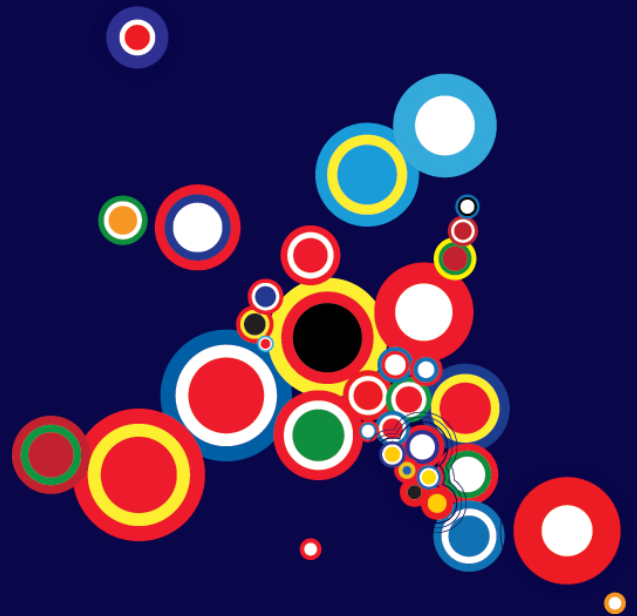




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

MULTI-COUNTRY

Technology Transfer
capacity building in the
Western Balkans



Action summary

The overall objective of this action is to support regional economic growth and to promote job creation via the establishment of an eco-system that would encourage intra-regional cooperation on research, increase levels of collaboration with industry and SMEs, and further foster the integration of the region into the European Research Area (ERA) and Innovation Union.

The Action is aimed at strengthening Technology Transfer capacity (2015-2018) in the framework of the Western Balkans Innovation Strategy Exercise (WISE).

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) has proven expertise in this technical domain, experience in providing technical assistance in support of EU macro-regional strategies (notably Danube Strategy) and in supporting Knowledge Transfer (Intellectual Property Rights, licensing, Technology Transfer Organisations (TTOs), Science Parks, etc.).

The JRC is strongly positioned to provide technical and scientific support both in the delivery of technical assistance and in defining the parameters for contracting certain services to third parties.

Action Identification	
Action Programme Title	IPA II Multi-country Action Programme 2015
Action Title	Technology Transfer Capacity Building in the Western Balkans
Action ID	IPA 2015/031-609.10/MC/technology transfer
Sector Information	
IPA II Sector(s)	9. Regional and territorial cooperation
DAC Sector	32182 Technological research and development
Budget	
Total cost	EUR 1.5 million
EU contribution	EUR 1.5 million
Management and Implementation	
Method of implementation	Direct management
<i>Direct management:</i>	DG NEAR, Unit D.5. – Western Balkans Regional Cooperation and Programmes
Implementation responsibilities	DG NEAR D.5.
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A
Timeline	
Deadline for conclusion of the Financing Agreement	N/A
Contracting deadline	31/12/2016
End of operational implementation period	31/12/2019

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

RATIONALE

Delivering the Europe 2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth requires both at EU and Member State level efforts on research and innovation, and notably the level of investment in Research and Innovation (R&I) need to increase (achieving the 3% of GDP investment in research is one of the five targets of the EU 2020 strategy and an essential element of the EU strategy for smart growth). Increased efforts on R&I and a better R&I capacity are necessary to address the societal challenges Europe is facing. In other words, R&I is an across the board and cross-cutting topic in the EU agenda.

The same, and everything in proportion, is even more valid for the IPA II beneficiaries in the Western Balkan who are struggling in building up efficient research and innovation systems and have on average less than 0.5% investment of GDP in R&I. The South Eastern Europe 2020 Strategy (SEE 2020) defines areas and mechanisms for sustainable growth and development in Western Balkans with the ultimate strategic goals of job creation and regional economic growth. This strategy is being implemented with the support of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

In particular the "Smart Growth" pillar of the SEE 2020 Strategy is seen as pivotal to a successful EU accession and as for Member States, this requires also better governance to ensure that the actions are properly implemented and progress monitored. For this purpose, the European Commission issued in October 2014 a Guidance note to the candidate countries and potential candidates for developing Economic Reform Programmes. Structural reforms to promote competitiveness and growth are necessary, and just as for Member States, this includes increased efforts on research to be monitored amongst others through the 3% indicator or in the case of the Western Balkans, adjusted to a 1.40% target of GDP invested in R & I .

Increasing on average the R&I density from 0.5% to 1.40% by 2020 requires, however, huge efforts. In particular it will require investment from the business sectors, by for example, building up capacities in key technologies and by producing more technology-intensive goods and services both for the domestic and foreign markets. This is why it is of key importance that pre-accession funding is allocated to R&I with a focus on areas that can stimulate private investment in research and innovation. This should be done both at the national as well as at regional level.

The Regional Research and Development Strategy for Innovation for the Western Balkans, adopted by the Ministerial Conference in Zagreb on 24 October 2013, calls also for reforms at national level and joint investments in selected regional initiatives. The strategy was developed by the World Bank with support from IPA I Multi-beneficiary programmes.

The strategy identified four key pillars that should be prioritised at regional level, in order to increase R&I capacity in the Western Balkans:

- 1. Establish a research excellence fund to control the regional brain-drain, by attracting and retaining scientific talents. The fund would be a tool to (i) foster collaboration among Balkans-born scientists who have migrated overseas and those who remain in the region and (ii) to support young researchers;*
- 2. Design an action to develop networks of excellence to improve coordination of national research facilities, and to foster the concentration of resources in areas consistent with regional "smart specialization";*
- 3. Develop an action aimed at the dissemination of technology transfer know-how, strengthening links between research institutions and the industry, and promoting early commercialisation of research results;*

4. *Facilitate incubation and assist start-up with financing and mentoring services at the early stage of their innovation process, to foster a culture of entrepreneurship.*

In addition, it was recommended to create a platform to promote continued policy dialogue, training and assistance on the design, monitoring and evaluation of the various programmes called the Western Balkans Innovation Strategy Exercise (WISE) Facility to ensure sustainability in the management and implementation of necessary reforms in the region. This Facility, in the form of a non-profit organisation, is under preparation and will be located in Split (contribution in kind of Croatia who is in the lead of this Facility).

