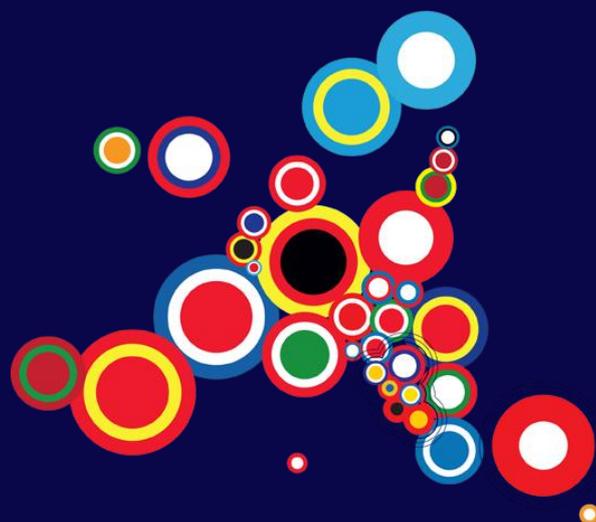




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

Kosovo* EU Acquis Approximation Facility and Young Cell Scheme



Action summary

The main aim of the action is to further support Kosovo's approximation with the EU acquis through strengthening technical and administrative capacity of the administration in relation to Kosovo's European Reform Agenda, in implementing measures related to urgent political priorities in the framework of Kosovo's European perspective, including those that may arise from the EU Facilitated Dialogue for the Normalisation of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina. In addition, the action aims at supporting the public administration to improve the professional capacity of the civil service, to better serve Kosovo citizens, through ensuring continuation of the Young Cell Scheme.

*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

Action Identification	
Action Programme Title	Annual Action Programme for Kosovo for the Year 2019
Action Title	EU Acquis Approximation Facility, Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue Facility and Young Cell Scheme
Action ID	IPA 2019 /041 247 / 01 / Kosovo/EU Acquis Approximation Facility
Sector Information	
IPA II Sector	1. Democracy and Governance
DAC Sector	43010
Budget	
Total cost	EUR 7 000 000 million
EU contribution	EUR 6 000 000 million
Budget line(s)	22 02 01 01
Management and Implementation	
Management mode	Direct management
Direct management: Indirect management:	European Union Office in Kosovo
Implementation responsibilities	European Union Office in Kosovo
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	Kosovo
Specific implementation area(s)	Kosovo
Timeline	
Final date for concluding Financing Agreement(s) with IPA II beneficiary	At the latest by 31 December 2020
Final date for concluding delegation agreements under indirect management	
Final date for concluding procurement and grant contracts	3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement, with the exception of cases listed under Article 189(2) of the Financial Regulation
Final date for operational implementation	6 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement
Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement (date by which this	12 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement

programme should be de-committed and closed)			
Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Aid to environment	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
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

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the European Union and Kosovo entered into force on 1st April 2016. The SAA establishes a contractual relationship that entails mutual rights and obligations and covers a wide variety of sectors. The SAA focuses on respect for key democratic principles and core elements that are at the heart of the EU's single market. The SAA aims at gradually develop a free trade area between the EU and Kosovo where free movement of goods, services and capital are mutually guaranteed and where the application of European standards in areas such as competition, state aid and intellectual property rights will be aligned. Other provisions cover political dialogue, cooperation in a wide variety of sectors ranging from education and employment to energy, the environment and justice and home affairs.

The European Reform Agenda (ERA), launched by the EU and Kosovo in November 2016, has continued to serve as a useful tool to guide the implementation of EU - related reforms in the SAA context. The 2019 Kosovo Report emphasises that implementation of the SAA is proceeding that a stronger focus on SAA implementation will be needed to ensure that Kosovo meets its contractual obligations and deadlines under the Agreement.

The Ministerial Council for European Integration (led by the Prime Minister) and the Working Committee for European Integration (led by the Minister for European Integration) meet at regular intervals to provide strategic guidance on EU related reforms. The role of the Ministry of European Integration is crucial in ensuring effective coordination of and a strategic approach to EU - related reforms.

This action will address issues around three main areas:

EU Acquis approximation and support to SAA

The SAA obligations assume that Kosovo's public administration is ready and capable to adopt and implement the SAA in an efficient and effective manner. As part of overall public administration reform (PAR) efforts, the government's top priority should be to establish the policy planning system and ensure better regulation as well as to prepare the structures and strengthen the capacities required for implementation of the SAA.

While the overall policy planning reform is coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office in close coordination with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of European Integration, the main stakeholder for ensuring effective coordination of and a strategic approach to EU - related reforms is the Ministry of European Integration. The mandate of the Ministry of European Integration was defined by a decision of May 2010, setting out its competencies with regard to the overall management and co-ordination of all central institutions stakeholders involved in the implementation of the ERA and IPA assistance

Support to the EU Facilitated Dialogue for the Normalisation of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina

On the basis of a UN General Assembly resolution adopted on 9 September 2010, an EU facilitated dialogue for the normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina started on 8 March 2011. The dialogue represents a key factor for peace, security and stability in the region, for promotion of cooperation and progress on Serbia and Kosovo's respective European paths. It also contributes to improving the lives of citizens of Kosovo. The dialogue is being facilitated by the High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission, supported by the European External Action Service (EEAS), and in cooperation with the European Commission. Since July 2017, Belgrade and Pristina are working on a comprehensive normalisation of relations in the form of a legally binding agreement. The EU supports the implementation of the agreements reached so far in the context of the dialogue, including through IPA assistance. EU assistance will continue to be required for the implementation of existing and future agreements in line with the revised Indicative Strategy Paper for Kosovo 2014-2020 adopted in August 2018. The present action includes activities related to the dialogue that will be implemented with the involvement of the main stakeholders:

Ministry of European Integration, line ministries, local administrations (including in the north of Kosovo), cultural institutions, NGOs, media community etc.

