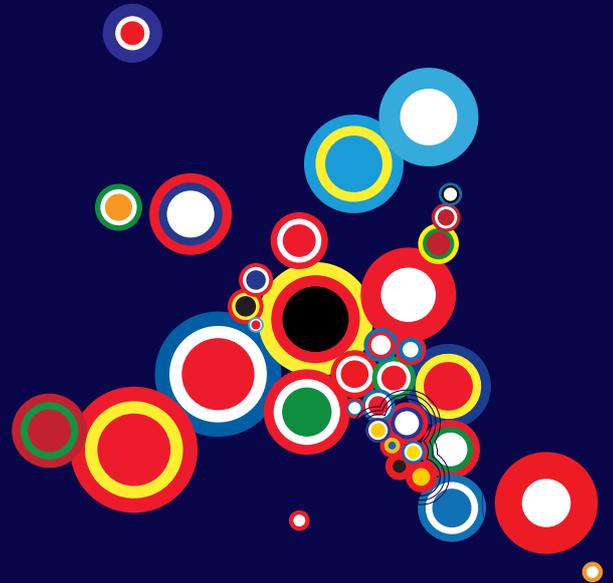




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

TURKEY

Town Twinning between Turkey and the EU



Action Summary

This action on Town Twinning is relevant both in the context of public administration reform and for the promotion of dialogue between Turkey and the EU. Its objective is to create sustainable structures for exchange between local administrations in Turkey and EU Member States in areas relevant for EU accession. With one technical assistance and one grant scheme component, the following results shall be achieved: (1) the capacity of Turkish institutions with roles in town twinings with the EU will be improved in structural terms; (2) relations with key partners in the EU and Turkey for town twinning will be sustained, including by strengthening institutionalised networking structures; (3) the capacity of Turkish local authorities will be improved in areas relevant for EU accession and best practices will be disseminated; and (4) the quantity and quality of town twinings involving Turkish local administrations will increase, including effective promotion and involvement of key stakeholders such as civil society and citizens at local level.

Action Identification	
Programme Title	Annual Action Programme for Turkey 2014
Action Title	Town Twinning Between Turkey and the EU
Action Reference	IPA/2014/ 031-874/1/ TR/TownTwinning
Sector Information	
ELARG Sectors	Democracy and Governance
DAC Sector	43030 - Urban development and management
Budget	
Total cost	EUR 4.500.000
EU contribution	EUR 4.050.000
Management and Implementation	
Method of implementation	Indirect management
Indirect management: Responsible Unit or National Authority/Implementing Agency	Central Finance and Contracts Unit (CFCU) Ms. Emine DÖĞER (Acting PAO-CFCU Director) Eskişehir Yolu 4.Km 2180. Cad. (Halkbank Kampüsü) No: 63 C-Blok 06510 Söğütözü / Ankara / TURKEY
Implementation responsibilities	Ministry for EU Affairs Bülent Özcan Director-Project Implementation Directorate - Ministry for EU Affairs Co-beneficiaries: Union of Municipalities of Turkey Bahar Özden Expert International Relations Department Tel: 419 21 00/375 Fax: 419 21 08 Gsm: 532 582 19 09 Address: Tunus cad. No:12 06680 kavaklıdere Ankara Union of Provincial Services Bülent Boztuğ Strategy Development Manager (Union of Provincial Services) e-mail: bulent.boztug@vilayetler.gov.tr Tel: +90 312 231 36 76 Fax: +90 312 231 36 79
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	Turkey
Specific implementation area(s)	Turkey
Timeline	

Deadline for conclusion of the Financing Agreement	At the latest by 31 December 2015
Contracting deadline	3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing agreement
End of operational implementation period	6 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing agreement

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Turkey has been a candidate country for EU membership since 1999 and accession negotiations were opened on 3 October 2005. In the last decade a considerable effort has been made in order to meet the EU conditionality. At the central level, numerous legal reforms have been achieved in order to meet the EU standards. Regarding the EU acquis, 14 chapters have been opened up to the present.