The four pillars identified for action at regional level do all correspond to actions which have been identified at EU (28) level to strengthen the R&I capacity. The pillar on Transfer of Technology, for example, is one of the key priorities of the European Research Area.¹

The third pillar, Transfer of Technology, is also the most mature as it has been further developed in a regional programme for Transfer of Technology approved by the Regional Ministers of Science in November 2014. In this programme the need for coordinated actions with competent partners (helping hands) is very much stressed. The programme also calls upon facilitators to stimulate science-industry collaboration and technology transfer by sharing good practice in the area of intellectual property management in public research organisations; developing knowledge exchange capacity and mechanisms at regional level and financial management to support patenting. In other words knowledge on how to cover the entire chain from research to the market will be facilitated.

Finally, in addressing as a matter of priority Transfer of Technology will increase the chances of successful participation of candidate countries and potential candidates in the EU Research and Innovation programme 'Horizon 2020' to which they are associated. A robust knowledge transfer system and collaboration between academia and the private sector/SMEs are a key objectives and prerequisites for successful participation in 'Horizon 2020'.

In short it would be advisable (1) to concentrate support on the implementation of the Regional Strategy and (2) start with implementing the pillar on Knowledge Transfer (KT) since this is an area in which the scientific community of Western Balkan countries need hands on support and interventions.

Considering the JRC's expertise in this technical domain, and its experience in providing technical assistance to other areas of regional clusters (notably Danube Strategy), it would be much to the benefit of all, and above all the Western Balkans, that IPA II funding is allocated to the implementation of activities in support of knowledge transfer (including support in the areas of Intellectual Property Rights; licensing, TTOs, Science Parks) and that in so doing the JRC's expertise is fully utilised. The Directorate General for Research and Innovation, given its policy responsibilities in this area will be involved by making its expertise in relation to Western Balkans available to ensure a good synergy between 'Horizon 2020' and IPA II programmes.

¹ See the 2012 Communication on 'A reinforced European Research area Partnership for Excellence and Growth' (Com (2012) 392 final)

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

In December 2014 the Regional Programme on Technology was approved by the SEE 2020 Programming Committee on behalf of the SEE Governments.

This strategy is very comprehensive and underlines once more the need for R&I actors, including SMEs, to become more innovative which will require, amongst others, access to professional, supportive and intermediate services and soft and hardware innovation infrastructure. In turn such services require Technology Transfer Organisations (TTOs) and Science and Technology Parks and technology incubators.

The importance of Transfer of Technology is also an integral part of EU policy on research and innovation (Chapter 25 in *acquis* terms). In the 2012 Communication on 'A reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth'² (hereafter ERA Communication), five priorities for action had been identified of which (priority Area 5) concerns the need to ensure optimal circulation, access to and transfer of scientific knowledge including digital ERA.

Concentrating efforts on Transfer of Technology is thus fully in line with the EU *acquis*.

Finally, all Western Balkans, (except Kosovo) are associated to the new EU programme on research and innovation 'Horizon 2020' (2014-2020) for which they pay a substantial financial contribution. Investing in Transfer of Technology should thus pay off with 'Horizon 2020' collaborations.

'Horizon 2020' is designed to address the challenges the EU is facing of which becoming more competitive and creating growth and jobs. For this reason, more than in the past, the new programme 'Horizon 2020' will finance projects that are considering innovation, include SMEs and bring about scientific excellence. Innovation and knowledge transfer between research institutes and the private sector/SMEs are thus key objectives and prerequisite for success under 'Horizon 2020' which is very competitive.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

I. The Joint Research Centre, Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) is playing an important role in providing scientific and technological support for the European Union's enlargement and integration process. The JRC is a member of the Inter-Service Group Enlargement and cooperates with DG NEAR in the framework of the accession negotiations as well as in the preparation of the annual enlargement package.

Since 1999, through its Enlargement and Integration Action (E&IA), the JRC gives scientific and technical support to candidate countries and potential candidates on the road towards EU membership, New Member States and Associated Countries to the Research Framework Programmes. The JRC supports the transposition of the EU laws (*acquis*) to national legislation and facilitates scientific and technical exchange

Since 2003 the JRC has provided technical assistance in support of the European Quality Infrastructure for conformity assessment, which is related to issues such as measurement and testing, metrology, accreditation, standards. This is highly relevant to many chapters of the *acquis* such as internal market, trade, customs, agriculture, environment etc.

Moreover, all candidate countries, the potential candidates and the associated countries to 'Horizon 2020' have their representatives in the JRC Board of Governors. The Board helps with JRC strategic decision-making on scientific, technical and financial management. Individual Board members have also an important role in presenting the JRC activities in their respective countries. In addition there is an intensive networking activity with the JRC Enlargement National Contact Points (NCPs) appointed by the beneficiaries.

² COM (2012) 392 final

JRC is providing support, at a different level, to two macroregional strategies: the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), for which the JRC is coordinating an initiative aiming to address the scientific needs related to the implementation of the Danube Strategy and to strengthen the scientific cooperation in the region, as well as the Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.

II. JRC's Enlargement and Integration Actions

These actions include the following activities:

- Organisation of specialist workshops, advanced trainings and conferences for invited participants from the target countries. The workshops are set up to allow competent organisations in the target countries to study the scientific and technical methods and techniques underpinning EU policy implementation. Every year a call for proposals is launched by the JRC to the JRC Institutes. The activities proposed are in line with JRC key orientations and countries' priorities, identified during the JRC Enlargement NCPs Annual Meeting. In 2014 the E&IA call committed EUR 1.7 million to support 50 workshops and trainings.
- The involvement of experts by offering 40 temporary positions for a maximum period of 3 years in the JRC Institutes for experts from research organisations, public administration bodies, national enforcement laboratories and scientists from the candidate countries and potential candidates.