Young Cell Scheme – Round XIV-XV

Since 2004, one of the main instruments for pursuing the access of Kosovo students to high quality tertiary education and at the same time the support to PAR with the recruitment of young professionals, has been the Young Cell Scheme (YCS). Building on the success of the previous rounds of YCS, this action foresees the continuation of the programme with a view to further strengthening the Kosovo civil service, especially in view of the ongoing public administration reform efforts and the obligations and challenges stemming from the implementation of the SAA.

According to the 2018 Kosovo Report, women remain under-represented within the public administration, particularly in decision-making positions. Women comprise only 37.25% of civil servants and occupy only 27.8% of senior level posts. As foreseen by the Law on Gender Equality, affirmative actions are needed to increase women's participation in the public administration.

The YCS is a scholarship scheme that has been offered to a large number of students, with an equal representation of gender and minorities. It is a unique opportunity to achieve high levels of professionalism in leading higher education institutions in EU, and at the same time it has guaranteed to the public administration the possibility to improve quality and efficiency of the services provided to Kosovo citizens.

Since 2004, up to 409 grantees from Kosovo have benefited from a scholarship under the YCS. The YCS has evolved throughout the years from a Master scholarship scheme for general European Studies (Rounds I-V) into more sectoral development schemes (Rounds VI – X) – meaning scholarships aimed to build professionals in specific sectors of EU integration for Kosovo, based on the necessity for specific expertise in different sectors of the public administration. The young cell scheme will mainly target the institutions at central and local level, public bodies that need highly specialised young professionals, academics, and the Ministry of Public Administration and line ministries. Indirectly, the private bodies will also be involved and benefit from the overall impact of a more efficient and effective Public Administration. In this context, gender balance will be ensured to increase the representation of women in the public service.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

The present action includes three main components as presented below.

EU Acquis Approximation and to **support to the SAA** with the view to assist Kosovo in advancing its ERA, the activity supporting the EU acquis approximation facility will contribute to strengthening technical and administrative capacity of the Kosovo administration and supporting effective and efficient management and absorption of EU funds. It also aims at supporting the preparation and implementation of activities responding to the challenges identified in the SAA, the Economic Reform Programme (ERP), the ERA and the Kosovo Report. The present action will support activities necessary to put in place the measures that would be necessary to fulfil unforeseen requirements emerging from the Kosovo report, the ERA the ERP and SAA.

Support to the Belgrade- Pristina dialogue - EU assistance in the north of Kosovo will pursue the priorities identified in the revised Indicative Strategy Paper for Kosovo 2014-2020 and ensure synergies and complementarities with activities funded under the Development Fund as well as activities funded by other donors. Activities will include institution-building and investments that are directly related to Kosovo's European perspective. Assistance will target areas such as the rule of law, decentralisation, trade, economic development, private sector development, support to civil society, PAR, employment and social policies, education, training and research, culture, minority communities, support to agriculture, sectorial approximation (energy, the environment and transport) and building institutional capacity. Local administrations, line ministries, cultural institutions and NGOs will be involved.

Young Cell Scheme - The action will support two cycles Rounds XIV-XV of the scheme in order to provide qualification to about 90 young professionals. The Young Cell Alumni association will operate to support the

young trained students to access public administration jobs. In this context, gender balance will be ensured to increase the representation of women in the public service. The Action will contribute to EU Gender Action Plan II (GAP II), ensuring equal inclusion of women and minorities, and supporting extension of the areas of specialisation to new fields related to non-discrimination and equal opportunities.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The present action will be implemented in line with the strategies mentioned below.

In February 2018, the Commission adopted the strategy for “**A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans**” (COM(2018)65). The strategy is confirming the European future of the region as a geostrategic investment in a stable, strong and united Europe based on common values. It reconfirmed that Kosovo has an opportunity for sustainable progress through implementation of the SAA. It spells out the priorities and areas of joint reinforced cooperation, addressing the need for fundamental reforms and good neighbourly relations.

According to the revised **Indicative Strategy Paper** for Kosovo 2014-2020, as approved in August 2018, Kosovo will be supported to create a more depoliticised, reliable, transparent and an accountable public administration at all levels, capable to implement the SAA.

In line with the **SAA**, IPA II assistance will support Kosovo to continue its reform of public administration for the institutional and legal framework to implement EU gender equality acquis, complying to the provisions on gender equality and women’s rights in the 2014 “European Council Conclusions on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process”.

In order to guide reforms under the implementation of the SAA, the Commission and Kosovo identified main priority areas of the SAA and included them in the **ERA**. ERA outlines priority actions in the fields of good governance and the rule of law, competitiveness and investment climate, and employment and education.

