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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
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SPCP 2012-16

Swiss Regional Police Cooperation Programme in the Western Balkans

SPCP PARTNERS' FORUM

EVENT REPORT

FEBRUARY 11TH – 13TH || BELGRADE, SERBIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is product of the SPCP Partners' Forum¹ that took place on February 11-13, 2015 in Belgrade, Serbia. The event was organized within the framework of the Swiss Police Cooperation Programme, by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) as mandated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The forum brought together about twenty five participants, including the different implementing partners of the SPCP (IOM, OSCE, UNODC, .BK and PCC Secretariat), programme donor (SDC), Advisory Group members (AG) and managing partner (DCAF). The SPCP currently supports six regional projects for police cooperation in the Western Balkans, and the forum aimed for them to exchange experiences and lessons from project implementation. It also sought to produce the guidelines for a common approach to monitoring and evaluation to guide their result-based reporting, and to invite participants to reflect on the impact and future outlook for the SPCP, the discussions relating to which have been summarised in the following pages.

¹ *This report contains information collected during and after the SPCP forum, none of which represents the particular views of DCAF or SDC. All information contained within is based on discussion and cannot be confirmed to be factually accurate.*



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
SESSION 1 – LESSONS LEARNED FROM SPCP IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION	5
SESSION II – MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF SPCP 2012-2016	10
METHODOLOGY FOR PROJECT EVALUATION	10
GROUP EXERCISE	11
SESSION III – SPCP COMMON MONITORING AND EVALUATION APPROACH	13
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF A DRAFT PROPOSAL	13
SESSION IV –GAP ANALYSIS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS RELATED TO SPCP 2012-2016	14
ANNEX.....	17
PARTICIPANT LIST.....	17



INTRODUCTION

The Swiss Regional Police Cooperation Programme 2012-2016 (SPCP 2012-16) hereafter referred as SPCP, was established at the initiative of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to enhance framework mechanisms for police cooperation in the Western Balkans. DCAF, mandated by the SDC to manage the programme, organized the SPCP Partners' Forum in Belgrade, Serbia in February 11-13, 2015. The event intended to bring SPCP partners together to facilitate the exchange of their experiences and to learn about the different approaches taken during project implementation. The Forum further seeks to improve the projects' effectiveness in achieving their objectives in the second stage of implementation, and to ensure the success of the SPCP as a whole.

During the introductory remarks, SDC and DCAF welcomed participants of the SPCP Partners' Forum, consisting of implementing partners, advisory group (AG) and regional police attachés. The forum moderator and Head of DCAF's Police Programme OPS-1, provided introductory remarks on the background and aims of the SPCP and on DCAF's role as Intermediary Management Body. In turn, the implementing partners introduced themselves and their project, making note of departures and new additions to their staff, as is in the case of OSCE Serbia. In turn, SDC welcomed the opportunity to meet people involved in the programme, and referred to Switzerland's support to police cooperation for the past twenty five years, in bilateral and regional schemes, as the backdrop for the SPCP. While the SPCP represents a continuation of these schemes, notable new elements include the constitution of an intermediary management body and the introduction of a whole-of-government approach including advisors from FEDPOL, the Swiss Customs Administration and the FDFA.

It is for the reasons above that the forum's first session sought to facilitate the sharing of experiences, best practices and challenges in project implementation, as well as partners' update on progress and outlook on achieving the the SPCP expected results. The identification of joint issues and challenges faced by the implementing partners was expected to facilitate and further underscore the importance of generating a collective approach for reporting, monitoring, review and evaluation

DCAF and SDC further noted that the forum aimed at developing an understanding of the implications the 2014 Opatija Ministerial Conference conclusions had on the SPCP. In particular, the forum sought to ascertain how or to what extent are these conclusions being streamlined, and what steps would need to be taken to continue to implement them. It is of particular relevance to assess these conclusions in the face of current and rising challenges likely to have an impact on the programme during its implementation and after its conclusion.

To finalise the introductory remarks, the moderator outlined the structure of the forum and the focus of each session: the first one on the presentations prepared by implementing partners; the second on monitoring and evaluation; the third on the outlook of the programme for the future. Key questions that were raised for the upcoming sessions were:

- What are the results attained by SPCP and how are they reported?
- How do operational results reflect in terms of changes in behavior, trust and cooperation in the region?



