



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

MULTI-COUNTRY

EU Regional action on
animal disease eradication in
the Western Balkans



Action summary

Animal health and food safety issues are considered as a priority in the indicative Strategy Papers 2014-2020 of the Western Balkans. As candidates for EU membership, the Western Balkans are going to form part of the internal market. If the Western Balkans have a different animal health status to the rest of the EU, then they cannot safely trade with other parts of the EU. The overall objective is to contribute to animal disease freedom in the Western Balkans and the improvement of access to the EU's single market of animals and animal products from relevant IPA II beneficiaries. The action would interact and support national disease surveillance, control and eradication programmes in the Western Balkans, in particular those that are set up to vaccinate against particular diseases. Examples of such animal diseases are for instance rabies, classical swine fever, lumpy skin disease, bluetongue and *Brucella melitensis*. Control and eradication of transboundary animal diseases at source using a regionally coordinated strategy benefits the EU by substantially reducing the threat to human and animal health, food safety and livestock production and trade.

Action Identification			
Action Programme Title	IPA II Multi-country Action Programme 2018		
Action Title	EU Regional action on animal disease eradication in the Western Balkans		
Action ID	IPA 2018/040-824.13/MC/Animal eradication		
Sector Information			
IPA II Sector	9. Regional and territorial cooperation		
DAC Sector	31195 - Livestock/veterinary services		
Budget			
Total cost	EUR 1.5 million		
EU contribution	EUR 1.5 million		
Budget line(s)	22.020401-Multi-country programmes, regional integration and territorial cooperation		
Management and Implementation			
Management mode	Direct management		
<i>Direct management:</i> European Commission	European Commission (Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety in cross-subdelegation)		
Implementation responsibilities	European Commission (Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety in cross-subdelegation)		
Location			
Zone benefiting from the action	Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, and Serbia)		
Specific implementation area(s)	Veterinary administrations of the Ministries of Agriculture in the Western Balkans		
Timeline			
Final date for contracting including the conclusion of delegation agreements	At the latest by 31 December 2019		
Final date for operational implementation	At the latest by 31 December 2022		
Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<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

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

Animal diseases of interest at regional level are highly contagious and transboundary in nature and they can spread easily, also across borders. All efforts in one country may be hampered by unsuccessful and un-coordinated eradication policies in another. An important focus of this action should also be the coordination of disease eradication efforts at central level, including bilateral IPA projects in the Western Balkans. It is best to tackle transboundary animal diseases (TADs) at regional level, but even better if bilateral and regional programmes and measures are closely integrated and based on the same needs assessment.

Control and eradication of such diseases at source using a regionally coordinated strategy benefits not only the IPA II beneficiaries but also the EU by substantially eliminating them as a threat to human health, food safety and livestock production and trade. In this respect it should be noted that the region has proved, in the recent past, to represent a corridor for incursion of contagious diseases to the EU (e.g. bluetongue, lumpy skin disease, and others).

The export potential of the Western Balkans to the EU today is high. In this regard animal health and food safety issues are considered as a priority in all indicative Strategy papers. As candidates for membership, the Western Balkans are – one day- going to form part of the internal market. If the Western Balkans have a different animal health status to the rest of the EU then they cannot safely trade (internally) with the other parts of the EU - the internal market thereby cannot operate as it should. Much depends in this respect on the performance of the competent veterinary authority. By investing in building the competence of the relevant authorities in the Western Balkans in a regional context we have a more sustainable footing for ensuring a good animal health status in the region, and that thereby trade can take place without problems for the whole region.

Stakeholders most affected are the competent veterinary authorities in the Western Balkans that should most benefit from capacity building and technical support. But also farmers, traders and other stakeholders that will directly benefit from a better animal disease status and indirectly via an improvement of the export potential for animals and animal products in the region that is now under-utilised.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

The aim of the action is to ensure capacity building in the veterinary authorities of the relevant IPA II beneficiaries, to ensure that the region will become closely integrated with their neighbours, both in the Western Balkans and the EU, to facilitate its accession to the EU. And thereby also ensure that animal diseases of interest to the EU are successfully eradicated in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries.

Key activities would be to improve regional and cross-border cooperation among relevant IPA II beneficiaries, EU Member States and the European Commission, to reinforce activities at IPA II beneficiary level in the area of animal disease control, and to ensure regional harmonised implementation of animal disease strategies to enable the control and eradication of transboundary animal diseases that are a threat to the EU and the Western Balkans. The action would interact with "national disease surveillance", control and eradication programmes, in particular those that are set up to vaccinate against particular diseases. It would support local and central authorities in setting up and implementing such bilateral programmes.

