

Rules of Procedure

EU Scheme for Young professionals in the Western Balkans

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EU Scheme for Young Professionals in the Western Balkans

Rules of Procedure for the Selection Process – ROUND II

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I) Objectives and content of the Scheme for Young Professionals in the Western Balkans 2017

A) YPS 2017 Objectives and Principles

The *EU Scheme for Young Professionals in the Western Balkans 2017 (YPS 2017)* is the continuation of a pilot action, launched in 2016 by the European Commission, for a regional executive programme and exchange component for young civil servants from the Western Balkans countries.

This pilot action has been launched in the context of the Berlin process and in the framework of the EU's Connectivity Agenda for the Western Balkans, and its main objective was to support the countries of the Western Balkans, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (hereinafter WB6), in developing efficient, effective and accountable public administration capable of delivering public services to serve the needs of citizens and businesses; as well as promoting and enhancing regional cooperation respectively implementing exchange programmes among the WB6 administrations. The positive and encouraging results of this pilot action, presented in the framework of the Trieste Balkans Summit held in July 2017, convinced the European Commission, following a positive opinion of the IPA Committee (Member States), to continue the ***EU Scheme for Young Professionals in the Western Balkans (YPS)*** for a further two years.

Thus, the Trieste Balkans 2017 Summit confirmed that public administration reform and good governance continue to be key priorities under the political and administrative criteria for accession. According to the European Commission country Progress Reports and the EU/OECD SIGMA assessment reports, WB6 countries still face common challenges in the field of PAR despite recent progress made in the context of the EU enlargement process. In addition, as stated in the Description of Action of the YPS 2017: "*Regional cooperation remains a catalyst for the enlargement process and a key enabling factor for comprehensive reforms and the return to sustainable economic growth in the Western Balkans*".

As per the above, the **overall objective** of this follow up Action is contribute to progress in the accession process and to deepen regional cooperation among countries in the Western Balkans.

YPS 2017 has 2 specific objectives directly related with the overall objective described above:

Specific Objective 1: *To build professional capacity and prepare the next generation of public administrators and policy makers in the six Western Balkan countries who will be in charge of the accession process and drive and lead future change in their societies, in particular those required under the SAA implementation and accession negotiation process.*

Specific Objective 2: *To promote the regional cooperation element of the EU integration process at the level of civil service by making cross-border connections between these leaders and agents of change and facilitating peer learning and the sharing of best practices.*

Achieving these two specific objectives, the capacity of national administrations to modernise and implement Stabilisation Association Agreement (SAA) provisions and negotiate accession items in good standing will be significantly improved. At the same time, the motivation of participating civil servants to continue to work for, and pursue a career in, the Public Administration should also increase.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

These Rules of Procedure will mainly deal with Specific Objective 1 as they will describe in details and set the principles and the guidelines governing the selection process of civil servants from the WB6 countries involved in the Action. They will set some guidelines also for specific Objective 2 when and if in direct relation with implementation of activities under Specific Objective 1.

The overall goal of strengthening the public administration (PA) of the WB6 countries and the **Specific Objective 1** will be pursued through a three stage selection process (see below for target details) targeting early career civil servants through a **4 week-long tailor-made training programme** split between two training academic institutions: **Sciences Po in France** and **College of Europe in Belgium**. Alongside with the completion of the two training programmes the Project's DoA are providing also for a Regional Exchange programme. All these civil servants will be subsequently **employed for at least 2 more years in their national administrations following completion of Action programmes**.

In other terms, this Round II of the Action will strengthen the public administration (PA) of the WB6 countries by means of enhancing, inter alia, the management and public policy formulation and analysis capacities of 30 (5 from each country) young civil servants involved in policy formulation and strategic planning related with SAA and EU accession of WB6 countries.

As for the above, the project team has to perform the following activities as measurable outputs of Specific Objective 1:

- Effectively and efficiently organise the information campaign, the selection of participants and the training, including pre-departures and logistics;
- Total of 30 talented and motivated early career civil servants (5 selected participants from each Western Balkan country) have successfully completed the training programmes both at Sciences Po in France and College of Europe in Belgium.

B) Target group

The **target group** of YPS 2017 are young and talented mid-level **civil servants (2 to 5 years of experience in Public Administration, not political appointees)** involved in policy formulation and strategic planning within the **Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance**, strategic units of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of European Integration/Governmental Directorates/Bodies of European Integration** as well as civil servants from **other line Ministries directly involved in European Integration process**.

These RoP are reflecting the changes and improvements agreed by project's stakeholders at the end the previous Pilot Action to better address the key issues of ensuring that **only civil servants who passed a public competition and not political appointees are eligible to apply**, thus avoiding any indirect political influence over the Action.

The EU Scheme for Young Professionals in the Western Balkans will select **up to 30 early career civil servants employed in line Ministries directly involved in European Integration process (up to 5 from each of the six countries)**.