Although there has been an arduous effort in the central administration, these efforts cannot lead to sufficient effects at the local level. According to the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), “over 60% of decisions taken at the European level have a direct impact on municipalities, provinces, and regions.”¹. Therefore, local administrations have also important roles with respect to the implementation of the EU acquis at local level.

Besides legal and institutional changes at local level, it is important for local authorities in Turkey to observe how EU standards and policies are implemented in the EU member states and to transfer and adopt the good practices. In the Turkish institutional system the Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT) has a mission -as part of its mandate- to support the municipalities on the way to accession to the EU. UMT is also member of / associated to the European level CEMR. Other institutions which play a role in reinforcing the capacity of local administrations are the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Union of Provincial Services.

Local authorities in Turkey have launched town twinning relations with their counterparts in the EU member countries. However, no systematic analysis and action planning has been done to date on how the legal and financial environment could be improved to further promote sustainable town twinning and exchange at the level of local authorities. Moreover, since Turkey is not yet participating in the 'Europe for Citizens' Union Programme, which provides support town twinning activities, there is no support mechanism for town twinning activities of the Turkish local authorities. Local authorities in Turkey try to get involved in town twinning relationships by their own resources. Besides, in recent years central institutions such as Ministry for EU Affairs, Ministry of Interior and Union of Municipalities of Turkey have implemented projects which also cover town twinning programmes and the local authorities may participate. There is a need to develop the institutional capacity of key institutions and to thereby further promote and sustain twinning initiatives between Turkish and EU local authorities.

In practice town twinning generally conceived rather symbolic relationships than being effective collaboration between partner municipalities. The main reasons for this could be summarized as the inefficient capacity of municipalities to run international cooperation, lack of citizen involvement and lack of financial resources. Considering international municipal cooperation as an important tool to foster civil society dialogue and to contribute accession process to the EU at the very local level by enabling exchange of knowledge and experience comprising both municipalities and relevant civil society organizations, the support for effective twinning mechanisms would have an important contribution to public- civil society cooperation.

¹ http://www.ccre.org/docs/Local_and_Regional_Government_in_Europe.EN.pdf

Another problem is that municipal partnerships usually seen as too much of an inner circle tool, which means the partnership is limited to the municipal organization leaving the community out. However the overall objective of an international municipal partnership should be seen as a tool bridging the cities and communities together, and mobilizing the dynamics of the civil society. There is a need to create a convenient environment for municipalities and civil society organizations (CSO) to work together, share responsibilities and handle the partnership in close cooperation. The more social groups involved the more support there will be for a sustainable partnership.

Another related problem is the insufficient EU vision in the local administrations in Turkey. Without direct EU project implementation experiences and lacking opportunities for exchanges with EU counterparts, an EU perspective is not reflected sufficiently in local authorities' strategic plans or other relevant documents. Many local authorities have little awareness of EU policies which would need to be implemented at the local level. Likewise, most local authorities are not aware of the priority themes of the CEMR on which many municipalities inside the EU are involved as they had so far little opportunities to exchange with EU counterparts on these topics and relevant best practices.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The IPA II Indicative Strategy Paper for Turkey emphasizes that Turkey should continuously develop the administrative capacity in order to ensure proper implementation of the EU legislation. In this context, the process of public administration reform should continue, focusing on reorganising the public sector and ensuring the development of professional administration, both at national and local level. In particular, under the Democracy of Governance sector, “promotion of town-twinning with EU counter-parts” is highlighted as one of the priority actions for IPA II financing.

Moreover, this action will facilitate horizontal support to other sectors under the IPA II Strategy Paper. By involving local authorities and a large number of other local stakeholders in twinnings with EU counterparts on themes such as local governance and citizenship, equality of women and men in local life, local service provision, resource efficiency and environment, and on topics linked to economic, social and territorial cohesion, it is envisaged that more local authorities will have improved awareness and capacity to get involved in IPA II-financed actions under other sectors priorities.

