

Project Fiche– IPA Multi-beneficiary programmes / Component I

1 IDENTIFICATION

Project Title	Strengthening European Integration (SEI)
CRIS Decision number	2013/024091
Project no.	13
MIPD Sector Code	9. Support and other activities
ELARG Statistical code	04 – 40 Supporting Programmes
DAC Sector code	43010 – Multi-sector aid
Total cost (VAT excluded)¹	EUR 6 697 923
EU contribution	EUR 6 000 000
Management mode	Centralised (direct/indirect)/joint management
Centralised management:	Unit D3, Regional Programmes, DG Enlargement of the European Commission (direct) European Training Foundation (ETF) (indirect)
Implementation management	Unit D3 –Coordination section
Implementation modality	Stand alone project
Project implementation type	Services, Grants, Contribution Agreements, Administrative Agreement, Agreement
Zone benefiting from the action(s)	Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Iceland, Turkey

¹ The total project 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.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 PROJECT CONTEXT: ISSUES TO BE TACKLED AND NEEDS ADDRESSED

This project will address a number of demand-driven requests for specific expertise, short-term advisory assistance, studies, as well as attendance to IPA-related conferences and meetings/workshops by the administrations of the beneficiaries. In addition, the assistance will allow better and timely project preparation and implementation to proceed in a quick and effective manner.

2.2 LINK WITH MIPD AND NATIONAL SECTOR STRATEGIES

This project supports all priority areas of the IPA Multi-beneficiary (MB) Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) and will facilitate the preparation and implementation of various types of projects to be financed under the IPA MB programme.

2.3 LINK WITH ACCESSION PARTNERSHIP (AP) / EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP (EP) / STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT (SAA) / ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

According to the latest Enlargement Strategy², regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are essential elements of the Stabilisation and Association process and as such are closely monitored by the European Commission at all stages of the accession process.

2.4 PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The main objective of the IPA is to help beneficiaries face the challenges of European integration, implement the reforms needed to fulfil EU requirements and make progress in the Stabilisation and Association Process. The Multi-beneficiary programme is designed to respond to priority needs as indicated in the MIPD, taking into account activities implemented under the national programmes, the guidance provided in EU strategic documents, the lessons learned from the programming and implementation of previous EU assistance and the findings from consultations with, inter alia, the beneficiaries, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), EU Member States, civil society organisations and European Commission services.

The European Commission is responsible for the programming, contracting and implementation of the MB programme on behalf of the beneficiaries, but involves them and other stakeholders at an early stage in the programming to ensure ownership of and involvement in the projects.

In order to improve the quality and speed up the programming and implementation of the MB assistance it has been decided to allocate funds in each annual programme to prepare strategic documents and projects and to address horizontal challenges faced by the administrations of the beneficiaries on the path towards adopting a more sector based approach in programming their national IPA allocations.

Also, the fulfilment of EU requirements and progress in the Stabilisation and Association Process both require an increasing number of qualified experts, competent civil servants and necessitate expertise and EU knowledge in judicial, economic and political matters. Specific

² COM(2011) 666 final

administrative structures and management systems should be established or strengthened to satisfy the requirements of the EU *acquis* in a number of areas.

The allocation for this project will therefore also be used to address a number of institution building needs (e.g. training, technical assistance etc.) for priorities identified in the AP, NPAA or Regular Reports. The funds will provide for addressing a series of demand-driven requests such as short-term advisory assistance, attendance to accession related conferences and meetings/workshops by the administrations of the beneficiaries.

Eligible applicants are line ministries and public institutions/agencies and staff in the beneficiaries directly involved in the EU accession process.

2.5 LINKED ACTIVITIES AND DONOR COORDINATION

The SEI Project is linked to the Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) Programme. This programme is designed to enhance the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the assistance to the Western Balkans and Turkey and to provide the Commission with regular analytical assessments on implementation of projects and programmes, which are used during the implementation phase of projects as well as in the design of new projects.

The SEI Project is also linked to the IPA Audit and Evaluation Programme. Audits provide the Commission with assurance as to the legality and regularity of assistance and evaluations provide the Commission with judgement of interventions according to their results, impacts and needs they aim to satisfy. They also contribute to the design of interventions and improve the quality and report on the achievements of interventions, the results of which are used in future programming.

2.6 LESSONS LEARNED

Both under CARDS and IPA, all national programmes have included similar projects which have proven to be an excellent tool for supporting the programming process and the implementation of accession-related actions. Under previous MB IPA programmes this type of assistance facilitated a participatory approach in programming and the timely preparation of projects and subsequent implementation.