The **Belgrade-Pristina dialogue** is a fundamental pillar in the European perspective for Kosovo. Specific reference is included in the section IV of the Indicative Strategy Paper for Kosovo, where it is explicitly mentioned that IPA II will support the implementation of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue.

The activities with regard to the Young Cell Scheme will contribute to the implementation of the **Strategy for Modernisation of the Public Administration**, especially the specific objective 3 relating to the Civil Service, which includes: organisation and functioning of civil service that includes a professional and depoliticised civil service; competitive recruitment and selection on the basis of merit and clear testing criteria, and engagement of disabled persons according to the legislation on this category; and continued and necessary training performance assessment system based on institutional and individual objectives. Direct and secondary beneficiaries will be the Ministry for European Integration, and the line ministries, including the institutions at the local level.

Furthermore, with regard to SAA Obligations, the Indicative Strategy Paper for Kosovo acknowledges the need in the foreseeable future for Kosovo to build the necessary capacities and secure the resources to be able to address the key challenges arising from the approximation to the EU acquis, which are essential for all concerned ministries and other relevant institutions. Therefore, it is imperative that Kosovo continues reforms of the administration through ensuring professional recruitment of the civil servants. Moreover, it is also linked to the strategy for “A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans” which recognises the need for Kosovo to further improve the service delivery by strengthening the civil service, since its professionalism and the presence of a certain degree of political interference still need to be addressed. This Action also will contribute to the implementation of the **EU GAP II**, objective 13 “Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training free from discrimination”.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The EU acquis approximation facility has funded many projects which were successfully implemented under previous IPA programmes, from 2007-2018. Experience confirms that this type of assistance is particularly useful for responding quickly to urgent needs identified in the course of implementation of IPA assistance. The experience with the implementation of IPA assistance shows that the capacity of Kosovo administration still needs to be strengthened in executing activities necessary for the implementation of SAA or other important reforms

The activity foreseen to fund the next two rounds of the Young Cell Scheme – is built on a number of lessons learnt from previous rounds. This programme has been regularly evaluated. As a result of numerous recommendations, the process of ex-post evaluation will be continued in the next rounds, in order to adjust and focus each round to emerging needs and lesson learned. Evaluation recommendations were stressing the need for a more rigorous and transparent procedures.

The recommendations regarding the placement of YCS grantees in the public administration and their contract formula once employed in public administration will need further improvement, also including the needed provisions in the new Law on Public Officials.

Additional areas of studies should be ‘made available’ by the Programme, identified thorough needs assessment among the public administration institutions and ministries, and according to horizontal strategies for gender. Continuation of the Young Cell post-graduate scholarship scheme in the next school years has been specifically requested by Kosovo in light of the need for additional expertise in Kosovo and in the fields related to implementation of obligations arising from the SAA, and because of the scheme's contribution to the PAR processes in Kosovo and to the creation of an apolitical, professional and efficient body of civil servants. Additional expertise is particularly required in the field of legal approximation economic matters, gender non-discrimination policies. In order to ensure that the awarded YSC grantees are integrated into Kosovo's public administration immediately upon return the Ministry of Public Administration has been involved in the programme as a member of the project steering committee.

The grantees are furthermore obliged to finish a short-term internship in Kosovo's public administration prior to their deployment to Master studies in order to facilitate their integration in the public sector upon return, and increase awareness among the beneficiary institutions of the program and of potential future employees. In the past 10th round of the project, a pilot scheme for existing civil servants was introduced, which proved to be a welcoming addition to the programme, and should be continued.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)	Sources of Verification	
To facilitate the approximation with the EU acquis by enhancing capacities of the Kosovo administration for efficient use of IPA funds and to support public administration in improving the professional capacity of the civil service at all levels in Kosovo	Progress made towards meeting Copenhagen criteria	EU Commission Annual Kosovo Report	
Specific objectives (per component)	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<p>EU Acquis Approximation and Support to SAA</p> <p>To strengthen technical and administrative capacity of the Kosovo administration in relation to approximation with the EU acquis and to support the effective and efficient implementation of IPA assistance</p>	<p>Composite indicator government effectiveness (WB)</p> <p>Degree of Ministry of European Integration's responsibility for coordination and management of EU assistance programmes</p>	<p>World Bank, Eurostat Monitoring/evaluation reports¹ including ROM and</p> <p>Sector evaluation reports</p> <p>EU Commission Annual Kosovo Report</p> <p>Reports of IPA monitoring meetings</p>	<p>Legislative Framework is in place</p> <p>Political commitment is in place</p> <p>Progress towards approximation with the EU acquis.</p>
<p>Support to the Belgrade–Pristina dialogue</p> <p>To support the implementation of existing or future agreements reached within the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue</p>	<p>Degree of implementation of Agreements reached within the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue</p> <p>Living conditions improved</p>	<p>Line ministries reports</p> <p>EU Commission Annual Kosovo Report</p>	<p>Political commitment is in place for normalisation of relations</p>
<p>Young Cell Scheme – Round XIV-XV</p> <p>To improve the professional capacity of the</p>	<p>Number of grantees recruited in public bodies in high</p>	<p>YCS evaluation reports</p> <p>Administrative reform policy</p>	<p>Political Commitment for the PAR</p> <p>Permanent recruitment policies in place</p>

¹ The monitoring and/or evaluation reports will identify the level of the responsibility and ownership undertaken by the Ministry of European Integration compared to previous years

