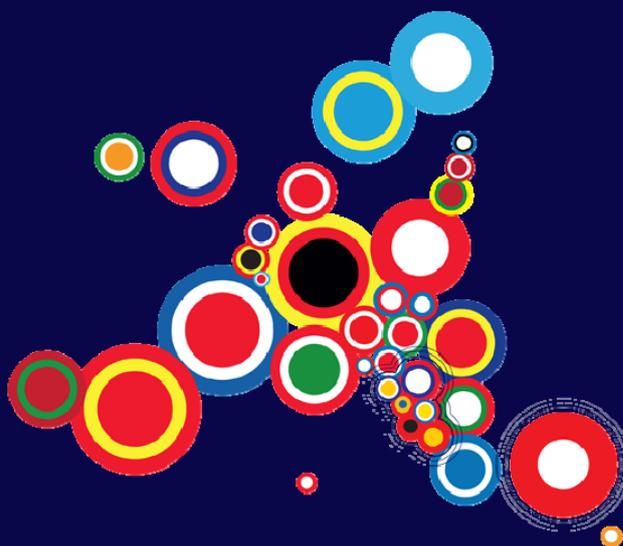




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

ALBANIA

European Union Integration Facility



Action summary

The **European Union Integration Facility** will contribute to strengthening the capacity and accountability of the Albanian public administration to assist the Government in the preparation for EU membership. The support will be instrumental for alignment with the EU *acquis* and development and implementation of relevant reforms and strategies.

Action Identification	
Action Programme Title	IPA 2017 Action Programme for Albania
Action Title	European Union Integration Facility
Action ID	IPA 2017/ 040-209.01/AL/EU Integration Facility
Sector Information	
IPA II Sector	Democracy and Governance
DAC Sector	15110 – Public sector policy and administrative management
Budget	
Total cost	EUR 14,600,000.00
EU contribution	EUR 14,600,000.00
Budget line(s)	22.02.01.01
Management and Implementation	
Management mode	Direct management and indirect management
<i>Direct management:</i> EU Delegation	EU Delegation to Albania – Activities 1.1, 1.7 and 2.1
<i>Indirect management:</i> National authority or entrusted entity	Indirect management with Albania for Activities 1.2, 1.3, and 1.5. The entrusted entity is the Central Finance and Contracting Unit (CFCU) within the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE). Indirect management by entrusted entities listed below: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) - Activity 1.4 and The Organisation and Security for Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) - Activity 1.6
Implementation responsibilities	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA)
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	Albania
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A
Timeline	
Final date for concluding Financing Agreement(s) with IPA II beneficiary	At the latest by 31 December 2018
Final date for concluding delegation agreements under indirect management	At the latest by 31 December 2018
Final date for concluding procurement and grant contracts	3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement, with the exception of cases listed under Article 189(2) of the Financial Regulation

Final date for operational implementation	6 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement		
Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement (date by which this programme should be de-committed and closed)	12 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement		
Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Aid to environment	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Biological diversity	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Albania has made steady progress and implemented smoothly its obligations under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and addressed key priorities for the opening of accession negotiations, as well as pursued the necessary reforms to advance the EU integration process.

The positive response in 2014 to Albania's candidacy for membership in the European Union led the country into a new phase for negotiation preparations, which requires further support for the European Integration process and more efforts towards the establishment of an effective and sustainable public administration.

In the **2016 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy**, the European Commission observed that Albania had continued to make steady progress towards fulfilling all of the five key priorities for the opening of accession negotiations. In view of such progress, and subject to credible and tangible progress in the implementation of the justice reform, in particular the re-evaluation of judges and prosecutors (*vetting*), the Commission recommended opening accession negotiations with Albania. The **General Affairs Council, meeting on 13 December 2016**, took positive note of the Commission's recommendation, and reiterated that a sustained, comprehensive and inclusive implementation of all five key priorities had to be ensured before the opening of accession negotiations. The Council invited the Commission to report on Albania in addition to the Enlargement Package and would revert to Albania once sufficient progress had been made.

The **Indicative Strategy Paper for Albania and the last Progress Report 2016** emphasize the need to further strengthen and increase the efficiency of Albania's public administration, both at the central and the local level. A sound and functioning public administration is a prerequisite for progress in many other sectors, and essential for an increase in investments, both foreign and domestic.

