



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

MULTI-COUNTRY EU4 Green Recovery

Action summary

The Action will support the sustainable recovery and green economic growth in the context of the post-COVID-19 pandemic. It will also implement specific actions in areas such as decarbonisation, circular economy, biodiversity to be defined in the upcoming Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. The aim is to support the sustainable recovery of the region, based on decarbonisation, sustainable production and consumption, cleaner technologies, reduction of air, and water pollution, protection and restoration of biodiversity and a healthier environment. The action will deploy the necessary technical assistance to implement these directions. It will contribute building fair and prosperous societies, with modern, resource-efficient and competitive economies where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, where economic growth is decoupled from resource use and where no one is left behind – the transition is just. The green recovery will be developed in line with the Communication JOINT(2020) 11 “Global EU response to COVID-19”.

The main expected results include: i) the Beneficiaries are empowered in the implementation of green recovery plans through a fit for purpose setup; ii) monitoring and reporting processes are operational; iii) sustainable, resilient and green recovery plans are developed; iv) citizens are aware of the EU’s efforts and contribution in the improvement of living conditions and green recovery plans in the Beneficiaries.

Action Identification			
Action Programme Title	IPA II Multi-country Action Programme 2020 – part 2		
Action Title	EU4 Green Recovery		
Action ID	IPA 2020/042-350.01/MC/EU4Green Recovery		
Sector Information			
IPA II Sector	9. Regional and territorial cooperation		
DAC Sector	140, 210, 230, 231, 232, 310, 311, 410		
Budget			
Total cost	EUR 10 million		
EU contribution	EUR 10 million		
Budget line(s)	22.020401- Multi-country programmes, regional integration and territorial cooperation		
Management and Implementation			
Method of implementation	Indirect management		
<i>Indirect management:</i>	EU Member State Agencies (or a consortium thereof)		
Entrusted entity			
Implementation responsibilities	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations– Unit D.5 Regional Cooperation and Programmes		
Location			
Zone benefiting from the action	Western Balkans (Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, and Republic of Serbia)		
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A		
Timeline			
Final date for contracting including the conclusion of contribution/delegation agreements	At the latest by 31 December 2021		
Final date for operational implementation	72 months from the adoption of the Financing Decision		
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	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.

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The European Green Deal adopted by the European Commission on 11 December 2019¹ puts forward the ambitious long term goal of making Europe a resource efficient economy and a carbon neutral continent by 2050, and sets out a number of related targets and concrete actions in the field of climate, energy, mobility, economy, agriculture, pollution and biodiversity management.

The communication stresses that “the ecological transition for Europe can only be fully effective if the EU’s immediate neighbourhood also takes effective action. Work is underway on a green agenda for the Western Balkans”. This is not only because of their European perspective confirmed in the Western Balkans Strategy² and the subsequent summits, but also because this is essential for their citizens and because climate change, polluted air and water know no borders.

Since the European Green Deal was published, the global economy has been hard hit by an unprecedented external shock in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Communication on the Global EU response to COVID-19 mentions³ that “the current crisis is a reminder that full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement is crucial to help better equip the world for future systemic shocks.” In addition, one key challenge is to “ensure that companies regain ability to finance longer-term investments, so that economies can recover in a green and inclusive mode.”

Countering the economic impact of COVID-19 is a major challenge for the EU and the Western Balkans. It does also create an opportunity for a green economic recovery, green economic growth and for rendering the socio-economic model more resilient to environmental, health and economic threats. Greening the economy has a significant potential for job creation that can help Western Balkans recover from the economic shock.

The Western Balkans are projected to be severely hit by climate change. The rise in temperature is projected to be up to 6 degrees Celsius in summer, annual precipitation to decrease by 12% (including decrease of up to 50% in summer). Increases in droughts, flooding as well as in frequency and intensity of extreme weather phenomena are expected. It is therefore in the interest of citizens, especially of the young generation, of the region that, in line with Paris Agreement, carbon reduction commitments are implemented in respect of clean energy supply and of smart mobility solutions. Energy efficiency of buildings and of industrial plants will need to be equally addressed.

