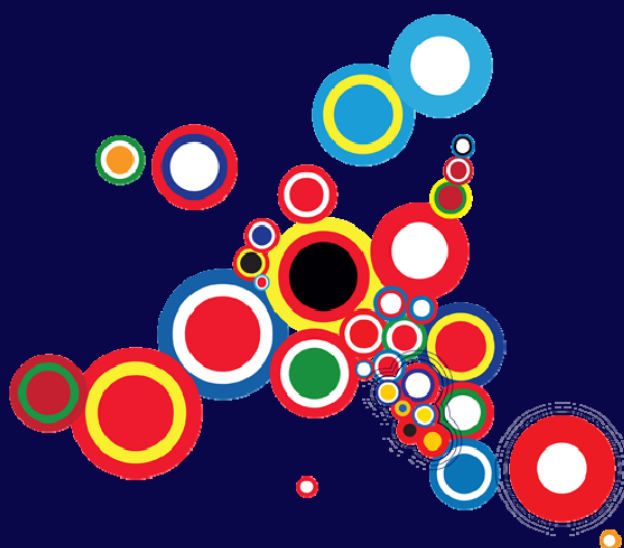




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

MULTI-COUNTRY Statistics



Action Summary

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

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

| Action Identification | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Action Programme Title | IPA II Annual Multi-country Action Programme 2017 | | |
| Action Title | Statistics | | |
| Action ID | IPA 2017/039-873.03/MC/Statistics | | |
| Sector Information | | | |
| IPA II Sector | 9. Regional and territorial cooperation | | |
| DAC Sector | 16062- Statistical capacity building | | |
| Budget | | | |
| Total cost | EUR 14 315 700 | | |
| EU contribution | EUR 14 000 000 | | |
| Management and Implementation | | | |
| Management mode | Direct management | | |
| <i>Direct management:</i> | DG ESTAT, Unit A3 Statistical Cooperation (in cross sub-delegation) | | |
| Implementation responsibilities | DG ESTAT, Unit A3 Statistical Cooperation | | |
| Location | | | |
| Zone benefiting from the action | Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia) and Turkey | | |
| Specific implementation area(s) | N/A | | |
| Timeline | | | |
| Final date for contracting including the conclusion of delegation agreements | 31/12/2018 | | |
| Final date for operational implementation | 31/12/2021 | | |
| Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form) | | | |
| General policy objective | Not targeted | Significant objective | Main objective |
| Participation development/good governance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | X |
| Aid to environment | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

* 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.

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

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The IPA II beneficiaries have to upgrade their statistical systems with a view to accession. The degree of compliance varies considerably between the individual IPA II beneficiaries, as they have different starting points, but they need to improve their capacities, especially with a view to produce good quality data for evidence-based decision-making. In addition they have to align methodologies and output with the EU *acquis* in statistics, taking forward their integration into the European Statistical System.

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

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

The capacity of the NSIs to produce statistical information of sufficient coverage and based on high quality standards is still insufficient in most IPA II beneficiaries, despite the progress made also with the support of IPA assistance. Further development of statistical systems to a level comparable to the one in the current Member States and their integration into the European Statistical System (ESS) remains the ultimate objective.

The IPA II beneficiaries are not at the same level of development and are progressing towards an efficient and modern statistical system at a different pace. In most of them the basic principles are being followed and the institutional framework for producing statistics is in place. However, considerable efforts are needed and should focus on enhancing the availability, quality and comparability of statistics in a timely manner, especially in the areas that are indispensable for the accession process and in relation to the accession negotiations. From an institutional point of view, strengthening the organisational capacity of NSIs is of importance for producing more and better statistics. Better organisational capacity will make improvements more permanent as more knowledge and skills are retained with the human capital.

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

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

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

In order to achieve these results, the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) of the beneficiaries will participate in meetings and working groups within the European Statistical System (ESS), training events, study visits and they will benefit from consultancies and reviews. Moreover, the NSIs can send trainees to EU Member States for in-depth learning. The planned statistical projects will focus on implementing data collection and production in the following broad statistical areas: macro-economics statistics, business statistics, social statistics, agricultural and environment statistics, multi-domain statistics as well as address shortcomings in the institutional environment of the NSIs and the infrastructure.

Four of the IPA II beneficiaries of this action will receive direct grants, signed by the NSI. A service contract will be concluded benefitting the less advanced IPA II beneficiaries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo), but also covering a number of activities where it is preferable to include all IPA II beneficiaries due to the regional nature of the assistance.