III. Technology Transfer Offices (TTO) Circle

As part of the Europe 2020 Strategy and in accordance to the 'Innovation Union' flagship initiative the JRC, in collaboration with DG RTD and DG ENTR, set up in 2011 the European Technology Transfer Offices (TTO) Circle, a network bringing together the technology transfer offices of major European Public Research Organisations. The TTO Circle operates as a laboratory for the development and testing of new tools, methods and instruments to support technology transfer and the commercialisation of research results in Europe. The TTO Circle includes as members 25 among the largest research organisations in Europe (e.g. CERN, Fraunhofer, Max Planck, TNO, VTT, CEA, ENEA).

IV. Macro-regional strategies, example of the Danube Innovation Partnership

Launched in June 2011, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) aims to boost the development of the Danube Region. The macro-regional strategy relies on an integrated approach to encourage better policy development and the alignment of funding and resources,

As the Commission's in-house science service, the JRC launched the initiative "Scientific Support to the Danube Strategy" aiming to address the scientific needs related to the implementation of the strategy and to strengthen the scientific cooperation in the Danube Region. To reach excellence and to improve competitiveness, researchers, innovators and businesses need to have access to and share knowledge within and across national borders.

In May 2013, at a high-level event in Bratislava, DG JRC launched four scientific flagship clusters: the Danube Water Nexus, the Danube Land and Soil Nexus, the Danube Air Nexus and the Danube Bioenergy Nexus, complemented by three horizontal activities: the Danube Reference Data and Services Infrastructure, the Danube Innovation Partnership, and the Smart Specialisation for the Danube Region.

• Danube Innovation Partnership (DIP)

The JRC, leveraging on the expertise of the TTO Circle members, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and the European Investment Fund (EIF), gathered stakeholders in the innovation value chain of the Danube region into a partnership that designs and implements actions to accelerate innovation and technology transfer.

Survey information gathered from beneficiaries of activities organised by the Danube Innovation Partnership, in particular among participants to the Technology Transfer Summer School, confirmed that the actions were of high quality and expected to have a tangible impact on technology transfer in the region and on the career prospects of individuals involved.

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

Competitiveness and growth are among the main pillars of the Multi-country Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020³: boosting competitiveness and innovation to allow participation of candidate countries and potential candidates in the global economy and improving the overall business environment including the capacity for innovation, by invigorating trade, integration and export-led growth. A particular focus is needed on private sector development and SMEs.

In October 2013, Ministers from the six Western Balkan countries and Croatia endorsed the Regional R&I Strategy for Innovation. The overall aim of the Strategy is to further growth, competitiveness and employment through four specific priorities: i) improve the research base and conditions for research excellence; ii) promote science-industry collaboration and technology transfer; iii) enable business investments in research and investment and start-up creation and iv) strengthen the governance of research and innovation policies.

In its conclusions of 18 July 2013, the Council recognised the added value of macro-regional strategies they provide inter alia by strengthening integration of the Member States concerned and cooperation with third countries in the areas of common interest and in addressing common challenges of the respective macro-region, by promoting multi-level governance by encouraging cooperation between regional, national and local levels and by improving access to financing for development of project ideas. The Council emphasised the importance to align available financial sources with the objectives of macro-regional strategies and to prioritise operations deriving from these strategies. These considerations are equally valid for funding from IPA II.

More specifically, the Council encouraged the Member States to strengthen cooperation with the candidate countries and potential candidates under the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

³ C(2014) 4293, 30.06.2014

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE:	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
<p>The overall objective is to support regional economic growth and to promote job creation via the establishment of an eco-system that would encourage intraregional cooperation on research, increase level of collaboration with the business sector, and further foster the integration of the region into the European Research Area (ERA) and Innovation Union</p>	<p>Employment in knowledge intensive industry - (as % of workforce)</p>	<p>SEE 2020 Monitoring Framework assisted by OECD Global Innovation Index 2014 Report⁴ International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) World Economic Forum, Executive Opinion Survey 2013–2014 International Labour Organization, LABORSTA Database of Labour Statistics (2004–08), ILOSTAT Database of Labour Statistics Beta version (2004–12)</p>	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>To strengthen technology transfer capabilities in the region, in order to encourage commercialisation of innovative research, fostering a vibrant early stage investment scene to reduce risk aversion., increasing investor's understanding within the framework of smart specialisation approach adopted by the EU Innovation Union.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of University/industry collaborations 2. Royalties and licence fees 3. % Patent family filed 4. Number of Venture capital deals 	<p>SEE 2020 Monitoring Framework assisted by OECD Global Innovation Index Report World Economic Forum, Executive Opinion Survey 2013–2014 World Trade Organization, Trade in Commercial Services database, based on the International Monetary Fund Balance of Payments database (2007–12)</p>	<p>DG JRC.DD.03 / Technology transfer and IP units have sufficient capacity to achieve results of the thus secure their sustainability. Successful approval and launch of a Technology Transfer Financing Facility under H2020</p>
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS

⁴ The annual report is a joint collaboration between the JC, WIPO and Cornell University

