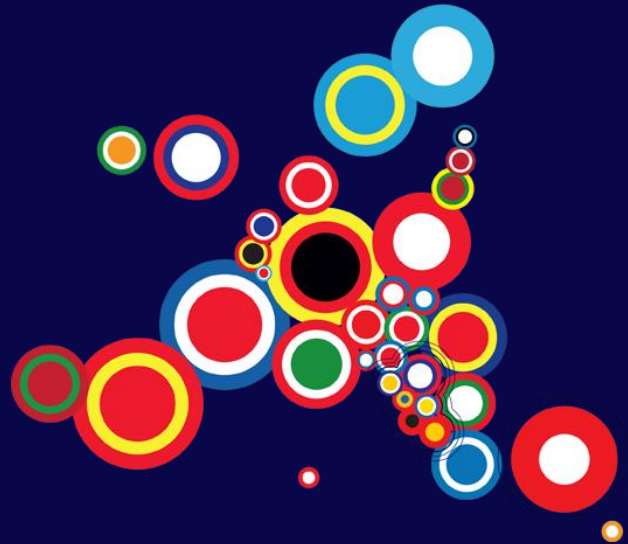




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

ALBANIA

Support to Food Safety,
Veterinary and Phytosanitary
Standards



Action summary

The overall objective of the Action is to contribute to an increased protection of human, animal and plant health at every stage of the food production process, through the establishment of the institutional and administrative capacities in line with the overall public administration reform agenda.

This will be achieved by assisting the reform and ensuring capacity building of the necessary administrative structure to implement policy actions, by raising public awareness to ensure that consumers are properly informed about their choices, roles and responsibilities in the food safety system. The action will finally aim at establishing the necessary legal and institutional framework and building up of the appropriate capacity to adopt the acquis and monitor the progress in the field of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary in line with strategic objectives.

Action Identification	
Action Programme Title	IPA 2016 Action Programme for Albania
Action Title	Support to Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Standards
Action ID	IPA 2016/038718.07/AL/ Food Safety and Veterinary Standards
Sector Information	
IPA II Sector	Agriculture and Rural Development
DAC Sector	31110 - Agricultural policy and administrative management
Budget	
Total cost	EUR 5,000,000.00
EU contribution	EUR 5,000,000.00
Budget line(s)	22.02.01.02
Management and Implementation	
Management mode	Direct management
<i>Direct management:</i> EU Delegation	EU Delegation to Albania
Implementation responsibilities	Ministry of Agriculture Rural Development and Water Administration
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	Albania
Specific implementation area(s)	Whole country
Timeline	
Final date for concluding Financing Agreement(s) with IPA II beneficiary	At the latest by 31 December 2017
Final date for concluding delegation agreements under indirect management	At the latest by 31 December 2017
Final date for concluding procurement and grant contracts	3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement, with the exception of cases listed under Article 189(2) of the Financial Regulation
Final date for operational implementation	6 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement
Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement (date by which this programme should be de-committed and closed)	12 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<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	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Albania has benefited from significant assistance from the EU with regard to capacity building in the field of food safety and veterinary. Relatively large projects funded under CARDS or IPA programmes have provided assistance to build capacities in the sector. Nevertheless, despite the progress made so far, the food and veterinary system is still not consolidated. In addition to the latest Commission 2015 annual enlargement report, weaknesses and reasons have been shown also in various reports prepared by TAIEX, OIE and EU-funded projects. The 2015 OECD/SIGMA baseline measurement report¹, which benchmarked the Albanian central administration against the Principles of Public Administration, highlighted a number of general weaknesses such as fragmentation, weak accountability lines between institutions, politicisation and weak administrative capacity, which have a profound effect also in this sector.

The food safety and veterinary systems have suffered from fragmentation of competencies and communication among various national bodies that have, as result, compromised the execution of duties under a clear chain of command making the control of animal movement and traceability of the products difficult. As an example, the regional veterinary service was under the Regional Directorates of Agriculture, the I&R system was under the Institute of Food Safety and Veterinary (National Reference Laboratory), the animal markets and ante and post-mortem controls were under the local government units and regional veterinary laboratories were under the National Food Authority. Other outstanding problems include:

- An incomplete and often conflicting legal framework causes institutional fragmentation, overlapping or duplication of competencies, lack of coordination and sharing of resources among various institutions involved in the food safety chain. Food legislation is not fully compliant with the EU acquis and contains ambiguous and inconsistent provisions as regards the balance of responsibilities and accountability lines between implementing bodies.
- The capacity to transpose the EU legislation and keep it updated is very low. As highlighted in the 2015 SIGMA baseline measurement report, Albania does not yet implement an inclusive and evidence based approach to policy and legislative development. There is limited analysis of the impact of laws and policies. Draft proposals usually lack proper costing or alignment to the medium-term budget programme. The evidence supporting draft proposals is therefore often incomplete. While there is a certain level of external stakeholder consultations, this is not always done in the right time of the process and the decision-makers are not systematically informed on the outcomes of the consultations. Also, monitoring and analysis of the implementation of policies is not carried out on a regular basis. These weaknesses related to policy development and coordination is one of the key reasons why adopted laws and policies are not always properly implemented and enforced.
- Partial transposition of the acquis has been more a sign of political willingness to gradually integrate EU regulations into national legislation rather than to improve the food hygiene or animal health standards.
- An unbalanced distribution of human resources has caused some services regarding animal or plant health being severely and chronically understaffed to a point at which they are unable to cover the tasks of the service. For example, no measures have been taken with regard to animal waste management or improving animal market infrastructure.
- The high turnover of staff especially at management level has not been always associated with improvement of the human resource quality; the lack of continuity associated with repeated changes have prevented the retention of essential institutional knowledge, which has greatly impeded progress towards compliance with EU requirements.
- Due to weak financial planning capacities and subsequent allocation of inadequate budgetary resources, relevant information systems such as the animal register have not been updated, reporting

¹ http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Baseline_Measurement_2015_Albania.pdf

has been erratic and performance criteria have not been applied. As a result, planning of specific measures has suffered from insufficient and unreliable information.

