

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

United Nations Development Programme
Istanbul Regional Hub
*Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector
Reform in the Western Balkans (Phase II)*
Reporting period: 01 January 2020 – 31 December 2020



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Reporting Period	01 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Donor	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic
Country	Istanbul Regional Hub
Project Title	<i>Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans</i>
Project ID Output Strategic Plan and/or CPD Outcomes	0008593 – UNDP SEESAC 2015-21 Small Arms Control 00113253 – Women in the Military 2 Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity-building of Gender Equality Mechanisms through information sharing, knowledge exchange, learning and support for the implementation of small-scale projects - Increasing capacities of Human Resources Departments in the MoDs to develop evidence-based and gender responsive human resources policies - Advancing gender awareness in the MoDs and Armed Forces through gender awareness activities delivered by the Regional Network of Gender Military Trainers - Mainstreaming gender in military education and training
Implementing Partner(s)	Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Defence of Montenegro Ministry of Defence of the Republic of North Macedonia Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia
Project Start Date	15 December 2018
Project End Date	31 December 2021
Annual Work Plan Budget	USD
Total resources required	2,669,220 USD
Revenue received	The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 19,447,510.00 NOK Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic 150,000.00 EUR Total 2,464,371.35 USD (calculated as per exchange rates of the first-year tranches)
Unfunded budget	USD 204,848.65
UNDP Contact Person	Bojana Balon UNDP SEESAC Project Manager UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub Email: bojana.balon@undp.org Tel.: +381 11 4155 300

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>I. BACKGROUND</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>III. PROGRESS REVIEW: KEY ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>IV. PROJECT RISKS AND ISSUES, OVERVIEW OF KEY CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>VI. MONITORING OF ACTIVITIES.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>VII. PARTNERSHIPS</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>VIII. SUSTAINABILITY.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>IX. PROJECT VISIBILITY</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>X. FINANCIAL STATUS</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>ANNEX 1 – ANNUAL WORKPLAN 2021</i>	<i>38</i>

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFs	Armed Forces
BCMS	Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbian
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
GEMs	Gender Equality Mechanisms
GToT	Gender Training of Trainers
EU	European Union
GENSAC	Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control
HR	Human resources
IRH	Istanbul Regional Hub
MoDs	Ministries of Defence
NAP	National Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCGM	Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NOK	Norwegian Krone
OSCE	The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
RACVIAC	Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre
RGEM	Regional Meeting of Gender Equality Mechanisms
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SEDM	Meetings of Defence Ministers of Southeast Europe
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEE	South-East Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNORE	United Nations Operational Rates of Exchange
USD	United States Dollar
WB	Western Balkans

I. Background

Achieving gender equality in the military is critical to ensuring safety and security for all citizens. Promoting gender equality is not only the right thing to do but also a smart thing to do, from the perspective of complex challenges in today's world. The **Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda** recognizes women as key actors in promoting peace and security. Gender equality has pivotal role in contributing to **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs). Countries of the Western Balkans subscribe to both the WPS agenda and SDGs. The United Nations Development Programme Istanbul Regional Hub / South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNDP SEESAC, hereinafter SEESAC) facilitates the **regional cooperation among Ministries of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia** since 2012.¹ SEESAC established excellent cooperation with the Ministries of Defence (MoDs) in the Western Balkans through the implementation of the project *Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans* (henceforth – the project). The second phase of the project dovetails the Phase I, implemented in the period 2012-2016². The project has been conceptualized upon request and in close consultation with the MoDs of the four participating jurisdictions in the Western Balkans.

The Phase I of the project initiated the transformational gender equality process in the MoDs and Armed Forces (AFs). The project led to the strengthening of regional cooperation on gender equality in the military through regular regional meetings that enabled networking, knowledge and information exchange among the representatives of Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs), decision-makers and military commanders. Through the regional cooperation, the MoDs strengthened GEMs' capacities to implement practical solutions to advance gender equality; increased evidence-based insight into the position of women in the AFs, which enabled, inter alia, support for professional development of women in the military and enhancement of working conditions to put women on par with their male colleagues. An overall increase in gender awareness in the military was achieved through the establishment of a regional network of 33 Gender Military Trainers who organized briefings and seminars for over 4,700 military personnel. The Project's unique approach enabled the establishment of regional knowledge exchange platforms on gender equality in the military, an example not known in any other region in the world, generating impact beyond the Western Balkans. Since its establishment in 2014, the regional network of the gender military trainers continued to support delivery of gender trainings through the [Regional Security Sector Reform Platform](#), a vehicle for the transfer of expertise to the other countries of Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and beyond.

Notwithstanding advances achieved by the MoDs and the AFs in the Western Balkans, women remain underrepresented in the military. Challenges include limited capacities for gender-sensitive analysis and evidence-based policymaking, inability of institutions to fully address gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, and lack of shared understanding on how to integrate the gender perspective in the military education. Based on the needs identified, the Phase II of the project continues fostering both regional and national level activities through support for: 1) Gender responsive and evidence-based policy development and implementation; and 2) Improved integration of women in the military through gender sensitization.

The project brings the Western Balkans closer to fulfilling their global SDG commitments by directly contributing to the **Sustainable Development Goal 16** dedicated to building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels, as well as to **Sustainable Development Goal 5** on achieving gender equality. The project contributes to the UNDP's Regional programme outcome No. 3 – 'Building resilience to

¹ SEESAC has extensive experience of working in South East Europe (SEE). With a result-oriented mode of operation, SEESAC identifies relevant regional issues, collects baseline data, ensures political support from the national stakeholders, secures funding, and implements the envisaged activities ensuring strong national ownership. The implementation at the regional level brings added value through coordination, experience and best practices sharing, as well as the regional and national level research.

² The first phase of the project was implemented with the financial support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

shocks and crises through enhanced prevention and risk-informed development', notably output 3.3. – 'Regional cooperation enables national systems to ensure the restoration of justice institutions, redress mechanisms and community security, including armed violence reduction and small arms and light weapons (SALW) control'. Ultimately, the project envisages the Western Balkans as an exporter of security in Europe and as a unique source of expertise on achieving gender equality in the military around the globe. The project is financially supported by the Norwegian and Slovak Governments.

II. Executive summary

This report presents an overview of the activities implemented and results achieved under the Phase II of the project in the period from 01 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

The second year of project implementation was the year of marking the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. SEESAC continued supporting the regional cooperation with strong focus on WPS Agenda. Project partners from the MoDs and AFs from four countries of the Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) kept steady on their course towards gender equality and strengthening women's role in the military, despite challenging context.

The project activities were implemented against the backdrop of geopolitical tensions, including newly generated tensions and legacy effects of violent conflicts during 1990s, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic which revealed the extent of fragility of democratic institutions, challenges related to the rule of law as well as economic and social wellbeing. For Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, 2020 was the year of parliamentary elections, while Bosnia and Herzegovina had the local elections scheduled at the end of the year. All four countries faced various levels of civil unrest and protests were brought to the streets. North Macedonia and Serbia proclaimed the state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while all four jurisdictions imposed various limitations to group gatherings and travel to slow down the spread of the virus.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), with politically charged discussions and divisions about the need to revise the DPA. Serbia signed the Washington Agreement focusing on the normalisation of economic relations with the disputed territory of Kosovo*, however the progress to date has been slow, with numerous tensions and unresolved issues, therefore the situation still being referred to as a frozen conflict. Tensions escalated between Montenegro and Serbia, due to politization of the Law on Freedom of Religion and started to reduce with the new Montenegrin government coming to the office at the end of the year. In September 2020 the Government of Serbia enacted decision to pull out of all international military cooperation, which directly affected implementation of the regional project.

In March, Macedonia became the 30th country member of the NATO. In August, the new government of North Macedonia was established, with the female defence minister remaining in her cabinet (appointed in 2017). The new Minister of defence in Serbia took office at the end of October. Political changes in Montenegro resulted with the appointment of the first women Minister of Defence in December 2020.

Despite many events that affected the capacities and made increased demand on time of staff in MoDs and AFs, the project progressed with some inevitable setbacks caused primarily by Serbia's withdrawal from the regional activities and inability to organise regional meetings in person due to COVID-19, as per usual practice.³ Both the number and the quality of activities, as well as keen interest and engagement demonstrated by project partners in such a complex project environment represent the strongest evidence of partners' dedication to the regional military cooperation in the field of gender equality. As in previous years, project activities were implemented upon request and with active participation of MoDs, thus reemphasising SEESAC's commitment to build rather than substitute the capacities of the participating MoDs. In December, the MoD of Serbia confirmed their commitment to the project and resumed pending regional level activities.

Throughout 2020, SEESAC continued to act as an agile facilitator, while also bringing in required expertise available in house, combined with the experienced consultants from the region. Notwithstanding the fact

* Reference to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of the Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

³ Please refer to detailed reporting on project components in the continuation of the report, where delays and changes to the project implementation are outlined. While significant progress was made under dire circumstances in 2020, SEESAC flagged that a *no-cost extension* should be considered to catch up with delays in implementation. Please refer to the Section V (Overview of key challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations) and Section VII (Sustainability) for an appropriate justification for a no-cost extension.

that some field activities had to slow down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the new opportunities emerged to **accelerate innovative practices and improve digital literacy** of the participants. While project partners flagged that online meetings cannot fully replace face to face exchange, intensive use of online means of communication generated new dynamic and ideas related to digital content focused on gender.



PHOTO: Due to COVID-19 pandemic, precautionary measures were introduced to prevent the spread of virus, such as obligatory wearing of masks.

SEESAC team acted diligently and flexibly in order to respond to the needs expressed by the partners, thus maintaining **strong sense of ownership** by the participating staff of MoDs and AFs. Responsiveness combined with proactive support, relevant and timely inputs remained the key feature, while the regional platform for cooperation remained the backbone of the regional project. To ensure the relevance and sustainability of action, monitoring and evaluation of results is continuous, and all key activities are being evaluated and evaluation reports prepared to help with planning and improvements as necessary.

Finally, the paramount impact of the project is reflected in the improved representation of women in the military, and progress towards gender equality in the MoDs and AFs. According to the MoDs data gathered for the 2nd regional Study on the position of women in the AFs in the Western Balkans, there is a **significant increase in the number of women in the AFs in the period 2013 - 2020**. The latest data confirm the number of women in the AFs in the Western Balkans raised as follows: in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 3,85% in 2013, to 6,77% in 2020; in North Macedonia from 4,01%, in 2013, to 8% in 2020; and in Montenegro from 4,41% in 2013, to 7,19% in 2020⁴. Although this positive trend cannot be attributed to the project, well-focused and intensive activities on gender equality supported by the project contributed to the greater openness of the military to women's participation and strong commitment to work further on gender equality issues.

⁴ Data for Serbia are pending, expected in Q1, 2021.

Key achievements in 2020:

Outcome 1 (Strengthened capacities for gender responsive and evidence-based policy development and implementation) aims to further institutionalize Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs), strengthen the capacities of the Ministries of Defence (MoDs) for gender responsive policymaking and implementation and enhance their response to gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. This is done through information sharing, knowledge exchange and learning grounded at regional meetings, and support for the implementation of small-scale projects.

