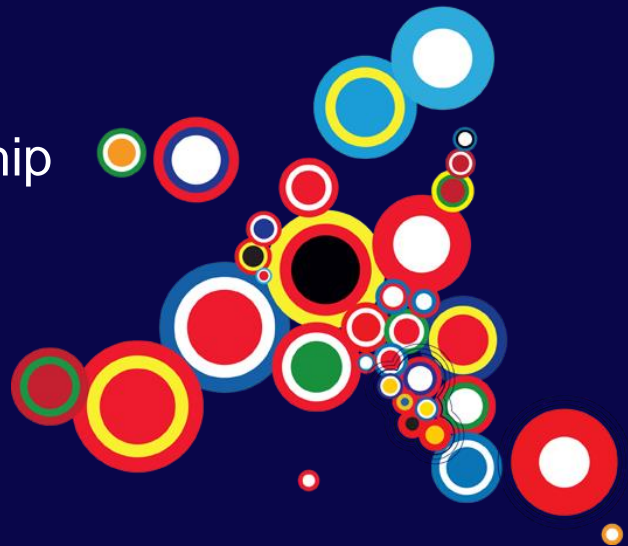




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

MULTI-COUNTRY

EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession (EPPA)



Action summary

The action will provide technical assistance to IPA II beneficiaries with a view to supporting their progress towards the adoption and implementation of the EU environment *acquis*, as well as strengthening regional cooperation in the environmental field.

The action will target the areas identified as having the biggest potential for progress with concrete deliverables. These include waste, water, air quality and industrial pollution, nature and biodiversity, combating illegal trade in timber and wildlife, as well as compliance checks of legislation.

It seeks to complement the work carried out under ECRAN (Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network) and to foster regional cooperation in new areas of interest to the EU. An important dimension of the action is the planned close collaboration and exchange with EU Member States' experts, as it also focuses on areas of intervention with impact on the EU as a whole and on EU citizens.

Action Identification			
Action Programme Title	IPA II Multi-country Action Programme 2017		
Action Title	EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession (EPPA)		
Action ID	IPA 2017/039-874.12/MC/EPPA		
Sector Information			
IPA II Sector	9. Regional and territorial cooperation		
DAC Sector	43010 - multi-sector aid		
Budget			
Total cost	EUR 2.5 million		
EU contribution	EUR 2.5 million		
Budget line(s)	22.020401		
Management and Implementation			
Management mode	Direct management (through cross sub-delegation)		
European Commission	DG ENV/F.2		
Implementation responsibilities	DG ENV/F.2		
Location			
Zone benefiting from the action	Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia) and Turkey		
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A		
Timeline			
Final date for contracting including the conclusion of delegation agreements	31 December 2018		
Final date for operational implementation	31 December 2021		
Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective

* 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.

Biological diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

During the pre-accession period, the candidates and potential candidates adapt their institutions, legislation and infrastructure to enable them to meet the obligations of a Member State (MS). The accession process involves compliance with the accession criteria, including adoption and implementation of the *acquis*.

The European Union (EU) has some of the world's highest environmental standards. Environment policy helps green the EU economy, protect nature and safeguard the health and quality of life of people living in the EU and beyond. The environmental *acquis* comprises over 200 major legal acts, representing a third of the total EU *acquis*, and covers areas such as horizontal legislation, water and air quality, waste management, nature protection, industrial pollution control and risk management, chemicals, noise etc. The implementation and compliance with the *acquis* requires significant investments as well as well-equipped administrative capacity at central and local levels. IPA II beneficiaries would benefit from additional technical assistance to help them meet the obligations and responsibilities stemming from the EU environmental *acquis*.

The Beneficiaries concerned by this action include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

Although the progress made by Beneficiaries on their way towards the European path varies, as far as negotiation for Chapter 27 – Environment is concerned two key common problems can be identified:

- (1) limited financial resources and administrative capacity;
- (2) low priority of environmental policy in IPA II beneficiaries;
- (3) persisting shortcomings in policy and legislative development and coordination systems, in particular regarding the limited inter-institutional and public consultation, use of analytical tools and fiscal and regulatory impact assessment, as well as limited capacities to estimate costs of implementation and therefore secure sufficient funds; and
- (4) high staff turnover in public institutions which may affect the impact of capacity building activities.

Given their geographical proximity, IPA II beneficiaries share a number of common and trans-boundary issues that require a coordinated regional approach. In addition, certain policy areas (e.g. forest protection) would benefit from strengthened regional co-operation and awareness raising, including better coordination amongst the various competent enforcement authorities.

The previous environmental cooperation programmes such as the Regional Environmental Network for Accession (RENA) and the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN) have provided important technical assistance for capacity building. However, further work is still needed to address the capacity gaps regarding the implementation of the environmental *acquis* that exist and to promote and ensure compliance with the new pieces of EU legislation and policy objectives. The aim of the action is also to encourage Beneficiaries to look towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns, more resource efficiency and the implementation of circular economy principles

A new support programme will aim at building on the results of the RENA and ECRAN projects by furthering the regional cooperation and strengthening the administrative capacities of IPA II beneficiaries. Regional cooperation provides the framework for sharing knowledge, expertise and good practices, and for addressing common environmental problems in a more sustainable and efficient way.

The current proposal presents only several selected themes under each of the sectors. The action has no ambition to address all the shortcomings and capacity gaps at the level of the IPA II beneficiaries. The areas presented in the framework of this action were selected in consultation with the Beneficiaries and EU services due to their potential to deliver tangible and measurable results in terms of progress towards the European path if adequate level of commitment is ensured by the targeted administrations. Also, they have the potential to strengthen regional cooperation between the Beneficiaries. Finally, this selective approach results also from the lessons learnt from previous initiatives and their outcomes, in particular ECRAN, and from the different levels of progress the Beneficiaries have on their European path. **However, as IPA II beneficiaries' progress in the approximation and implementation of the environmental *acquis*, it is**

anticipated that new areas of cooperation will be identified during implementation of this action and new needs for capacity building and support will emerge, both at local and regional level.