At the end of application procedure (see below for details) it is expected to have at least **50 candidates from each country, in total up to 300 candidates for up to 30 places available, with a distribution ratio of 1 to 4**.

After the pre-selection stage (formal and administrative criteria check) it is expected that at least **30 candidates will be shortlisted for English language test and interview from each country, with 180 candidates in total, in this case the distribution ratio will be 1 to 6**, this minimum number has been set in order to ensure a reserve list in the event of last minute cancellations.

If the number of applications received from each country will present great differences and unbalances the EU Scheme working group reserves the right to review the overall number of candidates invited to interviews and therefore the number of selected participants, in any case the number of participants from each country of the region has to be equal as much as possible. The working group's task is to keep a balance among the six target countries. The overall number of places awarded could vary depending on the overall quality of applicants and it can be reduced (i.e. less than 5 per country) if it will not be considered as satisfactory by the selection panel (both during the pre-selection/English language test phases and the interview phase) in terms of motivation and knowledge.

It has been highlighted by previous YPS alumni that the selected participants in 2016 presented a very different academic and professional background, and therefore it has been somehow difficult to find a common ground of action among all participants to the scheme. Thus, an innovative aspect of this Action compared to the 2016 Pilot is that the YPS 2017 working group will do its best that selected participants are in homogenous groups according to their professional and academic background.

C) Information/Outreach Campaign

The YPS 2017 Information/Outreach Campaign (Working Package 1 of DoA) will maintain the two-step approach of the Outreach Campaign of the pilot phase, namely:

- the pre-notice phase: a pre-notice of the call for applications will be published in the project's website (<http://eu4wb6.com/>), social media, government portals and/or other governmental lines of communication to civil servants (dedicated mailing), relevant web portals and disseminated through the catalogued e-mails of potential applicants;
- the application phase: a final notice of the call of applications will be published. During the opening of the application phase the following media will be used: a) E-mail lists by targeted governments; b) EU Scheme website; c) EU Scheme Facebook and Twitter; d) Hard-copy materials to be displayed at WB6 Government Institutions and British Council offices; e) British Council's websites; f) British Council's Facebook and Twitter Accounts; g) Leading On-line portals across the Western Balkans; h) Facebook accounts and website of EUDs, target ministries and NIPAC offices across the region; i) info days can also be organised for civil servants by British Council offices in each target country in cooperation with the national governments and EUDs.

In addition, in order to better disseminate the information about the Action and to reach a greater number of potential applicants, as well as to increase the overall number of applications received, the following improvements have been included in this year selection process:

- all outreach activities will be directly monitored by the British Council (BC). The BC will support partner governments in disseminating the relevant information through eligible ministries using both dedicated mailing. Each government will be in direct contact with the British Council and it will give a clear feedback directly to it about the means used and the concrete outputs, including a list of contacted civil servants and dates, venue and number of participants to open days;
- an extended list of eligible line ministries according to the different distribution of tasks and competencies related to EU accession in each WB6 country;
- an extended timeframe for the Outreach Campaign and application phase (3 weeks).
- involvement of Alumni in the application phase

This **enhanced consultation and coordination with the WB6 governments during the outreach campaign** (by means of being granted, for example, access to the list of targeted offices/persons) should guarantee a more consistent and equilibrated distribution of received applications in each WB6 country in comparison with 2016 experience and should allow BC and the scheme working group to intervene directly with governments where and if needed..

The main goal of the EU Scheme Outreach campaign is to be able to selected the best and the brightest 30 civil servants from across the Western Balkans. A reserve list of selected candidates will be created in each country.

D) Application Campaign

As already mentioned above, the YPS 2017 **application campaign** (Work Package 1 of Description of Action) is strictly linked to the information/outreach campaign and will last from **25 September – 10 October 2017**.

It will start during the outreach campaign and, as it was in previous year's Pilot Action, it will be divided in three consequent stages: the **pre notice**, the **application phase** and the **selection of received applications**.

PRE NOTICE – During the outreach campaign a pre-notice of the call for applications will be published in social media, government portals and/or other governmental lines of communication to civil servants, relevant web portals and the EU Scheme website (<http://Eu4wb6.com/>) and disseminated through the catalogued e-mails of potential applicants. The pre-notice phase will last two days - **25-26 September 2017**.

APPLICATION PHASE– The YPS 2017 **call for applications phase** will be open for between **27 September and 10 October 2017**. The application process will be only online and only applications received by email will be considered as valid. Similar to the pilot phase and in order to ensure data security and confidentiality, all interested civil servants registered on the website will receive the application package via email by simply typing their name, surname and e-mail.

The **application package** will include:

- an **application form** to be filled and signed;
- an **Europass CV template** and related instructions;
- the revised **Rules of Procedure** and a **final check list**.