The action will also interact with the multi-country action on "EU Integration Facility, including EU support for the participation of beneficiaries in EU Agencies" and then in particular where it concerns the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) as regards zoonoses, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) that plays an essential role in helping the EU respond swiftly to food safety crises in particular where it concerns the harmonised data collection, and the European Medicine Agency's (EMA) through the evaluation and authorisation of vaccines.

Eradicating diseases that are a threat will benefit not only the EU but also benefit the relevant IPA II beneficiaries that will be able to trade with the EU animals and animal products without any restrictions linked to their animal health status. The aim of these activities should be first of all to strengthen the capacity of the competent authorities in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries, and to help them from a technical and administrative point of view where necessary and to focus on those areas where the technical know-how at this moment is lacking. This could be different per each IPA II beneficiary. Training events, dedicated missions and simulation exercises will be the basis for such capacity building, together with technical reports on issues of interest in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries. Support should also be given to EU Delegations and veterinary authorities in the Western Balkans for vaccine procurement. Focus should also be on improving laboratory capacity in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries.

As regards vaccination, this is a major element to control and eradicate most transboundary animal diseases. But it is important that this is done correctly, and in such a way that progress is well documented. For this reason the action would support relevant authorities in the Western Balkans in setting up a solid and long term vaccination strategy. The funds would not be used for actually buying the vaccine, but it could support as well the relevant authorities (and for instance EU Delegations in the region) in setting up successful procurement actions to buy the necessary vaccines. This would ensure synergies, harmonisation of policies, and together with a sustainable vaccination strategy would also ensure that the vaccines bought are used efficiently.

All the relevant IPA II beneficiaries covered by this action have in place bilateral eradication programmes for animal diseases. This action brings added value through ensuring a regional aspect by which eradication of important animal diseases is harmonised and coordinated in the Western Balkans. Furthermore, it will be possible to take account of the experience available within the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, which supports the Member States in controlling such transboundary animal diseases on their territory.

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

Introduction

The proposed action aims at controlling transboundary diseases. It should thereby be highlighted that these diseases, by their own nature are far better dealt with from a regional perspective than from an individual IPA II beneficiary perspective.

The objective of the action is the following:

- ❖ To further enhance the regional and cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans as regards animal disease control;
- ❖ To control and eradicate important animal diseases in the Western Balkans, in particular those diseases that continue to be a threat to EU Member States;
- ❖ To improve the access of their agriculture products to the internal market and to non-EU countries markets;
- ❖ To protect the animal health status of the EU.

This action will help to meet the objectives of the revised Multi-country Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020¹ and other key references as:

- They will support the relevant IPA II beneficiaries to draft and harmonise their legislation in the animal health and food safety field;

¹C(2018) 3442, 31.05.2018.

- They will support the relevant IPA II beneficiaries to implement their legislation in the animal health and food safety field;
- They will improve the capacity to deal with animal diseases and improve the European perspective of the relevant IPA II beneficiaries in the animal health and food safety field;
- They will support the relevant IPA II beneficiaries to gain access to the internal market and to other international markets for their agricultural products.

Multi-country Strategy Paper and other key references

Multi-country Strategy Paper

One of the key aspects of the multi-country strategy paper is to advocate for concentrating the EU's financial support on:

- *"The areas where reforms or investments are most needed to meet accession criteria and tailored to take into account the capacities of the countries to meet these needs";*

It is worth mentioning that food safety and animal health legislation are an important part of the EU acquis and it is usually one of the last parts of EU legislation to be fully harmonised in relevant IPA II beneficiaries. This prevents relevant IPA II beneficiaries of having full access to the internal market.

- *"Assistance under regional programmes should be directed towards areas where similar or joint efforts by several countries are needed, or where investments will produce a positive impact in several countries";*

In this regard, it can be argued that most of the diseases of EU concern are highly transmissible through the movement of farm animals and products thereof, through the movement of wild animals or spread by vectors. The control of these diseases, as the EU experience has shown, can only be dealt with from a regional perspective.