IPA II beneficiaries face a number of specific environmental challenges in several key areas:

Waste management is a challenge for all Beneficiaries given the high investments needs in this area, the need to reinforce the role of the local and regional authorities and the involvement of multiple actors. The challenge rests with the implementation of sustainable management of the different waste streams given the lack of adequate waste management policies, legislation and facilities.

Previous technical assistance in the area of waste management focused on the assessment of the waste management policies and waste management plans and on the development of "National Waste Assessments" (NWA) and Roadmaps for improving waste management for IPA II beneficiaries.

This action builds on the outcomes and recommendations of the previous assistance in the area and focuses on further aligning the policies and legislation in IPA II beneficiaries with the waste hierarchy¹. The focus should be on helping the Beneficiaries implement the Roadmaps developed, on supporting their transition to more resource efficiency and to the circular economy model.

In the area of **water**, the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides the legislative framework for addressing trans-boundary pollution problems, setting out the basis for the implementation of commonly shared principles such as a basin-wide holistic approach, ecosystem management, etc. Implementation of the EU water legislation regulating water pollution from various sources – Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD), Nitrates Directive, Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), Ground Water Directive, etc. – is quite at an early stage in the region. There is a need to better coordinate the efforts of the Beneficiaries to combat pollution of their waters, to allow a sustainable use of waters and water conservation and to provide flood protection.

The previous technical assistance in the water sector has focused on regional cooperation and management of trans-boundary water resources. Beside capacity building provided under RENA for a better understanding of the requirements of the WFD, the assistance provided under ECRAN addressed the development of trans-boundary river basin management plans, the links between the WFD and the Marine Strategy Directive and the cost recovery and cost-effectiveness of water resources including the use of innovative systems of waste water treatment.

Given the complexity of the water *acquis*, there is still a need for continued support for IPA II beneficiaries to transpose and implement the legislation in the water sector, including the marine issues. Another aim is to strengthen the trans-boundary water cooperation and protection including with the concerned EU Member States and support the regional coordination mechanisms such as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), endorsed by the European Council in June 2011, and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), endorsed by the European Council in October 2014.

Nature protection is another area where IPA II beneficiaries need to implement the relevant EU *acquis* and the requirements under Multilateral Environmental Agreements and where the progress in implementation is at an early stage.

IPA II beneficiaries are lagging behind in the implementation of key pieces of nature legislation, i.e. the Birds and Habitats Directives. Given that several areas of high natural value stretch across borders/boundaries (between IPA II beneficiaries or the neighbouring EU Member States), it is important that Beneficiaries should work together and with the Member States concerned to prepare for the future designation of NATURA 2000 sites and to foster collaboration towards establishment of the adequate management systems.

¹ The European Union's approach to waste management is based on the "waste hierarchy" which sets the following priority order when shaping waste policy and managing waste at the operational level: prevention, (preparing for) reuse, recycling, recovery and, as the least preferred option, disposal (which includes landfilling and incineration without energy recovery).

Progress made recently by the EU with regards to biodiversity, combating invasive alien species, illegal timber trade and wildlife trafficking calls for additional capacity building and awareness raising activities at the level of the Beneficiaries. These issues can be best and more effectively addressed at regional level, hence cooperation between the Beneficiaries is essential. In this regard, the EUSDR and the EUSAIR represent important platforms for cooperation, as most of these issues are covered by these Strategies.

Restoring natural habitats and building green infrastructure remains a priority for Europe. As owners of a wealth of species and habitats, the Beneficiaries need support for the assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services which will be provided building on the EU initiative on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES), Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) and contributing to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) regional and global assessments. As regards the protection of biodiversity, capacity building on green infrastructure aims to identify the potential contribution of green infrastructure to biodiversity conservation in the Beneficiaries and to provide support for the policy implementation.

An important step towards halting biodiversity loss has been taken by the EU when adopting the first EU list of invasive alien species in 2016. The list contains 37 species that cause damage on a scale that justifies dedicated measure across the Union and not only. Species on the list will be subject to restrictions on keeping, importing, selling, breeding and growing. The Beneficiaries would benefit from reaching compliance with the Invasive Alien Species Regulation and cooperation with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) to link their alien species databases with European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN) and thus become data contributors.

Illegal logging has a devastating impact on forests and on the people who rely on the resources that forests provide. It undermines the legitimacy of the forest sector and hinders the efforts of governments to implement sustainable forest management and develop international trade.

The EU is the largest consumer of timber products from IPA II beneficiaries for whom the forest sector represents an important part of their economies. EU Timber Regulation and the broader EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan have proved to be excellent tools to tackle illegal logging. The capacities of IPA II beneficiaries in this sector need to be strengthened and close inter-institutional relations to be established to ensure mutual economic and environmental benefits for the EU and IPA II beneficiaries.

IPA II beneficiaries need to build close inter-institutional relations and private sector networks internally, between each other and with the EU Member States with the aim of developing good governance in the forest sector as well as for lowering the risk of illegal timber exported to the EU.

IPA II beneficiaries are all Parties to the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species** (CITES). The EU implements the CITES Convention through the Wildlife Trade Regulations, under which imports from and exports to IPA II beneficiaries are regulated and monitored.

In February 2016, the European Commission adopted a Communication on the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking which sets out a comprehensive blueprint for joined-up efforts to fight wildlife crime inside the EU, and for strengthening the EU's role in the global fight against these illegal activities. The plan has three main strands - greater enforcement, better cooperation, and more effective prevention. Cooperation with IPA II beneficiaries in this area needs support as it will contribute to the implementation of the Plan.

There is a clear need to step up enforcement efforts in the region and to reinforce the capacities of customs and control agencies to combat wildlife trafficking, in line with the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking adopted in 2016. The Balkan route has been identified in a number of cases as a major transit point for illegal wildlife trafficked to the EU via Turkey.

Air pollution in Southeast Europe remains one of the highest in Europe. Pollution with particulate matters is very high due mainly to industry and increased traffic in big cities. Air quality plans and monitoring systems need to be developed or improved in order to speed up the alignment with the EU *acquis* in this field.

