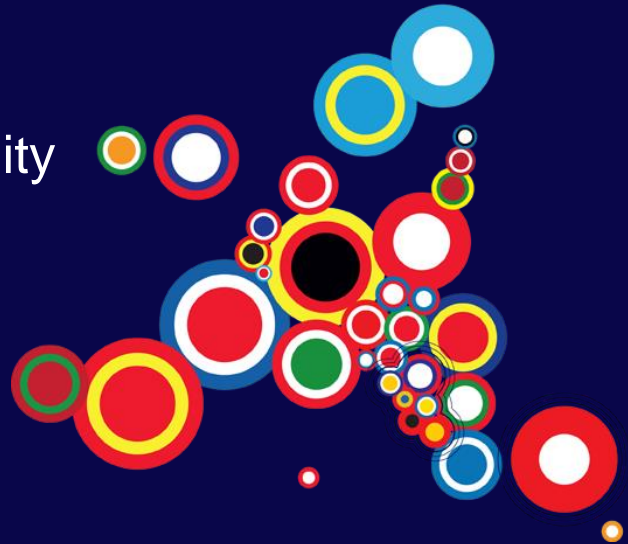




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

MULTI-COUNTRY European Integration Facility



Action summary

The objective of the European Integration Facility is to assist the IPA II beneficiaries in the overall development towards EU accession, by supporting the civil and public administration and helping them to efficiently manage the pre-accession funds and effectively manage the process of EU integration.

The action contains a number of smaller interventions such as provision of technical assistance, preparatory or follow up actions, which are not yet mature enough to be presented as stand-alone actions. It may also cover relevant networking and visibility activities, as well as training. It also foresees a pilot action for a regional executive programme and exchange component for young civil servants from the Western Balkans.

Action Identification			
Action Programme Title	IPA II Annual Multi-country Action Programme 2016		
Action Title	European Integration Facility		
Action ID	IPA 2016/037-900.05/MC/EIF		
Sector Information			
IPA II Sector	9. Regional and territorial cooperation		
DAC Sector	43010- multi-sector aid		
Budget			
Total cost	EUR 3 million		
EU contribution	EUR 3 million		
Budget line(s)	22.020401		
Management and Implementation			
Management mode	Direct management		
<i>Direct management:</i> European Commission	Unit D.5. - Western Balkans Regional Cooperation and Programmes		
Implementation responsibilities	Jung Morten, Head of Unit NEAR D.5		
Location			
Zone benefiting from the action	Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia) and Turkey		
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A		
Timeline			
Final date for contracting including the conclusion of delegation agreements	31 December 2017		
Final date for operational implementation	31 December 2020		
Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"/>

* 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.

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 Western Balkans and Turkey face important common challenges, which are reflected in the EU enlargement strategy. The challenges in the area of democracy and the rule of law include the functioning and independence of institutions, empowerment of civil society, fighting organised crime and corruption, ensuring independent, impartial, efficient and accountable judicial systems, as well as safeguarding fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and rights of persons belonging to minorities as well as vulnerable groups, notably Roma.

The economic crisis has underlined the need for all the IPA II beneficiaries to strengthen their governance, in particular economic governance and improving competitiveness in order to meet economic accession criteria. None of the Western Balkans enjoys the status of a functioning market economy, public financial management systems need strengthening, structural reforms need to be prioritised and competitiveness enhanced, in order to support fiscal consolidation, to tackle high external imbalances as well as high unemployment.

Regional cooperation remains a catalyst for the enlargement process. The IPA II beneficiaries face a number of common problems which they could more efficiently address through peer review and sharing of good practices.

Regional cooperation is a key enabling factor for comprehensive reforms and the return to sustainable economic growth. All IPA II beneficiaries preparing for accession need to align their national legislation to the *acquis* and to gradually adapt to the Union standards and practices. This task is facilitated by regional organisations or bodies set up by the IPA II beneficiaries in many sectors.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

In line with the above, the action will enable the implementation of a small number of accession-related actions in order to meet specific and urgent needs in the region, as well as relevant support to networking and visibility activities or unforeseen needs. In that sense, the activities and the tasks will serve the purpose of supporting *acquis* chapters through creation of an EU Integration Facility for the unspecified institution building needs (training, technical assistance, grants, etc.) and support for the relevant EU networks. A pilot action for a regional executive programme and exchange component for young civil servants from the Western Balkans is also foreseen.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II MULTI-COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

Financial assistance will be granted in line with, and in support of, the enlargement strategy for the Western Balkans and Turkey. It will be shaped to be consistent with other EU policies in the same area, in particular with the Europe 2020 strategy and the applicable EU macro-regional strategies, with the flagship initiatives of the EU to boost growth and jobs and with the climate policy objectives of the EU. Furthermore, the objectives agreed under the South East Europe 2020 Strategy represent important benchmarks for the reform efforts of the IPA II beneficiaries and the financial assistance under IPA II will be used to support meeting these targets.

