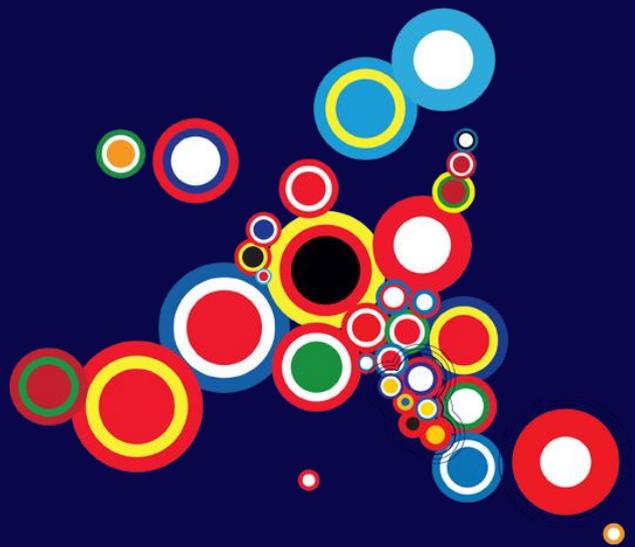




## **INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020**

**Kosovo\***  
EU for Education



### **Action summary**

This action mainly aims at improving the quality of Education in Kosovo at primary level with special emphasis on inclusion of children belonging to minority communities and overcrowded schools. More specifically the action will aim to construct three new schools, improve school infrastructure, and increase both the participation rates of children in Kosovo in primary and lower secondary education in line with the new Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

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

<b>Action Identification</b>	
<b>Action Programme Title</b>	<b>Action Programme for Kosovo for the Year 2017 – Part I</b>
<b>Action Title</b>	EU for Education
<b>Action ID</b>	IPA 2017 /040506 / 11 / Kosovo / Education
<b>Sector Information</b>	
<b>IPA II Sector</b>	7. Education, employment and social policies
<b>DAC Sector</b>	11110
<b>Budget</b>	
<b>Total cost</b>	8.2 EUR million
<b>EU contribution</b>	8.2 EUR million
<b>Budget line(s)</b>	22.02.01.02
<b>Management and Implementation</b>	
<b>Management mode</b>	Direct management
<i>Direct management:</i> <b>EU Delegation</b>	European Union Office in Kosovo for the Activity.
<b>Implementation responsibilities</b>	European Union Office in Kosovo
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Zone benefiting from the action</b>	Kosovo
<b>Specific implementation area(s)</b>	Kosovo
<b>Timeline</b>	
<b>Final date for concluding Financing Agreement(s) with IPA II beneficiary</b>	At the latest by 31 December 2018
<b>Final date for concluding delegation agreements under indirect management</b>	At the latest by 31 December 2018
<b>Final date for concluding procurement and grant contracts</b>	3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement, with the exception of cases listed under Article 189(2) of the Financial Regulation
<b>Final date for operational implementation</b>	6 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement
<b>Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement</b>	12 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement

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

## **1. RATIONALE**

### **PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS**

Kosovo aims to build a society of knowledge, integrated into the European trends and with equal opportunities for personal development. In line with this vision, Kosovo is committed to build an inclusive education system which provides conditions for qualified education and in line with the needs of the labour market and of society.

The Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2017-2021 states that the image of education in the eyes of the citizens is not good and there is a demand for improved quality in education. This is reflected in public debate and negative media coverage about the quality of education. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests, led by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and conducted in 2016 for the first time in Kosovo highlighted the fact that education needs to be improved as a matter of priority in Kosovo. Such results must be seen as a positive incentive to implement the new KESP, and move with accelerated steps towards improving the situation.

Kosovo schools are challenged by being overcrowded, and having rundown infrastructure with limited sanitary and instructional facilities. Many primary schools teach in two shifts, a few teach in three shifts, shortening classes and limiting teachers' ability to conduct quality curricular and extracurricular activities. The problem is reported to be especially grave in urban areas, as a large per cent of the population has migrated to the cities and the infrastructure has been stretched beyond its limits.

KESP identifies a need to improve the environment for learning at primary and lower secondary (grades 1 to 9) education levels. This involves the renovation of more than 250 schools and a need identified in Strategy to build at least 25 new schools. It is seen as very important for the future development of Kosovo that there is the provision of the right infrastructures for learning, including sufficient and adequate space, adequate teaching and learning materials as well as provision of a safe, healthy, and above all friendly environment. This is in parallel to the provision an adequate management infrastructure management to sustain this safer, healthier, and friendlier learning environment.