- There is a low awareness in society at large and among commercial agro-food operators of the environmental and food safety standards that are required. They have not been regularly informed about policies and regulations in place regarding food, animal or plant health.
- Policy in the sector has changed in line with political priorities and reforming of the system has been considered more as sharing of powers rather than improving food safety by following best practice in EU countries.
- The enforcement of regulations and official controls has been interpreted as an instrument to punish the producers rather than educating them to adopt new rules.

These problems have various impacts on the different stakeholder groups. **At the level of producers**, the absence of an effective extension service and the lack of suitably presented information represent major constraints on the development of safe production systems. Farmers are largely unaware of the improved practices they could and should adopt; they lack sufficient skills; they are weakly organised as an interest group and do not demand services; they do not have access to capital and inputs; and they lack market information and cannot access regulated markets.

The agricultural labour force is characterised by a large share of women working in agriculture (54.5%). The vast majority of women (87%) work primarily in informal arrangements and as unpaid family workers, posing an obstacle to accessing productive resources, training and services, since in general these tend not to target women. Women are largely excluded from agro-food systems, and from effective diversification and upscaling of value chains. Farmers in the more remote areas trade mainly through middlemen. Coupled with the very small sizes of holdings, Albania's agricultural production and productivity is seriously constrained.

Many **suppliers of agricultural inputs**, including agrochemicals and veterinary medicines operate without being licensed or effectively supervised and regulated, which means that quite commonly controlled substances are used in agricultural production without adequate controls. For example, antibiotics are commonly used to treat mastitis that arises as a result of poor hygienic practices. This means that somatic cell counts in milk are high and the presence of antibiotic residues interferes with cheese making; of greater significance, these residues potentially promote the emergence of antibiotic resistance, with serious implications for human health.

The supply of **animal feeds** depends to a large extent on imported concentrates, which makes it difficult for producers in Albania to compete against less expensive imported finished animals (pigs) and products of animal origin. Furthermore, there is insufficient systematic screening of animal feeds to detect residues and the presence of pathogens, such as *Salmonella* spp.

In terms of **agrochemicals for use in crop production**, controls on distribution, usage and inspection are generally weak and, in many areas, non-existent. In part, this is due to the lack of a programme of official controls and sampling regime embedding significant environmental implications due to likely leaching of pesticides into aquatic systems.

Markets are nominally regulated by municipal authorities but, in practice, facilities are negligible, inspections are erratic and superficial, and they function largely informally, which means that the State forfeits potential revenue. Poor practices at markets place consumers at risk of food-borne hazards, including pathogens and residues. Animal welfare is an almost completely neglected subject at markets, as is the importance of ensuring traceability. Commonly, animals presented for sale are not identified and cattle are rarely accompanied by proper documentation, *i.e.* a movement permit and bovine passport. At many markets, correctly identified imported cattle animals have their ear tags removed by the purchaser as a matter of routine. This practice at markets undermines completely the traceability that should underpin food safety.

At **abattoirs**, throughput is generally low since owners and butchers choose to slaughter animals at the less expensive, unlicensed slaughter points. Here again, traceability is not in place, despite several EU-funded projects that have aimed to assist the establishment of the system.

Milk collection is generally not well organised and, although there are some large processors who achieve high standards and a significant share of **milk and dairy produce** is still sold informally by the roadside.

The lack of an effective national laboratory network for veterinary diagnostics has resulted in the absence of reliable laboratory analysis results to confirm diagnosis of animal diseases.

Development of mechanisms to communicate and coordinate with the Public Health component of the MoH as part of a 'one health' strategy is required. Specifically, work to develop coordination and communication protocols between FSVI and the MoH-PH laboratory to share zoonotic disease information in both the immediate timeframe for important or emerging disease and on a regular (*e.g.* quarterly, semi- and annual) basis should be taken into account.

The development of a plan for the structure of the diagnostic veterinary laboratories to overcome the existing fragmented and inefficient structure which is inimical to effective disease control, need to be designed in line with national strategies including the Inter-sectorial Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2014-2020 and the Cross-cutting Strategy for Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance 2014-2020.

As a consequence of these conditions, the quality and safety of the food produced and distributed in Albania is of increasing concern to the national competent authority, to major stakeholders and to a growing number of consumers.

In the context of rural development, there is a need for an enhanced coordination and cooperation, including clear division of responsibilities concerning food safety and animal welfare among the responsible authorities at national, regional and local levels. Challenges in this regard include:

- The enforcement of newly adopted food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary standards is incomplete due to the weaknesses in enforcement capacity and insufficient administrative capacity to carry out the necessary inspection and control;
- Further developing the capacity to inspect establishments and control compliance with EU standards is needed in the framework of the implementation of the IPARD II programme;
- Ensuring that the introduction of new food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary standards allows the necessary time for private operators to adopt and meet the standards and that the necessary inspection and control capacity is in place to ensure efficient enforcement.
- Enforcing the legislation concerning animal waste collection and management and establishing the required infrastructure and operation systems are essential.

Animal disease control programmes in Albania have progressively become de-linked from a risk-based approach. Notional control measures have been applied on a large scale in the absence of data on the prevalence or incidence of the diseases. The cumulative result of these conditions is that in Albania reliable information on animal diseases is not available. A field protocol to ensure accurate and timely reporting of all relevant animal disease data and incorporate laboratory data in the RUDA database and monthly reports will be developed.

An important element in the Ministry's approach to reform the food safety system will be integrated capacity building for emergency response and disease control measures. This initiative will address current constraints, especially the limited field resources, lack of adequate means of transport, and the current low level of technical capacity. The SVS will take the lead to develop protocols for emergency management and interagency cooperation and communication, and will conduct simulation exercises to consolidate the reformed organisational structures. In this context, attention will be paid to the improvement of biosecurity and waste management, which are serious concerns that have to be addressed.

The relatively large number of small farms (more than 300,000) and food establishments (more than 20,000) requires the adoption of an integrated approach able to assure a high level of food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health through planning and implementation of coherent measures along the entire food chain. Therefore, establishing the administrative structure able ensure higher food safety standards for consumers is a real challenge.

The main stakeholders in the process will be the government represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration with its agencies such as the National Food Authority, Agriculture and Rural Development Agency (IPARD Paying Agency), the Ministry of Health, the Ministry

of Environment, Local Government Units; producers represented by farmers and food processing operators and consumers.