SESSION 1 – LESSONS LEARNED FROM SPCP IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

PRESENTATIONS FROM IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

The first session invited the input of implementing partners in the form of a short presentation that outlined the scope and aim of the project in relation to the overarching SPCP outcomes. Implementing partners further addressed the progress and impact of their projects in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, local ownership and sustainability. Brief summaries of their presentations follow.

Table 1. PCC-SEE

PROJECT	PROJECT OUTCOME	SPCP OUTCOME
PCC-SEE	Successful implementation of PCC SEE for strategic and operational police cooperation	1
<p>The Secretariat for the Police Cooperation Convention in South East Europe (PCC SEE), located in Ljubljana and supported by Switzerland, works to align policing standards with EU and Schengen area and to assist in the implementation of the Convention. Since 2006, the PCC has become as an efficient instrument for police cooperation on various levels: it is simultaneously a convention, multilateral treaty, and part of national legislative frameworks. The goal for the PCC Secretariat is to support PCC contracting Parties to achieve operationalization of the convention, and to enhance frameworks and conditions for strategic cooperation. To this end, the Secretariat seeks to strengthen national capacities, establish networks and efficient decision-making processes, and increase awareness about the legal instrument on all levels of law enforcement before the end of the project in 2016.</p> <p>The Secretariat carries out different activities, and counts with seven working groups on issues such as police education, cross border surveillance, joint investigation teams, counterterrorism networks, etc. All activities have a degree of complementarity and a strong sense of local ownership, as they are set by the countries and agreed upon by decision-making bodies (committee of ministers and expert working group). The process is based on a common identification of national and regional needs. Furthermore, countries steer the implementation process through a rotating chairmanship. The Secretariat also has a monitoring mechanism through which countries review their activities and gaps. These established processes make the project efficient, although some challenges or influencing factors have an impact on the development of the project. Every one of the eleven contracting partners has a national policy of their own, different equipment, legal frameworks, etc. When a challenge rises, countries need to harmonise their response through the Convention. External influences therefore affect the process of implementation by slowing it down.</p> <p>The project is expected to be sustainable on account of the national capacity and mutual trust it has built, which will continue after the project given the formal setting for cooperation it has created. Moreover, the convention provides tools that are integrated into the countries' legal framework. For example, the project has already seen some success in terms of the sharing and exchange of operational information.</p>		

Questions following the presentation by PCC focused on whether their objectives were likely to be met. The Secretariat pointed out that completion of activities was only one element leading towards achieving objectives, namely the effectiveness of the project in achieving these goals. The PCC is partly dependent on implementing parties: some countries are preparing implementation agreements and will offer them to neighbouring countries, which bodes a good start for regional cooperation, although it cannot be monitored. All the same, this is a good indication that knowledge on the Convention has been received, practices have



been established and methods are being employed. In addition, it indicates there is a high commitment from parties to participate in activities and the decision making process of the PCC.

In order to measure trust, the Secretariat explained its employment of different indicators, but relying on main outputs such as the application of the knowledge. In order to measure this, the Secretariat takes into account political commitments made, consensus being met, whether countries follow a regional approach and if they share a common understanding or approach to cooperation. In turn, a good indicator of trust has been the fact that since January 26, 2015 any chairing country can suggest the invitation of Kosovo to participate in implementation activities, with contracting parties having a mechanism to include or exclude their participation.

Table 2. IOM

PROJECT	PROJECT OUTCOME	SPCP OUTCOME
IOM	Enhance fight against irregular migration and cross-border transgressions in order to enhance security in Western Balkans and Western Europe	2,3
<p>The IOM project is currently operating under a no-cost extension. The project involves six countries and aims to enhance capacities in the fight against irregular migration and cross border transgressions. The project has benefitted from the IOM's regional presence as well as good cooperation networks that allowed the project to deal with operational challenges.</p> <p>The project can account for a number of outcomes, among which stands the development of specialized training on joint patrols and cross-border cooperation, and the production of two manuals and a handbook. All knowledge products have included aspects concerning national legislation, the incorporation of the PCC as well as Schengen protocols related to joint patrols. In regards to training activities, the project reports a greater scope of impact than originally envisioned: the project trained 880 officials, above their original 670 target.</p> <p>The project has reported positive feedback from its beneficiaries, who have welcomed the study visits and equipment donated to police in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Moreover, the knowledge gained by officials during trainings is expected to trickle down even in the event of staff turnover, therefore contributing to the overall sustainability of the project. There is also an aspect of sustainability in encouraging countries to use the same police curricula, as detailed in the knowledge products developed by IOM.</p>		