<p>Result 1:</p> <p>R1. Knowledge of technology transfer in the region is improved and activities related to commercialisation of research are increased through the set-up of technology transfer office and the training of TT practitioners.</p> <p>R2. Creation or restructuring of Science parks and incubation facilities with a focus on strategic sectors serving the smart specialisation goals of Western Balkan countries.</p> <p>R3 Increase in the availability of technology transfer related financial instruments and improved access to investment for start-up companies thanks to extensive investor readiness training.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of TTOs set-up and/or restructured 2. Number of individuals trained by the summer school 3. Number of mentoring programmes from well-established EU TT offices 4. Number of individuals getting access to TT clinics 5. Number of individuals participating to licensing workshops 5. Number of summer schools, 6. Numero TT clinics 7. Numero licensing workshops 8. Number of investment events 9. Number of attendees (both companies and investors) to participate in the investment events 10. Number of start-up companies undergoing investment readiness training 	<p>SEE 2020 Monitoring Framework assisted by OECD</p> <p>Global Innovation Index</p> <p>Thomson Reuters, Thomson One Banker Private Equity database;</p> <p>World Bank, Doing Business 2014, Entrepreneurship (2007–12)</p> <p>World Intellectual Property Organization, WIPO Statistics Database;</p> <p>World Trade Organization, Trade in Commercial Services database, based on the International Monetary Fund Balance of Payments database (2007–12)</p> <p>Report / Survey of participants</p> <p>PRO internal records</p> <p>IASP database</p> <p>EPO database</p> <p>Internal reports</p>	<p>DG JRC.DD.03 / Technology transfer and IP units have sufficient capacity to achieve results of the thus secure their sustainability.</p> <p>Successful approval and launch of a Technology Transfer Financing Facility under H2020</p>
<p>ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>MEANS</p>	<p>OVERALL COST</p>	<p>ASSUMPTIONS</p>
<p><i>Operational activities</i></p> <p>1. – Technology Transfer Training</p> <p>Leveraging the expertise of the JRC and of the European Technology Transfer Offices Circle, a one week residential course will be organised. Training in this area will cover legal, commercial and negotiation aspects of early commercialisation exploitation. It will address aspects pertinent to both public and private investments.</p> <p>2 – Technology Transfer Clinics and Best Practices Exchange</p> <p>This action is focused on providing support to technology transfer offices in finding solutions to practical technology transfer cases</p> <p>3.TA assistance for set-up and management of Technology Transfer Offices</p> <p>To provide an advisory manual containing information on the setting up and on the organisation of operations in newly established technology transfer offices</p> <p>4.Technology Transfer Financial Instruments</p> <p>The JRC will coordinate the set-up of a platform and organisation of its biannual meetings.</p> <p>Actors to be involved in the platform will include various European Institutions (JRC, DGs ENTR and R&I), the European Investment Bank, European Investment Fund as well as large scale financial</p>	<p>These activities will be procured to a service provider via a call for tender</p>	<p>EUR 1.13 million</p>	

<p>intermediaries and actors operating in the technology transfer, angel and VC investment sectors</p> <p>5. Contract Research.</p> <p>The generation of contract research capacity in Western Balkans could be contracted out to organisations with relevant experience in setting up local contract research units within technology transfer offices in Western Balkans.</p> <p>6. Creation of a regional S&T park network</p> <p>To enable the sharing of experiences and emerging good practices in setting up and managing sustainable models of S&T park activity and pooling expertise – in particular sectoral – to help implement smart specialisation and industrial policy and strategy.</p> <p>7. Investment readiness and reduction of investment barriers</p> <p>Set-up of a platform and organisation of its biannual meetings. Actors to be involved in the platform will include various European Institutions (JRC, DGs ENTR and R&I), the European Investment Bank, European Investment Fund as well as large scale financial intermediaries and actors operating in the technology transfer, angel and VC investment sectors</p> <p>To provide investment readiness training to start-up companies ahead of the investment events</p>			
<p>JRC related activities</p> <p>Preparation of ToRs</p> <p>Reviewing of tender dossiers</p> <p>Participation in evaluation committees for IPA technical assistance project.</p> <p>Participation in the steering committee for the action and in related progress or technical meetings</p> <p>Evaluation of progress and final reports related to IPA technical assistance project</p> <p>Active participation to operational component of the action</p>	<p>These activities will be undertaken by the JRC through an administrative arrangement with DG NEAR</p>	<p>EUR 0.37 million</p>	

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

Component 1: Training Activities and Exchange of Best Practices

Component 1 of this action will be focused on the delivery of training in the area of technology transfer and on allowing technology transfer offices from the region to access advice and best practices from the most advanced technology transfer offices in the EU.

Training

Technology transfer is an emerging and highly technical professional domain that has largely evolved on an ad-hoc basis, in different parts of the world starting in the United States in the 1980s, following the introduction in 1980 of the Bayh-Dole Act.

Today, the creation and operation of efficient technology transfer offices is considered pivotal to the realisation of the commercial benefits and resulting economic growth and employment resulting from the exploitation of new technologies developed in universities and research centres.

Finding suitably qualified and skilled technology transfer professionals, however, remains hard for several reasons: firstly, technology transfer professionals require a complex mix of technical, scientific, legal and commercial skills which are difficult to find, secondly, no structured academic programmes for the training of technology transfer professionals exists in university curricula.

In this context, the importance of providing practical training to young individuals, interested in pursuing a career in technology transfer, cannot be understated.

The JRC of the European Commission, in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organisation and with members of the European Technology Transfer Offices Circle, will be responsible for organisation and delivery of all training activities under this action.

The individuals to be targeted under this action will be selected, by the JRC, according to criteria already developed in the context of the Danube Innovation Partnership Technology Transfer Summer School.

The focus will be primarily on young professionals under the age of 35 with a background in scientific, technical or economic disciplines and with previous experience in technology transfer or a clear commitment to pursue a career in this domain.

Based on past experience, it is expected that around 70 % of training recipients will be post-doctoral researchers currently employed in a university or research centre with an interest in developing specific skills in the technology transfer domain. The remaining participants will probably come from a variety of other sectors including consulting, the financial sector, the incubation and science parks sector, government and administrative departments of research centres and universities

Training will cover the following specific domains: Intellectual Property Rights, Contract Research, Negotiation Techniques, Spin-off creation and Dispute Resolution.

Some more advanced training in the specific area of licensing for specific IP asset categories may be provided based on a verification of actual demand.

Exchange of Best Practices

Young technology transfer offices often find themselves in complex and unfamiliar situations that present significant legal, commercial or administrative challenges. Often, lack of experience results in an inability to find optimal solutions to some of these difficulties and can lead to sub-optimal commercial and technical outcomes (i.e. the granting of licenses at too low a price, granting of exclusive licenses etc.)

The JRC will leverage expertise of member organisations of the TTO circle to organise Technology Transfer clinics. This will offer the opportunity to technology transfer offices from the region to present (in an anonymised fashion) to their peers and to experts from the TTO circle details of particularly challenging situation they are facing and to receive advice from professionals with extensive technology transfer experience.

