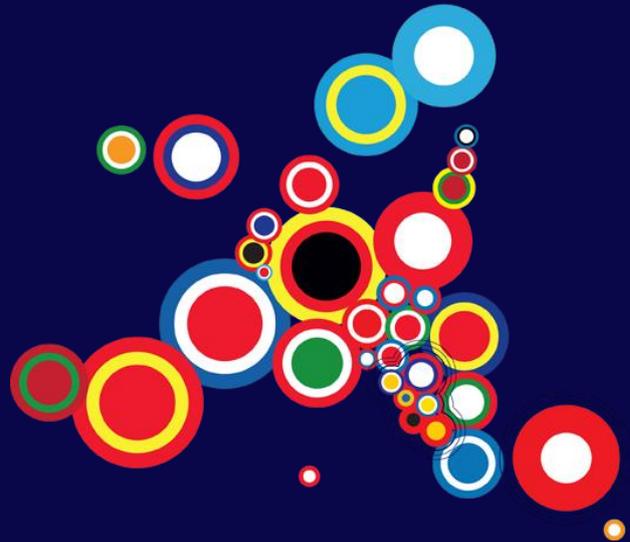




## **INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020**

### **MULTI-COUNTRY**

### **Cross-Border Institution Building (CBIB+) Phase III**



#### **Action summary**

CBIB+ is the regional technical assistance towards management structures of IPA II cross-border cooperation within the Western Balkans. Its goal is to enhance regional coordination and harmonisation of approaches and mechanisms in line with EU frameworks in the area of territorial cooperation.

The expected outcome of Phase III of CBIB+ is more effective and efficient implementation of CBC programmes as well as a stronger impact of CBC programmes at regional level.

The main benefit for the IPA II beneficiaries will be socio-economic development of cross-border areas resulting in an increased quality of citizens' lives. It will also provide advantages at EU level; i.e. enhanced reconciliation and good neighbourly relations in the region, thereby contributing to peace and stability in a wider Europe.

<b>Action Identification</b>			
<b>Action Programme Title</b>	IPA II Annual Multi - country Action programme 2017		
<b>Action Title</b>	Cross-Border Institution Building (CBIB+) – Phase III		
<b>Action ID</b>	IPA 2017/039-402.20/MC/CBIB+3		
<b>Sector Information</b>			
<b>IPA II Sector</b>	Regional and territorial cooperation		
<b>DAC Sector</b>	43010 – Multisector aid		
<b>Budget</b>			
<b>Total cost</b>	EUR 2 million		
<b>EU contribution</b>	EUR 2 million		
<b>Budget line(s)</b>	22.020401 – Multi-country programmes, regional integration and territorial cooperation		
<b>Management and Implementation</b>			
<b>Management mode</b>	Direct management		
<b>Unit in charge</b>	NEAR A4		
<b>Implementation responsibilities</b>	NEAR A4		
<b>Location</b>			
<b>Zone benefiting from the action</b>	Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia)		
<b>Specific implementation area(s)</b>	N/A		
<b>Timeline</b>			
<b>Final date for contracting including the conclusion of delegation agreements</b>	31 December 2018		
<b>Final date for operational implementation</b>	31 December 2021		
<b>Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)</b>			
<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aid to environment	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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"/>
<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
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"/>

\* 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

# 1. RATIONALE

## PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Cross-border cooperation is a specific type of programme supported by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, the aim of which is to enhance socio-economic development of border areas and, more specifically in the context of the Western Balkans, promote good neighbourly relations between these areas. This action focuses on regional technical assistance for cross-border cooperation at intra-western Balkan borders (cross-border cooperation between IPA II beneficiaries and EU Member States is not covered).

As showed by the 2016 Evaluation of IPA CBC Programmes 2007-2013<sup>1</sup>, cross-borders cooperation (CBC) programmes at intra-Western Balkans level have contributed to building strong ties between border communities and are very well perceived by local communities as an instrument to cooperate and reinforce mutual trust. Despite these good results, there is still much to do in terms of programme ownership, technical capacity and performance measurement.

Under IPA II, the following 2014-2020 CBC programmes at intra-Western Balkans level (often referred to as IPA-IPA CBC) were adopted in 2014:

- Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Serbia and Montenegro
- Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro
- Montenegro and Albania
- the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania
- Albania and Kosovo
- Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Montenegro and Kosovo.

The CBC Programme 2016-2020 between Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was approved in 2016.

CBC programmes at intra-Western Balkan borders under IPA II present a number of substantial changes in the management and implementation methods and mechanisms compared to IPA 2007-2013. Most notably, the programmes are managed by a single Contracting Authority (CA) funded by a single financial envelope for the entire programme, without budgetary split between beneficiaries. On the grantees' side, each project is awarded with a single grant contract covering both sides of the territory.

In addition, programmes are in some cases managed by national authorities following the indirect management method<sup>2</sup> instead of the Delegations of the European Union (EUD); i.e. direct management.