Representatives for the IOM project were asked about the mitigation strategies employed to deal with issues such as turnover. They responded by saying the project mainly relies on its training aids and staff rotation, 'training the trainer' to promote capacity development. In detail, the project has a selection of national experts to develop the manuals, which are technical in nature, and given their operational contents, some reservations to their public consumption have been raised. However, as pointed out during the discussion these publications have been developed under the auspice of the Swiss government with publicly available information, reasons for which a call to access and transparency should be made. It was recommended during the discussion that the project should seek to secure public support from institutions by opening up to national civil society organisations so that they may ensure that procedures are legitimate and that local ownership is an essential part of police cooperation.



Table 3. .BK

PROJECT	PROJECT OUTCOME	SPCP OUTCOME
.BK	Strengthening regional cooperation with law enforcement process between the ILECU network and other relevant institutions, like SEPCA and PCC , for the effective combat of organised crime. Improving quality standards in the region	2,3
<p>Funded by the Austrian development agency and the SDC, the ILECU project aims to create a single focal point for cooperation and coordination in the region. More precisely, the project seeks to strengthen the rule of law, and promote the sustainable improvement of national, international and regional cooperation in the fight against translational crime. Although the project faced challenges posed by limited institutional capacities and lengthy processes, it has succeeded in connecting many multi-beneficiary branches with a single point of contact.</p> <p>The ILECU project has had three main outputs, listed as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhanced regional capacities and strategies for an appropriate and autonomous director generals network. This includes new statutory documents, new organizational structure, rotating SEPCA office and a Management Information System. 2. Facilitated cooperation and developed frameworks between PCC and ILECU 3. Creating a sustainable training structure for representatives of relevant authorities within law enforcement process that features the exchange of experiences between regional experts and the use of local infrastructure. <p>Reflecting on the implementation stage, the .BK partners noted that perception was one of their most important and most difficult to measure indicators. Nonetheless, the project has placed great importance on outcomes reflected in terms of beneficiary reactions and changes in attitude, as they are most telling. For this reason, some of the project indicators were 'tweaked' or change in order to better measure the progress of the project, therefore defining ILECU as a transitional model.</p>		

The ILECU project was brought under discussion in terms of approaches to the institutionalization of cooperation. The differences between ILECU and PCC were pointed out. Most notable was the fact that the project is constantly challenged by the political environment of the region, which enables or hinders the sustainability of the project in accordance with political positions, turnover, etc. On account of this, ILECU has pushed for the use of the SEPCA framework on a strategic and not operational level.



Table 4. UNODC

PROJECT	PROJECT OUTCOME	SPCP OUTCOME
UNODC	Improve security in containerised supply chain by countering transport of illicit goods	2
<p>The Container Control Programme (CCP) started in 2004 and has a global scope, yet activities carried out within the framework of SPCP receive funding from Switzerland. It is a partnership programme with the World Customs Organisation, and its objective is to establish dedicated interagency units for container profile analysis.</p> <p>The programme overall has operations in 24 operational countries and 27 funded countries, which are all linked in a secure network. Despite this, the project has been challenged in trying to get police and customs to work together, especially in countries where these are separate units. Nonetheless, the project has been able to advance practices such as joint training and facility sharing, as well as reading assessments on organized crime, technical needs assessment for ports and working with civil society organisations. The project focuses on cargo, and not people, yet places great importance in the training capacity of staff involved in creating a secure network for cooperation.</p> <p>The project lists a number of systemic challenges as the main sources for disruption. These include organized crime, drug trafficking, weak justice systems, corruption and money laundering. On account of these issues, the project has been geared towards assisting criminal police in increasing their capacities, and in facilitating and harmonizing cooperation standards. The advantages of the project lie in its comprehensive and coherent programming, through which it has managed to achieve increased cooperation among law enforcement entities, and an integrated and strategic approach vis a vis EU accession process.</p> <p>The project partner, UNODC, holds that sustainability of the project is difficult to measure, as it is hard to ascertain how many countries will continue to work together once the presence of UNODC is lifted. Contracting parties commit to the exchange of information and the sharing of information between units, and operational and joint continued control teams have been set up, yet the presence of UNODC has been constant. Nonetheless, the implementing partner notes that as a counter measure, the innovation from the CCP steering committee is expected to reflect positively in the sustainability of the project, as it provides direct communication and advice, and reviews implementation processes with national counterparts.</p> <p>The CCP has an advanced, established and formalized framework through which it has streamlined gender, struck partnerships and cooperation schemes with Joint Container Control Units across the world, and signed joint orders and SoPs between national entities.</p>		

UNODC was asked about how it interprets success, to which it responded that not all participating countries are covered by UNODC presence, which hinders the scope of impact and the ability to measure success. Similarly, the level of cooperation and responsiveness is not the same with all countries. As such, the project depends greatly on perception, data gathering and the accurate interpretation of statistics to offer insight into the progress of the project.