As part of the regional cooperation through the regional platforms supported by SEESAC, **two online regional meetings** were organized, facilitating exchange of information and knowledge related to integrating gender perspective into various aspects of the military practice: the *12th Regional Meeting of the Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs)* and the [5th meeting of the Regional Network of Gender Military Trainers](#) strengthened further the regional cooperation, while increasing capacities of MoDs and AFs to implement practical solutions for mainstreaming gender perspective in the military.

Cross-regional data collection for evidence-based policies resulted with the drafts of three national reports to inform the **2nd regional Study** on [The Position of Women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans](#).⁵ An updated set of data on gender equality in the AFs in four countries participating in the project is aimed to assess progress compared to the baseline study published in 2014. The 2nd regional Study, to be published in 2021, represents an important tool to promote evidence-based policymaking and uphold WPS agenda.

All four MoDs with SEESAC's support continued focusing on combating gender-based discrimination, through exchange of information and data collection, which started with establishment of the Working group in September 2019. This cooperation resulted with developing the final draft of the regional [Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse](#). This important **joint knowledge tool** is aimed to help practitioners as well as the general workforce in the military to recognize, address, process and, most importantly, reduce and ultimately eradicate gender-based discrimination in the military.

At the national level, intensive engagement with MoDs continued through the implementation of the **small-scale projects** - a flexible approach to address the priority needs and honour full ownership of the MoDs and AFs. The project partners decided to focus on **methods for evidence-based and gender responsive human resources (HR) policies**, as well as to **advance their capacities in addressing gender-based discrimination**.

To that end, four tailor-made online training courses on data analysis and report writing were organized for the members of HR department of the MoD of [Montenegro](#). Training resulted with building the capacities of the relevant employees to collect and analyse HR-related data with the aim to better understand job satisfaction of employees in order to attract and retain more gender-balanced workforce in the military. Based on the request from the MoD of [North Macedonia](#), twelve representatives of the internal complaints mechanism in the MoD and AFs participated in a capacity building seminar for mediators, focusing on the prevention of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. The seminar resulted with the increased awareness and ability of the mediators to address gender-related complaints in MoDs and AFs. A series of seminars for the persons of trust of the MoD of [Serbia](#) were organized to further strengthen the capacities of the internal complaints mechanism to effectively prevent and respond to gender-based discrimination and harassment. One seminar organized in 2020 resulted with a greater clarity on the role of the persons of trust and their increased ability to recognize and address gender-based discrimination.

In order to **boost the opportunities for career advancement for the women in the military**, a variety of courses that are not limited to gender equality but to other aspects relevant for expanding women's opportunities to advance their careers were identified and offered by SEESAC. Due to travel

⁵ The national report for Serbia is pending and is expected in Q1, 2021.

restrictions, only one candidate from Montenegro (2nd Lieutenant, commander of platoon) participated in the online course focusing on communication systems, organized by the [Cranfield university](#).

Outcome 2 (Improved integration of women into the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans through increasing gender awareness and revision of the military education curricula) aims to advance gender awareness in the MoDs and AFs through the Regional Network of Gender Military Trainers, and to mainstream gender in military education and training.

Focusing on building gender-related knowledge of high-level decision makers, SEESAC facilitated **Gender Coach Programme**, tailored to the needs of top-level commanding officers. This resulted with two rounds of individual coaching support completed with the General Inspector of the MoD in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Director of Human Resources Directorate in the MoD of Montenegro.

Capacity building through enabling access to cutting edge knowledge products continued to be one of the aspects of the project valued by the project partners, thus complementing the knowledge products generated in partnership between SEESAC and the MoDs. Three knowledge tools and two policy briefs on Gender and Security Sector Reform and Women, Peace and Security and Sustainable Development Goals were translated and distributed to the project partners. All publications were posted on [SEESAC page on Gender Equality in Security publications](#), allowing partners to access relevant documents at their own convenience.

Furthermore, in order to step up the activities aimed at mainstreaming gender in the military education and training, the translation of DCAF's Handbook Teaching Gender in Military in BCMS and Macedonian was finalized by the end of 2020 and the Concept paper on gender mainstreaming in the education commissioned with the aim to establish a joint understanding of gender mainstreaming in the military curricula and plan for the next steps adapted to the Western Balkans context.

Importantly, SEESAC with its project partners implemented several spin-off activities that were not included in the annual workplan. However, they generated a multiplier effect by **expanding the project impact beyond the Western Balkans**. The knowledge and experience on integrating gender into the security sector reform in the Western Balkans [was shared with other regions through the global Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control](#) (GENSAC), launched by the German Federal Foreign Office in 2020 as part of the efforts to promote greater and more active inclusion of women in policy decision-making, as well as improved gender-responsive measures to protect women and men from the misuse of firearms. The [gender military trainers](#) from the Western Balkans trained their peers in the National Army in Chisinau, Moldova. The Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations invited SEESAC and partners to contribute to their second publication titled 'Whose Security'. Finally, the practical examples and best practices on integrating gender in the AFs in the Western Balkans were shared at the South East Europe Military Intelligence Chiefs' Forum via the [Online Basic Gender Seminar](#) which resulted in expanding the pool of people in the military with increased gender awareness.

Challenges, risks, and lessons learnt

Despite the results achieved in 2020, project implementation was affected by **difficulties posed by COVID-19 pandemic and MoD Serbia pooling out of the project, negatively impacted** the project. The implementation has been significantly slowed down which endangered completion of planned activities and sustainability of results. SEESAC informed the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Annual Consultations held online in October 2020 that a no-extension for the project will be requested.

Decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to pull out from the international military cooperation resulted with MoD of Serbia withdrawing from project activities as of September 2020. This impacted the dynamic of implementation of the activities that were planned for 2020: the representatives of the MoD of Serbia did not take part in the 12th regional meeting of Gender Equality Mechanisms in MoDs and Armed Forces in September 2020 and the 5th regional meeting of Gender Military Trainers in October 2020. Both regional meetings enable regular information sharing and knowledge

exchange among representatives of gender equality mechanisms, decision-makers, gender trainers and military commanders, and evaluations from the meetings confirmed that Serbia's participation was missed.

The decision of Serbian MoD to withdraw from the regional Project impacted finalization of the regional study on *the Position of Women in the AFs in the Western Balkans*, as well as delayed the approval of the content of the regional *Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse*. Both documents are in the final phase and will require the approval of the Serbian MoD in order to be released.

The request from the MoD Serbia, to support the MoD in organization of the international conference to mark the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, planned in Belgrade in November 2020 had to be cancelled. The reason was two-fold: this event was planned as conference that should take place face to face and eventually the MoD of Serbia gave up from their initial plan. In addition, as per decision of the Government of Serbia, MoD suspended international military cooperation as of September 2020.

Following the meeting between Francine Pickup, UNDP Serbia Resident Representative; Bojana Balon, UNDP SEESAC Project Manager, and Mr. Nebojsa Stefanovic, the newly appointed Minister of Defence, held on 2nd December 2020, SEESAC was informed that MoD of Serbia will reconsider continuation of MoD's participation in the project both at the national and regional level. A separate meeting between SEESAC and the MoD Gender Adviser to the Minister of Defence was organized on 22nd December 2020 to plan implementation of delayed activities in 2020. The questionnaire for the 2nd regional Study on ***the Position of Women in the Armed Forces in Western Balkans*** was shared again with the MoD Serbia in December and it is expected to receive the data in Q1 2021. Also, the regional ***Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse*** was shared with the MoD Serbia with kind request to provide comments and approval of the Manual.

In addition to this, project implementation was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In mid-March 2020, Governments introduced a wide set of measures to contain the pandemic, including restrictions to travel, public gatherings and downsizing of non-essential governmental and business processes. Also, MoDs in all four countries, **shifted their efforts to emergency response measures.** Although SEESAC was in regular contact with MoDs, several activities planned for the first half of 2020, had to be rescheduled for late 2020 or 2021.

COVID-19 pandemic thus affected organization of the planned regional meetings, as well as planned seminars aimed at increasing capacities of internal complaints mechanisms in MoDs of North Macedonia and Serbia.

Instead of two regional meetings of Gender Equality Mechanisms in the MoDs and AFs (RGEM), one meeting was organized. The 12th RGEM was firstly scheduled for 22 and 23 April 2020 but it had to be postponed to September 2020, and was organized online, due to travel restrictions and social distancing measures. Consequently, the 13th RGEM planned for November 2020 had to be postponed for 2021.

One seminar for persons of trust, MoD of Serbia internal complaints mechanism, was organized instead of two. One out of two planned seminars was organized at the beginning of March and the next one planned for April 2020 was postponed due to COVID-19 and later due to withdrawal of Serbia from the international military cooperation. The postponed seminar will be organized in 2021.

The seminar on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse, for internal complaints mechanisms in the MoD of North Macedonia was planned for April 2020. However, due to the travel restrictions, it was postponed and organized online in December 2020.

According to the plan the 3rd Regional Gender Training of Trainers (GTtoT) was to be organized by the end of 2020. However, this training had to be postponed due to the pandemic, as this type of activity requires intensive face to face interaction among participants and training leaders. Due to its complexity that involves

syndicate work spanning over 14 days (with full day interactive work), the online training is not a suitable solution. As already emphasized, the regional GToT is important as it enables networking among gender trainers, therefore needs to be organized in person. Given that the travel restrictions and social distancing measures will most likely be still in place in early 2021, the regional GToT will have to be moved to second half of the year.

The regional gender awareness commanding officers' seminar that was planned with the Norwegian Defence Attaché in Belgrade for Q2 2020 is postponed due to the measures introduced by the Governments in the region to contain COVID-19. The objective of the seminar is to increase understanding and skills of the military officers from the AFs (at the level of Colonel) in integrating gender perspective in their everyday work. The organization of this regional event that will gather high-level military officers will be possible once the measures to contain the pandemic, including restrictions to travel and gatherings, are removed.

The 5th Gender Coach session with Director of HR Directorate of MoD Montenegro planned for Q4, was postponed due to the pandemic and later due to the change of personnel in the Directorate, after the elections in Montenegro in 2020.

Financial performance:

Cumulative expenses for the period December 2018 – December 2020 amount to US\$ 703,906, which represents 29% of the overall available project budget of US\$ 2,464,371.



PHOTO: H.E. Jørn Eugene Gjelstad, Ambassador, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade at the opening of the online 12th Regional Meeting of Gender Equality Mechanisms in the Western Balkans, September 2020

III. Progress Review: Key Activities and Results

Outcome 1: Strengthened capacities for gender responsive and evidence-based policy development and implementation			
Budget:	US\$889,356	Spent:	Costs incurred: US\$304,419
			From Norway funds: US\$175,867
			From Slovak funds: US\$128,552
			Legal commitments: US\$25,188

This component is building upon the successful facilitation of the networking at the regional level between the MoDs and AFs in the Western Balkans. The regional platform established in the first phase of the Project (2012–2016) that enabled information sharing and knowledge exchange resulted in increased regional cooperation, strengthened capacities of the MoDs and AFs for gender mainstreaming, and practical solutions for gender mainstreaming in the military.

