



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

MULTI-COUNTRY

EU support to Regional programme on culture and creativity in the Western Balkans

Action summary

In line with the Western Balkans Strategy, this action will promote intercultural dialogue and enhance the socio-economic impact of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans. Through a multi-sectorial approach targeting public authorities, the private sector and civil society organisations in culture, this action will (1) improve the performance of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans; (2) strengthen the cultural cooperation within and with the Western Balkans and (3) enhance inclusive cultural heritage for local development. The ultimate beneficiaries will be citizens in the Western Balkans.

Action Identification			
Action Programme Title	IPA II Multi-country Programme 2020 – part 2		
Action Title	EU support to Regional programme on culture and creativity in the Western Balkans		
Action ID	IPA 2020/NEAR>EAC.03/MC/Culture and Creativity		
Sector Information			
IPA II Sector	9. Regional and territorial cooperation		
DAC Sector	15220 – Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution		
Budget			
Total cost	EUR 8 million		
EU contribution	EUR 8 million		
Budget line(s)	22.020401- Multi-country programmes, regional integration and territorial		
Management and Implementation			
Method of implementation	Indirect management		
<i>Indirect management:</i>	International organisation/s and/or EU Member State agency/ies		
Entrusted entity			
Implementation responsibilities	Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (co-delegated by Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations)		
Location			
Zone benefiting from the action	Western Balkans (Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, and Republic of Serbia)		
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A		
Timeline			
Final date for contracting including the conclusion of contribution/delegation agreements	At the latest by 31 December 2021		
Final date for operational implementation	72 months from the adoption of the Financing Decision		
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)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<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

As recalled in the Commission's Communication for "A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans" ("Western Balkans Strategy"),¹ regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations in the Western Balkans are essential preconditions for the progress towards a European perspective.

Reconciliation and restoring trust among citizens and societies are key to firmly anchoring peace, ensuring lasting stability and socio-economic development in the region. Reconciliation cannot be imposed from the outside. Bottom-up community and society ownership of actions as well as gender-inclusiveness are important success factors towards restoring trust among citizens and between communities. This is all the more important in a context where ethnic-based radicalism and nationalist speech feed on unresolved issues and the denial of past atrocities.

The role of culture and inter-cultural dialogue processes in creating an enabling environment for strengthening and reconciling communities is recognised. Specifically, culture and inter-cultural dialogue can build common narratives between inclusive communities and link people to people. Equally, cultural and creative networks and industries have a socio-economic potential which – if supported - can equip societies with tools to restore trust and bring tangible benefits to their citizens. Gender equality and inclusiveness are at the core of approaches using culture as a vehicle for reconciliation. The role of women is essential in the intergenerational transmission and the renewal of intangible cultural heritage in local contexts, as well as in the promotion of cultural diversity.

The Western Balkans is a region with abundant cultural and creative talent and potential. The cultural and creative sectors (covering both the public and private sectors, as well as non-governmental organisations) however, need more dedicated support to overcome existing financial, institutional and political challenges to unlock their full potential. This is especially relevant in the current context where the economic impact of the COVID 19 pandemic is expected to limit both market opportunities and public funding available, while these sectors are crucial in supporting intercultural dialogue and providing economic and social perspectives, particularly for youth.

More specifically, for public institutions, the main challenges include: lack of inclusive approaches to cultural policy; insufficient data for evidence-based policy making (including on gender equality and inclusiveness); limited capacity to assess and monitor the impact of policies and measures in the sector; weak coordination and planning between central and local level bodies; shortage of expertise and technical know-how for the improvement of sector policies; insufficient institutional capacities, especially in management, audience development, promotion, communications, and marketing; and difficulty to reach out to young people. It is coupled by poor cultural infrastructure and provision outside capital cities, with few spaces for youth to engage in cultural and creative pursuits.