Each applicant will be asked to send by email the **full application** including:

- **filled and signed application form**;
- **his/her Europass CV**;
- **signed and scanned letter of motivation including a draft proposal for the common assignment topic to be agreed during the executive training period**.

If one or more of the above mentioned parts of the application package is/are missing (including the common assignment topic or the letter of motivation) the candidate will be automatically excluded during the pre-selection phase.

Specifically, during the application phase the project's website will contain the following sections offering clear guidance and help desk assistance to potential applicants throughout the entire procedure:

- **EU Scheme overview** – presenting action objectives with particular focus on the goals of the planned EU executive trainings in Paris and Bruges and exchange programmes and associated contractual obligations for the selected participants (see below). This section will also include information on the selection process (3 stages: pre-notice, application phase and selections), related deadlines and expected dates for the delivery of the executive training and exchange programmes;
- **Contacts** – Action office and management team details providing help desk functions during the application phase.

SELECTION PHASE – The selection phase will last between **11 October and 11 November 2017** and it will consist of three different stages:

- i. **long list/pre-selection** of received applications based on administrative and eligibility criteria;

- ii. **short list** based on the results of an English testing. All candidates considered as eligible will receive an email inviting them to sit the English test in one of the British Council offices in the capital cities of all six Western Balkans countries if they had no valid IELTS or TOEFL certification [those with a valid TOEFL/IELTS certification equal or above B2 level will be automatically invited to sit the interviews]. The English test will aim at assessing the overall level of English to a minimum B2 level to be admitted to interviews. Each British Council office will organise a separate English Language Test in six capitals (to be coordinated by British Council Belgrade) aiming at ascertaining at least a strong upper-intermediated level (B2) of English.
- iii. **Interviews** by a “travelling panel” composed of permanent members (representatives of the Action Management Team - British Council and Senior Expert - and rotating members - representatives of EUD, the national governments (NIPAC office) and YPS Alumni. The real novelty here is the inclusion of Alumni of the pilot phase in the selection process by ways of promoting the Scheme.

The three phase methodology will be maintained by the „travelling panel“ as in 2016:

- **Phase 1: Review of the CV and Motivation Letter of candidates;**
- **Phase 2. Presentation made by the Candidates;**
- **Phase 3. Interviews.**

The interview panel will evaluate academic knowledge, professional skills and level of motivation expressed by each candidate facilitating the selection of the most talented, enthusiastic, EU-phile and professional civil servants. The general guiding idea of the interview panel is to choose those candidates who carry the potential of pursuing a career in the public administration and could act as change agents and promoters of EU values in their respective countries.

All interviewees will be required to present a common assignment topic proposal to be included in the motivation letter. The best proposals will be chosen by the interview panel and further elaborated during the trainings at Science Po and College of Europe.

The local British Council staff in all Western Balkans offices will assist the panel during the interviews and manage candidates’ registration desk collecting copies of candidates’ passports and signatures. At the end of the interview phase the Action Working Team will draft the minutes for each country and ask all members of the panel to sign it. This will be recorded in the consensus sheets. Each member of the interview panel will also receive an individual evaluation sheet where he/she will note all his/her impressions and detailed grades given to each candidate for each of the three phases of the interview mentioned above (see below for more details).

Selected participants may be differentiated in groups during the selection process according to their professional and academic backgrounds. The idea is to ensure that training programmes are customised specifically to the needs and preferences of the participants as well as of the national administrations. Related provisions will be included in the revised RoP.

The whole selection phase should be concluded on **11 November 2017** with the **publication on the project’s website (<http://Eu4wb6.com/>) of the final ranking** at the end of each interview stage in each target country. A specific ranking will be published for each country, with indication of the exact number of awarded candidates for each country (as well as reserve lists).

Upon completion of the selection process grantees will sign a Declaration of Understanding with the EU Scheme Secretariat covering the obligations set forth by the present Rules of Procedure. Finally, prior to their departure they will also sign a contract with the EC and the British Council

defining the mutual contractual obligations during their staying abroad and upon return during the exchange phase.

The Declaration of Understanding will also establish precise disciplinary procedures to be applied to selected candidates in the period prior to their departure, where and if the civil servant does not comply with all obligations set forth by the present Rules. Disciplinary consequences for non-compliance might include the withdrawal from the scheme in serious cases. Disciplinary procedures will be decided upon by the Project Steering Committee, which acts on case referral from the EU Scheme Secretariat.

To ensure the full success of the selection process, attention will be drawn to:

- The quality, transparency and fairness of the recruitment process (see below);
- The regular evaluation and assessment of selected candidates progress and compliance to their obligations during the period prior to the departure abroad;
- The quality and accuracy of trainings delivered;
- The identification and assessment of civil servants strengths and weaknesses.

The Selection Process will abide in particular to 3 fundamental principles: **transparency**, **fairness** and **non-discrimination**.