Support will be mobilised in response to unforeseen priority needs relevant to the accession process as well as to promote the visibility of the multi-country action programme.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A European Integration Facility was included in the previous programmes under IPA I. It helped strengthen the link between the policy agenda and financial assistance by allowing a faster response to a limited number of unforeseen priority needs and to help mature projects which were not yet ready for implementation. The preparatory study on parliamentary cooperation is one example of a successful use of

the European Integration Facility which allowed the European Commission to gather a more solid information basis before deciding on the way forward.

Another lessons learned from previous assistance is the difficulty to prove the impact of our interventions, as appears from several evaluations. This difficulty is a consequence of the practice of not conducting project/programme evaluations to identify findings also by means of appropriate quantitative and qualitative methodologies. In this respect, and in line with the DG NEAR evaluation policy it has been found necessary to dedicate an appropriate budget during the programming stage for carrying out sector/project evaluations.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To contribute to progress in the accession process and increase the effectiveness and impact of accession oriented actions.	Progress made on political and economic criteria	Progress Reports and Enlargement strategy	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
To programme, manage, implement and contribute to the follow up of the pre-accession efficiently and effectively	Timely implementation of Multi-country action programmes - – number of contracts under implementation	Financial assistance implementation reports	The continuing commitment of IPA II beneficiaries to an inclusive process of deepening regional cooperation.
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Results: Specific and urgent needs in the region supported by this action; Ensured implementation of a number of accession related preparatory and start-up actions; Urgent/bridging support for important regional initiatives and organisations ensured with the support of this action; TA provided, studies carried out; Training provided; Monitoring and evaluation missions/studies carried out; Visibility material produced; Pilot action for regional executive and exchange programme successfully completed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of preparatory and start-up actions implemented; ▪ Number of good quality communication materials produced ▪ Number of outputs, such as Terms of Reference, technical specifications, feasibility studies and other documents ▪ Number of trained persons. ▪ Number of monitoring/evaluation missions carried out ▪ Number of young civil servants having successfully completed the executive programme 	Implementation reports Studies	Timely identification of the needs, which need to be addressed by this facility

(*) All indicators should be formulated as measurement, without specifying targets in the Logical Framework Matrix. The targets should be included in the performance measurement table in section 4. More detailed guidance on indicators is provided in Section 4 on performance measurement.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

The activities and the tasks will serve the purpose of supporting *acquis* chapters through creation of an EU Integration Facility for the unspecified institution building needs (training, technical assistance, grants, etc.) and support for the relevant EU networks, through the implementation of a small number of accession-related actions in order to meet specific and urgent needs in the region.

The support will be provided in cases where an initial proposal is considered to correspond to a priority for IPA II financial assistance, (justified in terms of short or medium term priorities; and relevant strategic documents), but where further efforts are needed to design and appraise mature actions, ready for implementation under the upcoming IPA II financial assistance action programme.

At this stage the following intervention is identified:

- Pilot action for a regional executive programme and exchange component for young civil servants from the Western Balkans (5 from each IPA II beneficiary). The 30 candidates would jointly participate in a tailor-made 3-4 week long executive programme covering key public administration areas such as policy formulation and analysis. The shorter duration allows them to limit their time away from work but the intensive nature would still provide them with a global perspective on public sector administration. The joint enrolment would facilitate the regional exchange component which involves each candidate spending 2-3 months in the public administration of a neighbouring IPA II beneficiary. The successful candidates would have to work for at least 3 years following their return.

Other activities, not yet identified, could include:

- Provision of short term technical expert assistance, such as drafting the tender documents and/or terms of reference and technical specifications for the implementation of IPA II funded actions;
- Feasibility studies, assessments, and other preparatory and start-up actions;
- Visibility for multi-country activities, in particular by identifying and preparing 'success stories'
- Support to regional networks by and, amongst others, organisation of regional meetings, workshops, study visits in strategically important areas;
- Provision of training to relevant authorities;
- Monitoring and if applicable evaluation of multi-country actions during or following the implementation.

RISKS

The main assumptions that should be considered on the level of the whole action include:

- The Governments are firmly committed to the regional executive and exchange programme; ensuring appropriate internship and completion of the recruitment process for the candidates before the start of the programme and shows readiness to absorb all returning candidates within the public administration.
- The continuing commitment of IPA II beneficiaries to an inclusive process of deepening regional cooperation.
- Timely identification of the needs, which need to be addressed by this facility.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This action will be implemented in the modality of direct management, with Unit D.5 being responsible for the contract implementation and monitoring.