In addition, the cultural and creative sector overall and the cultural and creative industries in particular, need improved management and entrepreneurial skills to reach economies of scale and increase their competitiveness and growth perspectives. The skills and aptitude for collaboration within the sector is low and should be improved also in view of promoting inclusive policy-making. This can be achieved through increased cooperation, peer-to-peer exchanges and joint projects between different stakeholders as well as through increasing the sector's visibility within the region and at the European level.

¹ COM (2018) 65 final of 6 February 2018.

Increased competitiveness of the cultural and creative sector is necessary to realise its potential in terms of employment and job creation. There is a big knowledge gap between formal education and market skills for creatives. Access to markets and financing, including for investments, and the availability of skills and informal education/mentoring schemes for young creatives are fundamental for their development. Digital tools and platforms, training, and increased international presence and networking are important to help access to finance and markets, particularly foreign markets. While regional circulation of creative goods and services would be a bolstering asset, it also remains challenging, due to the lack of shared media outlets, limited knowledge of other markets, and lack of partnerships.

An effective tool to strengthen the cultural and creative sector is mobility schemes. Currently, mobility schemes in the Western Balkans are few, often small-scale and earmarked for participation in festivals and trade fairs only, rather than supporting cultural co-productions. A critical shortcoming, which needs to be addressed, is the volume and availability of longer term funding for mobility which would offer sustainability over years.

The cultural and creative sector can tap into the rich cultural heritage and other local cultural resources for their development. However, the prevailing policies determining cultural heritage conservation and management in the Western Balkans often rely on a monument-based approach in which individual monuments are “restored” without adequate attention to community interests, future use, and operations and maintenance. It is therefore important to strengthen the implementation of sustainable preservation and promotion strategies, necessitating more inclusive approaches and situating heritage as an asset for inter-cultural dialogue.

Against this background, this action proposes a comprehensive support to culture through promoting inter-cultural dialogue and enhancing the socio-economic impact of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans. A comprehensive support to culture should be the result of interactions between measures, decisions and activities undertaken at different levels by many stakeholders. Therefore, the action will work at several levels, and will target both the cultural and creative sector and authorities who are in a position to create an enabling environment for the sector. This entails work with:

- Public authorities (including at local level), in particular in view of inclusive policy-making, and institutions (such as libraries, museums, theatres);
- Private sector including: professionals and enterprises in cultural and creative industries (audio-visual, radio, music, literature, performing/visual arts, artisans, tangible and intangible cultural heritage and arts and crafts cooperatives), independent cultural actors and entrepreneurs and private businesses/small and medium enterprises (SMEs) related to cultural creative industries;
- Non-governmental organisations in the area of culture and heritage.

The action will specifically aim to promote gender equality and inclusiveness and reach out to young people. At the community level, it will particularly involve young people, women and vulnerable groups. The ultimate beneficiaries of the action are local communities who, through a stronger cultural and creative sector, more cooperation within the region and with the EU, and more inclusive cultural heritage management, will benefit from an environment conducive to reconciliation.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

The overall objective of the proposed assistance is to foster reconciliation and good neighbourly relations in the Western Balkans through culture. This action aims at promoting intercultural dialogue and enhance the socio-economic benefits of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans, through (1) improving the performance of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans; (2) promoting cultural cooperation within and with the Western Balkans; and (3) enhancing inclusive cultural heritage for local development. It complements other on-going EU assistance, such as the Creative Europe Programme.

The action will implement a broad range of activities involving multiple stakeholders. The main types of actions include: promotion of inclusive policy-making, technical support, capacity building, mentoring/peer learning/exchange/networking/mobility/partnership activities including on cultural heritage, cooperation/co-production support at a regional level and activities stimulating private financing, market access and internationalisation. The activities will be developed and implemented in close cooperation with the main stakeholders to build on their actual needs and priorities as well as to ensure full ownership and sustainability.