Performance will be measured against the indicators set out in the logframe matrix. The main means of measurement is the level of compliance with the EU *acquis* in the area of statistics by each IPA II beneficiary. The performance will as well be measured by the strengthening of the administrative capacity of the NSIs. The performance indicators will measure the availability of statistical data in accordance with the frequency, timeliness, quality and formats as defined in the relevant regulations. The strengthening of the administrative capacity of the NSIs, notably through the increased delivery of timely and accurate data as well as through peer reviews of statistical systems will be targeted and monitored.

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

The action addresses the need to meet several priorities set out in the Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Paper (MCSP) 2014-2020¹:

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

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

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

¹C(2014) 4293, 30.06.2014

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

Finally, the action complements IPA II action programmes for specific IPA II beneficiaries, by offering a range of smaller statistical projects in areas not covered by the larger projects, which are funded through the IPA II programmes for relevant beneficiaries.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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

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

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

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

While support for the application of these fundamental principles of official statistics needs to be continued, support under IPA 2017 will increasingly focus on enabling the IPA II beneficiaries to produce statistics in selected statistical domains and transmit them to Eurostat.

Another lesson learnt from previous action programmes is the need to coordinate effectively the different types of assistance activities. The combination of multi-country and IPA II action

programmes for specific IPA II beneficiaries and other sources of funding (either from government or from other international donors such as the United Nations-UN or the International Monetary Fund-IMF) will be efficient if complementarities and synergies are sought, but can create problems in absorption capacity if there are overlaps of content among the different action programmes. Partly for this reason Eurostat has developed an annual donor coordination survey on statistical support which provides an overview of the activities ongoing in each IPA II beneficiary in the field of statistics. The latest survey, which was completed in May 2016, shows that several donors and international organisations are active in the region. This includes Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, the United Kingdom, Norway, France and the United States as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the Council of Europe, the IMF, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other UN organisations. The European Commission is the largest donor in the region, providing significantly more support than all other donors together.

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

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

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

| OVERALL OBJECTIVE | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI) | SOURCES OF VERIFICATION | |
|--|---|---|---|
| To support the process of harmonisation of the IPA II beneficiaries' statistical production for future EU membership by aligning their present methodologies and output with the EU <i>acquis</i> in statistics and taking forward their integration into the European Statistical System. | Progress in the development of the statistical systems as evidenced by improvements in the assessments made in peer reviews Qualitative scoring in NEAR reports per IPA II beneficiary | Monitoring reports of the Strategy for Statistical Cooperation 2014-2020; Peer reviews reports Chapter "Statistics" of the country reports of DG NEAR | |
| SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI) | SOURCES OF VERIFICATION | ASSUMPTIONS |
| 1 – Improve compliance with the EU <i>acquis</i> in statistics 2 – Make statistics a better tool for policy purposes 3 – Further integrate the NSIs into the ESS 4 – Progress in implementing the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP) 5 – Strengthen the management capacity of NSIs | Compliance level indicators as set out in the <i>Strategy for Statistical Cooperation 2014-2020, compliance rate</i> Progress in the implementation of the CoP Qualitative scoring in NEAR reports per IPA II beneficiary | Peer reviews reports, sector assessment reports Chapter "Statistics" of the country reports of DG NEAR | Commitment of IPA II beneficiaries' authorities to the process. |
| RESULTS | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI) | SOURCES OF VERIFICATION | ASSUMPTIONS |
| 1) improved availability and quality of statistical data in selected statistical areas; 2) Increased trust and confidence in statistics expressed by policy makers; 3) Increased relevance and timeliness of statistical data for policy makers. 4) Increased knowledge about the EU <i>acquis</i> , European statistics and their compilation methods, standards and terminologies; 5) Improved cooperation between ESS and NSIs of IPA II beneficiaries; 6) Increasingly assured professional independence of the NSI; 7) Strengthened role of NSIs as coordinators of the official statistical system | 1) New statistical datasets covered; percentage of data transmitted in good time to Eurostat, 2) Results expressed in user satisfaction surveys; Number and extent of error corrections; 3) Information on the methodology and quality of outputs is publicly available, including to policy makers; Instructions and guidelines on the dissemination processes are publicly available; Release calendars on publications and press-releases are publicly available, updated and kept; 4) Number of staff trained; Number of Eurostat meetings attended; Number of traineeship programmes organized; 5) Number of projects the NSI has participated in; Number of study visits from IPA II beneficiaries to Member States; Number of committees, task forces, high level meetings attended; Volume of contributions/presentations of IPA II beneficiaries to conferences, meetings and statistical work (e.g. the census) in the context of ESS. 6) The rules for the appointment, dismissal and length of mandate of the Head of the NSI in the statistical law or other relevant legal acts, 7) The existence of legislation that stipulates the rights of the NSI regarding the coordination of and influence over official statistics and the access, creation, improvement or discontinuation of administrative registers. | Compliance monitoring reports of Eurostat (SMIS+) Peer review reports Sector assessment reports User satisfaction surveys carried out by the NSIs Data inclusion report of Eurostat | Cooperation of official statistics providers in the beneficiaries. Parallel implementation of necessary IPA II action programmes on statistics at Beneficiary level. Sufficient support to NSI provided by Government institutions. |

