



*RIVER SEE*  
*Regional Integration through Volunteer Exchanges*  
*for the Reconciliation of SEE*

**Summary:**

The UNV/UNDP **RIVER SEE** Programme **seeks to develop** regional **confidence** and **facilitate** valuable **linkages** between the **populations** and **governments** in the Balkan region. Its overall objective is to **contribute to regional integration, social cohesion** and **poverty reduction** in the Balkans by:

- strengthening networks through East-to-East volunteers exchanges;
- promoting volunteerism and proactive citizenship;
- building the capacity of civil society to deal with local development and governance processes; and,
- establishing regional cooperation between civil initiatives.

The **Programme** represents **a unique UNV/UNDP regional collaboration** that will be **co-implemented** with partners such as European Union/European Voluntary Service (**EU/EVS**), Voluntary Service Organization United Kingdom(**VSO UK**), South East European Youth Network (**SEEYN**), OneWorld South East Europe (**OneWorld SEE**) and **14 Implementing Partners Organization(s)**-- Albanian Youth Council and Balkans Youth Link/Mjaft (**ALBANIA**); Youth Communication Centre and Youth Centre Livno (*BiH*); Volunteer's Centre Zagreb and Centre for Peace Studies (**CROATIA**); Association for Democratic Initiatives Macedonia and Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (*FYROM*); Kosovo Youth Network and Kosovo Action for Civic Initiatives (**KOSOVO**); Timoc Club and European Movement in Serbia (**SERBIA and MONTENEGRO**); Association for Democratic Prosperity and SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence (**SERBIA and MONTENEGRO**)--from seven countries/areas in the Balkans with envisaged extension to Romania and Bulgaria, and is planned to continue over a period of 24 months. IPOs will be responsible for relations with volunteers, and CS/ViOs and for the implementation of voluntary management activities at the country/area level and, through the RIVER SEE Regional Board, at the regional level.

The **RIVER SEE** Programme during two years will set up a new regional scheme to **execute the exchange of the first 100 volunteer placements** within civil society/Voluntary Involving Organizations (CS/ViOs) that deal with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and those more particularly engaged in community development, good governance and the promotion of youth. To that end, they will be encouraged to participate in, and contribute to economic development projects that aim at eradicating extreme poverty, hunger and promote sustainable approaches. This approach represents an investment in the stability of local communities and nations in the Balkans. The 14 Implementing Partner Organizations will be supported--through technical assistance and capacity building--in their management of East-to-East volunteer exchanges and promotion of volunteer enabling policies and environment.

**Strategy and Vision:** Throughout 2002 and 2003 UNDP recognised the need to adopt a sub-regional strategy and programmatic approach to its work in the Balkans. This strategy is based on the principle that countries of the sub-region can accelerate their development and benefit from positive cross-border relationships to restore confidence between these nations. Volunteer's participation will generate social capital and economic productivity. Additionally it will be instrumental in regional reconciliation efforts, civil society building, and environmental protection efforts.

By building the development capacity of local CS/ViOs with MDGs-related agendas, UNV/UNDP will establish solid and sustainable local ownership of development initiatives. RIVER SEE 'Vs' will participate in cross-border exchange programs with the view of cultivating partnerships and resources connected with MDGs, civil society building, sustainability and transfer of knowledge. To further increase the impact of the programme at the national level and contribute to sustainability efforts, the following advocacy activities are also foreseen:

- Promotion of legislative frameworks on volunteerism in the countries/areas of the Balkans region in order to secure a supportive environment and elicit support from local, regional and national governments/institutions towards a vibrant volunteer sector;
- Guaranteed long term commitment of IPOs and their representatives who will be trained in volunteer management in order to implement East-East regional exchanges;
- Transformation of negative misconceptions of volunteerism emphasis on its contribution to development, and to the achievement of MDGs and community building processes.
- Secured national ownership as a crucial component of sustainability

Media outreach will be planned, coordinated and disseminated regionally to ensure proper visibility to both overall programme aims and local achievements. Particular attention will be paid to ensure financial sustainability

of the RIVER SEE 'volunteer scheme' through provision of support and mentorship to the IPOs including resource mobilization capacity and fundraising strategies.

