

The objective of the project is to contribute to increased regional cooperation between Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro and enhance the capacities of law enforcement authorities and the judiciary to apprehend, investigate and prosecute cases of smuggling of migrants, and protect migrants along the Western Balkan coastal route. The project will strive to achieve:

- **Law enforcement and service providers in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro proactively identify and prevent SOM and cases of violence, exploitation, abuse or violation of migrants' rights along the WB coastal route.**

IOM will aim to improve operational capacities of first and second point of contact within each country to proactively identify SOM in mixed migration flows including the cases of violence, exploitation and abuse. IOM will design and organize advanced national trainings for Border police (BP) with the focus on gender sensitive SOM indicators. Important consideration would be given to exchange of experience and best practices between the project countries, especially with EU neighbouring countries, in detection of SOM cases. The Reception/Transit centres as service providers would be trained to apply gender sensitive SOM indicators in their work.

To further practical cooperation and capacities for (gender sensitive) identification of SOM at the border, the project will conduct simulations/desktop exercises for BPs of joint operations, including joint patrolling, interviewing, intelligence gathering, referral of identified vulnerable migrants including unaccompanied migrant children (UMC) and potential/victims of trafficking (P/VOTs).

- **Law enforcement and the judiciary in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro cooperate and conduct joint operations to investigate and prosecute SOM as well as associated corruption cases while applying a victim-centered approach.**

IOM will aim to enhance regional cooperation of investigative authorities to regularly exchange information and ensure that the police and prosecutors in respective countries possess capacities to effectively investigate trans-border crimes. Since the project countries have limited capacities and experience to conduct joint operations and investigations, and limited opportunities to exchange information and evidence on cross-border cases, the project will facilitate increase in exchange of information and improved practical cooperation between counter-SOM and counter THB taskforces. The project will also put an emphasis on capacity building of competent law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities to apply modern investigation techniques in joint investigations of SOM.

- **Raising awareness of the local communities in transit hot spots on migrant vulnerabilities and risks of migrant smuggling to enhance the local population's understanding of their potential role in preventing SOM.**

IOM will strive to engage with local communities and service providers, in transit hotspots, through information sessions, development of targeted informative material and support to local initiatives, to raise awareness about migrants' vulnerabilities, available assistance and services to enhance the potential of local communities in migrant reception and assistance. At the same time, we will design activities to raise awareness among the local population about what constitutes facilitation of SOM according to the national legal framework.