Transparency is to be understood by the fact that each stage of the selection process will be publicly advertised at the same time for all applicants, and the same information will be provided to everybody. It will be ensured also by the extensive use of email with both applicants and potential applicants registering on the EU Scheme's website <http://eu4wb6.com/>. The list of candidates (with their names and surnames) and their ranking will be published on the same website. Thus all applicants, including those not short-listed or selected for the further stages, will be able to witness in details the development of each stage of the selection procedure. Upon their requests applicants will be allowed to view the outcome of their interviews (minutes) after the results have been made public. The final minutes of the interviews stage will also be published on the project's official website <http://eu4wb6.com/>.

Fairness is to be understood both as related to interviews, as precise guidelines on scoring will be included, and to equal treatment of all candidates. Applicants will be number coded to ensure confidentiality of files and non-disclosure of their personal information to third parties (formal application form, incl. applicant's professional and work profile, motivation letter and CV, as well as English language test results). Furthermore, the involvement of an external Senior action expert with an academic background, as explained below, will provide for an unbiased selection at the moment of the interviews. Fairness is also related to the fact that any candidate attempting in any way or form to influence or mislead the selection process in his/her favour will be disqualified and immediately eliminated from the selection. Attempts in this sense include, though not exclusively, phone calls, emails or any other form of direct contact with the EU Scheme working group or with other individuals officially involved in the selection process in order to try to influence the outcome of the selections (i.e. foreign academic, BC officials in one of the six countries, etc.). Any threats of any form or attempt to influence decision moved directly or indirectly to the EU Scheme Secretariat or to any of the individuals involved in the selection process will also be reported immediately to the competent authorities, where and if such threats represent a criminal offence.

Positive discrimination is to be understood by the fact that women, minorities and people with disabilities are particularly encouraged to apply. Between equally qualified candidates (ie, two applicants with the same final score) the principle is that women, members of minorities and candidates with disabilities will be preferred and given priority in order to ensure a balanced outcome of the competition. **People with disabilities will be kindly invited to notify to the EU**

Scheme Secretariat, on the online Application Form, their needs at the moment of applying for the programme so that the Secretariat can take the necessary measures to ensure access to the premises of the exams and to ensure equal conditions as any other candidate to succeed in the selections. The Action will also closely liaise with Sciences Po, the College of Europe and the national administrations in order to ensure that selected civil servants with disabilities experience no major problems in their mobility in the context of the executive and regional exchange training programmes.

II) TRAININGS AND REGIONAL EXCHANGE PHASES

This phase of the Action is under Working package 2 of DoA. Following the publication and discussion of the proposals contained in the *Report on the Final Conference, Lessons Learned and Recommendations of the EU Scheme for Young Professional in Western Balkans Project*, and the consideration that one of the key feedback received from YPS alumni during the pilot phase was the lack of practical skills offered during the training, it has been decided that to improve the training phase through a competitive selection of EU training institutions/providers and the inclusion of visits to EU institutions (see below).

According to the above, six different EU institutions have been contacted and the Action Team received three expressions of interest. Thus, institutions formally approached were: Sciences Po (France), UK Civil Service College (United Kingdom) and College of Europe (Belgium). Offers were received from all three institutions.

Two different trainings (2 weeks each) in two different EU academic institutions (Science Po in Paris as in 2016 and the **College of Europe in Bruges)** have been selected by the Action Team in consultation with NEAR D5. This decision has been taken based on experience in working with WB countries and training relevance, comparative evaluation contents and budget, and based on the consideration that both offer a tailor-made specialised executive training programme which suites in both cases the profiles of the selected civil servants and the needs of the WB6 public administrations.

Building on the positive feedback of the pilot phase, **short pre-departure briefing events** will be organised in each country of WB6 aiming at building confidence and mitigate anxiety among selected participants. These briefings will include relevant information on the two-rounds of the executive training programmes and logistics (travel, health/travel insurance, accommodation and other general information).

A) Sciences Po – Executive Certificate in Management and Public Policy

The Sciences Po course named “Executive Certificate in Management and Public Policy” is an intensive **10 days (2 weeks) training** where the participants are becoming actors of institutional change and policy reform in their countries.

Thanks to the programme, they will be able to:

- Design, implement and evaluate public policies;
- Master tools and methods for efficient public management;
- Develop strategies for successful project management;
- Focus on key policy issues currently addressed by National/European authorities and relevant for the six countries in WB;
- Understand the European economic and regulatory environment;

- Collaborate in collective processes of change and co-produce reforms with a diverse set of actors.

The **learning/training methodology** is a mix of different tools and approaches. This methodology includes lectures on administration and policy-related topics and active pedagogy, specific case studies, direct interaction between trainers and participants (simulation, role play, etc.), organisation of high level meetings and visits to understand the realities faced by French/European policy makers and interact with them, the use of a mixed academic team with academics and practitioners and of team work to enhance collaboration skills of participants.