Despite the changes introduced under IPA II, managing and coordinating cross-border cooperation programmes remains complex. There is a need for technical and logistical support to a wide network of stakeholders to act in a coordinated, consistent and harmonised way. The network includes the geographical units in DG NEAR, the unit in DG NEAR dealing with coordination of CBC, the Operating Structures and Delegations of the European Union in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia, the Contracting Authorities (Central Finance and Contract Units) in Montenegro and Serbia as well as the Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS) and Joint Monitoring Committees (JMC) of all programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> EuropeAid/129783/C/SER/Multi- Contract No2015/366156/1

<sup>2</sup> Serbian national authorities are responsible for the management of the following programmes: Serbia-Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia-Montenegro.

Montenegrin national authorities are responsible for the management of the following programmes: Montenegro-Albania; Montenegro-Kosovo.

For all IPA II beneficiaries, challenges concern the management, monitoring, efficiency, effectiveness and impact measurement of programmes/projects. Individual and regional needs that the relevant authorities are facing include:

- Need to harmonise procedures, approaches and processes in CBC implementation.
- Need to provide strengthening direct support to the authorities and management bodies for the implementation of CBC programmes.
- Need for ad hoc assistance to overcome specific technical problems encountered by the Operating structures, the Joint Monitoring Committees and the Joint Technical Secretariats.
- Need to improve outcomes and impact monitoring of the results achieved by CBC.
- Need to ensure the visibility of CBC programmes in the Western Balkan region and beyond.

Hence the necessity for a continuation (and in some instances, re-calibration) of the technical assistance to support IPA II beneficiaries in the field of cross-border cooperation at intra-Western Balkan borders (this comes in addition to the support provided by the permanent EU funded programme INTERACT for European Territorial Cooperation programmes involving Member States).

### **OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE**

CBIB + is the regional technical assistance for cross-border cooperation towards management structures in the Western Balkans. The aim of CBIB+ is to assist programme structures in improving their work and management practices, whilst facilitating the exchange of experience across programmes. It fosters coordination of approaches, provides capacity-building, supports interpretation and dissemination of European Commission rules and dissemination of best practice.

This role of CBIB+ in coordinating, networking and experience exchanges has been valued by all IPA CBC management structures over the years and will therefore continue. One of the specificities of Phase III of CBIB+ will consist of furthering the work on the performance framework initiated in the current phase, as well as supporting capitalisation of results achieved by IPA CBC and their dissemination.

The action is expected to generate the following results:

- enhanced regional coordination and interaction between CBC stakeholders in the Western Balkans;
- best practice culture and sharing of experiences promoted;
- strengthened capacity of the authorities to programme, manage, implement, monitor and report on IPA II CBC programmes;
- improved monitoring of IPA II CBC programmes through a streamlined results/impact measurement methodology;
- strengthened visibility of IPA II CBC at intra-Western Balkan borders.

The action will encompass a variety of technical assistance activities to respond to the specific regional needs outlined above. It will provide assistance and advice to the following key structures involved in the management and implementation of CBC programmes at intra-Western Balkan borders in their respective areas of responsibilities (non – exhaustive list): National IPA Co-ordinators (NIPAC); Operating Structures (OS); Joint Monitoring Committees (JMC); Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS).

The planned activities will be organised around the following areas of work: organisation and coordination of an IPA II CBC Regional Consultative Forum and technical working groups; exchanges of staff of the beneficiaries' authorities managing CBC programmes; assistance for new CBC programmes development, revision of the current ones (if needed) and assistance for the preparation of the new programming documents beyond 2020 and provision of demand-driven technical expertise; result/impact measurements and promotion of quality improvement; visibility and communication.

The direct beneficiaries of the action are the stakeholders mentioned above who will benefit from a flexible approach, as the action will keep on providing demand driven ad-hoc assistance. In fact, stakeholders will have the possibility to call on direct, tailor-made, individualised technical assistance related to CBC programme management and implementation.

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

This action is to be seen in the context of the fourth specific objective of financial assistance under IPA II namely "strengthening regional integration and territorial cooperation" and the fifth policy area stated in the IPA II Regulation "regional and territorial cooperation".

The EU Enlargement Strategy 2016 confirms that good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation are essential elements of the Stabilisation and Association Process<sup>3</sup>.

The IPA II Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Paper (MCSP) 2014-2020<sup>4</sup> explicitly foresees the need for horizontal support and capacity building for cross-border cooperation. The cross-border programmes at intra-Western Balkan borders are mentioned in the Indicative Strategy Papers<sup>5</sup> as well. Cross-border cooperation has been part of the pre-accession assistance package for many years and remains one of the best-known forms of EU assistance at the level of the IPA II beneficiaries in the Western Balkans.

