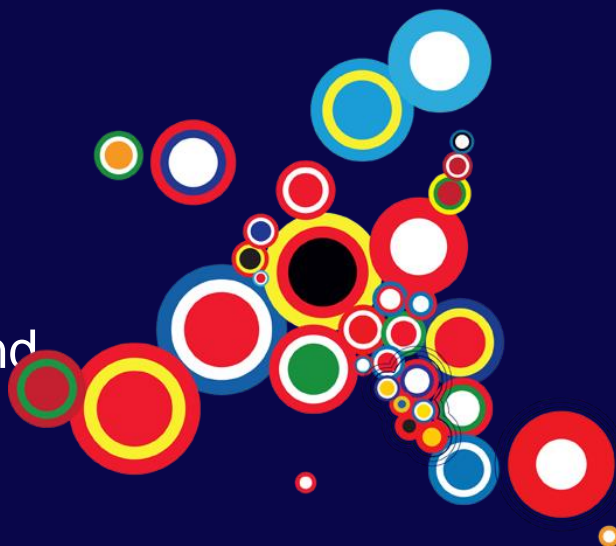




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

EU Support to Agriculture
and Rural Development,
Food Safety, Veterinary and
Phytosanitary Standards



Action summary

The overall objective of the Action is to modernise the agri-food sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina and empower the sector through support measures aimed at strengthening competitiveness, reinforcing EU-aligned policies and building capacities, thereby ensuring the production of safe and quality food.

The Action will contribute to higher levels of production of safe and quality food, while preserving the natural resources that agricultural productivity depends upon. This can only be achieved by a competitive and viable agricultural sector operating within a properly functioning supply chain and contributing to the maintenance of the rural economy and the quality of life in rural areas.

It will also contribute to the sustainable protection of human, animal and plant health in the agri-food chain. This will be achieved by supporting gradual acquis alignment and ensuring administrative and technical capacity building of relevant institutions, allowing them to regulate and implement policy actions in line with EU requirements and monitor the progress in line with strategic objectives.

Action Identification	
Action Programme Title	Annual Action Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the year 2018
Action Title	EU Support to Agriculture and Rural Development, Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Standards
Action ID	IPA 2018/decisionnumber.sequencenumber/country/title(short)
Sector Information	
IPA II Sector	Competitiveness, Innovation, Agriculture and Rural Development
DAC Sector	31110 - Agricultural policy and administrative management
Budget	
Total cost	EUR 30 000 000
EU contribution	EUR 30 000 000
Budget line(s)	22.020102
Management and Implementation	
Management mode	1. Indirect management (Agriculture and rural development) 2. Direct management (Food safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary)
<i>Direct management:</i> EU Delegation <i>Indirect management:</i> National authority or other entrusted entity	1. The entrusted entity for Agriculture and Rural development 2. EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina (for Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary)
Implementation responsibilities	EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Specific implementation area(s)	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Timeline	
Final date for concluding Financing Agreement(s) with IPA II beneficiary	At the latest by 31 December 2019
Final date for concluding delegation agreements under indirect management	At the latest by 31 December 2019
Final date for concluding procurement and grant contracts	3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement, with the exception of cases listed under Article 114(2) of the Financial Regulation
Final date for operational implementation	6 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement

Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement (date by which this programme should be de-committed and closed)	12 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement		
Policy objectives / Markers (DAC form)			
General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Aid to environment	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
Biological diversity	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) agriculture and rural development sector, including food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary matters, is one of the key strategic sectors for competitiveness of the country's economy. It has a high potential for generating growth, job creation and export. It is also crucial for local economic development, as most of the country is rural with a huge amount – over 50% of the country's surface – of agricultural land¹.

The 2016 European Commission (EC) Country Report for BiH stresses that some progress was achieved on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policies. However, the administrative capacity and coordination within the agriculture and rural development sector still needs to be improved. The effectiveness and EU compliance of support measures remain insufficient to increase the sector's productivity and competitiveness. Further alignments of its official veterinary and phytosanitary control systems with European standards and further upgrading of its administrative capacities, in particular with regard to inspection services and laboratories, are key priorities for the country on its further EU approximation path.