The work under this component contributes to: i) institutionalization of gender equality through continued support to the GEM in the MoDs; ii) increased gender-responsive policymaking and implementation capacities of Human Resources (HR) Departments in the MoDs; and iii) enhanced response to gender-based discrimination by strengthening the internal complaints mechanisms. This is done through information sharing, knowledge exchange and learning grounded on regional meetings, and support for the implementation of small-scale projects.

Key activities implemented in 2020:

- [The 12th Regional Meeting of Gender Equality Mechanisms in the MoDs and AFs in the Western Balkans](#) was organized in September, enabling information sharing and exchange of knowledge on practical solutions for integrating gender perspective in the military. Despite busy schedules, the meeting gathered 23 participants – representatives of GEMs, decision-makers and commanding officers who allocated their time to provide overviews of their work and discuss challenges and practices that worked, as well as to share MoDs’ plans for 2021 and plan for the regional activities within the SEESAC supported project.
- MoDs in BiH, Montenegro and North Macedonia completed the questionnaire for the **2nd regional Study on [The Position of Women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans](#)**. Based on the questionnaire data gathered by MoDs, three out of four national reports were drafted, providing the updated information on the number and the position of women in the AFs. It is expected that Serbia will provide information and that the national report will be drafted in Q1, 2021. A comprehensive set of data on gender equality in the AFs in four countries participating in the project is aimed to assess progress compared to the seminal baseline study published in 2014. The data provided by end of August 2020, by the three MoDs out of four confirmed remarkable increase in the number of women in the AFs in the period 2013 - 2020. The figures in the national reports are as follows: BiH increased the percentage of women in AFs from 3,85% in 2013, to 6,77% in 2020; North Macedonia from 4,01%, in 2013, to 8% in 2020; and in Montenegro from 4,41% in 2013, to 7,19% in 2020. Completion of the study was delayed due to non-submission of Serbia, which did not submit the data by end of December 2020. The second request to submit the data was sent to MoD Serbia on December 22nd 2020, following the conclusion of the meeting held with the Gender Adviser of the Minister of Defence in Serbia, in which it was stated that the MoD will continue to participate in the regional project.
- The Working group comprised from the representatives of four MoDs, supported by SEESAC, completed the final draft of the regional [Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual](#)

harassment and abuse. The regional manual is intended for both the practitioners and policymakers, as well as the general workforce in the military to enable them to recognize, address, process and, most importantly, reduce and ultimately eradicate gender-based discrimination in the military. The process of drafting and commenting the content of the manual through two iterations was capacity building exercise in its own right, as members of GEMs and the Working group had the opportunity to provide their inputs and comments and have access to information and practice examples across the region.

- The **Regional Online Youth Perception Survey** on values and attitudes while considering future profession with specific emphasis on gender-related aspects focusing on the career in the military in the Western Balkans: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Republic of Serbia was **launched**. The regional research will enable data that will support MoDs to develop evidence-based human resources policies to attract a more diverse pool of applicants among youth and achieve greater level of diversity among professional staff.
- **Five small-scale projects on building institutional capacities for combating gender-based discrimination and data collection and gender analysis to inform evidence-based policies** were supported on the request of the MoDs of Montenegro (two projects), Serbia (two projects) and North Macedonia (one project). The projects underpinned and reinforced the results achieved through the regional cooperation. The **MoD of Montenegro** conducted the first gender-sensitive survey on employees' job satisfaction. The survey findings enabled the MoD to better understand gender-related aspects to introduce improvements in the working environment and offer equal career opportunities for men and women. At the request of **MoD of Montenegro**, the project supported **one female officer from the AFs to attend specialized online course on Communication Systems** at Cranfield university. At the request of the **MoD of Serbia**, a capacity building workshop was organized to further strengthen capacities of internal complaints mechanism to effectively prevent and respond to the cases of gender-based discrimination and harassment.⁶ At the request of the **MoD Serbia**, project provided technical equipment to the MoD to enable participation in online regional meetings during COVID-19. Project supported the **MoD of North Macedonia** small project related to prevention of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. To this end, an online capacity building seminar for twelve mediators, representatives of the internal complaints mechanism in the MoD was organized with the aim to increase their awareness and ability to address gender-related complaints. In addition to planned activities, at the request of MoD North Macedonia, advisory and administrative support in developing and printing of the 2nd National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in North Macedonia was provided in Q3. **MoD integrated the strategic goal related to the impact of arms, armed conflict, and the role of women's in participation in small arms control legislation and policy into NAP**, upon suggestion of SEESAC. MoD launched the 2nd NAP as planned, in October 2020. Design and printing of publication (200 pieces in Macedonian and 200 pieces in English) was supported by the project. SEESAC team participated in the presentation of the 2nd NAP.



⁶ Two workshops were held in 2019, one in 2020 and the remaining one will be held in 2021.

<u>ACTIVITY 1.1</u>	Capacity-building of Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs) through information sharing, knowledge exchange, learning and support for the implementation of small-scale projects		
Budget:	US\$393,356	Spent:	Costs incurred: US\$209,022
			Legal commitments: US\$6,324
Operational Contact:	Danijela Djurovic, UNDP SEESAC Project Analyst danijela.djurovic@undp.org		

1. Operational Activities

The Project continued to facilitate the regional cooperation on gender equality in the military between the MoDs and AFs in the Western Balkans that was initiated in the first phase of the project (implemented in the period 2012–2016). A total of nine regional meetings of GEMs were organized in the phase one. In the first year of the implementation of the phase two of the project, a total of two regional meetings were held ([10th](#) and [11th](#) regional meeting), as planned.

The regional meetings represent key capacity-building mechanism for the MoDs and AFs and, as such, are regarded as a backbone of regional cooperation. The regional meetings enable regular exchange of information and experience sharing on practical as well as policy aspects of mainstreaming gender equality in the military. While this activity presents an opportunity for intensive and time-bound knowledge sharing, technical support is available to the GEMs in the MoDs and AFs on-demand at any time, offering expertise, training, and assistance with implementation of small-scale projects to increase gender equality in practice.

- **In Q3, [the 12th Regional Meeting of Gender Equality Mechanisms \(RGEM\) in the MoDs and AFs in the Western Balkans](#)**, was organized gathering **twenty-three** representatives **of the MoDs and AFs** of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia⁷. The 12th RGEM was of specific importance because it was for **the first time organized in the new online format**. More importantly, this meeting took place in late September, at the time before marking the 20th Anniversary of the UNSCR 1325. This timing enabled information sharing among the MoDs and AFs related to the whole variety of important topics, including plans for marking the Anniversary, as well as progress, challenges and remaining gaps in promoting gender equality in the military. MoDs prepared comprehensive overviews of the work of GEMs, human resources management from gender perspective. They also reported on the progress related to the prevention of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as action towards mainstreaming gender in military education and training. Although this was the first online RGEM, it resulted with active participation, exchange of information and joint planning of project activities.

The meeting also served for planning activities for the next period, with the emphasis on Q1, 2021. This included a discussion on the preparation of the 3rd Gender Training of Trainers (GToT) for the MoDs and AFs in the Western Balkans.⁸ The 3rd GToT was planned be delivered in Q3 2020 close cooperation with Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM) and the MoDs from the Western Balkans but was postponed due to COVID-19 to 2021. Nomination of gender instructors, criteria for nominating the GToT participants and the venue (required equipment and facilities for the efficient and effective training delivery) were discussed. The needs for support and next steps in further integration of gender into the

⁷ The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia did not take part in the 12th RGEM, following decision of the Government of Serbia to temporarily withdraw from all international military cooperation.

⁸ The 3rd GToT was planned for 2020, however it had to be postponed due to epidemiological measures banning group gatherings. Two RGEMs were planned in 2020, however one online RGEM was organized (see under: Challenges and measures taken to address the issues).

military education and training was discussed in order to step up the efforts to mainstream gender in the military curricula beyond the existing gender training modules.

At 12 RGEM, SEESAC team also updated participants on the progress of data collection and drafting the national reports to contribute to the 2nd regional Study *The Position of Women in the AFs in the Western Balkans* and presented progress in finalizing the *Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse*.

As mentioned, earlier, the 12th RGEM was the first regional meeting organized online, which required different set up and organization. Nevertheless, the evaluations of the participants were very positive, however highlighting that face to face meetings could not be entirely replaced with online engagement. MoD of Bosnia and Herzegovina offered to host the next regional meeting (planned towards the end of Q1, 2021) in Sarajevo.

- **SEESAC provided technical advisory support to the MoDs** to develop and implement small-scale projects in line with their priority needs. Using the small-projects framework to address various gender-related aspects of their work, MoDs increased their capacities in multifold ways: i) building their capacities to recognize and address gaps related to gender perspective in the military; ii) strengthening capacities for policy-oriented research; and iii) gaining ability to competently identify problem and use the project cycle management to tackle gender related matters. In 2021, **five small-scale projects** were implemented aiming at institutionalizing GEMs, further strengthening of evidence-based human resources policymaking, enhancing prevention and response to gender-based discrimination and building professional capacities of female officers in MoDs and AFs. **As activities implemented through small-scale projects are contributing to the increased capacities of Human Resources Departments, a more detailed description is provided in the next section of this report, under the project Activity 1.2: *Increasing capacities of Human Resources Departments in the MoDs to develop evidence-based and gender-responsive human resource policies.***
- At the request of the MoD of Serbia, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic the SEESAC team provided the video conferencing equipment to enable the MoD to take part in online meetings. This equipment increased the capacity of MoD to engage in sharing and knowledge exchange on distance, which is deemed extremely important given the new circumstances caused by the pandemic.



PHOTO: *Social distancing measures were introduced in meetings and workshop.*

2. Challenges and measures taken to address the issues

- **In 2020, COVID-19 pandemic affected organization of the planned regional meetings**, as well as national level seminars which were organized within the small-scale projects scheme. Due to *force majeure* (the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic), instead of two regional meetings of GEMs, one meeting was organized. The 12th Regional Meeting of Gender Equality Mechanisms in the MoDs and AFs in the Western Balkans was firstly scheduled for 22 and 23 April 2020 but it had to be postponed due to travel restrictions and social distancing measures. Given that this activity is considered as an important opportunity to meet face to face, the SEESAC team kept in contact with all partners and monitored the situation hoping that it would be possible to organize the RGEM in late spring/early summer.
- **The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia did not take part in the 12th RGEM**, following decision of the Government of Serbia to temporarily withdraw from all international military cooperation. SEESAC team monitored the situation and continued implementing regional activities without the participation of MoD Serbia, with the intention not to delay additionally activities at the regional level which have already been delayed by COVID -19.
- Meeting between UNDP Serbia Resident Representative, SEESAC Project Manager and newly appointed Minister of Defence of Serbia was organized on 2nd December 2020 to address the issue of MoDs withdrawal from the regional project due to the Government decision to stop international military cooperation. At the request of the MoD Serbia, the meeting with the Gender Adviser to the Minister of Defence was organized on 22nd December 2020 to plan implementation of delayed activities in 2020.
- **MoD of Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrated lower interest in the implementation of the small-scale projects compared to other project partners – only one project was proposed, focusing on purchasing the washing machines for the basic military training centre.** The MoD submitted the project in Q3 requesting refurbishment of laundry space and purchase of washing machines in the basic military training centre to enable more conducive environment for women and men in the military, with specific emphasis on the needs for improved hygiene stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. SEESAC requested MoD to provide gender analysis of the proposed project to ensure that it would contribute to achieving gender equality in the basic military training centre Pazaric.