Finally, the CBC Programmes and the related Action Programmes state that, where appropriate, the definition of strategic projects and calls for proposals can take into account the priority areas and objectives of the relevant macro-regional strategies, namely the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

## LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Experience and the 2016 Evaluation of IPA CBC Programmes 2007-2013 show that without a regional TA facility, it would be very hard to capitalise on lessons learnt and keep on fostering a CBC learning community based on good practice examples. As cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation in the context of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) show, there has always been a need for coordination and support for this kind of complex programmes. In fact, in the framework of ETC the promotion and support of good governance of programmes are secured by INTERACT, the permanent EU-wide assistance programme. A similar kind of assistance should be secured for IPA II cross-border cooperation that would not be possible without some form of technical assistance providing coordination, harmonisation of approaches as well as regional drive, as showed by the gap of activity between CBIB II and CBIB+ (November 2011-January 2013).

The regional TA will continue to be the hub for the collection and sharing of information to and from a wide network of stakeholders, for the identification of any potential problem in the organisation and implementation of the **last round of 2014-2020 Calls for Proposals, in the closure of 2014-2020 programmes** and in the preparation of regional **CBC programmes beyond 2020**.

Key lessons learned from the CBIB+ experience (2013-2015) are:

- A tight **coordination** and fluent exchange among relevant stakeholders must be ensured through the CBC platform (i.e. Regional Consultative Fora and their respective technical working groups) in order to collect and share information, to exchange and disseminate best practices and to address common problems.
- A flexible approach must be kept to be able to provide a **demand driven ad-hoc assistance** as stakeholders should receive direct and tailor-made support.
- In order to further improve the programme management and to better promote programmes within and outside the region, it is crucial to capture and make more visible the change made by programme interventions and measure the outcomes and **impact** achieved.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key\\_documents/2016/20161109\\_strategy\\_paper\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_strategy_paper_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> C(2014)4293,30.06.2014.

<sup>5</sup> C(2014) 5770, 18.08.2014-Albania; C(2014) 9495-Bosnia and Herzegovina,15.12.2014; C(2014) 5861, 19.08.2014-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; C(2014) 5771, 18.08.2014-Montenegro; C(2014) 5772, 20.08.2014-Kosovo and C(2014) 5872, 19.08.2014-Serbia

Key lessons learnt were also identified in the report on Evaluation of IPA CBC Programmes 2007-2013 that was performed in 2016. Key recommendations regarding CBC in the Western Balkans include:

- The main objective of promoting good neighbourly relations should have been/be clearly reflected in the CBC programmes.
- The intervention logic of programmes must be improved as there is little evidence of the linkage between programmes/projects/activities with the overall objective, the ex-ante evaluations of complementarity and coherence are weak (the link with other policies and programmes at beneficiary level is often inexistent; i.e. CBC is dealt with as a stand-alone intervention) and the needs analysis is not cross-border oriented.
- The decision-making structure should be simplified as it represents the weakest link in IPA CBC programmes.
- The reporting and monitoring systems must be improved as they are not structured to set out a clear basis for measuring the results at programmes level. In particular, it is important to set common programme objectives and indicators in order to ascertain the effectiveness of each programme.
- There is a need for keeping on capacity building activities for Operating Structures and Joint Technical Secretariats/Antennas.
- The selection procedures of operations must be improved and shortened: more focus must be given to projects' indicators and intended results and the evaluators' skills must be strengthened.
- There is a need for cooperation with the INTERACT project (providing technical assistance to the ETC programmes) and the TESIM project (providing technical assistance to the ENI CBC programmes) to produce improvements by making available experiences.

Key recommendations regarding the regional technical assistance more specifically include the need to strengthen support at regional level on the following three dimensions:

- Improve synergies with policies/programmes developed by beneficiaries: the implementation of CBC happens too often independently of interventions at beneficiaries and donor-funded level in relation to border regions in relevant sectors and it is thought CBIB+ should help operating structures establish these links, for instance during the preparation of calls for proposal;
- Improve the performance framework: the absence of proper monitoring and evaluation is considered a major weakness of CBC management at present and adequate support from CBIB+ should be planned to train the relevant structures accordingly;
- Improve dissemination and capitalisation: CBIB+ is considered best placed at the regional level to collect and promote best practice examples and also disseminate results achieved.

#### Links to previous financial assistance

In the past, a number of donors has supported institution building activities in relation to cross-border co-operation and other forms of territorial cooperation in the Western Balkans, including the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Department for International Development (DFID) in the United Kingdom, the Spanish Agency for Regional Cooperation, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

*At regional level:* CBIB has been available through several phases/projects since 2006 (CBIB I, CBIB II and CBIB+) and will be completed by December 2017 when the on-going Action – CBIB+ phase 2 that started in December 2015 - will come to an end.

*Technical assistance to each CBC Programme at intra-Western Balkan level under IPA II* is one of the Programmes' priorities and is implemented through service contracts directly awarded to the Operating Structures of the IPA II beneficiary where the Contracting Authority for a given Programme is located. The

following capacity-building activities (non-exhaustive list) funded by the EU or other donors have been recently or are being implemented at the level of individual IPA II beneficiaries:

*Albania:*

- "Support to the implementation of the cross-border programme between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Albania" (2014-2016).
- "Technical Assistance for the cross-border programmes Montenegro-Albania and Montenegro - Kosovo" (2014 -2016)
- "Support to the implementation of the cross-border programme between the Republic of Greece and the Republic of Albania" (2014-2016).
- "Support to the implementation of the cross-border programme between the Republic of Greece and the Republic of Albania "(2013 allocations).