The recently adopted Strategic Plan for Rural Development 2018-2021 - Framework document (SPRD) is the framework for further development of the agriculture and rural development sector. It enhances coordination and management in the sector, improves the regulation of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary matters and provides for inter-institutional coordination and harmonization of legislation with the purpose of alignment with EU and international standards. The aim of SPRD is to set up objectives, establish measures for achieving these objectives, establish monitoring and evaluation, as well as define the financial resources needed for the implementation of these measures. The SPRD identifies and addresses key problems in the sector, and serves as the basis for the problem analysis presented below.

The share of agriculture in the BiH gross domestic product is high (between 6.0 and 7.5% of the GDP). The sector accounts for 17 % of employment in BiH². However, the productivity of the agricultural sector, the degree of marketability and the added value of agricultural production in BiH is low. Challenges to agricultural production are: fragmentation of agricultural land, outdated production technology, low productivity of breeds for cattle and of the plants varieties that are predominantly grown. Rural areas suffer from a lack of physical infrastructure, culture and social infrastructure as well as job opportunities. In addition, BiH is predominantly a country of small farms with insufficient competitiveness. The area of agricultural land that determines the volume and structure of agricultural production is scarce and its use is inefficient due to the fragmentation of land-parcels, topographic characteristics, problems with cadastre registration of property rights and the quality of soil. Cooperation and coordination between policy makers, scientific research institutions, advisors and the producers is limited. Women are faced with additional challenges which prevent them from equal participation in economic activities in rural areas. According to the labour force survey for 2017, around 154 000 persons were engaged in the agriculture sector, of which approximately 60% were men and 40% were women. Besides that, the land is usually owned by men which makes it more challenging for women to apply for the loans they would need to start or expand the business³.

The institutional and administrative capacity necessary for accelerating the EU integration process in this area is not sufficient. Furthermore, the legal framework, within the country internally and with the *acquis*, is not fully harmonised.

The agricultural information system in BiH is not adequate to support good policy making and needs improvements to advance in its approximation to the EU.

¹ Strategic Plan for Rural Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021 – Framework document: "According to the statistical sources, BiH has 2.2 million ha of agricultural land of which 1.6 million ha is arable land and 600 thousand ha are pastures"

² European Commission, Country Report for BiH 2016

³ Strategic Plan for Rural Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021 – Framework document

BiH's progress in response to these challenges will also accelerate the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) which calls for “modernising and restructuring the agriculture and agro-industrial sector ... to reach veterinary and phytosanitary Community requirements and...supporting the progressive approximation of the legislation”.

The stakeholders most affected by the problems identified are farmers and agricultural associations, cooperatives, primary holdings, food business operators (producers, processors, including in particular those export oriented), start-ups, entrepreneurs, young people and the rural population. On the other hand, state and entity ministries and other institutional bodies and services, like inspectorates, laboratories etc., as well as those of Brčko District of BiH, cantons, municipalities and cities, are facing challenges related to *acquis* alignment and implementation of policy measures. Stakeholders who influence conditions for improved competitiveness of agricultural producers and processors are also very important. These are rural development centres, local action groups, universities and research institutes, training providers, employers' associations, chambers of commerce, social partners, sector organisations and NGOs.

OUTLINE OF IPA II ASSISTANCE

To address the above described sector needs and constraints, IPA II assistance will support BiH in developing an efficient, sustainable and innovative agro-food sector which is competitive on the EU market and offers employment, economic inclusion and quality of life for the rural population. The application of EU food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary standards in the agro-food chain will increase production in BiH competitive sectors such as meat and dairy products, fruits and vegetables, crops and cereals, and fisheries and will improve the quality of agricultural and food products. It will also enhance BiH's approximation to further EU accession stages and financial assistance programmes after 2020.

The Action will provide for benefits to producers, processors and other actors in the value chain (e.g. collection, distribution, marketing and sales) that will flow in parallel with upgrading institutional and administrative services across the sector. Therefore, producers will obtain benefits in the long run through higher sales in local markets due to higher productivity rates and a rising quality of the production. It will also lead to enhancing the confidence of consumers not only in the quality of domestic products but also in their belief that exports will increase due to compliance with EU standards. In addition, higher quality, safe food will protect the human health. The expected increase in productivity may also positively affect growth rates of the country's economy and stabilise or even increase employment rates.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

The Stabilization and Association Agreement sets the goal to modernise and restructure the agriculture and agro-industrial sector in BiH, in particular to reach veterinary and phytosanitary Community requirements and support the approximation of BiH legislation to the Community rules and standards.