It is expected that these activities will result in the following interlinked **outputs**:

- (1) Improved capacities of, and partnership between public authorities, private sector and civil society organisations to develop and promote inclusive policy-making in culture;
- (2) Increased regional exchanges in the culture and creative sector;
- (3) Enhanced capacities and skills of the cultural and creative sector in management, business planning, community engagement and communication;
- (4) Increased mobility of artists, cultural operators and increased circulation of creative goods and services across the region and with the EU;
- (5) Increased capacities and skills of local stakeholders in developing inclusive cultural heritage for local development.

A substantial part of the action will be directed towards grant support to the cultural and creative sector as a means to build capacity and ownership. It will focus on local authorities, reaching outside capital cities, promoting local cultural sites, activities and events outside capitals, and building capacity of local actors. The grant support will be combined with technical assistance to plug critical knowledge and skills gaps.

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

The revised IPA II Multi-country Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020² highlights the need to support the Western Balkans' region in promoting reconciliation and good neighbourly relations, including through cooperation in culture.

Reconciliation and good neighbourly relations are key elements of the enlargement and stabilisation and association process, as recalled in the Western Balkans Strategy and in the Sofia Declaration.³ Enhancing cooperation in culture is specifically one of the actions targeted in support of the flagship initiative 6 of the Western Balkans Strategy to foster reconciliation and good neighbourly relations.

This action supports the implementation of the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council 'Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations', which recalls the key role of inter-cultural dialogue in the promotion of reconciliation,⁴ as well as the Commission's "New European Agenda for Culture",⁵ which stresses the need to use culture and inter-cultural dialogue as vectors for cohesion and socio-economic development in the Western Balkans.

² C(2018) 3442, 31.05.2018, p. 20-21.

³ COM (2018) 65, 6.2.2018, pp. 7 and 18; Sofia Declaration, 17.05.2018.

⁴ Join(2016) 29 final, 8.6.2016, pp. 11 and 12.

⁵ COM(2018) 267 final) of 22 May 2018.

This action also contributes to the implementation of the political commitment made by the Western Balkans IPA II beneficiaries to promote culture and inter-cultural dialogue as key drivers for mutual understanding and socio-economic development, made at the Western Balkans Summit in Poznan 2019⁶.

The proposed action will further contribute to the development of robust private sector in the culture area and to supporting socio-economic development in the region, in line with the flagship initiative 3 of the Western Balkans Strategy and the Sofia Declaration.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Up to now, culture has been addressed in the Western Balkans mainly through actions implemented bilaterally. There are some regional and cross-border programmes funded under the Instrument for Pre-Accession, mainly in cultural heritage and tourism. Overall, efforts in the area of cultural heritage have focused on providing infrastructure and access with little attention paid to developing the content of the sites or to think strategically about creating a critical mass of destinations. Regarding the cultural and creatives industries, SMEs can access the Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WBEDIF), which includes SME equity financing, SME loan guarantees, SME lending, and support services. However, according to impact reports, around 0.06% of the funding available under the WBEDIF guarantee facility II is currently accessed by the cultural and creative industries. In 2019, the IPA II multi-country programme specifically targeted the cultural and creatives industries of the Western Balkans to bolster their participation in the Creative Europe programme.

This action will build on the experience of prior EU funded projects. These include the need to develop a narrative for cultural heritage sites and involvement of local communities in heritage development. The action will promote innovation, inclusive culture and cultural heritage projects, which leave space for the participation of civil society organisations and creative actors, including through a more local approach. An important lesson learned from the Creative Europe programme is the need to create additional and complementary programmes in support to culture to achieve a major impact at sectoral level. The current action should be seen as an important investment in strengthening existing work in support of culture while firmly addressing remaining knowledge and approach gaps in line with clear needs.

