EX-POST EVALUATIONS OF THEMATIC EVALUATION ON IPA SUPPORT TO ROMA COMMUNITIES (Ref. Contract No 2014/344098)

FOLLOW-UP ON THE LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS, RELEVANT TO FUTURE IPA INSTRUMENT

Recommendations, Final report	Responses, DG NEAR: (i) accepted or not, ii) actions to be undertaken	Follow up	Implementation
Recommendation 1: Political commitment a) The European Commission should **formally remind** accession countries of the obligations of future member states to **comply** with the **EU Framework** for Roma integration, and the **four** measurable **goals** set out in this framework.	**i) Accepted** This recommendation is addressed to the European Commission (Commission). DG NEAR accepts this recommendation. **ii) actions to be undertaken** The Commission will remind all Western Balkans countries and Turkey of their obligations to comply with the EU Framework for Roma integration with special attention to the five priority areas (education, employment, health, housing, civil documentation) through its reporting, negotiations and bilateral processes.	**Follow-up** The Commission to include this message in the 2016 Enlargement Strategy Paper. EUDs/EUO, country units and the Roma adviser to continue regular dialogue on Roma integration through annual Progress Report, Roma Seminars, bilateral subcommittee, high level and negotiation meetings.	**Implementation** The regular dialogue on Roma integration, based on the principles stablished by the EU Framework on Roma integration, continued through the annual Progress Reports (that include specific sections to testimony on evolution in the four priority areas), Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) Sub-committee meetings and Stabilisation and Association Council meetings, negotiation reporting under chapter 23 (for Montenegro and Serbia) and IPA programming meetings. The two-yearly Roma Seminars established in 2011 have taken place in all Western Balkans countries (Albania in 2011/2014/2016; Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2011/2013/2015; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2011/2014/2017; Kosovo[*] in 2011/2013/2015, Montenegro in 2011/2014/2016 and in Serbia in 2011/2013/2015/2017). For 2018, in line with their biennial schedule, Seminars are planned in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro. EUDs/EUO have engaged in working level meetings focussed on Roma inclusion issues and relating to the implementation of a number of national Roma Action Plans as well as national meetings. The EUD BiH e.g. participated in the inauguration of the Roma Board in April 2017. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the EUD participates in Roma integration coordination meetings held twice a year with the 25 most active NGOs and other interest groups and observes the regular meetings of the Standing inter-ministerial working group on Roma issues. All EUDs/EUO participate as observers in the national Policy Dialogue Forums on Roma that are co-organised by the responsible ministries and the RI2020 Action Team. In addition, the Commission organises ad hoc Peer assessment reviews on Roma integration. The last took place in July 2017 in Serbia.

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[*] 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.

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b) The EC should request accession countries to ensure that they have the **monitoring mechanisms** in place to assess progress annually against these four goals. If necessary, IPA or other funding should be made available to develop the mechanisms necessary for monitoring these goals.	**i) Accepted** DG NEAR considers the existence of solid monitoring mechanisms on implementation of Roma integration policies and the related use of IPA Funds essential. Therefore NEAR supports the beneficiaries' use and further development of such processes and mechanisms at national level. At EU level, dialogue and monitoring is carried out through policy dialogue, Chapter 23 (Judiciary and fundamental rights) meetings for negotiating countries, Roma Integration Seminars, relevant subcommittees, bilateral meetings and dialogue about financial programming. DG NEAR assesses the mechanisms put in place by the IPA beneficiaries during the various policy dialogues listed above, and stands ready to support possible further development and implementation thereof.	**Follow-up** EUDs/EUO, country units and the Roma adviser to increase focus on policy dialogue on monitoring in general and, if relevant, monitoring of IPA funded actions. NEAR A4 is organising training workshops in the use of indicators, monitoring, evaluation and exchange of best practices to be organised for beneficiaries during 2016. This training is based on the SPD developed by the beneficiaries. Ensure further training and exchange of best monitoring practices in the framework of the implementation of IPA multi-country "Roma integration 2020 project". In 2016, DG NEAR is programming an IPA multi-country project, including as one of its components a survey aiming to identify the gap between the Roma and non-Roma population in the 5 key priority areas. In the future, this data will allow for a solid monitoring on progress.	**Implementation** The Commission has developed different formal monitoring tools, in addition to the regular bilateral contacts with all relevant internal and external actors: • Every two years, in the Roma Seminar meetings, the state of play in the five priority areas is discussed involving public authorities at central and local level. Furthermore, formal conclusions on priorities of action for the next two years are adopted. • The implementation of the Seminar conclusions is monitored in the relevant annual Subcommittees following previous written reporting by the government on implementation. • As from 2017, the new harmonised Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) tool used by MS has been introduced, in a simplified version, in the enlargement region. NEAR A3/A4 has organised, and continues to organise, training workshops in the use of indicators, monitoring, evaluation and exchange of best practices. These trainings are targeted jointly for national counterparts and EU staff in the beneficiary countries, and the case study themes are proposed by the participants in advance. For the IPA beneficiaries regional trainings have been provided in the use of indicators, monitoring, evaluation and exchange of best practices through the IPA multi-country "Roma integration 2020" platform. Such trainings are also provided on a national basis, e.g. as part of the IPA funded "SIROMA" project in Turkey. The IPA Roma multi-county survey was launched in June 2017. From 2018 the results should help to identify solid baseline indicators on the gap between the Roma and non-Roma populations in the five key priority areas, and content wise improve monitoring and reporting as well as inform policy and programming discussions. IPA funding is available to develop the mechanisms necessary for monitoring and reporting on Roma integration. To this end, under IPA 2016 e.g., an action for Turkey on "Establishing Strong Monitoring,