Table 5. OSCE Kosovo.

PROJECT	PROJECT OUTCOME	SPCP OUTCOME
OSCE KOSOVO	Develop human, procedural, administrative and technical capabilities for strategic analysis of criminal intelligence and criminal trends	3
<p>The background for the set-up of this project came from the intention to extend SPCP in the region. As it is well known, Kosovo is a unique case, where its neutral status requires it to comply with UNSCR 1244. The project is similar in content and structure to that implemented by OSCE Serbia. It aims to ensure that project goals are met through learning and training, for which three separate learning blocks have been organized over the next 12 months. In this sense, planned mentoring is at the core of the project. The impact of the project in its early stages has revealed a keen interest of students to keep learning. While still lacking in strategic foresight, the students have shown promise.</p> <p>The relevance of the project lies in its interactive nature, as it encourages students to participate, engage in knowledge sharing and in identifying best practice. Students get practical training in real facilities, so they may experience the conditions of work. The efficiency of the project is reflected in the training provided, as it is responsive to the training needs analysis carried out prior and which reveals the skills needing reinforcement. The project, nonetheless, faces difficult challenges in finding data or statistics necessary to carry out any further needs assessment or operational analysis. There is however, no support for those trained to apply or continue their training elsewhere, given the country's unstable political environment. In 2013, for example, an election brought a change in staff that impacted on the training programme, as well as investigations.</p>		

PROJECT	PROJECT OUTCOME	SPCP OUTCOME
OSCE SERBIA	Enhance proactive approach to organised crime through intelligence-led policing and strategic planning in the Western Balkans	2
<p>In similar fashion to the Kosovo project, the aim of OSCE Serbia has been to enhance a regional proactive approach to tackling organized crime through intelligence sharing. The OSCE was approached by Serbian authorities to develop the project, which speaks to its degree of local ownership and prospects for sustainability and success. The first year of the project was focused on building capacity through training, so that in its second year SOCTA reports can be produced by trainees themselves. For this purpose, equipment was also donated, both IT hardware and software.</p> <p>The project has thus far received EUROPOL assistance, especially in matters of training and mentoring. The project adopted the EUROPOL recruitment process in order to address issues of political interest and lack of gender balance in the selection of analysts, as well as a high degree of efficiency. The project has shown promise in terms of sustainability, as it has instilled ownership for its outcomes by reaching out to new people and involving a ministerial group in the implementation. The steering committee has been successful in putting together action plans for the project, and the training has thus far responded to the needs-assessments and feedback. Training has consisted of basic analytical work, as delivered by a consultant and two study trips (one with EUROPOL in the Hague and one in Brussels).</p> <p>Flexibility has been a feature and necessity for the project. Provided by the donor (SDC) and its management partner (DCAF), it has facilitated the documentation of progress, justification of changes and readjustment of planning. Overall, the project expects to deliver three SOCTA reports, and questionnaires for EUROPOL and UNODC. Success will be reflected by how well the project overcomes bureaucratic lag (the management of cooperation between more than three countries is unrealistic) and strategic (mis) understandings (miscommunication with OSCE missions and national ministries leads often to delays). OSCE Serbia holds hopes that the project may be brought to other states in the longer term.</p>		



Both OSCE Serbia and OSCE Kosovo were asked about their deliverables, namely the SOCTA analysis their trainees are meant to produce at the end of their project. OSCE highlighted the fact that SOCTA has a peer review process, whereby an expert comes in during the mentoring phase of the training, for approximately two days, to review. It was further stressed that SOCTA is not just a report, but also a baseline for all activity. It is in a sense, an assessment indicative of both strategic and operational levels the project seeks to improve.