The **sector approach**, including sector reform contracts, still requires backing from the line Ministries in preparing national support programmes and sector support programmes. In addition, support is needed in order to prepare mature investment projects with a full set of project documentation in line with EU procedures for programming and EU procurement rules, including capacity building focusing on infrastructure tender procedures and other related complex tenders.

The **2017 EU Integration Facility (EUIF)** will provide *ad hoc* expertise to support EU accession-related reforms, including the fulfilment of the five key priorities for the opening of accession negotiations, and to support the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions under IPA.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

Implementation of reforms undertaken by the Government of Albania (GoA) will require **strong cross-ministerial cooperation and expertise for strengthening high-level EU integration capacity**; preparation of EU accession-related documents, studies; assistance for programming under IPA II. Prioritisation of efforts is essential and in this respect, the EU enlargement strategy remains focused on the "fundamentals first" principle. Core issues of the rule of law, fundamental rights, strengthening democratic institutions, including public administration reform, as well as economic governance, development and competitiveness remain key priorities in the enlargement process. As part of the latter, Albania submits on an annual basis an Economic Reform Programme addressing both the medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal policy framework as well as structural reforms.

The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA) is the main institution benefiting from such support as the leading ministry in implementation of the EU Integration facility. MEFA will ensure close cooperation and coordination with other relevant ministries and institutions to implement all planned activities.

The EU Integration Facility under IPA 2014 is focused on strengthening Albania's institutional mechanisms, capacities and procedures for strategic and integrated planning at central and sector level, further reinforce the capacities to properly manage IPA II actions, but as well continue the above mentioned support to the IPMGs (both existing and new ones to be established), and support the National Investment Committee in order to more easily access grant and loan funding through the WBIF. In addition, it will further support MEFA, target the Parliament and other key institutions in the internal market and energy sector, and last but not least support Civil Society Organisations.

The EU Integration Facility under IPA 2015 is focused on supporting Albania's civil servants of the Public Administration through capacity building via scholarships for post-graduate masters on policies studies, support to improve regulatory framework and functions of key Albanian Institutions, such as the Bank of Albania and the Competition Authority, support to EU accession processes and preparation of EU accession related documents. Support is provided to CSO's capacity building to increase policy dialogue and awareness on EU integration processes, support to gender mainstreaming to strategies and programmes of the government, and implementation of EU gender equality agenda across EU delegation in Albania and key governmental institutions.

The EU Integration Facility under IPA 2016 aimed to further support related to the EUD managed studies, preparatory and capacity building actions, evaluation of EU funded projects and actions, to strengthen high level EU integration capacities and provision of technical assistance and supplies through direct management in view of preparing and implementing IPA activities and actions needed to implement reforms and strategies subject to sector reform contracts.

While the assistance under previous programmes is being provided, **the 2017 EU Integration Facility (EUIF)** is a continuation of last year's facility with the same name and aims to continue supporting the Albanian public administration in implementing EU integration related reforms, and in preparing sector reform programmes and projects. On the one hand it will support institution-building in relation to EU integration and alignment with EU acquis (including the fulfilment of the five key priorities for the opening of accession negotiations), including policy dialogue with CSOs. On the other hand it will consist of a facility (including possible supply of equipment), to be managed by the EU Delegation, for developing and implementing national reforms, sector strategies and action plans, meeting acquis-related needs and carrying out related studies, increasing the maturity of actions proposed for EU funding, and supporting their implementation, as well as their monitoring and evaluation.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The proposed action is a flexible instrument meant to cover various ad-hoc needs related to EU integration processes set out in the **Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020**, focusing on key areas where financial assistance is most useful to meet the accession criteria.

The progress report 2016 noted that "Albania has continued to make steady progress in addressing all of the five **key priorities** for the opening of accession negotiations, pursuing a set of reforms necessary to advance in the EU integration path. Achievements related to public administration reform continued to be consolidated. As regards the rule of law, constitutional amendments were adopted in July 2016, paving the way for thorough and comprehensive reform of the judicial system. It is essential to build on the progress made and keep the reform momentum. Albania needs to demonstrate progress with a view to establishing a solid track record of investigations, prosecutions and final convictions in organised crime and corruption at all levels. The implementation of effective measures to reinforce the protection of human rights, including of Roma citizens and other vulnerable groups within the society, and anti-discrimination policies, as well as the implementation of property rights remain of the utmost importance. Albania should pursue economic reforms aimed at increasing competitiveness and tackling high unemployment, as well as improve the business environment".