#### **National Level Activities:**

One of the most important issues for all countries in the South East Europe is the eradication of poverty and the need to ensure environmental sustainability and development. MDGs 1, 7 and 8 have been prioritized by UNDP Country. Having the above in mind, **RIVER SEE**, through its activities, **will focus on further strengthening the capacity of volunteers and CSOs/ViOs dealing with Good Governance, Local Community Development and Youth. Two IPOs** per country/area of competence **will be responsible for the coordination of sending and hosting activities** in their respective country/area including:

- Activities related to relations with CS/ViOs and volunteers, identification of potential exchanges and liaison with other IPOs;
- Promotion of the RIVER SEE Regional Exchange Scheme by liaising with CS/ViOs, in order to identify potential placements with interested volunteers;
- Insertion of data collected at the grass roots level and review/approval of data inserted by CS/ViOs and Vs on-line, in order to constantly update the Web-enabled Multilingual Relational Database;
- Pre-screening of potential matches between request for volunteers, and volunteering offers through the matching tool provided by the Web-enabled Multilingual Relational Database<sup>1</sup>;
- Participation in National Advisory Board meetings to ensure that criteria used in the evaluation of potential matches are in line with UNDP country priorities and are able to support related programs/projects;
- Coordination of activities related to potential hosting and sending activities: IPOs liaise with CS/ViOs and Volunteers to verify the feasibility of the requests resulting from the pre-screening phase and its alignment with set criteria (MDGs, Local Development, Governance, Youth, etc.);
- Liaising with IPOs operating in other countries/areas to identify potential matches.

#### **RIVER SEE National Advisory Boards:**

The RIVER SEE **National Advisory Boards** (NABs) will be set up to **provide substantive input into the direction and content of the Programme**, ensuring that the desired Programme results are achieved, and that criteria used in the identification of regional exchanges are in line with UNDP country priorities and are able to support related programs/projects. In addition NABs will contribute to identifying strategies to enhance recognition of Voluntarism and its impact in development and thereby enhance national ownership and institutional support. In each targeted country/area, the National Advisory Board will be composed of:

- UNDP Portfolio Managers (PM) and/or Programme/Project Managers whose projects are implemented in direct or indirect partnership with CS/ViOs that can benefit from Volunteers exchanges;
- UNV Program Officers (PO) or Focal Points (FP);
- IPOs top management (Executive director and/or Board President);
- International Counterparts of UNV/UNDP projects, relevant for programme activities, from National Governments;
- Representatives from EU;

**NABs** will be mainly **responsible** for the following: (i) policy orientation; (ii) identification, appraisal and approval of RIVER SEE 'V' placements; (iii) implementation modalities; (iv) placement monitoring, evaluation and lessons learned; (v) fundraising; (vi) the integration of the MDGs dimension; (vii) management, administration and financing.

In addition to the above, the National Advisory Board in each respective country/area will appoint an official representative from UNV/UNDP (UNDP Portfolio Managers, UNV Programme Officers or UNV Focal Points) which will be responsible for the following: organization of NAB meetings, assistance to Chairperson, ensuring that all decisions related to selection process and volunteer placements are completed effectively and in a transparent fashion, and coordination and follow up reporting to the Regional Coordination Centre of the RIVER SEE programme.

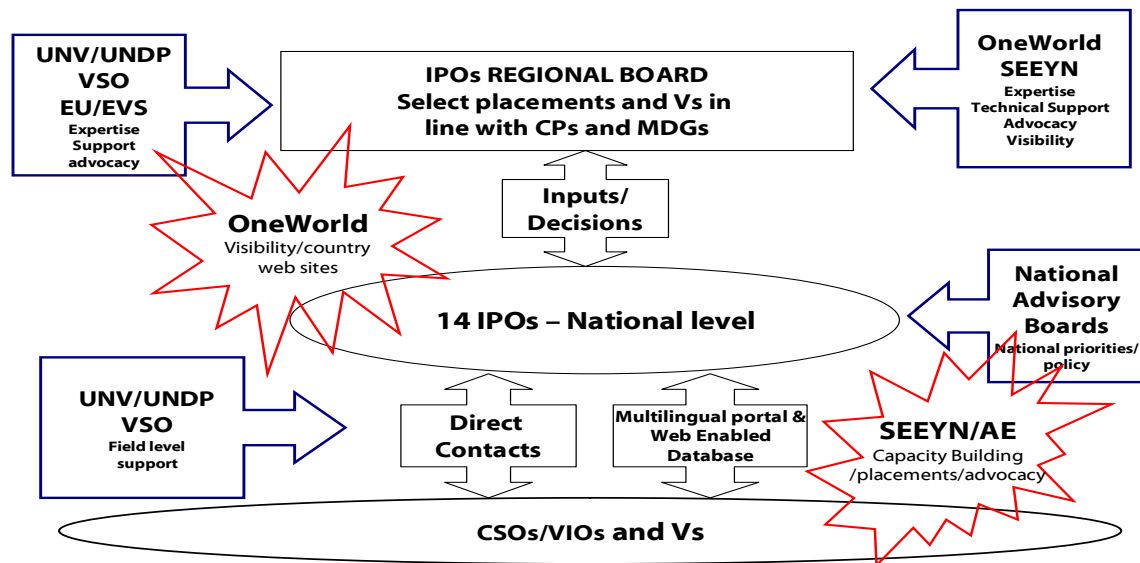
**RIVER SEE Regional Board:** The RIVER SEE Regional Board (**RB**) will meet on a quarterly base, rotating among countries/areas involved in the Programme. **RB** will be composed of : (i) 14 NUNVs representing IPOs; (ii) One RIVER SEE PM; (iii) One UNV PO or Focal Point of the country/area where the meeting of the board is organized; (iv) One UNDP representative identified among participants of the National Advisory Board of the country/area where the meeting of the board is organized; (v) One or two experts from VSO; (vi) One expert from SEEYN; (vii) One expert from South East Europe Resource Centre of the EU-YOUTH/EVS Programme; (viii) One representative of OneWorld South East Europe.

