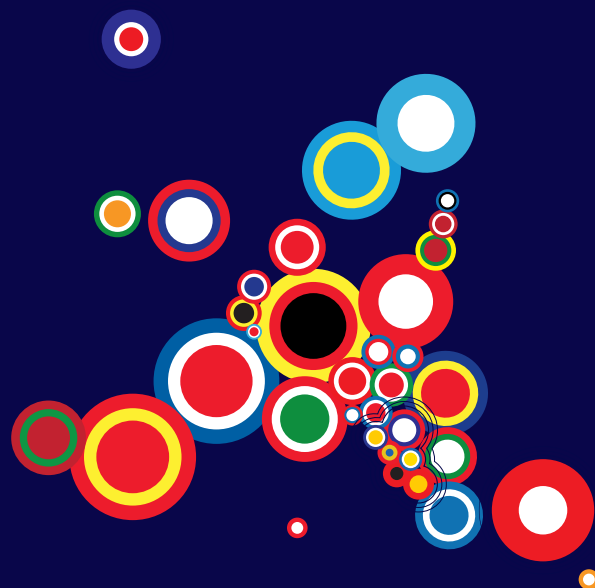




## INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

# SERBIA

## Support to participation in EU Programmes



### Action Summary

*This Action will facilitate Serbian participation in EU programmes during the new financial perspective 2014-2020 by co-financing the costs of the "entry-tickets", through IPA funds, which Serbia must pay in areas such as education, health, science, culture, employment, entrepreneurship and innovation, taxation and custom system, etc. This will help Serbia in deciding to participate in broad range of Union programmes as of 2014.*

*In addition, this Action aims to strengthen capacities of both, responsible Governmental bodies for management and coordination of EU Programmes, as well as potential beneficiaries and applicants, to soundly, efficiently and timely implement available EU funds. Furthermore, it aims to support establishment of technical support and of national Agencies which are a pre-requisite for participation in particular EU Programmes.*

*The Serbia's participation in the broad range of previous Union programmes enabled citizens, institutions, civil society and private sector to acquaint themselves with EU values, policies in different fields, legal regulations and their implementation, to gain experience from EU countries related to methods and rules by which the EU functions. Lessons learned during this process shall facilitate Serbia's preparation to become member state and for using other EU financial instruments in the future. Ultimately this Action shall strengthen Serbia's efforts in meeting the EU accession Agenda.*

<b>Action Identification</b>	
<b>Programme Title</b>	Annual Action Programme for Serbia (2014)
<b>Action Title</b>	Support to participation in Union Programmes
<b>Action Reference</b>	2014/032-799.03/Serbia/ Support to participation in Union Programmes
<b>Sector Information</b>	
<b>IPA II Sectors</b>	<i>Democracy and Governance</i>
<b>DAC Sector</b>	43082
<b>Budget</b>	
<b>Total cost</b> (VAT excluded) <sup>1</sup>	EUR 14 124 217
<b>EU contribution</b>	EUR 8 063 840
<b>Management and Implementation</b>	
<b>Method of implementation</b>	Indirect management for the Results 1 and 2
<i>Indirect management:</i> <b>Responsible Unit or National Authority/Implementing Agency</b>	Central Finance and Contracting Unit (CFCU) - Ministry of Finance, Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Projects
<b>Implementation responsibilities</b>	Result 1 and Result 2: Senior Programme Officer at Serbian European Integration office.
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Zone benefiting from the action</b>	Republic of Serbia
<b>Specific implementation area(s)</b>	<i>n/a</i>
<b>Timeline</b>	
<b>Deadline for conclusion of the Financing Agreement</b>	31 December 2015
<b>Contracting deadline</b>	<i>3 years after signature of the Financing Agreement</i>
<b>End of operational implementation period</b>	<i>6 years after signature of the Financing Agreement</i>

<sup>1</sup> The total action cost should be net of VAT and/or of other taxes. Should this not be the case, clearly indicate the amount of VAT and the reasons why it is considered eligible.

