



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

MULTI-COUNTRY

EU support to statistics in the Western Balkans and Turkey

Action Summary

The action aims to support the IPA II beneficiaries in the process of harmonisation with EU standards by aligning their present methodologies and output with the EU *acquis* in statistics and gradually integrating them into the European Statistical System.

In addition the action has the objective of increasing the availability of good quality data from the IPA II beneficiaries.

Action Identification			
Action Programme Title	IPA II Multi-country Action Programme 2019		
Action Title	EU support to statistics in the Western Balkans and Turkey		
Action ID	IPA 2019/ NEAR>ESTAT.10/MC/Statistics		
Sector Information			
IPA II Sector	9. Regional and territorial cooperation Public Administration Reform		
DAC Sector	16062 Statistical capacity building		
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	Direct management		
<i>Direct management:</i>	Eurostat, Unit B3 (co-delegated by Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations)		
Implementation responsibilities	Eurostat, Unit B3		
Location			
Zone benefiting from the action	Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Turkey		
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A		
Timeline			
Final date for contracting including the conclusion of delegation agreements	31/12/2020		
Indicative operational implementation period	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	<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"/>

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

RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Biological diversity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The Western Balkans Strategy of 6 February 2018 “*A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans*”¹, needs to be supported by statistical data and by the capacity of the IPA II beneficiaries to produce statistical data according to varying needs, in particular in relation to the support for socio-economic development, but also to increasing connectivity, a digital agenda and reinforcing engagement on security and on migration. The IPA II beneficiaries have to upgrade their statistical systems with a view to approximation with EU standards. The degree of compliance varies considerably between the individual IPA II beneficiaries, as they have different starting points, but they need to improve their capacities, especially with a view to produce good quality data for evidence-based decision-making. In addition they have to align methodologies and output with the EU *acquis* in statistics, taking forward their integration into the European Statistical System.

Statistics is an important source for evidence-based decision making by policy makers at central, regional, European and international levels. Policy makers in the IPA II beneficiaries but also within the EU need more and better quality statistics to support evidence based policy making and planning. The beneficiaries of this action are asked to provide these data in good quality. The statistical systems of the IPA II beneficiaries need to implement the European statistics Code of Practice and its basic principles and criteria for establishing sustainable and trustworthy statistical systems.

Statistics offer an essential representation of realities that helps to understand and identify the gender gaps and thus provide an important basis for political decisions. At the 4th World Women’s Conference held in Beijing in 1995, it was established that the lives and realities of women and men, girls and boys are often shaped very differently. Therefore, it is necessary to compile, analyse and publish official statistical data separately for both sexes wherever the gender dimension is relevant. In some areas, for instance in the health and education sector, due to the increase of gender-disaggregated data compilation and analysis, it was possible to gear services and developmental interventions more towards the partly different needs of both sexes. In order to take into account gender-specific disadvantages, needs and potentials, it is important to compile gender-disaggregated data in many other areas, e.g. data about the time use and the division of labour, the distribution of property and assets between women and men as well as sensitive issues like gender-based violence. A gender-sensitive analysis of statistics should go beyond simply disaggregating data according to sex. Rather, it should question the underlying gender relations which are reflected in the data.

It is equally important to make statistical data openly available and guarantee equal access to statistics for all users. To make statistics a better tool for policy purposes, every National Statistical Institute (NSI) or agency, as the main coordinator of the statistical system in the IPA II beneficiaries, has to focus its efforts on the following: production of data (improving the coverage of statistical information), dissemination (improving the availability and visibility of data), and quality (produce high quality data).

The capacity of the NSIs to produce statistical information of sufficient coverage and based on high quality standards is still insufficient in the IPA II beneficiaries, despite the progress made also with the support of IPA assistance. Further development of statistical systems to a level comparable to the one

¹ COM (2018) 65, 6.2.2018

in the current Member States and their integration into the European Statistical System (ESS) remains the ultimate objective.