<p>civil service to better serve Kosovo citizens and meet obligations arising from the SAA.</p>	<p>specialisation/responsibility roles after completing academic programmes in EU Universities, disaggregated by gender</p> <p>Share of women and men supported by the YCS and absorbed by Kosovo bodies</p>	<p>studies</p> <p>PAR assessments</p> <p>EU Commission Annual Kosovo Report</p> <p>YCS evaluation reports</p>	<p>for the absorption of higher education laureates in key roles in the public administration</p> <p>Permanent measures in place to prevent gender discrimination in public administrations recruitment</p> <p>Improved communication and exchanges of information between and within institutional bodies</p>
<p>Results (per component)</p>	<p>Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)</p>	<p>Sources of Verification</p>	<p>Assumptions</p>
<p><i>EU Acquis Approximation and Support to SAA</i></p> <p>1. Coordinated response put in place to meet urgent and unforeseen needs related to Kosovo's European perspective, and capacities needed for programming/implementation of IPA funds</p> <p>2. Kosovo's Ministry of European Integration and relevant line ministries capable of preparing and developing programming documents and aligning programmes with relevant processes</p>	<p>Number of projects developed under the facility for the approximation with the EU acquis</p> <p>Quality document developed and well defined IPA annual programmes</p>	<p>Monitoring reports such as ROM report and project progress reports</p> <p>Annual report on Implementation of IPA by NIPAC</p> <p>Quality Review process reports /checklists</p> <p>Project implementation reports</p>	<p>-absorption capacity ensured, through effective design of Offices and procedures in Kosovo institutions</p> <p>-Sufficient Staff and procedures in Kosovo Institutions of Kosovo in place for the effective implementation of the approximation strategy</p> <p>-Approximation with the EU acquis is the priority of the Kosovo institutions and of the Assembly of Kosovo</p> <p>-Overall commitment to implement the ERA</p>

<p>Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue Facility Relations between Kosovo and Serbia have improved</p> <p>Progress been made in the integration of northern Kosovo structures and mutual trust between communities has increased</p>	<p>Number of agreements and projects reached and implemented within the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue</p> <p>Number of projects (during the implementation of which beneficiaries will be disaggregated by gender) for socioeconomic development implemented</p>	<p>Project implementation reports</p> <p>EU Commission Annual Kosovo Report.</p>	<p>Political commitment of both parties</p> <p>Local administration support for dialogue</p> <p>Civil Society committed to dialogue and integration of minorities.</p>
<p><i>Young Cell Scheme –Rounds XIV-XV</i></p> <p>Selected students, including an equal representation of women and minorities, involved in tertiary education in EU outstanding academic institutions.</p>	<p>Number of Kosovo students completing tertiary education programme with the support of the YCS disaggregated by gender and ethnicity²</p>	<p>Reports on YCS monitoring</p> <p>YCS evaluation reports</p>	<p>Availability of EU MS tertiary education institutions for the involvement in the YCS</p> <p>Full commitment of all stakeholders and beneficiaries during implementation of the project;</p> <p>Kosovo Public administration taking takes into account lessons learned from past experience in addressing the problems</p> <p>Young Cell Alumni Association and permanently involved in mentoring and monitoring YCS grantee carriers</p>

² This will contribute to GAP II indicator 13.10: “Ratio of female to male who have benefitted from Vocational Education and Training / Skills development and other active labour market programmes with EU support (EURF)”.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Under the **Support to SAA and EU Acquis approximation facility** the action will support: preparation and/or implementation of interventions responding to the challenges identified in the SAA, the ERP, the ERA, and the Kosovo Report.

It will support possible urgent priorities that arise from the approximation with the EU acquis or other political developments that are beyond the Commission's control and which cannot be programmed in advance. All interventions will ensure that gender non-discrimination and equal opportunities principles are addressed in the design of projects and implementation strategies.

Activities foreseen per each result are as follows:

Component 1: EU Acquis Approximation and Support to SAA

Result 1: Coordinated response put in place to meet urgent and unforeseen needs related to Kosovo's European perspective, and for implementation of IPA funds

Activities:

- Support to the Ministry of European Integration and line institutions in the fields of approximation to EU acquis for emerging issues (according to SAA priorities).
- On the job training for Ministry and line institutions staff for legislative procedures and working methods.

Result 2: Capacity of Kosovo's Ministry of European Integration and relevant line ministries is improved to prepare and implement programming documents and to align programmes with relevant strategies

Activities:

- Support to Kosovo's Ministry of European Integration and line ministries in preparing and developing programming documents: National Development Plan, ERP, ERA and any other strategic document required for accessing IPA assistance.
- Support the alignment of IPA annual programmes with all relevant processes which are guided by the above-mentioned documents, such as National Development Plan, ERP, ERA and any other strategic document required for accessing IPA assistance.
- Seminars and thematic workshops on legislative and procedures on elaboration chapters of EU acquis (according to SAA priorities).

Component 2: Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue Facility

Under the **Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue Facility** the action will have the following results and activities:

Result 1: Relations between Kosovo and Serbia are improved

Activities:

- The activities under this result will target, but not exclusively, areas such as the rule of law, decentralisation, support to civil society, PAR, employment and social policies, education, training and research, culture, the European perspective all targeting minority communities, and building institutional capacity. The type of activities expected to be carried out under this facility may include technical assistance for assessments, drafting of project documents, drafting of technical

specifications or ad-hoc activities to support the local authorities as a result of the outcomes of the dialogue process. In accordance with the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP), gender evidence will be used to inform activities

Result 2; Progress been made in the integration of northern Kosovo structures and mutual trust between communities has increased;

Activities:

- Assistance will aim, among others, to enhance integration of northern Kosovo structures with a view to enabling all communities in Kosovo to take part in the economic opportunities resulting from the SAA.

