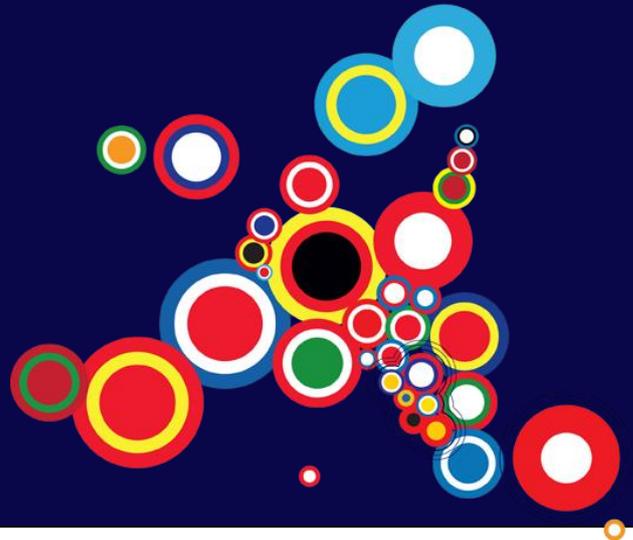




# INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

## Kosovo\*

### EU Support to Communities



#### **Action summary**

The action aims at supporting the creation of an inclusive multi-ethnic society in Kosovo, through socio-economic stability and community development initiatives and viable income and employment creation.

At the same time the effort within this action will contribute to joint efforts by the EU, and central and local Kosovo authorities in finding durable solutions for displaced persons, providing housing solutions and socio-economic inclusion for people still living in Collective Centres.

\*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

<b>Action Identification</b>	
<b>Action Programme Title</b>	Annual Action Programme for Kosovo 2018
<b>Action Title</b>	EU Support to Communities
<b>Action ID</b>	IPA 2018 /041 245/ 04 / Kosovo/ Community Stabilisation and Refugees Integration
<b>Sector Information</b>	
<b>IPA II Sector</b>	<i>Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights</i>
<b>DAC Sector</b>	15220
<b>Budget</b>	
<b>Total cost</b>	EUR 5 650 000
<b>EU contribution</b>	EUR 5 000 000
<b>Budget line(s)</b>	22.02 01 01
<b>Management and Implementation</b>	
<b>Management mode</b>	Indirect Management (component I) and Direct management (component II)
<b>Method of implementation</b>	
<i>Direct management:</i> <b>EU Delegation</b>	European Union Office in Kosovo Component II: Danish Refugees Council
<i>Indirect management:</i> <b>Entrusted entity</b>	Component I: International Organisation for Migration
<b>Implementation responsibilities</b>	European Union Office in Kosovo  International Organisation for Migration Danish Refugees Council
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Zone benefiting from the action</b>	Kosovo
<b>Specific implementation area(s)</b>	<b>Component I</b> - 38 Municipalities throughout Kosovo with a significant population of non-majority community members <b>Component II</b> –Municipalities of Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/Graçanicë
<b>Timeline</b>	
<b>Final date for concluding Financing Agreement(s) with IPA II beneficiary</b>	At the latest by 31 December 2019
<b>Final date for concluding delegation agreements under indirect management</b>	At the latest by 31 December 2019
<b>Final date for concluding procurement and grant contracts</b>	3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement, with the exception of cases listed under Article 114(2) of the Financial Regulation
<b>Final date for operational implementation</b>	6 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement

<b>Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement (date by which this programme should be de-committed and closed)</b>	12 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement		
<b>Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)</b>			
<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
Biological diversity	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 1. RATIONALE

### PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

#### Component I – Community Stabilisation Programme phase IV (CSP IV)

Kosovo still suffers from a weak economy characterised by limited job opportunities. While significant efforts have been done to stabilise the socio-economic situation, both by the Kosovo institutions and the international community presence in Kosovo, non-majority communities continue to face difficulties accessing income generation and employment opportunities. In the longer term this situation could potentially induce social unrests and become a vehicle for inter-ethnic tensions. Because of its sustainability and economic safety, employment in the public sector is viewed as one of the most “desirable” employment sectors. However, having in mind the limited absorption capacities of the public sector, development of private sector and support to businesses should lead to greater economic stability, and would create a more positive environment for reconciliation, while supporting the economic development of Kosovo which still remains one of the poorest in Europe.

The 2018 Kosovo Report indicates that despite GDP growth of more than 4% in the last 3 years, Kosovo remains the poorest economy in the region. High inactivity and low employment remain among key challenges. The overall activity rate stood at 37.6 % in 2015 and the employment rate was extremely low at 25 %. In addition to that, the unemployment rate is still very high at 31 % in 2017. It continues to be higher for women (37 %) than for men (29 %). The overall employment rate is 30 %, but only 13 % of women are in formal employment, compared to 47 % of men. Only 29 % of the employed have permanent work contracts, whereas 71 % work on short-term contracts. Unemployment is most prevalent among young people (15-24 years), with 51 % unemployed. The rates of unemployment are even higher in the Roma and Ashkali communities. The members of these communities usually work in the informal sector, holding unsecured, unqualified and low status jobs. Only a small number is registered as unemployed.

Against this background, vulnerable groups such as non-majority community members and moreover youth and women as well as returnees, are confronted with the various socio-economic challenges, the scarcity of employment opportunities and ethnic divisions inhibiting them from engaging in viable income-generating activities which would secure their livelihood.

The limited opportunities available for non-majority groups to participate in community initiatives and enhance the community around them, are singled out by non-majority groups in most communities, eager for opportunities to better themselves socially and economically.

Actions benefiting non-majority communities and returnees should produce a positive multiplier effect on the local economy. By supporting viable small enterprises for these groups, the local economy receives immediate stimulus. Firstly, by increasing economic activities, disposal income is created, which families can use for consumption which in turn supports businesses operated by the communities’ members. But more importantly these small enterprises create the opportunity for employment of other individuals and the potential for further expansion offering livelihood opportunities to greater numbers of community members.

The Ministry for Communities and Returns (MCR) is mandated to develop guidance and promote as well as implement legislation for the protection of the communities and the creation of conditions for return. While the Ministry continues to expand its capacities budgetary constraints remain a challenge.