The benefits of this initiative will not just be confined to the advice received in relation to specific technology transfer cases but will also include an opportunity for technology transfer professionals to network and build lasting relationships both with peers from the region as well as with professionals from other parts of the EU.

Component 2: Contract research

Utilising a methodology similar to that developed over the years by the Steinbeis foundation a series of contract research antennas will be activated within selected technology transfer offices in the region. These individuals will be responsible for building and maintaining relationships with local industry and for identifying opportunities for small scale consulting assignments where universities assist local companies with small scale (value of between EUR 5,000 and 25,000) technical challenges that can be addressed and resolved by leveraging scientific expertise available within local universities or research centres. This type of intervention is technical domain agnostic and could cover many services across several disciplines including, for example, engineering (production process redesign or optimisation, life cycle management, environmental regulations compliance advice), laboratory testing (for the pharmaceutical, life sciences or agricultural sector), etc.

This approach has proven extremely successful in Germany and increasingly in the Danube region in fostering stable industry academia collaborations to the benefit of both.

Component 3: Science Parks and Incubators

Science parks and incubators are important players in any innovation eco-system. The development of these sectors in the Western Balkans is limited.

This component of the action will be looking at supporting and facilitating the establishment of new science parks and incubators focused on strategic sectors as well as at networking existing facilities in the region among themselves and with entities in other parts of Europe and beyond.

Particular emphasis will be placed on the fostering of international collaboration leveraging, in particular, the network of the International Association of Science Parks

Component 4: Technology Transfer Financial Facility

The Western Balkans like many parts of the EU have a capable research sector but the benefits of academic and applied research are not being fully exploited and are currently not properly commercialised resulting in a missed opportunity in terms of job creation and growth. One of the most imperious challenges facing researchers, not just in Europe but all over the world, is financing the technology transfer phase that gets new discoveries and technologies to a point where they have been proven to work outside the laboratory and where potential investors can clearly see the potential for real life applications. The stage at which a technology reaches such a critical point and at which investors start to express an interest is commonly referred to as 'proof of concept' (PoC).

While funding for basic or applied research is relatively plentiful and the mechanics of its distribution are quite transparent, getting technologies through the proof of concept stage is considerably harder. The main reason for this is that, on the one hand, publicly available research funds tend to become scarce at the PoC stage which normally involves not only prototyping, but also a number of ancillary activities like market studies, preliminary business model development, identification of the end customers etc. that are not considered part of the R&I process. On the other hand, business angels and venture capital investors, usually involved in financing high risk technology based new ventures, are often sceptical towards investing in the development of technologies whose solidity has not yet been proven. For this class of investors, though they are used to operate in environments with low and highly volatile returns on investments, the risks of financing PoC studies in emerging technologies is just too high. Moreover, investment in technologies at the PoC stage is rendered more challenging by the frequent absence of a company structure and the related difficulties involved in arranging investments against equity transactions.

This state of affairs generates a critical funding gap in the innovation value chain that goes from the laboratory to the market. This gap, which is mainly localised at the proof of concept stage, is commonly

referred to as 'the valley of death' and it is the point at which most technologies are shelved due to lack of funding, long before they manage to reach the market and consumers at large and deliver tangible benefits.

The issue of technologies that have been developed but cannot be commercialised is particularly relevant to and important for universities and Public Research Organisations (PROs).

While data specific to the Western Balkans is not available, information on the situation in the European Union makes for rather a sombre reading. European universities and public research laboratories, make considerable investments to ensure that technologies are validated and commercialised. Despite their efforts, however, and according to a comprehensive study^[1], about 40% of European patents are never used for commercial purposes. This is not simply the result of a lack of funding and expertise. It is also dictated by the increasing specialisation and fragmentation of the intellectual property market, meaning that single technologies can hardly generate a usable product or service unless they are bundled with other, complementary IP and know-how.

While this is a problem that affects some 1,500 PROs technology transfer offices, there is no instrument available to address it in a coordinated pan-European manner. Instruments are available upstream, for the financing of pre-competitive or basic research (e.g. FP7, ERC), and also further downstream for financing innovation and competitiveness within established companies (e.g. COSME and H2020 financial instruments), but no dedicated facility exists for financing technology transfer and in particular Proof of Concept in a sustainable manner. In addition, those few instruments that do provide funding at the PoC level do so only in the form of grants, operate only at the level of an individual entity or technology, and do not ensure financing continuity with the downstream pre-seed and seed stages.

The Technology Transfer Financing Facility is a new equity based financial instrument currently under analysis at the European Commission. It will provide support for the validation of research results with a potential industrial and/or commercial impact (i.e. proof of concept - PoC), and for the creation and development of high-tech start-up companies. The TTF will be a sustainable not-for-profit instrument that will operate at the PoC, pre-seed (POC+) and seed level. In other words, it will provide support for the attainment of proof of concept, it will help in the prototyping and initial market roll out phase, and it will finance the creation of companies and their initial development and growth.

The TTF will generate deal flow by working together with European TTOs. The direct involvement in the conception of the facility of the European Technology Transfer Offices Circle (TTO Circle) and of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) will further strengthen the buy in from TTOs. This will ensure that the fund has continuous access to a critical mass of world class emerging technologies to invest in.

The structure and emphasis of the TTF could also act as a catalyst to accelerate collaboration between European PROs and between European PROs and industry. The fund's evaluation methodology could in fact privilege collaborative projects with industry and other R&I partners (e.g. SMEs, start-up and spin-off companies), thereby contributing to building bridges between the various actors involved in the innovation eco-system.

If approved, the Technology Transfer Financing Facility will operate in a select group of EU countries as a pilot during the years 2015 and 2016. Subject to a successful mid-term evaluation, it will be scaled up to a fully-fledged H2020 instrument in 2017.

In this context, it will be important to prepare the ground for full deployment of TTF (including the Western Balkans) in 2017. The JRC proposes to coordinate a platform of local stakeholders and potential partners for implementation, to train them, and to work towards a consensus on how the Western Balkans could best prepare to benefit from this new instrument.