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			Evaluation and Coordination Mechanism for National Roma Integration Strategy" has been programmed.
c) The EC should then **assess progress** against these goals using the information provided by governments and from other sources, and report in the context of the annual accession Progress Reports.	**i) Accepted** The Commission reports regularly on developments on Roma integration, subject to the limits of the annual accession Progress Report; as well as in the annual Commission Report on the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.	**Follow-up** The Commission will continue to report on progress and will also benefit in the future from having a solid baseline on the state of play to monitor progress thanks to the future implementation of the 2016 IPA (see point 1 b) above). DG NEAR will continue to use for preparing the annual report information not only from the governments but also shadow reports from civil society.	**Implementation** Input for the 2018 Progress Reports will be provided as usual by the assessment by the governments themselves, the EUDs/EUO, structured shadow reporting by international organisations (IO) and civil society (CSO). The AMRs will be gradually improved in the coming years with progress in baseline data and with the full use of the new reporting format. In case of Montenegro and Serbia, assessments are also made in the framework of Chapter 23.
d) The Commission should indicate a **percentage of IPA II** funds that are expected to be allocated for support to Roma inclusion actions.	**i) Partially accepted** In the 2013 EU Enlargement Strategy, the Commission committed to give more and spend better under IPA II funds for Roma integration compared with IPA I. However, the support for Roma integration depends not only on the availability of financial resources, but also on the political will and good policy design of documents. As support to Roma integration should be mainstreamed in the financial support to the country, figures are not fixed in advance. Also, it is sounder and more sustainable, financially and programming wise, to programme against strategies and mature actions backed by measurable national commitments. It is important that both EU and national policies and legislation addressing equal treatment also open IPA projects for all vulnerable groups.	**Follow-up** The DG NEAR will regularly monitor the amount of IPA funds allocated on Roma integration projects in the context of the internal coordination meetings, in preparation of annual action programmes in close collaboration with the beneficiary authorities	**Implementation** No fixed percentages are allocated for Roma integration under IPA II, but there is a clear commitment to use "more and better" on Roma integration compared with IPA I. Fixed amounts would prevent programming against sound and mature strategies and actions backed by national commitments, realities and absorption capacities. Implementation of Roma Strategies and Action Plans are at different stages throughout the region, and this is also reflected in the funding made available for Roma integration under IPA II. Further: several actions relevant for Roma integration funded under IPA I are still under implementation. DG NEAR monitors the allocation of IPA funds through the regular updating of an internal database. The information identifies if IPA funds are allocated under the national or the multicultural envelopes, and if the actions support targeted or mainstream initiatives. Roma inclusion is an integral topic in the annual IPA programming process and discussions with the national authorities. Increased attention has been given, through the RI 2020 IPA project, to improve national capacities for budgeting ("budgeting for Roma integration" training) and coordinating donor support.

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e) Political commitment could also be strengthened by establishing **diplomatic networks** of embassies in each country which have an **interest in Roma inclusion** – 'a Friends of Roma' diplomatic initiative, led either by the EU Delegation, or, better, by an interested EU/EEA state.	**i) Rejected** The Commission welcomes a diplomatic initiative such as this and invites relevant actors to consider it. If an enlargement host country should adopt it, the Commission will support it through the EUD. However, it is also important that each enlargement country takes full ownership and responsibility to ensure implementation of their Roma integration policy, including a strong coordination of donors.	**Follow-up** No specific additional follow up action is envisaged.	**Implementation** N/A
Recommendation 2: Roma Focal Point Each **EU Delegation**/Office should have a designated and named **Roma Focal Point** to be the key link between political and operational aspects of the EU's work to support Roma inclusion, as well as with Roma civil society organisations and government representatives to provide support and alignment with EU acquis and specifically the EU Framework on Roma Integration.	**i) Accepted** This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation. Following a note from J.-E. Paquet, Director, DG NEAR Directorate D Western Balkans, to Heads of EUDs/EUO of 09/10/2015, existing Roma desk officers in EUDs/EUO have been officially designated as Roma Focal Points. They are responsible for coordinating Roma policies within the EUD/EUO and being the interlocutor for HQ, the public authorities and civil society on Roma related questions.	**Follow-up** To ensure visibility, each EUD to clearly specify in their public organigram the persons having the Roma Focal Point task. Focal Points to pro-actively engage with public authorities, international organisations and NGOs to support Roma integration, policy coordination and monitor implementation of commitments. Roma Focal points to organise regular meetings with relevant interlocutors and report results to HQ. Roma adviser to inform EUD /EUO focal points on main development of EU Roma integration policy and continue regular meetings of the HQ/EUD Roma Network Working group.	**Implementation** Each EUD/EUO has appointed a Roma Focal Point supported by a second colleague. A similar structure has been created at HQ: in DG NEAR on average four persons by country are responsible for Roma integration issues covering political and IPA aspects. This staff group, headed by the Roma Adviser, constitute the **DG NEAR Roma Network** that meets on a regular basis. They have been actively engaged with local partners, CSO, relevant national authorities, Member States and international organisations. Internal reporting to HQ on activities is being made on a regular basis.
Recommendation 3:	**i) Accepted** This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this	**Follow-up** The outcome of internal reflexion to be discussed with beneficiary countries and	**Implementation** The "IPA Roma response" strategic paper has been prepared in close