SEESAC remained actively engaged with the MoD, notably through Gender Coach Programme specifically tailored for General Inspector of the MoD of Bosnia and Herzegovina (more detailed description provided under Activity 2.2).

3. Changes introduced in implementation

- Instead of two Regional Meetings of Gender Equality Mechanisms in the MoDs and AFs as per annual plan, only one meeting (12 RGEM) was organized in Q3. It was not possible to organize the regional meeting in person, due to the travel restrictions imposed in the region, therefore, the meeting was organized as an on-line event.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as of March 2020, all the activities were organized online, including the 12th RGEM and capacity building seminars for MoDs at the national level.

4. Achievements and results

- **Fostering of regional cooperation continued** among MoDs and AFs on gender equality in the military through the 12th Regional Meeting of Gender Equality Mechanisms, which allowed information sharing, knowledge exchange and joint planning of project activities for advancing of gender equality in military.
- **Increased institutional capacities of MoDs** to recognize and address gaps related to gender perspective in the military through development and support for implementation of small-scale projects.

5. Work plan for Q1 2021⁹

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral preparatory meetings for the 13th RGEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare the jointly agreed agenda for the 13th RGEM with clearly outlined expected outcomes of the regional meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of bilateral meetings focusing on 13th RGEM • Quality of meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize the 13th RGEM (preferably face to face, hosted by the MoD of Bosnia and Herzegovina) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain dynamic of regional knowledge exchange and make decisions on continuation of regional and national level activities appropriate to the context and needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of RGEM participants • Quality of presentations • Evaluation report findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building seminar on the prevention of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment for the representatives of MoD of North Macedonia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen further the capacities of the internal complaints mechanism to competently respond to gender-related complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training organized • Evaluation report findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to the MoD of North Macedonia to design and print the promotive materials focusing on gender awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise gender awareness in the MoD and AFs of North Macedonia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotive materials – number and quality of printed material • Indicators established by the MoD to monitor feedback and success of messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the research in the MoD of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase further the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of trainings

⁹ Annual workplan for 2021 is enclosed as Annex 1 to this report.

Montenegro: System of Values in the MoD of Montenegro aimed to better understand the barriers and entry points for gender mainstreaming efforts ¹⁰	institutional capacities for gathering gender disaggregated data, conducting data analysis to develop gender-sensitive HR policies	delivered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants' evaluations • Quality of research tools prepared
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender awareness training for the representatives of GEMs and the Verification centre - familiarisation with the UN General Assembly Resolution 73/46 on Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase a shared understanding of gender perspective in the military, with specific emphasis on the provisions of A/RES/73/46 and the reporting requirements stemming from the resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training participants • Participants evaluations' • Quality and timeliness of the report on implementation of A/RES/73/46
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the MoD Serbia to strengthen the capacities of persons of trust through organization of workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the capacities of the internal complaints mechanism to respond to gender-related complaints effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 4th seminar for MoD Serbia organized • Participants' evaluations

Spin-off activities contributing to the project outcomes planned for Q1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a session on Gender and Security Sector Reform at the capacity building seminar for the Gender Coordination Body in the Ministry of Security of BiH, Including practice examples from the project¹¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share practical examples of good practice in promoting gender equality in security sector through regional cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The session delivered and number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the project with specific emphasis on lessons learnt from regional cooperation on gender equality in the military among MoDs in the Western Balkans to the MoD of Georgia on their request¹² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver presentation on the project and practical examples of good practice in promoting gender equality through regional cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants at the workshop • Evaluation of the presentation • Number of follow up requests for information and cooperation

¹⁰ This small-scale project dovetails the one focusing on employees' job satisfaction. In addition to this small scale project the MoD of Montenegro revised the list small-scale projects asked for: i) support to educate female officers in the AFs in HR policies, and increase their communications skills; ii) increase gender awareness of the members of recruitment commission; and iii) increase the knowledge in the area of women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

¹¹ This is a spin-off activity, however important for promoting of the project approach and results and expanding further opportunities for converging the SEESAC SALW and Gender portfolio.

¹² This is a spin-off activity, however important for promoting of the project approach and results and expanding further opportunities for the international cooperation and knowledge exchange.

<u>ACTIVITY 1.2</u>	Increasing capacities of Human Resources Departments in the MoDs to develop evidence-based and gender-responsive human resources policies		
Budget:	US\$496,000	Spent:	Costs incurred: US\$95,397
			Legal commitments: US\$18,864
Operational Contact:	Danijela Djurovic, UNDP SEESAC Project Analyst danijela.djurovic@undp.org		

1. Operational Activities

The aim of this activity is to enhance the capacities of the MoDs and AFs for gender sensitive data collection and analysis to support gender-responsive HR policies through organization of regional workshops, development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), research and provision of technical advice. As part of this activity, the project also facilitates capacity building for addressing gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse by reviewing the existing procedures, holding workshops, provision of advisory services and developing the knowledge tools.

- Three **national reports on the position of women in the AFs** from the MoDs of BiH, Montenegro and North Macedonia out of four were developed based on the data provided by the MoDs, for the **2nd regional Study on the Position of Women in the AFs in the Western Balkans**.¹³
 - In Q1, the four MoDs developed the questionnaire for the study at [the first meeting of the regional Working Group](#). The questionnaire was developed by the representatives of the MoDs in BiH, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, based on the questionnaire which has been developed for the 1st regional study, conducted in 2012. Prior to developing the survey tool, the MoDs consulted on the questionnaire at the [11th Regional meeting of GEMs](#) and at the [regional workshop](#) which was focused on gender responsive human resources policies (both events held in November, 2019).
 - In Q3, SEESAC initiated analysis of data and information collected and provided by 3 MoDs (BiH, Montenegro, and North Macedonia) which submitted the data by the end of August. Due to the delay of submission of data from MoD Serbia, development of 3 national reports on the position of women in AFs in BiH, Montenegro, and North Macedonia were initiated in Q3. Development of national reports was seen as additional knowledge product and the way to go head while waiting for Serbia inputs.
 - In Q4, the national reports for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia were completed, while the national report on Serbia is expected to be completed in early 2021, after receiving input from Serbia. The regional analysis for the study is therefore delayed and will be conducted based on produced national reports in 2021.

This **regional study** will provide an updated set of data on gender equality in the armed forces of four countries of the Western Balkans, allowing comparison of results with the first regional study issued in 2014 to assess **progress in improving the position of women in the AFs**.

- The Working group appointed by the MoDs jointly drafted the [Regional manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse](#) with support and guidance of SEESAC. The following activities were undertaken:
 - In Q2, the first draft of *the regional Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse* was completed. It was presented to the members of the **regional Working Group** at their second meeting held online on 22nd May 2020. The meeting resulted with comments to the structure and the content of the regional manual.
 - In Q3, editing of the regional manual based on Working Group comments started.

¹³ The MoD of Serbia did not provide the data, due to the decision of the Government of Serbia to freeze international military cooperation.

- In Q4 the final draft was finalized and shared with the MoD in Serbia. The adjustment of the Manual into Bosnian, Montenegrin and translation into Macedonian was initiated and will be shared with MoDs for approval once the translation is finalized in Q1 2021.
 - Given a large volume of valuable material provided by MoDs for the regional Manual, SEESAC proposed to the project partners to complement the integral version with a *Summary Overview* of the manual. The regional manual is planned for distribution in Q1 2021 with the aim to help practitioners as well as the general workforce in the military to recognize, address, process and, most importantly, reduce gender-based discrimination in the military. The regional Manual and the Summary Overview will be available in both in printed and the electronic version to serve as an important knowledge tool for the MoDs and AF employees with useful examples from practice in the Western Balkans and will also feed the project implementation.
- The ***Regional Online Youth Perception Research – Values and Attitudes while considering future profession with specific emphasis on gender related aspects focusing on the career in the military in the Western Balkans: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia and Republic of Serbia was initiated.***¹⁴ The regional survey is a complex research including desktop survey, online survey through questionnaires targeting young women and men, focus groups discussion, key informants interviews, that will take 28 weeks, and the first results are expected in July 2021. The purpose of this online survey is to obtain regionally comparable, gender-disaggregated data on how the attitudes and values, socio-economic context and previous education influence the choices of profession/occupation of youth. Notwithstanding the fact that the policy and legal framework in support of equal opportunities, working conditions, professional development and assistance is well established in all four countries, the methods for capturing and analysing talents and skills of youth, and systematically identifying opportunities for policy refinement are lacking. This youth perception survey will provide MoDs with gender-disaggregated data on the attitudes of youth when considering future profession, thus enabling MoDs to develop HR policies created to attract more diverse applicants and refine their policies for recruitment and retention.
 - **Increased capacities of MoDs to develop evidence-based and gender-responsive human resources policies and address gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse through small-scale projects:**

In Q1, the capacity building support to internal complaints mechanism in the Ministry of Defence and Serbian AFs – the Persons of Trust was provided, through capacity building seminar, organized on 10 and 11 March, as part of the series of seminars initiated in 2019¹⁵, with the aim to recognize and combat gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. The seminar topics ranged from the basic concept of discrimination to the mechanisms for protection. The participants were presented with a model of mediation enabling them to recognize the cases that can be resolved through mediation. The seminar included a review of reported cases of discrimination in the MoD, as well the role of persons of trust in addressing them. The [seminar](#) resulted with increased knowledge of twenty-one persons of trust in the MoD and SAF, as confirmed by the evaluation. Satisfaction with the seminar was gauged based on the number and type of recommendations provided by the participants such as: continue education of persons of trust to help them carry out their function, establish the network of persons of trust including an online platform to exchange knowledge and experience, as well as useful literature. Furthermore, the persons of trust recommended that the MoD should develop guidelines to assist them in their daily work and organize follow up training with focus on practical advice for addressing the cases of discrimination.

¹⁴ The research concept stems from the conclusions of the Regional workshop on gender responsive policy making for Human Resources of the Ministries of Defence in the Western Balkans held in Sarajevo in November 2019. [RFP](#) for the survey (#670) was launched on 1st October 2020 on UNDP Global Procurement website followed by wide dissemination of the advertisement through SEESAC social media. UNICEF was consulted related to the relevant desk top materials for researchers. The research will be carried out through in the first half of 2021.

¹⁵ This was the 3rd seminar in the series of seminars, initiated in 2019.