In its Enlargement Strategy 2013-2014 the European Commission has stated under the section on “functioning of institutions guaranteeing democracy” that more needs to be done to strengthen participatory democracy and establish national platforms for EU-related reforms that build a consensus across parties and wider society to support the major reforms required. Accordingly, the enlargement countries also need to find an appropriate balance between central, regional and local government that best supports implementation of reforms and the delivery of services to citizens. The role of regional and local authorities in the EU alignment process and eventual application of EU rules is also key. It also states that public administration reform is vital.

Last Annual Progress Report (2013) mentions that the "the law on Metropolitan Municipalities [...] extended the scope of the municipalities' competences, thus partially addressing the Council of Europe criticism of some small municipalities' weak capacity to deliver public services." Under the section on Public Administration it also mentions that "the Turkish government has launched a series of projects and actions aiming at increasing the efficiency of public administration." The proposed action will help to further improve the capacity of local administrations and thus help to respond to some of the shortcomings identified in the Progress Report.

As regards strategies by the Turkish authorities, the tenth National Development Plan (2014-2018) states that “The main goals of Strategic management in Public Sector are to increase the effectiveness of implementation of strategic management in public administrations and putting accountability into practice at all stages of management cycle from planning to monitoring and evaluation. Main principles are to increase the pace and quality of public services and to ensure participation, transparency and citizen satisfaction to achieve these goals”. In this context, it is of vital importance to improve the administrative capacity of the local authorities for effective implementation of the EU acquis as over 60% of decisions taken at the European level have a direct impact on municipalities,

provinces, and regions, and 70% to 80% of public investments in Europe are made by local and regional authorities.²

The National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA, 2008) declares that “In order to achieve a transparent and effective administrative system, work for the adoption of Law on General Administrative Procedures will continue. In this context the Law on Administrative Legal Procedures will also be amended. The NPPA also states that “Effective implementation of the legislation regarding the restructuring of the central administration and transferring authority to the local administrations in an effective way, adopted earlier, will continue.” In this framework, “Municipality Law” (2005), “Metropolitan Municipality Law” (2005), “Law on Special Provincial Administration” (2005), “Law on Local Authority Associations” (2005), and “Law on Share Given to Special Provincial Administration and Municipalities from General Budget Tax Revenues” (2005) have already been enacted.

In this context of continuous local administration reform supported by the Turkish government, the action for enhancing sustainable structures for increased exchange between Turkish local authorities and EU counterparts can make an important contribution to integrate an EU perspective in ongoing reform processes while supporting participation of stakeholders at the local level.

SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

Concerning key strategies and legal reforms relating to this stand-alone action, please see section 'Relevance'.

Concerning institutional arrangements, Ministry of EU Affairs has the overall coordination role for Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU and functions as National IPA Coordinator for EU pre-accession assistance to Turkey. MEUA has also experience with town twinning from previous projects. The ongoing project on "Building Capacity for EU Affairs in Governorates" entailed a number of activities involving town twinning between the EU and Turkey. For more detailed information, please see www.vabpro.org

Article 74 of the Municipal Law allows international partnerships, subject to the formal decision of the Municipal Council and approval of MoI and MFA. The Ministry of Interior coordinates the approval procedure, grants this approval and publishes a list of approved town-twinning on a regular basis.

The law on unions of local authorities (2005) provides for a nation-wide union to defend and protect the interests of local authorities, respectively municipalities and special provincial administrations; only a single union may be established (art.20). On the basis of this provision, two unions have been created at the national level: the Union of Municipalities of Turkey, and the Union of Provincial Services. The purpose of these unions is to develop the awareness for local government in the public opinion and a lobbying activity in favour of local authorities, to influence the legislative process, to guide local authorities in their activities and disseminate knowledge.

The Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT), established as an association in 1945 became a public legal entity in 2005, in compliance with art. 20 of Law No: 5355 on Local Authorities Union as part of the Local Authorities Reform Process has all of the 1396 municipalities in Turkey as its natural members. Among UMT's main tasks are: giving opinion during the preparation of legislation effecting and relating the municipalities on the basis of the European Charter of Local Self-Government; providing consultancy services on legal, technical and other related municipal issues; collaborating with world organisations and national local authority associations abroad to improve municipal international cooperation; supporting municipalities on the way to accession to the European Union; and organising trainings for mayors, municipal councillors and personnel.

UMT is a member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), which has among its core themes of work: democracy, citizenship and enlargement; local and regional governments as employers and service providers; resource efficiency and environment; and economic, social and

² http://www.ccre.org/docs/Local_and_Regional_Government_in_Europe.EN.pdf

territorial cohesion. It is also a member of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), which represents and defends the interests of local governments on the world stage, regardless of the size of the communities they serve. The Mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality is the current President of UCLG and UMT is a member of the Middle East-West Asia (MEWA) Section of UCLG.

Union of Provincial Services of Turkey (UPS) established as public legal entity in 2005, in compliance with art. 20 of Law No: 5355 on Local Authorities' Union comprises of the governors and a representative of provincial councils. UPS's decision making body is the general council composed of governors of 51 provinces and one elected representative from each general provincial council of 51 provinces thereby bringing the total numbers of representatives to 102. The natural chairman of the general council and also of UPS is the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior (MoI). The Law on Unions of Local Governments provides for a clear and well defined role on behalf of, and in relation to, UPS's members: "nationwide union for SPAs may...represent the respective groups of local governments in order to protect the interests of local governments, assist their development, train their personnel and provide opinion in legislative preparation". They may also: "provide guidance to local governments, encourage assistance and cooperation between local governments, exchange of technical knowledge and administrative experiences, assist in dissemination of best practices, support SPAs in relation to Turkey's accession to EU".

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Previous EU-funded projects which each entailed a component for town twinning between Turkish and EU local authorities are: "Support to Local Administration Reform" (MEDA 2002) and "Support to Further Implementation of Local Administration Reform in Turkey" (IPA 2007) which were implemented by the Ministry of Interior as well as "Building Capacity for EU Affairs in Governorates" (IPA 2009) the 'Istanbul on the Path to EU' project implemented by MEUA. All of these projects aimed to contribute to the establishment of partnerships between the EU member countries and Turkish provinces for exchanging experience regarding the implementation of the EU acquis at local level. The Union of Municipalities in Turkey was a co-beneficiary in "Support to Further Implementation of Local Administration Reform in Turkey" and was a member of the project steering committee in the other projects.