3 DESCRIPTION

3.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

To ensure strategic planning, effective programming and project development as well as implementation of the MB programmes, thus contributing to the overall progress of the accession process and increasing the effectiveness and impact of accession-oriented projects financed through IPA.

3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE PROJECT

The project aims to strengthen the ability of the beneficiaries to effectively develop new strategic documents, design and develop programmes and projects for financing under IPA. The project will also support the implementation of a number of accession-related actions and initiatives in regional cooperation of various public/private actors in order to meet specific and urgent needs in the beneficiaries. Furthermore, to support the beneficiaries' participation in activities for the exchange of information, networking, participation in workshops,

conferences, study visits and similar activities and to assist in smaller-scale projects supporting European integration.

3.3 RESULTS

- Regional Strategy Paper developed, embracing the new financial framework (2014-2020);
- Strategic plans designed in different sector areas;
- Stakeholder consultations organised;
- Project fiches, multi-annual and annual programmes developed;
- Tender documents, guidelines for calls for proposals, terms of reference and technical specifications drafted;
- Feasibility studies, Environmental Impact Assessments carried out, project preparatory and start-up actions implemented;
- Increased capacities of beneficiary institutions to introduce a Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) for IPA assistance;
- Urgent/bridging support provided to regional initiatives;
- Information and communication material on MB IPA assistance produced.

Measurable Indicators

- Quality and timely processing of strategy paper, strategic plans;
- Quality of project fiches, multi-annual and annual programmes, number of stakeholder consultations;
- Quality and quantity of tender documents, calls for proposals, terms of reference and technical specifications;
- Number of feasibility studies, EIAs, preparatory and start-up actions implemented;
- SWAP approach rolled out for IPA assistance at national level;
- Number of urgent/bridging actions implemented;
- Quantity and quality of information and communication material produced.

3.4 MAIN ACTIVITIES

1) Development of Regional Strategy Paper, support in designing effective strategic plans in different sector areas (by means of service contracts/specific contracts under framework contracts and agreement with the European Training Foundation (ETF)).

2) Support in planning and programming the IPA-funded projects by for example assisting in stakeholder consultations, advice on drafting project fiches and their annexes (by means of service contracts/ specific contracts under framework contracts). Particular support (by way of grant) will be provided to the South East Europe Rural Development Standing Working Group (SGW SEE) for the preparation of a region-

wide pilot initiative in close collaboration with the Commission services, in particular DG Enlargement and DG Agriculture and Rural Development.

3) Provide expert assistance in drafting the tender documents, guidelines for applicants, and/or terms of reference and technical specifications for the implementation of IPA funded projects (by means of service contracts/ specific contracts under framework contracts).

4) Carry out feasibility studies, EIAs, project preparatory and start-up actions (by means of service contracts/specific contracts under framework contracts).

5) Provide short-term technical assistance including training, study-visits, management, organisational and other expert advice - to support beneficiary institutions in developing/upgrading necessary technical know-how and management skills in project preparation and implementation as well as introducing a Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) in IPA assistance (by way of Administrative Agreement with the World Bank under joint management).

6) Support to regional networks/initiatives and organisation of regional meetings, workshops, study visits in strategically important areas (by way of grants or Contribution Agreements).

7) Strengthening regional news exchange from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) by means of a direct grant to the SENSE News Agency. Support to the outreach programme of ICTY by way of a Contribution Agreement.

8) Develop and disseminate relevant information and communication material on IPA MB assistance in the region (by way of service contracts/specific contracts under framework contracts).

3.5 ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT IMPACT, CATALYTIC EFFECT AND CROSS-BORDER IMPACT (WHERE APPLICABLE)

The impact of the SEI Project is significant. Effective delivery of the project results in:

- More effective strategic planning, programming and implementation of IPA assistance – better designed strategies, programmes and projects produce better results that are also less likely to require subsequent addenda and contractual revision;
- Faster completion of tendering procedures, calls for proposals – properly prepared documentation can be approved more quickly and will require fewer corrigenda once launched;
- Higher quality responses from organisations and companies submitting bids/applications – tender documentation that is clear, logical and learns from experience elsewhere in the EU will ensure that submitted offers provide what the Contracting Authority requires;
- Faster contracting and disbursement of available funds;
- Improved effectiveness of projects;
- Facilitation of the accession process.