The Indicative Strategy Paper for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2014-2020 (ISP) foresees IPA II support to create an efficient, sustainable and innovative agro-food sector which is competitive in the EU market and offers employment, social inclusion and better living standards for farmers and the rural population. In line with the ISP, IPA II shall support modernisation and restructuring of the agriculture and agro-industrial sector in BiH, in particular to with a view to complying with the EU veterinary and phytosanitary requirements and to support the progressive approximation of BiH legislation and practices to the *acquis*.

European Commission's Strategy for the Western Balkans⁴ published in February 2018 points at the Western Balkans region's significant economic potential with higher growth rates than that of the EU and its increasingly interesting market for EU goods and services that is gradually becoming part of European value chains. The level of economic integration with the Union is already very high due to the Stabilisation and Association Agreements. However, further efforts are needed to increase the competitiveness of the Western Balkan economies, address high unemployment especially among the young, and create business

⁴ A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/eu-western-balkans-strategy-credible-enlargement-perspective_en

opportunities not least for local players. In spite of all progress on reforms, many structural issues remain, including substantial work to align with the EU's *acquis*, establish or improve the relevant institutions, and ensure implementation capacity as well as apply EU rules and standards across all policy areas.

The last 2016 European Commission Country Report for BiH stresses that some progress was achieved in the sector, like on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policies. However, the administrative capacity and coordination within the agriculture and rural development sector still need to be improved. The effectiveness and EU compliance of support measures remain insufficient to increase the sector's productivity and competitiveness of the country. Further alignments of its official veterinary and phytosanitary control systems with European standards and further upgrading its administrative capacities, in particular inspection services and laboratories, remain key priorities for the country on its further EU approximation path.

The South East Europe 2020 Strategy (SEE 2020) follows the vision of the Europe 2020 Strategy and pursues a holistic pattern of development for the region and seeks to stimulate the key long-term drivers of growth such as innovation, skills and the integration of trade. Strategy states that by signing the CEFTA Agreement, parties have made an important step towards deepening of regional cooperation by successfully completing an elimination of tariffs in goods, and substantial liberalization of trade in agricultural products. However, when it comes to shaping competitiveness and entrepreneurship in the sector of agriculture and rural development, there are still many challenges, mostly recognized in the relatively small size of micro SMEs and their lack of innovation and internationalization.

The Strategic plan of Rural Development of BiH (2018-2021) – Framework document - points at the necessity to gradually increase the investment support available for private sector development, focused on strengthening production, improving value chain linkages and increasing access of producers and processors to modern technology, primarily targeting niche markets where BiH may have a comparative advantage⁵.

In that respect, its 2nd strategic objective is to strengthen the competitiveness of agriculture, forestry and rural areas through increasing the level of investments and improving the transfer of knowledge and promotion of innovation. It is followed by the 3rd objective of improving marketability of agri-food products by increasing value-added activities, improving quality and safety standards and strengthening linkages within the value chains as well as the 5th one of improving the quality of life in rural areas through new income generating sources and the improvement of the physical infrastructure, social inclusion and accessibility of public services⁶.

Those objectives derive from problems that agricultural producers in BiH face, including various limitations pertaining to access to markets, input supply, technology, advice and information exchange, economy of scale of production, investment opportunities, etc. Rural areas suffer from depopulation, insufficient incentives for revitalisation and preservation of the agri-environmental resources, as well as insufficient employment opportunities and innovative practices. Social infrastructure and services only partially meet the needs of the rural population and businesses.

The Strategic Plan of Rural Development of BiH (2018-2021) – Framework document - sets as its 6th objective to improve institutional systems and capacities and the harmonisation of the legal framework in agriculture and rural development at all government levels, with the aim of gradual approximation to the EU CAP⁷.

The Economic Reform Programme 2017-2019 points at crucial sector needs and constraints, like the fragmentation of arable agricultural parcels, a high share of small farms, low productivity, low level of modernisation of manufacturing and processing capacities, low level of cooperatives and an unfavourable age structure of producers. It recommends BiH to make progress towards raising the competitiveness of the agricultural sector in BiH and developing the country's rural areas with the aim of integrating the BiH agricultural sector into the European and global market.

⁵ Strategic Plan of Rural Development of BiH 2018-2021 – Framework document (SPRD), page 2

⁶ SPRD, page 46

⁷ The same as above

BiH is an active member the Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development (SWG RRD) that provides a platform for networking and regional co-operation of the governmental institutions responsible for rural development in the Western Balkans (WB) countries. It contributes to the implementation of rural development policies and multi-beneficiary projects together with EU and International partners, all aimed at ensuring a sustainable rural development in the South East Europe.