- *Jobs and growth - the Multi country strategy paper indicates that as regards competitiveness and growth significant challenges remain in all enlargement countries, in particular as regards job creation. This includes the agri-food sector, even though the region has the land, labour, location, and climate needed to potentially supply domestic and European markets with high-value products. The Multi country strategy paper continues stressing that in the context of the **SEE2020 Strategy**, the EU should help countries in the Western Balkans to better respond to market signals, integrate the agriculture in expanding regional and international markets, improve efficiency and provide alternative jobs outside agriculture;*

As mentioned above, a pre-requisite for these high value products to access to the internal market, to better respond to market signals and to be integrated in regional and international markets is to meet EU animal health and food safety standards.

- *Boosting competitiveness and innovation to allow participating in the global economy and improving the overall business environment including the capacity for research and innovation, by invigorating trade, integration and export-led growth;*

A particular focus is needed on private sector development and SMEs. Improvement of animal health and food safety standards contributes to trade and export led growth. In addition, an important part of the standards are also oriented towards human health protection, which can only be guaranteed by meeting them.

Europe 2020 Strategy

One of the priorities of Europe 2020 to relates to sustainable growth by promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy. One of the factors that prevents the farming sector to optimise their actions and improve their competitiveness is the presence of animal diseases by means of direct losses (dead

of animals, decreased yields) or by indirect losses linked to the restricted access of animals and products thereof sourced from disease infected areas. Improving animal health and food safety status will certainly improve competitiveness of the agro-food industry, gaining access to markets improving export potential and paving the way for a full access to the internal market upon accession. It should be highlighted that one of the bottlenecks identified by the 2020 Strategy has been the full completion of the internal market. In the animal health and food safety field the internal market is fully operational since decades and provided basic standards are met, relevant IPA II beneficiaries may benefit from it from the moment of accession.

Indicative Strategy Papers

The indicative Strategy Papers from the Western Balkans describe similar needs and objectives as those already mentioned in the Multi-country Strategy Paper, as last revised, and Europe 2020 Strategy. As overall objectives for the Western Balkans it has been identified that support is needed to increase food-safety and the ability of the agri-food sectors to cope with competitive pressure and market forces. Capacity building of public administration should therefore concentrate on sectors where the *acquis*-related implementing standards are particularly demanding (e.g. dairy and meat sectors, fruit, vegetable, wine, etc.), and where inter-sector cooperation is needed, especially in the areas of public and animal health.

For instance, for Bosnia and Herzegovina it is specifically highlighted that the level of competitiveness of the economy and agriculture remains low in comparison to EU Member States and most IPA II beneficiaries and that this should be improved. Albania and Kosovo, but also in other Western Balkans, lag behind in having in place functioning quality policy legislation while the lack of collection, distribution and management systems for fresh products, and the lack of infrastructure for processing, labelling, packaging and marketing have been specifically highlighted by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as affecting the quality and safety of products. As a consequence, only a few agri-food enterprises are authorised to export to the EU when there is more potential that is not fully utilised.

For Montenegro it has been identified by the relevant authorities that reforms are needed in the agri-food sector to ensure alignment with and implementation of the EU *acquis* in three negotiations chapters including Chapter 12 –Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy. Progress has been made in the harmonisation of legislation with the *acquis*. Improved implementation and further harmonisation- transposition of legislation and control standards is required in the areas of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy and animal health. In the area of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy, Montenegro faces several challenges given its small size and limited resources. Particular focus will be placed on upgrading of food and animal by-products establishments, strengthening the capacity of the veterinary services to undertake control measures and surveillance activities for animal diseases and on implementing the EU requirements on control of products of animal origin.

As needs, the Serbian authorities have noted that while some progress has been made on harmonisation of legislation with the *acquis*, effective implementation is only at an early stage in most areas. Improved implementation and further alignment of legislation and control standards is required in the areas of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy and animal health. One of the objectives of EU assistance identified is to contribute to a competitive, sustainable and efficient agriculture sector in Serbia, while maintaining vibrant rural communities, and to improve food safety, resilience to climate change impacts, and implementation of EU compliant veterinary and phytosanitary standards. As a result, it is expected that competitiveness of the Serbian agricultural sector will be improved through modernisation of agri-food establishments to meet the EU environmental, food safety and other relevant standards, that veterinary and phytosanitary services and controls are implemented in line with the EU requirements, and that animal health is improved through eradication of diseases and/or better control of brucellosis, bovine leucosis and tuberculosis, rabies and classical swine fever.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