Table 6. OSCE Albania

PROJECT	PROJECT OUTCOME	SPCP OUTCOME
OSCE ALBANIA	This project seeks to achieve international standards for forensic science services in Albania and Kosovo, through the improvement of the local Police forensic science laboratories	2,3
<p>The OSCE Albania project is a bilateral initiative between Albania and Kosovo. It aims to develop the analytical capacities of laboratories for forensics in both countries to a competitive standard, namely training and methodologies. The project also seeks to address how these laboratories are sharing practices, and expects to establish a national database (such as Combined DNA Index System or CODIS) in Albania, seeing as there is already one in Kosovo.</p> <p>Although still in its initial phase, the project expects to raise standards through accreditation to the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI). This network, although not part of the EU, is recognized. Accreditation is necessary for membership, which in the long run would guarantee the sustainability of the project as standards would need to be kept and improved to maintain accreditation. Accreditation comes from national bodies, but since these two countries don't have the resources, it has come from Europe, which in turn grants the process with transparency. Support from teams of experts from ENFSI will also appeal to the capacity building component of the project.</p>		

SESSION II – MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF SPCP 2012-2016

METHODOLOGY FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

Session II featured a presentation by DCAF expert consultant, Mirko Fernandez, on monitoring and evaluation for results-based reporting. Mr. Fernandez focused particularly on the effective use of indicators, and how partners can structure and plan by employing results-based thinking. This was sparked by a review of partners' progress reports, which revealed that some indicators are not being used properly, that language is sometimes misleading, and that partners find the prescribed length of reports to be too short.

In fact, key observations on reporting – as provided during the session- showed that there is a great diversity in reporting formats. Unsurprisingly, narratives within and among projects are quite different. In many cases, activity based reporting prevails over results oriented reporting, which is likely owed to the sources of verification (or means of reference) employed when reporting. Similarly, the absence of information or failure to report on transversal issues, such as gender and good governance, affects the quality of reporting.

In order to report consistently, the relevance of the activity needs to be present and clear. It is useful to question how and to what extent the reported activity has contributed to a specific outcome. It is also useful to ask whether said activity produces results that reflect and address the country's needs. In case circumstances change, reviewing the relevance of project activities allows implementers to effectively manage



the project's expected results. As such, it is important for partners to test their indicators ahead of time and to determine which statistics or information serves as the best means for verification.

In addition to statistics or quantitative information or as a substitute if the former is insufficient, questionnaires provide a means to measure qualitative changes, such as increased trust and other behavioral changes. In this sense, reports can reflect whether an increase in trainings, for example, has also led to increased trust. Generally, activities should be considered as building blocks, or sequential elements, that produce certain outputs, thus leading towards the projects' outcomes. In turn, reports should aim at explaining these links between activities, outputs and progress towards achieving the project's outcomes.

In a next step, participants were invited to engage in an exercise that consisted of providing feedback and weaving best practice with their own experiences, so as to arrive at a common approach to reporting that suits their needs and best reflects progress for each project



GROUP EXERCISE

The group exercise required participants to embrace the idea of a scenario called '*looking back from a position of success*'. In this scenario, implementing partners were asked to imagine that their projects had come to completion, achieving their objectives. From this stance, partners would 'look back' and identify the main challenges for reporting. Their findings are listed as follows:

1. Logistical and bureaucratic obstacles preventing them from securing comparable data, and/or the prevalence of different reporting systems;
2. Difficulties in gaging qualitative indicators, despite their being more meaningful measures of progress;
3. Political changes impacting the results of the project and therefore making indicators inadequate or irrelevant;
4. Difficulties in measuring progress on outcome level when intended behavior or institutional change is a long process.



Taking into account the above, the exercise then proceeded to seek out solutions by proposing indicators and sources of verification (SoV) for better reporting. DCAF consultant Mirko Fernandez suggested partners employ a results chain to represent actions in a logical manner, provide feedback into the logical framework, and therefore find solutions to overcome shared challenges and reach SPCP outcomes. The following guiding questions were advanced for participants to observe during their deliberations:

- How were challenges identified? How were solutions proposed?
- To what extent do the selected indicator represent the best solution for the identified challenges?

Participants formed mixed teams from among the different projects and began working on defining indicators that would best help achieve the three SPCP outcomes. The following table contains some of the examples mentioned.

Table 7. Looking back from a position of success.