BiH also participates in the EU macro-regional strategies like EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), aimed at addressing the common challenges of the participating countries⁸ in the fields of connectivity, energy networks, environmental protection, sustainable tourism and socio-economic development.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Bosnia and Herzegovina has benefited from significant EU assistance related to capacity building and supplies in the fields of agriculture, rural development, food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary. Large scale CARDS, OBNOVA, PHARE programmes paved the way to revitalisation of sectors via post-war/humanitarian and reconstruction aid interventions of app. 60 MEUR invested into livestock regeneration, machineries and related equipment, capacity building start up etc.

IPA 2007-2013 assistance followed up with app. 27 MEUR invested in institutional capacity building – technical assistance that supported upgrades of policy and legislation, including also preparations for IPARD as well as supplies for information and payments systems within the country's relevant institutions. It also covered a few grant projects that channelled assistance measures in standards certification, transfer of knowledge, provision of assets etc. to rural population and farmers in competitive sectors of fruits and vegetables, medical plants, dairy etc. Large scale technical assistances also provided for acquis alignment in the food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary areas. There were specific diagnostics and equipment provided to laboratories and inspectorates, supplies (vaccines for animal disease control, like those against brucellosis, rabies and classical swine fever), support to animal identification and movement control system, Border Crossing Points with relevant facilities for sanitary and phytosanitary controls etc. In addition, EU provides technical assistance to BiH focused on sectors priority areas through TAIEX, Twinnings and BTSEF programmes.

Since the IPA II instrument has been introduced, the main problem preventing the agriculture sector from receiving the needed support for its development was the absence of a country-wide agriculture and rural development strategy. Insufficient knowledge of the public and of interest groups when it comes to the implications, processes and opportunities related to EU accession, and the failure of the sector to meet the preconditions for implementing approved projects slowed down its development. Due to the above-mentioned sector challenges, other donors' programmes also had limited scopes and opportunities during the past years, and only a limited number of donors' programmes are currently ongoing (e.g. FARMA II, SIDA/USAID/Czech Republic) or are planned.

Some cross-cutting initiatives supporting the sector have taken place under Competitiveness and Innovation, like a 15 MEUR programme to support the implementation of local development strategies under IPA 2016.

A general lesson learnt, which applies to all sectors, is that policy and legislative developments needs to be evidence-based, costed and subject to appropriate internal and external stakeholder consultations at the right time of the legislative and policy-making process. This is key to ensuring the implementation and enforcement of adopted policies and legislation. Therefore the action shall ensure consistency with the horizontal public administration reform (PAR) efforts.

⁸ Both EU Member States and non-EU Member States (potential and candidate countries for the EU membership)

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To modernise agri-food sector and foster rural economy in BiH	Total investment generated via IPA II in agri-food sector and rural development (EUR)	EC Country reports DG AGRI statistics DG SANTE Country profiles WB, ERP, OIE, FAO, SWG RRD reports Statistics and sectoral reports in BiH	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
1. To increase competitiveness of agriculture production and rural jobs and services 2. To support acquis alignment and implementation of policy measures in the areas of food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary standards	1.1. New generated value in relation to IPA funds disbursed through this action ¹ 1.2. Employment rate in agriculture (sex disaggregated) ² 2.1. Agricultural products export rate ³	Sectors related authority reports in BiH Statistics reports in BiH Action reports	Governments in BiH are committed to reforms in sectors Adequate number of staff is assigned in accordance with policy objectives Farmers and agri-food operators cooperate and transpose EU aligned standards and practices into their farming and businesses
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (*)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Result 1.1 Higher levels of production of safe and quality food based on introduced innovative practices, while preserving the natural resources and the countryside, are sustained	1.1.1. Number of agri-food operators (physical and legal entities) supported through IPA action with projects which increase quality/quantity of agricultural products 1.1.2. Number of new jobs created, including for youth and for women in rural areas (sex disaggregated)	EC country reports and profiles Authorities' reports in BiH Statistics reports in BiH Action reports	Governments in BiH are committed to reforms in sectors Adequate number of staff is assigned in accordance with policy objectives Farmers and agri-businesses, animal holders and plant operators cooperate and transpose EU aligned standards and practices into their farming and businesses
Result 1.2 Policy actions ⁴ are implemented in EU aligned manner, based on sector services and systems improved	1.2.1. Level of approximation of policy actions with the EU	Authority reports in BiH Action reports	

¹ For measurement, creating and monitoring the addition of value through value chains the following parameters may be considered, including, to the extent available, the increase in farm revenues affected by IPA support, increase in salaries and fees for farmers/workers receiving IPA support (training), number of farms converted from subsistence farms to economically viable farms, average farm size (ha), agriculture related GDP / percentage of active population employed in agriculture etc.