In Q1 and Q2 support to the capacity development of the Ministry of Defence of Montenegro was provided by helping the MoD to conceptualize the problem related to improving the working environment and career prospects for men and women in the military and conduct the job satisfaction survey of employees in the MoD.

Support was provided through a series of tailor-made seminars for the group nominated to carry out the survey, which consisted of nine MoD personnel: gender military trainers, psychologists, and representatives of human resources. At the MoD request, SEESAC supported the group to develop the methodology, collect data and perform the gender-sensitive data analysis, and draft recommendations based on survey findings.

The initial training for the group in charge of a survey was held in November 2019 with the aim to develop the research proposal. This was followed by the [two days gender training in February 2020](#) to consolidate the capacities for data collection. After the data was collected, SEESAC delivered four [on-line coaching sessions from mid-March to May 2020](#), to support the process of data entry and analysis. Due to travel restrictions imposed by the Governments in the Western Balkans during the COVID 19 pandemic, the coaching sessions were held online. The group successfully finalized the report based on the findings including the gender-responsive recommendations.

As a result of tailor-made seminars, the capacity of MoD of Montenegro was increased to develop and conduct evidence-based policy research in-house. In addition to capacity building of the participants, the seminars resulted with the opportunity for networking among the participants: psychologists, human resources personnel and gender military trainers.

This was the first time that the MoD requested this type of support, reflecting the level of understanding of the need for evidence based policymaking but also high level of trust between the MoD of Montenegro and SEESAC, since the survey focused on highly sensitive aspects of working environment, including gathering of confidential data.

In Q4, support to MoD North Macedonia, was provided to increase ability to recognize gender-based discrimination and distinguish it from other forms of abuse at work through a two-day capacity building seminar on the prevention of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse for twelve mediators - representatives of internal complaints mechanism in the MoD on 16 and 17 December 2020.

As confirmed in the evaluation, the seminar resulted with improved understanding of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse, national anti-discrimination legislative framework in North Macedonia, as well as relevant international standards. The seminar was an opportunity to exchange information on the practical knowledge and experience related to the subject matter. As per usual practice, the seminar included the exchange of regional experiences. To that end, Brigadier General, General Inspector of the MoD of Bosnia and Herzegovina, shared with the participants experiences and good practices from MoD and AFs of BiH on addressing the cases of gender-based discrimination.

Q4, SEESAC supported MoD Montenegro to enable better access to training and education for women in the military to increase their professional development and career advancement opportunities. To that end, **one female officer from the Armed Forces of Montenegro successfully finalized the specialized course *Communication Systems* at Cranfield university based in Shrivenham in the United Kingdom.**¹⁶

2. Challenges and measures taken to address the issues

- **The MoD Serbia decision to withdraw from the international military cooperation** influenced the dynamic of editing and completion of the first draft of the 2nd regional Study on *The Position of Women in the AFs in the Western Balkans*, since the MoD Serbia did not provide data for the Study on

¹⁶ 2020 was a challenging year because of the pandemic – some courses had to be cancelled and most of the courses were provided online. As a result, only one candidate attended the course (selected from the list of courses offered by SEESAC).

time to start the analysis and prepare the national report (other three MoDs delivered the data so the analysis could start in Q3. SEESAC developed three national reports based on data from the MoDs in BiH, Montenegro and North Macedonia which submitted the data for the regional study in Q3 2020. This was introduced as the solution, in order to continue work on the regional study, while waiting for the input from Serbia, as the regional analysis could not be initiated without the data from Serbia.

- The completion of regional ***Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse*** was also delayed due to COVID-19. The MoDs imposed the restrictions to travel, public gatherings and downsizing of non-essential governmental and business processes and also, MoDs in all four countries, shifted their efforts to emergency response measures, so the inputs for the Manual were received with the delay.
- At the meeting **held on 2nd December 2020**, between Francine Pickup, UNDP Serbia Resident Representative, Bojana Balon, SEESAC Project Manager, and Mr. Nebojsa Stefanovic, **the newly appointed Minister of Defence**, informed SEESAC that MoD of Serbia will soon re-evaluate the measure of withdrawal from international military cooperation activities. Following this meeting, at the request of MoD Serbia, the meeting with the Gender Advisor of the Minister, was organized on 22nd December 2020 with the aim to plan activities that were postponed. It was agreed to share the questionnaire for the study with the MoD Serbia again and to receive the data in Q1 2021.¹⁷ Also, the *regional Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse* was shared with the MoD Serbia with kind request to provide comments and approval of the Manual.
- The request from the MoD Serbia, to support the MoD in organization of the international conference to mark the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, planned in Belgrade in November 2020 had to be cancelled. The reason was two-fold: this event was planned as conference that should take place face to face and eventually the MoD of Serbia gave up from their initial plan. In addition, as per decision of the Government of Serbia, MoD suspended international military cooperation as of September 2020.

3. Changes introduced in implementation

- Detailed national reports on the position of women in AFs for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia were developed while waiting for the inputs from Serbia. This will enrich the scope for the analysis and comparisons both at the national and the regional levels. Instead of one regional report as planned, there will be four national reports and the regional study (the second one using the same methodology).
- The *Regional manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and abuse* is very comprehensive, with over 100 pages of definitions, overviews of policy frameworks in four countries of the Western Balkans and relevant international policy framework, supported by practice examples. Therefore, a Summary Overview of the regional Manual is planned to be distributed in Q1 2021 as a 'teaser' for those who do not have time to read the integral version, aiming to maximize the number of military personnel using the regional Manual.
- The Regional online youth perception survey was initially conceptualized to include focus groups and face to face interviews, however this idea had to be abandoned due to the pandemic-related restrictions. The online survey is planned instead, however the situation will be monitored and face to face interviews and focus groups organized, situation permitting.
- One seminar for persons of trust in the MoD of Serbia was organized (the 3rd seminar) instead of two. The 4th seminar was planned for April 2020 but was postponed due to COVID-19 and later due to withdrawal of Serbia from the international military cooperation. The seminar will be organized in 2021.
- The seminar on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse, for mediators in the MoD of North Macedonia was planned for April 2020. However, due to the travel restrictions, it was postponed and organized online in Q4.

¹⁷ At the operational planning meeting held on 22nd December 2020, with representatives on the MoD Serbia, SEESAC was informed that the MoD will send the data for the regional study, therefore the finalization of the Regional Study will be prolonged, and is expected to be finalized in Q2 2021 and not in Q1 2021.

- It was agreed that the small-scale projects will be focused on capacity building and other priority activities, excluding infrastructure improvements (which was done in the Phase I of the project). However, Bosnia and Herzegovina MoD decided to focus on infrastructure because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to refurbish laundry department to improve hygiene for the female and male soldiers and officers spending longer periods of time in the basic military training facility. Similarly, MoD Serbia requested assistance with the IT equipment to address the increased need to organize online meetings.

4. Achievements and results

- **Enhanced capacities of MoDs** for evidence-based policies development through data collection and research for the:
 - The 2nd regional Study on *The Position of Women in the AFs in the Western Balkans*. An updated set of data on gender equality in the AFs in four countries of the Western Balkans, once finalized, will provide a unique opportunity for assessing progress towards gender equality compared to the data from 2014, when the first seminal study was published.
 - Increased in-house capacity to conduct policy research and develop evidence-based HR policies (Montenegro).
- **Increased capacities of MoDs for combating gender-responsive human resources policies** through:
- **Development of the regional *Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse***. This joint knowledge tool, which is one of a kind in the Western Balkans and beyond, is aimed to help practitioners as well as the general workforce in the military to recognize, address, process and, most importantly, reduce gender-based discrimination in the military.
- **Workshops, coaching and technical advice provided for the internal complaints** mechanisms to recognize and address gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse (workshops were organized in North Macedonia and Serbia, while technical advice and gender coaching was conducted in the MoD BiH with the General Inspector).
- **Regional exchange of good practices in combating gender-based discrimination**, which was enabled by inviting guest speakers from another country to share lessons learnt. This was done when General Inspector from the MoD of BiH participated in the capacity building seminar for the internal complaints mechanism in the MoD North Macedonia on 16th and 17th December 2020 and shared MoD BiH experience on combating gender-based discrimination with colleagues in the MoD North Macedonia.

5. Work plan for Q1 2021

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop national report on the Position of Women in the Armed Forces of Serbia based on the data collected by MoD Serbia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide MoDs with the updated information on the position of women in their respective AFs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All national reports finalized • Final approval from the MoDs obtained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the first draft of <i>the 2nd regional Study on the Position of Women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive analysis and comparison of data from 2014 to identify progress and gaps in promoting gender equality in the military 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first draft of the regional study finalized and sent to the MoDs for comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize <i>the regional Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse</i> including <i>the Summary</i> and distribute the manual through partners' network as well as through online distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacities of the MoDs and AFs to effectively recognize, respond and sanction gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final draft of the regional Manual approved by the MoDs • The regional Manual and the Summary Overview printed and distributed to the MoDs and AFs

Outcome 2: Improved integration of women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans through increasing gender awareness and revising the military education curricula

Budget:	US\$681,969	Spent:	Costs incurred from Norway funds: US\$88,938
			Legal commitments: US\$3,060

This component is building upon the results achieved in raising gender awareness of the military in the first phase. Diverse activities are undertaken in order to contribute to a more gender-sensitive organizational culture, free from obstacles to meaningful integration of women in the defence system. The project supports and further strengthens the Regional Network of Gender Military Trainers established in the first phase, through regular regional meetings and access to relevant knowledge tools. In order to facilitate the integration of the gender perspective into military training and education, and thus ensure a systematic approach to gender sensitization in the military, technical support will be provided for the purpose of raising gender awareness of curriculum developers and the teaching staff of the military, both through trainings and education institutional tools. Military curricula revision will be supported through four pilots involving analysis and workshops, to create capacities for systematic integration of the gender perspective into military education. In order to enhance the implementation of gender equality policies in practice, decision-makers and commanders will be targeted through capacity development activities such as the Gender Coach Programme, as well as Commanding officers’ seminars.

Key activities implemented in 2020:

- **The 5th Regional Meeting of the Network of Gender Military Trainers** was organized online in October. It enabled information sharing and knowledge exchange among twenty-six gender military trainers on activities related to raising gender awareness in their respective institutions and beyond. Gender trainers shared their experiences in conducting a detailed gender analysis and developing SOPs for integrating gender into strategic documents in the missions to which they have been deployed. In addition to knowledge exchange, the regional meeting resulted with plan of activities for 2021.
- **The Gender Coach Programme (GCP)** was completed resulting with increased **gender awareness of two high-ranking officials and commanding officers** through tailor-made one on one sessions. Two GCPs included the General Inspector in the AFs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Director of Human Resources Directorate of the MoD Montenegro.
- Activities related to the mainstreaming of gender perspective in the military education and training were intensified. To achieve a shared understanding of this activity and the existing gaps, the translation of **DCAF’s Handbook Teaching Gender in Military** in BCMS and Macedonian was finalized. Recognizing the need to adapt the activities to the Western Balkans context, drafting of the concept paper was commissioned to kick start gap analysis and detailed planning for the next steps.
- Translations of **three knowledge tools as well as two policy briefs related to Gender, Security Sector Reform, Agenda 2030 and Women, Peace and Security** have been finalized and disseminated to the project partners at the end of 2020.
- Despite achievements, there were significant delays and deviations in implementation of project activities due to COVID-19 and withdrawal of MoD Serbia from the regional project. **Representatives of MoD Serbia did not take part in the 5th Regional Meeting of Gender Military Trainers**, which enabled information sharing and knowledge exchange among twenty-six gender military trainers on activities related to raising gender awareness in their respective institutions and beyond. **Gender Coach Programme in MoD Montenegro had to be postponed** after the 4th session with the Director of the Human Resources Directorate due to COVID-19. Later the programme was cancelled due to changes introduced in the MoD after the elections in Montenegro in December 2020. SEESAC will send new invitation to the MoD to nominate high level decision maker or military commanding officer to take part in Gender Coach Programme.