3.6 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is ensured through demonstrating how good project design leads to good project implementation. This will encourage all stakeholders to attach greater priority to the programming and project design phases and should improve ownership.

3.7 ASSUMPTIONS AND PRE-CONDITIONS³

It is assumed that the administrations of IPA beneficiaries are committed to an inclusive process of deepening regional cooperation.

4 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

This project will be implemented by means of service contracts/specific contracts under Framework Contracts and grant contracts, Contribution Agreements, Administrative Agreement, and Agreement with ETF.

³ Assumptions are external factors that have the potential to influence (or even determine) the success of a project but lie outside the control of the implementation managers. Such factors are sometimes referred to as risks or assumptions but the Commission requires that all risks shall be expressed as assumptions. Pre-conditions are requirements that must be met before the sector support can start.

4.1 INDICATIVE PROJECT BUDGET (AMOUNTS IN EUR)

PROJECT TITLE			SOURCES OF FUNDING										
			TOTAL EXPENDITURE	TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	IPA CONTRIBUTION		NATIONAL PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION						PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION
	IB (1)	INV (1)	EUR (a)=(b)+(e)	EUR (b)=(c)+(d)	EUR (c)	% (2)	Total EUR (d)=(x)+(y)+(z)	% (2)	Central EUR (x)	Regional/Local EUR (y)	IFIs EUR (z)	EUR (e)	% (3)
Activity 1-6, 8	X		4 300 000	4 300 000	4 300 000	100						0	0
Service/Specific Contracts	-	-	2 500 000	2 500 000	2 500 000	100	0						-
Agreement with ETF	-	-	1 400 000	1 400 000	1 400 000	100	0						-
Grant to SGW SEE	-	-	400 000	400 000	400 000	100	0						-
							0						-
Activity 5	X		1 000 000	1 000 000	1 000 000	100							0
Adm. Agreement with WB	-	-	1 000 000	1 000 000	1 000 000	100	0						-
Activity 7	X		1 397 923	700 000	700 000	50	0					697 923	50
Grant SENSE	=	=	897 923	200 000	200 000	22	0					697 923	78
Grant ICTY	=	=	500 000	500 000	500 000	100	0						-
TOTAL IB			6 697 923	6 000 000	6 000 000	90	0					697 923	10
TOTAL INV													
TOTAL PROJECT			6 697 923	6 000 000	6 000 000	90	0					697 923	10

Amounts net of VAT; (1) In the Activity row, use "X" to identify whether IB or INV; (2) Expressed in % of the **Public** Expenditure (column (b)); (3) Expressed in % of the **Total** Expenditure (column (a))

4.2 INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (PERIODS BROKEN DOWN BY QUARTER)

Contracts	Start of Tendering/ Call for proposals	Signature of contract	Project Completion
For activities 1 – 6 and 8: Up to 8 service contracts/specific contracts under Framework Contracts	Q1 2013 – Q3 2014	Q1 2013 – Q4 2014	Q4 2016
For activity 1: Agreement with ETF	N/A	Q1 2013	Q4 2016
For activity 2: Grant to SWG SEE	N/A	Q2 2014	Q4 2016
For activity 5: Administrative Agreement with the World Bank	N/A	Q3 2013	Q4 2016
For activity 7: Grant Agreement with SENSE News Agency	N/A	Q 1 2013	Q1 2015
For activity 7: Contribution Agreement with ICTY	N/A	Q1 2013	Q4 2015

4.3 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

4.3.1 *Equal Opportunities and non discrimination*

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination principles will be respected at the programming and implementation stage as regards gender and minorities. Based on the fundamental principles of promoting equality and combating discrimination, participation in the project will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

4.3.2 *Environment and climate change*

The activities in this project will allow to better mainstream environmental protection and climate change actions in the preparation and implementation of IPA projects.

4.3.3 *Civil Society/Stakeholders involvement*

Civil society and other stakeholders, in particular the RCC, other donors and IFIs are regularly consulted in the programming and project preparation for IPA MB programmes and benefit at the same time from better project implementation.