The Municipal Officers for Community and Return (MOCRs) are responsible for community affairs and improving the livelihood of communities in their respective municipalities will be significantly involved in the action particularly at the field level addressing the needs of the communities they serve.

Broadly the action will support actors from civil society as the programme provides a platform through which individuals, communities and civil society organisations can identify needs and priorities, develop solutions and be provided with assistance to address these needs and priorities. The Ministry for Labour and Social Welfare through Regional Employment Centres are also stakeholders in the action as the action is also in line with their broad mandate of supporting employment creation measures.

#### Component II - Supporting durable solutions for Collective Centre (CC) residents in Kosovo phase II (CC II)

Despite progress made on finding durable solutions for displaced families within Kosovo, according to UNHCR December 2017 statistical updates, there remain 28 collective centres (CCs) accommodating just under 500 (52% male and 48% female) internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kosovo. Štrpce/Shtërpce municipality hosts the majority of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in collective centres, followed by the North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region and Gračanica/Graçanicë municipality. While durable solutions are being provided to all IDP families currently accommodated in collective centres in Štrpce/Shtërpce municipality through IPA 2014 action, the protracted displacement of IDPs in the municipalities of North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region and Gračanica/Graçanicë remains unresolved.

According to an IDP profiling exercise carried out under the guidance of the MCR of Kosovo, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council, 92% of families living in collective centres have been displaced since 1999 which constitutes the highest percentage of protracted displacement among IDPs in Kosovo. In addition, the majority of IDPs in collective centres prefer local integration as a durable solution, while only 1.5% indicate return to their place of origin as a preference.

However, collective centres currently do not provide adequate housing with many centres being in disrepair and lacking adequate infrastructure to enable a dignified living situation. In terms of socio-economic indicators, IDPs in collective centres also have some of the highest unemployment rates (62% with approximate breakdown of 52% male and 48% female) and report some of the lowest earnings and highest welfare dependency rates among the IDP population.

Given the particularly dire situation of IDPs in collective centre coupled with the lack of available funding by the Kosovo institutions, finding durable solutions for this IDP population remains a priority.

The action will therefore focus on three municipalities (Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/Graçanicë) with the highest concentration of IDPs in collective centres still waiting for a durable solution. The action will facilitate up to 70 IDP families (accommodated currently in 15 collective centres) to realise their preferred durable solution including provision of adequate housing, socio-economic and psychosocial support.

Public land allocation by municipal authorities has been identified as an essential precondition for the implementation of this action. Therefore the three target municipalities have shown strong support for the action by agreeing to allocate suitable public land for the construction of IDP housing solutions (see principal agreement for land allocation provided by Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/ Graçanicë municipalities).

This action represents the continuation of joint efforts by Kosovo institutions, the EU and the respective municipalities to facilitating durable solutions for the displaced in Kosovo in particular addressing the needs of displaced families in CCs.

Incorporating lessons learned from the Phase CC I action in Štrpce/Shtërpce municipality, including the collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESp) in regards to social housing standards, it is expected that Kosovo institutions will have increased capacity to provide durable solutions for the displaced and close accordingly all CCs.

The main stakeholders of the action are the MCR, which will co-finance the action together with Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/Graçanicë municipalities, who will support the coordination, implementation and monitoring of this action. The action will thus contribute to improvement in the implementation of Kosovo and EU plans and policies in the areas of human rights, and protection of non-majority communities.

## **OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE**

The current challenges and needs outlined above will be addressed directly by **Component I** of the proposed Action through activities aiming to support the creation of an inclusive multi-ethnic society in Kosovo, create income-generating opportunities for non-majority communities, promote the sustainable reintegration of returnees, all through supporting the socio-economic stability and community development initiatives, thereby enhancing (re)integration prospects and social inclusion.

Firstly, through bringing support to the creation and development of collective/associated businesses it will assist them in developing collective business operations, establish new value added production and benefit together through their maximised results and strengthened position.

Secondly, the action supports new or operational non-majority entrepreneurs to establish or enhance their production through material and know-how assistance, as well as the creation of business linkages and extended market access.

Thirdly, through the implementation of community level interventions the action will directly support a broad range of initiatives to address broader community concerns, priorities and needs, fostering social (re)integration opportunities among community members.

All activities are done in close cooperation with local authorities who play an important role each step of the process.

**Component II** will contribute to the sound implementation of strategies for displaced families in CCs by supporting the realisation of durable solutions for their social and economic integration. The action will be developed through multi-faceted interventions aimed at supporting a dignified and sustainable integration for up to 70 direct beneficiary families (142 individuals i.e. 73 male and 69 female) residing currently in CCs.

As indirect beneficiaries, the municipalities of Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/ Graçanicë will benefit from increased technical capacity to provide durable solutions and improved integration prospects for their IDP population.

Activities related to the realisation of main action results (housing, humanitarian assistance, income generation, social integration) will be implemented in parallel and in full coordination with respective municipal authorities and action beneficiaries.

## **RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES**

The action is a continuation of IPA support to non-majority communities with the aim of stabilising their socio-economic and employment prospects and inclusion of non-majority communities. This is in line with the Europe 2020 priorities particularly “Inclusive growth: fostering high employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion”. Furthermore the SEE 2020 strategy specifies that the objective of the Inclusive Growth pillar is to enhance employment through skills development, employment creation and labour market participation.

The **Indicative Strategy Paper for Kosovo 2014-2020** (Part IV) points out that human rights and inclusion of non-majority communities and vulnerable groups remains one of the key priority sectors. In its section 2.3 the paper states that an estimated 10,000 people displaced in the Balkans region have expressed their willingness to return to Kosovo. Furthermore, an estimated 17,000 people remain displaced within Kosovo and are still without durable solution. The main objective of IPA II interventions will be to enable sustainable livelihoods and the durable integration into Kosovo society for returnees, IDPs and refugees who want to return to Kosovo. Kosovo will not only need to provide land and housing solutions, but also improve access to education and employment opportunities for returnees, as well as other socially marginalised groups including women. IPA II will also continue to support the stabilisation of different communities in Kosovo through socio-economic and livelihood measures.