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Strategy The European Commission, in cooperation with the enlargement countries, should prepare an **internal working document** for **each enlargement country** which sets out **how t**he EC **will support** the countries to achieve their Roma inclusion goals as defined in the national strategies for Roma inclusion.	recommendation. An internal "IPA Roma response" working paper has been developed for each country setting out how the Commission could use IPA II funding to assist beneficiaries to reach their stated Roma inclusion goals as defined in their national strategies, action plans and Sector Planning Documents (SPD). As 2016 priorities are already set, the main focus will be on IPA support to be programmed in 2017-2020.	other relevant international players. Conclusions to be reflected in the IPA II mid-term review strategic documents.	cooperation with EUD, agreed at Director level and shared internally. In the mid-term review of the IPA II Indicative Strategy Papers, all revised drafts discussed with the national authorities included a reference to the importance of Roma policy and the specific needs of Roma providing an enhanced IPA programming framework for the next three years.
Recommendation 4: Gender a) The European Commission is urged to **identify gender focal points** in each delegation/office to ensure effective inclusion of gender perspective in all processes and at all levels.	**i) Accepted** This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation, which has been followed up with DG NEAR gender experts based in units A3. The Commission's "Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019" emphasises the need to integrate gender equality into EU policies and funding programmes. NEAR seeks to implement the Gender Action Plan through continued efforts to integrate a gender mainstreaming perspective into all relevant IPA programmes. DG NEAR agrees that the gender dimension is especially relevant in the area of Roma integration. Each EUD/EUO has gender officials who coordinate their work with IPA beneficiaries, country units and the gender desk, and provide thematic support.	**Follow-up** • Reinforced training in gender mainstreaming has been organised by the gender focal point for beneficiaries and at EC HQ during 2015 and will continue in 2016. • The recommendation will be followed up in the context of the annual programming by EU delegations, geographic units in close cooperation with DG NEAR gender desk and unit A4 "MFF, Programming & Evaluation".	**Implementation** Gender mainstreaming is increasingly an integral part of the IPA programming process using gender analysis as a cross-cutting issue - including in Roma actions - to inform design of actions and projects. Special attention is and will be placed on how intersecting inequalities on the basis of gender and ethnicity affect Roma communities, in particular women and girls. HQ has a designated gender expert tasked with providing advice on gender issues and expertise in the preparation of strategies, policy dialogues and financial assistance programmes. All EUDs have officers tasked with providing advice and expertise on gender related issues (gender focal points). The new Gender Analysis Terms of reference (ToR) foresees training on gender issues including usage of g-markers for monitoring purposes. Training on gender has been provided to NEAR staff and knowledge sharing is ensured through the NEAR Gender Working Group. The quality review process has been revised to ensure that all Action Documents are reviewed by all relevant units, services, CoTEs and focal points.
b) The EU is also recommended to urge enlargement governments to identify **gender focal points** in the National IPA	**i) Partially accepted** Gender equality is at the core of European	**Follow-up** The implementation of the gender dimension	**Implementation** The gender dimension is taken into account when IPA Roma actions/

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Committee (**NIPAC**).

The EU Delegation/Office focal point on gender should then work closely with the NIPAC gender focal point in order to ensure improved quality of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation from a gender perspective throughout the IPA II cycle. | values and is very relevant for the Roma community (e.g. in the field of education, child marriages, employment…). The gender dimension is a cross cutting priority in the Roma integration process.

The DG NEAR approach is not to develop a specific "Roma gender" related policy, but to include it within the general framework of the implementation of the new Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 (GAP). However, it is beyond the Roma integration policy to request NIPACs to have gender focal points. | on Roma integration policy and related IPA programs to be discussed in the DG NEAR Roma Network (officials working on Roma integration in HQ and in EUD) and good examples on successful projects to be shared.

EUD to consider whether Roma could be included as one of the priority areas in their gender plan.

The gender dimension to be taken into account when programing IPA Roma related projects.

Roma integration survey to be implemented under the IPA 2016 multi-country Roma project, to get data on the priority areas segregated by gender to allow solid data for future policy decisions. | projects are programmed and designed.

The gender dimension has been and will also be raised and discussed at Roma Seminars and Subcommittee meetings. It will further be taken on board at the meetings of the NEAR Gender Working Group. Gender has and will continue to be discussed in the NEAR Roma Network as relevant and the Roma adviser addresses gender related issues whenever relevant.

The results of the 2017 Roma integration Survey includes gender segregated data. This will create a clear base line on gender gaps.

The gender dimension is furthermore a cross-cutting dimension throughout the final analyses of the data collected by the Roma Survey and that are expected to be issued in 2018. One expected outcome will be to see how gender blindness and double discrimination against Roma women and children impact the socio-economic living conditions they face and the special attention required to overcome it. |
| **Recommendation 5: Policy Capacities**

a) **IPA Multi-beneficiary funding** should be used to support one (or more) initiatives to **strengthen policy capacities** in the enlargement region. The action should be longer term, rooted in local experience and with strong mechanisms to feedback policy findings and recommendations to practitioners in government and civil society. | **i) Accepted**

This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation.

DG NEAR is aware of the important role to be played by IPA multi-country funds on strengthening policy capacities on Roma integration in the enlargement region. In that context, the Commission adopted the 2014 multi-country program "Roma Integration 2020 initiative" (RI2020) to be implemented by the new Roma action team in the Regional Cooperation Council and is co-financed by EC, RCC and Open Society Foundation. | **Follow-up**

The multi-country Roma Integration 2020 initiative, starting its implementation in Spring 2016, will serve the purpose of enhancing policy development capacities of the IPA beneficiaries, individually as well as regionally. | **Implementation**

The use of IPA multi-country projects has been maximised in the last years to cover strategic areas relevant for all countries. The RI2020 platform is ongoing, and EUDs/EUO are actively involved in the implementation as relevant for their countries. Due to its success, a phase 2 is being programmed for the period post 2018. Every year complimentary IPA multi-country projects have been launched:
- The IPA 2016 multi-country project has three components: 1) Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level; 2) Regional Roma survey; 3) Reintegration of returnees assessment.
- The IPA 2017 multi-country project has two components: 1) Promoting Roma education; and 2) Second phase of the Regional Housing Project that also addresses Roma housing challenges. |
| b) Roma individuals and **civil society** organisations should be **involved** as far as | **i) Accepted**