UNV PM and PO/FP together with VSO, EU/EVS and SEEYN experts will share its international experiences and best practices to the capacity building efforts of IPOs. OneWorld SEE will provide support in the definition of advocacy/visibility tools and communication strategy based on specific needs/potentials arising in the field. **See**

<sup>1</sup> The database contain two different user records: 'Individual' and 'CSOs/ViO' and sends an automatic "reply" via e-mail to the 'Individual' and 'Civil Society/Voluntary Involving Organization' with their own password and login data to allow multiple log-ins and edit/updating of information. The database is multilingual and enables use of Albanian-Croatian-Bosnian- Macedonian and Serbian languages (please see **Annex VI RIVER SEE MANUAL.doc**);

below the visual description explaining how the RIVER SEE Programme functions, specifying roles of involved parties and relations between the two Programme bodies: NABs and Regional Board.

### ***Roles of the actors involved --National Advisory Board and Regional Board***



**Organizational management structure:** The RIVER SEE management team will be composed as follows: 1) UNV HQ Senior Programme Specialist; 2) Regional Programme Officer/UNV Programme Officer in BiH; 3) Programme Manager (IUNV); 4) UNV Programme Officers in Albania, BiH and Kosovo; 5) UNV Focal Points in Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro (TBD for Macedonia); 6) Top management (Executive Director and/or Board Director) of the 14 IPOs. Staff directly involved and enrolled under UNVs contractual modalities to implement RIVER SEE Programme will be: (i) 1 International UN Volunteer - Programme Manager; (ii) 14 National UNVs – serving within IPOs in the respective countries/areas (2 per country/area).

The Programme Manager, in close cooperation with the management of the IPOs, will be responsible for the coordination of the 14 NUNVs. The 14 National UNVs will be selected by IPOs management in close cooperation with RIVER SEE Programme Manager and UNV PO or FP; they will be based in the IPOs premises and will be the primary contact for CS/ViOs and volunteers willing to take part in volunteer exchanges, providing direct support, monitoring the implementation of activities, and constantly updating the Web-Enabled Database, etc. NUNVs will be selected among at least three short-listed candidates to be enrolled under the National UNV scheme of each respective country/area. Selected NUNVs will be trained in volunteer management from UNV/UNDP and its partners as the most direct implementers of programme activities. Key responsibilities of NUNVs will be specified in the Terms of Reference (Please, see **Annex V B** ToR RIVER SEE IPOs Representatives/NUNVs) and a Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNV/UNDP and the IPOs.

In addition UNV POs (Albania, BiH and Kosovo), UNV Focal Points (Croatia, FYROM, Serbia & Montenegro), VSO trainers/experts, EU/EVS and SEEYN experts will support the implementation of the activities at the country and regional level. UNV/UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina will host the RIVER SEE Regional Coordination Center, and, in collaboration with UNV COs Albania and Kosovo, will be the institution responsible for managing the regional programme. The UNV BiH PO/Regional Coordinator, liaising with other POs and UNVs, will: 1) supervise and provide overall guidance to the Programme Manager, 2) ensure general administrative backstopping.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** The annual work plan and the performance and impact indicators contained in the Results Framework represent the main instrument to monitor project activities. The programme will maintain a database based on the results indicators. Programme and work plans will be reviewed on a quarterly basis and progress reports will be the basis for follow up discussions. The Programme will also be subject to an annual management and finance audit. Audits will be based on compliance, performance, relevance and results in relation to the project document; annual and quarterly work plans, Tri-Partite Review (TPR) meetings and UNDP policies and procedures. These measures are taken to ensure transparent and accountable use of resources.

As per the RIVER SEE Programme Management Structure, each of the 14 NUNVs will report on a monthly basis directly to the RIVER SEE Programme Manager and the Top Management of each respective IPO. The opportunity for feedback and supervision, on a monthly basis, will ensure coordination and the effective program implementation.