² The use of modern machinery leading to less employment in agriculture will be tackled by the activities to support diversification in rural economy, considering a number of parameters, to the extent available, like labour productivity in agriculture (possibly productivity per person-time unit), intensity of agriculture (productivity per ha etc.) etc.

³ Compared to the baseline year

⁴ Actions stand for specific strategic measures defined in the Strategic plan of rural development of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018- 2021) – Framework document

Result 2.1 Animal health is protected and marketability of animal origin products is improved by an advanced level of policies implemented and acquis aligned legislation	2.1.1. Level of acquis alignment in the veterinary sector ⁵ 2.1.2. Animal health status (number of outbreaks) ⁶	EC country reports and profiles OIE reports ADNS, TRACE records ⁷ Veterinary authority reports in BiH Statistics reports in BiH Action reports	
Result 2.2 Safety and quality of food is improved by an advanced level of food safety policies implemented and acquis aligned legislation	2.2.1. Level of acquis alignment in the food safety sector ⁸ 2.2.2. Number of food samples taken through official controls	EC country reports and profiles EFSA reports RASFF records ⁹ Food safety authority reports in BiH Statistics reports in BiH Action reports	
Result 2.3 Healthy and protected plants and quality seeds are improved by an advanced level of policies implemented and acquis aligned legislation	2.3.1. Level of acquis alignment ¹⁰ in the area of plant health, seed and seedling material, plant protection product 2.3.2. Plant health status ¹¹	EC country reports and profiles EUROPHYT records ¹² Phytopathological authority reports in BiH Statistics reports in BiH Action reports	

⁵ Number of EU Regulations and Directives fully transposed in the national legislation

⁶The animal health status in the country is stable and mostly refers to preventive measures. The only affecting factor (disease) at this point is brucellosis in small ruminants that defines the indicator. There are also parameters like number of vaccination campaigns successfully implemented, number of laboratories accredited etc. that may also be considered in support of the performance measurement.

⁷ADNS stands for EU's Animal Disease Notification System and TRACE stands for EU's Trade Control and Expert's System

⁸Number of harmonized legal acts with the acquis

⁹RASFF stands for EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

¹⁰Number of legislative acts aligned with the acquis supported by IPA 2018 assistance

¹¹ Status is defined by the state of quarantine harmful organisms. The country reports on it to EC and European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO).

¹²Notification and rapid alert system dealing with [Interceptions](#) for plant health reasons of consignments of plants and plant products imported into the EU or being traded within the EU itself

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Activities related to Result 1.1 – *Higher levels of production of safe quality food based on introduced innovative practices, while preserving the natural resources and the countryside are sustained*

Activities to support Result 1.1. consist of *competitiveness support measures*²¹. Together with activities to support Result 1.2 below, they make up the two priority pillars of Specific objective number 1 and constitute the overall support to the agriculture and rural development sector.

Competitiveness support measures are defined in the Strategic Plan of Rural Development of BiH 2018 – 2021 – Framework document - and are aligned with the EU Rural Development policy. The measures are to be launched via calls for applications to channel grants and subsidised support targeting:

1.1.1 Improving market efficiency – support measures will target large agri-food industry value-chains, small-scale farmers promoting short value-chains through partnerships between local producers, processors and retailers, and, producers' organisations such as farmers' associations, cooperatives etc. These measures will increase volume and production, create jobs, preserve the sector potential (natural, human capital etc.), improve standards etc. Measures may include, but not be limited to:

- improving farming facilities, business and production capacities through better physical infrastructure
- purchasing machinery and equipment aimed at increasing livestock production and fisheries, as well as plant production,
- introducing new technologies via supplies and practical on-the-job trainings
- providing certification in quality and safety standards etc., including protection of traditional production (e.g. quality schemes)
- increasing organic production and obtaining relevant certification recognised country-wide, and in the EU
- establishing and/or developing the capacity of agricultural producers and agri-food processor groups (associations and cooperatives)

1.1.2 Strengthening advisory and extension services to farmers and agri-food operators across the country (knowledge transfer and innovative practices) by non-state actors which act in support of the advisory services that the competent institutions provide for. Those actors may be education and professional training organisations, business support services, rural development centres etc. thereby contributing to:

- assisting farmers in identifying sources of financing, writing project proposals and business plans;
- overcoming the gap between science and farming.