The Commission supports enhancing the civil | **Follow-up**

DG NEAR will continue its close cooperation | **Implementation**

Close cooperation and contacts with CSOs continues. The IPA 2015 |

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possible and collaborative **links** made between practitioners in civil society and **government and between countries**.	society role on Roma integration both on the definition and implementation of the Roma integration policies. This principle is implemented through different tools: - Multi-country projects supporting the role of civil society such as "Roma Integration 2020 initiative": OSF and two Roma representatives sitting in the Roma 2020 "Task force" that will guide implementation of the project. And the "Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey" through the creation of a regional Roma Network for (pro) Roma civil society to actively participate in local and national policy and decision making processes. - Involving civil Society as one of the key actors of the Roma Seminars. - Using the civil society shadow reporting as one of the contributions to prepare the annual enlargement package.	with CSO implementing existing practices.	"Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey" continue its implementation. Furthermore, the CSO network, funded by the OSF, ensures the CSO component of the RI2020 platform through their representation in the RI2020 Task Force steering group. Both CSO groups ensure the civil society participation in decision making and monitoring processes. Focus has so far been to raise the capacity of the participating NGOs regarding advocacy, management and monitoring the performance of authorities through collection of data for shadow reporting. CSOs have met with the competent national and local authorities which have been used for advocacy. They also have regular meetings with representatives of the EU institutions and play a central role not only in the Roma Seminars but also in the consultation related to key strategic policy decisions such as the post 2020 Roma policy. NEAR continues to consult CSO for the Progress Reports during local (lead by the EUDs) and EU level consultation meetings.
c) **Actions should draw from policy lessons learned in Member States**, identify gaps and uncertainties in the policy base, and conduct policy experiments and tests to develop new or more effective approaches. Indicative topics for such an initiative include: - Sustainable models for social housing and links to social security reform. - Conditional cash transfers as measures for supporting educational attainment. - Testing and identification of effective employment measures - Anti-discrimination in practice – how to	**i) Accepted** DG NEAR cooperates closely with DG JUST, and other DGs involved in Roma integration in EU Member States (EUMS). DG NEAR is aware of the main evolutions/ concerns on Roma integration of the Member States through participation in the EU Roma Contact Points meetings, the CoE CAHROM meetings, and the Commission internal Work Groups. The relevant information and "lessons learned" are shared in the context of the DG NEAR Roma Network meetings. The transfer of knowledge, policy dialogues	**Follow-up** The recommendation will be followed up in the context of the Roma Network meetings, annual programming, TAIEX events and policy dialogues where relevant.	**Implementation** DG NEAR services continue to contribute to internal knowledge sharing through, among other venues, the Roma Network and Gender Network meetings, annual programming, TAIEX events and policy dialogues where relevant. Follow-up is ongoing and has taken place in various ways in the partner countries: In Kosovo through actions for communities (education, business start-up, multi-sectoral approach to reintegration); in Montenegro by institutionalising Roma mediators (work in progress); and in Serbia where the Roma Seminar and peer assessments (e.g. gaps identified by RI2020) have resulted in policy suggestions to feed into the policy dialogue. In Turkey, TAIEX and IPA funded initiatives have e.g. made use of EU Member State experiences.

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change attitudes and behaviours. - Moving from Roma mediators to institutional reform – tackling institutional discrimination throughout a system.	and lessons learned form an integral part of NEARs inter-service cooperation approach, and facilitates the policy dialogues NEAR has with the IPA beneficiaries about their sector reforms in preparation for accession. TAIEX events, as well as other programming initiatives and actions, are specifically designed to provide IPA beneficiaries with national and regional fora where such policy lessons and best practices can be shared and policy dialogue in general be further enabled.		An example of NGO knowledge sharing is the May 2017 study visit on access to education and employment organised by the NEAR People-2-People programme. Enlargement NGOs were invited to learn about a Spanish Roma integration project implemented by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano and funded by the European Social Fund. Externally, relevant Commission services (JUST, NEAR, EAC, EMPL, REGIO etc.) continue to participate in the CoE CAHROM meetings, that include Roma integration side meetings for the enlargement region.
Recommendation 6: Quality Assurance and Good Practice a) All draft **programmes** and action designs need to be **reviewed** by appropriately experienced and **qualified people** to ensure compliance with the 10 Common Principles, and to provide input based on relevant evidence from policy and practice. The European Commission should develop procedures to ensure that this happens.	**i) Accepted** This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation. Structures for assessing programming and action documents are in place. The aim is to ensure that planning and programming documents are consistent with any high level strategic planning/programming documents and the enlargement agenda, as well as to provide recommendations for the work ahead. IPA action documents are based on policy and programming documents adopted by the IPA beneficiaries. Throughout the programming process they undergo consultation with IPA beneficiaries and EUDs/EUO. As part of the Quality Review of Programmes procedure, action documents are also reviewed by the Roma adviser, relevant CoTE, Chapter desk or Quality Review Group.	**Follow-up** The recommendation will also be followed up in the context of annual programming in close cooperation with the Roma adviser, the relevant CoTE experts during the Quality Review of Programmes.	**Implementation** The programming documents, including the revised Indicative Strategy Papers, have undergone assessment by the internal Quality Review group to ensure compliance with the necessary requirements. The full quality assurance cycle continues to be applied at EUD and HQ level. Furthermore, it is expected that increasing national policy capacity and enhanced involvement by the CSOs will provide for additional competences regarding quality assurance and good practices in the IPA beneficiary countries. Specific IPA projects are and will be implemented when required by the countries in support of the implementation of the national Roma Strategies and Action Plans in e.g. Kosovo and Turkey. Other countries (e.g. Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina) are considering similar IPA funded support.