Assistance will target, but not exclusively, areas such economic development, private sector development, culture, minority communities, support to agriculture, sectorial approximation (energy, the environment and transport) and building institutional capacity.

Component 3: Young Cell Scheme –Rounds XIV-XV

Under the **Young Cell Scheme – Rounds XIV-XV** the action will have the following results and activities:

Result 1: Selected students, including an equal representation of women and minorities, involved in tertiary education in EU outstanding academic institutions.

Activities:

- Selection of up to 90 candidates, for both rounds for postgraduate studies in specific identified-areas. Selection shall include a gender balance and use of affirmative measures to include more, diverse women in YCS (e.g., from minority ethnic groups), given women’s under-representation within the public administration. Organisation of information and communication campaigns to promote women and men and minorities participation to YCS; In order to achieve and capitalise results in gender non-discrimination and equal opportunities additional areas of studies could be considered.
- Tutoring and support to selected students for the access to post graduate courses in EU universities, including support for the achievement of language competencies needed for the participation to the courses.
- Services for placement strategy: arrangement of employment contracts before students' departure; supervision of students during their studies abroad; support YCS returnees during their employment, helping a successful experience during the mandatory years in order to improve long-term employment in the public bodies: trainings, mentoring and coaching, support to YCS returnees by YCS alumni;
- TA for promoting systematic absorption of Young Cells into Kosovo institutions at local or central level.
- Services and support to the YCS Alumni Association in Kosovo to strengthen their awareness raising capacities to reach out to potential applicants through training and coaching.

RISKS

For the activities related to the **EU Acquis Approximation Facility** the main risks identified concern the political environment such as: instability in political scenario leading to weakened commitments in the EU acquis approximation process; weakening of capacity for evidence-based policymaking; Lack of inter-ministerial cooperation and involvement of stakeholder; Inadequate coordination of donor actions and Limited absorption capacity at the relevant institutions and agencies.

Some of the proposed **mitigation measures** include communication and awareness raising campaigns on the objectives of the approximation strategy and benefits for the Kosovo communities, support to inter-ministerial coordination and public consultations on policy and legislative proposals and capacity building actions especially on awareness raising and coordination at inter-institutional level.

Effort to strengthen the role of the Sector Working Groups on Donor Coordination organised/managed by the Ministry for European Integration will continue as well as close donor coordination at the level of projects especially in activities' planning to avoid overlapping and promote synergies.

For the activities related to the **Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue**, the main risks identified concern political factors that may affect the dialogue process or lead to its halt. The security situation in the north of Kosovo represents a challenge for adequate implementation or monitoring of the activities. The past experience has showed that the security situation, and related limitations on the free movement of EU statutory staff, in addition to other external environment risks present this area, can significantly impact the proper implementation of projects in the north of Kosovo.

Lack of donor coordination active in the north of Kosovo can potentially lead to duplication and overlaps of activities in this area.

Some of the proposed **mitigation measures** include put in place some early warning indicators of potential obstacles which would allow for swift reaction before the assistance is jeopardised. It is important to maintain and strengthen the coordination of the Sector Working Groups on Donor Coordination organised/managed by the Ministry for European Integration.

For the activities related to the **Young Cell Scheme** the main risks identified concern: the indicated number of selected grantees might be lower than indicated due to a lack of 1 year Master studies in EU Universities (2 years is the trend now); delays in the approval of the sub-legal act for the appointment of YCS scholars to Civil Service by the Ministry of Public Administration; inadequate capacity by the Kosovo public administration for the YCS alumni absorption, due to insufficient financial resources; poor attractiveness of public administration due to competitive offers by private companies for best young graduates and professionals and reduced participation of women and minorities in the scheme due to weak promotion and information.

Some of the proposed **mitigation measures** include: strong coordination within the Ministry of Public Administration for the urgent preparation/approval of sub-legal acts that will clarify the YCS contractual arrangement within PA; strong promotion and information strategies to raise awareness in public administrations on the added value of YCS; strong involvement in the Alumni Association; awareness raising in the public administration and tailored strategies for promotions of participation to the scheme of women and minorities; improvement of timing and transparency in selection procedures and introduction of additional fields of specialisation to better comply with PA needs.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The main assumptions identified under this action are:

- Continued political commitment for ongoing EU - related reforms and IPA implementation;
- Continuation of Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue;
- Sufficient resources allocated to implement the agreements reached in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue.
- Availability of EU MS tertiary education institutions for the enrolment of the YCS grantees
- Young Cell Alumni Association is sustainable to mentor and monitor the YCS grantees.

The implementation of this action is subject to the following conditions:

- Ministry of European Integration (NIPAC) to take the responsibility to secure employment for the YCS graduates;
- Ministry of European Integration should secure a commitment of the co-financing for the next rounds.

An ex post evaluation should be carried out per each round, ensuring needed adjustments of selection procedures and of strategies for absorption of graduates in public administrations.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This action will be managed by the EU Office in Kosovo and coordinated by the relevant beneficiary institutions and the NIPAC office at the Ministry for European Integration.