They are based on partnerships between public, private and non-state educational and training. Activities may include support measures such as, but not limited to:

- trainings of advisors in identifying financing sources and writing project proposals and business plans for farms and agri-business.
- capacity building of structures providing professional training and education for farmers
- providing advice and consulting on farm management, operations, logistics, marketing and investment etc.
- information and awareness campaigns on agricultural market trends for specific products, with an emphasis on high-value crops or products.

²¹ In line with strategic goals II, III and V of Strategic Plan of Rural Development of BiH 2018- 2021 – Framework document

- practical demonstrations and in-the-field trials regarding the use of machinery and technologies for crop cultivation, sustainable plant protection, and the implementation of hygiene, animal welfare and health standards.
- Hand-in-hand activities with the institutional services based on on-the-job and in-the-field trainings etc.

1.1.3 Strengthening the rural economy and its diversification. These measures will support rural jobs and services in order to ensure a better quality of life in rural areas. Activities may include support measures such as, but not limited to:

- on-farm investments with a strong focus on innovative practices:
 - diversifying usual farming production e.g. producing ornamental medical and spice herbs, beekeeping, aquaculture etc.
 - maintaining grassland and livestock (machinery, infrastructure, breeding, standards etc.).
 - improving facilities for agriculture-related activities e.g. green markets in the communities, purchase stations, venues for fairs, sale and presentation of products.
- off-farm investments:
 - increasing socio-economic activities e.g. establishing village centres, agri-incubators (including best local practices to pilot via local partnerships), thereby facilitating access to other operators in the value chain and to the market with branded products;
 - setting up and equipping centres of youth farming ideas, IT centres/internet hubs
 - increasing production and market positioning of local craftsmanship
 - developing rural tourism
 - starting new micro businesses

Within activities under 1.1.3 and in addition to equal representation under activities 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, women and young people in rural areas will be also specifically targeted as 'community made leaders' under the launched calls for applications to provide investments into their start-ups and education, including innovative practice base.

Activities related to result 1.2 – *Policy actions are implemented in EU aligned manner, based on sector services and systems improved*

Activities to support Result 1.2, represent the technical assistance (expertise and any tailor made, like IT or working tools related supplies) to the sector administration at all levels in their administrative and institutional capacity building²², in the fields like, but not limited to:

- policy implementation via reviews/upgrades of action plans, implementing procedures (both desk research and in the field trainings), practical demonstrations etc. which includes improving know-how, skills and mode operandi;
- management of grant schemes, including monitoring the soundness and efficiency of grants support as well as reporting and evaluating its effectiveness at both outputs and outcome level.
- institutional advisory support services (as cross-cutting with 1.1.2): needs assessment, design of common training programmes, systems (like certification), review and upgrade of monitoring and evaluation system for extension/non-state actors' advisory services, development of common information exchange web system for advisory/extension services etc.

²² In line with strategic goal VI of Strategic Plan of Rural Development of BiH (2018- 2021) – Framework document. The same applies for activities related to Results 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3

- improving knowledge base and skills in on-the-job trainings and in-the-field practical demonstrations etc.
- improvements of information systems, registries,, including needs assessment, reviews of methodologies, development of ICT solutions, piloting, trainings and skills improvement etc.
- if agreeable by all authorities and as identified along the work of implementing policy measures, possibly improving legislation and gradually acquis-aligning it to the extent to which BiH is able to follow more structural sector reforms.
- monitoring and evaluation via reviews of systems and needs assessment, improvement of procedural and ICT base and solution development, skills improvements etc.
- human resource development. Training programmes shall be specifically tailored for groups of employees in line with their functions and responsibilities across all sector policy making structures.