<u>ACTIVITY 2.1</u>	Gender awareness in the MoDs and AFs advanced through activities delivered by the Regional Network of Gender Military Trainers		
Budget:	US\$258,000	Spent:	Costs incurred: US\$41,673
			Legal commitments: -
Operational Contact:	Danijela Djurovic, UNDP SEESAC Project Analyst danijela.djurovic@undp.org		

1. Operational Activities

This activity aims to support capacity development of gender trainers through knowledge sharing in meetings and workshops; organization of the Gender Training of Trainers (GToT) and support to gender trainers in conducting national training sessions, as well as development of knowledge products.

- **In Q3**, [the 5th regional meeting of the network of gender military trainers in the Western Balkans](#) was organized on 21st October 2020 with the aim to enable networking through information sharing and knowledge exchange. Gender trainers shared their experiences on integrating gender perspective and raising awareness on national level and various deployments outside of the Western Balkans. Furthermore, a discussion on the capacity development needs of Regional Network of Gender Military was initiated at the meeting and planning for the next steps took place. Finally, the meeting presented an opportunity to discuss with the gender trainers planned activities, notably finalization and use of the *regional Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse*, as well as rolling out *Regional Online Youth Perception Survey* and the *3rd GTOT*.
- **In Q4**, **translation of knowledge tools concerning gender and Security Sector Reform** from English to BCMS and Macedonian has been finalized (*Tool 1 Security Sector Governance, Security Sector Reform and Gender, Tool 3 Defence and Gender, Tool 6 Border Management and Gender, Policy Brief A Security Sector Governance Approach to Women, Peace and Security and Policy Brief 2030 Agenda*). The aim of this activity was to give access to up-to-date knowledge tools related to SSR and WPS Agenda in the local languages, since similar knowledge tools are still available mostly only in English language, thus limiting the ability of many actors in the military to use them. The tools have been uploaded on the [SEESAC page on Gender Equality in Security publications](#) and disseminated to gender trainers in the MoDs and AFs. This resulted with positive feedback from project partners, however the real results of this activity will be felt in the future once the tools get widely disseminated and used.

2. Challenges and measures taken to address the issues

- The key challenge was related to the COVID-19 pandemic and lack of opportunities to organize regional meetings and trainings in the way that was familiar and appreciated by the project partners. This challenge was addressed by introducing some changes to the schedule and taking activities online.

3. Changes introduced in implementation

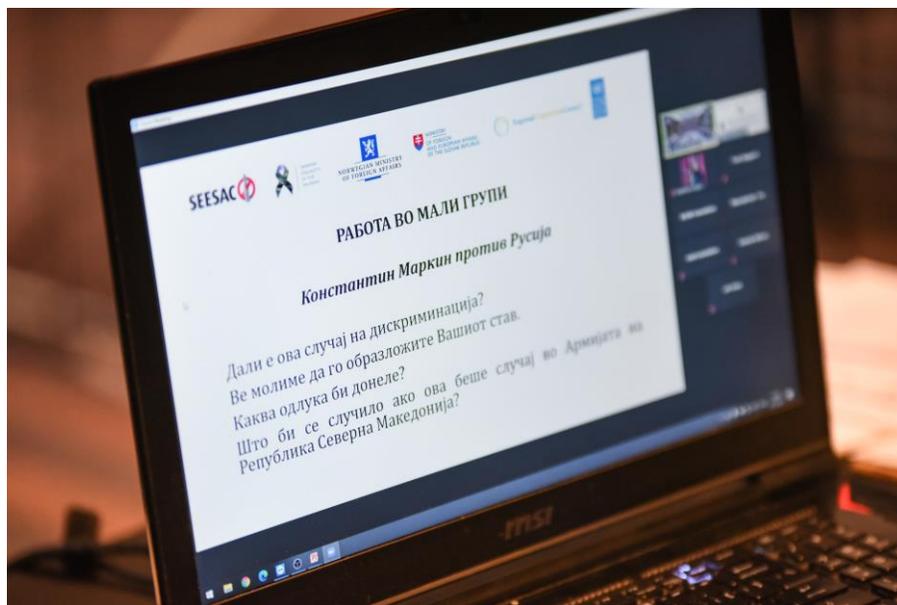
- According to the plan GToT was to be organized by the end of 2020. However, this training had to be postponed due to the pandemic, as this type of activity requires intensive face to face interaction among participants and training leaders. The Ministry of Defence of North Macedonia offered to host the 3rd Regional Gender Training of Trainers (GToT) in Q2 2021. Given that the travel restrictions and social distancing measures are in place in early 2021, the regional GToT will have to be moved to second half of the year. Due to its complexity that involves syndicate work spanning over 14 days (with full day interactive work), the online training is not a suitable solution. As already emphasized, the regional GToT is important as it enables networking among gender trainers, therefore needs to be organized in person.

4. Achievements and results

- **Gender awareness in the MoDs and AFs advanced through** activities conducted by the regional network of Gender Military Trainers that provide up-to-date knowledge used in regular/planned gender equality trainings by the MoDs and AFs in the Western Balkans, noting that

demand for the training also comes outside of the Balkans region (example of the training delivered in Moldova).

- **Reinvigorated regional cooperation on gender equality in the AFs** through the 5th regional meeting that enabled knowledge sharing and information exchange and resulted with identified areas for further support to gender trainers.



5. Work plan for Q1 2021

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory activities for the 3rd Gender Training of Trainers (GTotT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation and expansion of the regional network of gender military trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants confirmed • Venue confirmed (this training has to be conducted face to face) • Contingency plan in place in case face to face meeting is not possible in Q1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for the national level activities with the gender military trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase and systematize delivery of gender awareness trainings • Increase gender awareness of MoDs and AFs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of national activities conducted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess options for development of basic online gender training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize on the increased use of digital tools for gender training to systematize basic training and make it widely available (including basic and refreshment trainings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of potential providers long listed • Number of trainers ready to participate in developing online gender training content

ACTIVITY 2.2	Mainstreaming gender in military education and training		
Budget:	US\$423,969	Spent:	Costs incurred: US\$47,264
			Legal commitments: US\$3,060
Operational Contact:	Danijela Djurovic, UNDP SEESAC Project Analyst danijela.djurovic@undp.org		

1. Operational Activities

The aim of this activity is to increase gender awareness among personnel and integrate the gender perspective into military education that will contribute to elimination of gender stereotypes in the MoDs and AF and change in the institutional culture. This will be done through support for gender awareness workshops, regional meetings, analyses and piloting of gender in military training and education, the implementation of the Gender Coach Programme (GCP), commanding officers' seminars and the development of a toolkit.

- In 2020, one **Gender Coach Programme** has been completed in MoD of BiH and two Gender Coach sessions were conducted in MoD of Montenegro:
 - **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** In Q4 the [Gender Coach Programme](#) has been completed with Brigadier General, General Inspector of the MoD. In total, 14 sessions were held from October 2019 to December 2020, with the aim of strengthening the ability of the coaching partner to more effectively implement the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination in everyday work, within his functional competence, and within the key goals of the Ministry of Defence. According to the feedback of the coachee from BiH MoD, coaching programme was of high quality, timely and relevant, thus providing valuable material for further GCPs. One of the recommendations is to conduct GCP with larger number of high-level decision makers in MoD and AFs in BiH who have key role in organizational change necessary for successful integration of gender perspective in defence.
 - **Montenegro:** The [Montenegro GCP](#) was conducted with Director of the Human Resources Directorate of the MoD. Sessions were held on 23 January and 27 February 2020. The session in January presented best practices on gender mainstreaming in security sector and in the human resources management as a way of promoting gender equality in the workplace. The session in February focused on detailed update on the progress of the survey on job satisfaction of the MoD employees, which was supported by SEESAC at the request of the MoD.
The first Gender Coach Session was held with Director General for the Defence Policy and Planning of the MoD of Montenegro in July 2020. The first session which was held online was used to enable introduction to the objectives of coaching programme and to SEESAC's work in mainstreaming gender in SALW and in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans.
- Importantly, the **Concept paper on gender mainstreaming in the military education** was commissioned with the aim to establish a joint understanding of gender mainstreaming in the military curricula and plan for the next steps adapted to the Western Balkans context, including identifying four pilot programmes as per Annual workplan (enclosed in Annexes to the report). In addition to this, the translation into Macedonian and BCMS of DCAF (Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance) Teaching Gender in the Military: A Handbook, was finalized. The Handbook will be disseminated to the MoDs and AFs representatives, to increase their understanding how to incorporate transformative gender learning in the curricula.

2. Challenges and measures taken to address the issues

- In Q1, the meeting was held with the Norwegian Defence Attaché in Belgrade to update on the activities within the Project and plan **the regional gender awareness commanding officers'**

seminar. The objective of the seminar is to increase understanding and skills of the military officers from the AFs (at the level of Colonel) in integrating gender perspective in their everyday work. It was planned that the seminar takes place in the first week of May. The seminar was postponed due to the measures introduced by the Governments in the region to contain COVID-19.

3. Changes introduced in implementation

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic some activities were postponed or cancelled:

- The regional gender awareness commanding officers’ seminar that was planned for Q2 2020 is postponed.
- The 5th Gender Coach session with Director of HR Directorate of MoD Montenegro was prepared, but the activity was postponed due to the pandemic.
- **Instead of developing a Handbook for commanding officers** as part of the mainstreaming gender in the military education and training, **DCAF’s handbook ‘Teaching Gender in the Military’** has been **translated** and the **Concept paper for mainstreaming gender in the military developed** to ensure a shared understanding of the issue at hand and facilitate joint planning of the follow up activities.

4. Achievements and results

- **Gender awareness in the MoDs and AFs advanced** through **tailor-made [Gender Coach Programme](#) (GCP)** with high level officials. GCP strengthened the capacity and increased gender awareness of decision-makers in the MoDs in BiH and Montenegro.
- **Initiated gender mainstreaming in the military education and training** by drafting the Concept note with defining entry points for gender mainstreaming in the military curricula with translation and dissemination of the **seminal DCAF’s handbook ‘Teaching Gender in the Military’**.