ANNEXES

1. Logical framework matrix in standard format
2. Amounts (in EUR) contracted and disbursed per quarter over the full duration of project
3. Details per EU funded contract

ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR Project Fiche		Project 12: Strengthening European Integration		
		Contracting period expires: 30 November 2014		Execution period expires: 30 November 2017
		Total budget	6 697 923	
		IPA budget:	6 000 000	
Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)	Sources of Verification		
To ensure effective programming and project development as well as implementation of the MB programmes, thus contributing to the overall progress of the accession process and increasing the effectiveness and impact of accession oriented projects.				
Specific objective	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)	Sources of Verification	Assumptions	
To strengthen the ability of the beneficiaries to effectively design and develop strategic documents, programmes and projects to be submitted for financing under IPA Multi-beneficiary Programmes as well as to enable the implementation of a number of accession-related actions of various public/private actors in order to meet specific and urgent needs in the beneficiaries. Furthermore, to support the beneficiaries' participation in activities for the exchange of information, networking, participation in workshops, conferences, study visits and similar activities and to assist in smaller-scale projects supporting European Integration				
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)	Sources of Verification	Assumptions	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategy Paper, Strategic plans, programmes and projects are designed in different sector areas; 2. Stakeholder consultations organised, project fiches are drafted well; 3. Tender documents, terms of reference and technical specifications drafted; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality and quantity of strategic plans; 2. Quality of project fiches and quality and quantity of stakeholder consultations; 3. Quality and quantity of tender documents, terms of reference and technical specifications; 4. Number of preparatory and start-up actions implemented. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic plans 2. Project fiches, minutes from stakeholder consultations 3. Tender documents, terms of reference and technical specifications; 4. Results from preparatory and start up actions 		

4. Project preparatory and start-up actions implemented.	5. Swap approach introduced for national IPA assistance.	5. Sector programmes in IPA beneficiaries	
5. Increased capacities of beneficiaries' institutions to prepare the ground for introducing a Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) for IPA assistance.	6. Number of urgent /bridging actions implemented.	6. Implementation reports from grant beneficiaries.	
6. Urgent/bridging support is provided to important regional initiatives and organisations	7. Number of reports	7. Reports and Information material	
7. Information and communication material on IPA MB assistance produced	8. Quantity and quality of material.		
Activities to achieve results	Means / contracts	Costs	Assumptions
1. Support in designing effective strategic documents and plans in different sector areas.	Service contracts/specific contracts under Framework contracts, Agreement with ETF		
2. Support in planning and programming the IPA-funded projects by assisting in stakeholder consultations, advise on drafting project fiches and their annexes. Support to the SWG SEE for rural development	Grant to SWG SEE		
3. Provide expert assistance in drafting the tender documents and/or terms of reference and technical specifications for the implementation of IPA funded projects.			
4. Feasibility studies, EIAs, project preparatory and start-up actions.	Administrative Agreement		
5. Provide short-term technical assistance including training, study-visits, management, organizational and other expert advice - to support the beneficiaries' institutions in developing/upgrading necessary technical know-how and management skills in project preparation and implementation as well as introducing a SWAP approach.	Grant Agreement/ Contribution Agreement		
6. Support to regional networks and organisation of regional meetings, workshops, study visits in strategically important areas	Service contract/specific contract under Framework contracts.	EUR 6 000 000	
7. Continued support to SENSE, support to outreach programme of ICTY			
8. Develop and disseminate relevant information and communication material on MB IPA assistance.			

ANNEX 2: Amounts (in EUR) contracted and disbursed per quarter over the full duration of project

Contracted	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014	Q3 2014	Q4 2014	Q1 2015	Q2 2015	Q3 2015	Q4 2015	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016
Service/ Specific Contracts		200 000	700 000	400 000	600 000	200 000	200 000	200 000								
Agreement ETF	1 400 000															
Grant to SWG SEE						400 000										
Adm. Agreement World Bank			1 000 000													
Grant Agreement SENSE	200 000															
Contribution Agreement ICTY	500 000															
Cumulated	2 100 000	2 300 000	4 000 000	4 400 000	5 000 000	5 600 000	5 800 000	6 000 000								

Disbursed	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014	Q2 2014	Q3 2014	Q4 2014	Q1 2015	Q2 2015	Q3 2015	Q4 2015	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016
Service Contract/Specific Contracts			160 000	500 000		240 000	300 000	100 000	400 000	100 000		300 000	100 000	100 000		200 000
Agreement ETF		600 000			500 000						300 000					
Grant to SWG SEE							160 000				140 000				100 000	
Administrative Agreement				500 000					500 000							
Grant Agreement SENSE		160 000									40 000					
Contribution Agreement ICTY		300 000				200 000										
Cumulated	0	1 060 000	1 220 000	2 220 000	2 720 000	3 160 000	3 620 000	3 720 000	4 620 000	4 720 000	5 200 000	5 500 000	5 600 000	5 700 000	5 800 000	6 000 000

ANNEX 3: Details per EU funded contract

For activities 1 to 6 and 8, it is expected that part of the project will be implemented through approximately 7 service contracts for a total indicative amount of EUR 2 500 000, procured through calls for tender (1-2) or under framework contracts (5-6) depending on the amount. All service contracts should be signed between quarter 1, 2013 and quarter 4, 2014.