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

Activities will be implemented through a number of service contracts (5 - 6 contracts) with the indicative procurement procedures to be launched between Q4 2016 and Q3 2017. Contracts to be signed will mostly be specific contracts under framework contracts and other types of contract implementation under the PRAG and the Financial Regulation rules. The global budgetary envelope for procurement amounts to EUR 2.1 million.

Part of the action will be implemented on a direct management basis through a grant with the British Council to be signed in Q3 2016 for an amount of EUR 0.9 million. The direct award is based on Article 190 (1)(f) of the Rules of Application, since a particular type of body on account of its technical competence and its high degree of specialisation is required. The British Council will be awarded the grant directly building on its mandate, strengths, presence and valuable previous expertise in the Western Balkans, particularly in implementing a similar scheme, the Young Cells Scheme in Kosovo.

The grantee will have to respect strict EU visibility guidelines and will be responsible for organising an objective and transparent selection process. The grant includes management fees for the organisation of the selection process as well as networking costs. The grantee will also take care of the payments of fees, allowances and travel costs.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

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

IPA II monitoring process is organised and led by Unit D.5. The monitoring process is aimed to improve programming, implementation and sustainability as well as timely identification, remedying and alleviation of potential issues in the process of programming and implementation of Actions.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline (2016) (2)	Target 2020 (3)	Final Target (2020) (4)	Source of information
MCSP indicator (impact/outcome)...(1)				
<i>Specific objective - Timely implementation of Multi-country action programmes – Number of contracts under implementation</i>	1-2	3-4	3-4	<i>Financial assistance implementation reports</i>
<i>Results - Number of preparatory and start-up actions implemented</i>	1	1-2	1-2	<i>Implementation reports</i>
<i>Results – Number of good quality communication materials produced</i>	1	1-2	1-2	<i>Publications</i>
<i>Results - Number of outputs, such as Terms of Reference, technical specifications, feasibility studies and other documents produced</i>	1	1-2	1-2	<i>Studies</i>
<i>Results - Number of trained persons (men - women)</i>	20 (10-10)	30 (15-15)	30 (15-15)	<i>Implementation reports</i>
<i>Results - Number of monitoring/evaluation missions carried out</i>	1	1	1	<i>Reports</i>
<i>Results - Number of young civil servants having successfully completed the executive programme</i>	0	30	30	<i>Implementation reports</i>

(1) This is the related indicator as included in the Indicative Strategy Paper (for reference only)

(2) The agreed baseline year is 2010 (to be inserted in brackets in the top row). If for the chosen indicator, there are no available data for 2010, it is advisable to refer to the following years – 2011, 2012. The year of reference may not be the same either for all indicators selected due to a lack of data availability; in this case, the

year should then be inserted in each cell in brackets. The baseline value may be "0" (i.e. no reference values are available as the Action represents a novelty for the beneficiary) but cannot be left empty or include references such as "N/A" or "will be determined later".

(3) The target year CANNOT be modified.

(4) This will be a useful reference to continue measuring the outcome of IPA II support beyond the 2014-2020 multi-annual financial period. If the Action is completed before 2020 (year for the performance reward), this value and that in the 2020 target column must be the same.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

This action will strive to promote gender equality as well to take measures to achieve equal opportunities for male and female in all aspects regarding the implementation of the action. Gender equality incentives will be incorporated particularly in the activities concerning capacity building.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equal participation of women and men will be secured through appropriate information and publicity material, in the design of actions and accessibility to the opportunities they offer. An appropriate men/women balance will be sought on all the managing bodies and activities of the action. All contractors shall be requested to provide monitoring data recording the participation of men and women in terms of expert inputs, as a proof of equal participation of men and women in the different phase. Enforcement of those principles is likewise ensured through specific administrative procedures applied in accordance with the Law on non-discrimination. In the implementation of activities under this Action, the same principles shall apply, so that participation in the envisaged activities will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, etc.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

The action will positively promote equality of opportunities and combat discrimination. The European Integration Facility provides for room to support actions that directly deal with minorities and vulnerable groups.

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

In complementarity with this facility, the Civil Society Facility helps to ensure an inclusive and transparent dialogue, consultation and communication with all relevant stakeholders in the respective sectors. This serves as a platform that enables exchange of information and contribution of CSOs in relation to planning development assistance, particularly programming and monitoring of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

By their nature, the majority of activities envisaged under this action do not imply direct and major impact to environmental issues, but will however be implemented in a manner which is environmentally friendly.

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 0
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6. SUSTAINABILITY

The action will produce sustainable results in the short run since the entire beneficiary institutions/structures need to be already in place, and the action does not envisage establishment or financing of the new organisational units and their running costs. Sustainability is also given in the fact that the support for legislative alignment results eventually in adoption of the laws, by-laws, plans, etc., by the Parliament, Government or governmental bodies.

7. 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 contractors, 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 programme objectives and the accession process. 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. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

The European Commission shall be fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.