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Results

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

Main activities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RISKS

In addition to the assumptions listed in the Logframe, there are certain risks that need to be addressed. A potential risk is represented by insufficient human and budgetary resources in beneficiaries that may jeopardize the smooth running of some activities or even of statistical projects. IPA II beneficiaries ought to be fully aware of the need to prioritise activities and deliverables within statistical projects in order to manage the implementation of the projects with the available resources.

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

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

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

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The action will be cross sub-delegated to DG Eurostat for contracting and implementation. Four of the IPA II beneficiaries of this action will receive direct grants, signed by the NSI in the relevant IPA II beneficiary. Depending on the set-up of each statistical system, other producers of official statistics may be included as partners in the direct grants.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Unit A3, "Statistical Cooperation", in Eurostat focuses its work on following the developments in the IPA II beneficiaries on a regular basis, including in statistics, and in contributing to bilateral meetings within the Stabilisation and Association Process such as Sub-Committee Meetings on economic and financial issues and statistics. International co-operation departments and project implementation units of the IPA II beneficiaries will take the leading role in the implementation process. Eurostat is supported in the implementation by the two main bodies for coordination of statistical cooperation with third countries. One body is the Management Group for Statistical Cooperation (MGSC) where NSIs of EU Member

States are the main participants, and IPA II beneficiaries participate as observers. The MGSC also serves as the Working Group for statistical cooperation and one of its main agenda items each year is donor coordination. The second body is the Policy Group for Statistical Cooperation (PGSC) which is composed by the Director General and the heads of cooperation units in the NSIs of the IPA II beneficiaries. The PGSC serves as the sector group for statistics and a forum to discuss strategic issues related to the multi-country programmes.

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

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

1) Direct Grants:

Direct grants will be provided to the NSIs of Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. Through these grants the beneficiary NSIs shall be directly responsible for the implementation of the activities foreseen in this action. Eurostat uses direct grants addressed to NSIs of the relevant IPA II beneficiaries listed above as they have a *de-jure* and *de facto* monopoly to carry out the statistical activities included in this action, in line with the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. They are, according to Beneficiaries' statistical laws, the institutions inside the public administration of IPA II beneficiaries responsible for collecting, producing and disseminating official statistics. The NSIs may be supported in this undertaking by other services of the public administration but the final responsibility for disseminating official statistics lies with the NSIs.

The grant beneficiaries will contribute with a 5% co-financing to the eligible expenditure. The indicative EU contribution will be granted to each beneficiary in accordance with their individual needs. The total contribution from the IPA II programme for the four grants together is EUR 6 000 000. The final distribution between the beneficiaries will be decided during the evaluation of the applications, based on the beneficiaries' needs. These needs depend on the specific circumstances in the beneficiaries, in particular as regards the costs and workload involved in implementing the statistical projects. The grants will cover technical assistance, statistical projects, and provision of tailor made expertise.

A direct grant will be awarded with prior approval to the IMF on the basis of the *Framework Administrative Agreement between the European Union and the International Monetary Fund on actions administered by the International Monetary Fund and funded or co-funded by the European Union*. Eurostat and the IMF will conclude a grant agreement for pillar assessed organisations. The IMF will be awarded a financial contribution for financing the implementation of two statistical projects in specific statistical areas in the IPA II beneficiaries, namely external sector statistics and government finance statistics. This assistance will be complementary to the assistance provided by Eurostat. The IMF has sound expertise in these statistical areas and has already worked with relevant institutions (NSIs, Ministry of Finance) in the IPA II beneficiaries.

The total contribution from the IPA II programme for this grant is EUR 370 000. This contribution amounts to 100% of total eligible costs.

The total contribution from the IPA II Programme to all five grants taken together is EUR 6 370 000.

2) Service Contract

Following a restricted tender, a service contract of EUR 7 630 000 maximum will be concluded to provide technical assistance to the IPA II beneficiaries. This service contract will provide support to the implementation of statistical projects, participation in the ESS meetings, traineeships, provision of expertise, etc. for those IPA II beneficiaries of the action not benefitting from grants. For projects of common interest, all seven IPA II beneficiaries will participate in project implementation. Apart from the statistical projects, the contract will provide external technical expertise in selected areas and the organisation of workshops, study visits and provision of consultancy services, which can also be organised for all seven IPA II beneficiaries. As in the past, this external technical support is organised via a service contract rather than being included in each individual grant. This guarantees the nature of a multi-country programme, ensures an efficient approach and facilitates monitoring and evaluation.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Performance will be measured against the indicators set out in the logframe matrix. The main means of measurement is the level of compliance with the EU *acquis* in the area of statistics by each IPA II beneficiary. The performance will as well be measured by the strengthening of the administrative capacity of the NSIs, notably through the increased delivery of timely and accurate data requested by data users at local and international level.