Capacity building for managing the air quality *acquis* is necessary for further alignment, especially in three specific areas within the sector: air quality monitoring and preparation of air quality plans, the sulphur emissions from the maritime transport and the implementation of the IED. A first step in this direction was made under ECRAN, where several workshops have been provided to the Beneficiaries on the content and requirements of the EU air quality legislation (e.g. on Air Quality Assessment and Management, "National Emissions Ceiling Directive", air quality modelling).

Humans can be adversely affected by exposure to air pollutants in ambient air. In response, the European Union has developed an extensive body of legislation which establishes health based standards and objectives for a number of pollutants in air. Assessment of ambient air quality through monitoring, modelling, and objective estimation provides information on the compliance with the environmental standards and informs further air pollution abatement effort. The assessment covers the minimum assessment requirements set in the directive as well as the additional assessment such as source apportionment, in particular in agglomerations and areas with high pollution. In their efforts to implement the air quality legislation, IPA II beneficiaries need to be able to assure air quality monitoring, air quality management and reporting, air quality assessment methodologies and development of air quality improvements plan according to the Air Quality Directive.

Emissions of air pollutants like sulphur dioxide can travel long distances, and in the recent years, emissions from maritime transport have increasingly affected air quality in the EU. As shipping is an international industry, environmental, security and safety standards are developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The maximum permissible sulphur content of marine fuels inside and outside of SECAs limits set by IMO are now present in EU law under the Directive 2012/33/EU. The relevant environmental inspectorates in the Beneficiaries need to be able to implement the EU requirements in this area, process that will be beneficial not only for IPA II beneficiaries but, given the nature of the air pollution linked to sulphur dioxide, also for the EU.

The second area of focus within this sector is the Industrial Emissions Directive (Directive 2010/75/EU). This is the main EU instrument regulating pollutant emissions from industrial installations. The practical application of Best Available Techniques (BATs) and permitting setting the conditions in accordance with the principles and provisions of the IED is a challenging process that needs additional capacity building.

Compliance checks

The European Commission has an institutional responsibility to assist in the alignment process and to assess legislation in this regards, in particular for beneficiaries with on-going negotiations towards the European perspective. Given the limited capacities of IPA II beneficiaries, compliance checks of draft legislation are essential as they allow identifying and eliminating potential errors before the legislative procedure is finalised by a candidate or potential candidate. Therefore, it is proposed to provide access to this form of assistance to IPA II beneficiaries, in agreement with DG NEAR, by a third party in the framework of the action. Compliance checks may cover all environment sub-sectors, depending on the needs arising.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

This action will focus mainly on addressing the problem of limited technical and administrative capacity. In this sense, the stakeholders targeted by the action are mainly the central and local public administrations.

The action will also contribute to raising the profile of the environmental policy at the level of the IPA II beneficiaries through high level policy meetings and conferences at regional and IPA II beneficiary level on environmental priorities.

More specifically, the action will contribute to the achievement of the following specific objectives:

- support for political reforms, inter alia through strengthening of public administration and good governance at all levels;
- support for economic, social and territorial development, with a view to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth inter alia through economic reforms necessary to cope with competitive pressure and market forces in the Union, while contributing to the achievement of social and environmental goals;
- strengthening of the ability of the Beneficiaries at all levels to fulfil the obligations stemming from Union membership by supporting progressive alignment with, and adoption, implementation and enforcement of, the Union *acquis*.

This action considers not only providing support for capacity building to IPA II beneficiaries but it also focuses on areas of intervention with impact on the EU as a whole and on the EU citizens. For these reasons the focus is on common environmental issues between EU Member States and IPA II beneficiaries such as marine environment, air quality issues and trade in timber and wildlife.

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

The action will be directly contributing to the achievement of the general objective of IPA II Regulation², namely support the Beneficiaries in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required in order to comply with the Union's values and to progressively align to the Union's rules, standards, policies and practices, with a view to Union membership.

The action is in line with the **Multi-country Strategy Paper 2014-2020 (MCSP)**³ that promotes investment in the area of environment to strengthen the protection of the environment, quality of life particularly in the areas of water, waste management and air pollution, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the development towards a resource-efficient, low carbon economy.

As mentioned in the MCSP, IPA II beneficiaries will continue to be assisted in developing their strategic thinking and planning the transposition and implementation of the environment acquis including their investments needs and their prioritisation by regional programmes that will provide an interface between the regional aspects and the specific IPA II beneficiary's priorities.

The action addresses also the priorities set out by the **Enlargement Strategy**, in particular the regional cooperation and the connectivity agenda. Improving connectivity requires investments to improve transport and energy infrastructure. However, such efforts require respect of the relevant environmental legislation and mainstreaming.

Cooperation between EU Member States and IPA II beneficiaries is also a key element of the **EUSDR**. Building also on the enlargement process, the Danube Strategy has put in place a cooperation structure to address common challenges and to achieve four strategic policy objectives: connecting the Danube Region; protecting the environment, building prosperity and strengthening the Danube Region.

The **EUSAIR** intends to build on the lessons learnt inter alia from the EUSDR and pursues similar objectives. The action will also contribute to strengthening cooperation of the Member States with IPA II beneficiaries under EUSAIR. The Adriatic-Ionian Strategy focuses on number of areas of mutual interest, where the added value of cooperation is the highest: Blue growth; Connecting the Region; Environmental quality; and Sustainable tourism.

For these reasons, both the EUSDR and the EUSAIR represent two important cooperation frameworks for the implementation of the proposed action and for facilitating synergies with other relevant initiatives/projects. As stated in the implementation report on the **EU Macro-Regional Strategies**⁴, recently adopted by the European Commission, the Strategies have become an important instrument in the relations between EU Member States and IPA II beneficiaries.