Outcome 1	Framework conditions for strategic and operational police cooperation (to implement PCC SEE) are enhanced
Indicator	An increase in the percentage of bilateral activities carried out between contracting parties as an indicator of enhanced PCC cooperation methods.
Challenge (SoV)	Statistical data is often not available or its integrity is compromised. As such, PCC needs to introduce extra measures such as conducting interviews and questionnaire sin order to define the baseline or comparison for progress in cooperation.
Outcome 2	Mutual trust and common approaches among law enforcement authorities in the region and their ability to prevent and fight serious and organized crime are enhanced
Indicator	An increase in the number of trainings, operations and capacity building activities as an indicator for capacity development.
Challenge (SoV)	The implementation of specialized training programmes requires a verified training plan and curriculum to ensure that it is enhancing capacity, trust and common approaches.
Outcome 3	Involvement and engagement of Kosovo in bilateral and multilateral police cooperation activities is enhanced
Indicator	The increase of participation or non- participation of Kosovo
Challenge (SoV)	Participation depends highly on the information and feedback provided by active organisations in the region. Since there are too many, there is a need to get an overview of activities in a programme cycle, and a need for defining criteria to measure the success of participation.



The discussion that resulted from this exercise raised a number of questions on avenues to use indicators for better reporting. The use of alternative sources of information as sources of verification, for example, proposed relying on corruption indexes, satisfaction surveys, and academic studies to complement data obtained by partners. The matter of information also prompted participants to refer back to the mandates of their institutions and the limitations these may pose in terms of access— some partners may not be able to use a certain source of verification, and must problem-solve their logical chain correspondingly.



Indicators are at the core of a reliable and meaningful monitoring system and need to be able to reflect the expected results appropriately. The right indicators are thus crucial for a results-oriented reporting. In order to support partners, DCAF would produce a set of reporting guidelines that would take into consideration the feedback and discussions of the session.

SESSION III – SPCP COMMON MONITORING AND EVALUATION APPROACH

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF A DRAFT PROPOSAL

During the third session, DCAF introduced a document that summarized the proceedings from the previous day and translated the exchanges into best practice. This document featured the reporting guidelines for SPCP partners, which constitute the core of a common approach towards result-oriented reporting. The guidelines feed into the strategic overview of the SPCP programme, meaning that if the indicators selected by implementing partners are not appropriate, the guidelines will not by themselves yield better reporting.

It was clarified that the reporting process would remain the same, and that DCAF will continue to provide feedback to project partners throughout the process. Nonetheless, the reporting structure would change in accordance with what is stipulated in the reporting guidelines, requiring partners to build on the past reporting structure and relaying not only activities, but their key results as well. In doing so, partners will aid DCAF in linking their implementation activities to the outcomes of the programme. This process was referred to as activity output.

In terms of testing and retesting indicators and sources of verification, participants raised a number of points on whether this process was feasible, affordable and recommendable. Although flexibility exists, projects were encouraged to review their indicators, rather than change them, as soon as they represent a problem. Project implementation can fall behind schedule if the right data is not being collected, or if the indicator does not translate in terms of institutional impact. SDC in particular highlights the importance of measuring and accounting for institutional change.



A change in attitude, behavior or practice is not always easily measured. For this reason, DCAF and SDC stress the importance of engaging agents of change that can provide feedback and evidence to the process. OSCE Serbia, for example, conducts feedback reviews after every activity, which makes information gathering, training needs analyses and assessments easier. It was debated whether holding interviews two weeks



after an activity would shine light on whether the course of trainees impacted their work, and in what way; the argument against this type of feedback stressed that accuracy and responsiveness might be affected by the delay. However, it was proposed that providing mentoring afterwards, or keeping records, would allow implementing partners to gather feedback in the long-term.

Implementing partners provided further ideas for developing parallel reporting aids. For example, surveys for participant satisfaction; critical and developmental feedback on the complexity of the training methodology and training cycle; semi structured interviews; etc. SDC representatives further advance the notion of exploring the environment in which activities take place to support reporting. Implementing partners are asked about their enabling or disabling environment, on the leverage they have or lack for implementation, on the working culture they develop and the relationships partners strike with local authorities. They are also asked to assess how these elements impact their implementation process.

OSCE Serbia for example highlights the role of the steering group in fostering an enabling working environment, backed by the country's ministry, EUROPOL and local decision-makers. Concerns were raised about whether projects are engaging the right people, given the high incidence of staff rotation and partisan dynamics that determine who gets trained. However, partner networks are susceptible to larger systemic challenges which they cannot influence or account for. These sorts of issues do not mean that projects are failing, but rather that the project needs to adapt to the changing needs of the country.