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The level of compliance with the EU *acquis* in statistics can be estimated in various ways such as legal compliance or technical / methodological compliance, but central to the concept of compliance measurement is the availability of statistical data in accordance with the frequency, timeliness, quality and formats as defined in the relevant regulations. The estimation of the compliance levels is based on various sources of information and on a selected list of statistical domains. The criteria for selecting the statistical domains are linked to the particular relevance for the EU policy, i.e. the Europe 2020 indicators and the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure, to the importance of the statistical domain for each statistical system as such and for policy monitoring (accounts, labour market, environment, agriculture). The selection of statistical domains has been done on the basis of available knowledge and in agreement with the relevant institutions in IPA II beneficiaries.

In total there are 30 statistical domains used for the estimates of compliance level. In each domain, the year of expected compliance was translated into a degree of compliance by the cut-off dates for monitoring.

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

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

The progress of the IPA II beneficiaries will be equally measured against the performance as evaluated in the NEAR reports per IPA II beneficiary.

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

The data will be monitored on annual basis and checked against the targets set in 2020 (another check takes place in 2017).

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

| Indicator | Baseline² | Target 2020 | Final Target | Source of information |
|--|--|---|--|------------------------------|
| Compliance rate (IPAI beneficiaries' data validated and published by the European Commission) | 33-39% ³ | 70%-82% | It is not possible to estimate the final target. | Eurostat calculations |
| Progress in the implementation of the CoP (number of peer reviews conducted in the IPA II beneficiaries and percentage of recommendations in the peer reviews which were implemented) | 0 | 7 peer reviews conducted and 40% of improvement recommendations implemented | 80% of recommendations implemented | Eurostat |
| Qualitative scoring in NEAR reports per IPA II beneficiary | 2 IPA II beneficiaries at an early stage 2 IPA II beneficiaries some level of | 5 IPA II beneficiaries moderately prepared 2 IPA II beneficiaries | 4 IPA II beneficiaries moderately prepared 3 IPA II beneficiaries | DG NEAR Country reports |

² Baseline year for qualitative scoring is 2015

³ Expert estimates as of end-2014 / beginning of 2015. Due to uncertainties in the estimate and the fact that it is calculated on a sample of statistical areas, the rate is given as an interval.

| | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| | preparation 3 IPA II beneficiaries moderately prepared | with a good level of preparation | with a good level of preparation | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|

The target for the compliance rate in 2020 is an average level for all the beneficiaries and presents an estimation that can change over time depending on the number of the new regulations being adopted in the meantime and moreover, the compliance of each individual IPA II beneficiary may be higher or lower..

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Statistics is a special area that affects many other policy areas by providing the figures that policy makers use to develop policies. There are very important links to key areas such as the macro-economic imbalance procedure, the excessive deficit procedure, the Europe 2020 headline targets or the SEE 2020 strategy. The Western Balkans have committed themselves by formally adhering to the SEE 2020 strategy. Moreover, NSIs need to coordinate other producers of statistics as well, such as the "national bank", ministries, agencies, etc. In that respect, the programme will lead to improvements not only for the statistical offices but also for the main partners involved in producing official statistics. Hence the capacity of the statistical systems will be enhanced.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

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

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

Not applicable.

| |
|--|
| Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 0 million |
|--|

6. SUSTAINABILITY

The actions will result in strengthened capacity for statistical production, ensuring the availability of timely and good quality statistics that are comparable with the statistics of EU Member States. The increased professional independence, improved coordinating function of the statistical offices and the increase in production capacities are the best guarantees for the

sustainability of the action. Furthermore, the beneficiaries are committed to take up the results achieved by the action and develop them further. However, institutions in the region are still fragile and exposed to high staff turnover, a lack of certain skills and a lack of financial and IT resources. Moreover, the EU *acquis* is constantly evolving and hence requires continuous support, as it is also granted to the Member States of the European Statistical System.

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the action. All necessary measures will be taken to make public the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the Commission (DG NEAR) will have to be followed.

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

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. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences the added value and impact of the EU's interventions and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

The European Commission shall be fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.

Any notice or publication by the NSIs concerning the action, including those given at a conference or seminar, will specify that the action has been supported by EU funding. Any publication by the NSIs, in whatever form and by whatever medium, including the internet, will include the following statement: "This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the NSI and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union."