The major challenge in food safety is that it is a large and complex field that includes numerous disciplines and stakeholders. In Albania, stakeholder groups are generally not well organised: in particular, food producers are not supported by effective producer organisations; agricultural and food industry suppliers do not have strong representation; in addition, food business operators are only loosely associated – they represent an important but weak lobby for the development of the industry. As a consequence of these factors, the best organised stakeholder groups are the most powerful, *i.e.* the regulatory authorities, currently represented by the National Food Authority and the veterinary service. Consumers' interests are only poorly represented by the small, underfunded associations.

The *Agriculture and Rural Development Agency (IPARD Paying Agency)* is in charge of publicity, selection of projects, authorisation, control and accounting of commitments and payments and execution of payments, debt management and internal audit. The agency is responsible for the implementation of the IPARD II programme in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and some of the agency's functions and responsibilities impinge on the food safety system and activities.

The agency selects projects to be implemented in accordance with the criteria and procedures applicable to the IPARD II programme and complying with the relevant Union and National rules. The agency makes calls for grant applications and publicises terms and conditions for eligibility, upon consultation with the MA, some of which could be linked to the promotion of improved food safety.

Other stakeholders linked with veterinary and food safety sectors include:

- (i) The Albanian Agribusiness Council (which is composed by around 300 interest groups involved in different sectors related to agriculture);
- (ii) National livestock farmers organisations, local livestock farmers organisations, Poultry breeders association (Durrës); ADAMA (Albanian dairy and meat association); LEAA (Livestock Entrepreneurs Association of Albania); Bee-keepers association (Tirana); Taranteze breeders (Korçë); Jersey breeders (Shkoder); Norway breeders (Elbasan); Simmental breeders (Lushnjë);
- (iii) Other stakeholder organisations Consumer protection office, Consumer organisations National consumer association.

However, coordination, collaboration and communication among the NFA, central SVS, regional SVS, RADs, FSVI, MoI-MVs and MoH is generally lacking and this critically impacts the 'farm to fork' continuum for food safety, control of zoonosis and effective implementation of animal health programmes. Furthermore, food safety standards need to be improved and aligned to EU requirements.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

IPA II assistance will support Albania in developing an efficient, sustainable and innovative agro-food sector which is competitive on the EU market and offers employment, economic inclusion and quality of life for the rural population in particular the large share of marginalised women and girls working in agriculture. Application of environmental and food safety standards in the entire agro-food chain will improve especially regarding meat and dairy production as well as products for export.

This action intends to improve the institutional and organisational framework of the whole system including food safety, animal health and plant health by defining the role and responsibility of each institution in the whole food chain while establishing coordination mechanisms to increase their synergy and efficiency.

Benefits to producers will flow only after the institutional and administrative structure of government agencies is properly consolidated. Therefore, producers will capture benefits on a mid or long run through higher sales in the domestic market due to increased confidence of consumer on the safety of product or exports due to compliance with EU standards. Increased compliance will also positively impact on produce and product certification, and resulting export opportunities.

Consumers can be considered the group that will benefit the most from the changes. Higher safe food means less lost days due to illness and caring for sick dependants, less expenditure on treatment and medicines. As

consumers are also part of the labour force, increased productivity can be expected to positively reflect on growth rates of the national economy.

The support to the sector aims to provide assistance on three main priorities:

Priority 1 – Organisational reform and human resources.

Policy objectives cannot be achieved without the establishment of an adequately staffed, motivated and skilled administration that is no longer subject of unfair dismissals favouritism or dissuasion. Improving of public administration shall be achieved when a number of conditions fully reflected in institutional practices as outlined in the SIGMA Assessment Report for Albania (2014) have been achieved and respected.

Achieving policy objectives as defined in the Inter-sectorial Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2014-2020 requires well-organised and properly staffed structures with a clear definition of profiles, functions, tasks and responsibilities in accordance with the workload matrix.

Therefore, assistance to support the setting up and functioning of a modern administration that is fit for purpose is at present the highest priority of the action in light of the past experiences and associated performances of the administration in the concerned sectors. Assistance will be linked to the ongoing human resources management reforms that are being implemented in the framework of the public administration reform strategy 2015-20 and supported through ongoing EU assistance (IPA 2015 PAR sector budget support).

Priority 2 –Public awareness and communication

Enforcing legislation by official control bodies should be accompanied by increasing the awareness of the general public on the food they consume. It is imperative that consumers receive clear, unambiguous information on the content and origin of food enabling them to make informed choices.

Increased public awareness will exert pressure on businesses to produce safe and quality food but also on the administration to carry out its tasks. Through this approach, the attitudes can be shifted: coercive measures should be complemented by increased awareness and capacity of producers to produce safer food.

Furthermore, increasing the role of consumers and consumer organisations is a pre-requisite for challenging policy makers and the industry to effectively take into account consumer protection. The important role the civil society should play in the socio-economic development of the country has been outlined in several strategic documents. As stated in the Inter-sectorial strategy on the reform for the public administration 2015-2020 "All policies, inter-sectorial strategies, legal acts and regulations must be consulted extensively with all stakeholders and civil society and be published in the web pages of relevant institutions".

The action will therefore aim at raising public awareness on the importance of safe and high-quality food products and ensuring that consumers are adequately informed about their choices, roles and responsibilities.

Priority 3 – Acquis adoption and policy implementation capacity

The inter-sectorial strategy for agriculture and rural development 2014-2020 was endorsed by the government in October 2014. The ministry is establishing a policy unit with the assistance of Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO). The project should assist the ministry establish clear indicators on the status of the sector and progress. The Ministry should monitor the implementation of policy actions including the enforcement of legislation, according to the corresponding strategy or action plans.

In this context, the Action will aim at endorsing the necessary legal and institutional framework, as well as designing and implementing the required policy measures to ensure progress toward strategic objectives in the field of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary standards.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The IPA II Indicative Strategy Paper² for Albania points out that the country is still challenged by low productivity of agriculture and underdeveloped rural areas. Farmers and agri-business operators are not yet

² http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20140919-csp-albania.pdf

sufficiently prepared to manage the opportunities and challenges originating from the integration in EU agricultural markets and policies.