As a final point, participants were advised to make use of complementary outreach elements of the programme to gain visibility. More specifically, this recommendation refers to using the SPCP webpage, newsletter and communications to become more transparent and to evaluate their progress.

SESSION IV –GAP ANALYSIS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS RELATED TO SPCP 2012-2016

The final and fourth session consisted of a plenary discussion, with a focus on a gap analysis for the programme and an assessment of any current and future needs in the framework of the SPCP. The discussion departed from the three conclusions drawn from the 2014 Opatija Ministerial Conference, and how they affect project implementation and the achievement of SPCP outcomes. These conclusions are recommendations, rather than obligations; nonetheless, they are crucial for the SPCP programme as they require partners to act in a concerted manner whenever challenges arise.

In terms of the first conclusion partners were asked if and how, in the frame of their project, they had achieved political support in the form of sufficient technical and human capacity. As for the second conclusion, the



discussion centred on whether there were any gaps in terms of inclusion and human rights that could be addressed by and through SPCP. Finally, the question about how to make use of regional cooperation mechanisms was introduced.

Feedback from implementing partners suggested that regional cooperation mechanisms do not always function smoothly. Despite the fact that the region had good policing mechanisms in place, obstacles for their full functioning have multiplied. Commitments are not self-imposed and countries are overly reliant on aid and technical expertise from external institutions. Providing tools at a political level is not a usual practice, yet there is a need to bring stakeholders together to create a sense of shared responsibility. Furthermore, there is a need to bridge policy and practice, in order to make the technical language easier to understand and therefore more likely to support. In turn, implementing partners hoped to impact and shape political narratives via conventions, secretariat or other tools that might bring along institutional change. More importantly, partners stressed that these tools should be locally owned and steered, in order to see a longer-term impact on strategic and practitioner levels.

DCAF raised the matter for realistic assumptions for framework projects, which implementing partners linked to strong political interests and political will as determinant for their success. The substance of projects is and has been affected by large-scale decisions that limit the ability of beneficiaries to participate or practice. For example, restrictions in employment or austerity measures can hinder participation of beneficiaries or the adoption of measures if agencies are understaffed or lacking in funding. Implementing partners stressed that the number of parallel processes taking place do not always match the capacity of the project to meet them. In this sense, sustainability becomes a 'glossy' word that partners, donor and managing partner need to focus on.

Improving coordination is a suggestion given by implementing partners that could positively impact on sustainability. Ministries do not necessarily share information or experiences, and international efforts tend to overlap. To this purpose, the presence and role of DCAF has been most beneficial, according to implementing partners. DCAF has helped coordinate six different projects under the SPCP umbrella, and geared them to work towards shared objectives. In the future, it would serve to enhance this coordination by providing capacity development in a selective manner to avoid duplication, crossovers and ensure sustainability.

In addition to coordination, DCAF asked if there were any other actions that could be taken to apply the ministerial conference decisions to build national capacity, ensure financial resources and sustainability. Implementing partners conceded that coordination alone would not suffice, as institutions and projects do not speak with one voice. As such, the engagement of ministries should be actively sought so that national capacity development would be housed under their own national resources and planning. Twinning, five year plans and bilateral assistance are all suggested as strategies towards this end.

In terms of whether SPCP is making progress in terms of police cooperation, the issue of institutional change was mentioned as a key consideration for the future. Training and activities should be focused on imprinting in technical, operational and legal frameworks in order to have long-term institutional impact. DCAF stresses that the challenge of implementation lies in operationalization; more specifically, even if there is expertise, the financial sustainability of the project demands a corresponding dialogue on the political level between national authorities and the donor community. More importantly, there should be control mechanisms to ensure sustainability and accountability from the donor community.

Implementing partners weighed in on the outlook of their projects and SPCP as a whole. Overall, partners agreed that the scheme of the programme benefits the countries and the region through the promotion of best practice. Priorities for projects remain the same: to improve capacity, to innovate through training, and to



promote interagency approaches to regional policing issues. Protocols, trainings and mechanisms have been set up, therefore it is contingent on those trained to continue developing capacity, in some cases with the support of donors. For example:

- UNODC will seek further funding to continue its activities and presence;
- IOM can see a need for continued skill development and awareness raising;
- OSCE Serbia foresees the need to further EUROPOL mentoring and assistance;
- OSCE Albania is only in its early stages and yet it anticipates the need to push for further intelligence sharing;
- OSCE Kosovo sees an advantage in receiving support from EUROPOL and the UK in terms of strategic assessments;
- .BK expects the ILECU network to be sustainable, but would push towards its institutionalisation within the PCC;
- PCC Secretariat will need further support to continue the implementation of the Convention, so they may merge efforts within the SPCP programme.