For the three main components of this action, the leading institution/main beneficiary is the NIPAC at the Ministry for European Integration and the line ministries involved in the implementation of the SAA and IPA assistance.

For the **Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue facility** The EU Office in Kosovo will be in charge of implementation and it will work in close coordination with the Kosovo government, mainly Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Local Government and Administration, Ministry of European Integration, Ministry of Dialogue and Ministry of Internal Affairs.

With regard to the Young Cell Scheme, the Ministry of European Integration has the responsibility to support and follow the graduates in their employment process as well as their progress in the respective ministries. The Ministry of European Integration was put in charge of coordination of YCS due to its capacity as coordinator of EU assistance to Kosovo. For this purpose, the Ministry of European Integration has appointed one official in charge of coordination of the YCS. The YCS alumni association will be supported and involved in the action and their representatives appointed to the project steering committee.

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

The activities under this action will be implemented under direct management.

Component 1: EU Acquis Approximation and Support to the SAA

Depending on the needs, the **EU acquis approximation facility** and **support to SAA** described above will be implemented through a number of service/framework contracts/grant contracts/twinning/twinning light contracts, works contracts/supply contracts where the need for a rapid response of the Commission to non-programmable events is such that the duration of the procedure to amend this decision would frustrate the purpose of such response.

There might also be the possibility for grants contracts or twinning light with EU Member States administrations or mandated bodies if there is an urgent need for further approximation with the EU acquis linked to SAA obligations.

The implementation modalities of the projects arising under this action will be closely discussed with the Kosovo Unit in DG NEAR as well as the beneficiaries and the best possible option will be considered.

Component 2: Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue Facility

Depending on the needs, the **Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue facility** described above will be implemented through a number of service/framework contracts/ grant contracts/ twinning/twinning light contracts/works contracts/supply contracts where the need for a rapid response of the Commission to non-programmable events is such that the duration of the procedure to amend this decision would frustrate the purpose of such response.

The implementation modalities of the projects arising under this action will be closely discussed with the Kosovo Unit in DG NEAR as well as the beneficiaries and the best possible option will be considered.

Component 3: *Young Cell Scheme –Rounds XIV-XV*

The activity supporting the Young Cell Scheme is to be implemented through a grant contract, by way of a competition between public sector agencies based in EU Member States involved in cultural and educational activities. The aim is to have a signed contract when conditions for implementation are met, as to ensure an early start of the application process for the project. The grant will be supplemented by parallel co-financing by the Ministry of European Integration specifically for scholarships.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

Monitoring should be carried out from the commencement of all action activities and beneficiaries should allocate sufficient resources for data collection. Overall coordination of monitoring the financial and technical progress of the Action will be carried out by the EU Office for Kosovo (EUO) as Contracting Authority (CA).

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.

As per the EU GAP, monitoring and evaluation will include gender analysis.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline 2017/2018	Target 2021	Final Target 2022	Source of information
Degree of Ministry of European Integration responsibility for coordination and management of EU assistance programmes	50%	60%	70%	LRM Reports Annual Legislative Programmes
Number of projects developed and implemented under the EU acquis approximation facility 2019	0	10	15	Monitoring reports. Project implementation reports by NIPAC. Monitoring Committee meeting reports Ministry of European Integration annual report on IPA
Quality documents developed and well defined IPA annual programmes	0	3	3	The Annual Programmes Monitoring Committee meeting reports Ministry of European Integration annual report on IPA Quality Review process reports /checklists
Degree of implementation of Agreements reached within the EU facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina	35%	80%	90%	EU Kosovo report
Number of projects implemented in northern Kosovo	32	38	45	Contracts signed; Monitoring/Evaluation reports Project implementation reports
Number of YCS grantee completing their academic programmes	269 (2018)	409 (gender balanced)	499* (gender balanced)	Monitoring and evaluation reports YCS Follow up of the Ministry of European Integration on the employment
% of female YCS graduates employed		50%	50%	Monitoring and evaluation reports YCS Follow up of the Ministry of European Integration on the employment

* The action will be completed in 2023

5. SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

Activities under this objective have a horizontal aim and impact several sectors and sub-sectors. Given their ad-hoc horizontal nature they cannot be assessed in the framework of a single sector approach. However, due care will be taken to ensure that all actions financed under this action will be coordinated with other IPA interventions that are programmed on the basis of the IPA Indicative Strategy Paper for Kosovo 2014-2020, which are democracy and governance, Rule of law & fundamental rights, energy, competitiveness and innovation, education, employment & social policies, agriculture & rural development and regional and territorial cooperation.

The action addresses several issues related to democracy and governance. In late 2017 the DG NEAR Evaluation Unit had initiated an evaluation of the IPA II sector Approach in Western Balkans including Kosovo. One of the main preliminary findings in the Kosovo context was that the prospect for sectoral approach are based on the increased political dialogue and IPA programming and implementation which has taken place for the two Sector Budget Support programmes, one in PAR and the other one in PFM (Public Finance Management reform, approved in 2016).