Advisory and extension services are weak and do not yet respond to the specific needs of women and men working in agriculture; agriculture-related information systems are not well developed (land register, functional farm and animal registers). Further harmonisation with EU legislation in order to optimise the access to EU market opportunities is not yet ensured with respect to food safety, veterinary, and other related areas.

Neither the public nor producers have adequate knowledge of the environmental and food safety standards in farming and primary food processing. Adherence to environmental standards and food safety standards remains low.

The 2015 Albania report on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary states that country has some level of preparation in food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy. No steps have been taken to improve the legal and institutional framework for the food safety system by establishing responsibilities and cooperation between implementing bodies. The veterinary service is fragmented, with unclear procedures, and limited human and financial resources. On phytosanitary policy, administrative and technical capacity remains limited". The reform in the sector is strongly related to the public administration reforms in respect of enhancing professional merit based recruitment.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

In recent years, the Ministry has coordinated the activities of a number of significant projects in the food safety field.

- IPA 2009 project ***“The Cross-Cutting Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development”*** project (€450 000) was implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. The project drafted a new Cross-Cutting Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development for the period 2014 to 2020, with an action plan to implement IPARD measures, and a plan for the approximation of legislation in the agricultural fields with the *EU acquis*.
- IPA 2010 project ***“Rehabilitation of NFA Regional offices and laboratories”*** project (€5.2 million, including €0.7 million from the Government of Albania [GoA]): this project was completed in the first quarter of 2014. The purpose of this project is to improve the efficiency of the food safety system through improved regional laboratories and offices network of National Food Authority.
- IPA 2010 project ***“Construction of Central Veterinary Laboratory in FSVI”*** project (€1.4 million) has provided the Central Veterinary Laboratory at the Food Safety and Veterinary Institute in accordance with EU veterinary and animal health standards.
- IPA 2011 ***“Support to Agriculture and Rural Development, IPARD like”*** project (€20.75 million) implemented by GIZ. In line with the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD), the project aims to provide grants for farmers and agro-businesses, build the capacity of the Managing Authority and Paying Agency, and prepare the extension service to distribute information and advice to farmers and agro-businesses for IPARD measures.
- The IPA 2012 project ***“Improving consumer protection against zoonotic diseases – II phase”*** (4.9 million including € 0.4 million from Albanian Government co-financing) is a follow-up of the IPA 2008 project "PAZA-1" including reform in the veterinary sector, capacity building with regard disease surveillance and laboratory diagnostics on zoonotic diseases, monitoring of rabies vaccination. The overall objective is to increase livestock health and productivity and improved protection of public health in Albania in line with the EU regulations for the control and monitoring of zoonotic agents.
- IPA 2013 foresees the support to laboratory system through the project ***“Strengthening food safety laboratories in Albania”*** (€ 4.4 million, including € 0.4 million from Albanian Government co-financing) will the purpose to increase the role of laboratory system toward improved levels of food safety throughout the whole food chain.

The efficiency of EU and other donor assistance has been hampered by various factors:

- The sector-specific financial assistance has not always sufficiently taken into consideration the horizontal public administration reform (PAR) agenda,
- Due to politicisation of administration, frequent turnover of administrative staff especially at management level,
- Insufficient number of technical staff to absorb and adopt the input provided by the technical assistance,
- Budgetary constraints preventing the collection and entry of data for updating of relevant information systems in the sector,
- Incomplete regulatory framework regarding the tasks and responsibilities of bodies dealing with food safety issues bringing about lack of intra-institutional cooperation,
- Changing of priorities following political changes,
- Lack of understanding of the principles of food safety chain "from stable to table" or "one health" resulting in a lack of integration of different elements, lack of allocation and sharing of resources, no cooperation between stakeholder groups, resulting in no synergy,
- The assistance has not adequately recognised the prominent role that public awareness has in the improving the performance of public administration and food business operators,
- Lack of consistent gender mainstreaming into programme and budgetary plans.

The proposed action should be based on three main lessons:

1. The action should start when there is a clear commitment from the government to fulfil the main conditions for implementation as assessed and agreed by the EC.
2. Horizontal PAR elements will need to be better addressed as follows: *Acquis* alignment and policy development will need to promote an inclusive and evidence-based approach, as this is a key in ensuring implementation and enforcement of new policies and legislation. Legislative development, where relevant, will need to ensure compliance with the new Code of Administrative Procedures rather than propose special administrative procedures, as they risk undermining transparency, predictability and legal certainty in decision-making. Where activities support the establishment of new administrative structures such as agencies, special attention will need to be paid to establishing appropriate accountability lines between the new structures and responsible parent institutions. Finally, training and capacity-building activities in the sector will need to be coordinated with the institution that is centrally responsible for human resources management and professional development of civil servants in order to ensure sustainability of training and capacity-building activities.
3. The support should aim toward a more holistic approach considering the role and interaction among all the actors in the food chain i.e. producers – processors – traders – consumers – government. For example, the assistance so far has targeted the EU integration process focusing on the government capacity in enforcing the legislation whilst neglecting the other side of the coin, i.e. not supporting (or empowering) producers and consumers. Among these actors/stakeholders, the characteristics, roles and needs of particular stakeholder groups need to be analysed and taken into consideration including their gender perspective.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To contribute to an increased protection of human, animal and plant health at every stage of the food production process, through the establishment of institutional and administrative capacities in line with the overall public administration reform agenda.	Total investment generated via IPA II in the agri-food sector and rural development (EUR) Number of citizens affected by food borne diseases, health status of animals and plants	IPA Monitoring Committee report, DG AGRI Ministry of Health report	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>1- To assist the restructuring of the relevant administrative structures and ensure the building of the appropriate capacities to implement policy measures and achieve strategic objectives in the sector in line with general public administration reform efforts and the EU membership requirements.</p> <p>2- To raise public awareness ensuring that consumers are adequately informed about their choices, roles and responsibilities, and increasingly demanding safe and high-quality food products</p> <p>3- To help develop the necessary legal and institutional framework and design and to help implement the required policy measures to ensure the progress toward strategic objectives in the field of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary standards.</p>	<p>Number of staff of the food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary services in place in accordance with the organigramme</p> <p>Number of civil actions taken by consumers and their organisations</p> <p>Number of national legislation in the field of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary standards aligned with the acquis</p>	<p>HR reports Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration, DOPA</p> <p>Media reports</p> <p>Official Journal, EC Albania Report</p>	<p>Government is committed to establish consolidated structures covering issues related to food safety veterinary and plant protection.</p> <p>Appropriate number of staff is assigned in accordance with policy objectives</p> <p>Legislation regarding the right and role of civil society and consumers is in place</p>
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Result 1.1 – The skills of a reorganised and adequately staffed administration established in line with the public administration reform agenda have been increased.	Number of staff for food safety, phytosanitary and veterinary services recruited in line with civil service law	DOPA report	Government is committed to establish consolidated structures covering issues