The structure of the executive training programme at Science Po is the following:

10 days programme – 2 weeks

- **3-16 December 2017**, 10 days plus one week end (travel 3 December and 16 December);

The programme includes:

- 2 thematic modules
- 2 field visits
- 2 master classes
- Group project and final group evaluation

As for the possible visits during the training we can list here the French Parliament, the General Secretariat for Public Action Modernization (SGMAP), OECD, the French National Public Auditing Body (Cour de Comptes), the High Authority for Transparency in Public Life (HATVP), the General Secretariat for European Affairs (SGAE – PMO), other optional cultural and institutional visits can be added (e.g. Brussels). The agenda will be finalised after the selection is complete.

B) College of Europe - Public Administration Reform in the context of EU integration process

The College of Europe's programme named "Public Administration Reform in the context of the EU integration process" is a practical and specialised executive training aiming at targeting different competencies and roles of participants within each of WB6 civil services and against the professional and academic profile of the groups of participants.

This is an intensive **10 days (2 weeks) training** where the participants will acquire the necessary tools and knowledge to improve their management and public policy formulation and analysis capacities in the EU accession negotiation and integration context.

Thanks to this training programme, participating young civil servants from WB6 countries will be able to:

- Understand the importance and evaluate the impact and the effectiveness of Public Administration Reform process (PAR) in the EU accession negotiation and integration context;
- Deepen and analyse the public administration management in the EU accession negotiation and integration context;
- Better understand and participate to the negotiation of the acquis: role of and impact in the public administration;

- Deepen their knowledge about funding, management and monitoring of the PAR process.

Last and cross-cutting module is related to soft skills: oral and written (communication skills, negotiation skills...). As the participants are expected to hold from managing position within their respective administration they will most probably be involved in negotiations with partners and also inside their administration. Therefore, it is as important for them to be able to communicate to achieve their administration's goals and transfer their know-how effectively.

The **learning/training methodology** is a mix of different tools and approaches. The training sessions will be interactive training and learning events creating a highly engaging environment that fosters collaboration and encourages participants to be actively involved. Moreover, participants will be exposed to and be invited to review and reflect upon practical and understandable examples and case studies. Each session will allow discussions and exchange of good practice. Summarizing it can be defined as "learning by doing", highly interactive and participatory with a mix of presentations, small exercises, a simulation exercise and a study visit in Brussels.

The structure of the executive training programme at Science Po is the following:

10 days programme– 2 weeks

- **28 January – 10 February 2018**, 10 days plus one week end (travel 28 January and 10 February);

The detailed programme will be drafted and submitted once the selection of participant is completed, so as to tailor as much as possible the four-week training programme to the participants needs in line with their background and needs.

C) Western Balkans Exchange Programme

As briefly introduced above and even if these Rules of Procedure are not dealing directly with the organization of this exchange component which is under Working Package 3 of DoA, it must be stressed that the Action will complement the training programmes at Sciences Po and at College of Europe with a **short 2-week long mobility exchange component** for the young professionals involved in the action (**March/April 2018**).

The purpose of the regional exchange programme will be to (i) maintain the momentum of career development of young professionals and of administrative capacity improvement at national governments; and (ii) to further strengthen the regional reconciliation and cooperation element of the EU enlargement policy in the Western Balkans.

The exchange programme will provide an excellent opportunity for the selected young professionals to learn and develop their skills by visiting similar public institutions of another Western Balkan country. The regional programmes will enable the participants to exchange experiences and learn by their peers, share best practices as well as learn by doing in a different context than the ones from their own national level.

The programme will also provide a good opportunity to participants to further network and receive direct insight on how the respective institutions and specific organisational parts manage the process of EU integration. It will also further regional cooperation and reconciliation by means of dispelling myths and misinformation about the neighbouring "other".

The exchange will be perceived as a short term programme limited to 2 weeks, and it will be organised simultaneously for all civil servants who will complete the trainings at Sciences Po and College of Europe. The 5 candidates from each country will collectively cover all of the 5 neighbouring countries in order to strengthen the reconciliation element, and avoid that the exchange is made according to language group.

The exchange period will be used to work on a specific assignment (same for all participants). The best topics will be identified and proposed to training institutions by the interview panel at the end of selection process. Training institutions will further develop and enrich these proposals during the two trainings and the final 6 assignments will be decided at the end of trainings dividing the participants in homogenous groups, each of which will attend the exchange period in each WB6 country.

All assignment papers will be drafted following clear instructions on their content and structure, the research methodology to be used and the mechanics of their drafting. The Guidelines on common assignment topics prepared during the pilot phase by the Action Team will be delivered to all participants.