Activities related to result 2.1 – *animal health is protected and marketability of animal origin products is improved by an advanced level of policies implemented and acquis aligned legislation*

Technical assistance in the form of twinning will be provided to the veterinary administration and services in institutional capacity building, policy implementation and acquis alignments in the fields of animal health and protection (e.g. policy reviews, legal screening and design, implementation of control measures like vaccinations and monitoring, emergency preparedness, outbreak management, awareness raising etc.), including some aspects of animal welfare (e.g. policy reviews and upgrades, legal screening and design, awareness raising etc.) and animal by-product management (follow up on IPA 2012 project in policy design, information system upgrades, technical documentation preparation, where relevant, knowledge transfer and skills improvements in control and inspection, study tours and awareness raising etc.).

Activities related to result 2.2 – *Safety and quality of food is improved by an advanced level of food safety policies implemented and acquis aligned legislation*

Technical assistance in the form of twinning will be provided to the food safety administration and services in BiH in institutional capacity building, policy implementation and acquis alignments in the fields of (but not limited to) hygiene package implementation, official controls, risk assessment and management, quality policy, consumer protection, GMOs etc. The activities may cover policy reviews and upgrades, legal screening and design, ICT systems development, knowledge transfer and skills improvements via on-the job trainings, practical demonstrations, study tours etc.

Activities related to result 2.3 – *healthy and protected plants and quality seeds are improved by an advanced level of policies implemented and acquis aligned legislation*

Technical assistance in the form of twinning will be provided to further strengthening of institutional capacities of phytosanitary sector in BiH and its gradual alignment with the acquis and standards in the areas of (but not limited to) plant health, Plant protection product (PPPs), Quality of Seeds and Propagating Material, Plant Variety Rights and Official controls.

Each of the above three groups of activities will strengthen institutional capacities of the targeted administrations and services in, but not limited to:

- EU *acquis* approximation. In that respect, it is necessary to ensure a coordinated approach among all relevant administration levels to avoid further fragmentation. In addition, the assistance to EU *acquis* alignment shall be provided in accordance with the principles of inclusive and evidence-based policy/legislative development,
- regulatory framework reforms where appropriate and necessary for alignment with the EU law and policy implementation mechanisms,
- monitoring and reporting structures,

- improvements of sector information systems, including introducing new technologies and innovative practices (inspectories and laboratories in specific),
- awareness raising, transfer of knowledge and know how,
- Information, visibility and promotion campaigns etc.

Activities 2.1a, 2.2a and 2.3a related to Results 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3: tailor made supplies will complement capacity building activities under 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, like but not limited to: procurement of vaccines against zoonoses and/or exotic diseases with economic or human health impact, diagnostics, working kits etc. (e.g. for laboratories), ICT equipment, working tools and specific monitoring and control devices (e.g. for inspectories, relevant administrative departments etc.), emergency preparedness and field equipment etc.

RISKS

Risks:

- Sector complexity and a wide number of stakeholders at various levels of the administration.
- Insufficient communication between the administration and agri-food operators.
- Insufficient sector coordination and cooperation amongst relevant stakeholders.
- Insufficient absorption capacities of the stakeholders, both institutional and final beneficiaries.
- Low level of efficiency of implementation, monitoring and evaluation system.
- Lack of co-financing on the side of beneficiaries.

Mitigation measures to be undertaken will include:

- Facilitation of cooperation between all relevant stakeholders. It will be ensured that all agreed measures are deemed relevant by all stakeholders involved.
- Regular communication and information exchange between all stakeholders will be ensured via sector coordination mechanisms as well as the Action bodies like Steering Committee etc.
- Administration's staff to have active involvement in the Action to be nominated on merit-basis and with adequate competences (in support to Public Administration principles).
- Dynamics of action implementation will take into account capacities of final beneficiaries. The Action will support further development of beneficiaries' capacities via relevant advisory and coaching mechanisms like information and awareness campaigns, trainings (hand-in-hand with institutional advisory services) etc.
- Where lacking, basic conditions for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy measures must be in place prior to implementation of the Action.
- Inclusive and evidence based policy and legislative development (where applicable) in targeted sectors is a must.
- Avoidance of promoting any practices that may undermine transparency, accountability and legal certainty in decision making.
- In case of measures for large infrastructure, significant co-financing to be ensured by domestic partners. For the grants in specific, the Action may facilitate possible partnerships with the banking sector for co-funding to be provided at the applicant's level.