<p>Result 1.2 - The administrative capacity to adopt, integrate and implement the EU acquis and standards in the food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary fields is ensured, in an inclusive and evidence-based manner</p>	<p>Number of staff for food safety, phytosanitary and veterinary services trained with support from EU assistance</p>	<p>Technical assistance report</p>	<p>related to food safety veterinary and plant protection</p>
<p>Result 2.1 – Awareness of consumers and active participation consumer-related organisations are improved in policy and legislative development</p> <p>Result 2.2 - The safety and quality of marketed food is improved due notably to the increased role of consumers</p>	<p>Number of awareness raising activities for food safety launched supported by EU assistance</p> <p>Number of citizens' complaints to National Food Authority recorded for inspection</p>	<p>Technical assistance report</p> <p>National Food Authority reports/records</p>	<p>Legislation regarding the right and role of civil society and consumers is in place</p>
<p>Result 3.1 – The legal and institutional framework related to the EU acquis for food safety and veterinary and phytosanitary standards is in place</p> <p>Result 3.2 – Appropriate EU acquis and standards related policy measures are designed and efficiently implemented and monitored, in consultation with stakeholders and civil society</p>	<p>Number of legislative alignment with EU acquis for food safety and phytosanitary and veterinary standard supported by EU assistance</p> <p>Number of legislations consulted with stakeholders and civil society</p>	<p>Technical assistance report</p> <p>Government input to EC Annual report on recorded opinions from stakeholders and civil society</p>	<p>Appropriate number of staff is assigned in accordance with policy objectives</p>

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Activities related to result 1.1 – The skills of a reorganised and adequately staffed administration established in line with the public administration reform agenda have been increased

Activity 1.1.1 – Assist the beneficiary to carry out the selection of employees in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Law of 2013 and coordinate with the Department of Public Administration for their recruitment.

The Beneficiary shall be assisted to identify and propose for recruitment the most appropriate job profiles required to implement the action plans in line with outlined strategy timelines.

Activity 1.1.2 - Support the preparation of a training programme to encourage personal and professional development of the employee, including into the programme gender sensitisation and training module on basic gender skills.

Training programmes shall be specifically tailored for groups of employees in line with their functions and responsibility.

Activities related to result 1.2 - The administrative capacity to adopt, integrate and implement the EU acquis and standards in the food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary fields is ensured, in an inclusive and evidence-based manner

Activity 1.2.1- Carry out a functional analysis of institutions involved in food safety/quality and advise on the organisational structure of the ministry and related agencies in line with policy objectives while ensuring appropriate lines of accountability between them.

The organisational structure of food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary may require rearrangements regarding the role, tasks, responsibility, communication and information between various departments and agencies in line with legislation in force, strategic duties and allocated budget.

Activity 1.2.2 - Assist the integration or updating of information tools to provide basic data required to prepare operational plans, monitoring strategies etc.

Several information tools such as RUDA (animal health database) or AKUNET (food business operators' database) have been established with the assistance of IPA programmes. Beside serving as a source of information (animal health or food hygiene), preparation of inspection plans (food businesses), monitoring of milk and residues, these tools will be considered with regard to their usefulness regarding food traceability and crisis management.

Activity 1.2.3 – Assist the beneficiary to carry out the selection of employees in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Law of 2013 and equal opportunities legislation coordinating with the Department of Public Administration for their recruitment.

The Beneficiary shall be assisted to identify and propose for recruitment the most appropriate job profiles required to implement the action plans in line with outlined strategy timelines.

Activity 1.2.4 - Support the preparation of a training programme to encourage personal and professional development of the employee, including into the programme gender sensitisation and training module on basic gender skills.

Training programmes shall be specifically tailored for groups of employees in line with their functions and responsibility.

Activities related to result 2.1- Awareness of consumers and active participation consumer-related organisations are improved in policy and legislative development.

Activity 2.1.1- Assist the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration to establish a communication programme to inform stakeholders, specifically: food business operators, schoolchildren, media and general consumers, raising their awareness on their roles along the food chain.

Enforcing of rules is only one side to the improving of food safety but is not enough without active participation of other stakeholders. However, the knowledge of these stakeholders on food safety issues from

the farm (animal health and production) to slaughterhouses (animal welfare) and to processing plants or markets (hygiene of establishments) is very weak. As a result, the response is also weak. The setting up of communication capacity within the ministry and related agencies is considered an important step toward increasing the awareness of stakeholders in the field.

Activity 2.1.2 - Assist stakeholders and civil society to get organised and be able to provide constructive input in public consultation processes concerning relevant policy and legislative proposals.

As many stakeholders receive and react to problems often in an individual way, raising the problem and asking for its solving as a group is considered of prime importance especially in the field of food safety. The action may assist interest groups in developing their action platform.

Activity 2.1.3 – Assist the setting up of capacity for facilitating access, for both men and women (rural and urban) to information about legislation in the field, public consultations, food production and consumption related to safety, rules for marketing of food.

Webpages of the ministry and related agencies will be checked about the quality and inclusiveness of information these deliver to stakeholders and improvements will be proposed and carried out. Running capacity and procedures will be considered too.

Activity 2.1.4 - Engage with teaching institutions to improve undergraduate and technical curricula in concerned fields and for continuing professional development, and vocational qualifications for employees and businesses in the sector

General education on food safety issues will ensure the sustainability and quality of the stakeholders and civil society not only regarding the awareness but also role in decision making.

Activities related to result 2.2 - The safety and quality of the marketed food is improved due notably to the increased role of consumers

Activity 2.2.1 - Support the adoption of tools to inform food businesses on the national regulations regarding food safety, animal and plant health and ensure that they are in place.