This action is also taking into consideration the regional strategy **South East Europe 2020 (SEE 2020)** modelled on the Europe 2020 strategy, that it seeks to promote a comprehensive approach to the economic development of the region by stimulating key long-term drivers of growth – innovation, skills and trade integration. Regional headline targets to be achieved by 2020 have been set for five development priorities: integrated, smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, as well as governance for growth. The sustainable growth pillar aims at raising the level of competitiveness in the private sector, development of infrastructure and encouraging greener and more energy-efficient growth. Areas of action are climate change, irrigation of agricultural land, forestation, water management.

Finally, it is worth to flag that most of the IPA II beneficiaries have committed to horizontal public administration reform (PAR) and have developed (or are developing) comprehensive PAR strategies and action plans. Therefore, this action will take the PAR efforts into consideration. In particular assistance will align with the approach advocated by the 'Better Regulation Agenda' thus ensuring that policy documents and legislation are developed in an open, transparent, inclusive and evidence-based way.

² Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II)

³ European Commission, Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, Multi-country Indicative Strategy Paper (2014-2020), adopted on 30/06/2014

⁴ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Region on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies (COM(2016) 805 final)

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The following lessons have been drawn from the experience of ECRAN:

- Need for more active involvement of the European Commission to ensure the quality of the content delivered by the contractor and its alignment with the policy priorities.
- Given the limited absorption capacity in IPA II beneficiaries, the number of training events organised per year needs to be lowered. Therefore, the current action proposes a more focused approach with a lower number of workshops and events to be organised but better targeted. This will also allow for a more active involvement of DG ENV.
- The organisation of activities will need to take into consideration the different level of progress in aligning with the *acquis* of the Beneficiaries. Their organisation will be at sub-regional, regional or IPA II beneficiary level depending on the topic to be covered.
- A better link needs to be established between the resources allocated, activities and the targeted results to provide a better results oriented focus.
- The measurement indicators to be used needs to be precise, ambitious, while realistic.
- The involvement of other stakeholders in the region including the EU Delegations needs to be improved.

In addition, a general lesson learned is that EU assistance has sometimes contributed to building capacities in one particular sector and to create sectoral isolated 'islands of excellence', which are rarely sustainable in the overall administrative environment. This has notably been criticised by the Court of Auditors (e.g. draft Meta Audit on IPA I assistance).

Finally, despite substantial EU assistance on *acquis* alignment, the Beneficiaries continue to suffer from poor implementation and enforcement record of laws and policies. This is to a large extent due to the fact that support (including by the Commission services) focuses on technical alignment (content) but does not pay sufficient attention to the poor quality of the law-and policy-making processes, which largely define whether new laws and policies can be implemented and enforced. The common problems are weak or non-existing (regulatory/fiscal) impact assessments of proposed laws and policies, poor inter-ministerial coordination and external (public) stakeholder consultations.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To strengthen the implementation of the EU environmental <i>acquis</i> in the Western Balkans and Turkey in areas relevant for addressing trans-boundary environmental issues.	Progress towards the implementation of the EU environmental <i>acquis</i> in IPA II beneficiaries	Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports)	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
To foster and strengthen regional cooperation in the Western Balkans and Turkey in policy areas with a trans-boundary character such as waste management, nature protection, biodiversity, air quality, industrial pollution, and water management	Progress towards the implementation of the EU environmental <i>acquis</i> in IPA II beneficiaries and in particular in managing regionally the different trans-boundary issues in waste, nature protection, biodiversity conservation, air pollution, industrial pollution, and water management sectors.	Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports) Annual European Commission Enlargement package Number of ESPOO Convention trans-boundary consultations Bilateral agreements between the Beneficiaries	- Political and security situation in the region stable - Willingness from the part of the relevant stakeholders to address and manage the trans-boundary issues at regional and sub-regional level.
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Result 1 (General) Information provided to the environmental ministries and other relevant public administration institutions on the latest policy priorities in the environmental policy area	- Number of regional conferences/forums organised - Number of conferences/forums organised at IPA II beneficiary level	Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports) Strategies and Action Plans at IPA II beneficiary level include EU environmental policy objectives	- Political and security situation in the region stable. - Commitment of IPA II beneficiaries political elites to proactively participate in the action
Result 2: Waste Capacity building and technical expertise provided to IPA II beneficiaries for the preparation of waste management plans, the development of policies and the revision of legislation in line with EU waste priorities (i.e. waste hierarchy and transition to a circular economy)	- Number of waste management plans prepared - Number of waste policies amended - Legislation revised when non-compliance with EU <i>acquis</i> is being identified as part of the technical assistance provided	Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports) Annual European Commission Enlargement package	- Political and security situation in the region stable - Commitment of IPA II beneficiaries to proactively participate in the action

<p>Result 3: Water Regional cooperation in trans-boundary water management and protection of the marine and coastal environment facilitated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree to which progress is made with the implementation of selected Directives in IPA II beneficiaries (selected structural measures in place etc.) - Number of small pilot actions/application for large-scale transnational actions/ application for technical assistance prepared by stakeholders - Number of meetings attended in the framework of EUSAIR/EUSDR 	<p>Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports)</p> <p>Annual European Commission Enlargement package</p> <p>Applications for EU financing instruments (e.g. ESIF, Horizon 2020, LIFE)</p> <p>EUSAIR/ EUSDR meeting reports</p>	
<p>Result 4: Air The capacity to address trans-boundary air quality issues and to further the alignment to the air quality legislation strengthened</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of IED structural measures established or strengthened by stakeholders (for example: systems to issues permits in line with the provisions of IED established or strengthened etc.) - Levels of air pollution kept below the target values 	<p>Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports)</p> <p>Annual European Commission Enlargement package</p> <p>Air pollution reports provided by the Beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political and security situation in the region stable - Commitment of IPA II beneficiaries to proactively participate in the action
<p>Result 5: Nature Regional cooperation in managing trans-boundary nature protection, marine and coastal matters facilitated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of IAS structural measures developed (for example IAS databases established etc). - Number of meetings for exchange of best practices among the managing authorities of the natural sites - Degree to which progress is made in the implementation of the EUSAIR/EUSDR activities in the biodiversity policy area 	<p>Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action</p> <p>Annual European Commission Enlargement package</p> <p>EUSAIR/EUSDR reports on the environmental quality pillar of the Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political and security situation in the region stable - Commitment of the IPA II beneficiaries to proactively participate in the action
<p>Result 6: Combating illegal trade Regional cooperation for combating illegal timber trade facilitated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree to which progress is made towards establishing relevant legislation in IPA II beneficiaries - Degree of enforcement cooperation - Degree to which selected structural measures are established (for example: systems in place to issue permits etc). 	<p>Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports)</p> <p>Annual European Commission Enlargement package</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political and security situation in the region stable - Commitment of the IPA II beneficiaries to proactively participate in the action