The region’s economies rely heavily on the extraction and consumption of fossil fuels and on resource-intensive and inefficient industrial plants, which have not been fully modernised. Equally, the farming sector has great potential to become more efficient and go beyond merely catering for self-subsistence. The region requires a paradigm shift in its economic development model – one based on a circular economy, where extraction and use of new natural resources is significantly reduced, while recycling and reuse are the order of the day. This also offers an opportunity for the Western Balkans to leap-frog to innovative green technologies, catering both to the local and the European markets. There are good examples in the region. The Western Balkans already have on average a higher share of renewables (e.g. 40% in Montenegro) than the EU average (just over 17%).

¹ Commission Communication on “The European Green Deal” (2019) 640 final

² Commission Communication on “A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans”, COM (2018) 65, 6.2.2018, pp. 7 and 18.

³ JOIN (2020) 11, 08.04.2020.

The region also faces waste management challenges, related to increased quantities of waste due to rising living standards, historical hazardous waste that needs to be properly dealt with and the increase of quantities of demolition and construction waste. There are no collection and recycling systems and centres established, and only a few adequate waste management facilities. As a result, most of the waste still goes to illegal dumps and non-sanitary landfills. There is an urgent need in the Western Balkans to take on the circular economy model, where waste generation is limited, waste collection and segregation improved and the resources used in production are recycled and reduced.

As a result of a lower level of industrialisation, the Western Balkans boast some of the most pristine habitats in Europe, which are home to a number of endangered species and biodiversity. Apart from nature preservation, these ecosystems can be a significant draw for tourism and clean economic activities. As the region's economic growth progresses, this biodiversity needs to be actively protected and, where appropriate, restored. Nature protection and safeguarding biodiversity is an area where regional cooperation will bring substantial benefits such as for the management of trans-frontier nature parks and protected areas.

Air quality is one of the key problems for the region and in particular its capitals. It deeply affects the health of citizens and the economies of both the Western Balkans and the neighbouring EU Member States such as Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy and Greece. Air pollution in the region is caused by energy production (coal power plants) but also by transport and household heating (especially during the winter season). Joint monitoring of air pollution, joint air quality plans and cooperation under the Energy Community Treaty to reduce the level of pollution are approaches that can be taken at regional level, including in cooperation with the neighbouring EU Member States.

About 90% of the territory of Western Balkans falls within shared river basins. More than half of the thirteen major transboundary rivers and four shared lakes in the region fall into the territory of three or more riparian countries. Transboundary cooperation for the management of water resources, consultations on hydropower development projects and the management of transboundary freshwater and marine protected areas is essential for obtaining the conservation status needed and for stopping the decline and loss of the region's biodiversity.

Finally, with agriculture accounting for a large proportion of the region's economy, the protection of the quality of soil is essential. The extensive use of pesticides, deforestation and other polluting and soil degrading farming practices need to be addressed.

The fact that the Western Balkans are less advanced in industrial development and environmental protection than most of Europe is both an opportunity and a challenge. On the one hand, the region has the opportunity to leapfrog in areas such as innovation and nature-based solutions. On the other, the transition to carbon neutrality is likely to carry greater social and economic costs due to heavy reliance on fossil fuels in the economies. In that context, it is important to ensure a fair and just transition, in which no region or citizen is left behind and where re-skilling and green jobs programmes are facilitated.

The impacts of climate change and environment degradation can exacerbate existing gender inequalities as well as create new ones. A global transition towards a low-carbon and sustainable economy presents several opportunities for achieving gender equality to contribute to sustainable development. An inclusive action can play a strong role in transforming gender norms and furthering gender equality, while ensuring women have the opportunity to participate as actors in combating climate change, building a green economy and generating green jobs.

So far, financial assistance in the field of environment and climate change has been mainly sectoral, focused on the process of alignment to the EU *acquis* under the requirements of chapter 27, with both actions at bilateral (mainly investments) and regional level (mainly capacity building). Given the evolution of EU *acquis* and political agenda in the field of clean energy transition and Green Deal, there is a need to further

mainstream environment and climate in IPA assistance and support all relevant institutions in the Western Balkans in the implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.