In KESP the current state of schools is reported as poor and generally schools are in need of improved sanitary facilities. In many instance the current structures can no longer provide a healthy physical environment. School buildings are often badly insulated in general and consequently are highly energy inefficient. Many are ergonomically challenging for the students and teachers with out-dated heating systems (some are individual wood stoves in each classroom) and limited or non-existent gym and kitchen facilities. In at least 25 instances it has been recognised that the most cost effective approach is to build a new school.

Increased Capital Investment in School facilities is consistent with changes in the Kosovo education systems which have been on-going since 2011. The system has been undergoing a comprehensive reform based on the Kosovo Education Strategy 2011-2016 which is currently being reviewed with a view of its extension until 2021. Review of the previous Strategy (2011-2016), however, shows that only limited progress has been achieved so far and shortcomings persist with regard to the quality of both the learning environment and teaching processes. Although public spending in the Education Sector in Kosovo has been seen to have grown steadily from 3.3% to a level which makes Kosovo comparable to other countries in the Region, the problem of a low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and young population means that Kosovo lags behind other countries in terms of student per capita spending. The achievement of the objectives of the current KESP (2017-2021) will not be met by relying solely on Public Sector Spending Kosovo.

## OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

IPA II assistance will be provided for the construction of three new schools. The implementation of the proposed Action will produce immediate and tangible results, as well as, long-term intended impact on the target audiences and final beneficiaries. It will support the action plan of the KESP by supporting the construction of 3 schools in 2017.

The use of IPA funds of 8.2 million Euros will be used for the supervision, construction, furnishing in the three schools to be constructed through this action<sup>1</sup>.

Maintenance of the facilities will be taken over fully by the relevant municipalities<sup>2</sup>. More detailed allocations of funding will be available in the action planning phase if this action is approved.

As a direct consequence of the implementation of the Action, the following results will be achieved:

- i. Three schools will be constructed and will be operational with the necessary conditions pursuant to the norms and standards. These schools will provide primary and lower secondary education (grades 1-9);
- ii. The new school facilities will be constructed through the application of modern European Norms for new school construction including energy efficiency requirements and disable access;
- iii. School attendance and level of education in the catchments of these schools will increase.

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

This proposed Action is also fully aligned with the Indicative Strategy Paper- section on Education, Employment and Social Policies which clearly stipulates that "EU targeted policies aimed to raise the employability and social inclusion among particularly vulnerable groups".

This Strategy Paper under 5.1 highlights that "*Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe with 50% under 25 years of age. As confirmed in the 2013 Kosovo Report, significant investment is necessary. The education sector is still affected by the lack of adequate facilities, maintenance and quality assurance*". Crucial challenges to be tackled in the education sector include, among others, improving the quality of primary and lower secondary education.

Relevance is also provided under the "National Development Strategy 2017-2021" which identifies "*that improving of the quality of teaching in the primary and secondary education, as a field of immediate intervention, is a pre-requisite for better success of the education system*". In this context the improvement of the teaching environment is crucial to improving the quality of teaching overall.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) sets the frame for Kosovo to cooperate with the EU in improving the quality of education at all levels, with the aim of improving skills, employability, social inclusion and promoting economic development. The SAA pays special attention to cooperation for achieving inclusiveness and equality in education, with specific reference to, for example, gender, ethnicity, religion, and disability. It is expected that cooperation between the EU and Kosovo should take the form of

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<sup>1</sup> According to article 5 of the law on municipalities, the municipality where the school is constructed secures the necessary staff, the respective Municipal Education Department submits a request to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for the number of teaching staff, administrative staff and technical staff one year before the inauguration of the new school. In some cases MEST includes the staff for the new school under the "Financial Formula" for the budget planning of the next year, when the institution is expected to be functionalized.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Law Nr. 03/L-068 a year before the construction of school is finished, the square meters of each new school that has been constructed are included in the municipal planning for maintenance.

technical assistance for implementation of certain KESP measures. This Strategic Plan, therefore, will be the topic of regular consultations with the EU and subject of review in Kosovo Reports.

