



PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans 2020

HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS



Apartment building, in
Ovca, Serbia. © CEB



As a consequence of the war in the 1990s, over three million people were displaced both within and beyond the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. Twenty-five years after the Dayton Accords, the Western Balkans are still host to almost half a million vulnerable persons displaced by conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The Regional Housing Programme (RHP) aims to provide durable housing solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons in need.

To resolve this protracted displacement, the four countries have agreed in 2011 on a comprehensive regional programme for the provision of housing solutions for vulnerable refugees settled in the region and internal displaced person (RHP beneficiaries). This regional initiative is an integral part of the "Sarajevo Process on refugees and displaced persons" initiated in 2005 and it was supported by the international community, including the European Union, the United States of America, the UNHCR, OSCE, and the Council of Europe Development Bank ("CEB").

THE REGIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME

The RHP has been launched in 2012 and will be completed by the end of 2022. The RHP aims at contributing to the satisfactory resolution of the protracted problem of the remaining refugees and displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia by providing long-lasting, sustainable housing solutions with full respect for the rights of refugees and displaced persons. Since 2012, 289 million Euros have been approved.

The RHP intends to provide at least 11'800 housing units (HU) for approximately 36'000 vulnerable refugees and displaced persons in the four Partner Countries until 2022.

Switzerland joined the RHP as a donor in 2012 and contributed a total of 7,8 million francs. The financial means were made available by SEM (State Secretariat for Migration) and SDC.

BENEFICIARIES OF THE REGIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME

The refugees and internally displaced persons vary in current housing placements. Thousands of them still live in collective centres, others in formal or informal collective accommodations, as well as in private accommodations. The beneficiaries of the Programme choose whether they wish to return and reintegrate into their place of origin, or integrate into their place of current residence. For all of them improved and durable housing solutions will be found – either by building, reconstructing or even purchasing apartments and houses, or through provision of construction materials, and accommodation in social welfare institutions.

The RHP is expected to provide durable and sustainable housing solutions to 36'000 people or 11'800 housing units. The beneficiaries are vulnerable refugees, displaced persons, returnees and elderly. RHPs implementation capacities have considerably accelerated as an increasing number of HU have been built, purchased, or renovated and handed over to beneficiaries. By December 2019, more than 6'200 HU have been delivered. A peak of delivery will be in 2020 with over 3'200 HU. Other than providing durable housing solutions, the Programme will have a positive effect on the self-reliance and income level of refugees and internally displaced persons.

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND RECONCILIATION THROUGH THE RHP

All stakeholders unanimously agree that the programme also contributes to an improved regional cooperation and to national and regional reconciliation. Additionally, the RHP is making an important contribution to poverty reduction, social inclusion and economic empowerment as well as supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia in their EU accession process. Even so, the initiative can become a model for the resolution of long lasting refugee and internal displacement crises worldwide.



Individual house in Foča Ustikolina, Bosnia and Herzegovina. © CEB

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

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THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME

Swiss contribution to the Regional Housing Programme for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in the Western Balkans

DOMAIN

Regional programs and Projects

THEME

Migration

COUNTRY/REGION

Western Balkans

PARTNERS

Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia
European Commission, USA and other bilateral donors
UNHCR and OSCE – monitoring
Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) – implementing agency

BACKGROUND

As a consequence of the armed conflicts in the 1990s, over 3 million people were displaced both within and beyond the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Today, almost half a million people remain displaced, living in precarious situations, without any perspective of attaining durable housing projects.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Through the contribution to the Regional Housing Programme – a joint initiative of BiH, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia – the Government of Switzerland, as well as other donors and the international community, seek to provide durable housing solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons in the region.

Through the project, 36'000 individuals should either reintegrate into their place of origin, or integrate into the place of current residence.

TARGET GROUP

The project will benefit 36'000 persons, who were displaced during the Balkan wars 1991-1995.

COSTS

CHF 7'800'000 (contribution of the Government of Switzerland to the RHP).

DURATION

20.10.2012 – 31.12.2022