Regional cooperation is key to address transboundary issues and ease potential tensions. In addition to strong investment's needs in the field of water and waste in particular, the main challenges in these areas faced by all IPA II beneficiaries in the region are mainly twofold. Beneficiaries need to have a structured co-operation among all relevant ministries and stakeholders including local authorities, industry and civil society. They also need to set a strong and well-equipped administration at central and local level, imperative for *acquis* implementation and enforcement. This is a major challenge, also linked to public administration reform and public finance management.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

The action aims at providing support for the development and implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. In so doing it would continue to mainstream environmental and climate policies and strengthen the administrative capacities of the relevant IPA II beneficiaries while at the same time fostering regional cooperation.

The Green Agenda for the Western Balkans mirrors the initiative of the EU Green Deal. It is based on four pillars: a) climate actions, including de-carbonisation, just and clean energy transition and sustainable mobility; b) circular economy, addressing in particular recycling and efficient use of resources in all sectors; c) biodiversity, aiming to protect and restore natural wealth of the region and d) fighting pollution of air, water and soil.

The action will include a governance, coordination and monitoring scheme for the Green Agenda that will facilitate a more substantial and more prominent high-level political dialogue at a regional level. Its role will ensure proper technical discussion as well as coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the different components of the Green Agenda. Moreover, this scheme will strengthen the cooperation between the Western Balkans and vis-à-vis the EU and other stakeholders. A further goal is the strengthening of Green Agenda governance in the relevant Beneficiaries.

There are already a number of structures/institutions that cover some of the most relevant elements of the Green Agenda. This Green Agenda Governance and Coordination Scheme will not replace any of them, but will look for synergies, avoiding overlapping between the existing initiatives. A non-exhaustive list of the existing regional bodies to be considered would be: the National IPA Coordinators (NIPACs), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), the REA, the Chamber Investment Forum, the Energy Community, the Transport Community, the Western Balkans Investment Framework and International Financial Institutions, among others.

The main expected results are:

1. Beneficiaries are empowered in the implementation of green recovery plans through a fit for purpose setup.
2. Monitoring and reporting processes are operational.
3. Sustainable, resilient and green recovery plans are developed.
4. Citizens are aware of the EU's efforts and contribution in the improvement of living conditions and green recovery plans in the Beneficiaries implementation.

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

The revised IPA II Multi-country Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020⁴ establishes environment and climate action as one of the priorities under the regional structures and networks axe, which should assist the Beneficiaries in providing "an interface between the regional aspects of environmental protection and climate action and the respective national priorities, helping the Beneficiaries to exchange information and experience related to the preparation for accession and to assist their progress in the transposition and implementation of EU environmental and climate *acquis*." Additionally, it highlights the need to invest in the area of environment and climate action in order to promote protection of the environment, quality of life particularly in the areas of water, waste management and air pollution, climate change adaptation and mitigation including disaster risk reduction, and the development towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy.

The action will be directly in line with the following strategic documents:

- The **Western Balkans Strategy**⁵ acknowledges the efforts the Western Balkans need to do to progress with alignment in the field of environment. The Strategy also prioritises to expand the Energy Union to the Western Balkans.
- The **Declaration of the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia**⁶ in May 2018 specifically refers to helping the Western Balkans move faster towards sustainable and climate friendly societies in line with the Paris Agreement.
- The **2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy**⁷ confirmed that there is considerable scope for the Western Balkans to embark on a Green Agenda, for the region to address environmental issues such as waste management, air pollution and climate change.
- In the joint **“Statement on Clean Energy Transition for the Western Balkans”**⁸ signed in Podgorica on 21 February 2019, the Western Balkans ministers of energy and of environment confirmed their will to align as swiftly as possible with the EU's energy, climate and environmental policies and the long term objectives of the Paris Agreement, by this contributing to the well-being of citizens and the sustainable development of the region.
- In the **conclusions of the Berlin 6 Summit in Poznań in July 2019**, the Western Balkans leaders expressed their willingness “to work together for the launching of an ambitious Green Agenda, to contribute to the leading efforts of the EU in fighting climate change, protecting the environment and to unlock the economic potential of the green, low carbon and circular economy in the region. The Leaders confirmed their readiness to meaningfully contribute to such an agenda, which could be presented at the next EU Western Balkans Summit to be hosted by Croatia in May 2020.”