The IPA II beneficiaries are not at the same level of development and are progressing towards an efficient and modern statistical system at a different pace. Nevertheless, statistical requirements are common to all and the value added lies in harmonisation of statistics to be implemented by all IPA II beneficiaries and therefore the multi-beneficiary approach is an efficient instrument to use. In most of the IPA II beneficiaries the basic principles are being followed and the institutional framework for producing statistics is in place. However, considerable efforts are needed and should focus on enhancing the availability, quality and comparability of statistics in a timely manner, especially in the areas that are indispensable for the European path and in relation to the accession negotiations. From an institutional point of view, strengthening the organisational capacity of NSIs is of importance for producing more and better statistics. Better organisational capacity will make improvements more permanent as more knowledge and skills are retained with the human capital.

The stakeholders most affected are the NSIs and their partners in the statistical system in the IPA II beneficiaries, together being responsible for the production of official statistics in the IPA II beneficiaries. Other government bodies, as well as policy Directorates General in the European Commission, are also stakeholders as they need high quality statistical data for each IPA II beneficiary in order to monitor policy decisions and to negotiate the accession to the EU in the respective chapter. Coordination between producers of official statistics within the statistical system in the IPA II beneficiaries needs to be enhanced and cooperation with those holding administrative data needs to be improved.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

Assistance provided in the framework of IPA II will result in an increased availability of good quality data from the IPA II beneficiaries. These data can be used by policy makers on central, regional and European level.

Eurostat developed a strategy document² together with selected statistical offices of the IPA beneficiaries for the whole IPA II period 2014 2020. Based on the strategy, support to develop the statistical systems in the IPA II beneficiaries and to align statistics with the EU standards has been provided in the framework of IPA multi-beneficiary programmes (MBP) 2014, 2015, 2017 and in IPA II bilateral programmes. The IPA 2019 multi-country programme is the latest part in this series of statistical programmes. Results are visible as all beneficiaries have increased data transmission to Eurostat during this period and more and more data from the beneficiaries are validated and disseminated by Eurostat year after year. Beneficiaries have developed additional statistical domains that are part of the EU *acquis*, but which were not produced by beneficiaries previously. The progress is marked by many small steps forward on a broad front of many statistical areas rather than spectacular leaps in progress.

The expected results of the IPA II assistance are further compliance with the EU *acquis* in statistics, additional statistical data transmitted to Eurostat, more efficient working methods in the IPA II beneficiaries and more awareness of EU requirements in statistics in the IPA II beneficiaries.

The key activities to be implemented are participation of IPA II beneficiaries in the activities of the European Statistical System (ESS), expert missions to IPA II beneficiaries to explain in detail the

² [Strategy for Statistical Cooperation with the Enlargement Countries 2014 – 2020](#)

methods used in various statistical domains, study visits to EU Member States, consultancy on statistical issues, traineeships in Eurostat and in EU Member States.

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

The action addresses the need to meet several priorities set out in the revised Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Paper (MCSP) 2014-2020³ and the Western Balkans strategy:

It helps the strengthening of democratic institutions and contributes to the **public administration reform** (PAR) by offering assistance to the NSIs of the IPA II beneficiaries. It assists them in adhering to the European statistics Code of Practice, which provides the basic principles and criteria for establishing sustainable, transparent and trustworthy statistical systems.

A credible enlargement perspective requires statistical data, in particular in relation to social inclusion and economic reform, but also to increasing connectivity, a digital agenda and reinforcing engagement on security and on migration. Statistical data should be disaggregated by gender to the extent possible.

The Action Plan in Support of the Transformation of the Western Balkans has a number of actions which success needs to be verified with statistical data, such as data on socio-economic developments, migration, energy, transport, and data on information and communication technology.

The new approach to **economic governance** with a focus on tackling the economic fundamentals first allows enhanced strategic and targeted support for reform priorities. The IPA II beneficiaries will be asked to prepare annual Economic Reform Programmes and bi-annual Competitiveness and Growth Programmes. These programmes need to be based on reliable statistical data to develop appropriate policy frameworks.