^[1] FINAL REPORT OF THE PATVAL EU PROJECT, Contract HPV2-CT-2001-00013, January 2005

Component 5: Investment readiness training and support

The growth of commercial roll-out of new products and services and the growth of start-up companies is often dependent on successfully securing external investment.

Financing for new start-up companies can take many forms ranging from government grants, to bank loans, to individual savings. In most cases, however, given the risks involved in financing early stage companies and technologies the most common route of raising financing is equity investment where a portion of the company equity is ceded to an external investor in exchange for a capital injection.

Investment against equity in start-up or growth companies is handled by the business angel sector or by the venture capital segment of the private equity industry.

Angel investors are high net-worth individuals that make use of their personal disposable finance and make their own decisions about investments. An angel investor would normally take shares in a business in return for providing equity finance. In so doing, they normally seek to not only provide businesses with money to grow, but also bring their experience and knowledge to help a company achieve success. Angel investors seek to have a return on their investment over a period of 3-8 years. Angels can invest on their own or with a syndicate. Angel investors then follow their deal either actively taking a role on the board or actively supporting the business, or may act passively as part of a group with a lead angel taking this role on their behalf.

Venture capital is a broad sub-category of private equity that refers to equity investments made, typically in less mature companies, for the launch of a seed or start-up company, early stage development, or expansion of a business. Venture investment is most often found in the application of new technology, new marketing concepts and new products that do not have a proven track record or stable revenue streams.

Venture capital is often sub-divided by the stage of development of the company ranging from early stage capital used for the launch of start-up companies to late stage and growth capital that is often used to fund expansion of existing business that are generating revenue but may not yet be profitable or generating cash flow to fund future growth.

Entrepreneurs often develop products and ideas that require substantial capital during the formative stages of their companies' life cycles. Many entrepreneurs do not have sufficient funds to finance projects themselves, and they must therefore seek outside financing. The venture capitalist's need to deliver high returns to compensate for the risk of these investments makes venture funding an expensive capital source for companies. Being able to secure financing is critical to any business, whether it is a start-up seeking venture capital or a mid-sized firm that needs more cash to grow. Venture capital is most suitable for businesses with large up-front capital requirements which cannot be financed by cheaper alternatives such as debt. Although venture capital is often most closely associated with fast-growing technology, healthcare and biotechnology fields, venture funding has been used for other more traditional businesses.

In many cases, young companies or their founders have little familiarity with the criteria utilised by angel and private equity investors for making investment decisions.

Investor readiness training which is focused on helping finders to polish presentations of their business ideas and technologies and to practice short 'pitching' sessions has been shown, over the years, both in Europe and in the US to make a significant difference to a company's ability to raise investment capital.

Large scale investment events have also been proven to attract more investors as they offer an opportunity to maximise the number of prospects assessed in a short period of time.

This action will organise three large scale investment forums at which at least 50 companies from the region will be presented to an international group of investors.

All the companies will benefit from preparatory training and will also get an opportunity to meet with investors at the event both during dedicated sectorial pitching sessions and on a one to one basis to discuss individual investment options.

ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE JRC

The services to be provided by the JRC cover several activities as described below:

Preparation of ToRs

Preparation and/or reviewing of Terms of Reference for those elements of this action to be tendered. Upon request of DG NEAR, the JRC will draft and/or review Terms of Reference for the service contract to be supported by IPA II as well as the related Action documents.

Reviewing of tender dossiers

Reviewing of tender dossiers for the IPA II technical assistance activity.

Participation in the evaluation committees for IPA technical assistance activity.

Following a call for tender for the operational component of this action to be funded under IPA II, the JRC may be asked by DG NEAR to participate in the evaluation committee meetings as full member or as observer.

Participation in the steering committee for the action and in related progress or technical meetings

Upon request from DG NEAR, the JRC will send relevant experts to steering committee, progress or technical meetings related to the action. Attendance to a maximum of 20 meetings is planned within the framework of this contract.

In addition, the JRC will participate upon specific request from DG NEAR to any relevant technical meetings to be organised in Brussels.

Evaluation of interim and final reports related to IPA technical assistance

The JRC will, together with the steering committee, monitor the operational activities of the action and perform a technical evaluation of the interim and final results achieved. This technical evaluation will comprise an analysis of the compliance with the Terms of Reference, highlight technical novelties and give recommendations for the possible future extension and development of the action. The format for the evaluation will be given by DG NEAR.

Active participation in the operational component of the action

Experts from the JRC will support the external contractor in the delivery of the operational component of the action by making their specialist scientific expertise available to the contractor implementing the operational component of the action and by mobilising members of various institutional networks of which the JRC is part (for example the European Technology Transfer Offices Circle).

JRC staff may also become involved in the delivery of technical trainings to be organised by the external contractor where the necessary competences are available within JRC.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The operational component of this action will be implemented by an external contractor to be selected via a public procurement procedure to be managed by DG NEAR. The JRC will provide DG NEAR with a series of support services based on its technical expertise in the subject matter (see section 2 above). This assistance will be the object of an administrative arrangement to be concluded between DG JRC and DG NEAR.

Implementation of this action will be coordinated by the JRC. The JRC will be responsible for monitoring of annual implementation plans, including results, activities, performance indicators and risks. The JRC will also plan and coordinate all communication activities related to the action. JRC will also produce progress reports and be responsible for monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, activities under this action will be monitored and overseen by a steering committee initially composed of representatives of the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, the JRC and the Directorate General for Research and Innovation. Additional Directorates General of the European Commission and external third parties could be admitted to the steering committee if considered necessary. Beneficiaries of the action – as well as stakeholders from the region (e.g. the Regional Cooperation Council) shall also be members of the steering committee. The steering committee shall meet on a quarterly basis and be responsible for reviewing and approving implementation plans and for reviewing ongoing progress of the action. The steering committee will also make suggestions for changes to any implementation plans and for suggesting any corrective actions related to the action where necessary.

The beneficiaries of the action will be entities and individuals active in the technology transfer domain in the Western Balkans.