⁴ C(2018) 3442, 31.05.2018, p. 21

⁵ C(2018) 65, 6.02.2018.

⁶ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/34776/sofia-declaration_en.pdf

⁷ C(2019)260, 29.5.2019.

⁸ <https://wbif.eu/storage/app/media/News/Ministerial-Statement-signed-February-2019.pdf>

- On 16 July 2019, in her **Political Guidelines for the new Commission**⁹, the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced as her priority the need to develop a European Green Deal and reaffirmed the European perspective of the Western Balkans, pointing out to the important role of continuing the reform process across the region. Finally, the action is fully in line with the communication on the **European Green Deal**¹⁰, adopted by the European Commission on 11 December 2019. This strategic document acknowledges that the ecological transition for Europe can only be fully effective if the EU's immediate neighbourhood also takes effective action. The Green Agenda for the Western Balkans is one of the key actions listed in the annex to be achieved.
- The Joint Statement of the European Council of March 26¹¹ stresses that “the urgency is presently in fighting the Coronavirus pandemic and its immediate consequences. We should however start to prepare the measures necessary to get back to normal functioning of our societies and economies and to sustainable growth, integrating i.a. the green transition and the digital transformation, and drawing all lessons from the crisis”.
- The Communication Joint(2020) 11 final “Global EU response to COVID-19” states the need to integrate in our response “the strategic objectives the EU has set itself as regards the environment and climate, as set out in the European Green Deal, and the Digital Agenda, which remain fully valid. Ongoing work on these objectives will in fact reinforce the efforts to address the short and long-term challenges linked to the pandemic. The current crisis is a reminder that the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement remain crucial to help better equip the world for future systemic shocks

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Regional co-operation in the environment and climate area has been supported by the European Commission for more than a decade, starting in 2005 with the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Program for South-East Europe (REReP), continuing with the Regional Environmental Network for Accession (RENA) covering the period 2010 -2013, followed by the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN) programme as from October 2013 until October 2016, and the Regional Implementation of Paris Agreement project (RIPAP) from August 2017-October 2018.

These projects all contributed to the creation of a platform for the Western Balkans and Turkey to exchange of best practices, information sharing and establishment of relevant networks. The regional networks developed by these four programmes have proven useful in helping the Beneficiaries in the European perspective and have been very successful in fostering and facilitating the dialogue at regional level but also between the region and the EU Member States.

ECRAN has been followed by the **EU Environment Partnership Program for Accession (EPPA)**¹² (2019-2022) that has the same aims and goals of enabling the beneficiaries to have a better understanding of joint environmental challenges, as well as of the solutions that can be developed together. The main areas of work under EPPA are general environmental policy, waste management, water management, air quality, nature protection including illegal logging and trade in wild fauna and flora.

Lessons learnt from sectoral cooperation so far point to the need to focus more on implementation and differentiated needs (sub-regional approach). Limited absorption capacity is also an issue, which needs to be addressed. The action will build on the results of previous and existing programmes in the above fields and

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf

¹⁰ C(2019)640, 11.12.2019.

¹¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/43076/26-vc-euco-statement-en.pdf>

¹² www.eppanetwork.eu

will complement actions implemented at bilateral level through IPA funding. A mapping exercise is being carried out to identify the activities already existing, both at regional and individual levels (e.g. 1) regional: from EPPA and RIPAP, Regional Energy Efficiency Programme (REEP), GFG; 2) bilateral: there are bilateral actions in Albania and Serbia supporting the circular economy; the EEA provides capacity building on data collection, monitoring and reporting; some measures under the instrument for pre-accession assistance for rural development (IPARD) could also contribute to attend the Green Agenda goals). There is complementarity with the Energy and Transport Communities (both receive annual IPA support for their core functions), the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) and its associated technical assistance scheme (which currently under revision to allow for environmental and climate concerns to be better addressed and mainstreamed).