*Bosnia and Herzegovina:*

- The national technical assistance project "EU CORIN" supported the national authorities in CBC programmes at intra- Western Balkan borders, with Member States, in the transnational cooperation programmes South–East Europe and Mediterranean (2007-2011).
- "Technical Assistance to support capacity building for First Level Control (FLC) in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the implementation of IPA CBC Transnational and Member-state Programmes" (2011-2012)

*Kosovo:*

- CARDS 2005 TA project "Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Kosovo" (2008-2012) assisted Kosovar authorities in preparing the CBC programmes at local and regional level.
- IPA CBC TA II (2013- 2015) supported the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) in the implementation of joint CBC initiatives with Albania, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

*The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* has received assistance provided by Bulgaria and Greece under CBC programmes with these EU Member States.

*Montenegro:*

- CARDS 2005/2006 project "Support to the implementation of cross-border programmes in the framework of IPA component II in Montenegro" was awarded to the National Authority (Secretariat for European Integration) in order to establish the necessary structures for the implementation of CBC programmes and strengthening their capacities.

*Serbia:*

- A national TA project supported the Ministry of Finance in the establishment of a Programme Coordination and Management Unit (PCMU) ensuring that CBC programmes 2004–2006 with Member States and subsequent IPA-IPA CBC programmes led to successful projects (various phases from 2004 to 2010).
- The project "Support to the alignment of the Cross-Border and Transnational Programmes with the requirements of IPA II 2014 – 2020" (2015- 2016) assists the Serbian authorities in transition from IPA I to IPA II.
- The project "Technical Assistance to Serbian authorities for the management of Pre-accession assistance" (2014 - 2017) advises Serbian institutions on decentralised/indirect management of IPA funds. The main beneficiaries are National Fund/NAO Support Office and the CFCU. The project is advising the DIS institutions on procurement issues, as well as on management and control system of IPA under decentralised/indirect management.

## 2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

### LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To support the implementation of IPA II CBC programmes in an efficient, effective, harmonized, coordinated and results based way.	Number of IPA II CBC programmes implemented in an efficient, effective, harmonized, coordinated and according to a results-based approach as shown by the evaluation reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Evaluation report of CBC programmes by European Commission</li> </ul>	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>To enhance regional coordination and harmonisation of approaches and mechanisms in the field of cross-border cooperation at intra-Western Balkan borders in line with EU frameworks and guidelines.</p> <p>To improve the technical capacities of the management structures.</p>	<p>Duration of the evaluation of project proposals and contracting phase.</p> <p>Percentage of CBC projects successfully implemented.</p> <p>Number of individual requests by the managing structures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· ROM reports</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS)</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Contracting Authorities</li> <li>· Evaluation report of CBC programmes by European Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· High interest and absorption capacity of CBC structures to enhance capacities</li> <li>· Efficient and effective coordination between stakeholders</li> <li>· Regional and local authorities perceive the IPA CBC support as an additional resource for the implementation of activities foreseen in their development strategy</li> <li>· CBC programmes are considered as beneficial instruments to strengthen the collaboration and exchanges with neighbours</li> </ul>
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p><b>Result 1:</b></p> <p>Enhanced networking and cross-border management capabilities between CBC stakeholders in the Western Balkans</p>	<p>Number of peer-to-peer exchanges between CBC structures at the level of IPA II beneficiaries (i.e. CBC Forum and Technical/Thematic Working Groups)</p> <p>Number of harmonized procedures/manuals developed and applied by the IPA CBC programmes as a result of the work of the CBC forum and thematic working groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> <li>· Minutes of meetings of regional events/forums/thematic working groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Staff employed in the CBC structures are interested in skills improvement</li> <li>· All IPA II beneficiaries of the Western Balkans have signed the Rules of Procedures of the Regional CBC Consultative Forum; participate in its meetings and contribute with their budgets to its organisation</li> <li>· High level of motivation of the authorities to implement CBC programmes and ensure that envisaged results and impact is achieved</li> <li>· Eligible partners in the border regions of the IPA II</li> </ul>