# 1. RATIONALE

## PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

With a view to support implementation of reforms, one of the instruments that European Union uses to strengthen cooperation between EU member countries at one side and potential and candidate countries on another in the area of European policies for a specified period of time is the EU Programmes. For the Republic of Serbia participation in EU Programmes represents an opportunity to make acquaintance with the European institutions, legislation and their application in practice, with EU policies as well as with the system of values and mechanisms on which the EU is based.

The Republic of Serbia signed the Framework Agreement on participation in the EU Programmes on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005, which came into force on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005, by which the Republic of Serbia became eligible to use the funds available through this instrument. In the period 2007 – 2013 the Republic of Serbia participated in 12 EU programmes: the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), Progress, Culture, CIP, CIP EIP, Fiscalis, Customs, Safer Internet, Lifelong Learning Programme, Europe for Citizens and two programmes, which was carried out through MB IPA: Tempus/Erasmus Mundus and Youth in Action. In order to establish the legal basis for participation in each individual EU Programme, International Agreement (previously a Memorandum of Understanding) has to be signed between the European Commission and the Republic of Serbia, which sets up the general principles for the participation, including administrative capacities (e.g. financial control, satisfactory number of people dealing with their implementation, financial resources for participation, mechanisms of participation in programme management etc.). In order to participate in the EU Programmes Serbia has to pay a contribution in the form of annual fee to the general budget of the EU ("entry tickets"). IPA National Programmes can be used to a certain extent to complement national funds in a form of co-financing "entry tickets".

The European Commission established in November 2013 an Overview of the Union Programmes, in order to encourage greater participation by beneficiaries from Member States, candidate country and potential candidate country in programmes that are open to them. The new 7-years Financial Perspective brings about the opportunity for the Republic of Serbia to participate in new EU Programmes for period 2014-2020, with new modalities, administration and dynamic. A broad range of EU Programmes for Serbia, as a candidate county, are open in meeting EU requirements. Although most of new EU Programmes are the successors of the previous, some changes are introduced. In particular, significant change in the new programmes structure is the mergers of the education and youth programmes in to the Erasmus for all Programmes and of the Competiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) with the Programme for Research and Innovation (FP7) into Horizon 2020.

**Erasmus+** is the EU Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. It brings together the Lifelong Learning programme, Youth in Action, Erasmus Mundus and Tempus programme. It is designed to support Programme Countries efforts to efficiently use the potential of Europe's human and social capital, while confirming the principal of lifelong learning by linking support to formal, non-formal and informal learning throughout the education, training and youth fields. The programme also enhances the opportunities for cooperation and mobility with Partner Countries, notably in the fields of higher education and youth. The Republic of Serbia has been successfully participating in the EU education and training cooperation programmes for more than 10 years and demonstrates that the institutions and organisations from this country are able to compete with other programme countries. Previous programmes have been implemented by their focal points, the Foundation Tempus and the NGO "Let's..." and in line ministries which have been performing all the necessary activities for the current level of participation in EU education and youth programmes. The Ministry in charge of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Ministry in charge of Youth have been participating in the programme implementation and they are responsible for the strategic decisions. International Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Serbia on the participation of Republic of Serbia in Erasmus+ is signed on June 11<sup>th</sup> 2014.

**Horizon 2020** is the EU Research and Innovation programme established by the Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013. It brings together Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP), the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). The goal of the programme is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation. The Ministry in charge of Education, Science and Technological Development is in charge for this programme in Serbia. The International Agreement for the Horizon 2020 is signed on July 01<sup>st</sup> 2014.

**COSME** is the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized enterprises is the EU Programme established by the Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013 with the goal to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of the Unions enterprises and to encourage an entrepreneurial culture and promote creation and growth of SMEs. The Ministry in charge of Economy is in charge for this programme and International Agreement for the participation in COSME programme is expected to be signed during June 2014.