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE(S) / (IMPACT(S))	INDICATOR'S NAME	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS			SOURCES & MEANS OF VERIFICATION	
		BASELINES (INCL. VALUE & REFERENCE YEAR)	MILESTONES (INCL. VALUE & REFERENCE YEAR)	TARGETS (INCL. VALUE & REFERENCE YEAR)		
Overall objective: To enhance the Western Balkans transition to a growth strategy to achieve a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient, decarbonised and competitive economy.	Size of the green economy	Assessment of national budget dedicated to green recovery and green agenda in 2020 (i.e. state aid, investments etc.)	Increase of 12;5 % by middle of action timeline	Increase of 25 % by end of implementation of action	Relevant IPA II beneficiary reports, Economic Reform Programs; Eurostat Resources efficiency scoreboard,	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE(S) / OUTCOME(S)	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)				SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
To support the Western Balkans in their green recovery	Amount of energy savings Renewable energy sources (RES) share Amount of greenhouse gas emissions Greenhouse gas emissions intensity of energy consumption Climate mainstreaming in the budgets of the Western Balkans Resource baseline Primary energy consumption Rail and inland waterway as percentage of total freight transport Common birds population Sticks fished at maximum sustainable yield levels Pesticide risk Consumption of hazardous chemicals Nitrate in groundwater Years lost due to fine particular matter in the air Area under organic farming	Assessment once Green Agenda finalised in 2020	Increase of 12;5 % by middle of action timeline	Increase of 25 % by end of implementation of action	Beneficiaries' documentation, NECPs, progress and monitoring reports	Commitment of the relevant IPA II beneficiaries to proactively participate in the action Robust, participative and credible strategic long-term planning to reach decarbonization, accompanied by the availability of appropriate resources is ensured by relevant authorities. Political stability in the region is

	<p>Climate-related economic losses</p> <p>Recycling rate of plastic packaging</p> <p>Assessment of risks and hazards related to climate change and capacities to adapt to them</p> <p>Energy poverty indicators</p> <p>Pollution levels for main polluters for air, and water.</p> <p>Amount of recycled/re-used waste.</p>					<p>maintained.</p> <p>Lobby's pressure and institutional corruption are tackled</p> <p>Sufficient administrative capacity in the Beneficiaries</p> <p>Concrete steps are taken towards preparing Strategies and legislation.</p> <p>Continued Beneficiaries' commitment towards the climate and energy reforms</p> <p>Continued Beneficiaries' commitment towards the European perspective</p> <p>Willingness from the part of the relevant stakeholders to address and manage the trans-boundary issues at regional and sub-regional level</p>
OUTPUTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)				SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Beneficiaries are empowered in the implementation of green recovery plans through a fit for purpose setup	<p>Green recovery plans/strategies adopted.</p> <p>Operational action plans of Green Agenda implementation formalised</p> <p>Number of meeting organised on the Green Agenda (Ministerial, technical groups)</p> <p>Number of regional cooperation events</p> <p>Number of joint participation in international events</p> <p>Number of coordination meetings organised</p> <p>Number of climate and energy coordination units operational</p>	<p>Assessment once Green Agenda finalised in 2020</p>	<p>Increase of 12;5 % by middle of action timeline</p>	<p>Increase of 25 % by end of implementation of action</p>	<p>Protocols of network meetings/workshops</p> <p>Reports</p> <p>Evaluation of the filled in needs assessment templates.</p> <p>Guidelines and training materials are present.</p> <p>Guidelines for environment and climate action mainstreaming are present.</p>	