The Indicative Country Strategy Paper (CSP) 2014- 2020 assumes that Albania will remain committed to its EU integration ambitions that it will continue implementing relevant reforms and that the process will continue during the entire period, including the starting of accession negotiations once the country has achieved the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria.

The proposed action supports objectives related to **Democracy and Governance** as a key priority defined in the Indicative Strategy Paper for Albania. More specifically actions will help to meet some key results namely: a) democratic institutions in conformity with the legal framework and allowing for consensus building to support EU-related reforms; b) sufficient capacities in place for managing EU accession processes, including for policy development and preparing and implementing adequate legislation; c) decision making processes taking into account performance based monitoring.

The **National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2015- 2020** of the Government of Albania is expected to contribute directly to strengthening Albania's institutional mechanisms, capacities and procedures for strategic and integrated planning at central and sectoral level, to further reinforcing the capacities to properly implement the IPA II actions, as well as to the implementation of **the National Plan for European Integration (NPEI) 2016-2020**. Other relevant documents are the cross-cutting 2015-2020 **Public Administration Reform Strategy** and the annual **Economic Reform Programme** (currently covering the years 2016-18), which sets out a medium-term macro-fiscal policy framework and a structural reform agenda aimed at ensuring competitiveness and inclusive growth.

Albania's national plans are generally aligned with several regional integration initiatives. This includes the commitment to the regional **South East Europe (SEE) 2020** growth targets. Moreover, Albania participates in the new **EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)** which aims at promoting economic and social prosperity and growth in the region by supporting blue growth, improved connectivity of transport/energy networks, better environmental quality and sustainable tourism actions. The strategy also includes, as cross-cutting aspects: capacity-building, communication, research and innovation and SMEs.

Furthermore, Albania also cooperates in the development of a regional transport network in line with the multi-annual plan of the **South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO)**. Albania is a signatory of the Energy Community Treaty. Albania has signed the **Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA)** which prepares the trade policy of the country to meet the standards of EU membership. Finally, Albania participates in the **Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN)** and the **Rural Development Standing Working Group** which enhance regional cooperation in the implementation of environmental and agricultural policies.

Support to EUIF will continue to be provided in line with the **EU Enlargement Strategy**, as well as the **Europe 2020** and **regional strategy SEE 2020**.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Past and current assistance highlights the need to establish a dedicated network of civil servants that can properly manage the negotiation process and other related EU integration issues. Despite prior and ongoing support, there still exist clear needs in building systems and capacities at the horizontal level in order for the public administration to function better.

A general lesson learned is that whereas EU assistance can contribute to building capacities in one particular sector, it does not always contribute to strengthen the overall functioning of public administration. In fact, past EU assistance has sometimes contributed to creation of sectoral isolated 'islands of excellence', which are rarely sustainable in the overall administrative environment. This has notably been criticised by the Court of Auditors (e.g. Meta Audit on IPA I assistance). In addition, despite substantial assistance provided for alignment with the EU acquis, the countries continue to suffer from poor implementation and enforcement record of laws and policies. This is to a large extent due to the fact that support (including by the Commission services) focuses on technical alignment (content) but does not pay sufficient attention to the poor quality of the law-and policy-making processes, which largely define whether new laws and policies can be implemented and enforced. The common problems are weak or non-existing (regulatory/fiscal) impact assessments of proposed laws and policies, poor inter-ministerial coordination and external (public) stakeholder consultations. Therefore, assistance envisaged under this Action will take the overall horizontal public administration reform efforts into consideration and will integrate the key principles of public administration and the 'Better Regulation' approach.

In previous programming exercises, it appeared that the programming process was still partly suffering from weak technical capacity and lack of specialised expertise in the beneficiary institutions. This conclusion was reiterated in the study of the readiness of Albania to apply the sector approach¹. The use of specialised expertise will further improve the country's capacity to develop and implement national sectoral programmes and to prepare mature investment projects in line with EU requirements and best practices.