The action will also contribute to the priority areas of **employment, education, social policies, transport, energy and environment**, by increasing the capacities of the IPA II beneficiaries to provide reliable and comparable statistical information in these areas. More importantly, the Europe 2020 strategy and **the South East Europe (SEE) 2020 strategy** and their successors will be served by assisting the IPA II beneficiaries to produce the indicators which are necessary to measure the achievement of headline targets set out by such strategies.

The current action is based on the *Strategy for Statistical Cooperation 2014-2020*, elaborated jointly by all the stakeholders and endorsed by the Management Group for Statistical Co-operation (MGSC) on 20 March 2014. This Strategy is meant to be a framework for developing sustainable and reliable statistical systems capable of producing statistics in accordance with the EU *acquis*. The main goal of the strategy is to support the process of harmonising statistical production with the EU *acquis*, bearing in mind that this is a strategy for seven different IPA II beneficiaries and that the EU *acquis* in statistics is evolving and constantly changing. The strategy ensures efficient use of resources by focusing cooperation on those areas where improvements are most needed and by helping to make the achievements sustainable. It also highlights key areas of statistics which are of common interest and in need of development and describes the impact that good quality statistics can have on the development of good policies. The reference timeframe for this strategy corresponds to the EU multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020.

³ C(2018) 3442, 31.05.2018.

Finally, the action complements bilateral IPA II action programmes, by offering a range of smaller statistical projects in areas not covered by the larger projects, which are funded through the bilateral IPA II programmes. Statistics has a *regional nature* as all candidate countries and potential candidates aim to become compliant with EU *acquis* in statistics. The evolving EU *acquis* can be seen as a moving target where common, regional efforts are helpful. Multi-country Programmes also have effects of economy of scale in their management; synergy effects by IPA II beneficiaries working together; Multi-country Programme is a good instrument for coordination with Other National Authorities for statistical production (ONA); development of statistics means long lead times and need for continuous support; and there were good results of previous Multi-country Programmes.

Specific support should be given to individual IPA II beneficiaries under bilateral IPA programmes (designed by EU Delegations), for instance financing of very large statistical exercised such as population census, agriculture census; twinning programmes with intensive cooperation with an EU Member State NSI; and supply contracts for equipment to NSIs (supply contracts are not possible in Multi-country Programmes).

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Multi-country statistical cooperation action programmes have proven to be a particularly useful tool in:

- Harmonising the statistical methodologies and outputs with the EU requirements;
- Sharing best practice;
- Changing the working culture towards a more open adaptation towards EU standards;
- Creating networks of experts among the IPA II beneficiaries but also with the Member States' experts;
- Delivering harmonised statistical data
- Integrating the IPA II beneficiaries into the European Statistical System.

One of the key lessons learnt is that developing reliable statistics is a long process that cannot be completed in the framework of one single action programme. It takes a long time from setting up an appropriate institutional framework and developing the respective legislation on statistics through developing methodologies, procedures to protect the confidentiality of individual data, policies to assure the quality of the data to finally disseminate reliable and comparable statistics. Experience shows that this process requires continuous support.

In this context, cooperation with the IPA II beneficiaries and recent developments in the European Statistical System have demonstrated a very clear need to focus assistance and support on some important principles of the European statistics Code of Practice, such as professional independence, impartiality, objectivity, quality commitment and easy access to data. This may in part also take the form of moral support but assistance is required as well through awareness raising and training.