⁶ Western Balkans Summit Poznan. Chair's conclusions, 5.07.2019:
https://www.premier.gov.pl/files/files/chairs_conclusions.pdf

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE(S) / (IMPACT(S))	INDICATOR'S NAME	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS			SOURCES & MEANS OF VERIFICATION	
		BASELINES (INCL. VALUE & REFERENCE YEAR)	MILESTONES (INCL. VALUE & REFERENCE YEAR)	TARGETS (INCL. VALUE & REFERENCE YEAR)		
<p>Long-term Overall objective: To foster reconciliation and good neighbourly relations in the Western Balkans region through culture</p> <p>Intermediate Overall objective(s): To promote intercultural dialogue and enhance the socio-economic impact of the cultural and creative sectors in the Western Balkans</p>	<p>Level of cooperation within the region in the area of culture</p> <p>Assessment of stakeholders of level of intercultural dialogue and socio-economic impact of cultural and creative sector</p>	<p>Low level of cooperation within the region</p> <p>Baseline to be developed at inception</p>	<p>Improved cooperation within the region</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Improved and sustainable cooperation within the region</p> <p>Improved perception</p>	<p>International and EU reports</p> <p>Assessment of stakeholder opinion</p>	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE(S) / OUTCOME(S)	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)				SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>Specific Objective 1: To improve the performance of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans</p> <p>Specific Objective 2: To strengthen cultural cooperation within and with the Western Balkans</p> <p>Specific Objective 3: To enhance inclusive cultural heritage for local development</p>	<p>SO1 # of artists and cultural works promoted (including sex-disaggregated data) # of jobs generated in the region by selected projects (including sex-disaggregated data).</p> <p>SO2 Perceptions of stakeholders on increased cultural cooperation</p> <p>SO3 # of local heritage protection plans developed through participation in cooperation.</p>	<p>SO1 0</p> <p>Baseline to be developed at inception</p> <p>SO2 Baseline to be developed at inception</p> <p>SO3 0</p>	<p>SO1 (Y2) Between 50 – 75</p> <p>Increase 10-20%</p> <p>SO2 N/A</p> <p>SO3 1 to 2 plans per targeted IPA II beneficiaries</p>	<p>SO1 Between 100 and 150</p> <p>Increase 20-30%</p> <p>SO2 Improved perception</p> <p>SO3 3 to 4 plans per targeted IPA II beneficiary</p>	<p>Action's intermediate and final reports</p> <p>Targeted IPA Beneficiaries reports and statistics</p> <p>Final reports of awarded projects. Questionnaire/surveys</p>	<p>Key stakeholders can be mobilised and are actively engaged in cooperation</p>
OUTPUTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)				SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>Output 1 (influencing Specific Objectives 1 and 2): Improved capacities of, and partnership between, public authorities, private sector and civil society organisations to develop and promote inclusive policy-making in culture</p>	<p>Output 1 # of partnerships public/non-public ("local cultural spaces") promoting inclusive policy-making (per targeted IPA II beneficiary) # of regional exchanges on inclusive policy-making in</p>	<p>Output 1 0 partnership</p> <p>0 regional exchange</p>	<p>Output 1 3 partnerships (amongst different IPA beneficiaries)</p> <p>1 regional exchange</p>	<p>Output 1 6 partnerships (1 per IPA beneficiaries)</p> <p>2 regional exchanges</p>	<p>Monitoring of the action</p> <p>Consultations with partners and stakeholders</p> <p>Results of the Call for Proposals</p>	<p>Western Balkans organizations have access to relevant calls for proposals</p>