As regards the link to previous financial assistance, since IPA 2008, the previous Ministry of European Integration and line Ministries have benefited from the technical expertise mobilised in the framework of the Project Preparation Facility (PPF), implemented through indirect centralised management with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). Currently, activities are focused on supporting the smooth functioning of so-called Integrated Policy Management Groups (IPMGs) in 4 pilot sectors including a central technical secretariat, the functions of the central and the other IPMG secretariats, and the development of national sector programmes.

¹ Study "Mapping Sector Strategies", Contract 2013/318-972
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2014/20140714-mapping-of-sector-strategies-final-report.pdf

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
<p>To strengthen the capacity of the Government of Albania to prepare for and participate in EU membership talks, and to progress toward meeting the Copenhagen criteria and the five "key priorities" for opening of accession negotiations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress made towards meeting accession criteria. - Composite indicator for PAR and governance, notably the average of the index for Government Effectiveness, Burden of Government Regulation and Regulatory Quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual EC country report - World Bank and World Economic Forum. 	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>To support alignment, to enhance the accountability of the Albanian administration, and to improve inclusive, gender-responsive and evidence-based planning, implementation and monitoring of national sectors reforms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of implementation of the National Plan for European Integration - Extent to which reporting provides information on the outcomes achieved - Extent to which policy development process makes the best use of analytical tools. - % of corrective measures proposed by the monitoring system for which an action has been taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular NPEI implementation reports (MEFA); - IPA II monitoring committees - Implementation review of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (2015-2020) - SIGMA 2015 Baseline measurement report and subsequent SIGMA monitoring/assessment reports - Reports of the National 	<p>Continuous high-level commitment from the Albanian authorities and from MEFA and line Ministries to the EU accession process;</p> <p>Continuous commitment to the implementation of the cross-cutting public administration reform and public financial management reform programme;</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which public consultation is used in developing policies and legislation. - Gender Inequality Index - World Press Freedom Index 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council for Civil Society; - Reports of the Prime Minister's Office (which oversees the roadmap on enabling environment for CS and monitors the public consultation process - Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum) - Reporters Without Borders WPF Index 	
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>1. Actions related to the political and economic Copenhagen criteria and to EU acquis are implemented in order to meet specific needs identified in the course of the pre-accession and upcoming negotiation processes; a sustainable pool of excellence, highly skilled in EU affairs, is created within the Albanian public administration; gender mainstreaming is taken into consideration throughout the reform cycle; and cooperation between Albanian authorities and CSOs in relation to EU Integration is enhanced.</p> <p>2. Draft national reforms, sector strategies and action plans developed in line with EU standards; acquis-related analyses and policy recommendations available; maturity of action proposals to be presented by the Government for future EU funding increased; EU-funded actions are monitored and evaluated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of draft national sector/inter-sectorial strategies developed in line with EU standards, and respecting the national regulations related to inclusive and evidence-based policy development - % of civil servants having benefitted from scholarship retained by the public administration - Number of central policy/ strategic planning documents, programmes, and funds developed, which reflect gender responsiveness - Number of gender specific input provided on priority sector reform, policy dialogue and reporting (such as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual EC country report; - IPA II Monitoring Committees; IPA II sectorial monitoring committees; - Sectoral and crosscutting policies, action plans, local development and action plans, selected key support programmes and financial instruments (e.g. RDF, NIC) 	<p>Continuous commitment from the Albanian authorities, from MEFA and line Ministries to the development and drafting of policy and program documents related to the EU accession reform process</p> <p>MEFA has sufficient administrative capacity and authority to play a proactive role during facility implementation and speeds up the implementation of actions foreseen in the EU integration facility 2014/2015/2016.</p>

	<p>SPDs, ADs, technical notes, or annual EC country report)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of action documents prepared and submitted - % of action documents prepared and submitted that scored at least 1 in the gender marker - Number of EU-funded actions for which monitoring and evaluation were carried out and their recommendations addressed - Number of staff of the public broadcaster trained for professional and independent new production - Number of newly graduated professional and independent journalists capacitated - Number of independent media productions and programmes produced 		
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DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Technical assistance shall continue to support development of national sector strategies and action plans; acquis-related needs and preparatory studies; increase maturity of action proposals to be presented by the Government for future EU funding through twinning, studies and other capacity development activities.