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	Once considered mature, the actions are submitted to Commission wide inter-service consultation that may result in a further review before adoption.		
b) **Specialists**, such as local policy experts, think tanks, NGOs, etc., **should** be identified who can **take an active role in project/action steering committees**, review progress, and provide balanced input to assist in ensuring that actions aimed at Roma inclusion are following the best practice guidance available. They should also play a role in flagging issues that might have unintended negative consequences.	**i) Accepted** The Commission makes extensive use of programme and project evaluations that feed into future programming, expert groups and expert assessments and is in regular contact with NGOs, civil society and international organisations during the annual programing and reporting periods, including on input to and outcome of actions financed under IPA. The Commission further regularly monitors individual projects and programmes and reports extensively on programming through a number of regular AOSD and ROM reports, as well as internal and external audits and evaluations, throughout each year.	**Follow-up** The recommendation will be implemented in the context of the preparation of annual action programmes and continuously during the implementation of on-going programmes. EUD/EUO will further involve Roma NGOs in the discussions on Roma integration projects in all relevant phases: programing, implementation and monitoring.	**Implementation** HQ and EUDs involve CSO extensively in the IPA programming process (from design, over implementation (as active partners) and monitoring (partaking in steering committees) to shadow reporting) as appropriate. The Roma adviser further consults NEAR country Roma contacts on multi-country projects and to ensure a regionally comparable approach to national CSO consultation, reflecting the special needs and challenges faced by local and national interest groups and actors.
c) **Experts, Roma Focal Points in EU Delegations**/Offices and **national Roma policy specialists** in government and **civil society** should meet regularly (at least 1 per year) to develop a **network of practitioners** and **share latest research findings.** This could be connected to a multi-beneficiary project for policy development (see section 6.11 on recommendations for Multi-beneficiary IPA funding).	**i) Accepted:** The Roma Integration Seminars allows every two years for the setup of such discussion fora. The implementation of the IPA multi-country Roma Integration 2020 initiative will serve the purpose to create a more frequent meeting venue of experts and Roma government regionally. The multi-country Civil society facility (CSF) and media programme already serves the purpose of enhancing policy involvement and capacities of IPA beneficiary civil societies through the creation of a regional Roma	**Follow-up** The recommendation will be followed up in the context of the Roma seminars every two years and at regular basis by the EUD/EUO (Roma Contact Points). In the framework of the implementation of the IPA multi-country Roma Integration 2020 initiative thematic workshops will be organised involving experts , public authorities and civil society.	**Implementation** The two-yearly Roma Seminars established in 2011 have taken place in all countries (see above) and are planned in line with their biennial schedule. For 2018 Seminars are planned in four countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro. The Roma Seminars also provide a discussion platform for networking, information exchange and policy development where, among other, recommendations from the thematic workshops feed in. Roma CSO and National Roma Contact points have been invited to participate in the most important Brussels events, e.g. the annual EU Roma Platform and the EU Roma week. In this context, specific side programmes have been organised to maximise their contacts with EU institutions, experts and European CSO.

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	Network. DG NEAR is reflecting on whether the DG JUST initiative to support national Roma Platforms is relevant at this stage for enlargement countries.		Thematic workshops including all relevant stakeholders (experts, public authorities/policy makers, CSO, IOs) are organised in all countries and regionally in the framework of the RI2020 platform. Since 2016, the RI2020 is further involved in co-organising National Dialogue Forums, a national consultation forum that mirrors the national Roma Platforms currently being implemented by MS and which DG JUST supports through targeted funding Calls for proposals. EUD experts further regularly meet with government and NGO experts and discuss recent developments, research findings etc.
Recommendation 7: Civil Society a) The European Commission, for each of the enlargement countries, should set out a **strategic approach to developing the capacities of civil society** in support of Roma inclusion. The goals of these strategies should emphasise: - The role of civil society in advocacy and accountability. - Sustainability of civil society organisations. - The role of civil society in service delivery and project implementation.	**i) Partly accepted** This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission partly accepts this recommendation. The Commission is committed to ensuring participation by civil society to enhance ownership and sustainable results by means of policy dialogues and financial assistance. However it thinks that this process is better served by supporting Roma networks and giving the civil society a role in a Roma integration process instead of imposing a top down, country by country approach.	**Follow-up** Implementation of the 2014-2015 IPA multi-country Civil society facility aims to set up a facilitating structure for (pro) Roma civil society to actively participate in the local and national policy and decision making process and establish a constructive and systematic dialogue with authorities and Roma NGOs/CSOs to influence policies on Roma integration, social inclusion, non-discrimination, interethnic dialogue, socio-economic development and citizens' rights.	**Implementation** See 5b above**.** Two regional networks have been established (see above). The EUD's/EUO further support national actions that either target Roma NGOs/networks or are led by Roma or pro-Roma NGOs. For instance, in Turkey there are ongoing European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and Sivil Düşün projects implemented by Roma NGOs. These projects also serve the capacity building for Roma NGOs/networks.
b) **Granting instruments** such as the Civil Society Facility, EIDHR and other specifically designed granting actions **need to take into account** the need for building **capacities of newly established grass-roots** organisations as well as well-established organisations. This means that	**i) Accepted** General civil society organisation facilities fall under the remit of EU Programmes which are governed by their specific implementing rules. They already focus on the development of minority and vulnerable groups NGOs in their	**Follow-up** The multi-country Civil society facility programme will serve the purpose of enhancing policy involvement and capacities of IPA beneficiary civil societies through the creation of a regional Roma Network.	**Implementation** The CSF multi-country project "Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey" (ref. 5b) also foresees sub-granting in order to reach small, grass-root organizations, support them and build their capacities. The same sub-granting provisions are being introduced/applied under the

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varying amounts of funds need to be available to meet the needs of different types of organisations. Grants of less than 10.000 EUR should be available for small grass-roots CSOs to complete specific actions. Medium size grants (10 – 90.000) are needed for larger local or national organisations for 1-2 year actions, and larger funds available for longer term actions and re-granting, possibly at the regional level. Technical assistance to civil society should not just look at how to apply for EU funds.	programming. The present financial Regulation foresees sub-granting as an option and rules for grants less than 10 000 EUR have been greatly eased. In addition, on country level, targeted calls for proposals specifically addressing specific beneficiaries can be and are organised.	The recommendation will be implemented in the context of the preparation of annual action programmes and continuously during the implementation of on-going programmes. Increased focus on these issues when drafting Terms of References before opening Calls for Proposals, with special emphasis on the use of sub-granting. Increased focus on communicating and explaining grants and funding options and grant application procedures clearly to all potential recipients. Continued reporting through AOSD reports by relevant organisational entities.	national windows of the CSF in all the countries. Such Calls for proposals are managed by the EUDs/EUO. Roma NGOs are encouraged to apply as programme manager and/or to respond to the sub-granting calls for proposals that are launched by the managing NGO. A sub-granting "window" is also provided for in the ongoing IPA funded "UN Women" project that also cover Roma. The EU funded TACSO has provided for continued training of NGOs on funding schemes, application procedures and project management, and under the People-2-People programme, a study visit on youth was e.g. organised for Roma CSO. The EIDHR instrument, which is a separate worldwide funding instrument, continues to support capacity building projects also in the enlargement and neighbourhood regions, including also for Roma and pro-Roma NGOs. In the period 2014-2016, the EIDHR instrument has allocated around EUR 3.61 million to Roma integration related projects throughout the enlargement region. These actions also serve the capacity building for Roma and pro-Roma NGOs/networks and civil society initiatives.
c) Strong consideration should be given to **re-granting** projects combined with provision of technical assistance – ideally over a medium to long term (4-7 years) specifically for CSOs working for Roma inclusion. The European Commission should ensure that these mechanisms and used tools are effectively coordinated.	**i) Accepted** The Commission is committed to ensuring sustainability of results of EU funding initiatives. It recognises that in many areas, in order to introduce change and have impact, a long term approach is needed. Changes introduced under IPA II facilitate the programming and implementation of programmes with a longer term perspective, in some cases up to seven years. **ii) actions to be undertaken** DG NEAR will increase focus on coordination when drafting Action Documents, Terms of References (ToR) and Calls for Proposals.	**Follow-up** The recommendation will be implemented in the context of the preparation of annual action programmes and continuously during the implementation of on-going programmes. Increased focus on these issues when drafting Action Documents, Terms of References and Calls for Proposals These points are being raised as part of the broader review under way in DG NEAR on the work done with CSO. EUDs are encouraged to better use the flexibility options given by the IPA II	**Implementation** See above. Furthermore, the IPA 2016 multi-country ROMACTED local component is designed to have a strong and direct impact at local level and involve/ strengthen local and small grassroots organisations. The Commission further discusses with IPA implementing actors if it will be possible to make use of local expertise and/or contribute to local capacity building through involvement of CSO partners throughout the various phases of implementation.