Part of activity 1 will be implemented by indirect centralised management through the European Training Foundation (ETF) in accordance with Article 54(2)(b) of the Financial Regulation. ETF will support the beneficiaries to develop strategies and action plans in the policy area of employment, social policies and Human Resources (HR) development. To this end, the European Commission will sign in quarter 1, 2013 an Agreement with ETF for an amount of EUR 1 400 000.

ETF was initially created by Council Regulation (EEC) N° 1360/90 of 7 May 1990, repealed by Regulation (EC) N° 1339/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 establishing a European Training Foundation (recast). ETF has extensive experience from previous enlargement rounds in supporting candidate countries of in the area of HR development, employment strategies and vocational training. In the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and in view of preparing for future membership, the beneficiaries have to reinforce reform efforts underpinning a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth agenda while addressing skills depletion, shortages or gaps in dynamic sectors, regions and enterprises. A first phase of activities will focus on reviewing and developing the methodological instruments to develop HR development strategies, including assessing institutional capacities, setting up of monitoring systems and facilitating exchange of experience. The second phase will prepare the ground for implementing the methodology for the effective development of tailor-made sector strategies for employment and HR development for IPA II.

For activity 2, one direct grant contract is foreseen with the South East Europe Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG SEE) for an indicative amount of EUR 400 000 to be awarded in Q2 2014, based on Article 168 (1) (f) of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation, since a particular type of body on account of its technical competence is required. Based on their regional presence and wide experience in horizontal actions, reviews and stakeholder coordination in the area of rural development, only the SWG SEE combines the required technical capacity, knowledge and above all independence and authority to undertake a fair and consistent assessment, with a view to creating the conditions for effective coordination of a future regional pilot initiative.

The support will allow continuing the preparation for implementation of the Area Based Development Approach (ABD) in the Western Balkans under the next financial framework (2014-2020), with the view to ensure sustainable socio-economic development of areas facing economic decline, depopulation and social and economic exclusion. Previous IPA assistance to the SWG SEE was used to identify the areas with a set of common problems; identify local stakeholders and establish a stakeholder group; and carry out a baseline study that identified the priority sectors to be addressed and included a SWOT analysis, a strategy and an action plan prepared for each selected region. The contract envisages to further build capacity and implementing structures, including Project Management Units (PMU) in the regions and a permanent secretariat in the SWG Headquarter; to consolidate the stakeholder structures established in the previous phase, and develop programming documents and/or a project pipeline for implementation.

In order to continue cooperating with the World Bank in rolling out a more sector based approach in the beneficiaries (activity 5), it is foreseen to sign an Administration Agreement and to enter into joint management with the World Bank, following Article 53d of the Financial Regulation and the corresponding provisions of the Implementing Rules. The World Bank has extensive international experience in working with government counterparts to implement policy reforms and associated sector programmes. Over the last years, the Bank has worked extensively with Turkey and the Western Balkans to strengthen government functions associated with the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes (e.g. programme budgeting, audit, statistical capacity) and is therefore well placed to carry this work forward.

An indicative amount of EUR 1 000 000 is set aside for this purpose and the Administrative Agreement should be signed in quarter 3, 2013.

For activity 7, it is foreseen to support the SENSE News Agency by way of direct grant, based on article 168 (1) (f) of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation, on account of its technical competence and high degree of specialisation.

Only the Sense News Agency, who has been covering regularly and systematically all the trials and other relevant activities at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for a number of years, has the technical capacity to conduct this assignment. An indicative amount of EUR 200 000, equivalent to 22% of the total cost of EUR 897 923, is foreseen for this grant, to be awarded in quarter 1, 2013.

It is also foreseen to support the Outreach Programme of ICTY with an indicative amount of EUR 500 000. To this end, a Contribution Agreement with ICTY should be signed in quarter 1, 2013, based on Article 168(1)(f) of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation on account of its technical competence and high degree of specialisation. Only the ICTY, responsible for the war crime judgements, has the technical capacity and knowledge to conduct this assignment, namely to promote transitional justice in the former Yugoslavia, through raising awareness of the ICTY's trials and of their role in the development of the rule of law and enforcement of human rights.