<p>Result 7: Trade in wild fauna and flora- CITES Regional cooperation for combating wildlife trafficking facilitated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree to which progress made towards establishing relevant legislation in IPA II beneficiaries - Degree of enforcement cooperation (for example, creation of regional wildlife enforcement network or participation in the EU wildlife enforcement network etc) 	<p>Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports)</p> <p>Annual European Commission Enlargement package</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political and security situation in the region stable - Commitment of IPA II beneficiaries to proactively participate in the action
<p>Result 8: Compliance checks Compliance checks for draft legislation prepared</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of compliance checks prepared 	<p>Action Final Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient demand for compliance checks - Budget available to implement compliance checks

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Indicative list of activities that will be implemented, in the limits of the budget available.

Result 1 – Information provided to the environmental ministries and other relevant public administration institutions on the latest policy priorities in the environmental policy area

- Action 1.1 – Organisation of regional and Beneficiary level conferences/forums in environmental priorities as envisaged by the 7th EAP (max. 2 regional and up to 7 events at Beneficiary level).

Result 2 – Capacity building and technical expertise provided to IPA II beneficiaries for the preparation of waste management plans, the development of policies and the revision of legislation in line with EU waste priorities (i.e. waste hierarchy and transition to a circular economy).

- Action 2.1 – Assistance for the implementation of the Roadmaps for improving the waste management (result of the SEEWA project) in view of furthering the alignment with the acquis and support for the transition to more resource efficiency and circular economy model.
- Action 2.2 – Revisions, if necessary, by the Beneficiaries of the waste management plans, policies and legislation. Presentation of the outcome during a follow-up workshop.
- Action 2.3 – Implementation of conferences at regional and Beneficiary level on resource efficiency and circular economy issues.

Result 3 – Regional cooperation in trans-boundary water management and protection of the marine and coastal environment facilitated

- Action 3.1 – Assistance for the implementation of the EUSAIR and EUSDR Strategies: e.g. Assistance for the development and implementation of small pilot actions (e.g. SEA of a plan/programme) and/or for the preparation of applications of large scale transnational actions funded through different EU instruments (e.g. ESIF, Horizon 2020 and LIFE/natural capital financing facility) and/or for preparation of applications for technical assistance under EUSAIR/EUSDR.
- Action 3.2 – Participation of experts in EUSAIR and EUSDR meetings (e.g. Steering Group, annual forums, other relevant events)
- Action 3.3 – Assistance for managing marine litter and support to the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive
- Action 3.4 – Assistance for the implementation of Barcelona Convention.
- Action 3.5 – Assistance for dealing with water management issues of land-locked Beneficiaries based on their identification of key issues.

Result 4 – The capacity to address trans-boundary air quality issues and to further the alignment to the air quality legislation strengthened

- Action 4.1 - Assistance on capacity building related to air quality monitoring, air quality management and reporting, air quality assessment methodologies and development of air quality improvements plan according to the Air Quality Directive.
- Action 4.2 – Assistance for dealing with BAT and permits setting the conditions in accordance with the principles and provisions of the IED.
- Action 4.3. - Capacity building for the implementation of the Convention on Long-range Trans-boundary Air Pollution and on limiting and monitoring the sulphur emissions in maritime transport
- Action 4.4 – Other assistance developed in cooperation with the Beneficiaries based on their identification of key issues.

Result 5 – Regional cooperation in managing trans-boundary nature protection, marine and coastal matters facilitated

- Action 5.1 – Support for the implementation of the EUSAIR and EUSDR activities in the area of nature protection and biodiversity.
- Action 5.2 - Assistance for the identification of marine protected areas and exchange of best practices to achieve and/or to maintain the good ecological status of marine waters and preserve biodiversity.
- Action 5.3 – Capacity building on invasive alien species of Union concern on the territory of the Beneficiaries including support for the cooperation with JRC to link the alien species databases with EASIN and thus become data contributors.
- Action 5.4 - Implementation of conferences at regional and Beneficiary level on Biodiversity Strategy.

Result 6 – Regional cooperation for combating illegal timber trade facilitated

- Action 6.1 – Elaboration of a study on trends in timber trade in IPA II beneficiaries and between the Beneficiaries and the EU;
- Action 6.2 – Elaboration of a study on existing administrative and legislative aspects (e.g. documents accompanying trade and related procedures, cooperation with customs) and relevant stakeholders in IPA II beneficiaries;
- Action 6.3 – Assistance for the exchange of information and best practices between the Beneficiaries;
- Action 6.4 – Involvement of IPA II beneficiaries in the project LEAF and the new forest crime working group;
- Action 6.5 – Assistance for the facilitation of legal trade, including cooperation between chambers of commerce.

Result 7 – Regional cooperation for combating wildlife trafficking facilitated

- Action 7.1 – Establishment of a regional wildlife enforcement network for cooperation between the relevant authorities in the Beneficiaries and similar EU networks;
- Action 7.2 – Assistance on establishing permitting system;
- Action 7.3 – Capacity building on CITES for the enforcement authorities.

Result 8 – Compliance checks for draft legislation prepared

- Action 8.1 – Checks for compliance of mature drafts or adopted acts by external consultants. This is a demand driven activity and the final number of the checks will depend on the number of requests. Requests will be considered with a consultation of DG NEAR headquarters geographical desks and EU Delegations. Compliance checks may cover all environment sub-sectors, depending on the needs arising.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) will be involved in EPPA's activities as often as relevant. They will be invited to take part in the different capacity building meetings and will thus benefit from EPPA knowledge transfer. It will allow them to maximise their roles and interventions when accompanying and monitoring the alignment with EU environment acquis.