More specifically, intended recipients of support under this action are listed in the table below:

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

The Action will be implemented in Direct management mode.

The tendering procedure will be managed by DG NEAR with technical support coming from DG JRC as specified in section "Activities to be Undertaken by the JRC" above.

In particular, the service contract will include the following components:

Action Component	Target Beneficiaries	Selection method
Component 1: Technology Transfer training		
<i>1.1 Technology Transfer Summer School</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young professionals < 35 • Active in or wanting to focus their career on technology transfer • Emphasis on scientific background (post-doc) and current employment in a university or research centre • Open also to individuals with a government or industry background on a case by case basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open call for applications to be published on-line • Promotion via various institutional networks • Final review of applications and selection performed by JRC
<i>1.2 Licensing Training</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals active in technology transfer • No age restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open call for applications to be published on-line • Promotion via various institutional networks • Final review of applications and selection performed by JRC
Component 2: Technology Transfer Clinics and Best	Open to professionals working in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of opportunity online

Practices Exchange	technology transfer offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion via relevant fora/ associations (EARTO, LERU, WIPO, Danube Rectors Conference, etc.) • Final selection of presenters operated by JRC based on relevance of the case studies proposed and sectoral focus)
Component 3: TA assistance for set-up and management of Technology Transfer Offices	Universities and research centres operating - or willing to establish - a technology transfer office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of opportunity online • Promotion via relevant fora/ associations (EARTO, LERU, WIPO, Danube Rectors Conference, etc.) • Final selection of beneficiaries to be operated by JRC
Component 4: Technology Transfer Financial Instruments	Private and public sector entities active in the financing of technology transfer or early stage investment projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be identified in consultation with relevant third parties (i.e. EIF, EIB, EVCA, RCC, etc.)
Component 5: Contract Research	Universities and research centres willing to create contract research capabilities, possibly as part of a structured tech transfer function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of opportunity online • Promotion via relevant fora/ associations (EARTO, LERU, WIPO, Danube Rectors Conference, etc.) • Final selection of beneficiaries to be operated by contractor in charge
Component 6: Science Parks and Incubators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing science parks and incubators • Public or private entities interested in establishing science parks or incubators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of opportunity online • Promotion via relevant fora/ associations (EARTO, LERU, WIPO, IASP, etc.) • Final selection of beneficiaries to be operated by contractor in charge
Component 7: Investment readiness and reduction of investment barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research projects that have reached a stage at which results that can be commercialised exist • High Technology start-up companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of opportunity online • Promotion via relevant fora/ associations (EARTO, LERU, Danube Rectors Conference, etc.)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final selection of beneficiaries to be operated by operated by contractor in charge
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4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The JRC.DDG.03 will perform effective and regular monitoring of the Action in order to assess interim progress, identify areas of failure and their reasons, and any immediate action to be taken to improve the performance further.

Annual substantive reports of the Action will be provided, reporting on progress achieved, based on results envisaged in the action plans, covering project outputs and outcomes.

The European Commission may carry out a final evaluation for this action or its components via independent consultants. In case a final evaluation is not foreseen, the 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.

Ad-interim evaluation will compare progress in the achievement of expected results on the basis of indicators outlined in the Action Document.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

The following table lists the indicators selected as appropriate to measure the impact of the proposed action. We selected the most recent values, as reported in the Global Innovation Index (GII) report, compiled by the WIPO, INSEAD and Cornell University, and co-authored by the JRC Econometrics and Statistics Unit.

The technology transfer and the IPR industry in the Western Balkans are still in their infancy. They are expected to mature over the following years – and this action aims to contribute and accelerate their development.

Currently, there is a limited number of establishments in place and of recorded transactions, and a rather small number of people employed in the sector.

The low volume of transactions/actors/institutions working in the Technology Transfer and IPR fields, coupled with the scarcity of robust statistical information presents a challenge.

The GII addressed these difficulties by collecting data indirectly, from a diverse range of sources, as listed on page 7 to 9. However, we observed that it was not always possible to provide values for specific indicators for all countries.

In particular, Kosovo proved particularly challenging, as there are no reliable data sets at the moment, for any of the indicators of interest. The situation is acknowledged in the Kosovo NCSP, and there are plans to improve collection and analysis of data, with the hope that such an effort will result in more reliable statistics on the current situation.

This situation impacts the ability to measure with great precision how the proposed action will impact on selected indicators.

Together with some of the authors of the GII report, we have tried to capture the dynamics of selected indicators for the years 2011 to 2014 (reported in bracket in the table); we will offer our best, conservative assessment of how this action might impact the value of the indicators and/or affect the currently observed trends, considering the limited data availability.

Indicator description	Baseline (year) (2)			Milestone 2017(4)	Target 2020 (5)⁵	Source of information
MCSP indicator (impact/outcome)...(1)						
OUTCOME/OVERALL OBJECTIVE Employment in knowledge intensive industry - (as % of workforce)	Albania	2012	16.1	+ 50%	+73%	SEE 2020 Monitoring Framework assisted by OECD Global Innovation Index 2014 ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) World Economic Forum, Executive Opinion Survey 2013–2014 International Labour Organization, LABORSTA Database of Labour Statistics (2004–08), ILOSTAT Database of Labour Statistics Beta version (2004–12)
	Bosnia	2012	N.A.	+20%	+40%	
	Croatia	2012	32.2	+20%	+45%	
	Kosovo	2012	N.A	+10%	+20%	
	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2012	29.6	+20%	+40%	
	Montenegro	2012	37.2	=20%	+40%	
	Serbia	2012	30.4	+30%	+50%	
OUTCOME/SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE Number of University/industry collaborations - (Average answer to the survey question: In your country, to what extent do business and universities collaborate on research and development (R&D) [1 = do not collaborate at all; 7 = collaborate extensively])	Albania	2013	26.3	+10%	+40%	