5. Work plan for Q1 2021

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring a shared understanding of how to incorporate transformative gender learning in the curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitizing key stakeholders for gender mainstreaming and gaining political support to move forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of downloads of DCAF’s Handbook on Training Gender in the Military • Number of printed copies distributed • Readiness to establish the Working group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalization of the Concept note with defining entry points for gender mainstreaming in the military curricula including selection of one pilot programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender mainstreaming in the military education and training beyond existing training programmes focusing exclusively on gender training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and quality of comments received on draft Concept note • Concept note on the viable entry points for mainstreaming gender in the military curricula approved by MoDs. • Working group established • Active participation of Working group members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of Gender Coach Programme in MoD of Montenegro 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the capacity and increase gender awareness of decision makers in the MoD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of GCP sessions • Quality of GCP sessions as evaluated by coachees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for mainstreaming gender in the military education and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream gender in the military curricula beyond the existing gender training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for implementing pilot projects finalized • Analysis and plan of the next steps including regulatory changes drafted

Spin off activities that further contributed to the project impact:

- In Q3, at the request of RCC, SEESAC delivered [online two-day basic gender awareness seminar](#) for representatives of the South East Europe Military Intelligence Chiefs' Forum (SEEMIC) on 30th September and 1st October 2020. Seminar increased participants' understanding how security sector can help to achieve gender equality in line with UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. **Twenty-two representatives of SEEMIC** participated in the seminar that introduced the UN framework for gender equality in line with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Seminar included topics from basic concepts of gender equality (gender and gender roles; stereotypes and prejudices as causes of discrimination; different types and forms of discrimination; strategies for achieving gender equality; gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving gender equality) to practical examples on Gender and Security Sector Reform through an overview of advancing gender equality within security sector institutions in the Western Balkans. Finally, the participants learned about gender-disaggregated data collection and gender analysis for evidence-based policymaking through experience shared in gathering gender-disaggregated data and conducting gender analysis in small arms and light weapons (SALW) control policy implementation in South East Europe. The participants' evaluations were highly positive related both to the organization and the content of the seminar and expressed interest to further enhance knowledge in this area.

Outreach activities of the Regional Network for Gender Military Trainers in the AFs in Western Balkans

- The regional project is recognized as an example of best practice beyond the Western Balkans. As part of the South-South knowledge exchange the [gender military trainers](#) from the Western Balkans trained their peers in the National Army in Chisinau, Moldova. UNDP SEESAC supported the Senior Leader Seminar and Gender Focal Point training for the Ministry of Defence and the National Army of Moldova, organized by the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations in Chisinau from 9 to 12 March. Gender Military Trainers from the Armed Forces of BiH and the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia, nominated through the [Regional Security Sector Reform Platform](#), delivered the sessions and exchanged knowledge gained on integrating gender in security sector institutions from the Western Balkans.

Sharing experiences from South East Europe and lessons learned on integrating gender perspective in SSR in the Western Balkans

- [UNDP SEESAC contributed to launching the global Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control \(GENSAC\)](#) at the international experts' conference "Gender Equal Small Arms Control – Towards Bullet Proof Inclusion", organized by the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin in February 2020. GENSAC is part of the German Government's efforts to promote greater and more active inclusion of women in policy decision-making, as well as more gender-responsive measures that protect women and men from the negative effects of the misuse of firearms. SEESAC presented the progress towards a gender responsive small arms control policy in the South East Europe, emphasizing it is a result of the long-term approach and cooperation with national small arms and light weapons Commissions, comprehensive research on gender and small arms that serves as a baseline for all interventions, and most recently the regional Roadmap for a sustainable solution to arms control in the Western Balkans by 2024. Also, SEESAC shared the lessons learnt on integrating gender perspective into the security sector reform process in cooperation with the Ministries of Defence in the Western Balkans, and the importance of regional cooperation in raising gender awareness.
- UNDP SEESAC [participated in the 42nd South-East Europe Defence Ministerial Coordination Committee Meeting \(SEDM - CC\)](#) on 15 May 2020 and in the 43rd SEDM-CC Meeting held online on 23rd September 2020, under the Chairmanship of the Ministry of Defence of Albania. UNDP SEESAC briefed on its recent

activities in supporting the counterparts in South-East Europe to strengthen small arms and light weapons control and advance gender equality in the security sector. Representatives from the Member Nations and international organizations (NATO, RACVIAC, UNDP SEESAC) gathered to share information on common security challenges in the region.

- In Q3, on the request of the NCGM, SEESAC shared lessons learnt on integrating gender perspective in the military. This input was solicited for the publication '*Whose Security*'; to be published by NCGM in 2021.
- On the occasion of marking the Anniversary of UNSCR 1325, SEESAC shared experiences from the Western Balkans on integrating gender in SSR as the example of good practice on how the activities with focus on UNSCR 1325 are implemented on the ground. The presentation was delivered on 10 November 2020 as part of the webinar series organized by the UNDP Women, Peace and Security Coordination Group (WPS CG). WPS CG, which brings together experts from UNDP Country Offices in five regions, Regional Hubs and Headquarters, meets regularly to exchange on topics relevant to the agenda.

IV. Project risks and issues, overview of challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations

In addition to the risks identified in the project document¹⁸, which were properly monitored and changes in the context taken into account to ensure smooth implementation of the project, one significant new risk emerged in Q1 2020 with the onset of the **COVID-19 pandemic**. In mid-March 2020 countries participating in the regional project introduced a wide set of measures to contain the pandemic, including restrictions to travel, public gatherings and downsizing of non-essential governmental and business processes. Furthermore, the state institutions, including SEESAC's partners – MoDs in all four countries, shifted their efforts to emergency response measures. Although SEESAC was in regular contact with MoDs, several activities planned for the first half of 2020, had to be rescheduled for late 2020 or 2021. Country level epidemic measures as well as UNDP measures for health protection were observed at all times.

As mentioned in the Executive summary, in three out of four jurisdictions the elections were held and, as a result, two new ministers came into office (in North Macedonia the minister remained in her position). SEESAC was proactive in monitoring the signs of changes in MoDs that could impact the project dynamic. In all four MoDs the situation was monitored, and appropriate briefs prepared to ensure that new high-level officials understand the purpose, goals and results of the project. This **was especially pertinent for Serbia, given the Government of Serbia decision to suspend all international military cooperation**.

Decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to pull out from the international military cooperation resulted with MoD of Serbia refraining from the project activities **as of September 2020**. This impacted the dynamic of implementation of the activities that were planned for 2020: the representatives of the MoD of Serbia did not take part in the 12th regional meeting of Gender Equality Mechanisms in MoDs and Armed Forces in September 2020 and the 5th regional meeting of Gender Military Trainers in October 2020. Both regional meetings enable regular information sharing and knowledge exchange among representatives of gender equality mechanisms, decision-makers, gender trainers and military commanders, and evaluations from the meetings confirmed that Serbia's participation was missed.

The decision of Serbian MoD to withdraw from the regional Project impacted finalization of the regional study on *the Position of Women in the AFs in the Western Balkans*, as well as the final approval of the content of the regional *Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse*.

¹⁸ A total of nine risks have been identified at the outset of the Phase II of the project including five medium level risks as follows: Change in regional political climate; Complexity of implementing and coordinating regional activities; Opposition among military decision-makers; Opposition among military personnel; Insufficient operational capacity within national counterparts. Four cross-cutting issues were identified as low-level risks including: Potential negative impact on human rights; Negative impact on women's rights and gender equality; Negative impact on climate/environment, and, Negative impact on anti-corruption.

Both documents are in the final phase and will require the approval of the Serbian MoD in order to be released.

At the national level, activities requested by the MoD of Serbia were cancelled, including the seminars for capacity building of internal complaints mechanisms in the MoD, the seminar for HR personnel and the International conference marking 20th anniversary of the UNSCR 1325 – Women, Peace and Security.

Changes of the ministers and staff in MoDs, as outlined in the Executive summary of this report, caused uneven engagement of project partners with occasional slow-down in project implementation, which is the usual situation during significant organizational changes and staff turnover.

To ensure achieving the project results as per the project results framework, enable smooth finalization of the project and sustainability of results, SEESAC will request one year no-cost extension to implement activities that had to be postponed or delayed in 2020, as it will not be possible to catch up with all planned activities and deliver results by the end of 2021. SEESAC informed the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on challenges in the project implementation at the Annual Consultation meeting held in October 2020, and that the request for no-cost extension will be submitted to the MFA in Q2 2021. In case that no-cost extension is not granted, the most likely consequence is that not all trainings and regional meetings will be held as planned. This will result with lack of institutional framework to support the regional cooperation of gender equality mechanisms, lower capacity of the regional pool of trainers to continue their cooperation and lack of opportunities for embedding new gender sensitive policies in the area of human resources, as well as ensuring robust mechanisms to combat gender-based discrimination. Gender mainstreaming in the curricula will not be finalised, which will have the negative effect on the sustainability of project results.

An additional administrative/financial potential risk was noted and monitored throughout the project implementation. Fluctuation in the exchange rate between the two currencies, the Norwegian Krone (NOK) and the United States Dollar (USD). The project budget defined in the agreement is stated in NOK, whereas the budget proposal, which is an integral part of the signed agreement, is drafted and adopted in USD. Due to the fluctuation in exchange rates, the first tranche paid in NOK did not match the USD amount as defined in the budget. It has to be assessed how the fluctuation will impact the projected budget further, given that two more tranches are expected. SEESAC will closely monitor the situation and take necessary steps to notify the donor on any developments that would significantly change the budget amount available for project implementation.

Finally, it is important to note that UNDP projects are subject to audits of the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations. Issues identified by the audit, if any, are unlikely to affect the achievement of the objectives of the audited entity/area. So far, the overall audit rating was 'satisfactory', which is the highest ranking. This is an additional institutional safeguard against the risk defined as cross-cutting – 'Negative impact on anti-corruption', which is rated as low in the project document, however requires regular due diligence, which is ensured through the regular UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations.

Despite the challenges encountered, the SEESAC team and all partners made an additional effort to ensure implementation of the key regional and national level activities. All regional meetings and trainings held online were evaluated as high quality. The situation imposed by the pandemic accelerated the use of digital platforms and prompted innovative thinking about the online content that can be created and used in the future, post-pandemic. As an example, online training modules are planned to increase the sustainability and outreach of the gender training courses.

V. Monitoring of Activities

Monitoring and evaluation are in place. The project is directly implemented by UNDP's Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS within the delegated Direct Implementation authority for the Regional Programme implementation, in line with UNDP's Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures. UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub is responsible for overall management, backstopping and monitoring of the project and prescribes regular monitoring practices related to timely planning, monitoring, and reporting as per the

established Quality Standards if UNDP and UNDP Monitoring Policy approved in 2016. The project assurance role for this project is performed by IRH Senior Programme Coordinator and IRH RBM Monitoring Specialist. The Project Assurance role supports the Project Board by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. The role ensures appropriate project management milestones are managed and completed. The Project Manager is responsible for tracking progress and reacting if the project risks level and/or the project context change.