A mid-term event may be organised to discuss with CSOs the first results of EPPA and the challenges remaining ahead.

RISKS

Identification of risks related to the achievement of the results presented above.

Result 1 – Awareness raising on new environmental policy developments and strengthen regional cooperation

- Lack of interest and will to participate in the regional conferences/events on environment

Mitigation measure: involvement of the European Commission from the early stages and early preparation of the events with the involvement of the Beneficiaries.

Result 2 – Waste - Transition to circular economy

- Lack of beneficiary capacity to revise the waste management plans

Mitigation measure: technical assistance provided to allow increase knowledge on the side of Beneficiaries to revise the waste management plans.

- Lack of willingness and /or capacity to implement the SEEWA Roadmaps

Mitigation measure: regular dialogue, participation of the European Commission in workshops to raise the profile, addressing the implementation of the Roadmaps during the annual sub-committee meetings.

Result 3 – Water – Protection of marine and coastal environment

- Lack of financial means to participate in the EUSAIR/EUSDR meetings/events

Mitigation measure: possibility to cover the costs of the participation

- Lack of capacity to manage marine and coastal environment

Mitigation measure: technical assistance provided to allow increase knowledge on the side of Beneficiaries to manage marine and coastal environments.

Result 4 - Air and industrial pollution – Management of trans-boundary air quality challenges

- Dealing with the complexity of BAT and permits setting in a regional project

Mitigation measure: organisation of workshops at Beneficiary level if needed to deal with specificities in the Beneficiaries.

- Lack of political support and financial means to improve the air quality legislation and implementation of the acquis

Mitigation measure: involvement of the European Commission during bilateral dialogues with the Beneficiaries.

Result 5 – Nature and biodiversity

- Lack of capacity to participate in the activities and reduced concrete outputs related to the low prioritisation of nature and biodiversity issues in the Beneficiaries

Mitigation measure: awareness raising about the relevant EU legislation in bilateral contacts with the Beneficiaries; involvement of high level decision makers in a regional conference.

- Lack of financial means to establish the IAS databases.

Result 6 – Combating the illegal logging

- Low prioritisation of illegal trade issues in the Beneficiaries, resulting in lack of interest to participate in the activities

Mitigation measure: awareness raising about the relevant EU legislation in bilateral contacts with the Beneficiaries.

Result 7 – Trade in wild fauna and flora (CITES)

- Lack of political support to deal with the trade in wild fauna and flora issues

Mitigation measure: participation of Beneficiaries in EU expert meeting on the subject.

Result 8 – Compliance checks

- Lack of demand for compliance checks
- Excessive demand for compliance checks

Mitigation measure: political dialogue and planning together with the Beneficiaries, consultation with DG NEAR (including regarding budget implications)

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Political support for alignment with the EU acquis;
- Availability of the Beneficiaries to actively participate in the events organised in the framework of the action and to provide expected deliverables before each event;
- Concrete deliverables will also require investments by IPA II beneficiaries and therefore a commitment from their side to follow up the capacity building and the regional cooperation initiatives with concrete investments will be necessary for the success of the action;
- Administrative capacity of the European Commission (in particular in DG ENV) not reduced and sufficient to ensure adequate follow up of the action from technical and administrative point of view.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The main institutional stakeholders include Line Ministries (responsible for environmental policies):

- **Albania** - Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** - Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology (Republika Srpska), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (Republika Srpska).
- **Kosovo** - Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
- **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
- **Montenegro** - Ministry of Tourism and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Agriculture (Water)
- **Serbia** - Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection
- **Turkey** - Ministry of Environment and Urbanization

The stakeholders identified above will be playing an important role in ensuring that other relevant stakeholders at central and regional level are adequately involved in the action. In particular, the action will involve the institutions centrally responsible for planning and monitoring EU approximation alignment as well as the institutions in charge of the preparation of the Governments' programmes.

The main coordination arrangement for the action will be the Steering Committee. One senior representative of each administration will be invited to participate in the Steering Committee. The Committee will be chaired by a senior civil servant in DG ENV (HoU F2). The meetings (1 per year) will be also attended by the representatives of the technical units. The Steering Committee will provide an opportunity for the Beneficiaries to shape the programme of the action by proposing concrete initiatives or areas for cooperation. The Beneficiaries will be requested to report in detail their respective use of the results of the actions and the progress made.

In order to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of the action, it is proposed to use an approach that requires substantial preparatory work from the Beneficiaries ahead of an action event or between events.

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

The action will be managed directly by DG ENV/F.2. It will be implemented through a service contract which should be signed during Q2 2018. The tender procedure, and subsequently the action, will follow the rules set by the Practical Guide for Procurement and Grants for European Union external actions (PRAG).

4. Performance measurement

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

The action will be monitored in four ways:

- Regular progress technical and financial reports (at least one per year)

Regular technical and financial reporting will be required from the contractor/s who will be required to report on the progress towards the achievement of the expected results. A summary report on the achievements and impact of the action as well as the level of budget execution will be attached to each report and circulated to the colleagues in DG ENV, DG NEAR, Delegations and Beneficiaries.

- Regular supervision by DG ENV

Because it is expected that DG ENV will participate in several of the events, this will provide an opportunity for the first hand monitoring of the quality of the work delivered by the contractor

- Regular feedback from the Beneficiaries and the EU Delegations

Regular feedback will be requested from the Beneficiaries and the EU Delegations. They will be asked to assess the quality of the activities, their usefulness for the administrations and present how the results of each event were used and implemented. This feedback will be requested from each of the Beneficiaries during the Steering Committee meetings.

- The specific progress evaluation for each Beneficiary carried out in 2019

ECRAN delivered on an annual basis a so-called progress report. Each of the candidates and potential candidates did a self - assessment and completed a set of templates which were used to compile a progress report showing whether a Beneficiary had advanced with the transposition and implementation of the key environmental legislative acts in a given year. However, because the progress in several of IPA II beneficiaries has been very slow or limited it was concluded that carrying this exercise on yearly basis has little added value. Furthermore, while the self-assessment formula contains an important element of the capacity building it might not be fully objective.