<p>Output 2 (influencing Specific Objectives 1 and 2): Increased regional exchanges in the culture and creative sector</p> <p>Output 3 (influencing Specific Objectives 1 and 2): Enhanced capacities and skills of the cultural and creative sector in management, business planning, community engagement and communication</p> <p>Output 4 (influencing Specific Objectives 1 and 2): Increased mobility of artists, cultural operators and increased circulation of creative goods and services across the region and with the EU</p> <p>Output 5 (influencing Specific Objective 3): Increased capacities and skills of local stakeholders in developing inclusive cultural heritage for local development</p>	<p>culture</p> <p>Output 2 # exchanges between cultural key partners at regional level Regional portal promoting cultural cooperation in the region set up</p> <p>Output 3 Rate of supported project participants who report new or enhanced market or professional opportunities (including sex-disaggregated data)</p> <p>Output 4 # of artists (including sex-disaggregated data), cultural operators, creative goods and services benefitting from mobility schemes</p> <p>Output 5 # of small-scale inclusive cultural heritage projects (per targeted IPA II beneficiary) Publication of recommendations and good practices on inclusive cultural heritage</p>	<p>Output 2 0 exchanges 0 portal</p> <p>Output 3 0%</p> <p>Output 4 0</p> <p>Output 5 0 project 0 Publication</p>	<p>Output 2 3 exchanges 1 portal</p> <p>Output 3 10%</p> <p>Output 4 Increase by 20-30%</p> <p>Output 5 3 projects (amongst the different targeted IPA II beneficiaries) 0 publication</p>	<p>Output 2 6 exchanges 1 sustainable portal</p> <p>Output 3 20%</p> <p>Output 4 Increase by 20-30%</p> <p>Output 5 6 projects (1 per targeted IPA II beneficiary) 1 Handbook</p>	<p>and implementation of the granted projects.</p> <p>Willingness of stakeholders to participate in defined capacity-building and awareness-raising programmes and activities</p> <p>Cooperation with and between the stakeholders in the Western Balkans</p> <p>Cooperation with and between main international stakeholders</p>
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DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

While specific activities will be developed in further detail with the chosen implementing partner(s), the main indicative activities foreseen are:

Expected Output 1: Improved capacities of, and partnership between public authorities, private sector and civil society organisations to develop and promote inclusive policy-making in culture

- Technical advice on data analysis and management, and on ways to improve data production and collection for the benefit of the culture sector;
- Training activities in inclusive policy-making and regional exchanges (including peer-to-peer working groups, conferences);
- Establishment of partnerships between local public/non-public organisations (either civil society organizations or private sector) such as support to jointly managed "local cultural spaces" promoting the cultural and creative valorisation of public spaces, thus contributing to local community development, including for youth and women.

Expected Output 2: Increased regional exchanges in the culture and creative sector

- Implementation of a cultural leadership programme in the region, including group training courses, coaching and mentoring, study visits, research and exchange at a regional and EU level for emerging culture and creative leaders to create a cadre of culture change makers;
- Connecting independent media portals to create and share content on culture in the region, open to independent bloggers.

Expected Output 3: Enhanced capacities and skills of the cultural and creative sector in management, business planning, community engagement and communication

- Mentoring and peer learning activities to help bridge the skills and knowledge gap across the diversity of culture and creative sector operators in the region and develop a pool of regional talents, such as:
 - Long-term mentoring scheme pairing mentors and mentees to develop a regional cultural or creative network/initiative;
 - Capacity building on fund raising and advocacy;
 - Work shadowing for skills development, which could also help to build trust between public and private stakeholders;
 - Bootcamps and workshops for intensive and structured training;
 - Networking events to gather cultural and creative entrepreneurs (one in each targeted IPA II beneficiary) with participation of EU entrepreneurs.

Expected Output 4: Increased mobility of artists, cultural operators and increased circulation of creative goods and services across the region and with the EU

- Activities to promote cooperation/co-production fostering a regional approach for inclusion and intercultural dialogue, such as:
 - Establishing a platform for music and arts venues and their managers;
 - Grant scheme to stimulate regional cooperation on specific topics (e.g. culture and creativity for social innovation) involving partners from the different targeted IPA beneficiaries in order to enhance interaction;
 - Grant scheme to co-productions of artistic productions addressing prevailing societal challenges in the region to stimulate the development of regional content and its circulation;
 - Financial and technical support to existing or new festivals focusing on audience development, regional cultural tourism, promotion of young talent, in particular women, and co-productions featuring multi-cultural content.