Despite the fact that part of Kosovo legislation is in place and is in line with the European acquis, the obligations of Kosovo to harmonise its legislation after entering into force of the SAA are clearly stated. In accordance with the Article 74, of the SAA, Kosovo shall approximate its legislation to that of the EU and ensure its effective implementation. Kosovo shall make sure that its existing and future legislation gradually will be made compatible with the EU legislation. The SAA also stipulates that legislation shall be effectively implemented and enforced. The SAA foresees that the approximation shall be done in several stages. The SAA also has provisions that the legal approximation shall be based on the approximation programme, which is agreed between the Kosovo and the EU (National Programme for the SAA implementation for 2016 – 2020).

National Programme for the SAA implementation was adopted on 10 March 2016 by the Assembly, based on the proposal (Decision of 16 December 2016) and amendments proposed by the CEI. The National Programme serves as a planning tool and monitoring instrument for SAA implementation. It is adopted for the period of 2016 – 2020. The priorities in the programme are divided into short term (for 2016) and medium term (2016 – 2020) actions which consist of two types of measures: a) legislative measures; b) implementing measures.

Kosovo's ERA, adopted in autumn 2016, became the key policy programme complementing the National Programme for the Implementation of the SAA to guide Kosovo in the European perspective.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender Mainstreaming is especially relevant or the approximation with the EU acquis, as EU gender equality is a crucial element of the acquis. As institutional learning and capacity development takes time, Ministry of European Integration, Agency for Gender Equality and line ministries will continue to develop capacity building towards gender mainstreaming in all IPA programming. The action will support women to participate in the EU funded activities. Their equal rights are guaranteed by the Law No. 05/L - 020 on Gender Equality.

This includes in particular improving a participatory approach to programming that considers the potentially different needs of women and men, as well as improving the collection and use of gender disaggregated data, towards better informing for all programming.

EU GAP implementation will continue and the work will continue specially on developing gender analysis (indicator 4.1.1) and gender disaggregated data (6.1.2.) which could inform the policy development in order to mainstream gender in the programming and the implementation phase. As foreseen by EU GAP, programmes will use findings from consultations with National Gender Equality

Mechanisms, CSOs, and women's organisations (4.3.1.) to inform action design, and any sector programmes will work with NGEMs (6.3.2.).

Based on the Kosovo Law on Gender Equality, the intervention planning and execution will ensure gender mainstreaming which entails integrating a gender perspective into every stage of the process, planning, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation, policies or programs and budgets, in all political, economic and social areas (Art. 3.1.16).

This Action will contribute to the implementation of the EU GAP II, objective 17: “Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels”.

The Constitution of Kosovo “ensures gender equality as a fundamental value for the democratic development of the society, providing equal opportunities for both female and male participation in the political, economic, social, cultural and other areas of societal life” (Art. 7). The Law on Gender Equality calls for equal representation of women and men at all decision-making levels within the public administration, and foresees the use of temporary affirmative discrimination measures towards furthering gender equality. The Action proposed will consider the possibility to use this tool, especially in the case of the EU facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and in the selection procedures of the Young Cells Scheme.

Considering women’s underrepresentation in the civil service and young women’s high unemployment rates, and even more important low active participation of women in the labour market, this action will actively support women’s access into public administration, particularly in roles and positions where women are under-represented.

The Action will use gender analysis when identifying insufficient capacities and vacant positions within the public administration, to be addressed by the YCS. Special efforts will be made to recruit women into the YCS so that they may gain education for entering into positions traditionally held by men. In this regard and in accordance with the EU GAP II, the Action will involve close collaboration with gender equality mechanisms (e.g., the Agency for Gender Equality and gender equality officers in ministries) and women’s CSOs to identify needs and promote the program to young women.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the fundamental principles of promoting equality and combating discrimination, participation in the project will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Equal access to all benefits of the Action will be promoted. More specifically, training and other capacity building activities in this project (timing and schedule) will be fully adjusted to the needs of women with children, training and meeting premises will be fully adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities, equal opportunities principles and concrete measures will be embedded in all strategic documents that will be produced under this Action. Equal opportunity will also be taken into account in the preparation of all tender documents and in the recruitment of personnel through the placement of appropriate wording.

In addition, the Action will address problems and practical needs specific to men and women in order to ensure capacities to deliver services in a gender-sensitive manner. Gender sensitive language will be maintained throughout the project cycle. It will be ensured that the project management will have adequate capacities to enhance women's participation in project activities and work towards gender equality objectives. In general, a gender perspective will be maintained ensuring that the results of the Action impact positively on gender equality as well.

The EU Recast Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation encourages equality in matters of occupation and employment (Directive 2006/54/EC).

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

During the implementation of the activities under this action, a special focus will be given to offering equal opportunities for everyone, including minority groups involved in the public sector as well as in the

private service sector. The aim will be to contribute to multi-ethnic representation in the institutions benefiting from this projects, which will address the ethnic groups fairly and equitably in accordance with the law, along with other marginalised groups. Special attention will be paid to ensuring involvement of women from diverse minority groups, many of whom are particularly marginalised from decision-making processes.

Special efforts will be made to include Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in activities, through close communication with local and international organisations supporting these communities. Vulnerable and social disadvantaged/excluded groups will also be targeted by this Action. Therefore, all the activities will try to maximise the benefits for women and men, youth and children amongst the most vulnerable groups including: ethnic minorities (notably those in poverty and social exclusion), women in rural areas and people with disabilities and their families.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY (AND IF RELEVANT OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

Specific attention will be paid to the framework of this action to ensure that civil society and other stakeholders are consulted in the right time for the legislative and policy-making process and that the decision-makers are informed about the outcomes of the consultations. The engagement of civil society organisations and stakeholders will be taken into consideration in all aspects of the action by strengthening their capacities, allowing them to engage in an effective dialogue with public and private actors. The Main Beneficiary with the EUO will monitor the progress in the different areas covered by the action.