The **2018 Kosovo Report** highlights that Kosovo's legal framework broadly guarantees the protection of human and fundamental rights in line with European standards. However, additional efforts are needed regarding enforcement. Implementation of human rights strategies and legislation is often undermined by inadequate financial and other resources, particularly at local level, limited political prioritisation and lack of coordination. More needs to be done to effectively guarantee the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including Roma and Ashkali and displaced persons. Furthermore, the report notes that the non-settlement of property claims by displaced persons is an important factor explaining why there is no enabling environment for returning. In relation to Roma and Ashkali communities the report states that the

rates of unemployment are higher than the average in Kosovo and that adequate measures should be ensured to include them in the labour market.

This action is also fully in line with the **EU's Western Balkans Strategy** whereby one of the enlargement criteria requires for stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities.

This Action will also contribute to the implementation of the **EU Gender Action Plan II (GAP II)**, objective 14: "Access to decent work for women of all ages"; and objective 15: "Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship", among others.

Furthermore the action will be directly linked with the **MCR Strategy for Communities and Returns 2014-2018**. It specifically addresses one of the main Strategic Objective namely "2. Empowerment and stabilisation of communities in Kosovo" by providing social/economic assistance packages to returnees, members of the communities of return and non-majority community members. Furthermore it is stated that during the period of this strategic plan, MCR will identify the needs of current residents of collective centres with the aim of closing all collective centres and finding accommodation solutions for the families.

The action not only is designed to support entrepreneurship among these communities but also will provide support and incentive for the formalisation of economic activities. Furthermore the action will provide housing and socio- economic assistance for families residing in collective centres.

The proposed action builds on previous actions funded and implemented jointly between the MCR and the EU (IPA 2009, IPA 2011 and IPA 2014-on-going), thereby contributing to the sectorial approach defined by the Strategy for Communities and Returns 2014-2018, targeting both returnees and members of non-majority communities in recognition of their very real need for extended support mechanisms. The MCR has shown strong ownership of their Strategy, continuously increasing its financial commitments and being actively involved in its implementation.

## **LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Component I of this action, will build upon the results and lessons learned from and best practices developed from the previous phases of the EU-CSP programme. The success achieved in the previous phases are direct results of the programme's evolution through lessons learned, field work and developing innovative business approaches. Action improvements have systematically been the result of extensive consultation with non-majority communities, relevant municipal authorities and mainstream businesses.

Overtime CSP maintained those approaches and models that have proven to be effective while further developing innovations and addressing new opportunities identified during the previous phases in order to maximise the impact and efficiency of the action.

The programme has recognised the important role of local economic actors and in this regard, the involvement of local economic actors will continue as in previous action phases, and is expected to create linkages with targeted IDPs/refugees and entrepreneurs.

Furthermore in terms of lessons learned from previous similar actions the participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries is an important element in ensuring the quality and sustainability of the ventures supported as well as 'buy-in' at both community and individual levels. When practical, the action requires the participation of the beneficiary with the aim of increasing the ownership and long-term sustainability. On the income generational level, this generally means that the beneficiary will purchase a complementary piece of equipment that will be used in the supported business or association. It can also mean that they directly contribute to the purchasing of the requested equipment. At the community level the municipality should be required to contribute to the intervention by providing a portion of the funding.

The previous 3 phases of CSP programme (IPA 2009, 2011 and 2014) have been monitored and evaluated several times over the implementation period from 2010 to present.

The latest external evaluation, commissioned by the EU Office in Kosovo, was conducted during the last

quarter of 2017. The evaluation looked into the extent to which the CSP programme, through all three phases, has contributed towards minority communities` stabilisation and welfare in Kosovo as well as the overall performance of the programme. It was noted that the “the relevance of the CSP is confirmed throughout the three phases of the programme”. All interviewees, including beneficiaries, praised the CSP programme in that it responds to a top priority.

The CSP programme has demonstrated a remarkable level of effectiveness: 100% of beneficiaries visited are effectively running stable business and 100% of community interventions are regularly used by the communities. CSP has produced verifiable, durable and substantially positive changes in the lives of vulnerable minority communities. Start-up businesses are generating a livelihood for the individual families despite challenging business/trade environment.

Furthermore the evaluation noted that the “CSP efficiency is strong as CSP I & II have exceeded objectives both quantitatively and qualitatively. CSP III is also on the way to reaching its foreseen objectives.

Efficiency is, on the first place, owed to human performance. The same CSP staff is there from day one: individual and team dedication, professional attitudes are the ingredients without which no such results could be achieved.

While the programme received very strong scores by the evaluators, recommendations were made towards increasing the knowledge management, as the CSP implementation was evaluated to be a successful model of intervention. As noted by the evaluators, “this model is relevant to inclusive employment for isolated communities in the context of Kosovo, and to some extent in other Western Balkans countries facing similar stabilisation and employment challenges.”

CSP contribution to the promotion of human rights and gender equality has been significant as the action created strong opportunities for minority communities to enjoy rights to employment, education, inter-ethnic life and tolerance, while also empowering female-run businesses. The evaluation recommended to continue supporting and increasing the number of female-led business beneficiaries, addressing directly Kosovo`s employment gender gap, currently the highest in Europe.

Furthermore, the action`s contribution to return and reintegration of displaced persons was evaluated “with 100% of successful returnee and IDP beneficiaries, CSP has proven its capacity to adjust to a more vulnerable target group while helping return and reintegration programme in achieving sustainable objectives.” As per its success, “the CSP model should be presented at regional venues, in order to promote effective and sustainable return to neighbouring countries.”

Additionally, throughout all CSP phases, three Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) missions were concluded, each delivering very strong scores to the programme. The ROM monitors noted that “The action represents a good example of a successful and strong partnership between the Contractor, MCR and local authorities” and further indicated that the action should prioritise interventions that have the greatest potential for growth and employment generation, such as the production oriented businesses, which the current action directly addresses.

Component II of this action will build on lessons learned gained during the implementation of the ‘Supporting durable solutions for collective centre residents in Kosovo’, under IPA 2014, in Štrpce/Shtërpce Municipality, constituting the first phase of MCR`s efforts to support the closure of collective centres in Kosovo.

Allocation of land by municipal authorities remains a crucial pre-condition for the success of this action. In addition, based on previous experience, municipal willingness to allocate land with suitable building conditions and adequate infrastructure connections are equally important factors minimising implementation delays and construction cost.