From 2011 to 2013 a similar project was organised under the IPA Multi Beneficiary Project, EuropeAid/129988/C/SER/MULTI, Contract No. 2009/212-678, called "Support for the control and

eradication of animal disease". The main issues tackled at that time was the regional coordination for IPA funded assistance in the area of animal health, focussing mainly on rabies and classical swine fever, to support veterinary authorities with technical expertise, from an animal health point of view focussing on local solutions for intricate problems, but also for complex procurement projects to acquire vaccines. In the final report of this action certain recommendations were given, mainly to ensure that there are procedures in place to ensure more feeling of ownership in the authorities of concerned IPA beneficiaries, to focus on networking and setting up of useful networks, not only within the Western Balkans but also between relevant IPA beneficiaries and EU Member States, ensure that animal disease eradication bilateral programmes conform with EU standards in view of accession, and to provide direct technical assistance to competent authorities in the relevant IPA beneficiaries, not only focussing on obvious diseases of direct interest for the EU but also on diseases of direct interest for the relevant IPA beneficiaries.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To contribute to animal disease freedom in the Western Balkans and the improvement of access to the EU's single market of animals and animal products from relevant IPA II beneficiaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of official disease freedom in accordance with international standards for important animal diseases. The Western Balkans are listed in EU legislation for the importation into the EU of all animal species and animal products. 	World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) EU legislation	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Improved veterinary services in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries that understand EU legislation and EU import requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of disease eradication programmes implemented in a coordinated manner across the region – information on the implementation of eradication programmes is shared across the region. Consistent application of internationally recognised diagnostic methods. Access to clear and reliable data on disease eradication activities. 	Veterinary authorities in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries	The overall objective will support the specific objective of the action.
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure and administrative capacity of veterinary services in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries analysed and assessed and possibilities for improvements suggested; Regional meetings between veterinary services organised in the Western Balkans on animal disease control; Recommendations for an enhanced regional cooperation prepared and discussed with the relevant IPA II beneficiaries. Facilitated exchange of data between relevant IPA II beneficiaries set up and harmonisation of collected data delivered; Strategy for listing relevant IPA II beneficiaries in relevant EU legislation produced and implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which harmonised and shared information channels are used to enable objectively reporting on implementation of eradication programmes; Number of regional meetings organised and extent to which specific cross-border activities between the Western Balkans and EU Member States takes place; Recommendation for enhanced regional cooperation and strategy for listing relevant IPA II beneficiaries. 	Veterinary authorities in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries and the Member States	An efficient use of resources by the veterinary services in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

1. Improvement of the epidemiological situation as regards important animal diseases in the whole of the Western Balkans
 - Harmonise the collection of data;
 - Identify common models and platforms for sharing epidemiological and laboratory data, and for disease eradication programmes and contingency plans to improve the quality of information available;
 - Support the analysis of data and results;
 - Strengthen the regional laboratory network in cooperation with the EU Reference Laboratories, and set up a common system for the procurement of vaccines.
2. Improvement of the regional and international cooperation between veterinary services in the Western Balkans in animal disease control
 - Establish a system of communication between the veterinary services in the Western Balkans regarding early notification and real-time information on the status of the potential transboundary disease outbreaks.
 - Share best practices and lessons learned in the control of animal diseases between competent authorities in the EU and in the Western Balkans;
 - Organise expert missions and simulation exercises and dedicated meetings and regional workshops;
 - Draft recommendations for an enhanced regional cooperation;
 - Establish links with EU Member States and relevant international organisation like the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and FAO.
3. Supporting the performance of veterinary services in the Western Balkans
 - Identify gaps as regards the required human resources, the technical capability and the interaction with stakeholders of the veterinary services in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries;
 - Propose initiatives to mitigate those gaps;
 - Conduct an assessment of the specific national strategies for the control of the concerned diseases;
 - Give support to the preparation and implementation of coherent disease eradication projects, including sustainable vaccination campaigns;
 - Design a strategy for listing relevant IPA II beneficiaries in relevant EU legislation.

RISKS

No specific risks are identified. It will be up to the contractor to ensure proper implementation and to gather support from the veterinary authorities and the Ministries in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries. The terms of reference should ensure that the tender is allocated to a capable contractor.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

No specific conditions need to be in place. The relevant IPA II beneficiaries have veterinary services and bilateral programmes in place. This action is to help them in capacity building to improve their capabilities, so that by the time of accession they are ready and can deliver according to the *EU acquis*.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Involvement of competent authorities in the Western Balkans and project officers in EU Delegations of the Western Balkans is key. This includes implementation, monitoring and communication activities. They should feel ownership of the action. A steering committee will be set up that should include Chief Veterinary Officers of the relevant IPA II beneficiaries and project officers in EU Delegations.