<p><b>Result 2:</b> Best practice culture and sharing of experiences promoted (better capitalisation and dissemination)</p>	<p>Number of CBC programmes staff having taken part in exchanges with other beneficiaries - Sex disaggregated data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· JTS reports</li> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· beneficiaries remain interested in the CBC and are able to submit high quality project proposals</li> <li>· Relations between the Western Balkan IPA II beneficiaries are further normalised</li> </ul>
<p><b>Result 3:</b> Capacity of IPA II relevant authorities to programme, manage, implement, monitor and report IPA II programmes strengthened</p>	<p>Number of CBC programmes' staff involved in capacity building activities- Sex disaggregated data Number of guidelines/working papers on programme management, implementation and monitoring published</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· JTS reports</li> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS)</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Contracting Authorities</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Result 4:</b> IPA II CBC programmes' monitoring enhanced through a streamlined performance measurement methodology</p>	<p>Number of CBC programmes monitored by the relevant IPA II Beneficiaries following the performance measurement methodology developed by CBIB+ Number of thematic working groups on monitoring and performance management organised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Monitoring reports</li> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· JTS reports</li> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Result 5:</b> Visibility of IPA II CBC at intra-Western Balkan borders strengthened</p>	<p>Number of citizens aware of CBC programmes in Western Balkans Number of staff of IPA CBC stakeholders trained on information and communication Number of IPA CBC programmes organizing events as part of the European Cooperation Days</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Records of CBIB+3 website's visitors</li> <li>· Records of each CBC programme website's visitors</li> <li>· Public media surveys</li> <li>· Euro barometer type of surveys in the Western Balkans</li> </ul>	

## DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

### **1. Activities planned to achieve Result no. 1 "*Enhanced regional coordination and interaction between CBC stakeholders in the Western Balkans*".**

#### *IPA II CBC Regional Consultative Forum and Thematic/Technical Working Groups*

A CBC Regional Consultative Forum (CBC Forum) targeting the entire CBC community will be organised at least once a year along the model and set-up of the CBC Forum meetings organised under CBIB+ and CBIB+2. The CBC Forum facilitates communication and information sharing between all IPA II CBC stakeholders, with a view to maintaining a constructive and active dialogue among Western Balkan beneficiaries within the scope of their responsibilities for implementation of IPA II CBC programmes. The themes of the CBC Forum will relate to issues of a cross-cutting and region-wide interest nature, in the area of CBC programming and implementation.

Under the umbrella of the Forum, several thematic/technical working groups will be set up with a view to promoting the harmonisation of procedures and methodologies or exchanging practices on aspects of common interest. The Working Groups could concern, individually or collectively: Contracting Authorities/EU Delegations; Joint Monitoring Committees; Operating Structures; Joint Technical Secretariats.

### **2. Activities planned to achieve Result no. 2 "*Best practice culture and sharing of experiences promoted (better capitalisation and dissemination)*".**

#### *2.1 Study visits/job shadowing/exchanges of staff of CBC management structures.*

The exchanges between IPA II beneficiaries will aim at sharing similar experiences, difficulties and challenges. Additionally exchanges with Croatia being a Western Balkans country that has recently joined the EU (2013) will be organised as well with other Member States managing INTERREG programmes involving IPA II beneficiaries and ENI CBC programmes.

*2.2 Participation of the staff of CBC management structures in events aiming at promoting a CBC community of practice (e.g. seminars organised by INTERACT, TESIM facility, etc.) in order to share experiences and information with other CBC environments.*

*2.3 Creation of a IPA CBC capitalisation platform, the aim of which will to ensure that good practice and results of CBC are shared and disseminated in a more systematic manner (this could take the form of project data bases; thematic online fora and communities of practice; etc.). Links with other capitalisation initiatives related to territorial cooperation should be explored.*

### **3. Activities planned to achieve Result no. 3 "*Capacity of IPA II relevant authorities to programme, manage, implement, monitor and report IPA II programmes strengthened*".**

#### *3.1 Provision of demand-driven technical expertise.*

This component aims at sensibly increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the management and implementation of the CBC programme and should, therefore, take stock and capitalise from previous assistance provided in the region, thus avoiding duplications or overlapping. One aspect that will be taken into account is the support to create synergies with IPA II beneficiaries' policies and other donors funding. The possible types of activities are:

- ✓ Organisation of regional capacity building sessions and events targeting the relevant Authorities in charge of IPA II CBC programmes in the Western Balkans in relation to programme management techniques, communication, strategic orientation, policy development, as well as programme level monitoring, evaluation and closure.

- ✓ Provision of individual/ad hoc technical support to the institutions and bodies responsible for the management and delivery of IPA II CBC programmes, particularly on aspects of common interest to all practitioners in the region.
- ✓ Provision of individual/ad hoc support to national authorities in charge of implementing CBC programmes under indirect management (i.e. Serbia for the programmes Serbia - Montenegro and Serbia – Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro for the programmes Montenegro – Kosovo and Montenegro - Albania).

### *3.2 Support for the development of the new 2014-2020 CBC Programmes and the revision of on-going programmes, as appropriate.*

IPA II beneficiaries, along with the European Commission, could explore the possibility to launch some new cooperation programmes. In this case, the action will provide support in the programming process by means of assistance to the Task Forces in charge of coordinating the programming exercises and defining the main elements of the programmes such as goals, thematic priorities, eligible areas, type of actions etc.

Additionally, support shall be given in case of revision of the on-going programmes, in accordance with Article 68(7) and (8) of the Framework Agreement.