					Projects selection and quality control are present.
Monitoring and reporting processes are operational.	<p>Number of monitoring and progress reports produced</p> <p>Support scheme for monitoring reporting and coordination in place</p> <p>Number of monitoring and progress reports on the Green Agenda implementation produced (covering both central and regional level)</p>				<p>Documentation of financing institutions.</p> <p>Work plan of the Western Balkans help desk is available.</p> <p>Project reports to EU.</p> <p>Events, participant surveys.</p> <p>Information material is presented.</p>
Sustainable, resilient and green recovery plans are developed.	<p>Number of policy proposals for adoption and implementation of the pillars of Green Agenda mainstreamed.</p> <p>Number of legislative proposals for adoption and implementation with the pillars of Green Agenda mainstreamed</p> <p>Number of IPA III programme proposals with the pillars of Green Agenda mainstreamed.</p> <p>Percentage of the domestic budget allocated to the implementation of the Green Agenda, including through the polluter pays principle ensured by proper legal framework</p> <p>Number of staff trained at central and local level both at political and technical levels (disaggregated gender) trained</p>	Assessment once Green Agenda finalised in 2020	Increase of 12;5 % by middle of action timeline	Increase of 25 % by end of implementation of action	Project report to EU- Western Balkans help desk, report to EU/Project.
Citizens are aware of the EU's efforts and contribution in the improvement of living conditions and sustainable green recovery in the Beneficiaries.	<p>Number of citizens made aware of the Green Agenda through related awareness raising campaigns (events, media campaigns, social media campaigns)</p> <p>Percentage of improvement in the way the Environmental Impact Assessments are perceived by the civil society</p>	Assessment once Green Agenda finalised in 2020	Increase of 12;5 % by middle of action timeline	Increase of 25 % by end of implementation of action	

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Key activities

Output 1: Beneficiaries are empowered in the implementation of green recovery plans through a fit for purpose setup.

Indicative list of activities:

- Mapping of already existing initiatives, which are relevant for the green recovery and green economic growth under the Green Agenda.
- On the basis of the mapping, proposals for an adequate setup to implement the green recovery plans under the Green Agenda will be made, taking into account the absorption capacity and specific needs of the Beneficiaries.
- Coordination with the support scheme established under the action to provide common methodologies and services: global IT and data management infrastructure: customisation of reporting platforms; on-demand support; international visibility; global coherence.
- Supporting the establishment and/or strengthening of local and/or regional public bodies or administrative units responsible for providing climate environment and energy expertise to and coordination amongst administrations of the Beneficiaries.

Output 2: Monitoring and reporting processes are operational.

The action will include a monitoring and reporting scheme, building the capacities of the exiting information and statistical systems in the region.

Indicative list of activities:

- Establishment of and support to a monitoring and reporting scheme aiming at continuous monitoring the progress of the implementation of green recovery plans under the Green Agenda, in order to ensure its greatest impacts. It shall engage with the relevant stakeholders in order to assure monitoring at regional level, central and local levels.
- Capacity development in the Beneficiaries' administrations in charge of monitoring of the implementation of the green recovery plans under the Green Agenda.

Output 3: Sustainable, resilient and green recovery plans are developed.

Indicative list of activities:

- Conducting of capacity building needs assessment in the Beneficiaries during the inception phase and define a set of criteria and the procedure for the assessment of the policy initiatives to be supported followed by development of capacity building action plan for addressing the capacity building needs related to the implementation of the green recovery plans in the most efficient ways.
- Development of training materials including webinars, drawing on what has been developed for other EU initiatives (ex. EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession - EPPA).
- Implementation of tailor-made trainings for the Beneficiaries on the implementation and monitoring of green recovery plans and green economic growth under the Green Agenda. Adjustment of methodology and tools will be needed to fit specific local requirements and delivering site-specific capacity-building measures for the data collection and management process.
- Establishment of a platform for information exchange and mutual learning on green recovery and green economic growth under the Green Agenda, among the stakeholders involved.
- Assuring quality control during the whole process the implementation of the green recovery plans under the Green Agenda.

Output 4: Citizens are aware of the EU's efforts and contribution in the improvement of living conditions and sustainable green recovery in the Beneficiaries.

One of the main prerequisites for successful climate environment and energy actions is involvement and active participation of stakeholders and the public in the implementation of green recovery plans under the Green Agenda. The action promotes participation of citizens and stakeholders by establishing platforms where these groups can articulate their ideas and concerns and can contribute creative and innovative solutions. These measures will also continuously assure the visibility of the EU involvement and support the Green Agenda implementation. Thus, citizens will directly perceive EU's role and contribution in the improvement of their living conditions.

Indicative list of actions:

- Continuous implementation of visibility actions according to the Communication and Visibility in EU-financed external actions guidebook - 2018¹³ and the visibility strategy of the action.
- Development and dissemination of various information contents and materials for different communication channels (printed, online).
- Advise to Beneficiaries on how to encourage citizens and stakeholders to take ownership of sustainable climate, environment and energy ideas, policies and projects. Opportunities need to be created for the Beneficiaries' administrations to incorporate local expertise and feedback into their work, thus achieving eventually the best possible outcome in terms of finding consensus.
- Organisation of visibility events throughout project's lifespan in coordination with other regional organisations.
- Providing support for the Beneficiaries in the organisation of public campaigns and events/workshops for different target groups.