**Creative Europe** is EU programme established by the Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 December 2013 with the goal to support to the culture and creative sector. It brings together the previous Culture, Media and Media Mundus programmes and supports: culture sector initiatives, audio-visual sector initiatives and a cross-sectorial strand. Serbia can participate in the Culture Sub-programme; in the Cross-sectorial Strand of the Programme, with the exception of the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility, as mentioned in article 14 and in accordance with article 8(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 and in the MEDIA Sub-programme from the first day following the written confirmation from the responsible Commission services that Serbia meets the conditions set out in Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 and in accordance with article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013. The International Agreement for Creative Europe is signed in June 19<sup>th</sup> 2014.

**Customs 2020 and Fiscalis 2020** are the successor of the Customs 2007-2013 and Fiscalis 2007-2013 programmes in which Serbia has already participated. They were managed by the Ministry in charge of Finance – Tax administration and Customs administration and management of two programmes will remain in 2014 as well. International Agreement for the participation in Customs 2020 and Fiscalis 2020 is expected to be signed during 2014.

**Europe for Citizens** is the successor of the previous EfC Programme and is established by the Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 with the goal to support two areas: European Remembrance and Democratic engagement and civic participation. Serbia will continue to participate in new EfC programme by signing the International Agreement with EC during 2014. Office for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations is in charge of this programme in Serbia.

**EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)** is established by the Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 with the goal to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions. It brings together three EU programmes managed separately by the EC between 2007 and 2013: PROGRESS, EURES and Progress Microfinance. Serbia will continue its participation in the EaSI programme. International Agreement with EC is expected to be signed in 2014. The Ministry in charge of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs is in charge for this programme in Serbia.

**Copernicus and LIFE Programmes** are related to the environment, climate change and nature conservation however Serbia's participation in these two programmes is expected to commence at the end of 2015 when all relevant structures and national authorities improve their capacities on the application and use of the environment related financial instruments. Before the full participation in these two programmes the International Agreement with the EC will be signed.

Based on the assessment of the EU programmes funds absorption in the period 2007-2012<sup>2</sup> it was noted that Serbia did not use sufficiently this financial instrument. The assessment noted many shortcomings and bottlenecks during the withdrawal of available EU Programmes funds as well as during the implementation of projects per Programme, including the weak position of National Contact Points (NCPs) within relevant ministry structures, timely execution of the annual entry ticket for programme participation, and the lack of knowledge related to project preparation and project management. The analysis pointed out few constraints which remains to be addressed in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency of EU programmes in Serbia and to increase the cost benefit ratio of Serbia's expenditures related to participation in EU programmes. In this regard, the Analysis indicated that potential EU programmes stakeholders and beneficiaries are still lacking systematic support in managing and implementation of EU programmes (some irregular capacity building support is provided by responsible ministries, but more on ad-hoc basis). In particular, NCPs, bodies responsible for implementation and management of EU programmes and potential applicants are missing necessary knowledge related to either understanding the specific programmes application or implementation requirements or they do not have adequate knowledge for project preparation and management. On the other side trainings and technical assistance should be provided to potential applicants, NCPs and bodies responsible for implementation of specific programmes where they exist and to ones that shall be established where needed. Only in this way all relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries will be able to use the available EU funds effectively and gain further insight into EU procedures and mechanisms.

The overall coordination of EU Programmes in Serbia lies within the mandate of National IPA Coordinator Technical Secretariat (NIPAC TS) and responsibilities includes: programming of IPA assistance to cover parts of entry tickets, reporting to the Government about international development assistance including EU Programmes, informing the public about international development assistance including EU Programmes, communication with the EC as the main interlocutor concerning programmes, coordination and organisation of the meetings with line ministries.

Following the EC rules individual programmes are coordinated by the responsible line ministries. NCPs, within the ministries, are responsible for coordination of individual EU programmes in Serbia. They perform different tasks related to the program coordination by organising info days, trainings for applicants, providing specific Programme related information to potential applicants, advising potential applicants on application preparation, supporting applicants in partner research, seminars, workshops etc.

EC Directorate General or their Executive Agencies are responsible for implementation of individual EU programmes which brings centralisation in their management. The latter does not apply to Erasmus +, since Erasmus+ is the only EU programme whose management is delegated by the Commission to a National Agency in each participating country.