It is worth mentioning that respective municipalities (Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/Graçanicë) have given their principal agreement for public land allocation for this action. The designated plots have been visited and found to be fully suitable in terms of adequate infrastructure and building requirements.

Moreover, given the aging population in collective centres and the combination of IDPs and social cases

accommodated in the centres, the action there is a need to adopt an integrated approach to housing, combining social housing standards and socio-economic integration prospects. By adopting social housing standards for the construction of municipality-owned apartment blocks in line with MESP laws and regulations, the maintenance and sustainability of such housing solutions is ensured and better prospects for reintegration achieved.

In addition to housing, the particularly vulnerable situation of the majority of IDPs and refugees in collective centres particularly in the areas of employment, social isolation and health also calls for targeted interventions in terms of tailored livelihood support, psychosocial counseling, youth activation and support to medical services.

MCR will build on lessons learned and best practice approaches implemented by IPA 2014 action in Štrpce/Shtërpce municipality including support to individualised livelihoods plans, activities and interventions improving access to health for the elderly in particular and continued psychosocial support throughout all stages of the action in order to ease the transition to independent living for IDPs and refugees in collective centres.

## 2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

### LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To contribute to the stabilisation of the socio-economic situation of non-majority communities in Kosovo.	Progress made towards meeting Copenhagen criteria	• Reports produced by the EU, the MCR, International Partners such as UN Agencies and OSCE	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<b>Component I</b> To create income-generating opportunities for non-majority communities throughout the value chain in key economic sectors in Kosovo.	% of small business activity in the target communities increased.	• Reports produced by the MCR as well as International Partners such as UN Agencies, OSCE and other relevant actors;	Members of non-majority communities make the best use of the assistance to increase their business production and reach new markets
<b>Component II:</b> To improve the living conditions, the settling and the fully participation in local community life of the vulnerable displaced families following their exit from collective centers in the Municipalities of Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan/ and Gračanica/Graçanicë.	% of vulnerable displaced families provided with durable solutions and enhanced housing living conditions	• Reports produced by the MCR as well as International Partners such as UN Agencies, OSCE and other relevant actors;	Action beneficiaries are able to fully integrate following their exit from the collective centres.  The security and political situation in Kosovo remains sufficiently stable
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<b>Component I</b> <b>Result 1</b> - Existing non-majority and inter-ethnic business associations/cooperatives/community	Number of business associations with new value-added chain in production and processing are established and supported.	• Business association/NGO registry records;	Willingness of business people from all communities to establish and maintain business

<p>initiatives and/or social enterprises are supported and/or new ones created.</p> <p><b>Result 2</b> - New or operational non-majority entrepreneurs supported to establish/enhance production and processing in economically advanced and high potential sectors, with a special focus on vulnerable groups such as returnees, women, and members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.</p> <p><b>Result 3</b> - Social (re)integration of community members facilitated through community actions of joint interest.</p> <p><b>Component II</b></p> <p><b>Result 1</b> - Housing solutions implemented for the vulnerable displaced families facilitating their exit from collective centres.</p> <p><b>Result 2</b> - The ability of the members of displaced families to access livelihood opportunities has been improved.</p> <p><b>Result 3</b> - The Municipalities of Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/ Graqanicë have increased technical capacity to support the sustainable integration of displaced and vulnerable families in the local community.</p>	<p>Number of start-up and operational businesses in target areas supported (disaggregated by sex and ethnicity)</p> <p>Number of sustainable longer-term employment positions created (disaggregated by sex)</p> <p>Number of priority community development interventions funded for the benefit of the wider communities in targeted areas.</p> <p>No of collective centres closed No of IDP families resettled</p> <p>No of socio-economic assistance packages.</p> <p>No of community and infrastructure interventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business registry records</li>   <li>• Action progress reports</li>   <li>• Reports produced by MoCR and action implementation team.</li>   <li>• Reports and statistics produced by the MCR and UNHCR;</li>   <li>• Action progress reports</li>   <li>• Reports produced by MoCR and action implementation team</li> </ul>	<p>relationships;</p> <p>Economic environment remains sufficiently stable for businesses to function and maintain employment levels;</p> <p>Municipalities are willing and able to allocate sufficient resources to ensure maintenance and sustainability of community interventions;</p> <p>Willingness of returnee and receiving communities to engage in community-based interventions.</p> <p>Respective municipalities allocate adequate public land for construction of housing solutions</p> <p>Beneficiaries are cooperative in terms of assessments and willingness to exit collective centers</p> <p>Willingness of action beneficiaries to engage in income generation counselling and skills upgrade</p> <p>Municipal authorities and local stakeholders participate in designing initiatives improving services for vulnerable families.</p>
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## DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

The activities foreseen under this action have been detailed per component.

### **Component I - Community Stabilisation Programme phase IV (CSP IV)**

This component should revolve around three main results further detailed below.

#### ***Result 1: Existing non-majority and inter-ethnic business associations/cooperatives/community initiatives and/or social enterprises are supported and/or new once created.***

In order to achieve Result 1 the action will provide support to business association/cooperatives/community initiatives and/or social enterprises to leverage economies of scale for groups of producers. This activity foresees constant mobile outreach, arranging specific meetings with existing business associations and groups of individual farmers and businesspeople to encourage cooperation and joint action. The Action will facilitate, where needed, the formalisation of spontaneously organised groups through legal registration with the relevant authorities. The Action will also provide support to business associations/cooperatives/community initiatives and/or social enterprises in terms of productive assets/business equipment as well as specialised capacity building to assist them in working more effectively and maximise their resources.

#### ***Result 2: New or existing non-majority entrepreneurs supported to establish/enhance production and processing in economically advanced and high potential sectors, with a special focus on vulnerable groups including returnees, women, and members of the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities***

To achieve Result 2 the action will provide the selection of new or existing entrepreneurs (women and men) support to upgrade and improve their services and products through provision of productive assets and equipment. It will ultimately result in improving their livelihood reduced unemployment and increased income levels at individual as well as non-majority community levels. In addition the action will provide specialised capacity building in order to increase their efficiency and effectiveness resulting in an increase of profitability and products range diversity.

