are operational as of yet	NAs	November
Set up required sectoral ad hoc working groups/mechanisms	NAs	November
Nominate representatives in each of the newly established/modified sectoral ad hoc working mechanisms	NAs	November
Produce a first stock-taking/needs assessment report in the areas under the MAP	RCC and CEFTA Secretariats	November
Organize the first donor coordination meeting on MAP	RCC and CEFTA Secretariats	December (tentatively)

Note: Some confirmations and nominations are to be completed

Annex: Multi Annual Plan for Regional Economic Area - Nominations and Contact Points

Multi Annual Plan for Regional Economic Area - Nominations and Contact Points										
	National Level						Regional Level			EC
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	Montenegro	Serbia	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia				
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<b>National Component Contact Points</b>							<b>Coordination, monitoring &amp; communication</b>	<b>Coordination, monitoring &amp; communication</b>	<b>Component Contact Points</b>	<b>Component designated persons</b>
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