Therefore, we propose to use the last ECRAN progress reports as a baseline and to carry out progress evaluation for each Beneficiary only once during the action lifetime, in 2019 (second last year of the action). The proposed evaluation will combine the self-assessment with objective external evaluation. Such exercise will deliver a number of benefits. Firstly, we will be able to gain a good insight into the level of approximation achieved by each of IPA II beneficiaries which than can be used during our bilateral discussions, preparations of the 2020 Beneficiary reports etc. Secondly, progress evaluation will be useful to design future local or regional assistance programs or initiatives in an informed way. And thirdly, the

progress evaluation will specifically (although not exclusively) focus on the areas targeted by the action, thus allowing to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and degree to which the results are achieved.

The European Commission may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the DG NEAR guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline (2016) (2)	Target 2020 (3)	Final Target (2020) (4)	Source of information
<p>Trans-boundary issues in waste, nature protection, biodiversity conservation, air pollution, industrial pollution and water management sectors managed by the beneficiaries regionally.</p>	<p>Limited regional cooperation in managing trans-boundary environmental issues.</p> <p>Moderate progress made by the beneficiaries under RENA and ECRAN in the form of exchange of information, best practices and creation of informal networks for managing trans-boundary issues</p>	<p>Improved regional cooperation in managing trans-boundary environmental issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regional cooperation for managing trans-boundary natural protected areas, as well as coastal and marine resources and ecosystems - regional cooperation for addressing air pollution problems - regional networks established for managing the trade in illegal timber and the trafficking of wild flora and fauna 	<p>Improved regional cooperation in managing trans-boundary environmental issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regional cooperation for managing trans-boundary natural protected areas, as well as coastal and marine resources and ecosystems - regional cooperation for addressing air pollution problems - regional networks established for managing the trade in illegal timber and the trafficking of wild flora and fauna 	<p>Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports)</p> <p>Annual European Commission Enlargement package</p> <p>Number of ESPOO Convention trans-boundary consultations</p> <p>Bilateral agreements between the Beneficiaries</p>
<p>Progress in aligning with the waste legislation</p>	<p>Albania – legislative alignment advanced; implementation at early stage</p>	<p>Very advanced level of transposition of waste legislation in all beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Very advanced level of transposition of waste legislation in all beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports)</p> <p>Annual European Commission Enlargement package</p>

	<p>Bosnia and Herzegovina - legislative alignment in early stages; implementation at early stages</p> <p>The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - legislative alignment advanced; implementation at early stage</p> <p>Kosovo - legislative alignment advanced; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Montenegro - legislative alignment advanced; implementation at early stage</p> <p>Serbia - legislative alignment advanced; implementation at early stage</p> <p>Turkey – legislative alignment mostly aligned; implementation moderately advanced.</p>	Advanced level of implementation	Advanced level of implementation	
Progress in aligning with the water legislation	Albania – legislative alignment in early stages; implementation at early stages	Very advanced level of transposition of water legislation in all beneficiaries.	Very advanced level transposition of water legislation in all beneficiaries.	Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports) Annual European Commission Enlargement package

	<p>Bosnia and Herzegovina - legislative alignment relatively advanced; implementation at early stages</p> <p>The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - legislative alignment advanced; implementation at early stage</p> <p>Kosovo - legislative alignment in early stages; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Montenegro - legislative alignment in early stages; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Serbia - legislative alignment moderately advanced; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Turkey – legislative alignment moderately advanced; implementation moderately advanced</p>	Advanced level of implementation	Advanced level of implementation	Applications for EU financing instruments (e.g. ESIF, Horizon 2020, LIFE) EUSAIR/ EUSDR meeting reports
Progress in aligning with the air legislation	Albania – legislative alignment relatively advanced;	Very advanced level of transposition of air legislation in all	Very advanced level of transposition of air legislation in all	Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports) Annual European Commission Enlargement

	<p>implementation at early stages</p> <p>Bosnia and Herzegovina - legislative alignment at early stages; implementation at early stages</p> <p>The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - legislative alignment advanced; implementation at early stage</p> <p>Kosovo - legislative alignment advanced; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Montenegro - legislative alignment relatively advanced; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Serbia - legislative alignment advanced; implementation moderately advanced</p> <p>Turkey - legislative alignment at early stages; implementation at early stages</p>	<p>beneficiaries.</p> <p>Advanced level of implementation</p>	<p>beneficiaries.</p> <p>Advanced level of implementation</p>	<p>package</p> <p>Air pollution reports provided by the Beneficiaries</p>
Progress in combating trade in illegal timber	Albania – legislative alignment at early stages; implementation	Advanced level of transposition of air legislation in all	Advanced level of transposition of air legislation in all	Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports)

	<p>at early stages</p> <p>Bosnia and Herzegovina - legislative alignment and implementation not started yet</p> <p>The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - legislative alignment and implementation not started yet</p> <p>Kosovo - legislative alignment at early stages; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Montenegro – legislative alignment advanced implementation advanced</p> <p>Serbia - legislative alignment at early stages; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Turkey - legislative alignment at early stages; implementation at early stages</p>	<p>beneficiaries.</p> <p>Advanced level of implementation</p> <p>Regional cooperation network established for combating illegal logging</p> <p>Relevant legislation adopted</p>	<p>beneficiaries.</p> <p>Advanced level of implementation</p> <p>Regional cooperation network established for combating illegal logging</p> <p>Relevant legislation adopted</p>	<p>Annual European Commission Enlargement package</p>
<p>Progress in combating wild fauna and flora trafficking</p>	<p>Albania – legislative alignment moderately advanced; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Bosnia and</p>	<p>Advanced level of transposition of air legislation in all beneficiaries.</p> <p>Advanced level of</p>	<p>Advanced level of transposition of air legislation in all beneficiaries.</p> <p>Advanced level of</p>	<p>Targeted progress evaluation in the last year of the action (baseline: ECRAN 2016 progress reports)</p> <p>Annual European Commission Enlargement</p>