Refer to activity 2.1.3

Activity 2.2.2 - Soliciting more comprehensive information and increased consumer influence on decision making in the field of food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary.

Assistance should aim to improve the capacity and skills of ministry staff to deliver comprehensive and qualitative information to Civil Society and interests groups to allow these provide a more useful opinion on decision making process.

Activity 2.2.3 – Support the administrative structure in increasing the coverage and effectiveness of food quality controls (and put in place adequate sanctions).

Capacity to control on adulterated (noncompliance with health or safety standards) or counterfeited (deliberate and intentional substitution, addition, tampering, or misrepresentation of food, food ingredients, or food packaging; or false or misleading statements made about a product, for economic gain) food is weak. Staff will be trained on the procedures to inspect and verify these products during production, processing and marketing.

Activities related to result 3.1- The legal and institutional framework related to the EU acquis for food safety and veterinary and phytosanitary standards is in place.

Activity 3.1.1 – Assist the ministry in transposing, drafting and updating the national legislation with the acquis and develop sectoral policy in an inclusive and evidence-based manner

The activity will identify the timeline and the costs needed for Albania to adopt or come closer to the EU standards in the fields of food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary. A legislation transposition plan should come along with the appointment of the necessary staff for the transposition, development, updating and communication on legislation.

Activities related to result 3.2- Appropriate EU acquis and standards related policy measures are designed and efficiently implemented and monitored, in consultation with stakeholders and civil society.

Activity 3.2.1 - Support capacity to design policies or adopt legislation based on impact assessment tools of reform measures, including the gender-specific impact on particular stakeholder groups where relevant.

Such capacity will require cooperation with relevant units in improving statistical data or using sufficient information from specific surveys in order to design appropriate policies.

Activity 3.2.2 - Assist the relevant units in the ministry in establishing clear monitoring indicators for policy measures and monitoring the progress towards achieving objectives as foreseen in the relevant strategic documents.

Activity 3.2.3 – Assist in the process of adjusting policy changes in line with developments in the sector including consultation process with stakeholders and civil society.

Specific policy measures could be related to taxes, subsidies, trade, food hygiene etc. are often subject of changes following impact assessments in the sector. In general, there is no understanding about the economic impact of a specific policy over various layers of the society such as e.g. consumers. Staff with appropriate education will benefit on-job training to work on policies or legislation as appropriate.

RISKS

Proper functioning of relevant services is hampered by overlapping responsibilities and by the lack of internal coordination and communication, properly qualified staff and financial resources. A comprehensive roadmap clarifying the legal, institutional and administrative framework needs to be adopted.

The experience so far has demonstrated that any type of assistance will remain isolated and will have a negligible impact in the absence of an administrative structure capable of carrying out functions and tasks as required in the relevant legislation. Therefore, implementing an action under similar conditions implies high risk at inception and reduced potential to improve performance.

- Lack of a comprehensive legal and institutional reform regarding the whole food safety system.

Various pieces of national legislation including the Food Law of 2008, Veterinary service Law of 2011 should be revised in line with recent development in EU legislation and also toward inter-sectorial strategies for Agriculture and Rural Development 2014-2020 and the one for Decentralization and Local Government (2015-2020) to avoid institutional problems outlined in the Commission Reports for Albania.

- Lack of sufficient budget allocated by the government to cover the operational costs of the sector and other forms of support

The necessary budget to be planned under the Mid-Term Budget Programme 2016-2018 should consider the operational costs of and adequately staffed public administration but also any support as foreseen under various policy instruments

- Lack of sufficient and professional staff to design, implement and monitor developments in legislation and strategy.

The presence of professional and motivated staff is crucial for the implementation of the strategy and especially for the designing of appropriate policy measures. In addition, the number of staff should be sufficient to cover for planned functions and tasks.

- Non-functional information systems related to farm and livestock.

Functioning of these systems require not only staffing and training of relevant units that have been subject of deep turnover, but also allocation of necessary budget resources for the registration of farms and livestock. Population and agriculture census carried in 2012 have not been used to consolidate the farm register that is a pre-requisite if food traceability principles are to be adopted

- Inclusive and evidence based approach to policy and legislative development is not properly applied due to lack of capacities, time pressure to adopt legislation or unwillingness of administration to engage into stakeholder consultations at the right time of the process.

This risk can be mitigated by ensuring appropriate internal planning and capacity building on impact assessment (fiscal, regulatory) methods and through awareness-raising on importance of 'better regulation' both internally and externally.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The identified conditions below need to be taken into account and be fulfilled to ensure the efficient implementation of the action. The Commission retains the right to recover IPA funds later if objectives of the action are not achieved due to missing fulfillment of the following conditions:

- The reform covering food safety and veterinary is supported by the establishment of sustainable administrative structures with staff recruited on merit-basis with adequate competences for their jobs. The activities under this action are expected to contribute to the horizontal PAR agenda and support Albania meeting the relevant Principles of Public Administration. Specifically, activities under this action will need to advocate inclusive and evidence based policy and legislative development on food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary issues. Where applicable, legislative development will also need to ensure compliance with the new Code of Administrative Procedures, and it will avoid promoting special administrative procedures, which risk undermining transparency, predictability and legal certainty in decision-making. Where activities support the establishment of new administrative structures such as agencies, special attention will need to be paid to establishing appropriate accountability lines between the new structures and responsible parent institutions. Finally, capacity building, training and human resources management activities under this action will need to be coordinated with the central institution responsible for coordination of human resources and professional development in order to ensure sustainability of training and capacity-building activities.
- Animal registration and movement control and food quality information systems are functional and effective.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The main beneficiaries of the action are:

1. Government institutions and agencies (Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration, National Food Authority, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment, Local Government Units),
2. Producers and processors including intermediate activities such as storage and transport
3. Consumers and their associations

The stakeholders will be part either of working groups or the Steering Committee to be set up to coordinate the implementation of this action.

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

Grant – Call for proposal: *Support to food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary standards*

- a) Objectives and foreseen results: as above
- b) The essential eligibility criteria:
Be a competent Government Department, Public body, or relevant mandated body of a Government Department or public body authority of a European Union Member State in the fields related to this

action and be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their partners, if any, not acting as an intermediary.