These previous projects have provided an opportunity for Turkish local authorities to create partnerships with EU counterparts and some Turkish local authorities have started to implement common projects and activities. Moreover, some local authorities have created sustainable relations with their counterparts. However, these success stories are limited due to the lack of financial resources, planning and thematic approach. In other cases, sustainable cooperation could not be achieved. Consequently, while building on previous efforts and contacts, this IPA 2014 action will seek to bring town twinnings between Turkey and the EU to another level by building the capacity of key institutions and connecting individual town twinning initiatives to existing institutional structures at Turkish and European levels while focusing on thematic topics that are part of a common agenda of local authorities that are members of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. In this framework, a grant mechanism through which the local authorities implement thematic small-scale actions agreed with their EU counterparts is likely to lead to more concrete and sustainable partnerships.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To improve administrative capacity at local level in the EU Accession process.	Progress achieved in meeting the political criteria related to government at level of local administrations.	Annual Progress Report (European Commission)	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
To create sustainable structures for exchange between local administrations in Turkey and EU Member States in areas relevant for EU accession	Number of local authorities actively involved in EU-related activities of UMT Number of CEMR events/year in which representatives of Turkish institutions participated	UMT statistics	Continuation of Turkey's accession process The target groups of the Programme participated actively
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Result 1: The capacity of key institutions for town twinnings with the EU (MEUA, UMT, UPS and MoI) will be improved, and a road map will be published to give guidance for further structural improvements.	Number of participants/year of MEUA, UMT, UPS and MoI representatives in town twinning related capacity building events	Ad hoc surveys conducted by MEUA (during implementation of the action with the support of TAT)	The target groups of the Programme participated actively Continuation of support by Turkish Government and EU authorities for strengthening dialogue and cooperation between local authorities.
Result 2: Relations with key partners in the EU and Turkey for town twinning will be sustained, including strengthened networking structures.	Number of official town twinning agreements between local authorities in Turkey and in EU countries.	Database of Ministry of Interior on town twinning	
Result 3 The capacity of Turkish local authorities will be improved in areas relevant for EU accession and best practices will be disseminated.	Number of grantees that have institutional contact point for EU affairs or for town twinning with the EU	TA team monitoring reports.	
Result 4: The quantity and quality of town twinnings involving Turkish local administrations will increase, including effective promotion and involvement of key stakeholders such as civil society and citizens at local level.	% of grantees that have developed a planning document for future town twinning activities relating to EU acquis or CEMR priority themes Number of Turkish municipalities reached with information activities promoting town twinning with EU counterparts.	TA team monitoring reports Source – TA team monitoring reports	
ACTIVITIES	MEANS	OVERALL COST	ASSUMPTIONS

<p><u>Activity block 1:</u></p> <p>Capacity building activities on town twinning with the involvement of MEUA, UMT, MoI and UPS (assessment of legal and financial framework, trainings, workshops, study visits to CEMR and key membership in EU member states, development of a roadmap for structural improvements on TR-EU town twinning cooperation)</p> <p>Promotion of the action, of UMT's mandate and CEMR priorities (dissemination of action related information, via UMT to local authorities, via media announcements, preparation of visibility materials, effective use of social media, conducting information activities for organized citizens and local authorities on best practices, awareness raising activities, an international twinning conference with participation of CEMR and local authorities' representatives from EU member states)</p> <p>Preparation of grant scheme and assistance in its implementation.</p> <p><u>Activity block 2:</u></p> <p>Implementation of small scale twinning actions under the grant scheme</p> <p>At least 20 grant actions involving local authorities from Turkey and from the EU, including visits in partner towns, thematic exchanges on joint topics (along the lines of CEMR priorities), with involvement of civil society stakeholders</p>	<p>Service contract and grant scheme</p>	<p>Total cost 4.500.000 € EU Contribution 4.050.000 €</p>	<p>Local authorities willing to cooperate and ready for the assistance.</p> <p>Continuation of support by Turkish Government and EU authorities for strengthening dialogue and cooperation between local authorities.</p>
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ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

The first component of the action will be a service contract for Technical Assistance to support capacity building of MEUA, UMT and UPS as well as for local authorities and to assist MEUA and UMT during the implementation stage. In the initial phase of the action the TA will carry out in participatory manner an analysis on the legal and financial framework for town twinnings between Turkey and the EU, including initial recommendations on structural improvements. Capacity building activities for MEUA, UMT and UPS (with the involvement of MoI, where appropriate) shall help to increase these institutions capacities to support and coordinate local authorities in town twinning activities with EU counter-parts, in engaging on topics that are relevant in the context of the EU accession process (see in particular CEMR priority themes), and to strengthen the connections to the European CEMR network. Moreover, the TA will be used in promotion of the activity, to ensure EU visibility and for the management of the grant scheme for smooth implementation of the activity as a whole.

The second component will be a grant scheme for small scale town twinning action between Turkish and EU local authorities to improve the capacity of local authorities in Turkey in terms of EU acquis alignment. With the implementation of the grant scheme, effectiveness of existing town twinning activities will be enhanced, good practices in the EU countries will be transferred and the interactions between local authorities will be improved.