RISKS

Risk	Level	Mitigation measures
Insufficient openness for cooperation and exchange among relevant authorities	L	Showcasing success stories and positive narrative on the Green Agenda, green recovery and green economic growth
Lack of beneficiary capacity and willingness to implement the green recovery approaches and the Green Agenda	M	Regular dialogue, including at high level, participation of the European Commission in workshops to raise the profile, addressing the implementation of the green recovery and Green Agenda
Limited control over the action and little visibility due to the strong leadership of Implementing partner	M	Governance ensured by regular meetings of Coordination Group and Advisory Board. Visibility is part of governance discussions
Lack of interest and will to participate in the regional conferences/events on environment	L	Involvement of the European Commission from the early stages and early preparation of the events with the involvement of the Beneficiaries

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

¹³ Guidebook available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-visibility-requirements-2018_en.pdf

The key condition for implementation is the necessary level of engagement and ownership from the Beneficiaries.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility of the programme lies with the European Commission. The steering of the action will be led by Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Unit D5. Other European Commission services (such as Directorate-General for Climate Action, Directorate-General for Environment, Directorate-General for Energy, Directorate-General for Transport and Mobility, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation) and the European External Action Service will be closely associated as relevant.

A Steering Committee will be led by European Commission services for reviewing the three results of the project and guide the way forward with main stakeholders. The Steering Committee will be chaired by the European Commission, and of any other concerned Directorate-General of the Commission. The Steering Committee shall meet at least twice a year to be updated on the annual activities and for the monitoring of the implementation. With the support of the entrusted entity, an annual meeting chaired by the European Commission will be organised with representatives of the Western Balkans. EU Member States may also be invited.

Other relevant meetings should be organised back to back or together with similar meetings organised under the in the context of the Covenant of Mayors related initiatives in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The European Commission will ensure the coordination and communication with the interested stakeholders, including relevant European Commission Services and EU Delegations. Programme-specific contact points shall be nominated at headquarters, in EU Delegations and in field offices to ensure coordinated internal and external communication.

The main institutional stakeholders include Line Ministries responsible for the areas covered by the Green Agenda, such as transport, energy, economy, agriculture, environment or tourism. Regional organisations such as Energy Community or Transport Community will be closely associated.

The stakeholders identified above will be playing an important role in ensuring that other relevant stakeholders at central and regional level are adequately involved in the action.

METHOD(S) OF IMPLEMENTATION AND TYPE(S) OF FINANCING (SEE ANNEX IMPLEMENTATION – BUDGET)

The action, for an amount of EUR 10 million, may be implemented in indirect management with a Member State agency. The indicative duration of the contribution agreement will be 48 months.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The progress of the action implementation will be assessed by the European Commission by assessing the progress in the achievement of expected results on the basis of indicators outlined in the action. Having regard to the importance and the nature of the action, 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 evaluation reports shall be shared with the IPA II beneficiaries and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the European Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the IPA II beneficiaries, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the action.

The evaluations should be carried out following the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation¹⁴. It is recommended that a Reference Group comprising the key stakeholders of this action be set up to steer the evaluation process and ensure the required quality level of the evaluation outputs as well as the proper follow-up of the recommendations of the evaluation.

In addition, the action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The gender perspective is relevant in all the different areas of environmental and climate change policies. Gender relations between women and men, and girls and boys, play a key role in the access to and control of environmental resources, as well as the goods and services they provide. Sustainable development approaches will be more efficient, effective, responsive and provide broader benefits when women and men have equal access to opportunities, resources, decision-making and benefits of climate action and responses.