The main phases of this exchange component are the following (the first two phases are integrant part of the selection phase under Work Package 1 and this is the main reason why they are listed in these RoP):

Phase 1: EU Scheme Call of Application. The dissemination of the information on the exchange programme and the necessary documentation will be distributed through the national governments and the Action's information campaign as an integrative element of the EU Scheme application procedure. The related information will be also posted on the EU Scheme website (<http://Eu4wb6.com/>).

Phase 2: Application procedure and selection of the participants. All applicants will be invited to propose a specific assignment on their Motivation Letter which will be attached to the Application Form. Short-listed candidates are invited to reflect on their exchange assignment proposal during the interview session. The best topics are identified as part of the selections procedure and further fine-tuned during the executive training programmes in Paris and Bruges.

Phase 3: Induction of the young professionals. The Action Team shares with selected young professionals additional instructions. All 30 of them are invited for a one day induction session at their local British Council office. This phase is crucial to match participants with host destinations and organisations.

Phase 4: Contacting and signing up host institutions. Prior to the conduct of the exchange programme, the Action Team liaises with the hosting institutions on the steps that they should follow while hosting a civil servant. In addition, the Action Team may consider possibility of inviting the representatives of hosting institutions in the foreseen Alumni Conference event furthering networking, i.e., improving and expanding the collaboration efforts among the regional public administrations.

Phase 5: Organisation of stay at the host institutions. The Action Team identifies and arranges all institutions who have expressed their interest to host and accept the candidates. Moreover, the Action Team organises their trips and other logistical items for the participants to attend the exchange programme. British Council branch office staff may accompany the participants for the first day to their hosting institution and make introductions.

Phase 6: Reporting. Following completion of the regional mobility scheme, participants will be invited to submit a short evaluation report. Information about the exchange programme will be

posted in the EU Scheme website (<http://Eu4wb6.com/>) and on the Action's Facebook and Twitter pages.

In order to avoid some shortcomings and organizational problems emerged in the pilot action in 2016, DoA provides that: "National governments in the WB6 countries will be requested to formally commit from the outset of the Action in hosting working groups within designate bodies of the public administration. This commitment may come in the form of a written agreement to be signed between the Action and each hosting PA organisation. This document will include a clear indication of the venue and all other needed arrangements to ensure consistency and the success of the exchange programmes. A vigilant monitoring system will be also put in place by the Action Team. Any deviations from what has been agreed will be duly communicated to the European Commission to ensure necessary remedial actions".

Written agreements with each hosting institution, listing the above, will be drafted by the BC, agreed and signed prior to the departure of each group for their final destination.

III) YPS 2017 Selection Schedule, Stages and Rules of Procedure

A) Schedule and Deadline for Application

25 September 2017 (Monday): Pre-notice of the call for applications (2 DAYS) published on social media, relevant online portals and the EU Scheme project's website <http://Eu4wb6.com/>. Each regional BC office will be in charge for the preparation and dissemination of the pre-notice in English.

27 September 2017 (Wednesday): Opening of the Call for applications (14 DAYS). After registering to the project's website <http://eu4wb6.com/> each potential applicant will receive by email the application package including an Europass CV template and related instructions, the application form, a check list and this Rules of Procedure. Complete applications (including also a signed and scanned letter of motivation with a proposal of common assignment topic – see above *Regional Exchange Programme* for details) must be sent by email to the following address: applications@eu4wb6.com. **NB: Incomplete applications will not be considered** (i.e. if the Europass CV and/or filled and signed application form and/or letter of motivation including a proposal of common assignment topic is/are missing the application will not be considered as valid even if the applicant is considered to be eligible according to his/her professional background and public institution he is employed in, see below *Eligibility criteria*).

10 October 2017 (Tuesday) @ 1800hrs - Deadline for the receipt of complete applications by email. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered during the pre-selection phase.

11-12 October 2016 (Wednesday-Thursday): Pre-selection of received applications according to set administrative criteria and **long listing of applicants invited to sit the English language test**. Long listed applicants will be invited by email to sit the English language test in each country BC office. Lists of long-listed applicants invited at English language test will be published online on the project's website <http://eu4wb6.com/>.

16-17 October 2017 (Monday-Tuesday): English language test for invited applicants aiming at ascertaining at least a strong upper-intermediated level (B2) of English. This test is therefore foreseen as determining the candidate's level of English and his/her suitability to join the programme. The results of the English language tests for each WB6 country will be published by **19 October 2017** including the final short-listed candidates. Each candidate invited to the interview will receive also an individual email from the project.

23 October – 10 November 2017: Interviews with short listed applicants in each capital city of all WB6 countries. Please see details below:

- **Prishtina:** 23 and 24 October 2017
- **Tirana:** 25 and 26 October 2017
- **Podgorica:** 31 October and 1 November 2017
- **Belgrade:** 2 and 3 November 2017
- **Sarajevo:** 6 and 7 November 2017
- **Skopje:** 9 and 10 November 2017

The results of the interview phase will be published in the projects website on **11 November 2017**.