Town twinning activities are important for creating “people to people, citizen diplomacy initiatives” and building a citizen diplomacy network. The grant scheme will support small-scale actions that are in line with the priority topics of CEMR and directly linked to EU acquis chapters. This thematic approach will facilitate finding local authorities in EU member states that work on similar topics in the framework of CEMR and thus provide an opportunity to gain concrete results. Also, through active involvement of UMT which is a member of CEMR, Turkish participation in this network will be strengthened. The selection of the thematic priorities will be finalised with the technical assistance team. As an indication, currently the main priorities of CEMR include:

Governance and citizenship, equality of women and men in local life, local and regional governments as employers and service providers, future of the workplace, resource efficiency and environment, waste, water, air quality, sustainable territorial and local development, cohesion policy, intergenerational dialogue, diversity and integration. For all small-scale actions under the grant scheme the participation of local stakeholders such as civil society organisations, universities and other educational institutions, development agencies, cultural institutions, local businesses will be actively promoted.

Under the grant scheme, the maximum grant amount will be EUR 130 000. At least four activities of exchange have to be foreseen per small-scale action and the activities must serve as a basis for future initiatives and actions between the towns involved.

The final beneficiaries of the action will be the Turkish local authorities who have already built or intent to build town twinning relations with EU member states’ local authorities. The grant scheme will aim to reach the local authorities and let them carry their relation one step further, rather on acquis based concrete projects/practices, EU policies and standards.

Regarding the main risks, success of the action's implementation will depend on the interest and availability of local authorities in EU member states to engage in town twinning activities with Turkish counter-parts. The risk will be mitigated by involving CEMR in the action, thus using this EU-wide platform's contacts and aligning the thematic focus of the grant scheme with topics that are commonly shared priorities among CEMR members. Furthermore, the database of the UMT, which was reinforced through the previous EU-funded project, should be used extensively.

As regards pre-conditions, promotional activities for the grant scheme need to be carried out on equal basis for all local authorities in Turkey, regardless of the region and political affiliation of the mayor. For the distribution of grants, there should be at least one municipality with a mayor from each of the political parties represented as a political group in the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The beneficiary of the “*Town Twinning between Turkey and the EU*” is Ministry for EU Affairs. The Union of Municipalities and the Union of Provincial Services will be co-beneficiaries of the action. MEUA's Directorate for Project Implementation will be responsible for the implementation. MEUA will coordinate the implementation of the activity, ensuring the involvement of UMT, UPS and (where relevant MoI) and participation of all concerned institutions and other relevant stakeholders. The Technical Assistance Team will be established for the capacity building to MEUA, UMT, UPS and local authorities, for the promotional activities and to assist MEUA in the implementation of the grant schemes.

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

The Project will be implemented through one Technical Assistance service contract and through one grant scheme. 10% co-financing will be provided by the national authorities both for the service contract and for the grant scheme.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

At the grant scheme level, in order to monitor the grant contracts a monitoring team will be formed within MEUA together with the Technical Assistance Team throughout the implementation. At the activity level, a *Steering Committee* will be formed for with the participation of from the EUD, MEU, CFCU, Union of Municipalities of Turkey, Union of Provincial Services and Ministry of Interior.

In addition, an ex-post evaluation of the Action by independent evaluation team will be foreseen.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Description	Baseline (year)	Last (year)	Milestone 2017	Target 2020	Source of information
Progress achieved in meeting the political criteria related to government at level of local administration		NA	NA	Limited progress noted in Turkey's Progress Report	Limited progress noted in Turkey's Progress Report	Annual Progress Report (European Commission)
Number of local authorities actively involved in EU-related activities of UMT		51 (2010)	81 (2013)	100	130	UMT statistics
Number of CEMR events/year in which representatives of Turkish institutions participated		2 (2010)	3 (2013)	5	7	UMT statistics
Number of official town twinning agreements between local authorities in Turkey and in EU countries.		388 (2010)	533 (2013)	565	600	Database of Ministry of Interior on Town twinning
Number of grantees that have institutional contact point for EU affairs or for town twinning with the EU		N/A	N/A	10	20	UMT or MEUA and/or TA team monitoring reports
% of grantees that have developed a planning document for future town twinning activities relating to EU or CEMR priority themes		N/A	N/A	5	10	TA team monitoring reports
Number of Turkish		N/A	N/A	200	250	Source - TA team