Final remarks, delivered by SDC, highlighted how every session had brought on a conclusion on the impact of the SPCP through its presence in various countries. SPCP is a technical project that aims to achieve the ambitious goal of enhanced police cooperation across borders. After considering the experiences and lessons shared by partners, an argument was made for focusing on the political dimension of regional police cooperation in the future. After all, the needs identified throughout discussions centred on the ability to stage institutional change through capacity development and commitments. As such, it would be expected that SPCP could have a more substantial and meaningful impact if it could leverage on strategic as well as operational processes through the efficient use of its resources.

The vision for SPCP is not to make borders disappear, but to bring them down when fighting serious organized crime in the region. With this outlook, the donor expects that the midterm review of the SPCP will bring about insight into what has worked, and what can still be changed. There are hopes for bringing about increased cooperation and coordination between all partners; similarly, SPCP would ideally be followed by another programme or second phase that can give continuity to its original aims. DCAF in its concluding forum remarks stated that the individual contributions of the projects, although not all-encompassing, will resonate in a positive manner as long as all projects continue to 'see the bigger picture' and work towards the aims of the programme.

Group photo. SPCP Partners' Forum





ANNEX

PARTICIPANT LIST

PARTICIPANT	ORGANISATION
Mr. Octavian Babici	.BK
Ms. Christine Sawyer	.BK
Mr. Christoph Gygax	Swiss Customs Adm., Advisory Group
Mr. Paulo Costa	DCAF
Ms. Irena Dzajkovska	DCAF
Mr. Mirko Fernandez	DCAF
Ms. Kim Piaget	DCAF
Mr. Milan Sekuloski	DCAF
Mr. Jan Käthner	FEDPOL
Ms. Pia Weber	FEDPOL, Advisory Group
Mr. Marko Perovic	IOM
Ms. Dusica Zivkovic	IOM
Mr. Adrian Nessel	OSCE Albania
Mr. John Corrigan	OSCE Kosovo
Mr. Peter Beyer	OSCE Serbia
Ms. Jasmina Ilić	OSCE Serbia
Ms. Natasa Ristovic	OSCE Serbia
Ms. Milena Vujovic	OSCE Serbia
Mr. Ottavio Bottecchia	PCC
Ms. Katarina Lednik	PCC
Ms. Liliane Tarnutzer	SDC
Ms. Ela Banaj	UNODC
Mr. Ketil Ottersen	UNODC



FORUM AGENDA

Day 1	
09:00 - 09:15	Opening Introductory remarks by organizers (DCAF and SDC)
09:15 – 10:40	Session I – Lessons Learned from SPCP Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Presentations from implementing partners :PCC , .BK , IOM Facilitator: Paulo Costa (DCAF)
10:40 - 11:00	Coffee break including group photo
11:00 – 12:30	Session I (cont.) – Lessons Learned from SPCP Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Presentations from implementing partners:UNODC, OSCE Mission to Serbia, OSCE Mission to Kosovo, OSCE Mission to Albania Facilitator: Paulo Costa (DCAF)
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	Session II – Monitoring and Evaluation of SPCP 2012-16 “Methodology for Project Evaluation – best practices and applicability to SPCP 2012-16” Facilitator: Paulo Costa (DCAF) M&E Expert:Mirko Fernandez (M&E Expert)
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30 – 17.00	Session II - (cont.) Continuation of previous session
17.00	Free evening
Day 2	
08:30-10:00	Session III - Common Monitoring and Evaluation approach Presentation and discussions of a draft proposal Facilitator:Paulo Costa (DCAF) M&E Expert: Mirko Fernandez (M&E Expert)
10:00-10:15	Coffee Break
10:15 -11:30	Session IV – MC2014 follow-up and analyses of gaps, current and future needs related to SPCP 2012-16 overall objectives. Facilitator: Paulo Costa (DCAF)
11:30-12:00	Closing Remarks by organizers (SDC & DCAF)
12:00- 13:00	Lunch
	Departure of participants