## **RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES**

The continuation of participation of the Republic of Serbia in EU Programmes is reflected and supported by the *Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020* (the Strategy Paper) through continuation of IPA support "to co-financing Serbia's contribution for its participation in the EU programmes, subject to the national prioritisation process among the different programmes". Setting down the priorities of IPA support, the Strategy Paper define results / targets that are expected to be achieved during defined period, in order to enable Serbia in fulfilling accession agenda. In this regard, since each EU Programme is reflecting the Strategy Paper sectorial priorities, Serbia's participation in specific Union Programme will additionally support Serbia's efforts in meeting accession criteria.

Therefore, participation in EU Programmes such as: Fiscalis 2020 will contribute to the fight against tax fraud and revenue collection which is in line with the IPA priorities for Serbia in the PAR sector. Participation in Europe for Citizens programme and Creative Europe programme could benefit to the achievement of priorities defied within the Rule of Law sector. Participation in LIFE programme with

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<sup>2</sup> "Evaluation of Participation of the Republic of Serbia in the EU Programmes in the period from 2007-2012", SEIO, 2013

its two sub-programmes on environment and on climate action, and the Copernicus programme (providing continuous, independent and reliable access to earth observation information relevant to policy-makers) are in line with the IPA priorities for Serbia in the Environment sector. Serbia's participation in Horizon 2020 programme and COSME programme are in line with the Strategy Paper priorities defined in the Competitiveness sector. Participation in the Erasmus + programme and the programme Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) is in line with priorities defined in HRSD sector.

*The EC Progress Report 2013* acknowledges that Serbia participates in a number of EU programmes: the Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development, Progress, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programmes, the Culture Programme, the Europe for Citizens Programme, the Customs Programme and the Fiscalis Programme.

This Action shall contribute to all sectors of the “*Priorities for International Assistance in period 2014-2017 with 2020 projections*” (NAD), by facilitating the preparation of Serbia's accession to the EU, as well as by enhancing the absorption of funds and the implementation efficiency.

*The NPAA 2014-2018* also recognise the importance of Serbia's participation in EU Programmes, reflected in numerous Sections through identification of measures and priorities for preparations for inclusion in the new EU programmes 2014-2020 – COSME, HORIZON 2020, Copernicus, Erasmus +, etc.

Furthermore the Action is in line with *Enlargement Strategy* in a way that proposed activities will contribute to the achievement of full compliance with all membership criteria.

#### **SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT**

The activities under this stand-alone Action are horizontal and cross several sectors.

#### **LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Participation of Serbia in the Union Programmes is of primary importance to Serbia's European efforts. This participation was therefore, encouraged by providing EU funds under National IPA Programmes for 2007 (EUR 2 000 000), 2008 (EUR 5 000 000), 2011 (EUR 6 000 000) and 2013 (EUR 6 500 000).

The recent experience of Serbia's involvement in Union Programmes shows that Serbian citizens and institutions had the access and opportunity to acquaint themselves with: the EU standards, different EU policies, successful solutions and experience from EU countries, etc. The participation of Serbia in EU Programmes has contributed to a deeper knowledge and capacity-building of many stakeholders when dealing with European issues and projects.

However, the “Evaluation of participation of the Republic of Serbia in the EU Programmes in the period from 2007-2012”, indicate that: there is a need for strong national coordination mechanism between all relevant institutions responsible for Union Programmes in the Republic of Serbia in order to ensure: effective and efficient participation in Union Programmes; absorption of available funds cost effectiveness of the entry ticket payment. In addition, the evaluation pointed out that regular exchange of information between EU and line ministries shall be secured, in order to enable national authorities to regularly monitors, on an annual base, the efficiency and effectiveness of Serbia's participation Union Programmes as well as the progress in alignment of the Serbia's strategic goals with the EU programmes financed initiatives.