Focus will be placed on sectors that offer a strong potential for growth in the context of Kosovo's economy such as: (i) Agro-Businesses: fruit and vegetable greenhouses, berries and forest fruits, horticulture, collecting/processing and packaging of herbs; (ii) Livestock: meat and dairy production and processing; (iii) Craft/construction: carpentry, processing/finishing of wood materials and products, building construction and plumbing, handy-craft activities; (iv) Tourism: preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and eco-tourism.

To achieve Results 1 and 2 the action will facilitate contacts between supported non-majority beneficiaries as well as majority value chain actors. These business linkages will be essential in supporting business expansion, sourcing materials to create added value to final products and ultimately distribution and sales of the final products. Efforts will be made to connect beneficiary/non-majority producers with those with greater operational access in Kosovo markets and beyond. Special attention will be paid to women producers who tend to have less access to networking opportunities in business.

#### ***Result 3: Social (re)integration of community members facilitated through community actions of joint interest***

To achieve Result 3 the action will support community level interventions that promote inclusivity and address entire community needs in coordination with local authorities to ensure ownership and sustainability. These interventions represent an opportunity to address broader community concerns and involve several communities in its outputs, while fostering social (re)integration opportunities among community members through economic development and business opportunities; Community interventions will be selected based on their benefit to the wider community and their role in helping promote integration and inter-ethnic reconciliation.

## **Component II - Supporting durable solutions for Collective Centre (CC) residents in Kosovo phase II (CC II)**

This component should revolve around three main results further detailed below:.

### **Result 1 - *Housing solutions implemented for the vulnerable displaced families facilitating their exit from collective centres***

In order to achieve Result 1 the action will provide support in development and realisation of beneficiary assessment and final selection in cooperation with respective municipal authorities. Furthermore the action will support municipal authorities in all stages of social housing i.e. design, procurement and actual works implementation. Joint monitoring between the action implementation team and municipal authorities will be conducted throughout works implementation.

### **Result 2 - *The ability of the members of displaced families to access livelihood opportunities has been improved.***

In order to achieve Result 2 the action will provide support towards finding durable livelihood solutions for up to 70 displaced families (142 individuals i.e. 73 male and 69 female). It will include provision of harmonised assistance packages food and non-food items and basic household appliances and furniture. In addition it will include income generation assistance and/or job placement opportunities in order to generate family businesses or improve job market access. A member of the family will undergo business development trainings to create an appropriate business plan, based on market needs and beneficiary capacities. Apprenticeships, internships and vocational education opportunities will also be offered to beneficiaries.

### **Result 3 - *The Municipalities of Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/ Graçanicë have increased technical capacity to support the sustainable integration of displaced and vulnerable families in the local community***

In order to achieve Result 3 the action will provide municipal authorities support in facilitating better access of action beneficiaries towards social services including health, youth, cultural and education services. Furthermore the action will facilitate open dialogue and community outreach activities in order to identify community priority needs. Community interventions will be selected based on their benefit to the wider community.

## **RISKS RELATED TO BOTH COMPONENTS I AND II**

Risk	Mitigation Measures
Deterioration of the political and the security situation in Kosovo.	In the event that tensions persist and the situation continues to deteriorate, potential reallocation of funds to non-affected areas will be considered.
Lack of willingness on behalf of central and local authorities to engage in action related activities	The action teams will maintain regular contacts with central and local counterparts in order to ensure their participation and ownership of the processes.

Lack of willingness of action beneficiaries to engage in action related activities	The action teams will conduct proper outreach and provide appropriate information and support during different stages of action implementation in order to ensure and explain the benefits of the action.
Municipal authorities and community representatives are not willing to participate in identifying community interventions	The action teams will maintain regular contacts with Municipal Offices for Return and Communities and community representatives to explain the benefits of all-community interventions and inter-ethnic relations
Limited absorption capacities at relevant central and local level institutions	The action will ensure proper capacity building measures (e.g. training, on-the-job coaching and mentoring ) during the entire implementation period

### CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- In relation to Component I, there are no conditions foreseen for implementation.
- In relation to Component II, the main condition for implementation is the allocation of adequate public land by Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/Graçanicë municipalities. The three municipalities have already given their principal agreement for land allocation.

## 3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At the central level the main institutional stakeholders of the **Component I** are the Ministry for Communities and Returns (has the main mandate for stabilisation of all communities living in Kosovo) and the European Union Office in Kosovo who will have the broad mandate for overseeing the action. At the local level the Municipal Officers for Communities and Returns (MOCRs) will be the main stakeholders in the action and have a broad role for supporting action activities/implementation, intervention identification and initial selection in coordination with the implementing partner. As implementing partner the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) will oversee the daily operations of the action and ensure the timely and prudent delivery of assistance to the beneficiaries.

Other stakeholders include the Ministry for Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) as in line with their broad mandate the action seeks to increase employment levels. Various United Nations agencies and international actors in the sectors, particularly UNHCR as the activities of the action are complementary to supporting their general mandate, will be stakeholders of the action. Local civil society organisations (CSOs) and local and international NGOs concerned with supporting returnees and non-majority communities including but not limited to OSCE, DRC, as well as locally established and developing business associations will all be stakeholders of the action.

The main institutional stakeholders involved in **Component II** are: (i) Ministry of Communities and Returns which has an overall mandate for communities and voluntary return; (ii) Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning as the relevant body on social housing regulations; and (iii) Municipalities of Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/ Graçanicë where individuals are residing in CCs and by which land was allocated and the integration of these individuals will be facilitated.

In addition, other stakeholders will be involved in the process: (i) DRC which is implementing the ‘Supporting durable solutions for collective centre residents in Kosovo’ action (IPA 2014) in Štrpce/Shtërpce and has been successfully implementing other EU-funded return actions in Kosovo and in the region, including the closure of collective centres in Serbia; (ii) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – supervises and coordinates protection issues for vulnerable groups; and (iii) families/individuals who are the beneficiaries in the integration process and without whose collaboration integration could not take place.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION METHOD(S) AND TYPE(S) OF FINANCING**

**Component I** of this action will be implemented through Indirect Management, with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) due to its significant experience in the sector.

In close cooperation with the Kosovo Ministry for Communities and Return (MCR) the organisation has successfully implemented the past phases of the EU Community Stabilisation Programming (EU-CSP I, EU-CSP II and EU-CSP III) as well as EU-Return and Reintegration in Kosovo (EU-RRK phase III, phase IV and an on-going phase V). The MCR has appreciated excellent relations with IOM throughout the implementation of joint actions ensuring programmatic coordination and maximisation of resources between the MCR and the EU funds. The existing synergies between the EU-CSP and EU-RRK programmes will be further enhanced during this phase, creating a broader and deeper impact of both programmes on the target beneficiaries and their communities.