Relevance of the action is also strongly supported by the KESP under Strategic objective 2: “*The Education System Management requires Schools to have established safe, friendly and healthy environments for all and to build an effective system of education building management that contributes to the creation of suitable learning environments*”. This can only be achieved as an objective by improving educational infrastructure through construction, renovation, expansion and equipping of educational institutions with adequate teaching resources.

The KESP Assessment 2011-2016 and a situation analysis carried out by the Core Group, with the help of six subgroups, has been the basis for the new five-year plan. The planning process was organised in seven thematic areas that cover all relevant segments of education in Kosovo.

For each strategic objective an action plan has been developed, as well as indicators of success to be used for monitoring the implementation of KESP. The action plans are summarised in a roadmap for the implementation of KESP. The KESP budget was also calculated, amounting to a total of €176.94 million. The development of School Infrastructure, specifically the building of new schools for primary and secondary education has been costed at 35.88 million Euros. Total Capital Expenditure by Kosovo in the sector is estimated at 53,305,000 million Euros with a current expectation that 5, 12 million Euros would be provided by EU funds alongside these funds.

Under Strategic Result 2 (2.8) of KESP 2017-2021 a need to build at least 25 new schools is identified, with the intention that in these schools 1/3 of pupils are to learn in one shift. The identification of the locations for the construction of these new schools will be based on the analysis of the school map (investment plan), according to the applicable norms and standards and the expected demographic changes. The three schools in this action document are the first to be selected.

The Action also will contribute to the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan objective: “Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination.”

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

As a result of wide consultations between donors active in education and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan – KESP 2011-2016 was developed and implemented. Overall, KESP 2011-2016 was implemented in various parts fairly successfully – in others, result stayed far behind the expectations. This was demonstrated by the detailed Evaluation Report (November 2015). Both the process of developing KESP 2017-2021, and the resulting document, have benefitted from the lessons learned from the experience of developing, implementing, and reviewing KESP 2011-2016. Since 2008, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has undertaken intensive activities aiming at the substantial improvement of school infrastructure by renovating and building annexes to existing school buildings and by constructing and furnishing schools. Needs of infrastructure in education were included in the Kosovo Education Strategy – KESP 2011-2016. Since this time and as a continuation of these activities under the programming period of KESP 2011-2016, MEST has managed to significantly improve the school infrastructure by building 65 new school buildings with 58 of these being primary schools, 6 secondary schools and a specialist music school.

The previous actions consisted in reducing triple- and quadruple-shift schools. Although the number of schools operating under these conditions has been reduced, work still needs to be completed to ensure that overcrowding in schools is further reduced. MEST has developed the GiS database, which holds data collected about the infrastructure of each school (level 1-12), in order to facilitate investment planning and policy development. MEST has also developed standards for school construction for levels 1-12, and such standards will have to be developed for other levels. During 2011-2015, school infrastructure reached 3.6 m<sup>2</sup>/ pupil. However, this remains below Kosovo standard, and further construction is necessary.

Funding of previous actions from the KESP 2011-2016 has been from a number of sources, including significant bilateral funding in addition to EU funding. Luxembourg Government provided 10 million euro for the construction of two centres of competences, and Norwegian government donated 13.5 million euro for the construction of another two centres of competences. Other donors who supported education infrastructure include USAID, Japan, Sweden, etc. While there has been significant amount of funding available for project and program implementation, their effectiveness and sustainability is questioned. Sustainability of actions relies on a successful transfer of ownership to the Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs). There is a need for the Local Governmental sector to also provide substantial capacities particularly as regards to teacher training and school management.

In parallel to building infrastructure at a local level there is also a need to provide technical assistance for Municipalities in ensuring the maintenance of new facilities (and equipment supplied) in accordance with international standards. In particular, this refers to health and safety standards, protection of the teaching environment, accessibility for students and staff with physical disabilities as a well as provision of assistive equipment to support inclusive education.