Activities related to result 1:

Activity 1.1: Support to Albania's institutional arrangements for accession negotiations, including the functioning of the law approximation units of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Parliament

Activity 1.2: Capacity building for civil servants of the Public Administration (of which at least 30% and preferably 50% women), including trainings/internships in EU Members State administrations and scholarship scheme ("young cells") for school years 2019-20 and 2020-21

Activity 1.3: Support to Civil Society Organisations for enhanced cooperation with state institutions in relation to the European Integration process

Activity 1.4: Support to the Gender Equality Facility (GEF) in assisting the Government in the national adoption of gender equality acquis, in ensuring that gender mainstreaming is taken into consideration by line Ministries and municipalities throughout the reform cycle.

Activity 1.5: Institution-building for alignment with the EU acquis and enhanced ability to meet economic criteria:

- Customs Administration under the Ministry of Finance and Economy in relation to the Union Customs Code;
- Energy Efficiency Agency under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy in relation to energy efficiency;
- Ministry of Finance and Economy in relation to intellectual property law;
- National Tourism Agency under the Ministry of Tourism and Environment to support upgrading of tourism services;
- Commissioner for Data Protection and Access to Information in relation to data protection.

Activity 1.6: Strengthening the capacity and independence of the public broadcaster and the public school of journalism, including enhanced international cooperation (notably with the European Broadcasting Union), with a view to strengthening the freedom of expression in the context of the Copenhagen political criteria

Activity 1.7: Support to enhance the quality of journalism, with a view to strengthening media pluralism and the freedom of expression in the context of the Copenhagen political criteria.

Activity related to result 2:

Activity 2.1: Facility to support (a) the preparation/programming, implementation, communication and visibility, monitoring and evaluation of IPA actions under direct and indirect management; support to actions needed to develop and implement reforms, strategies and plans including areas supported by sector reform contracts; elaboration of preparatory studies; the provision of supply to address material needs identified in relevant EU accession-related reports; (b) preparation of EU accession-related documents to address needs identified in EU accession-related reports including annual country reports, SAA Committee conclusions, Enlargement Strategy and related texts.

RISKS

In meeting the criteria on European standards, Albania generally fulfilled the SAA requirements according to the established deadlines and EU-Albania joint recommendations. Although there is no major risk foreseen to the implementation of this Action for 2017, there are still a number of assumptions that should be considered:

- Continuous high-level commitment from the Albanian authorities, from MEFA and line Ministries to the EU accession process;
- Continuous commitment to the implementation of the cross-cutting public administration reform and public financial management reform programmes;
- Continuous commitment from the Albanian authorities, from MEFA and line Ministries to the development and drafting of policy and program documents related to the EU accession reform process;
- MEFA has sufficient administrative capacity and authority to play a pro-active role during facility implementation and speeds up the implementation of actions foreseen in the EU integration facility 2014/2015/2016.

The EU Delegation will ensure continuous dialogue, regular and open communication, regular monitoring of implementation, to ensure that various potential influencing factors will not hamper actions to further strengthen the EU capacity for EU integration reforms.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There are three main conditions to be fulfilled while the IPA 2017 assistance is provided that will contribute to the efficient implementation of the action:

- Effective communication and active involvement of all stakeholders;
- No fundamental changes in priority setting;
- Sufficient ownership, motivation and support from all stakeholders to effectively and actively implement and monitor sector reform.

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

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

This action will be implemented under direct via procurement of service / framework / supply contracts, call for proposals for grants and indirect management delegation agreements with Albania and with entrusted entities (see details below).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For Activities 1.2, 1.3 and 1.5 indirect management with Albania is applied for which the allocation of roles and responsibilities takes into consideration the current state of knowledge, skills and capabilities of the Central Finance and Contracting Unit (CFCU) within the Ministry of Finance and Economy to prepare, tender, evaluate, sign and implement contracts, twinnings and call for proposals for grants. They are based on the responsibilities already conferred to the CFCU under the IPA 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 annual programmes. Ex-ante controls will be applied according to the plan approved by DG NEAR.

The EU Delegation retains the direct management responsibility for Activity 1.1 to support to preparation of accession negotiations for Activity 1.7 to support to independent media productions and programmes and for Activity 2.1 which is a facility to support the preparation of IPA actions, accession-related documents, studies, etc., based on the model successfully applied in Albania in previous years.

Activities 1.4 (Gender Equality Facility) and 1.6 (public broadcasting, media and journalism) require very special competences, which are respectively possessed by UN Women and the OSCE.