Recommendations, Final report	Responses, DG NEAR: (i) accepted or not, ii) actions to be undertaken	Follow up	Implementation
		financial regulation.	
Recommendation 8: Local Impact – Area based integrated interventions Programming for **IPA II actions** should strongly consider medium to long term actions focusing on integrated actions in **local areas** with relatively high Roma populations. Area-based interventions must **also have** a visible and **positive impact on the wider population.** Area-based interventions must also be linked to national/higher level policy initiatives. Area-based projects should have a **minimum time-frame of four years**, and local authorities should provide some element of match-funding to ensure commitment.	**i) Accepted** This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation where appropriate. DG NEAR recognises that in many areas, in order to introduce change and have impact, a long term (integrated) approach is needed. Changes introduced under IPA II facilitate the programming and implementation of programmes with a longer term perspective, in some cases up to seven years. Under the new IPA II regulation, integrated actions may well become part of the implementation modality again, should the beneficiaries plan for it in their strategies and action plans which target the focus of IPA funding. For Roma integration programs with local dimension, the IPA funds will be in priority allocated to the higher Roma populated areas.	**Follow-up** DG NEAR will increase focus on local dimension when drafting Action Documents, Terms of References and Calls for Proposals of annual action programmes. The 2016 IPA multi-country project will have as one of its objectives enhancing the local dimension of Roma integration supporting both local administration and civil society.	**Implementation** In addition to the IPA 2016 multi-country project ROMACTED action (see 5a) which has now been launched in all IPA beneficiary countries, and which targets the local dimension of Roma integration through supporting both local administrations and civil society, a so-called multi-sectoral approach is being applied in a Return and Reintegration project in Kosovo that started on 10 November 2017. The action will contribute to a stable multi-ethnic society by enabling sustainable livelihoods and a durable integration of Displaced Persons (DPs), Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Displaced Persons in the Region (DPRs) and refugees as defined by the Strategy for Communities and Return (2014-18). It will also increase the capacity of public and non-governmental actors to facilitate the dignified, sustainable return and reintegration of up to 400 families, including Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) families currently living in informal settlements and camps in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro. Up to 40% of the assistance is foreseen to address the return and reintegration of RAE displaced families. Further focus on the local dimension and reintegration challenges are expected to derive from the outcome of the 2016 IPA multi-country

Recommendations, Final report	Responses, DG NEAR: (i) accepted or not, ii) actions to be undertaken	Follow up	Implementation
	The scope of individual projects would need to be based on needs analyses, allow for evidence-based decisions and inclusion of lessons learned from comparable projects. When relevant, programs should also be open to non-Roma most vulnerable population. Area based actions would also need to be built in the framework of national and regional policies and matched by beneficiary strategies, action plans and funding in these areas.		component on Reintegration of Returnees in the Western Balkans identifying the local areas most affected by the arrival of returnees.
Recommendation 9: Monitoring a) The European Commission should **support the Western Balkans countries and Turkey to develop and operationalise appropriate monitoring systems** which will adequately capture information to monitor the achievement of each of these goals. The monitoring systems should be incorporated into existing or planned information systems.	**i) Accepted** The recommendation is addressed to the Commission.. The Commission accepts this recommendation The IPA II legal framework foresees that Sectoral Monitoring Committees will be reinforced to ensure effectiveness, coherence and coordination of the implementation of IPA assistance at sector level under indirect management with beneficiary countries. The legal framework envisages also that sectorial monitoring committees may be set up on an ad hoc basis under other implementation methods, when appropriate. DG NEAR has revised the Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) methodology to enhance project management based on performance monitoring and results reporting by external experts.	**Follow-up** From the policy point of view, the Commission will continue to request national authorities to closely monitor the implementation of their Roma integration policy, the conclusions of the Roma Seminar and the Roma integration measures included in the Action Plan for Chapter 23 for the countries that are negotiating. Reporting will be required in the relevant Subcommittees, the Roma Seminars and every six months in the framework of negotiations Chapter 23. As regards IPA projects, guidelines will be issued by DG NEAR A4 on monitoring and evaluation, also addressing national authorities. The Commission will continue to encourage IPA beneficiaries to set up or improve existing national systems for monitoring and evaluations of policies and programmes. Continued reporting by relevant organisational entities.	**Implementation** In addition to the regular policy monitoring in the context of negotiations, SAA, Subcommittees and Progress Reports (see above), as of 2017 the Annual Roma integration Monitoring Report (AMR) system used by MS has been introduced in the enlargement region. This reporting tool is foreseen to contribute to the strengthening of the countries' monitoring systems and implementation of the respective Roma Strategies and Action Plans. Support for the implementation of this instrument and assessment of its results will be provided by the RI 2020 framework. Furthermore, a systematic monitoring of the implementation of the Roma Seminar conclusions is done in the relevant Subcommittees. Monitoring of IPA support will continue to be ensured by the national authorities in close cooperation with the EUDs/EUO for national projects and in the Steering Committees or other forms of regular managing meetings for multi-country projects. The role of CSOs will also be enhanced in this respect supported by ongoing CSF actions and the support to the two CSO Roma networks also mentioned above. In some countries, IPA funding has been provided for Technical Assistance for drafting, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of Roma Strategies (e.g. the 2016 IPA project in Turkey "Establishing Strong Monitoring, Evaluation and Coordination Mechanism for National Roma Integration Strategy". More actions of this type are being