- Artists and professional residencies and placement/professional development in the region and in the EU and its cultural institutions.
- Mechanisms to stimulate private financing, market access and internationalisation, including:
 - Training and capacity-building workshops to support the cultural and creative industry in accessing finance and existing instruments for SME financing in the region;
 - Promote the internationalisation of the cultural and creative industry through international networking and increased presence in industry fairs and expos on European level, including clustering and joint branding of the region.

Expected Output 5: Increased capacities and skills of local stakeholders in developing inclusive cultural heritage for local development

- Small-scale cultural heritage projects feeding into local heritage plan development, ensuring local participation and strong contribution to community and local economic development;
- Best practice sharing activities within the region and with EU Member States on community involvement in restoring and managing cultural heritage;
- Peer-to-peer mentoring and capacity-building activities on inclusive cultural heritage for local development (including through the support of a pool of experts).

RISKS

Two main risks have been identified for this action.

Risk 1: Uneven participation in this action across the region and among the beneficiaries

Public authorities, civil society organisations or private sector in culture across the region may lack adequate capacity and/or interest to participate in this action. This may lead to uneven participation between or among the beneficiaries (such as between urban and rural areas, authorities and other stakeholders, women and men, or between beneficiaries).

To mitigate this risk, the action will adopt a proactive approach to reach out to a diversity of potential beneficiaries, especially outside capital cities. Information of the different activities to be implemented will be shared widely, using existing relevant networks as multipliers. Support targeted at local level actors, which are not usually reached by EU assistance will be designed in such a manner as to enable the development of capacities. The action will retain the flexibility to target some of its activities to very specific target groups (i.e. youth and women) in view of ensuring inclusiveness.

Risk 2: Difficulty for grant applicants to meet the minimum quality threshold requirements

Past experiences with the Creative Europe programme Calls for Proposals have illustrated gaps in the quality of proposals submitted by Western Balkans organisations and, thus, the possibility to award grants to them.

To mitigate this risk, the action will consider adapting the selection threshold for Calls for Proposals targeting specifically organisations active at the local level. A minimum quality threshold will have, however, to be met for applications to be selected.

Risk 3: Limited sustainability of grant activities supported under the action

There is a risk that the action serves to kick-start several micro-initiatives, which without support may be difficult to sustain.

To mitigate this risk, the action should prioritise support to initiatives which display high levels of local ownership and a vision which strengthens networks and the cultural and creative sector as such (as opposed to a project approach).

Risk 4: Deterioration of the regional cooperation or of the cooperation with EU Members States

A deterioration of the cooperation within the region or with EU Member States may affect the implementation of this action.

To mitigate this risk, the relevant European Commission services will continuously promote good neighbourly relations within the region and with EU Member States.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There are no particular conditions required for the implementation of this action. However, the implementing partner needs to ensure that the most relevant stakeholders are addressed by the Calls for Proposals. The implementation should also seek synergies with other relevant on-going programmes and actions. The involvement, and thus ownership, of relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of the activities will be crucial in order to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of this action.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The action is co-delegated to the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.

The Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture will manage and implement this action in indirect management. Regular information on the implementation progress and results will be provided to the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

A steering committee comprising at least the implementing partner, the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations will be set up to steer the implementation of this action. It will meet regularly at least once a year to discuss progress and approve work plans and budget. For advisory purposes, the implementing partner may establish a working group of cultural and creative sector actors from the Western Balkans and, if relevant, the EU.

METHOD(S) OF IMPLEMENTATION AND TYPE(S) OF FINANCING (SEE ANNEX IMPLEMENTATION – BUDGET)

This action will be implemented in indirect management with an entrusted entity(ies). The indicative duration of the contract will be 48 months.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

Having regard to the importance of the action, mid-term and final evaluations will be carried out for this action via an implementing partner.

In case a mid-term evaluation is foreseen it will be carried out for learning purposes, in particular with respect to informing the European Commission on future actions in the concerned area.