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

The different activities of this Action will be implemented as follows:

- Activity 1.1: direct management by EU Delegation, through indicatively one service contract
- Activity 1.2: indirect management with Albania, through indicatively one call for proposals with EU Member States or other mandated organisations
- Activity 1.3: indirect management with Albania, through indicatively one grant scheme with civil society organisations (call for proposals for indicatively 10-50 grants)
- Activity 1.4: indirect management delegation agreement between the EU Delegation and UN Women
- Activity 1.5: indirect management with Albania, through five twinning and/or twinning light contracts
- Activity 1.6: indirect management delegation agreement between the EU Delegation and the OSCE
- Activity 1.7: direct management by EU Delegation, through indicatively 1 grant awarded through call for proposal
- Activity 2.1: direct management by EU Delegation, through indicatively 15 service/framework and/or supply contracts

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The responsible structures for monitoring will be the following: (i) at Programme level: Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs for Monitoring of EU Assistance Projects; (ii) at Action level: the SPOs at the beneficiary institutions; (iii) at Contract level: the EU Delegation.

According to the IPA II regulation and the Manual for monitoring and evaluation, the terms of reference for the evaluators will be prepared by the Directorate for Monitoring of EU Assistance Projects.

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. Monitoring and evaluation exercises will be carried out as prescribed by the DG NEAR guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation.² In addition, the Action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures set in the Financing Agreement.

² https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/monitoring-and-evaluation_cs

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline	Target 2020 (4)	Final Target (2022) (5)	Source of information
<p><u>CSP Indicator</u></p> <p>Advancement in the IPA II Country Strategy Paper composite indicator for governance and PAR, notably the average of the index for Government Effectiveness, Burden of Government Regulation and Regulatory Quality</p>	75.37 (2010)	89.54	/	Index for Government Effectiveness (World Bank), Burden of Government Regulation (World Economic Forum) and Regulatory Quality (World Bank)
<p>% of implementation of the National Plan for European Integration</p>	56.7 (January 2017)	90	90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular NPEI implementation reports (MEFA); - IPA monitoring committees
<p>Extent to which reporting provides information on the outcomes achieved</p>	3 (2014)	6	8	SIGMA 2015 Baseline measurement report and subsequent SIGMA monitoring/assessment reports
<p>Extent to which policy development process makes the best use of analytical tools.</p>	<p>2 (2014)</p> <p>"Only simplistic techniques are used (e.g. interministerial meetings and consultation with interested parties) but on a regular basis"</p>	<p>5</p> <p>"Comprehensive <i>ex ante</i> analysis is carried out regularly".</p>	5	SIGMA 2015 Baseline measurement report and subsequent SIGMA monitoring/assessment reports
<p>% of corrective measures proposed by the monitoring system for which an action has been taken</p>	0 (April 2017)	80	100	IPA II monitoring committee and sectorial monitoring committees
<p>Extent to which public consultation is used in developing policies and legislation.</p>	<p>2 (2014)</p> <p>"Regulation is in place</p>	<p>5</p> <p>"Regulation is in</p>	5	SIGMA 2015 Baseline measurement report and subsequent SIGMA monitoring/assessment reports

	that sets out clear procedures for public consultation, but its enforcement is sporadic or inconsistent".	place that sets out clear procedures for public consultation. Its execution is regular and a mechanism exists to check the execution and its outcomes. Outcomes of consultations are also made public".		
Gender Inequality Index	0.704 (2016)	0.725	0.725	- Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum)
World Press Freedom Index Score	29.92 (2016)	24	20	Reporters Without Borders WPF Index
National sector/inter-sectorial strategies developed in line with EU standards, and respecting the national regulations related to inclusive and evidence-based policy development ;	22 (2016)	+ 5	+ 5	Annual EC country report; IPA II Monitoring Committees; Implementation review of the National Strategy for Development and Integration (2015-2020)
% of civil servants having benefitted from scholarship retained by the public administration	0 (2016)	0	90	Department of Public Administration, Office of the Prime Minister
Number of central policy/ strategic planning documents, programmes, and funds developed, which reflect gender responsiveness	3 policy documents /action plans, namely the National Strategy for Employment & Skills 2014-2020; the	5 additional policy documents/ strategies/ action plans; and 1 national fund	7 additional policy documents/ strategies/ action plans; and 1 national	Sectoral and crosscutting policies, action plans, local development and action plans, selected key support programmes and financial instruments (e.g. RDF, NIC)