### *3.3 Support to the definition of the new generation of CBC Programmes beyond 2020.*

The action will provide support in the definition of the new generation of CBC programmes in the Western Balkans, beyond 2020. The new generation of CBC Programmes could have different goals, thematic priorities, implementing structures and format (for example there could be trilateral CBC Programmes) compared to IPA II. Moreover, the new generation of CBC programmes must take stock of the results of the 2016 Evaluation of 2007-2013 CBC Programmes at intra-Western Balkans level and lessons learnt under IPA I and IPA II. The following indicative activities could be planned:

- ✓ Coordination of working groups discussing the features of the future programmes.
- ✓ Support to EU Delegations, CBC Authorities and Joint Task Forces in charge of the programming phases.
- ✓ Preparation of guidelines capitalising from the lessons learnt from IPA I and IPA II CBC programmes.
- ✓ Preparation of a handbook outlining IPA I and IPA II CBC best practices.

#### **4. Activities planned to achieve Result no. 4 " IPA II CBC programmes' monitoring enhanced through a streamlined performance measurement methodology ".**

In the on-going phase of this technical assistance – CBIB+2 – the service provider has been tasked to set up a monitoring tool (i.e. a software based on the excel programme) for systematic result/impact measurement which functions as a feedback circuit aiming at improving the overall quality of programmes, their impact, effectiveness and visibility. The objective is to set up a robust performance framework for IPA-IPA CBC that fosters the use of a common set of indicators and supports automation of results through more a systematic aggregation of data. This will be continued and further improved as part of CBIB+3 in the following way:

#### *4.1 Support to Operating Structures and Joint Technical Secretariat in the measurement of indicators.*

Support will be provided through training events (see activity 3 above) and ad hoc activities. More precise forms of support will need to be agreed once the initial phase of the work under Phase 2 of CBIB is completed.

#### 4.2 Preparation of consolidated annual and final implementation reports.

The operating structures prepare an annual report for each cross-border cooperation programme but there is a need for a consolidated version of them highlighting the key terms of the yearly progresses at regional and programmes level. CBIB+ will provide support in structuring information related to results.

4.3 Preparation of a report(s) at the end of the action aiming at highlighting the synergies of CBC programmes with beneficiaries and other donors' policy; the performance framework and dissemination and capitalisation at regional level.

### **5. Activities planned to achieve Result no 5 "Visibility of IPA II CBC at intra-Western Balkan borders strengthened"**

This component will foresee the following types of activities:

- ✓ Production and distribution of information/promotional material, newsletters and other sector-specific publications for potential applicants and CBC management structures ;
- ✓ Maintenance of a CBIB+ Phase III project website that, apart from including information on IPA CBC programmes (e.g. contacts details, summary of the main elements of each CBC programme, calls for proposals and links to the CBC programmes official websites, info days, etc.), will serve as a platform for disseminating good practices. Additionally the website will contain performance data at regional level;
- ✓ Operational assistance to the Authorities for the organisation of stakeholder events and thematic seminars, as well as "project fairs"; Organisation and delivery of training courses targeting the staff of CBC Authorities (including JTS and Antennae offices) on techniques and methods to reach out to the media community and general public.
- ✓ Support for the participation of IPA II CBC stakeholders in activities – in particular events of a European dimension – organised under the aegis of European Territorial Cooperation programmes and other initiatives in the area of cross-border cooperation: this will materialize in networking with other CBC environment and exchange of information with the IPA CBC management structures. This will include the coordination with INTERACT activities of the annual European Cooperation Days;
- ✓ Promotion of an online cross-border community of practice in line with Activity 2 related to best practice exchange and capitalisation, i.e. communication and exchange of information and knowledge with initiatives similar to CBIB+ 3 (e.g. INTERACT, ENI CBC facility).

### **RISKS**

Apart from the assumptions highlighted in the Logical framework matrix, the following possible risks may occur:

<b>POSSIBLE RISK</b>	<b>MITIGATION MEASURES</b>
Insufficient technical capacity of IPA II beneficiaries to improve the management of CBC programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure that CBC bodies well understand the purpose and the benefit of the action</li><li>• To regularly perform needs assessment</li><li>• To disseminate the best practice experiences from the other IPA II</li></ul>

	<p>beneficiaries and other CBC stakeholders in the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To regularly promote good practices among CBC bodies to stimulate those that are lagging behind</li> </ul>
<p>High turnover of staff in the CBC bodies (including the fact that the next CBC TA decision is planned to be adopted in 2018 for the following 3 years of implementation thereby the Operating Structures will be managing new service contracts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assess the training needs of new staff and to tailor assistance accordingly</li> <li>• To produce written documents and manuals (i.e. JTS manual of procedures)</li> <li>• To ensure effective capitalisation of CBC</li> </ul>
<p>Lack of commitments of IPA II beneficiaries to implement harmonised procedures and to coordinate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of the actions itself as regional technical assistance facility addresses this risk (in particular thanks to the CBC Forum and technical working groups).</li> <li>• The set of rules of IPA II mitigate this risk as the presence of a single Contracting Authority and budget allocation per programme entail a strong coordination between stakeholders</li> </ul>
<p>Relations between the IPA II beneficiaries are not further normalised</p>	<p>The action has no means to mitigate this risk that could have a high impact on the implementation of CBC Programmes. Anyhow, as the stabilisation of the relationship between IPA II beneficiaries is part of the EU enlargement policy, this risk is unlikely to occur.</p>

### CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of CBC programmes at intra Western Balkans level requires the following main conditions:

- In July 2015, the 2015-2017 Action Programmes were adopted. Therefore, new Action Programmes need to be adopted in 2018 for the allocations 2018-2020.
- The above is only partially valid for the Programmes Serbia - the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia which was adopted in 2016 only; thus, there is a need for programming alignment for all CBC Programmes.
- In order to make the yearly allocation available for operations, the yearly tripartite Financing Agreements between the European Commission and the two relevant IPA II beneficiaries must be signed and ratified on time.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

#### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A Steering Committee (SC), chaired by DG NEAR and consisting of representatives of the EU Delegations / Office of the European Union to the participating IPA II beneficiaries and Operating Structures of these IPA II beneficiaries will ensure a tight coordination and oversee the timely and proper implementation of the action.

The SC will meet at least twice a year.

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

The action will be implemented in direct management by means of a service contract with an estimated duration of three calendar years. A restricted tender procedure for an indicative amount of EUR 2 million will be launched in quarter Q1 2018.

## **4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

### **METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)**

The European Commission may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the DG NEAR Guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures.

Additionally, the action will be monitored through:

- Review of progress by the Steering Committee (once every 6 months).
- Reporting on progress to the Contracting Authority (once every 6 months).
- Regular reports (interim, yearly and final narrative and financial reports) and regular meetings with the service provider by the task manager and participation in Project Steering Committee meetings.
- For payments, the Contracting Authority has established checklists to identify key factors to ensure that project deliverables are adequately verified for the purpose of the visa “certified correct”. The invoices for interim and final payments are scrutinised by an independent external auditor who carries out an expenditure verification to ensure that costs have been incurred for the purposes of the action and are substantiated by supporting documents before the invoices are presented to the Contracting Authority.

## INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline (value + year)	Target 2020	Final Target (2021)	Source of information
Number of IPA II CBC programmes implemented in an efficient, effective, harmonized, coordinated and according to a results-based approach as shown by the evaluation reports  (This is the action outcome indicator 2 as linked to the specific objective)	0 (2014)	9	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Evaluation report of CBC programmes by European Commission</li> </ul>
Duration of the evaluation of project proposals and contracting phase	1,5 year (2016)	10 months	9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· ROM reports</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS)</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Contracting Authorities</li> <li>· Evaluation report of CBC programmes by European Commission</li> <li>·</li> </ul>
% of CBC projects successfully implemented	* (2017)	80%	90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· ROM reports</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS)</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Contracting Authorities</li> <li>· Evaluation report of CBC programmes by European Commission</li> <li>·</li> </ul>
Number of individual requests by the managing structures	*	To be provided	To be provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· ROM reports</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Joint Technical</li> </ul>

				Secretariats (JTS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Contracting Authorities</li> <li>· Evaluation report of CBC programmes by European Commission</li> <li>·</li> </ul>
Number of peer-to-peer exchanges between CBC structures at the level of IPA II beneficiaries (i.e. CBC Forum and Technical/Thematic Working Groups)	7 (2015)	16	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> <li>· Minutes of meetings of regional events/forums/thematic working groups</li> </ul>
Number of harmonized procedures/manuals developed and applied by the IPA CBC programmes as a result of the work of the CBC forum and thematic working groups	*	To be provided	To be provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> <li>· Minutes of meetings of regional events/forums/thematic working groups</li> <li>·</li> </ul>
Number of CBC programmes staff having taken part in exchanges with other beneficiaries - Sex disaggregated data	0(2016)	36 Males: 18 Females: 18	46 Males: 23 Females: 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· JTS reports</li> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> </ul>
Number of CBC programmes' staff involved in capacity building activities- Sex disaggregated data	1075 (2015) Males: 480 Females: 595	1200 Males: 600 Females: 600	1200 Males: 600 Females: 600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· JTS reports</li> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS)</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Contracting Authorities</li> </ul>
Number of guidelines/working papers on programme management, implementation and monitoring published	*	To be provided	To be provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· JTS reports</li> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS)</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Reports and statistics produced by the Contracting Authorities</li> </ul>
Number of CBC programmes monitored by the relevant IPA II beneficiaries following the performance measurement methodology developed by CBIB+	0 (2014)	9	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Monitoring reports</li> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· JTS reports</li> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> </ul>
Number of thematic working groups on monitoring and performance management organised	0(2016)	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Monitoring reports</li> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· JTS reports</li> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> </ul>
Number of CBC stakeholders aware of CBC programmes in Western Balkans	8000(2016)	10000	12000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Records of CBIB+3 website's visitors</li> <li>· Records of each CBC programme website's visitors</li> <li>· Public media surveys</li> <li>· Euro barometer type of surveys in the Western Balkans</li> </ul>
Number of staff of IPA CBC stakeholders trained on information and communication	*	To be provided	To be provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Annual Programme Implementation Reports</li> <li>· JTS reports</li> <li>· CBIB+ contract reports</li> </ul>
Number of IPA CBC programmes organizing events as part of the European Cooperation Days	0(2016)	9	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Records of CBIB+3 website's visitors</li> <li>· Records of each CBC programme website's visitors</li> <li>·</li> </ul>