Another lesson learnt from previous action programmes is the need to coordinate effectively the different types of assistance activities. The combination of multi-country and bilateral IPA II action programmes and other sources of funding (either from government or from other international donors such as the United Nations-UN or the International Monetary Fund-IMF) will be efficient if complementarities and synergies are sought, but can create problems in absorption capacity if there are overlaps of content among the different action programmes. Partly for this reason Eurostat has developed an annual donor coordination survey on statistical support which provides an overview of the activities ongoing in each IPA II beneficiary in the field of statistics. The latest survey, which was completed in May 2018, shows that several donors and international organisations are active in the region. This includes Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, the United Kingdom, Norway, France and the United States as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the Council of Europe, the IMF, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other UN organisations. The European Commission is the largest donor in the region, providing significantly more support than all other

donors together. In addition to Eurostat's leading role in donor coordination, the very close and systematic monitoring by Eurostat's experts in all steps of multi-country statistical cooperation action programmes, from programming to implementation, provides a powerful value-added in ensuring that support is focussed on those areas and developments where assistance is most relevant, and in assisting the IPA II beneficiaries to develop and produce statistics according to the EU *acquis*.

Past experience suggests that the sustainability of results is hampered by the high staff turnover in the statistical services of the region, which affects all the beneficiaries to some extent. To prevent the loss of institutional memory and know-how due to staff leaving the services, there is a need to assist the NSIs to develop a reliable system for the transfer of knowledge within their offices.

Feedback from previous action programmes has also demonstrated that the participation of the beneficiaries in the development and discussion on the EU *acquis* from an early stage onwards is beneficial and helpful as the direction of development is known and problems in the Member States with its implementation are identified as well as networks with experts from the Member States built.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) produces since 2010 relevant data and indicators, comparable and reliable, and delivers high-level expertise to the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Member States and Enlargement countries. However, this is not European statistics in the sense of EU Regulation 223/2009. EIGE initiated its cooperation with IPA II beneficiaries in 2013 (funded by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations until 2020). The main objective of the cooperation with EIGE is to support the countries in the development of the Gender equality index, Serbia being the first non EU country to develop the index.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
The ultimate objective is to support the harmonisation of the IPA II beneficiaries' statistical production, and thereby the Western Balkans strategy, by aligning their present methodologies and output with the EU <i>acquis</i> in statistics and taking forward their integration into the European Statistical System. The development of the statistical system of Turkey is supported in a similar way.	Progress in the development of the statistical systems as witnessed by peer reviews and assessments in SMIS+ (Statistical Management Information System) as well as availability of data in Eurostat's	Mid-term evaluation report of the <i>Strategy for Statistical Cooperation 2014-2020</i> ; Chapter "Statistics" of the Annual IPA II beneficiary reports	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>1 – To improve availability, versatility and usability of statistics for policy purposes and to support the Western Balkans strategy as well as Turkey</p> <p>2 – To contribute to the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice, to further integrate the NSIs or agencies into the ESS and to strengthen the management capacity of NSIs</p> <p>These objectives are in support of the European perspective in the framework of the Western Balkans strategy. The development of the statistical system of Turkey is supported in a similar way.</p>	<p>Compliance level indicator in terms of data points available in Eurostat's public dissemination database</p> <p>80% of improvement actions from Peer Reviews finalised within 5 years after the Peer Review in 5 of the IPA II beneficiaries</p>	<p>Eurostat public dissemination database, peer reviews reports, sector assessment reports</p> <p>Document with improvement actions and annual document with monitoring of implementation of improvement actions</p>	Commitment of relevant authorities to the process.
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>1) Improved availability, quality and comparability of statistical data in statistical areas of relevance for the Western Balkans strategy and for Turkey</p> <p>2) The professional independence of the NSI is ensured, a strengthened role of NSIs as coordinators of the official statistical system and increased trust and confidence in statistics expressed by policy makers and to support of the Western Balkans strategy.</p> <p>These results are in support of the European perspective in the framework of the Western Balkans strategy. The statistical system of Turkey will be developed in a similar way.</p>	<p>1) The number of data points in Eurostat's database is increasing faster for IPA II beneficiaries than for EU member states in relative terms</p> <p>2) 80% of improvement actions from Peer Reviews finalised within 5 years after the Peer Review in 5 of the IPA II beneficiaries</p>	<p>Eurostat public dissemination database</p> <p>Peer review reports and sector assessment reports</p> <p>Document with improvement actions and annual document with monitoring of implementation of improvement actions</p>	Cooperation of official statistics providers in the IPA II beneficiaries. Parallel implementation of necessary bilateral IPA II action programmes on statistics. Sufficient support to NSI provided by government institutions.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Results

The main result is the availability of reliable, timely and comparable (produced according to EU standards) data to be used by policy makers on central, regional and European level.