Furthermore, the Evaluation showed that existing capacities for both management and application to Union Programmes shall be additionally strengthened in order to maximise the benefits that Serbia can draw from programmes in which it participates. Additional trainings and awareness rising should also be envisaged in order to strengthening institutional capacities of programme coordinators and potential beneficiaries. It will also be necessary to ensure and deliver better access to information for all potential applicants, as well as budget support for partial co-financing of these projects.

VAT exemption procedure has not been possible for all EU Programmes beneficiaries in Serbia in the previous financial perspective. The main reason is that neither Framework Agreement that the Republic of Serbia signed on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2004 nor specific Agreements envisage VAT exemption

obligation. Consequently the performance of the Serbian applicants in awarded projects as well in the overall Union programme was seriously endangered considering the fact that Serbian applicants are under serious financial burden to cover these costs from their own resources. This rule should be especially ensured in the International Agreements for the new generation of Union Programme.

Last but not the least, preparatory measures which aims to support national authorities in management of EU Programmes have been implemented with the other candidate countries before their accession to the EU Programmes. Experience shows that thorough preparation is needed before full participation in the programmes, for participation to take place in good conditions, and to avoid problems in the management of the programmes.

## 2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

### LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION		
To support the preparation of Serbia's accession and increase the understanding of European Union policies and underpinning values by enhancing Serbian participation in EU Programmes	Serbian institutions are progressing towards EU accession and implementation of EU standards, legislation enforcement, etc.	EC Annual Progress Report Government documents, Reports		
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS	
To improve EU Programmes funds absorption by reinforcing management and implementation capacities of Serbian administration and potential beneficiaries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Serbia's participation rates in the different EU Programmes increase gradually</li> <li>2. Specific tasks identified in the work plan agreed with the European Commission have been completed according to the programme rules</li> <li>3. Number of institutions/organisations fully benefiting under EU Programmes and initiatives</li> </ol>	Evaluation of EU programmes and international assistance in RoS Annual NIPAC Reports on IPA	The IPA II financial assistance as well as the new EU Programmes financial allocation available for Serbia International Agreements on Serbia's participation in EU Programmes signed (in the financial perspective 2014-2020) Serbia is successfully progressing towards EU accession	
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS	
<p><b>Result 1</b> Strengthened ownership and responsibility as well as enhanced participation of Serbia in EU Programmes, including increased exchanges with EU Member States</p> <p><b>Result 2</b> National Contact Points, relevant Government administration bodies and potential applicants capacities strengthened and institutions prepared for participation in EU Programmes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of EU Programmes for which an International Agreement has been concluded: 2014-2020</li> <li>2. Serbian competent institutions receive reimbursement of entry-tickets in a timely manner</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Established, equipped and staffed necessary offices for technical support to EU Programmes</li> <li>2. Number of beneficiary and potential applicants requests processed by NCPs and Gov. bodies responsible for EU Programmes management</li> <li>3. Number of EU Programmes progress reports drafted and delivered by NCPs and line ministries to SEIO</li> <li>4. Number of trainings for NCPs and relevant Gov. bodies responsible for management and coordination on EU programmes delivered</li> <li>5. Number of on the job trainings for relevant project applicants increase each year</li> <li>6. Enhanced project writing, project management, budget preparation skills of potential EU Programmes applicants</li> <li>7. Established project pipeline for financial contribution to enhanced participation in specific EU Programmes</li> </ol>	<p><b>Result 1</b> EC IA, EC Reports GoS Decisions, International Agreements signed</p> <p><b>Result 2</b> NCPs and line ministries responsible for EU Programmes management reports, SEIO documents and reports on international assistance</p>	<p>The responsible competent institutions ensure the timely payment of the total entry ticket, as well as timely and documented requests for reimbursement. Responsible ministries continuously facilitate the support to the applicants participation in Union Programmes NCPs and line ministries are motivated and committed to participate in the project activities NCPs and line ministries are regularly communicating with beneficiaries and potential EU Programmes applicants All relevant stakeholders are aware of needs for technical support in preparing application forms</p>	
ACTIVITIES		MEANS	OVERALL COST	ASSUMPTIONS
<p><b>Activities to achieve Result 1:</b> <b>Activity 1.1</b> Provide co-financing of the entry-tickets/participation fees costs to be paid for participation in Union Programmes for which International Agreement is in force or being negotiated.</p>		<p><b>Activity 1.1</b> - IPA contribution to the entry tickets reimbursed based on the IA</p>	<p>Total cost for the entire Action is EUR 14 124 217</p> <p>IPA II contribution:</p>	<p>EU Programmes available for Serbia in the financial framework 2014-2020 The top management is supporting NCPs and other responsible civil servant in performing EU Programmes management and</p>