Recommendations, Final report	Responses, DG NEAR: (i) accepted or not, ii) actions to be undertaken	Follow up	Implementation
			considered to enhance existing national systems for monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes).
b) The EU should **support** accession countries to i) **review their data** systems and identify the most appropriate and cost-effective approaches to collecting the necessary data, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity and location; ii) **develop** or adjust the **data collection** and analysis tools necessary; iii) **find ways of appropriately reporting** on the data at regular (ideally annually or with periodic booster samples if necessary) intervals. Support may be needed also at the **political level** to encourage countries to include the ethnic dimension in their regular monitoring, with reference to considerations of treaties and regulations on human rights and data protection[1].	**i) Partially Accepted** As regards data, capacity building to improve national statistical services and other data gathering and quality control is foreseen for several IPA countries under different IPA projects (EU Approximation Facility, EU Integration Facility etc.). Funds for evaluations on country level are foreseen under the IPA evaluation budget and/or directly in project budgets. As regards support at the political level, there is neither EU *acquis* nor a common practice among EUMS on the collection of ethnic data. This is in fact a somewhat controversial topic, and the follow up to this recommendation goes beyond the remits of this evaluation.	**Follow-up** The outcome of the Roma Survey (RRS) in the 2016 IPA II multi-country initiative aiming to get country data on the gap between Roma and non-Roma population, from all Western Balkans countries and Turkey in the integration priority areas, will give a clear contribution to set up a clear base line and strong monitoring tools. DG NEAR will consider in the future whether a Roma data dimension should be included in the IPA multi-country project supporting all national statistical offices to ensure the sustainability of the survey data. The recommendation will be followed up in the context of monitoring on-going projects and annual programming where relevant.	**Implementation** As mentioned above, two components of the IPA 2016 multi-country project focus on data collection: 1. The "Regional Roma Survey" (RRS). The results will be made available online and ready for use by those influencing Roma inclusion policies and programmes, and information sessions at local levels will be held. National Statistical Offices have been included in the Action. 2. The "Reintegration of Returnees in the Western Balkans" will identify the challenges that returnees encounter when returning to the Western Balkans as well as the response by local governments and the challenges they face as recipient municipalities. In Turkey, both quantitative and qualitative surveys have been prepared and implemented under the IPA funded SIROMA project, benefitting Turkish Ministries. In December 2016, in the Framework of the RI 2020 platform, a reginal workshop on "Monitoring and Reporting" was organised.
c) Given the similarities of the challenges between the accession countries, there could be benefits to **work at a multi-beneficiary level** (see recommendation 11).	**i) Accepted** The Commission is increasing the use of the IPA Multi-country programs on Roma integration. Such programs were adopted in 2014, 2015 and are foreseen in 2016.	**Follow-up** The recommendation will be followed up in the context of annual programming.	**Implementation** The monitoring tools have been harmonized for all countries as regards the definition of the base line (outcome of the Roma Survey) and Annual Roma integration Monitoring Report (AMR).
Recommendation 10: Evaluation and Learning	**i) Accepted** This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this	**Follow-up** The recommendation will be followed up in the context of the implementation of annual	**Implementation** In 2017, the RI2020 was the subject of a ROM review.

[1] See http://www.euromanet.eu/upload/26/36/BRIEF_ON_ETHNIC_DATA_COLLECTION.pdf

EX-POST EVALUATIONS OF THEMATIC EVALUATION ON IPA SUPPORT TO ROMA COMMUNITIES (Ref. Contract No 2014/344098)

FOLLOW-UP ON THE LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS, RELEVANT TO FUTURE IPA INSTRUMENT

Recommendations, Final report	Responses, DG NEAR: (i) accepted or not, ii) actions to be undertaken	Follow up	Implementation
a) **IPA II interventions for Roma** inclusion should be **routinely evaluated** – both at mid-term and ex-post.	recommendation where appropriate. DG NEAR has adequate tools in place to evaluate projects and sector programmes, also in the area of Roma integration.	evaluation plan of DG NEAR.	Further evaluations may be identified in accordance with the criteria that apply for the establishment of DG NEAR's Annual Evaluation Plan. Such evaluations are carried out either by the EUDs/EUO or by the HQ unit in charge of that project.
b) Holding the evaluation budget within the EU Delegations/Offices also enables joint evaluations of linked interventions (such as local level and policy level interventions).	**i) Accepted** Budgets for evaluations are foreseen under IPA II programmes.	**Follow-up** DG NEAR will continue with existing practice.	**Implementation** Budgets for evaluations are in general foreseen under IPA II programme envelopes, but due to the various programming cycles, it is too early to identify which programmes/projects might be the focus of an evaluation and when.
c) The European Commission should also consider how it can support the evaluation and learning capacities of the Enlargement Countries' governments and relevant institutions in this thematic area.	**i) Accepted** Budgets for evaluations are foreseen under IPA II programmes. DG NEAR Guidelines for monitoring and evaluation are being reviewed. Training concerning evaluation and monitoring is foreseen to be organised for beneficiaries both in country and in EC HQ.	**Follow-up** The DG NEAR Unit A4 "Thematic support, Monitoring and Evaluation" is finalising the evaluation and monitoring guidelines and organising training by the end of 2016.	**Implementation** Trainings in this field have been and will continue to be implemented as relevant. The guidelines "DG NEAR Guidelines on linking planning/ programming, Monitoring and Evaluation'" were finalised and published on the DG NEAR website in November 2016. Training workshops in the use of indicators, monitoring, evaluation and exchange of best practices have been organized by DG NEAR in in all IPA beneficiaries both in 2016 and 2017 bringing together staff from the national authorities and EC delegations.
d) **Findings of evaluations should be fed back into the policy and programming** cycles for both governments and the European Commission. One forum for this could be the biennial Roma Inclusion Seminars Evaluation and learning could be substantially supported by greater transparency of project/action information by EU Delegations/Offices and Enlargement Country governments.	**i) Accepted** The Commission already has a number of tools in place to evaluate projects and sector programmes, also in the area of Roma integration. This information and reports is public information that is made available to the outside world. DG NEAR is improving its Intranet page concerning evaluations in order to facilitate exchange of findings of evaluations between services, delegation and countries. Also an IT tool to track all evaluations managed by all DG DEVCO and NEAR services is being	**Follow-up** DG NEAR is following up on the evaluation recommendations as has been the case in this case triggering policy decision and identifying areas that require IPA support. As regards the transparency, the Evaluation page of the DG NEAR Intranet will be updated in 2016 by NEAR A4. The EVAL-module will be operational in mid-2016.	**Implementation** Follow up of the implementation of the recommendations made has been carried out on a continuous basis by the Roma adviser and her team. The DG NEAR intranet was updated in 2016 and all evaluations commissioned by DG NEAR HQ, and related follow up tables, are published on the DG NEAR website. The EVAL-module is operational, and its use is mandatory for DG NEAR and DEVCO delegations as of September 2016.