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

The action will be managed directly by DG Health and Food Safety (cross-subdelegation from the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations). It will be implemented through a service contract which will be signed in Q1 2019. This will enable an optimal use of experience that is available in DG Health and Food Safety, which supports the Member States in controlling such transboundary animal diseases on their territory, for capacity building of veterinary services and the control and eradication of animal disease.

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 Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline (2017)	Target 2020	Final Target (2022)	Source of information
The Western Balkans are listed in EU legislation for the export to the EU of all animal species and animal products.	Only few relevant IPA II beneficiaries listed in 2017	All relevant IPA II beneficiaries are listed for the export of animal products to the EU	All relevant IPA II beneficiaries are listed for the export of live animals and animal products to the EU	EU legislation
Recognition of official disease freedom in accordance with international standards for important animal diseases.	Eradication programmes for rabies and classical swine fever are in place in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries	Rabies and classical swine fever are eradicated from the relevant IPA II beneficiaries	Vaccination programmes against rabies and classical swine fever have been stopped in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries	Veterinary authorities in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries
Number of disease eradication programmes implemented in a coordinated manner across the region – information on the implementation of eradication programmes is shared across the region.	2	4	8	Veterinary authorities in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries
Consistent application of internationally recognised diagnostic methods.	Only for rabies and classical swine fever	For an additional two diseases	For an additional four diseases	Diagnostic laboratories in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries
Access to clear and reliable data on disease eradication activities.	Only for rabies and classical swine fever	For an additional two diseases	For an additional four diseases	Veterinary authorities in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries
Extent to which harmonised and shared information channels are used to enable objectively reporting on implementation of eradication programmes	Only for rabies and classical swine fever	For an additional two diseases	For an additional four diseases	Veterinary authorities in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries
Number of regional meetings organised and extent to which specific cross-border activities between the Western Balkans and EU Member States takes place.	Only for rabies and classical swine fever	Two meetings for an additional two diseases	Four meetings for an additional four diseases	Veterinary authorities in the relevant IPA II beneficiaries and the Member States
Recommendation for enhanced regional			Recommendation and	Veterinary authorities in the relevant IPA II

cooperation and strategy for listing relevant IPA II beneficiaries.			strategy produced	beneficiaries
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5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender equality will be respected, this is however not seen as an issue for this action.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination will be respected.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Minority and vulnerable groups' concerns will be reflected in all activities, in particular when it concerns public services, legislative matters and socio-economic development.

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

No such consultation has taken place at this stage. Consultations with stakeholders (e.g. farmers) is foreseen during the implementation of the action.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

Climate change also has an impact on the occurrence of animal diseases, and in particular their spread. Capacity building of veterinary services will also have a positive effect on how the IPA II beneficiaries will be able to deal with incursions of diseases that cannot survive yet in this area.

This action does not have any climate change mitigating activities however.

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 0
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6. SUSTAINABILITY

In animal and public health, much depends on the performance of the competent veterinary authority. By investing in building and improving the capabilities of the competent authorities in the Western Balkans we have a more sustainable footing for ensuring a favourable animal health status for the whole region over the long term. In addition, some transboundary animal diseases occur in the interface between humans, animals and environment (like avian influenza). It is therefore necessary that these diseases are addressed within a One Health context that the EU supports. The action will also enable the Western Balkans to become familiar and implement the One Health approach, in line with the EU's best practices in this field.

The action aims to facilitate the progressive alignment of the animal health status, the priorities for disease control intervention and the disease preparedness of the Western Balkans to the higher EU standards, with European Commission support. It will enable the establishment of official disease freedom of the Western Balkan region. This will protect the EU and ensure a proper functioning of the internal market from the moment the Western Balkans are ready to join the EU. Once they are an EU Member State, they will be able to trade in the internal market without restrictions linked to their animal health status. They will also submit eradication programmes for those animal diseases still not

eradicated, to be co-financed by the European Commission, as is currently normal practice for the Member States.

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 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 Manual 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 accession 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 the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and the EU Delegations in the field.