Multiple sources of verification are being used including activity reports, publications and concept notes, meeting minutes and evaluations, as well as posts on websites and various social media. Both quantitative and qualitative monitoring data are gathered by the SEESAC team to assess the progress towards the planned results. Regular monitoring of activities is conducted through evaluation reports from all regional meetings and events in order to gauge the satisfaction and the level of genuine engagement on behalf of the project partners.

Two-pronged monitoring approach includes monitoring of activities by the SEESAC team and monitoring of the project activities by the participating MoDs. It is important to note that the activities are included to the annual plans of MoDs to ensure their implementation. MoDs inform the wider audience about their activities within the project and SEESAC is regularly monitoring MoDs websites. Examples of MoD's reporting about the activities within the project are given below:

- In Q1, the Ministries of Defence of [North Macedonia](#) and [Serbia](#) reported significant progress in implementing the [UNSCR 1325](#) and achieving gender equality in the military in their annual reports on the implementation of the national strategies and action plans for 2019. The MoDs emphasized support provided by the SEESAC in realization of these results through the regional project. In their national annual reports, the MoDs informed on increased regional cooperation on gender equality through the [regional meetings](#) of GEMs in the MoDs and AFs. Furthermore, the MoDs reported on the strengthened capacities for evidence-based policymaking and gender analysis resulting from the training organized on their request and by participating in the Working Group for the regional study on [the Position of Women in the AFs in the Western Balkans](#). The MoDs also reported on the increased capacities of their internal complaint mechanisms to efficiently prevent and respond to cases of discrimination through capacity building seminars provided by SEESAC and resulting from participation in development of regional [Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse](#)
- In Q2, the Ministry of Defence of [Montenegro](#) reported significant progress in implementing the [UNSCR 1325](#) and achieving gender equality in the military as per the National Action Plan. The MoD emphasized support provided by SEESAC in realization of these results through the regional project. In the NAP, the MoD informed on the increased regional cooperation on gender equality through the [regional meetings](#) of GEMs in the MoDs and AFs. Furthermore, the MoD reported on the strengthened capacities for evidence-based policymaking and gender analysis resulting from the training organized on their request and by participating in the Working Group for the regional study on [the Position of Women in the AFs in the Western Balkans](#). Finally, the MoD of Montenegro reported on the increased capacities of internal complaint mechanisms resulting from the capacity building seminars provided by SEESAC and through participation in development of regional [Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse](#).

Importantly, monitoring of the project progress is conducted through regular briefings with the donors. Meetings are held with the Military Attaché in the Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade twice a year. Notes from these meetings are produced and action points jointly agreed to ensure agreed project results and outcomes.

VI. Partnerships

MoDs are the key longstanding partners of SEESAC. The project has been conceptualized in close cooperation and partnership with MoDs in four participating jurisdictions.

Importantly, SEESAC is working in partnership with various stakeholders within and outside of the UN system. SEESAC is actively participating in the UNDP Women Peace and Security Coordination Group and consults as appropriate with UN Women, UNICEF, UNODC and other UN entities. Outside of the UN system, SEESAC has very close and long-standing cooperation with (by no way of order) DCAF, NCGM, OSCE, GENSAC, SEDEM, RACVIAC, as well as bilateral donors, focusing on support of the UNSCR 1325. These partnerships play a pivotal role in ensuring meaningful, sustainable and durable results, which is of special importance in the fragile context of the Western Balkans.

Close working relationship is maintained both with the Norwegian and the Slovak Embassies in Belgrade. The Norwegian Ambassador was invited to the opening session of the 12th regional meeting of GEMs and his keynote speech was included in the final report and posted on SEESAC website. This partnership goes beyond the financial support and extends to bi-annually consultations that include briefings from SEESAC on progress of the activities and advice and recommendations by the donors that are minuted and included in workplans to further contribute to the project results.

In Q3, MoD of Bosnia and Herzegovina embarked on a comprehensive gender audit of all aspects of military – from infrastructure, to the legal framework and standing operating procedures, training and education. This work was conducted with the financial support of the UK Embassy, and in close coordination with SEESAC team, who was consulted prior to starting the audit. Towards the end of 2020, SEESAC engaged with the UK Embassy and MoD in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to discuss assistance with the implementation of the recommendations stemming from the gender audit.

In Q4, SEESAC participated in number of events marking the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. SEESAC presented the regional project and its partnership work on supporting WPS Agenda at the UNDP Women, Peace and Security Coordination Group, which generated interest on specific approach through regional military cooperation. SEESAC participated at the International Conference "[*Gender equality - 20 years after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*](#)". The event took place under the auspices of the Process of Meetings of Defence Ministers of Southeast Europe (SEDM). Another Conference organized by [*RACVIAC*](#) titled "*Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security – From Expectations to Reality*" gathered key actors from South-East Europe and high-level NATO officials to discuss ways to strengthen the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. At both events, SEESAC partners in MoDs used the opportunity to emphasize in their presentations the importance of their regional cooperation supported by SEESAC in forging WPS agenda.

SEESAC gathers testimonies of good cooperation, some are highlighted below:

- The NCGM expressed gratitude for the support provided by one of the gender trainers who acted as syndicate leader and lecturer at the Gender Focal Point Course held in Chisinau, Moldova.
- MoD of Macedonia sent positive feedback upon receiving translation of new knowledge documents in December 2020, emphasizing both the timelines and relevance of the documents received.
- Participants of the 12th RGEM marked with highest marks in their evaluation both the organization and the presentations at the meeting.
- General Inspector who participated in the Gender Coach Programme, expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to take part in GCP that, according to his words, has increased his knowledge and skills for to perform his duties and actively contribute to reducing gender inequalities and gender based discrimination in the MoD and AFs of BiH.

VII. Sustainability

It is of great importance for the project sustainability the fact that it was developed by SEESAC at the request and in close cooperation with the MoDs and AFs and builds on the recommendations of the study

[The Position of Women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans](#); conclusions from the regional meetings of Gender Equality Mechanisms and Regional Network of Gender Military Trainers; as well as lessons learnt from the study visits, trainings and other activities implemented during Phase I of the project; and the discussion from the [Closing Conference](#) for Phase I of the project where results and remaining challenges were explored.

As already emphasised, the request for Phase II of the project came from the MoD's, which ensures the local ownership, which is prerequisite for the project sustainability. Once the project comes to an end, it is expected that the MoDs and AFs will have capacities and procedures in place for gender-responsive evidence-based policymaking and further improved actions for integration of women in the military.

Based on that expectation, the Phase II of the project is focused on embedding gender equality perspective in the military and ensuring sustainability of action through increasing MoDs capacities to develop gender responsive and evidence-based policies and integrate gender perspective into the military while actively working on enhancing gender awareness of military staff and commanding officers. All activities are conducted *by* the key partners and *not for* them, thus ensuring that the newly developed capacities are built and retained in the MoDs and AFs. SEESAC has available in-house gender equality expertise and provides support for ongoing activities on demand. Furthermore, close cooperation within the overall SEESAC team and projects focusing on SALW, contributes to further embedding best practices and ensuring sustainability of the action.

SEESAC is supporting MoDs in development of regional knowledge products which are important elements for ensuring the sustainability. In 2020, two regional knowledge tools have been developed: ***regional Manual on combating gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse*** and the ***2nd regional Study on the Position of Women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans***. The *regional Manual* represents a joint knowledge tool aimed to help practitioners as well as the general workforce in the military to recognize, address, process and, most importantly, reduce and ultimately eradicate gender-based discrimination in the military. The *2nd regional Study* represents an important tool to promote evidence-based policy making and uphold WPS agenda. *The Study* will enable updated set of data on gender equality in the AFs in four countries participating in the project is aimed to assess progress compared to the baseline study conducted in 2014. Both knowledge tools are expected to be finalized and approved by MoDs in 2021.

SEESAC's approach to mainstreaming gender in security sector reform processes, developed and implemented with the assistance of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has become one of its signature solutions that directly contributes to the sustaining WPS agenda. It directly contributes to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16, namely gender equality and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

Having in mind that all four countries subscribe to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, two countries are NATO members (Montenegro and North Macedonia) and two countries are in Partnership for Peace (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia), there is a wider policy framework that all countries subscribe to and this framework includes requirements related to gender equality in the military. Through their NAPs, gender-responsive budgeting, gender mainstreaming in the military education and training and, finally, through distribution of jointly developed knowledge tools and translation of relevant literature SEESAC will, together with partners, ensure long term sustainability of the action.

The project is grounded on a strong insight into regional issues, specifically on gender equality in the police and the military, as well as broader security sector reform issues due to SEESAC's 15 years of experience in implementation of the regional projects in South East Europe.

VIII. Project Visibility

The Visibility Report is attached separately to this report.

IX. Financial Status

Project's financial status: After two years of implementation, cumulative expenses for the period December 2018 – December 2020 amount to US\$ 703,906, which represents 29% of the overall available project budget of US\$ 2,464,371.

Together with legal commitments and costs for planned activities in 2021, budget projection for the year 2021 is US\$ 1,059,509.

Since the beginning of the project, only one tranche of funds was required from the donor Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in accordance with the signed contract and in the total amount of NOK 6,767,165. Since the expenses in the first two years were lower than planned due to project risks and issues as described in the Chapter IV, the second tranche in the amount of NOK 6,712,206 was not requested with the submission of the 2019 yearly report but will be requested with the approval of this - 2020 yearly report.

During the regular Annual Consultation Meetings held online in October 2020, SEESAC informed the donor that a no-extension for the project will be requested for a period of one year. The project budget has been revised as presented in the Annex 1. The final tranche will be required with the yearly report 2021.

Budgeted in 2020:	- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	US\$ 340,675
	- Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic	US\$ 70,008
Spent in 2020:		US\$ 339,932
		US\$ 58,116
Delivery rate:		100%
		83%

The Financial report is attached separately to this report.



Annex 1 – Annual workplan 2021

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Planned Budget by Year				RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		2019	2020	2021	2022		Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
Output 5 Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform (SSR) in the Western Balkans (Phase II)	Activity Result 1 Strengthened capacities for gender responsive and evidence-based policy development and implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity-building of Gender Equality Mechanisms through information sharing, knowledge exchange and learning though and support for the implementation of small-scale projects Increasing capacities of Human Resources Departments in MoDs to develop evidence based and gender responsive human resources policies 	185,000	96,901	482,867	227,400	UNDP SEESAC	Government of Norway	Contracts, Travel, DSA	992,168
	Activity Result 2 Improved Integration of Women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans through increasing gender awareness and revision of military education curricula <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender awareness in MoDs and AFs advanced through gender awareness activities delivered by the Regional Network of Gender Military Trainers Mainstreaming gender into military education and training 	23,540	58,809	290,040	213,513	UNDP SEESAC	Government of Norway	Contracts, Travel, DSA	585,902
	Project implementation costs	74,661	212,854	208,120	208,120	UNDP SEESAC	Government of Norway	Contracts, Travel, DSA	703,755
									2,281,825
General Management Support		22,656	29,485	78,482	51,923				182,546
TOTAL									2,464,371