Recommendations, Final report	Responses, DG NEAR: (i) accepted or not, ii) actions to be undertaken	Follow up	Implementation
	developed jointly by DEVCO and NEAR to be launched during 2016 (EVAL-module).		
Recommendation 11: Multi-beneficiary Funds a) The European Commission should consider the following areas as of particular priority and suitability for multi-beneficiary support:		**Follow-up** The recommendation will be followed up in the context of annual programming where relevant.	**Implementation**
- **Regional policy development and research**. Multi-country policy research can draw conclusions and recommendations applicable to all Western Balkans countries and Turkey and from the experience in EU Member states and share relevant findings. Results of policy research needs to be followed through to the implementation level, which means practitioners should also be involved closely in the research and dissemination - **Support for Roma civil society**, networks and partnerships as a means for building awareness, capacities, sharing best practices, and importantly as an advocacy platform, would be a useful contribution to the Roma civil society development efforts. This support should also be given sufficient time for development, learning and follow through. - Support for **national statistical and monitoring systems**. Support can be given	**i) Accepted** This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation where appropriate. DG NEAR is already making use of the IPA Multi-country projects to address questions on Roma integration that are relevant for all enlargement countries. In that context we have already ongoing two important programmes: The Roma Integration 2020 initiative and the IPA civil society Roma network project. These two programmes cover regional policy, monitoring and support to civil society Initiatives are being taken to incorporate best possibly conclusions and lessons learned from other initiatives in the programming phases for IPA II (policy and programming discussions, distribution of reports and analyses etc.).	**Follow-up** Continue implementation of the ongoing Roma integration multi-country programmes. The Commission is currently working on a 2016 IPA II multi-country initiative aiming to get data on the gap between Roma and non Roma population from all Western Balkan countries and Turkey building on the work done in the past by UNDP and the World Bank (RRS). This program will cover also the development of Roma integration at local level (ROMACTED).	**Implementation** Currently there are five multi-country Roma projects that enable exchange of information, findings and experiences at regional, national and local level, between institutions and civil society. 1) The multi-country RI2020 platform has been ongoing since mid-2016. Until now it has contributed to enhancing institutional and policy capacities for mainstreamed and budgeted Roma policies, enhancing complementarity with EU Roma policies and improvement of regional cooperation. The project team participates in the annual EU Roma Platform events where they exchange experiences with stakeholders from EU member states and DG JUST. While the RI2020 is focused on the national level, the other two multi-country projects 2) "ROMACTED: Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level" and 3) the "Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey" are focused on local level and civil society organizations working on Roma issues. In this way, for the first time, all levels and interest groups are included through various actions. The implementing and participating actors regularly communicate and exchange information and experiences. In addition, two other projects conducted by UNDP and World Bank (4) the RSS and 5) the Returnees report) are focused on creating a base line for the enlargement region on the state of play of Roma integration in the priority areas. Obtaining quantitative and qualitative data will enable

Recommendations, Final report	Responses, DG NEAR: (i) accepted or not, ii) actions to be undertaken	Follow up	Implementation
to relatively standardised surveys and survey questions that enable meaningful samples of Roma population to be included (building on the work already done by UNICEF (MICS), UNDP and the World Bank, and the Fundamental Rights Agency).			clear monitoring and contribute to shaping policies according to the needs on the ground. The national Statistic Offices are involved as well.
b) For all of these suggestions, **any project should:** - be sufficiently long term, **focused** on achieving particular **results on the ground;** - demonstrate **added value** of involving more than one country/territory; - **prioritise** support to **smaller countries**/territories that cannot capitalise on economies of scale; - **avoid the over-use of international organisations**, and instead focus on building regional/local capacities.	**i) Partially Accepted** The Commission agrees with the comments on consistency and added-value of projects, local focus and sustainability, and is committed to the building of national and regional capacities. However, in the present context, involving International Organisations (IO) is often the only real option to run the overall program and achieve needed results. Project proposals from regional and local actors are encouraged and accepted when relevant. DG NEAR will increase emphasis in the context of project preparation to ensure that projects implemented by IOs will include involvement of regional, local actors aiming to provide sufficient capacity building to national and regional organisations to ensure progressive transfer of implementation capabilities to these organisations, so that eventually they will be able to apply in their own right to be take responsible of implementing of the overall EU funded project.	**Follow-up** The recommendation will be followed up in the context of annual programming where relevant.	**Implementation** During both the annual programming and monitoring exercises, the criteria of added value, identification of expected progress on the ground and special support to the smaller countries are taken into account.