	National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020; the NSDI II 2015-2020 (2016)		fund	
Number of gender specific input provided on priority sector reform, policy dialogue and reporting (SPDs, ADs, technical notes, or annual EC country report)	9 inputs (2016)	+ 5	+ 10	Reports of the National Council for Civil Society; Reports of the Prime Minister's Office (which oversees the roadmap on enabling environment for CS and monitors the public consultation process together with MIPA)
- Number of action documents prepared and submitted	0 (2016)	+ 30	+ 30	- IPA II sectorial monitoring committees
-% of action documents prepared and submitted that scored at least 1 in the gender marker	0 (April 2017)	90	90	- NIPAC (submitting ADs) and EU Delegation
- Number of EU-funded actions for which monitoring and evaluation were carried out and their recommendations addressed	0 (2016)	+10	+10	- IPA II monitoring committee and sectorial monitoring committees
- Number of staff of the public broadcaster trained for professional and independent new production	0	+ 15	+20	- Surveys, progress report findings
- Number of newly graduated professional and independent journalists capacitated	0	+ 15	+20	- Surveys, progress report findings
- Number of independent media productions and programmes produced	0 (April 2017)	+10	+10	- Media outlets and grant activity reports

5. SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

The GoA approved in May 2016, the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) for the period 2015-2020. The NSDI provides the strategic framework for all sector and cross-sector strategies and is the backbone of the Integrated Planning System (IPS), which is a set of operating principles to ensure that government policy planning, budgeting and monitoring are linked and operate efficiently. The NSDI guides the Medium-Term Budget Programme (MTBP) and subsequently annual budget allocations by providing policy objectives which are included in the Ministry of Finance and Economy's instructions for the budget preparation by the various institutions. The GoA has defined its policy priorities, and subsequently additional sector strategies, most of which are finalised and approved together with the NSDI.

Efforts to ensure co-operation and an appropriate division of labour among donors have been directed by the provisions of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and are performed on the basis of the NSDI and the underlying national strategies.

The first annual implementation report of the cross-cutting 2015-2020 **Public Administration Reform Strategy** provides baselines for the selected performance indicators. Due to the need for an integrated, comprehensive and streamlined system to manage the overall policy cycle in key sectors, the GoA has adopted the establishment of the Integrated Policy Management Groups (IPMG), a new nexus or system to guide policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and to strengthen sector and donor coordination. The IPMGs will provide a formal structure that brings together senior representatives of the relevant ministries, agencies and development partners in priority sectors – particularly those requiring cross-ministerial cooperation - and allowing them to oversee the entire policy cycle and decide eventual adjustments.

The IPMG system aims to provide the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and other high-level government committees (e.g. the Inter Ministerial Committee on European Integration Coordination) with the necessary recommendations for key policy decisions affecting those sectors deemed a priority and which require cross-ministerial cooperation. IPMGs are officially established in four priority sectors: Integrated Water Management; Good Governance and PAR; Employment and Social Policy, Competitiveness and Social Innovation.

The integrated policy management group for public administration reform (PAR) was set up in September 2015. Public administration reform is one of the priorities of the NSDI. Funding of the PAR strategy is reflected in the medium-term budget programme.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

This action will support the preparation of sectors programmes and strategies with a view to increasing alignment with the Union acquis, which in itself precludes any discrimination based on gender. Throughout the implementation of this Action, attention will be given to ensuring proper gender mainstreaming across various documents, such as programs, policies, assessments or evaluations, etc. Activity 1.4 has gender mainstreaming as its main objective.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equal participation of women and men will be secured through appropriate information and publicity material in the design of Actions and access to the opportunities they offer. An appropriate men/women balance will be

sought on all the managing bodies and activities of the programme and its Actions. Special attention will be paid to the linkages between gender-responsive sector priorities and the MTBP.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

This action will support the preparation of sectors programmes and strategies with a view to increasing alignment with the Union acquis, which in itself precludes any discrimination based on minorities and vulnerable groups. Throughout the implementation of this Action, attention will be given to ensuring proper attention to the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups across various documents, such as programs, policies, assessments or evaluations, etc.