In March of 2015, the Presidency of the Assembly adopted the Declaration on Openness and Transparency and established its own Body / Parliamentary Transparency Forum for the drafting of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Declaration, composed of members of each parliamentary group, representatives from the Administration and civil society representatives. A compilation of the plan was preceded by detailed analysis to assess where the Assembly currently stands in fulfilling the principles and standards promoted by the Declaration on Open Parliament. This assessment has assisted the Forum members in defining 22 concrete actions / measures to advance parliamentary transparency and to promote citizen interaction with the Assembly. The plan has specific objectives to be achieved, concrete actions to be taken by the Assembly as well as the institutions and partner organisations of the Assembly.

The action plan is part of the strategic plan of the Assembly, which outlines the annual plans and determines the budgetary implications. The Parliamentary Transparency Forum will ensure that budgetary implications are reflected in the Assembly's budget for future years, and will oversee the implementation of the action plan. With the adoption of the Declaration on Open Parliament, and the drafting and implementation of the Action Plan, the Kosovo Assembly is the leader in the entire region. The work done so far is expected to serve the Parliamentary Transparency Forum to intensify efforts for the membership of the Assembly in the Parliamentary Transparency Working Group within the Open government Partnership (OGP). The action will involve and consult diverse CSOs, including women's CSOs.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

The foreseen activities under this action are not expected to have a relevant environmental impact. Nevertheless, should any of the sub activities raise environmental considerations then everything will be screened against environmental sustainability. Furthermore, environmental considerations will be duly reflected in all IPA financed activities. Kosovo has already undertaken concrete steps to implement EU directives of waste management and has jointly with the EU commission invested to begin the implementation of these measures. Adequate environment protection measures will be foreseen as per EU financing requirements and Kosovo laws. It should be noted that the legislation in the field of environment protection has been significantly improved, but significant challenges remain to achieve EU standards. Energy efficiency and promotion of renewable sources of energy will be at the core of Kosovo institutions attempts to minimise the carbon footprint and adverse effects on the environment.

7. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability of this action will be ensured through the involvement of all relevant actors, at all levels, and clear structures and roles for the implementation and monitoring.

With regard to the acquis approximation facility this type of assistance has proved to be extremely useful for the sustainability of the overall EU assistance to Kosovo especially as the interest and ownership of Ministry of European Integration for these types of activities is increasing continuously. What is important about this facility is that its methodology is being slowly taken on board by the IPA II beneficiary. They are now convinced that without having the relevant expertise and preparatory work done they are not able to engage into projects and ensure its successful implementation. This aspect has been further strengthened during the implementation of IPA II programmes which has had a more focused and sectoral approach.

The NIPAC office has undertaken a more active role in reporting on the implementation of the IPA assistance by providing annual reports to the EU. This has ensured that the NIPAC takes into consideration the monitoring of the implementation of different action which ensures the ownership and sustains the process.

Finally, the integration of the key principles of public administration, including the 'Better Regulation' approach into envisaged assistance will also contribute to sustainability of results. In particular, a) development of new legislation/ amendments and/or policies/strategies will be carried out respecting all procedures and legislative requirements of Kosovo, especially those related to (fiscal/ regulatory) impact assessments, public consultations, inter-ministerial coordination; the action will provide support to the beneficiaries with 'options analysis', regulatory impact assessments, concept papers, etc. prior to supporting them with drafting of legislation/ amendments; actual legal drafting will be mainly done by the beneficiary and even if some drafting is done by experts, it will be paired with capacity building (e.g. detailed explanation of proposed texts, comparison among international examples, etc.); b) any training, capacity-building and human resources development activities shall be coordinated with the institution that is centrally responsible for human resources management and professional development of civil servants; c) any activity supporting the development of IT tools shall ensure consistency with the interoperability standards in each beneficiary and, where these don't exist, they will promote consultations with the Ministries in charge of information society related matters; d) any guidelines developed by EU assistance shall be simple enough to allow revision by the beneficiary administrations without further external support; finally e) any new law or administrative procedures shall not contradict any existing law or procedure; if necessary the action will support harmonisation of the new procedures with the existing provisions.

Sustainability of the Young Cell Scheme will be ensured by linking the action with the overall reforms targeting public administration, ensuring that lessons learned and good practices established by the project will be fully integrated. Ministry of European Integration together with the Ministry of Public Administration will ensure through proper supervision and guidance that the grantees are recruited to appropriate positions and retained in the public service, also beyond their three year contract.

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 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 and the integration process, 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 Office in the field. The European Commission and the EU Office should be fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.

A consolidated communication and visibility plan for the Action will be developed, based on an agreed communication narrative and master messages, customised for the different target audiences (stakeholders, business community, civil society, general public etc.).

Effectiveness of communication activities will be measured inter alia through public surveys in the IPA II beneficiaries on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as the fact that it is funded by the EU. As a minimum one survey should be carried out before the start of the implementation of the communication and visibility plan and one after its completion.