The organisation has significant experience with implementing this particular type of programming from the initial post-conflict phases of Community Stabilisation Programmes (2002-2008 under CARDS funding) to the current action (2010 to current under IPA funding). Financing for the action should be provided in the form of an PADA for the full amount including 2.5 million Euros from the European Union to IOM, and a further 400,000 Euros provided by the Ministry for Communities and Returns to insure adequate funding is provided to this action.

**Component II** of this action is proposed to be implemented, through direct grant award, by Danish Refugee Council (DRC) due to its experience in the sector. This is in line with Article 195(1)(f) of the FR.

DRC is a long-lasting partner of the MCR and the EU in the minority rights and return/reintegration sector and is currently implementing the action leading to the closure of 5 collective centres in Štrpce/Shtërpce municipality. In previous actions, DRC has proven to be an excellent and reliable partner. They have established excellent relations with the Kosovo authorities both at central and local levels, and have been praised by all stakeholders for their prudent management of the action.

In addition, DRC has been particularly engaged in the management and closure of several CCs in the Western Balkans region through funding provided by the EU. Due to their in-depth knowledge and experience of closures of CCs, their established cooperation with target municipalities and the close and trustful relationship with displaced persons in Kosovo, DRC is particularly suited for the implementation of this action.

## **4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

### **METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)**

The European Commission may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this Action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the DG NEAR guidelines for evaluations. In

addition, the Action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures set in the Financing Agreement.

For **Component I** the action foresees regular monitoring from the MCR and the EU Office in Kosovo through direct participation in the action approval committee as well as regular reporting provided by the implementing agency. The action further foresees monitoring from the Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) teams from the EU. The implementing agency will be responsible for: regular monitoring of the programme beneficiaries to ensure that they are sufficiently supported and that regular contact is maintained in order to address any issues that might arise or to take remedial actions that may be required in order to ensure the supported enterprise, association or interventions remains operational.

The implementing agency will be required to conduct an evaluation to assess the overall impact of the action and its ability to provide the needed support. The assessment will be used to provide suggestions for the future implementation of similar programming and draw out lessons learned from the current phase. Action monitoring and evaluation will be based on a periodic assessment of progress in delivering specified action results and achieving action objectives.

For **Component II** the action foresees regular monitoring from the MCR and the EU office in Kosovo through direct participation during implementation as well as regular reporting provided by the implementing agency.

The implementing agency will be responsible for: (i) regular monitoring of the action beneficiaries to ensure that they are sufficiently supported and (ii) regular coordination with Leposavić/q, Zvečan/Zveqan and Gračanica/ Graçanicë municipalities. The implementing agency will be required to conduct an evaluation to assess the overall impact of the action and its ability to provide the needed support. The assessment will be used to provide suggestions for the future implementation of similar programming and draw out lessons learned from the current phase. Action monitoring and evaluation will be based on a periodic assessment of progress in delivering specified action results and achieving action objectives.

As per the EU Gender Action Plan, monitoring and evaluation will include assessment of the Action's impact on women and girls (as per indicator 4.1.2)

**INDICATOR MEASUREMENT/ RELATED TO BOTH COMPONENTS**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline (2017)</b>	<b>Target (2020)</b>	<b>Final Target (2022)</b>	<b>Source of information</b>
Progress made towards meeting Copenhagen criteria				
<b><u>Component I</u></b> % of small business activity in the target communities increased	5%	7%	10%	Reports produced by the MCR as well as International Partners such as UN Agencies, OSCE and other relevant actors
Number of business associations with new value-added chain in production and processing are established and supported	5	20	35	Business association/NGO registry records
Number of start-up and operational businesses in target areas supported (disaggregated by sex and ethnicity)	600	750	900	Business registry records
Number of sustainable longer-term employment positions created (disaggregated by sex).	800	1000	1200	Action progress reports
Number of priority community development interventions funded for the benefit of the wider communities in targeted areas	180	210	240	Reports produced by MoCR and action implementation team
<b><u>Component II</u></b> % of vulnerable displaced families provided with durable solutions and enhanced housing living conditions**	0%	60 %	85%	Reports produced by the MCR as well as International Partners such as UN Agencies, OSCE and other relevant actors

No of collective centres closed **	0	9	20	Reports and statistics produced by the MCR and UNHCR
No of IDP families resettled **	0	116	158	Reports and statistics produced by the MCR and UNHCR
No of socio-economic assistance packages**	0	50	80	Action progress reports
No of community and infrastructure interventions **	0	5	10	Reports produced by MoCR and action implementation team

\*N.B. for component I - the baseline includes contributions of CSP programme under IPA 2009, IPA 2011 and IPA 2014 assistance

\*\* Component II indicators includes data from IPA 2014 assistance Closure of CC in Štrpce/Shtërpce Municipality which is still ongoing

## 5. SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

This action is directly linked with the National Strategy for Communities and Returns 2014-2018. It specifically links with one of the four main Strategic Objectives namely "2. Empowerment and stabilisation of communities in Kosovo" as well as the MCR strategic plan, to identify the needs of current residents of collective centres with the aim of closing all collective centres. Furthermore the action is supporting the Kosovo institutions commitment to facilitate transfer of informal economic activities into formalised economic activities. Moreover, the Action underpins the sectorial approach defined by the Strategy for Communities and Returns 2014-2018 targeting both returnees and members of non-majority communities in recognition of their need for extended support for inclusiveness and (re)integration.

This Action (under both components) represents a continuation of previous assistance funded jointly by the MCR and the European Union Office in Kosovo. With the mandate to develop guidance, promote and implement legislation for the protection of communities and to create conditions for returns, the MCR is the lead institution in this Action. At the local level, the MOCRs are the responsible authorities for community affairs, and to improve the livelihood of communities in their respective municipalities. The role of the MOCRs is hence significant, especially regarding their involvement in the field addressing the needs of the communities they serve.