- c) The essential selection criterion is the operational capacity of the applicant.
- d) The essential award criteria are relevance, effectiveness and feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.
- e) Maximum rate of EU co-financing:

The maximum possible rate of EU financing will be 100% of the total cost of the action. Full financing of the action is essential for the action to be carried out because it is in the interest of the Union to be the sole donor so as to better ensure EU visibility, and to allow for participation by all interested Member States in the call for proposals.

- f) Indicative amount of the call: EUR 5,000,000
- g) Indicative date for launch of the call for proposals: Q2 2017

The action will assist in reforming the legal, institutional and administrative framework of the whole food safety system and monitoring the progress toward future EU accession as a whole rather than on separate components. It is expected that it will focus more on organisational processes rather than on pure technical content. Through cooperation with MS agencies in the field, the action will provide institutional experience, and it will use objectively verifiable means to monitor the beneficiary's achievement of reform targets.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

A coherent monitoring and evaluating system (M&E) will be established in order to ensure an efficient and effective use of the Ministry for Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration (MARDWA) and donors funds ensuring reliable information about outputs, results and impacts of various interventions of ISARD. This system is established according to the Order of the Prime Minister No. 139, date 1.7.2010 on "The implementation of the monitoring process of sectoral and inter-sectoral strategies".

MARDWA applies the Matrix of Results Evaluation (MRE) system as an instrument of monitoring sectoral and inter-sectoral strategies in the context of Integrated Planning System.

Using the MRE system, MARDWA prepares planning and monitoring tables with SMART³ indicators based on the objectives of the strategy supported by ministerial budget programs. MARDWA prepares planning tables, within June every year, before preparing the annual budget. It fills the monitoring tables before June every year, before framing the priority policies.

Managing budget programme team/groups of MARDWA, which are the structures responsible for preparing Matrix of Results Evaluation.

The General Secretary of MARDWA coordinates the preparation of MRE and upon the written approval of the minister includes it into Strategic Planning and Development Programmes at Prime Minister's Office.

The indicators for monitoring and evaluation selected for monitoring the inter-sectoral strategy and are used for System of information gathering and reporting for M&E purposes. They include:

Baseline indicators - provide information about essential topics on the situation in Albania for all the sectors of Agricultural, economical and rural development in strategy of inter sector development. They have been used for the analysis of the sectors and the rural areas and for the definition of the strategy objectives.

Financial indicators - measure absorption of the funds allocated to the implementation of the various interventions and includes for example data on requests from potential beneficiaries for support under rural development measures as well as under other interventions.

³ SMART = Specific, measurable, accurate, relevant and timely

Output indicators - measure outputs of activities implemented. For monitoring and reporting, information will be collected on relevant indicators depending on the type of intervention.

Result indicators - measure the direct and immediate effects of the interventions for example on access to irrigation and drainage, compliance with Community standards and improvement of performance of the supported agricultural holdings and enterprises.

Impact indicators - focus on effects of the different sectoral strategies on agricultural and rural development, among others on the modernization of the agro-food sector and its compliance with Community Standards.

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 for evaluations. In addition, the Action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures set in the Financing Agreement.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline (2010)	Target 2020	Final Target (year)	Source of information
Total investment generated via IPA II in the agri-food sector and rural development (EUR)	0	104 million	N/A	IPA Monitoring Committee report, DG AGRI
Number of citizens affected by food borne diseases, health status of animals and plants	3240 cases i.e. 0.1% of the population affected by severe cases (2014)	Reduction by at least 30%	Reduction by at least 30%	Public health report
Number of staff of the food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary services in place in accordance with the organigramme FS: food safety PH: phytosanitary VET: veterinary	FS: 10 PH: 3 VET: 5 (2010)	36	N/A	HR reports Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration, DOPA
Number of civil actions taken by consumers and their organisations	2	5	10	Media reports
Number of national legislation in the field of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary standards aligned with the acquis FS: food safety PH: phytosanitary VET: veterinary	FS: 5 PH: 3 VET: 1 (2010)	FS:12 PH:14 VET: 8	FS: 12 PH: 14 VET: 8 (2020)	Official Journal, EC Annual report
Number of staff for food safety, phytosanitary and veterinary services recruited in line with civil service law	0	18	N/A	DOPA report

Number of staff for food safety, phytosanitary and veterinary services trained with support from EU assistance	0	36	N/A	Technical assistance report
Number of awareness raising activities for food safety launched with support from EU assistance	0	4	N/A	Technical assistance report
Number of citizens' complaints to National Food Authority recorded for inspection	0	10	N/A	National Food Authority records/reports
Number of legislative alignment with the acquis for food safety, phytosanitary and veterinary standard prepared with support by EU assistance	0	10	N/A	Technical assistance reports
Number of legislation consulted with stakeholders and civil society FS: food safety PH: phytosanitary VET: veterinary	0	FS:12 PH:14 VET: 8	FS: 12 PH: 14 VET: 8 (2020)	Government input to EC Annual report on recorded opinions from stakeholders and civil society

5. SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

The Intersectoral strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2014-2020 points to full harmonisation with EU policies and regulatory requirements as a pre-condition for EU Membership. The process of approximation of national legislation and policy instruments to the EU Acquis and further development of the institutions for its enforcement shall be the main priority for the period 2014-2020. The objective is to gradually prepare the agro-food sectors and rural areas for EU Membership by among the others:

- Adapt national agricultural and rural development policies to the CAP by gradually introducing measures and actions in line with the CAP and IPARD measures;
- Gradually introduce EU requirements for the regulation of markets, health and hygiene standards, environmental protection and climate mitigation;
- Develop institutional capacity simultaneously with the introduction of new regulatory requirements to ensure full enforcement and compliance with the legal requirements in force.

A detailed action plan for *food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary issues* will be adopted, based on the defined strategic objectives for the period 2014-2020. The action plan will include short and medium term priorities in order to achieve gradual alignment and to reach full harmonisation, including enforcement capacity, by the end of 2020 and more specifically:

- **In the short term:** identifying the legislation and developing the inspection and enforcement capacity specifically needed for the implementation of the IPARD Programme, including the capacity to assess and classify food processing establishments eligible for IPARD in accordance with EU requirements.
- **In the medium term:** implementing the food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary strategic objectives in accordance with the priorities established in the Action Plan.