B) Selection Stage and Rules of Procedure

The selection procedure will be carried out in 3 stages:

- Long-listing: eligibility of applicants and complete applications (administrative and formal pre-selection of applications)
- English Language Test and short-listing of applicants for interviews
- Interviews

a) Long-listing (Eligibility of Applicants and Complete Applications)

The initial selection of applications is to ensure that applicants are eligible and that their applications are complete in all parts.

A panel composed by the Action Working Group will long-list candidates to be invited to the English language test. Candidates are pre-selected both on formal and administrative criteria (i.e. ***exclusion criteria***) aimed at ensuring the eligibility of applicants and the presentation of complete applications (i.e. with all required documents, and with the YPS 2017 Application Form duly filled in). This means that **applications from non-eligible candidates and/or incomplete applications in any part** (eg. missing CV and/or letter of motivation and/or common assignment topic proposal) **will be rejected** (see p. 17 for more details, **NB: this may also include application forms that have not been signed by the applicant**).

YCS 2017 **eligible applicants** are:

- **Civil servants with between 2 and 5 years of working experience** in Public Administration in one of the six countries of the Western Balkans;
- Only **Civil Servants recruited through a public competition** and not political appointees are eligible
- and strategic planning within the **Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance**, strategic units of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of European Integration/Governmental Directorates/Bodies of European Integration** as well as civil servants from **other line Ministries directly involved in European Integration process**.
- **Citizens with a valid passport issued by the National Authority in one of the WB6 countries**. Passports of another country than the one where the applicant works as a civil servant are not acceptable
- **Fluent in English with at least an upper-intermediate level (B2)**. Those candidates who already have a valid TOEFL/IELTS language certification will not be asked to participate to the second stage of selection (i.e. English language test) if they provide a valid proof of this certification with at least the same level of knowledge as above (B2 or equivalent)
- **Available to travel** and to move abroad from November 2017 to April/May 2018.

Complete applications are composed of:

- *YPS 2017 Application Form*, in English, completed and signed, Make sure to include a valid email address. **Communication with applicants will be conducted only and exclusively through email**
- *Europass CV, in English* (the project will provide all applicants with an updated Europass CV template within the application package they will receive by email),
- *Letter of Motivation, in English, including also a draft proposal for the common assignment topic* to be implemented during the exchange component. These topics will be further discussed during the training as already specified above, but there must be a proposal from each candidate already at this stage. Without this proposal the applicant will be automatically excluded from any further stage of selection.

A check-list will be included for the applicants' convenience in the *YCS 2017 Application Form*. Please make sure to have included all required documents to avoid disappointment and exclusion by failing to include required documents or for presenting them in the incorrect form (e.g. a CV or a Letter of Motivation not in English, or a YCS 2017 Application Form that has not been filled-in or signed, a Letter of Motivation without common assignment topic proposal etc). No applicants, under any circumstances, will be allowed to complete an incomplete application after submission. **Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted under no circumstances.**

NB: Documents submitted with the application will not be returned to applicants.

Incomplete applications are at this stage rejected.

Complete applications from eligible candidates are then formally accepted and the applicant is invited to sit the English Language Test. Please note that you will have to be available for the English Test on 16 or 17 October 2017.

b) English language test and short listing for interviews

The English Language test will be organised by the British Council to assess the level of English for each candidate.

Anonymity of applicants will be ensured by numerical codes given to each applicant on the day of test to be written in the answer sheets. **The English Language test has the goal to assess a minimum B2 level (upper-intermediate) English language knowledge. All those candidates who will be able to pass this threshold will be admitted to interviews.**

The English Language Test will be organised separately in each British Council country office. The test however does not count towards the final ranking of candidates (i.e., it does not accumulate points towards the final ranking). This test is an "in or out" threshold exam. This means that applicants are required to pass the thresholds specified below in order to be admitted at interviews. Before entering the examination rooms all candidates must prove their identity and be checked against an accredited list, sign for their admission while their presence is validated by a member of the British Council.

Upon admission to the examination room candidates will be asked to leave personal belongings (e.g. coats, mobile phones – turned off, electronic equipment, bags etc.) at a designated point in the room. TOTAL silence is demanded from the candidates.

Candidates must score at least a threshold of B2 level. Any candidates with less than B2 will be eliminated at this stage, unless not enough suitable candidates are to be found within this

threshold. In such a case, those candidates with at least threshold of B1 level might be conditionally rescued.

c) Interviews (motivation and discussion on potential exchange programme assignment)

Interviews will be conducted by an **interview panel** composed of an odd number of members (i.e. 5) and by a member of the working group in charge of taking the minutes of each interview. This interview panel will be composed by **2 permanent members (1 representative of the Action Management Team - British Council and 1 Action Senior Expert** with a specific academic background and scholarship management experience) and **3 rotating members (1 representative of EU Delegation in each WB6, 1 representative from the NIPAC office in each WB6 country and 1 YPS Alumnus)**. Interviews will be held in each capital city of the six target countries in British Council premises according to the schedule listed at p. 18 of these guidelines.

