

Conclusions from the Sixth Meeting of the SEE 2020 Programming Committee

Brussels, 12 March 2018

The sixth meeting of the SEE 2020 Programming Committee was held in Brussels on 12 March 2018 back to back with the Fourth Meeting on Donor Coordination in the Western Balkans. The aim of the meeting was to discuss and potentially endorse the SEE2020 Programming document for the period 2018 – 2020. The meeting gathered representatives of the South East Europe's (SEE) economies participating in implementation SEE 2020 Strategy, including representatives from the Offices of the National IPA Coordinators (NIPAC Offices), SEE2020 National Coordinators and representatives from the institutions responsible for aid coordination. The RCC was represented by the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General and the team engaged in the implementation of the SEE2020 Strategy.

The Secretary General welcomed the participants outlining the objectives of the meeting and stressing the considerable efforts invested to develop a comprehensive and regionally-owned document which highlights the priorities for the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy in the next three years. The process encompassed consultation and coordination with the national administrations and the regional dimension coordinators, engaged around joint regional priorities.

Session 1 - Adoption of the SEE 2020 Programming document 2018 – 2020 and provisions on the next programming cycle

The participants of the panel discussed and agreed on the Programming Document for the period 2018-2020. This Programming Document represents a target-oriented work plan for the given period. The panel stressed that the actions described in the Document represent the result of a wide consultative process involving the representatives of national authorities, regional organisations and structures, and international organisations engaged in coordinating and implementing SEE 2020 and Multi-Annual Plan for Regional Economic Area (MAP REA).

It was concluded that the Document addresses the main regional needs and provides a framework for operationalization of the regional policy objectives outlined in the SEE 2020 Strategy and MAP REA. It envisages specific actions to be taken in the period to the end of 2020 towards goals, such as: removal of obstacles to mobility of researchers, recognition of professional and academic qualifications; improved policy and regulatory frameworks on Open Science; further strengthening of employment and social affairs policies in the region; accelerated implementation, improved cross-sector coordination, built capacities and exchanged practices on Roma integration; regional capital markets development; developed digital infrastructure and boosted regional connectivity; coordinated roaming policies towards a roaming free economic area; strengthened capacities for the generation of income through economic diversification and the sustainable use of natural resources in rural areas; Western Balkans Six (WB6) region promoted as a unique investment destination: Joint regional tourism routes based on 3+ economy participation prepared and promoted internationally, with focus on cultural and adventure tourism; etc. Furthermore, the representatives on the meeting stated that the work plan set in the Document identifies the priority areas, concrete tasks, partners and their roles and responsibilities in the implementation process, projects and funding sources.

Session 2 - Donor coordination activities – briefing on the Fourth Donor Coordination meeting

The session was used to inform participants on programming cycle's linkage to the donor coordination activities. The Programming Document meeting was held in the eve of the Fourth Meeting on Donor Coordination in the Western Balkans, taking place also in Brussels the following day, where the document will be presented to the high level officials from the WB6, donor community, the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and Western Balkans' Chamber Investment Forum (WB CIF). The panel concluded that the endorsed Programming Document will be shared with donors at the Fourth Meeting on Donor Coordination and that from March to June, RCC will engage into discussions with all donors active on regional level including meeting with DG-NEAR to present agreed regional priorities linked to the SEE 2020 Strategy.

Conclusions and Follow-Up

The fifth meeting of the SEE 2020 Programming Committee concluded with the following recommendations and conclusions:

- RCC welcomed unprecedented initiative of the national authorities in providing contributions, inputs and proposals to be considered as a part of the Programming Document 2018-2020
- Participants agreed that programming cycle proved that national consultation should take place earlier in the process of preparation of the Programming Document, since key inputs were provided only after consultations were held
- The draft SEE 2020 Programming Document 2018-2020 was approved as it was presented to the participants of the Programming Committee
- Participants stressed out the relevance of the SEE 2020 programming process as an input for the IPA MC programming process
- Participants welcomed comprehensive analytics and needs assessment findings, especially those related to MAP REA, which were shared with the donor community in preparation of the Fourth Meeting on Donor Coordination in the Western Balkans
- The RCC was tasked to present the SEE 2020 Programming Document 2018-2020 to the Fourth Meeting on Donor Coordination in the Western Balkans taking place on 13 March in Brussels