\* to be collected by the end of 2017

## **5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

### **GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

Like every other external action, CBC programmes at intra-Western Balkans level shall be compliant with the Gender Action Programme 2016-2020 (GAP II) and integrate gender mainstreaming. In particular, projects funded by CBC programmes shall promote gender mainstreaming in subject matters and areas where the presence and participation of women in the socio-economic context has been traditionally low. In line with the prescriptions of the Gender Action Programme 2016-2020, the Contracting Authorities managing the Calls for Proposals of IPA II CBC programmes shall ensure that grants beneficiaries are able to contribute to GAP II objectives (e.g. gender analysis, sex disaggregated data, gender sensitive indicators as requirements for proposals etc.). As far as possible, sex-disaggregated data will be provided for indicators used to monitor implementation of CBIB+ Phase III.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Discrimination of persons based on sex, race, origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation will be prevented. The observance of the principle of equal opportunities for everybody and the prevention of discrimination will be ensured during each stage of the implementation of the action and the CBC programmes. In particular, these principles will be observed in the phase of defining the criteria for the selection of projects when calls for proposals are designed. Such principles will be conveyed by CBIB+ as part of its activities.

### **MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS**

The rights of minorities and vulnerable groups including ethnic minorities, children, people with disabilities etc. shall be guaranteed in every step of implementation. As a matter of concern in the region, the action shall promote further attention to the protection of minorities and inclusion of vulnerable groups into society by means of training to potential applicants and during the evaluation of projects submitted in the context of Calls for Proposals. It should be noted, for example, that among CBC Programme priorities, the one promoting employment, labour mobility, social and cultural inclusion across the borders pursues the specific objective of better employment opportunities and social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

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

The multiannual strategies for CBC programmes at intra-Western Balkan borders were drafted by the IPA II beneficiaries in close consultation with the European Commission. During the design phase of the IPA II CBC programmes, an extensive survey was undertaken in the programme areas to identify challenges and expectations. This survey was inter alia targeted at public institutions, municipalities, relevant ministries and civil society organisations from the two relevant IPA II beneficiaries participating in each bilateral programme. In addition, clarification interviews were held with municipalities, regional development agencies, chambers of commerce, ministries and civil society organisations.

Public consultation meetings were considered as essential during the programming exercise and were attended by representatives of municipalities and civil society organisations.

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

The European Union has a long-standing commitment to address environmental concerns in its assistance programme as part of a wider commitment to sustainable development.

The protection of the environment, the promotion of climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management represent a thematic priority for each IPA II CBC programme therefore grants addressing it will be awarded. Through this action, the CBC structures will be encouraged to guarantee that the above-mentioned thematic priority is addressed in the Calls for Proposals.

The estimate budget allocation for relevant climate related action in the on-going IPA II CBC programmes is EUR 25.372 million.

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 0
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## **6. SUSTAINABILITY**

It is expected that following the execution of the action, the governments of the IPA II beneficiaries will be able to ensure the proper implementation of CBC programmes in a more autonomous way, fully respecting the relevant administrative and financial rules. It is expected that the action will strengthen ownership and commitment and further enhance the skills of CBC structures.

Additionally, it is expected that IPA II beneficiaries will keep on exchanging best practices and knowledge at regional level by financing the organisation of regular regional events/fora and thematic working groups/workshops.

Training and ad hoc guidance should be organised as much as possible with a view to ensuring the retention of specialist knowledge and expertise in the various CBC structures so that upon completion of the Action the need for continued external technical assistance will be reduced. This will be supported by the capitalisation activities planned as part of CBIB+ Phase III.

The documents developed by CBIB+ Phase III (e.g. training materials, templates, guidelines, presentations, etc.) will be upload on the CBIB+ website and after the closure of the action they will be handed over to the IPA CBC stakeholders and DG NEAR.

In addition, training activities shall be coordinated with the institutions that are centrally responsible for human resources management and professional development of civil servants in each IPA II beneficiary.

## **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 action and shall include the maintenance of the CBIB+ website, the publication of regular newsletter and the coverage of CBIB and IPA CBC programme activities by social media.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action will receive funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the European Commission (DG NEAR) will have to be followed.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives and the accession process, as well as the benefits of the action for the general public. An important component of this action will relate to visibility of IPA-IPA CBC. Activities shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. These activities 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.