Main activities

The main activities will be statistical projects, participation in meetings within the European Statistical System (ESS) (working groups, etc.), traineeships to EU Member States or to an EFTA country, training events, study visits and organisation of consultancies and reviews.

The statistical projects will cover several of the following statistical areas: macro-economics, business statistics, social statistics, agricultural and environment statistics, multi-domain statistics and statistical infrastructure. They will focus on increasing data availability for IPA II beneficiaries, namely on collection of data that are compliant with EU requirements and will be published by Eurostat.

Participation of IPA II beneficiaries in ESS working groups together with EU Member States is an efficient tool for learning in a practical way, by getting informed on the practice, development and functioning of the NSIs of each Member State and the ESS as whole.

Trainings contribute to improving the statistical knowledge and other horizontal knowledge (e.g. governance of NSS, management of resources, etc.) of staff from the IPA II beneficiaries. Training courses facilitate the passing of European standards on to all IPA II beneficiaries thereby ensuring that all of them know and apply consistently the same standards. The authorities in charge of training for civil servants and public employees will be kept informed and, where relevant, they will be involved in the organisation of planned training sessions.

In the context of traineeships, employees from beneficiary NSIs are seconded to Eurostat or to an NSI in a Member State or an EFTA country to study more thoroughly the functioning of the European Statistical System. A traineeship usually lasts for three to five months.

Consultancy missions and study visits between the EU/EFTA countries and IPA II beneficiaries facilitate the integration of the IPA II beneficiaries into the ESS and the set-up of bilateral partnerships with EU Member States. These activities make it easier for experts from the IPA II beneficiaries to stay in contact with Eurostat and EU/EFTA countries, to increase their awareness and information about the ESS, and to be more involved in the ESS. In addition, consultancies and study visits allow the IPA II beneficiaries to become familiar with new techniques and acquainted with requirements of the EU acquis in statistics.

Finally, reviews of the entire statistical systems of the IPA II beneficiaries as well as of various statistical sectors will present recommendations for improvements of the system and/or the sectors to the IPA II beneficiaries together with policy options on how to address such recommendations. These reviews enable IPA II beneficiaries to focus efforts on those areas where improvement is needed and also to better plan their assistance needs.

RISKS

If the relevant authorities are not committed to support statistics with sufficient human and financial resources, there is a serious risk that the smooth running of some activities or even of statistical projects will be jeopardized. Providers of data, registers and other input material have to cooperate with the NSIs, otherwise there is a serious risk that related statistics cannot be produced by the NSIs. IPA II beneficiaries ought to be fully aware of the need to prioritise activities and deliverables within statistical projects in order to manage the implementation of the projects with the available resources.

Finally, there is a risk that the professional independence of the NSI is harmed by different outside factors. Therefore it is crucial for a successful implementation of the action that the governments guarantee the professional independence of the NSI. This can be achieved by implementing the European statistics Code of Practice, especially its Principle 1 on professional independence and by closely involving the relevant authorities with oversight functions over the NSIs.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to the assumptions listed in the Logframe, there are certain pre-conditions that need to be met for the success of the action. A pre-condition is to establish a system for knowledge transfer within the offices and an appropriate human resource policy to ensure more attractive career options for statisticians to slow down the rate of turnover. The latter shall be done in line with the rules governing career path of civil servants and public employees.

In terms of financing, it is essential that the governments of the IPA II beneficiaries ensure sufficient budget for NSIs for their activities.