<p><b>Activities to achieve Result 2:</b>  <b>Activity 2.1</b> Institutional and human capacity building of NCPs, other relevant Governmental bodies and potential applicants to coordinate, manage, prepare and implement projects in accordance with EU Programmes requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional building of structures necessary for provision of technical support to potential applicants of EU Programmes</li> <li>• Training of the NCPs and other relevant Governmental bodies staff in management and coordination of specific EU Programmes</li> <li>• Support cooperation between relevant national institutions/agencies and corresponding Union Programmes agencies, through conferences, seminars, etc.</li> <li>• Preparation of the training need analysis and training plan concerning strengthening capacities of potential applicants in writing project proposals under the EU Programmes calls</li> <li>• Training of relevant EU Programmes applicants in writing project proposals, project management, budget preparation, accounting, on the job training in project writing, etc.</li> <li>• Development of the project pipeline for specific projects eligible under specific EU programmes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Activity 2.1 –</b>  Service contract</p>	<p>EUR 8 063 840</p>	<p>coordination tasks</p>
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## ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

Activities related to **Result 1** are planned to provide a share of EU contribution to the EU Programmes entry ticket for 2014. The EU contribution to the entry ticket is decided between the beneficiary and the EC, normally before the International Agreement (IA) is signed. The participation of the beneficiary in EU Programmes, including payment by the country of the entry ticket, shall follow the specific terms and conditions set out for each such programme in the IA. Based on the 2008 Enlargement Strategy paper it is possible for the candidate countries and potential candidate countries to request co-financing through IPA of up to 90% of the country contribution to the specific EU Programme in the first year of participation. The Serbian Government must provide not only the national co-financing but also the funds necessary for the payment of the total entry ticket, prior to receiving the partial reimbursement from IPA.

Serbia has already reserved funds from the State Budget for financing annual contribution (entry tickets) for the participation in EU Programmes for 2014. Participation of the RS in EU Programmes in the previous financial perspective 2007-2013 has been co-financed from IPA funds following the percentages defined in each MoU that Serbia signed with EC. New International Agreements for the participation of the RS in EU Programmes do not include percentages of IPA II reimbursement, but stipulate that part of the financial contribution of Serbia may be financed under the relevant Union external aid instrument, if Serbia so requested.

Activities related to **Result 2** are aimed to support relevant national authorities, governmental bodies and adequate administrative structures, as well as potential applicants in efficient and effective management, coordination and implementation of EU Programmes. Designed activities are twofold and are aimed to build capacities of two groups: National Contact Points (NCPs) and public administrations responsible for management of EU Programmes and on the other side potential EU Programmes beneficiaries and applicants (such as CSOs, SMEs, Institutes, youth, students, public administration agencies, etc.) to timely and adequately address EU Programmes application and implementation requirements.

Newly designed EU Programmes 2014 -2020 introduced changes related to the number, structure, implementation, management, financial and application requirements. These novelties will require adequate capacities, both human and institutional, of all relevant stakeholders who need to provide support to potential beneficiaries and applicants of the specific EU Programmes. In this regard capacity building trainings and technical assistance shall be provided to NCPs, bodies responsible for management and implementation of specific programmes and where they do not exist shall be established. National institutional capacities for effective and efficient participation in the EU Programmes financial instruments which are aimed at supporting a diverse number of projects (in sectors such as environment, research, culture, economy, employment, etc.) will be enhanced through number of capacity building activities and the development of potential project pipeline for the contribution from these financial instruments.