**Institutional arrangements and coordination** - in order to further improve the issues facing the non-majority groups in Kosovo, the MCR is involved at different levels with different stakeholders both inside and outside Kosovo. Such mechanisms are designed to improve conditions for multi-ethnic societies, reintegration and livelihood of non-majority communities as well as facilitate easier inter-ethnic and reconciliation activities. In December 2017, Kosovo established Inter-Ministerial Commission for Returns and Community affairs. The Commission is chaired by the MCR Minister and represented by Ministers from various ministries addressing various issues related to non-majority community stabilisation, security of non-majority returnees, access to education, health and livelihood.

At the local level, the municipal authorities are closely involved at all phases of implementation facilitating the process of beneficiary selection, assessment and approval, In particular the Municipal Officers for Community and Return (MOCRs) are responsible for community affairs and improving the livelihood of communities in their respective municipalities being significantly involved in the action particularly at the field level addressing the needs of the communities they serve.

**Regional coordination** - The MCR is involved at the Regional Initiative with the aim of finding durable solution for displaced persons from Kosovo. The initiative is supported by OSCE, UNHCR and the EU and it involves the representatives of Kosovo (MCR), Serbia, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The forum operates at two levels i.e. (i) the High-level Forum with the aim of agreeing a framework for co-operation in the context of the regional process as well as (ii) Technical Working Group with the aim of discussing and coordinating various issues in specific areas such as Property Rights, Personal Documentation, Security, Dialogue and Reintegration, Data Management Advisory Group, and Solutions Planning.

In conclusion, it is fair to indicate that all of the above steps (i-the action being a continuation of the same programme, ii-the action addressing the objectives of the National Strategy for Communities and Returns 2014-2018 and iii-existence of different coordination mechanisms at central, local and regional levels) create good basis for the MCR to move towards sector approach. However the capacities of the MCR, the MoCR and other stakeholders in the sector need further improvements and financial support which will be addressed by this action.

## 6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

**Component I** of the action will build on already existing CSP expertise and on previously achieved results, as female-run businesses have proven highly qualitative: with their economic activities are performing strongly and the business reputation they have earned placed women on equal ground with men. When CSP helps a woman start her own business, it does not just result in generating a regular income for the households, but it gives a chance for a woman to earn credit and respect from her customers. This result is even more meaningful in the context of Kosovo, which has the highest employment gender gap in Europe, characterising minority community females as the group with an even lower access to employment, compared to men. It is worth noting that this action will cover all 38 municipalities in Kosovo offering equal geographical opportunities to all communities throughout Kosovo.

This component will specifically target female headed enterprises and business associations. Women oriented organisations and NGOs will be contacted regarding the support available and actively encouraged to apply for support. By reaching out to women's organisation the action will be able to better support entrepreneurship amongst women as they have tended to be underrepresented in economic activity in Kosovo and therefore will benefit from the guidance and encouragement of these organisations. These applications for support will be prioritised throughout the application and support processes. Facilitating the participation of women in income generating activities further assists the stabilisation of communities as incomes earned by women tend to be invested in the household, rather than elsewhere. This is particularly true in the more remote areas covered by the action. Furthermore, by accessing and operating in isolated areas the action provides a mechanism to better facilitate the participation of rural women in economic activities.

Under **component II** gender issues shall be actively mainstreamed throughout the intervention within both target institutions/organisations and activities/outputs. At the municipal level, decision-making processes shall take place in full consultation with displaced individuals/families (women, and particularly displaced minority women). Efforts shall be made to further empower the gender focal points already established within the municipalities.

This component will take into account different gender needs when preparing all activities. Women, people with special needs, youth and the elderly will be specifically targeted for input on construction of housing, delivery of family assistance packages and provision of livelihoods support through dialogue in the form of focus group discussions and counseling. Socio-economic measures particularly will be tailored to equally take into consideration the specific needs of male and female beneficiaries.

## **MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS**

Component I of the action specifically sets out to address the needs and aspirations of non-majority community members. The target groups for the intervention are members of minority communities including Serbian, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani, Bosniaks, Turks, and Croats throughout Kosovo and Albanian Communities living in Northern municipalities of Kosovo. The action also foresees the active engagement and participation of vulnerable groups from these communities. The action will use intensive outreach activities to identify potential individual and community level beneficiaries.

Through the business support efforts, the action will continue to contribute to enabling minority communities to enjoy their rights to employment, most especially when it comes to the most vulnerable and excluded communities. By providing them with a unique start-up opportunity, the members of minority communities will be employed and create conditions for other employment in their communities.

Through the support to community initiatives, the action will continue to contribute at proving vulnerable groups with access to their rights to education and cultural preservation, which often translated into supporting school infrastructure improvement, keeping schools functional, safe and recreational all at the same time. Individual businesses also play an active role in training young employees to practice traditional skills as professional skills. This way, CSP is not only preserving the cultural heritage of ancestral trades but

also providing the vocational qualification that is in demand from the private sector but scarce on the job market.

Lastly, the action targets anti-discrimination rights and the promotion of interethnic dialogue through various forms of interethnic exchanges and business links. Interethnic socialisation, more than just dialogue is one of many other linkages that the CSP has successfully established and wishes to continue.

Component II of the action primarily targets minority families willing to integrate in their place of displacement in Kosovo. Kosovo's Constitutional Framework provides for protection of linguistic rights and the action will, wherever necessary, make use of different community languages. Since 2003 a system of "fair share" has been in use at municipal level, whereby a set percentage of the municipal budget should be spent directly on the minority communities. This aspect shall be taken into consideration by the action when negotiating with municipalities their co-financing contribution to the action. Tailored measures / positive actions shall be considered to counteract the high level of discrimination these communities are exposed to.

#### **ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY (AND IF RELEVANT OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)**

Component I of the action is designed to actively engage with and seek out cooperation with a wide swath of civil society actors including business associations, business networks, local NGOs and civil society organisations from the communities in order to identify in which ways they might benefit from the actions outputs/support. The action is positioned to provide a variety of support to these groups including the provision of business related trainings/technical assistance for business associations/networks as well as productive assets to enhance their functionality. Through community development initiatives the action will also involve consultation and cooperate with civil society organisations and local NGOs.

Under component II the involvement of civil society has been an integral part of previous return and (re)integration related actions and will continue to remain so under the proposed action. Civil society organisations provide assistance in inter-ethnic dialogue facilitation, community outreach, information dissemination, conducting joint trainings for returnee and receiving communities, and implementing community development through joint social activities.