	<p>Herzegovina - legislative alignment at early stages; implementation at early stages</p> <p>The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – legislative alignment at early stages; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Kosovo - legislative alignment at early stages; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Montenegro - legislative alignment at early stages; implementation at early stages</p> <p>Serbia – complete legislative alignment; implementation moderately advanced</p> <p>Turkey - legislative alignment advanced; implementation at early stages.</p>	<p>implementation</p> <p>Regional cooperation network established for combating wild flora and fauna trafficking</p> <p>Relevant legislation adopted and implemented</p>	<p>implementation</p> <p>Regional cooperation network established for combating wild flora and fauna trafficking</p> <p>Relevant legislation adopted and implemented</p>	<p>package</p>
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(1) This is the related indicator as included in the Indicative Strategy Paper (for reference only)

(2) The agreed baseline year 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. The baseline value may be "0" (i.e. no reference values are available as the action represents a novelty for the Beneficiary) but cannot be left empty or include references such as "N/A" or "will be determined later".

(3) The target year CANNOT be modified.

(4) This will be a useful reference to continue measuring the outcome of IPA II support beyond the 2014-2020 multi-annual financial period. If the action is completed before 2020 (year for the performance reward), this value and that in the 2020 target column must be the same.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The action is not designed to address in any particular way the issue of gender mainstreaming. The development of the action will, however, ensure equal opportunities for women and men to participate in its implementation and in the selection of experts.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

As the action has a strong focus on capacity building, equal opportunities will be mainstreamed in all the relevant activities.

Implementation of the action will require professional qualifications and competences guaranteeing equal opportunities for its implementation and selection of experts.

The participation in the events will also be largely dependent on the field of work of the participants. The Beneficiaries will be invited to nominate participants for each of the events/activities. At that point, they will be requested to clarify how they ensure equal selection criteria and access to the events organised in the framework of the action.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

The Beneficiaries will be invited to nominate participants for each of the events/activities. At that point, they will be requested to clarify how they implement the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation with a view to taking appropriate measures to accommodate the needs of disabled people, including appropriate measures to enable a person with a disability to have access to offered activities.

The activities implemented in the framework of the action will be designed taking into account linguistic specificities of the region in case there will be a need to hold events in language other than English. Specifically in Bosnia and Herzegovina, taking into account the complex administrative structures of the Beneficiary, the organisers of different activities will consider admitting more participants in order to ensure the participation of relevant stakeholders from the different administrative structures to ensure adequate representation.

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

Civil Society representatives and other stakeholders will be invited to participate in the different activities depending on the subject presented and their relevance for the larger audience. In particular, civil society will be properly consulted and associated to any legislative development to make sure that the opinion of the target groups which are likely to be affected by the new legislation are duly taken into consideration. Finally, civil society can also play an important role in monitoring the implementation of legislation.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

The action has direct link to the EU environmental *acquis*.

The action will also support the EU's climate policy. Tackling climate change is a key item on the EU's environmental agenda. Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) refers to combating climate change as one of the objectives of EU environmental policy. Several of the pieces of EU legislation (in sectors such as air, industrial pollution, nature and biodiversity, waste) respond to the climate change challenges and support the achievement of the climate policy objectives, including the commitments made under the global climate agreement made in Paris in December 2015. The EU's climate policy will be therefore actively mainstreamed throughout most of the components of the action.

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 625 000 (representing 25% of the total amount of the action)

6. SUSTAINABILITY

Given the limited absorption and administrative capacities of the Beneficiaries, sustainability of the action is one of the concerns that need to be actively addressed throughout the implementation of the action. It is proposed to tackle this challenge by focusing the action on fewer areas than previous initiatives. This will enable a closer follow up already during the action lifespan and should not stretch too much the capacity of the targeted administrations and their ability to ensure the continuation of the activities or maintaining the achieved results. Also, during the action, the Beneficiaries will be held accountable for ensuring the continuation of the activities as during every Steering Committee meeting they will be requested to report on the follow-up of the action which should be an additional motivating factor to sustain the results and investments made in the framework of the action.

In order to strengthen sustainability of results, any support on acquis alignment, legislative development or preparation of policy documents will be done in accordance with the approach advocated by the 'Better Regulation Agenda', which aims to ensure that “policies and legislation are prepared, implemented and reviewed in an open and transparent manner, informed by the best available evidence and backed up by involving internal and external stakeholders”. In particular, assistance shall focus on providing analytical prerequisites such as concept notes, options analyses and support to impact assessment. Support in legislative drafting shall be paired with capacity building of the beneficiaries (introduction of international examples, detailed explanation of proposed texts, etc. the action will also ensure that the new pieces of legislation are consulted among the relevant institutions and with the target groups which are likely to be affected by the new legislation).

In addition, any training, capacity-building and human resources development activities shall be coordinated with the institutions that are centrally responsible for human resources management and professional development of civil servants.

Finally, whenever written procedural manuals or guidelines are developed, they should be simple enough to be regularly updated and changed by the staff of the beneficiary organisations without further external support. Any guidelines or procedures developed cannot contradict with any legal provision of the Beneficiary.

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility will be given high importance during the implementation of the action. The implementation of the communication activities shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the action.

The action will be publicised on the website of DG ENV. A brochure will be published presenting the main components of the action in terms of areas covered and actions to be implemented. The action will be presented to the Beneficiaries during the bilateral meetings (e.g. subcommittee meetings). Other stakeholders will be informed of the action during different bilateral and multilateral meetings.

DG NEAR will be fully informed of their planning and implementation of the communication activities.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the European Commission (DG NEAR) will have to be followed.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives and the accession process as well as the benefits of the action for the general public. Actions shall be aimed at strengthening general public awareness and support of interventions financed and the objectives pursued. The actions shall aim at highlighting to the relevant target audiences

the added value and impact of the EU's interventions and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.