Trainings and technical assistance will be focused on capacities related to project preparation and EU Programmes management so that all responsible management bodies can respond adequately to applicant requests and allow them to adequately fulfil their applications. Trainings will primarily be focused on institutions designated as NCPs in the Republic of Serbia as well as other relevant administrative bodies and structures which will be established for sound management of particular EU programmes.

Secondly, the support will be targeted at strengthening capacities of the EU Programmes beneficiaries and potential applicants. In this regard the Training Needs Analysis shall be conducted first in order to assess the knowledge and capacity gaps in order to tailor future trainings to particular needs per specific programme. Furthermore, the TNA shall also provide the methodology for selection of potential training applicants. Capacity building and technical assistance will be designed in order to prepare beneficiaries and potential applicants to better understand particular EU Programme requirements, application formats, management and implementation structures and tools, to use specific EU Programme funds adequately and to enhance their project pipeline. Where necessary the assistance will be used to advice on all possible models for the establishment of structures for the management of the specific EU Programmes.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

#### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO) will be responsible for implementation of the Activities related to Result 1 and 2. SEIO was established on 14 March 2004, as a Serbian Government service. SEIO's scope of work is regulated by Article 2 of the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia on the establishment of the European Integration Office ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 75/05, 63/06, 126/07, 117/08, 42/10 and 48/10). By the Decree amending the Decree on establishing European Integration Office from June 2010 (Official Gazette of RS, no. 42/10), scope of work of SEIO was expanded to the participation in coordinating activities in the area of planning and using European funds, donations and other forms of foreign development assistance. The Department for planning, programming, monitoring and reporting on EU and development assistance funds is performing the role of NIPAC Technical Secretariat.

SEIO prepares for adoption the acts of the Government designed for supervising, directing and harmonising the activities of ministries and special organisations in relation to the European Union association and accession and formulates public information on the process of European Union accession and association. SEIO also performs other activities in the domain of European Union accession and association as delegated to it by the Government. SEIO is responsible for preparation of strategic documents which define national development goals and priorities for using EU funds and development assistance; coordination with relevant public administration bodies and organisations, local self-government and other relevant institutions aiming to define sectorial, inter-sectorial and regional strategies, priority needs and selecting adequate projects and programmes which should be financed by international development assistance funds; cooperation with donors related to preparation of donor strategies and planning of programmes and projects to be supported through development assistance; monitoring implementation of projects and programmes through reports of EU and development assistance beneficiaries and donors, as well as coordination in providing evaluation reports. In addition, based on the annual Action Plans for the programming and reporting of international assistance and IPA, competent institutions are obliged to report to the NIPAC office on the process and progress achieved in their participation in the relevant Union Programmes. Furthermore, SEIO is responsible for preparation of all necessary documentation in order to secure timely implementation of operations and its submission to the Contracting Authority (CFCU) that will hold responsibility for the management of procurement and contracting.

Following national institutions are responsible for coordination of specific EU Programmes and in particular these are nominated National Contact Points:

- Horizon 2020 – Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development
- Cosme – Ministry of Economy
- Creative Europe – Ministry of Culture
- EaSI – Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs
- Europe for Citizens – Office for Cooperation with Civil Society Organisations
- Customs – Ministry of Finance, Customs Administration
- Fiscalis- Ministry of Finance, Tax Administration
- Erasmus + - Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and Ministry of Youth and Sports

IPA II monitoring process is organised and lead by the NIPAC/NIPAC TS. **National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC)** is the main interlocutor between the Serbian government and the EC regarding strategic planning, co-ordination of programming, monitoring of implementation, evaluation and reporting of the overall IPA assistance and is responsible for ensuring the linkage of IPA assistance to the EU accession process. The NIPAC will regularly monitor the participation rates and reports on them as well as on co-financing trends in the context of IPA monitoring committees. NIPAC monitors the process of programming, preparation and implementation as well as the sustainability and effects of Actions aiming to improve these processes, timely identification, remedying and alleviation of potential issues in the process of programming and implementation of Action Documents.