Another pre-condition is that a system of efficient coordination among different donors is in place to avoid inefficiencies in action implementation. Eurostat is constantly monitoring the various donor activities in the region through the annual donor coordination survey, and keeps close contact with other donors through coordination meetings.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The action will be co-delegated to Eurostat for contracting and implementation. Five of the IPA II beneficiaries of this action will receive direct grants, signed by the NSI in the relevant IPA II beneficiary. Depending on the set-up of each statistical system, other producers of official statistics may be included as partners in the direct grants. A service contract will be concluded to provide technical assistance mainly for those IPA II beneficiaries of the action not benefitting from grants.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Eurostat's unit B3, "Enlargement, neighbourhood and development cooperation", focuses its work on following the developments in the IPA II beneficiaries on a regular basis, including in statistics, and in contributing to bilateral meetings within the Stabilisation and Association Process such as Sub-Committee Meetings on economic and financial issues and statistics. International co-operation departments and project implementation units of the IPA II

beneficiaries will take the leading role in the implementation process. Eurostat is supported in the implementation by the two main bodies for coordination of statistical cooperation with third countries. One body is the Management Group for Statistical Cooperation (MGSC) where NSIs of EU Member States are the main participants, and IPA II beneficiaries participate as observers. The MGSC also serves as the Working Group for statistical cooperation and one of its main agenda items each year is donor coordination. The second body is the Policy Group for Statistical Cooperation (PGSC) which is composed by the Director General and the heads of cooperation units in the NSIs of the IPA II beneficiaries. The PGSC serves as the sector group for statistics and a forum to discuss strategic issues related to the multi-country programmes.

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

The action will be implemented through direct grants and a service contract:

1) Direct Grants:

Direct grants will be provided to the NSIs of Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. Through these grants the beneficiary NSIs shall be directly responsible for the implementation of the activities foreseen in this action. Eurostat uses direct grants addressed to NSIs of the relevant IPA II beneficiaries listed above as they have a *de-jure* monopoly to carry out the statistical activities included in this action, in line with Article 195 (c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union). They are, according to Beneficiaries' statistical laws, the institutions inside the public administration of IPA II beneficiaries responsible for collecting, producing and disseminating official statistics. The NSIs may be supported in this undertaking by other services of the public administration but the final responsibility for disseminating official statistics lies with the NSIs.

The indicative EU contribution will be granted to each beneficiary in accordance with their individual needs. The total contribution from the IPA II programme for the five grants together is **EUR 5.0 million**. The final distribution between the beneficiaries will be decided during the evaluation of the applications, based on the beneficiaries' needs. These needs depend on the specific circumstances in the beneficiaries, in particular as regards the costs and workload involved in implementing the statistical projects. The grants will cover technical assistance, statistical projects, and provision of tailor made expertise. The indicative duration of the grant contracts will be 36 months.

2) Service Contract

A service contract of **EUR 5.0 million** maximum will be concluded to provide technical assistance to the IPA II beneficiaries. This service contract will provide support to the implementation of statistical projects, participation in the ESS meetings, traineeships, provision of expertise, etc. for those IPA II beneficiaries of the action not benefitting from grants. For projects of common interest, all seven IPA II beneficiaries will participate in project implementation. Apart from the statistical projects, the contract will provide external technical expertise in selected areas and the organisation of workshops, study visits and provision of consultancy services, which can also be organised for all seven IPA II beneficiaries. As in the past, this external technical support is organised via a service contract rather than being included in each individual grant. This guarantees the nature of a multi-

country programme, ensures an efficient approach and facilitates monitoring and evaluation. The indicative duration of the service contract will be 36 months.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Performance will be measured against the indicators set out in the logframe matrix. The main means of measurement is the level of compliance with the EU *acquis* in the area of statistics by each IPA II beneficiary. Increased delivery of timely and accurate data requested by data users at local and international level will prove the compliance level. The performance will also be measured by implementation of improvement actions stemming from peer reviews in IPA II beneficiaries.

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The level of compliance with the EU *acquis* in statistics can be estimated in various ways such as legal compliance or technical / methodological compliance, but central to the concept of compliance measurement is the availability of statistical data in accordance with the frequency, timeliness, quality and formats as defined in the relevant regulations. The estimation of the compliance levels is based on availability of data in Eurostat's public online dissemination database.