## 2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

### LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To improve the quality of Education in Kosovo at primary level, with special emphasis on inclusion of children belonging to minority communities and overcrowded schools.	Progress made towards meeting Copenhagen Criteria	Eurostat Kosovo report.	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
To construct new schools thereby reducing the number of schools with overcrowded classrooms in primary and lower secondary schools (grades 1-9) and to increase the number of students belonging to minority communities in primary education.	<p>Number of schools that abolished multiple shifts.</p> <p>Number of pupils belonging to minority communities that attend primary and lower secondary education.</p>	<p>Education Information Management System (EMIS)</p> <p>PISA</p> <p>Kosovo Statistics Agency (KAS)</p> <p>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) annual reports</p> <p>Annual budgets</p> <p>Kosovo Report.</p> <p>Administrative reform policy studies.</p> <p>Progress reports on related Actions to strengthen the Kosovo administration.</p>	<p>Municipalities, in which schools will be constructed, are willing and able to allocate sufficient resources to ensure maintenance and sustainability of community action further to the maintenance period that the current action will cover; concerned municipalities allocate appropriate land, and provide technical documentation, permits in line with the Law on Construction, as well as access to proper infrastructure. Support from local and central authorities.</p>

<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)</b>	<b>SOURCES OF VERIFICATION</b>	<b>ASSUMPTIONS</b>
Result 1. Three schools are constructed and operational, are appropriately equipped consistent with the EU standards.	Number of primary schools (grade 1-9) operational	EMIS	Full commitment of all stakeholders and beneficiaries during implementation of the action; the government takes into account lessons learned from past experience in addressing the problems
Result 2. Enhanced rate of minority groups that attend primary and lower secondary school education.	Number of pupils belonging to minorities that have achieved 90% attendance during a given semester or school year.	PISA KAS MEST annual reports Students' diplomas.	
Result 3. Three schools operate in one shift	Number of schools operating in one shift	Employment contracts.	

(\*) Relevant activities have to be included only in the following sub-section.

## DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Activity 1. Construction of three new schools for primary and lower secondary education. The identification of the locations for the construction of these new schools will be based on the analysis of the school map (investment plan), according to the applicable norms and standards and the expected demographic changes. The three schools in this activity are the first to be selected. The planning and implementation of construction will be carried out in consultation with the gender equality officers in MEST and the targeted municipalities, women's organizations, and affected women and men in the communities targeted.

The implementation of the KESP itself largely depends on the implementation capacity of municipalities, in particular of the Municipal Education Directorates (MED). New Schools would be developed according to a set of to be determined principles. These principles will include:

1. Flexibility – Modern technology makes available a wide choice of versatile construction materials and methods so that a building will be adaptable to future changes in curriculum and teaching methods.
2. Durability – Buildings and equipment should be constructed of durable materials that need not be necessarily expensive. On the other hand, an initial higher cost of good sound materials may be offset by lower operational or maintenance expense.
3. Maintainability – Materials, system components, and structural features should be chosen with consideration given to ease of maintenance and availability of spare parts. Mechanical systems should provide plenty of access and room to work for the technicians who will service and repair the equipment in the future.
4. Health and Safety - Schools should be designed, built, and maintained in ways to minimise and control sources of pollution, provide adequate exhaust and outdoor air ventilation by natural and mechanical means, maintain proper temperature and humidity conditions, and be responsive to students and staff with particular sensitivities, such as persons with allergies or asthma. Natural light and fresh air help provide a healthy environment that enhances learning.
5. Security – The threat of physical violence from sources inside or outside the school must be considered. To the extent possible the design should include elements that seek to contain, channel, or otherwise minimise the exposure of pupils (girls and boys) and staff to such threats.
6. Expansibility – The building design should provide for possible future expansion and additions. Original construction should not be so permanent that it precludes changes in the structure.
7. Accessibility – Buildings should be designed to allow full disable accessibility and easy flow of traffic. This principle applies not only to vehicular traffic (accessibility to public thoroughfares and ample provision for parking), but also to the establishment of good pedestrian traffic patterns within the school. When choosing a location, preference should be given to sites which encourage walking or biking from home to school. The needs of children with disabilities also should be considered.

## RISKS

### Assumptions and risks

Key assumptions to ensure the achievement of the aforementioned objectives are:

<i>Risks</i>	<i>Mitigation measures</i>
<b>1. Securing appropriate land allocation as well as reliable and good quality data, by the concerned municipalities</b>	1. Only municipalities where the land has been already secured and reliable data are offered, will be selected
<b>2. Increase of education specific grant to enable addressing of sustainable funding for all schools and to encourage development activities.</b>	2. Based on municipal requests, according to existing criteria, MEST drafts mid-term and long-term investment plans. Investment criteria shall be reviewed on an on-going basis depending on the developments and achievements in the field of infrastructure
<b>3. Directors and governing boards take on an increasing role in the school development.</b>	3. A specific training module will be developed for MED staff, school directors and school quality coordinators. This module will also be incorporated into the existing training programme for school directors.

## CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The main conditions for the successful achievement of the above results are that municipalities in which schools will be constructed are willing and able to allocate sufficient resources to ensure maintenance and sustainability of community action further to the maintenance period that the current action will cover and that the concerned municipalities allocate appropriate land, provide technical documentation, permits in line with the Law on Construction, as well as access to proper infrastructure.

A complete set of following documents will be necessary, in original where possible:

- The ownership / Possession documents
- Land certificate /Copy of the plan
- Situation layout with all cadastral parcels and their respective numbers;
- Municipal decision on land property
- Building permits issued by the relevant authorities
- Consent for access to infrastructure, electrical, water and wastewater, etc.
- Specific Programme for each Municipality based on their real needs
- Financial guarantees
- Staff and resources for maintenance of the facilities

Failure to comply with the requirements set out above may lead to a recovery of funds under this programme and/or the re-allocation of future funding.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) are responsible for drafting and implementing education and research policy in Kosovo. The leading institution/main beneficiary of the Action is Ministry of Education and other institutions involved: Employment Agency; Employment Offices; Vocational Training Centres; Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Finance; Municipalities of Kosovo.

The Second beneficiary with an important role in the action is the Municipal Education Directorate in the Municipality where the new schools will be located. MEST policies in educational infrastructure are aligned towards empowering local authorities to take over the ownership of a process. This is planned for school investments and maintenance – mainly from MEST to the municipal level. Municipalities and schools are now empowered with full and exclusive authority for the development of education at the local level, including the building of school facilities, registration and reception of children, hiring and training of teachers, monitoring and reporting and setting fee levels.

The concerned Municipalities will be responsible for the proper maintenance of the new schools after the completion of the action.

MEST shall monitor the proper operation and maintenance of the schools by the Municipalities after the handing over to the latter ensuring proper operation of their heating, electricity and water system.

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

Activity 1: support improvement of education infrastructure with particular emphasis on the primary school facilities: geographically, this activity will tackle Kosovo's major centres, namely in three Municipalities of Kosovo. The suggested contract modalities are:

- 1) Service Contract – for the preparation of detailed design and the works tender dossier for the construction of the schools, including supervision of the works implementation
- 2) Works contract, for the construction activity
- 3) Supply contract, for the equipment for the schools with the required furniture and equipment.

### **4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

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

Action monitoring should be set up in service and supply contracts and the call for proposals, through the following actions by the beneficiary:

- a) It will ensure that monitoring requirements are promoted in information to potential beneficiaries;
- b) During calls for proposals/tenders, the Beneficiary and the Contracting Authority (CA) will ensure that monitoring requirements are explained to potential beneficiaries in the guidelines for applicants, and that the requirements for financial, outputs and results information in the application form is compatible with the strategic documents (financial table and measure-level monitoring indicators) and the operating structure's monitoring needs;

- c) A Steering Committee (SC) will hold the main responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the activities. The PSC will also be responsible for establishing the methodology and instruments for monitoring the implementation of the action. The Steering Committee – composed by both men and women will be comprised of: Ministry of Education and Ministry of European Integration, representatives from the EU Office, and representatives of the Municipality where schools are to be built.
- d) The request for payment from final beneficiaries, including the financial, outputs and results data, will be checked by the CA and verified by Beneficiary, as part of the financial management and control system, before being forwarded for payment, to ensure they are compatible with the contractual obligations
- e) The verification of operations by the CA/ Beneficiary through sample on-the-spot visits to activities will include checks as to whether the expenditure claimed has actually been incurred and the outputs achieved.

Overall coordination of monitoring the financial and technical progress of the Action will be obtained by the EU Office for Kosovo (EUO) as Contracting Authority.

The European Commission (EUO) 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.

## INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline (2016)</b>	<b>Target 2020</b>	<b>Final Target 2021 (4)</b>	<b>Source of information</b>
Number of schools that abolished multiple shifts.	338	340	341	MEST reports
Number of pupils belonging to minority communities that attend primary and lower secondary education.	372165 out of which 121234 female	402165 out of which 201234 female	422165 out of which 221234 female	MEST reports-
Number of primary schools constructed and operational (grades 1-9)	0	3	3	MEST, Education Management Information System (EMIS); Kosovo Statistics Agency (KSA) reports; MEST annual statistical report
Number of minority pupils that have achieved 90% attendance during a given semester or school year.	372165 out of which 121234 female	402165 out of which 201234 female	422165 out of which 221234 female	MEST reports
Number of schools that operate in one shift	338	340	341	MEST reports; Education Management Information System (EMIS);

## 5. SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

The first comprehensive strategic plans for education produced in Kosovo were the Higher Education Strategy 2005-2015 and the Pre-University Education Strategy 2007-2017. In 2009 when Kosovo adopted the Education Sector Wide Approach (SWAp), it was decided that a comprehensive and unique plan for the whole Education Sector was necessary, which led to the development of the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2011-2016. As a result of its implementation and the subsequent assessment of KESP 2011-2016, there is now a greater understanding of the importance of integrating monitoring, evaluation and assessment within the objectives framework, and an increased appreciation of the role of the wider group of stakeholders in education, which is reflected in the new Kosovo Education Strategy 2017-2021.

The KESP 2017-2021 takes as its starting point legislation approved by Kosovo, the "National Development Strategy 2016-2020", and other relevant documentation. Within these parameters, and taking into account the current environment at Kosovo and international level, the wide group of stakeholders involved in developing the KESP have formulated an updated vision for education in Kosovo: Kosovo, a competitive knowledge society, based on European values with equal opportunities for all its citizens to contribute to sustainable economic and social development. The development of KESP 2017-2021 has been possible due to the support of numerous donors active in the field of education in Kosovo for many years. It is with their assistance that the Ministry of Education, Technology and Science has also recently adopted the Action Plan of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021 which is essentially the roadmap for the implementation of KESP 2017-2021.

Through the official donor coordination meetings organised by MEST, relevant donors are actively supporting the Ministry of Education to proceed with the implementation of the Action Plan.

The public education system in Kosovo operates through a network of 43 pre-school institutions, 985 primary and lower secondary schools, 119 upper secondary schools, and nine public higher education institutions. In addition, there are 10 licensed private institutions offering primary and 19 offering secondary education, as well as 30 licensed private higher education institutions.

**A stated policy of Kosovo is to develop Multi Ethnic Schools. The goal is that in Kosovo, different communities are fully integrated in the education system, except for students who attend school in Serbian language. However, despite considerable efforts on the part of MEST, the Kosovo Reports continue to highlight the difficulties faced by children of marginalised groups, as well as different ethnic groups, and low levels of attendance particularly among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students remain a concern.**

Low involvement and participation in education of children from marginalised groups remains a major challenge that needs to be addressed, especially as regards the inclusion of children from marginalised groups in education and in particular children with special educational needs, as well as members from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. While there is no accurate data on the inclusion rate of children with special needs, children of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have an extremely low participation rate in pre-school and upper secondary education. Furthermore, their gross enrolment rate in compulsory education (grades 1-9) is about 85%, which is still significantly below Kosovo average.

The education sector as well as the employment and the private sector are closely interrelated and every action that is to be implemented in education sector should take into account its potential impact on the whole competitiveness sector. In addition to improving the welfare of the society, education is also a means for the prevention of poverty, protection of children from exploitative work, empowerment of women and integration of disabled people into the society. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), inclusive education is seen as a process that addresses and responds to the different student needs, through increased participation in learning and through the reduction of exclusion in education and from education (UNESCO 2003). In Kosovo the current low levels (despite the limited progress achieved so far) of inclusion, high rates of unemployment in youth,

low levels of active citizen participation show clearly that there is an immediate need for restructuring in-depth the education system starting, of course, from pre-school and primary levels.

Ensuring quality in education, equal access and high inclusion as well as improvement in infrastructure and provided facilities are some of the most urgent needs in the sector. Hence, this action is in line with the new Kosovo Education Strategy 2017-2021 as well as with the Quality Assurance Strategy for Pre-University Education. Increasing quality in education, establishing properly functioning quality assurance mechanisms as well as relevant teacher trainings that will be responsive to concrete needs of a modern school system constitute the most immediate priorities. Teacher trainings activity needs to take into consideration, engage actively all relevant actors and be implemented in close coordination with them: Ministry of Education (overall policy-making), Municipal Education Directors (in charge of selecting and deciding on teacher training programmes) as well as School Directors and Principals (in charge for implementing teacher training in schools). Teachers are leaders of change in every education system and safeguarding the quality of their training is essential in this regard.