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

In line with the Civil Society Guidelines 2014-2020, based on Results Framework that sets out objectives, results and indicators for the EU support to civil society, Government Program 2013-2017, new National Plan for European Integration and other sectoral strategies in place or to be developed, MEFA will continue to support civil society, and ensure cooperation of line ministries and other central institutions with CSOs in Albania.

In addition, civil society will be associated and involved in any policy and legislative development activity supported by this Action. Specifically on Public Administration Reform, assistance will liaise with the WeBER regional project (financed by the EU Civil Society Facility) which is aimed at monitoring public administration reforms and strengthen civil society participation in this field.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

The planned Action activities do not require any specific environmental considerations. However, due consideration will be given to preparing Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for potential future investments in the transport, social, environment and agriculture//rural development sectors.

7. SUSTAINABILITY

The Action will increase the ownership of MEFA regarding the EU integration policy dialogue.

The Action is likely to result in better performance of the Government and Governmental institutions in the fulfilment of its functions, and in better inter-institutional cooperation.

The foreseen impact of the Facility is also better planning, programming and enhanced ownership and sustainability of future IPA Action Programmes for Albania.

The new Civil Service Law, which became effective in February 2015, should guarantee that civil servants trained/coached/mentored with EU funds should stay in the public administration after government changes.

Development of strategic planning documents or new legislation/ amendments shall be carried out respecting all national procedures, especially those related to (fiscal/ regulatory) impact assessments, public consultations, inter-ministerial coordination ('better regulation approach'). Assistance to legislative and policy development shall start by providing support to the beneficiaries with 'options analysis', regulatory impact assessments, concept papers, estimation of costs of implementation, etc. prior to supporting them with drafting of legislation/ amendments. Actual policy or legal drafting shall be mainly done by the beneficiary and even if some drafting is done by experts, it shall be paired with capacity building (e.g. detailed explanation of proposed texts, comparison among international examples, etc.). Projects should respect the national legislation on conducting inter-institutional and public consultations and support beneficiary institutions in conducting them in a proper manner, not as a formality and too late in the process; for example, a) all public

stakeholders' consultations should be done in national language(s) to enable participation of all relevant stakeholders, b) results of the public consultations should be published and that all policy or legislative proposals that are submitted to the government/parliament should be accompanied with reports on outcomes of such consultations. The national institutions in charge of horizontal public administration reforms, including the Ministry of Finance and Economy shall be involved in all policy and legislative development processes.

Whenever job descriptions or internal procedure manuals are developed, they need to be consistent with the formal decrees on the organisational structure and job requirements for the organisation (often approved by the Government) and any by-laws that exist for all government bodies regarding job descriptions and written procedures. They also need to promote gender balance, especially in decision-making positions, where women are underrepresented,

Proposals for substantial re-organisation/re-arrangement of functions should be avoided, unless external analyses show organisational causes for malfunctioning, unless clearly supported by wide EU Member State practice or needed for specific legal requirements. Should creation of new public institutions or substantial re-organisation of existing ones be absolutely necessary, the decisions shall also be accompanied with a commitment by the national authorities to grant the sufficient legal powers, resources and staffing necessary to discharge their mandate; accountability lines towards parent institutions shall be formally defined and the general regulation for state administration and the organisation of Government structures shall be respected.

Training organised for a larger number of different public administration organisations shall be coordinated with the Albanian School for Public Administration and where possible, be carried out in cooperation with them. Women's participation must be promoted and encouraged in the context of capacity building.

Any IT development, including establishment of new registries, shall respect the national standards for interoperability; in cases when these are missing, relevant consultations with the coordinating state authority for ICT shall be a prerequisite for launching of any tenders.

Whenever written procedural manuals or guidelines are developed, these should be simple enough to be regularly updated and changed by the staff of the respective organisations without external support. Any guidelines or procedures developed shall not contradict with any legal provision of the country.

Transparency of government activities shall be strongly promoted and supported and the civil society will be involved in monitoring the implementation of reforms and the respect of citizens' rights as much as possible.

8. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

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

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the Action has received funding from the EU in line with the 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 and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to keep the EU Delegation and the Commission 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. Beneficiaries and contractors shall respect the EU's visibility guidelines in all communication activities undertaken under this action (briefings, presentations, press conferences, training and other events) and in the production of all visual communication tools (publications, fax headers, business cards, advertising material etc.). Also the web-site of the MEFA will be used as a platform to share relevant information about the activities.