The impact of the action translated into the progress made by the IPA II beneficiaries in the development of their statistical system will be measured through different tools, such as peer review reports, compliance measurement reports, mission reports, and annual reports per IPA II beneficiary.

The expected results corresponding to specific objectives of the action are assessed by Eurostat's annual compliance monitoring reports (SMIS+), sector assessment reports, peer reviews and studies on the data inclusion of beneficiaries into Eurostat's dissemination database.

These monitoring and evaluation tools allow a consistent and realistic assessment of the state-of-play of the IPA II beneficiaries in various statistical areas, a timely identification of weaknesses and strengths in areas concerned and of possible remedies and finally contribute to better adjusting technical assistance provided under the IPA II programme.

The data will be monitored on annual basis and checked against the targets set in 2020.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline⁴	Target 2020	Final Target	Source of information
Compliance rate (IPA II beneficiaries' data validated and published by the European Commission – Eurostat – comparison of the relative increase of IPA II beneficiaries with the increase in data availability from EU Member States)		Number of data points from IPA II beneficiaries increases faster in relative terms than the increase of data from EU MS	Number of data points from IPA II beneficiaries increases faster in relative terms than the increase of data from EU MS.	Eurostat calculations
Progress in the implementation of the European statistics Code of Practice (number of peer reviews conducted in the IPA II beneficiaries and percentage of recommendations in the peer reviews which were implemented)	0	6 peer reviews conducted and 40% of improvement recommendations implemented	80% of recommendations implemented within 5 years of the peer review in 5 of the IPA II beneficiaries	Eurostat

⁴ Baseline year for qualitative scoring is 2015.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Statistics is a special area that affects many other policy areas by providing the figures that policy makers use to develop policies. There are very important links to key areas such as the macro-economic imbalance procedure, and the excessive deficit procedure. Moreover, NSIs need to coordinate other producers of statistics as well, such as the Central Bank, ministries, agencies, etc. In that respect, the programme will lead to improvements not only for the statistical offices but also for the main partners involved in producing official statistics. Hence the capacity of the statistical systems will be enhanced.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Reliable and accessible gender segregated statistics are critical to allow monitoring of gender equality development and facilitate the design of appropriate policies and measures. The action will therefore contribute to instruments for gender equality development.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Furthermore, the principles and practices of equal opportunity will be guaranteed as to ensure equitable gender participation in the action.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Based on the fundamental principles of promoting equality and combating discrimination, the participation in the action will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

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

The action consists of support to official statistics, which, by its nature, is done by public bodies. However, an increased availability of official statistics will also benefit civil society as it will be able to use the data to follow up government policies. In addition, civil society will be kept informed and involved to enhance transparency and increase availability of statistics. The civil society will also be consulted on any regulatory review processes.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

In some IPA II beneficiaries, the action will support development of environmental accounts.

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 0
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6. SUSTAINABILITY

The action will result in strengthened capacity for statistical production, ensuring the availability of timely and good quality statistics that are comparable with the statistics of EU Member States. The increased professional independence, improved coordinating function of the statistical offices and the increase in production capacities are the best guarantees for the sustainability of the action. Furthermore, the beneficiaries are committed to take up the results achieved by the action and develop them further. However, institutions in the region are still

fragile and exposed to high staff turnover, a lack of certain skills and a lack of financial and IT resources. Moreover, the EU *acquis* is constantly evolving and hence requires continuous support, as it is also granted to the Member States of the European Statistical System.

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the action. The implementation of communication activities will be the joint responsibility of the beneficiaries, and shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the 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 and the European path, as well as the benefits of the action for the general public. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Visibility and communication aspects shall be complementary to the activities implemented by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and the EU Delegations in the field. The European Commission and the EU Delegations should be fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.

Under the service contract it is foreseen that the service provider produces a monthly newsletter with a summary of the activities covered by the contract.