Taking into account the fact that implementation modalities indirect management, monitoring arrangements including Steering Committee(s) shall be established in accordance with the relevant provisions of the applicable legal acts regulating IPA II. **Steering Committee's** will be organised in line with detailed provisions of the respective procedures under indirect and direct management of IPA II.

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

This Action will be implemented through:

1. Activities related to Result 1 – will be implemented as a reimbursement of a part of the payment for the entry ticket after the entry ticket has been paid by respective Serbian authorities. The reimbursement will be paid as a grant to the Serbian Government. The participation of the IPA II beneficiary in EU Programmes, including payment by the country of the entry ticket/participation fees, shall follow the specific terms and conditions set out for each programme in the relevant International Agreement. Co-financing rates from previous participation shall be taken into account, and in line with the principle of increasing the Republic of Serbia ownership and responsibility IPA funding rates shall decrease over the years in real or relative terms. Serbia must not only provide the co-financing but also the funds necessary for the payment of the total entry ticket, prior to receiving the partial reimbursement from IPA II.
2. Activities related to Result 2 – will be implemented through Service contract (TA) under indirect management and beneficiary, SEIO will be responsible for timely preparation of relevant documentation, monitoring and reporting. Indicative duration of the Service contract shall be 24 months. There is no national financing foreseen for the Result 2.

#### **4. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

Cross-cutting issues will be addressed throughout the Action, so to ensure that those horizontal issues are appropriately mainstreamed whenever applicable in the envisaged activities. For the reference, best practices and EU standards would be used, but also the national legislation reflecting such standards and requirements as incorporated into domestic system.

##### **ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)**

The Action Document will have no negative environmental effects.

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

Civil society organisations will take part in the implementation phase of the Action Document as final beneficiaries of some activities of Union Programmes targeted to these associations in Republic of Serbia. In addition specific tailor made trainings will also target CSOs.

##### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

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

##### **MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS**

The Action Document will in no way harm the rights of any individuals, including minorities and vulnerable groups. Involvement of minorities through the participation in the EU Programmes will be encouraged. In all activities during this project steps will be taken to ensure that the rights of minorities are taken into account.

#### **5. SUSTAINABILITY**

Participation in EU Programmes will continue encouraging the active involvement of public and private institutions, civil society and universities to benefit from the EU accession process. It is expected that the knowledge and skills developed through participation in EU Programmes will be retained within the participating institutions/organisations and the responsible ministries and

administration bodies. Established EU networks through EU Programmes participation will be transformed into longer term formal and informal collaboration.

Furthermore, the support through this Action will produce sustainable results in the short run since a number of relevant structures for management of EU Programmes are already in place and the need for technical assistance is likely to increase proportionally to the challenges ahead. Serbia already invested considerable financial and human resources to set up the structures and systems for implementation of financial assistance under the rules and procedures of the IPA (including EU Programmes). It is expected that the instrument and regulations that will derive from the new financial perspective 2014-2020 should take account of this in order to ensure a seamless move to the new period without jeopardising efforts already made.

## **6. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY**

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the Action.

The implementation of the communication activities shall be the responsibility of the beneficiary, and shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the Action.

All communication and visibility actions and tools will be fully aligned with the EU visibility guidelines (“Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions”). In regard to visibility following actions and tools should be carried out: definition of visual identity standards; preparation of written materials (factsheets, training compendia, manuals, etc.); production of branded material (panels, folders, promotional material); website; events (trainings, retreats, workshops, round tables, initial and closing events).

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed Action objectives and the accession process. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Communication and visibility will be ensured through information and promotion campaign that will be implemented from the very beginning of the Action.

Visibility actions will be undertaken to underscore the ‘additionally’ benefits of national and EU funding working in Union, to realise Serbian and EU strategic development objectives and to present the results achieved through Action implementation.

It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to keep the EU Delegation 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 sectorial monitoring committees.