In case a final evaluation is foreseen it will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that this is an innovative action.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the IPA II beneficiary and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the IPA II beneficiary, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The evaluations should be carried out following the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation⁷. It is recommended that a Reference Group comprising the key stakeholders of this action be set up to steer the evaluation process and ensure the required quality level of the evaluation outputs as well as the proper follow-up of the recommendations of the evaluation.

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

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

This action will be implemented through an approach that promotes gender equality in all areas, including in policies, strategies and practices in the cultural field, creation, artistic and intellectual production and dissemination of arts and culture. It will ensure gender balance and the active participation of women and girls and organisations focusing on gender equality in culture in activities planned under this action. Specifically, the action will promote women as cultural leaders, mentors and creators. It will also promote the collection by domestic authorities of sex-disaggregated data in culture. As regards data collection relevant to this action, as much as possible, the action will provide sex-disaggregated data such as measuring the number of people (men/women) participating or attending cultural experiences and the number of artists (men/women) and cultural works promoted.

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/near_guidelines.zip

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The action will be designed and implemented to allow equal participation for both women and men. Throughout the action, attention will be given to identifying and transforming gender imbalance.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

This action will contribute to good governance and the protection of human rights, including the rights for cultural expression, as stipulated by the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. It will promote inter-cultural dialogue, non-discrimination, social cohesion and integration of minorities, as well as an overall appreciation of cultural diversity. Its activities will aim to foster greater tolerance and promote EU values.

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

Civil society organisations will be one of the target groups of this action. Other relevant non-State stakeholders will include private entities operating in the cultural and creative sector. These will fully participate in the design and implementation of projects awarded under this action. A potential issue of concern is, however, the capacity and skills of Western Balkans civil society organisations to submit quality proposals.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

This action has no direct link with the EU environmental *acquis*.

Where possible and relevant, the impact of this action on the environment will be taken into consideration

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 0
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6. SUSTAINABILITY

The proposed action seeks to produce medium- and long-term impacts, through combining capacity-building, awareness-raising and the improvement of legal, institutional and policy frameworks.

The direct involvement and mobilization of all main actors at the beneficiary level, both separately and in a coordinated manner, will ensure local ownership and contribute to the overall sustainability of results, including where possible through supporting economic growth and job creation.

Activities will be developed and implemented in close cooperation with the beneficiaries to build on their actual needs and priorities as well as to ensure their ownership. To avoid duplication and increase its efficiency, the assistance will also promote close synergy with relevant stakeholders in the region as well as other relevant programmes, such as the Creative Europe Programme.

The results of the action are likely to continue benefitting the region beyond the implementation period. Improving partnership between public authorities, private sector and civil society organisations to develop and promote inclusive policy-making in culture may have a deeper impact on the concerned societies, including decision-making processes beyond the area of culture. Increasing cultural cooperation and mobility within the region and with EU Members States will, in turn, create opportunities for the establishment of partnerships and networking that could last longer and have positive outcomes in a long-term perspective. Likewise, increasing the skills of the cultural and creative

sector in the region and their institutional management capacities should have a positive impact beyond the action implementation period.

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the action. The implementation of the communication activities shall be funded from the 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 EU communication and visibility requirements in force. All stakeholders and implementing partners shall ensure the visibility of EU financial assistance provided through IPA II throughout all phases of the programme cycle.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives, 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.

Communication actions should aim to show the links between the funds invested and the policy priorities behind them. Where relevant, the communication and visibility plan will be based on an agreed communication narrative and master messages customised for the different target audiences.

Communication actions should also ensure that all relevant stakeholders, and where possible, also final beneficiaries, are informed about donors' involvement, joint actions and their results. Effectiveness of communication activities may be measured, inter alia, through public surveys in the IPA II beneficiaries on awareness about the programme, its objectives and EU funding.

The entrusted entity (entities) and the European Commission's actions should ensure enhanced donor visibility

Visibility and communication aspects shall be complementary to the activities implemented by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and the EU Delegations/Office in the field. It is the responsibility of the implementing partner(s) to keep the EU Delegations/Office and the European Commission fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.