Indicator	Description	Baseline (year)	Last (year)	Milestone 2017	Target 2020	Source of information
municipalities reached with information activities promoting town twinning with EU counterparts						monitoring reports and UMT/MEUA statistics

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

According to the OECD-DAC's methodology, in the activities foreseen, environment and climate change (mitigation and/or adaptation) should be classified as "not targeted" (Rio markers), as these issues are not relevant in the context of this action. The activities on this Action Programme are envisaged not to have any negative effect to climate change

ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY (AND IF RELEVANT OTHER NON-STATE STAKEHOLDERS)

For enhancing the multiplier effects of the town twinning activities CSO's will be one of the important stakeholders. While local authorities will be the main beneficiary of the grant scheme component, it should be compulsory to include at least one non-state actor (civil society organizations, chambers, universities, etc) with regard to the subject in each of the small-scale twinning actions financed under the grant scheme.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender balance will be sought on all the managing bodies and activities of the action, and importance will be given during all stages of contracting and implementation. Equal participation of women and men will be secured in the design of activities and access to the opportunities they offer. Promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities will be considered when preparing guidelines for applicants for the calls for proposals. The selection criteria for the grant schemes will favour projects that demonstrate a positive impact on equal opportunities. Appropriate guidance will be included in guidelines to applicants. All contractors shall be requested to provide monitoring data recording the participation of men and women in terms of expert inputs (in days) and of trainees/beneficiaries benefiting under the project (in days) as an integral component of all activity progress reports.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

According to the Turkish Constitutional System, the word minority encompasses only groups of persons defined and recognized as such on the basis of multilateral or bilateral instruments to which Turkey is a party. This action will contribute to the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms without any discrimination. Throughout the action, minorities and vulnerable groups will be invited for active participation in and benefiting from the activities, whenever appropriate. Whenever appropriate and possible, measures will be taken to enable children's and women's participation to the activities.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

In previous town twinning projects implemented by MEUA and MoI, it has been observed that if the local authorities implement specific activities with their counterparts and share experiences mutually, this sort of cooperation has a sound platform to be sustained. In this action, sustainability will be further enhanced by linking up to and further strengthening existing networking structures for town twinning, in Turkey through involvement of UMT and UPS and for connecting to the European level through cooperation with CEMR. By linking the choice of thematic topics to the priority areas of municipalities united under CEMR, sustainable partnerships among local authorities will be facilitated. Moreover, within the grant scheme component it will be compulsory to sign protocols among partner institutions so that the cooperation will be institutionalized and has greater chances to continue after the action.

Within the capacity building component, a road map will be developed, aiming at developing town twinning activities and to create systematic approach for town twinning initiatives between Turkey and the EU. This road map will also contribute to structural improvements for twinning activities involving Turkey in the long run.

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

In the first months of the action's implementation, an effective promotion of the action will be performed through local and national media, effective use of social media, regional info days. UMT's and UPS' contact channels to municipalities and provinces throughout Turkey will also be mobilised for this purpose. Moreover, guidance will be given to all beneficiaries under the grant scheme for promotion towards institutional stakeholders and citizens at local level so as to achieve maximum visibility about this form of Turkey-EU cooperation in the different participating municipalities throughout the country.

At the end of the project a compendium which includes success stories of the grant projects will be prepared and disseminated to municipalities throughout Turkey. The roadmap for further improvements on town twinning will be made available online for download and promoted in the context of the other communication and visibility efforts.