Interviews' procedure:

Prior to each interview panel members will individually review the CV and the Motivation Letter enclosed with the application of the candidate (5 minutes) and will score it properly accordingly to the overall quality of the CV and of the motivation letter in compliance with higher EU standards (keeping as main indicators for the evaluation the following: consistency, clarity, languages, studies, professional experience).

Before starting the interview the YPS 2017 BC Secretariat in each WB6 country will register the candidate. Therefore a copy of a valid passport issued by National Authorities is needed. Passports of another country than the one where the applicant works as a civil servant will not be acceptable.

The interviews will last for no more than 20 minutes per each candidate and they will consist of a 5 minutes personal presentation in English and a 10 to 15 minutes interview in English on the candidate's motivations, including the proposal made in the motivation letter for the common research to be performed during the exchange programme.

Interview: candidates will be asked very general questions about EU integration and Western Balkans, their field of activity within PA, their studies and professional background.

Candidates are first scored on a 10/10 basis by each member of the panel individually (i.e. each member of the panel scores individually each part of the interview):

- a) once for the review of CV/letter of motivation,**
- b) once for the personal presentation in English**
- c) once for the interview**

Maximum 10 points are awarded for each part.

The final mark of the candidate is calculated by making the mathematical average of the final score given by each member for each part this phase is divided in. **In total maximum 10 points are awarded for the 3 stages interview. Anyone below 6 is considered not to have passed the interview** and therefore cannot be considered as eligible. The interview counts for up to 100% of the final aggregate score. (ex. one candidate is scored 7 for the CV, 4 for motivation letter and 10 for the interview: his/her final score will be 7).

If there are relevant differences between scoring (more than 4 points) the final mark will be agreed upon consensus of the members.

d) Final Results

The final results of the selections will be made public within 1 working days from the end of the interviews stage (i.e. **11 November 2017**). A specific ranking will be published for each country, with indication of the exact number of awarded candidates for each country (as well as reserve lists)

How to calculate the final score?

FINAL AGGREGATE SCORE: The selection of candidates will be made on the basis of points awarded in the interviews, this means:

The Pre-selection stage (formal and administrative check for eligibility of applicants and complete applications) simply provides admission to or rejection from the other 2 stages of the Selections, but does not award any points;

The score on the English tests does not count for the final score. It is conceived as threshold to pass to the interview stage (see above p. 18);

The score on the interview counts for up to 100% of the final score. Each candidate will be evaluated separately with clear indications and comments by each member of the panel for each part the interview is divided in: review of CV/motivation letter; presentation; questions made by the panel;

Each member of the interview panel will fill an individual evaluation sheet with a clear indication of the scores given and clear comments and indicators explaining each decision.

IV) Indicative Overall Plan

Indicative Timetable

ACTIVITY	DATE
YPS 2017	
PRE NOTICE AND APPLICATION PHASE	25 September – 10 October 2017
PRE-SELECTION OF CANDIDATES (long listing)	11 October 2017
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST (short listing of candidates for interviews)	16-17 October 2017
INTERVIEWS	23 October – 10 November 2017
FINAL RESULTS	11 November 2017

Annex I - Evaluation Grid

<p>PRE-SELECTIONS</p> <p>RESULT: Admitted or Rejected</p>		<p>ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST</p> <p>Threshold B2 level</p>				<p>INTERVIEWS</p> <p>100% of the total score or 10 points available. Mathematical average of the three section for each member of the interview panel. Eliminated if less than 6 points or 60% as mathematical average of the 3 parts</p>		
<p>Ineligible candidate</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Not complete application</p> <p>=</p> <p>REJECTED</p>	<p>Eligible candidate</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Complete application</p> <p>=</p> <p>INVITED to English Language test</p>	<p>CAN follow or give a talk on a familiar topic or keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.</p>	<p>CAN scan texts for relevant information, and understand detailed instructions or advice.</p>	<p>CAN make notes while someone is talking or write a letter including non-standard requests</p>	<p>Total</p> <p>B2</p>	<p>Personal Presentation (10 points)</p> <p>Main indicators: Presentation skills, English language, professional background, Motivation and pro-European attitude, consistency and clarity</p>	<p>Interview (10 points)</p> <p>Main indicators: professional knowledge of EU polities and institutions, knowledge of integration process for WB6, SAA, challenges perspectives, motivation,</p>	<p>Review of CV/motivation letter (10 points)</p> <p>Main indicators: motivation, quality and relevance of common assignment topic proposal, academic background, professional activity,</p>