MARDWA has embarked in a significant institutional reform with regard the restructuring of food safety and veterinary systems reflecting the comments provided in the reports of various institutions such as the European Commission, Office International des Epizooties (OIE) etc.

Such reform is expected to eliminate the institutional and administrative problems the system has faced so far, establish the basis for improving of regulatory framework and enforcing the transposed EU standards.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Women make up around 57 percent of the rural labour force (LFS, 2014). The majority of women (87%) working in agriculture do so as informal and unpaid family workers. Furthermore, there is a large difference between men and women in terms of off-farm labour in the rural areas indicating a lack of economic opportunities for women, continuously trapping them in unpaid labour. Women's largely informal status in agriculture reduces their access to productive resources and services, since general training and services, including agricultural extension, tend not to target women. The economic potential of a significant stakeholder group of women in agriculture remains untapped, seriously constraining Albania's agricultural production and productivity. Concomitantly, the lack of economic opportunities further limits social development and economic inclusion of the rural population.

Particular attention will be paid to producers in general, and small producers in particular, with a specific focus on informal agricultural workers the majority of which are women. Interventions will be based on developing the capacity of involved institutions to (i) reflect the essential role of women in farming, as producers, and in the rural economy in Albania in planning and programming, (ii) develop gender indicators and coherently use, monitor and analyse sex-disaggregated and gender data; and (iii) undertake comprehensive analysis of the gender-specific obstacles women face in agro-food systems, effective diversification and upscaling of value chains. Special attention will be paid to professionalising women engaging in the sector through enabling access to relevant training including on skills to manage, diversify and expand production in line with new regulations, standards and norms, and enabling access to financial products and support programmes (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2013, point 31).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Ensuring equal access to resources for men and women implies that agro-food systems and chains will not remain a men's domain at the expense of women's productive activities. Involving women in small-scale agricultural units including production or processing of local food will contribute to the generation of new jobs in rural communities.

Therefore, ensuring equal access to information along with education and training would empower women not only in the economy of rural society but also ensure a higher participation in bodies responsible for food safety and quality standards. Initiatives to be promoted include consultations with women producer groups regarding major policy changes and their implications on production especially in the field of food safety systems while ensuring (rural) women's equal and informed participation in bodies responsible for food safety, quality standards and respective legislation.

Targeted action to women, mainly in the rural areas, on food safety issues will be carried out to improve their understanding and technical knowledge, and will thereby contribute to a better quality of food on the local market.

On the side of end-consumers, awareness raising campaigns need to consider the essential role of women as significant market segment (purchasers of food items) and as the main food processors within the family, and the immediate impact food quality and safety have on wellbeing and health as well as women's burden of caring for sick family members and dependants.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Positive impact is expected for those consumers belonging to health vulnerable groups of the society such as children, pregnant women, elderly and people with weakened immune systems, as well as minorities living in unhealthy environments. These groups are not only at increased risk of contracting a foodborne illness, but they are also more likely to have chronic diseases, undergo hospitalization or have more severe consequences. Setting up or mobilising adequate capacities to disseminate information to these groups regarding the content and quality of food as read by labels or handling of food shall be beneficial to these groups.

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

Food safety is ensured through the implementation of adequate control measures at every step along the food chain, i.e. from farm to fork. To ensure consumers play their role, it is important they are aware of the hazards associated with food and the relevant control measures. Education of consumers is therefore essential and civil society organisations have an important role to play in raising awareness among citizens and educating producers.

Currently, consumers' rights and interests are only poorly represented by a few small and under-funded associations. Specific support measures for mobilisation and professionalisation are required in order to strengthen their role, voice, and engagement in dialogue, monitoring and reform.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

There is a lack of awareness among food production and processing operators concerning environmental pollution and its impact on food produced under these conditions. Uncontrolled use of chemicals and lack of official controls have caused the placing in the market of food with amounts of contaminants above the allowed limits or pollution of waters.

It is part of the education and information to producers on the use of chemicals in agriculture and marketing of food. Policies that encourage the production of ecological food need to be developed.

Waste management remains a serious concern due to improper disposal of animal carcasses, deceased animals, materials in contact with pathogens and agricultural chemicals with negative impact not only on environment but also human health.

The issue of climate change on food safety is an emerging concern. Climate change indeed alters the incidence of foodborne illness and/or the ability of pathogens to cause illness. Changes in the nature, level and transmission of various chemicals, contaminants and toxins affect the safety of food. Climate change affects agricultural practices. Further adaptation measures to increase resilience to adverse these effects should be foreseen.

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 3,5 million EUR indicatively (SO2 and 3 mainly).

7. SUSTAINABILITY

The following main conditions are needed to ensure sustainability of the IPA II assistance:

- The administrative structure of the food safety system is set up based on the strategic objectives in line with the PAR principles, ensuring appropriate accountability lines that avoid any further fragmentation, and are able to retain staff and minimise turnover,
- The government commits to inclusive and evidence based policy and legislative development, and allocates – on the basis of realistic impact assessments and cost calculations – in the Medium Term Budgetary Plan and annual budgets the necessary administrative and operational resources needed for implementation and enforcement of the overall system,
- Staff is motivated and willing to learn and cooperate with the action,
- A permanent system for monitoring food quality, enforcing quality standards, and sanctioning non-complying producers and markets is in place.

8. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Enforcing legislation will not be effective through this action if the awareness of the general public on the food they consume is not increased correspondingly. Therefore a priority of the action is devoted to ensure that consumers receive clear, unambiguous information on the content and origin of food enabling them to make informed choices.

Appropriate information will be directed to businesses to produce safe and quality food but also on the administration to carry out its tasks. Through this approach, the attitudes can be shifted: coercive measures should be complemented by increased awareness and capacity of producers to produce safer food. Best practices of the food producers and transformers in this field will be promoted and disseminated, and other national experiences will be selected as models for relevant food safety campaigns.

A specific support will be provided to communication and information of civil society and to the publicity of policies, inter-sectorial strategies, legal acts and regulations in the web pages of relevant institutions.

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 amounts allocated to the Action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the Action has received funding from the EU in line with the 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. 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.