#### **ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)**

Under component I in general, support should be provided to businesses that have a very limited or indeed a potentially net positive environmental impact. In relation to the Rio Marker on mitigation of the activities, the action qualifies as "significant" in that the equipment provided will help businesses to produce less greenhouse gases, while the Rio Marker on adaptation is not targeted. Furthermore, the newer more technologically advanced equipment provided to the enterprises is in general more efficient producing less waste materials and using less resources to operate and thus reduce the impact of the machinery, and by extension the business activities on the environment. They increase the efficiency of land use producing more vegetables per square meter of land and they reduce the strain on water resources using drop by drop watering technology as opposed to open field watering where water is lost through evaporation. Finally the polyurethane plastic sheeting used in the greenhouses can be recycled when it is time for it to be replaced. Due to the production orientation of the businesses to be supported through the action communities will be less vulnerable to external forces and better able to cope in the case of disasters.

Whereas for component II environmental issues shall be actively mainstreamed throughout the action. In line with the EU Directive, any work involving the reconstruction of dwellings and medium water supplies, and the upgrading or construction of rural roads may require an Environmental Impact Assessment. Care will also be taken to ensure that so far as possible construction techniques and materials are environment friendly. Particular attention shall be given to the disposal of waste construction materials.

In addition, energy efficiency of housing solutions provided will be a main concern to increase not only comfort of living and decrease heating costs, but also lower the consumption of energy. Energy-efficiency measures including proper thermal insulation, triple window glazing and high-quality roof insulation, an electrical system with low consumption lighting units as well as an innovative heating system have been prioritised already during the design of housing solutions in the IPA 2014 Action in Strpce/Shtërpce

Municipality.

## **7. SUSTAINABILITY**

The first component of this action, the CSP programme, was designed to support non-majority communities towards a more sustainable socio-economic integration in their respective communities.

As the issue of inter-ethnic relations can be extremely sensitive and therefore particular attention will be paid regarding any incidents that could harm trustful relations between majority and minority communities. In this regard, the Action will work closely with municipalities and local communities in order to ensure a harmonised response to the entire community needs.

Through the consultations and capacity building provided to beneficiaries and the specialised equipment delivered to selected enterprises, the action introduces new technology and techniques to the communities upgrading their technical capacities. By doing so the action secures economic livelihoods for individual community members. But it does not stop there; it also promotes the integration and diversification of the local and wider Kosovo economies through creating linkages and encouraging cooperation across geographic, cultural, and, ethnic boundaries. Greater economic integration coupled with concrete initiatives in the form of community initiatives that benefit both the target groups and will have a direct impact on the social environment by reducing isolation of minority communities and providing depoliticised opportunities for interethnic interaction. Finally, this increased dialogue and especially by facilitating the interaction of local authorities with the target groups, the former will be able to propose new policies that effectively address the needs of the communities they serve.

The sustainability of the action is moreover ensured by the ownership both at the level of communities through the beneficiaries themselves, but also MCR and MOCR through their constant cooperation in all steps of the action.

Previous phases of the CSP programme show that MCR's full involvement in all aspects of programming, financing, contracting and implementation proved efficient and indispensable in ensuring sustainability of the action. This approach is set to continue under this action as the MCR will also continue to fund the action as well as their continuous involvement in action activities and implementation. At the local/municipal level the Municipal Offices for Communities and Returns (MOCRs) will continue to work closely with the staff of the action in both (i) field activities outreaching to potential beneficiaries as well as (ii) screening and pre-selection of projects to be supported by this action.

The MCR staff will also conduct regular monitoring in the field with action staff and management in order to be actively engaged in the positive outputs of the action. The net benefit of this active engagement not only means that the ministry has increased ownership of the outputs but also plays a greater role in the activities that ministry staff will increasingly and ultimately take over from the international actors.

Previous phases of the CSP programme show that sustainability is very strong with 100% success rate from 2010 to this day. From the view point of the impact in the ground, previous similar actions have shown very positive results in terms of longer-term sustainability. While all small businesses are generating regular incomes, their economic success differs in various ways: depending on the size of their business, their geographic location and the markets they target, beneficiaries have proven capable to (i) generate monthly profits, (ii) create additional employment, (iii) reach regional and international markets and (iv) show a strategic development vision.

The action will support sustainable employment by providing small business ventures in the targeted communities with productive business assets and equipment.

The effective selection process is applied to start-up ventures and to the expansion of operational businesses which, through their expansion are able to generate new long-term employment while at the same time securing the longer-term employment of those currently employed in the enterprise. The community initiatives will secure employment by providing equipment used at the community level (schools, health houses, kindergartens etc.) by members of the returns and receiving communities.

For component II of this action, the MCR remains committed to fulfilling its mandate within the return and reintegration process, and addressing one of its priorities to close CCs. This creates a sense of ownership and responsibility in the process. MCR has confirmed that it will co-finance the action with € 0.25 million.

In addition, three target municipalities have given principle agreement related to allocation of public land for the construction of housing with the view of closing 15 collective centres. All three municipalities are fully committed to assist during the implementation of the proposed action and the integration process.

Investment commitment from two key authorities (central and local) is likely to ensure future interest and thus sustainability of the long term social integration of these families/individuals. Of a particular importance for sustainability of the action is the involvement of municipal authorities in facilitating access to health, social services and education needs for the families, which has been very well supported in other actions.

The comprehensive approach of the action, incorporating housing, economic development, social integration and capacity building, has been specifically designed to foster a long-term sustainable solution for the overall livelihoods of the beneficiaries.

## **8. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY**

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the Action. The implementation of the communication activities shall be the responsibility of the IPA II beneficiary, and shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the Action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the EU communication and visibility requirements in force. All stakeholders and implementing partners shall ensure the visibility of EU financial assistance provided through IPA II throughout all phases of the programme cycle.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives, as well as the benefits of the action for the general public. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Visibility and communication aspects shall be complementary to the activities implemented by DG NEAR and the EU Delegations in the field

It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to keep the European Union Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities. The beneficiary shall report on its visibility and communication actions in the report submitted to the IPA monitoring committee and the sectorial monitoring committees.