	Bosnia	2013	55.3	+30%	+60%	Balance of Payments database (2007–12)
	Croatia	2013	41.1	+25%	+50%	
	Kosovo	2013	N.A	+15%	+50%	
	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2013	39.7	+40%	+60%	
	Montenegro	2013	50	+30%	+60%	
	Serbia	2013	36.5	+25%	+50%	
OUTCOME/SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE Royalties and licence fees receipts – (Royalties and license fees, receipts (% of total trade)	Albania	2012	0	+100%	+200%	
	Bosnia	2012	0.2	+40%	+80%	
	Croatia	2012	0.1	+20%	+50%	
	Kosovo	2012	N.A	+20%	+40%	
	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2012	0.1	+40%	+60%	
	Montenegro	2012	0	+40%	+60%	
	Serbia	2012	0.2	+20%	+50%	
OUTCOME/RESULT Patent family filed - Number of patent families filed by residents in at least three offices (per billion PPP\$ GDP)	Albania	2010	0.1	+30%	+60%	SEE 2020 Monitoring Framework assisted by OECD Global Innovation Index Report World Economic Forum, Executive Opinion Survey 2013–2014 World Trade Organization, Trade in Commercial Services database, based on the International Monetary Fund Balance of Payments database
	Bosnia	2010	0	+10%	+30%	
	Croatia	2010	0.1	+20%	+50%	
	Kosovo	2010	N.A	+25%	+50%	

	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2010	0	+25%	+50%	(2007–12)
	Montenegro	2010	0.2	+25%	+50%	
	Serbia	2010	0	+20%	+50%	
OUTCOME/RESULT Venture capital deals – (Venture capital per investment location: Number of deals (per trillion PPP\$ GDP))	Albania	2013	0	+25%	+30%	SEE 2020 Monitoring Framework assisted by OECD Global Innovation Index Thomson Reuters, Thomson One Banker Private Equity database; World Bank, Doing Business 2014, Entrepreneurship (2007–12) World Trade Organization, Trade in Commercial Services database, based on the International Monetary Fund Balance of Payments database (2007–12)
	Bosnia	2013	N.A.	+10%	+20%	
	Croatia	2013	0.01	+50%	+80%	
	Kosovo	2013	N.A.	+30%	+60%	
	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2013	N.A.	+30%	+60%	
	Montenegro	2013	N.A.	+30%	+60%	
	Serbia	2013	N.A.	+30%	+60%	
OUTCOME/RESULT Number of TTO set-up and/or restructured	Albania	2014		7	14	
	Bosnia					
	Croatia					
	Kosovo					
	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia					
	Montenegro					
	Serbia					

OUTCOME/RESULT Number of individuals trained by the summer school		2014		150	250	World Intellectual Property Organization, WIPO Statistics Database; Report / Survey of participants PRO internal records IASP database EPO database Internal reports
OUTCOME/RESULT Number of mentoring programmes from well-established EU TT offices		2014		6	10	World Intellectual Property Organization, WIPO Statistics Database; Report / Survey of participants PRO internal records IASP database EPO database Internal reports
OUTPUT/RESULT Number of individuals getting access to TT clinics		2015	0	300	500	
OUTPUT/RESULT Number of individuals participating to licensing workshops		2015	0	150	250	
OUTPUT/RESULT Number of TT summer schools		2015	0	3	5	
OUTPUT/RESULT Number TT clinics		2015	0	6	10	
OUTPUT/RESULT Number licensing workshops		2015	0	3	5	
OUTPUT/RESULT Number of investment events		2015	0	3	5	

OUTPUT/RESULT Number of attendees (both companies and investors) to participate in the investment events		2015	0	300	500	
OUTPUT/RESULT Number of start-up companies undergoing investment readiness training		2015	0	150	250	

(1) This is the indicator as included in the Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Paper.

(2) The agreed baseline is 2010 (to be inserted in brackets in the top row). If for the chosen indicator, there are no available data for 2010, it is advisable to refer to the following years – 2011, 2012. The year of reference may not be the same either for all indicators selected due to a lack of data availability; in this case, the year should then be inserted in each cell in brackets.

(3) The last available data (and reference year)

(4) The milestone year CANNOT be modified: it refers to the mid-term review of IPA II.

(5) The target year CANNOT be modified.

Further elaboration of the baseline and targets of the indicators will be provided before the start of the action in consultation with beneficiaries.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

Not applicable.

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

This action will not have any direct impact on organised civil society.

It is expected, however, that a number of industry associations or Chambers of Commerce may be involved and possibly act as interested observers. This could include associations of universities and technology transfer offices and various types of investors associations.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The Action will be carried out in the respect of principles of equal opportunity, and will not discriminate against in any contract it may conclude with any person because of his/her race, colour, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or age. Furthermore, the Action will promote the participation of both women and men.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Not applicable.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

All the activities undertaken in the context of this action are aimed at generating a lasting change in the technology transfer eco-system and infrastructure of the Western Balkans. Training of technology transfer practitioners will increase the amount of tech transfer expertise available in the region and strengthen the capabilities of technology transfer offices, work on contract research should help to create and foster symbiotic relationships between universities and local industries that should last well into the future. Work in the areas of science parks and incubators should provide an environment in which high technology start-ups will be able to grow. Work on the investment and investor readiness side should ensure that sustainable financial instruments for technology transfer are put in place and that companies from the region develop a greater familiarity with the way early stage investment decisions are made.

All activities to be undertaken by this action should be organised and delivered by an external contractor, as the capacity of local actors in the beneficiaries today is very limited. This action aims to be more than a one-off type of intervention with all activities stopping completely after project end. The action will leave behind - and in the hands of local actors (TT offices, financial intermediaries, individuals) - a wealth of competences and tools that they should be able to re-use and build upon in the future. However, it remains difficult, at this stage, to pinpoint - exactly - how this might happen as success of the action in leaving behind a permanent legacy will depend on the quality and determination of local actors, on the financing that they will have at their disposal and on continued political and institutional support.

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the Action. All necessary measures will be taken to make public the fact that the Action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions.

Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the European Commission (DG NEAR) will have to be followed.

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

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives and the accession process. Actions shall be undertaken to strengthen general public awareness and promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

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