As regards infrastructure needs, the government funding currently only covers a small part of the real needs of Kosovo impacting negatively on higher access to education, especially in areas outside the capital. Therefore, Kosovo had requested Funds to proceed with actions where the needs assessment in infrastructure at all levels of education was assessed as urgent.

In addition, the above activities will build on existing and/or recently finished projects, such as the twinning project on education, the work of which needs to be taken further: first priority concerns the implementation of the new Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF) in the classrooms. Relevant teacher trainings and textbooks are a pre-requisite for the above activity to take place. The KCF roll-out has already started in pilot schools in Kosovo by the recently completed Twinning project (EU-Finland-Austria). The same project has trained a considerable number of teachers (over 3000), while it has produced the Inclusion Roadmap and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Roadmap. Both have been approved by Kosovo and both will serve as a basis for formulating the respective teacher trainings.

Though progress has been achieved in the education sector, especially as regards the more focused policy orientation and subsequent adoption of relevant strategies, it is to be noted that still institutional as well as financial capacity still remains to be substantially improved.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The government is fully committed to a policy of equal opportunity. The implementation of the action will be transparent. All necessary steps will be considered to ensure the equal participation of youth women, men, and people from disadvantaged groups.

Based on the fundamental principles of promoting equality and combating discrimination, participation in the action 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 action (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 (GfA, local strategies, portfolio of Active Labour Market Measures (ALMM) etc.) and access to employment for all groups in the society will be especially promoted.

### **MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS**

The government is fully committed to a policy of equal opportunities and inclusiveness of its whole population of the Kosovo municipalities, including municipalities with minorities. The action will cover at least 5% of disadvantaged groups. In minority municipalities focus will be minority groups.

The Action will take a pro-active approach to facilitating participation of both men and women coming from minority groups in the three municipalities. One of the schools will be a multi-ethnic school, which aims to improve the enrolment rate of these groups.

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

Civil society organisations (CSO) (parent groups or similar) will be sought to contribute and are expected to continue to contribute to the management of the three schools. Schools are an important element of Community therefore a goal is greater inclusiveness of civil society in planning and execution of processes is essential.

Engagement of civil society will be ensured through active participation of CSOs from Kosovo and the region in the Berlin process and providing active input to key regional development needs and cross-border cooperation to be facilitated between countries. In accordance with the EU GAP, women's organizations also will be involved and consulted.

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

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 in beginning to implement 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 government attempts to minimise the carbon footprint and adverse effects on the environment.

In order to provide the best possible learning environment in schools, surroundings must be comfortable, pleasing, and safe. As much as possible, the school should be designed and built to have the minimum impact on the environment. Maximum use should be made of materials made from renewable resources, products produced locally, and those produced by low impact manufacturing processes. In addition high-performance building design should be considered which will result in lower operating and maintenance costs and reduced energy bills, and if properly planned and implemented, can contribute to healthy, productive school environments.

## **7. SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainability will be ensured through raising awareness of parents on the importance primary and secondary education through the debates with parents, public institutions directors. Data related to the increasing inclusion in primary education and secondary will show the level of parents' awareness about its importance. A program for further awareness rising on school education is essential, and also efforts should increase to expand the infrastructure and systems for accommodation of increasing demands. Kosovo budget (provided through the local municipality) will also ensure a continued budget support for the newly established schools after the one year period of support provided by EU funds.

Results oriented planning initiated by this document, and to be followed throughout further planning and delivery of support will be key to ensuring good governance and high efficiency of implementation of these School Actions. Both internal and external monitoring and evaluation tools need to be foreseen to ensure that objectives of support are met and that intended impact on children in primary and secondary education in these schools is achieved.

Sustainability of the interventions will also be ensured through the involvement of all relevant actors, at all levels, and clear structures and roles for the implementation and monitoring. The cooperation between various stakeholders is essential as it is virtually impossible to achieve an enabling environment that fosters innovation and growth without proper synchronisation of efforts between various stakeholders responsible.

## **8. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY**

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

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the Action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the European Commission (DG NEAR) will have to be followed.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed action objectives. 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. Communication and visibility tools will be tailored to reach diverse women, men, boys and girls, considering their often different means and sources of communication.

It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to keep the European Union Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.

The beneficiary shall report on its visibility and communication actions in the report submitted to the IPA monitoring committee and the sectoral monitoring committees.