Monitoring the gendered outcomes these policies it is important in order to inform the necessary reforms so that adaptation and mitigation responses promote gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The empowerment of women where gaps exist in distribution of power, resources, services, participation will be foreseen specific with positive actions, where possible.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Specific attention will be paid to this dimension when determining who will benefit from capacity building activities, training events, exchange of experts etc. The implementing partner 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 different phases. Enforcement of those principles is also ensured through specific administrative procedures applied in accordance with the legislation on anti-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. All activities under this action will be designed and implemented in accordance with the principles of good governance and human rights, gender equality, the inclusion of socially or economically deprived groups and environmental sustainability, wherever these issues are of particular relevance to the institutions and beneficiaries to be assisted.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

14 https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/near_guidelines.zip

The action will positively promote equality of opportunities and combat discrimination. To this effect, awareness and understanding of the different needs of various groups in society as well as cultural specificities and differences should also be taken into account. Particular attention should be paid to ensure inclusivity of the marginalised and those in vulnerable situations. The poorest being most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and energy poverty, the action is of particular importance to minorities and vulnerable groups, as well as to refugees. Participation in the implementation of the action will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access regardless racial issues or ethnic origin, religion and beliefs, age or sexual orientations.

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

Civil society organisations (CSOs) will be involved in the programme's activities as often as relevant. They will be invited to take part in the different capacity building and coordination meetings and will thus benefit from the knowledge transfer and the involvement in the implementation of the Green Agenda. It will allow them to maximise their roles and interventions when accompanying and monitoring the alignment with EU Green Agenda. A mid-term event may be organised to discuss with CSOs the first results of the Green Agenda implementation and the challenges remaining ahead.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

The action has a direct link to EU climate, environment and clean energy transition policies as it will provide support to implementation of the Green Agenda. Climate change and environmental protection are the key global challenges of our time. The European Green Deal adopted by the European Commission on 11 December 2019 puts forward the ambitious long-term goal of making Europe a resource efficient economy and a carbon neutral continent by 2050, and sets out a number of related targets and concrete actions in the field of climate, energy, mobility, economy, industry, agriculture, pollution and biodiversity management. The achievement of these objectives will not be possible without an upstream involvement of the Western Balkans region. This is not only because of their European perspective confirmed in the Western Balkans Strategy and the subsequent summits, but also because this is essential for their citizens and because climate change, polluted air and water know no borders.

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 10 million.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

Given the limited absorption and administrative capacities of the Beneficiaries, sustainability of the action is one of the concerns that need to be actively addressed throughout the implementation of the action.

In order to strengthen sustainability of results, any support on acquis alignment, legislative development or preparation of policy documents will be done in accordance with the approach advocated by the 'Better Regulation Agenda', which aims to ensure that “policies and legislation are prepared, implemented and reviewed in an open and transparent manner, informed by the best available evidence and backed up by involving internal and external stakeholders”. In particular, assistance shall focus on providing analytical prerequisites such as concept notes, options analyses and support to impact assessment. Support in legislative drafting shall be paired with capacity building of the Beneficiaries (introduction of international examples, detailed explanation of proposed texts, etc. the action will also ensure that the new pieces of legislation are consulted among the relevant institutions and with the target groups which are likely to be affected by the new legislation).

In addition, any training, capacity-building and human resources development activities shall be coordinated with the institutions that are centrally responsible for human resources management and professional development of civil servants.

Finally, whenever written procedural manuals or guidelines are developed, they should be simple enough to be regularly updated and changed by the staff of the beneficiary organisations without further external

support. Any guidelines or procedures developed cannot contradict with any legal provision of the Beneficiaries.

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 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, 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.

Communication actions should aim to show the links between the funds invested and the policy priorities behind them. When relevant for a specific intervention envisaged under the action, the communication and visibility plan will be based on an agreed communication narrative and master messages customised for the different target audiences. Effectiveness of communication activities may be measured, inter alia, through public surveys in the IPA II beneficiaries on awareness about the programme, its objectives and EU funding.

The entrusted entity (entities) and the European Commission's actions should ensure enhanced donor visibility. Communication actions should also ensure that all relevant stakeholders, and where possible, also final beneficiaries, are informed about donors' involvement, joint actions and their results.

Visibility and communication aspects shall be complementary to the activities implemented by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and the EU Delegations/EU Office in the field. It is the responsibility of the implementing partner(s) to keep the EU Delegations/Office and the European Commission fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.