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Given the complexity of the sector and this Action, the Terms of Reference for implementation should precisely define conditions and assumptions necessary for successful implementation of foreseen activities.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Action will ensure multi-layered project structure to provide for representation of all stakeholders and smooth reporting and coordination chain across all Action components.

In particular, implementation modalities for both specific objectives, will define specific management structures like steering committees, coordination groups, technical bodies etc. if and where relevant, so as to monitor the progress of Action implementation, facilitate access to information, relevant institutions etc., ensure their timely and sufficient inputs when required, provide advice etc.

There will be also proper reporting and evaluation mechanisms applied, so that representatives of all relevant stakeholders in BiH take an active role and fully exercise responsibilities together with the Action structures in implementing, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the Action's results and expected impact.

Results 1.1 and 1.2: the Action will establish a programme management structure to ensure representation of all stakeholders and a smooth reporting and coordination chain across all Action components.

A **Project Steering Committee** will be established in the inception phase to monitor the progress of Action implementation, facilitate access to information, ensure timely and sufficient inputs from institutions when required, provide advice etc. It will include the main institutional stakeholders in accordance with common practice (state, entities, Brčko District) under the chair of the EU Delegation to BiH. The administrative and logistics support is to be provided by the Action. Rights and obligations of the Steering Committee members will be prescribed by the Rules of procedure with the final goal to enable full commitment and ownership of BiH in this Action.

The Action will provide technical assistance for capacity building of relevant stakeholders for monitoring and evaluation of selected SPRD measures to provide inputs for better policy making. Due to the complexity and comprehensiveness of the policy fields covered by the Action, specific technical level coordination groups comprising relevant stakeholders may be set up across the activities (1.1 and 1.2). Technical level advisory forums may be considered if and when the needs for specific expertise and support arise under particular aspects of the intervention.

The indicative list of institutions involved in the above activities/fora includes representatives of:

- BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations (MoFTER)
- FBiH Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry
- RS Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water management
- Brčko District of BiH Government, department of agriculture, etc.

At the local and cantonal level, a wider range of stakeholders will be involved in the guidance of the Action. They will include relevant cantonal ministries and may also include municipalities/cities, local action groups, development agencies, rural, business and other relevant centres, etc.

Results 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3: the Action will follow twinning related management structures, proscribed by the EU standard rules, including, amongst others, Project Steering Committees, allowing for foreseeing working/coordination groups etc. if and where relevant. Lead implementing institutions will ensure involvement of and close coordination with all stakeholders at all levels. Supplies will follow EU-related procurement and contractual rules.

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

Activities related to Result 1.1 and 1.2 will be implemented in indirect management by an entity to be selected by the EU Delegation to BiH through the launch of a call for expression of interest, based on the assessment of a transparent set of selection criteria, including their technical and professional capacities as well as the proposed methodology for the implementation of the activities. The Delegation Agreement will:

- provide technical assistance for activities 1.2

- manage Grant Investments (activities 1.1.1 – 1.1.3).

Activities related to Results 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 will be implemented in direct management by the EU Delegation.

Activity 2.1 will be implemented through:

- a twinning contract under direct management;
- 2.1a: supplies contracts (3-4 indicatively under direct management to procure for vaccines, diagnostics, IT, working tools, devices, emergency preparedness and field equipment, etc. for relevant services.

Activity 2.2 it will be implemented through:

- a twinning contract under direct management;
- 2.2.a: supplies contracts (2-3 indicatively) to procure supplies (working tools, devices, IT etc.) for relevant administrative services.

Activity 2.3 it will be implemented through:

- a twinning contract under direct management;
- 2.3.a: supplies contracts (2-3 indicatively) to procure supplies for administrative services, inspectorates (working tools, devices, IT etc.) and laboratories (diagnostics, ICT etc.).

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

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

NIPAC monitors the process of programming, preparation and implementation as well as the sustainability and effects of Sector programmes aiming to improve these processes, timely identification, remedying and alleviation of potential issues in the process of programming and implementation of AD.

The implementation partner under Results 1.1 and 1.2 will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Action in close cooperation with the stakeholders under Action structures to be established, like Steering Committee, advisory bodies, technical groups etc including joint field visits, where appropriate, for checking and monitoring the results and impact.

At the start of the Action, the implementation partner will refine the matrix of indicators for the Action after undertaking the necessary research and data collection to define accurate baselines and realistic targets. The matrix of indicators will be discussed with the EU Delegation to BiH and approved by the Steering Committee. The monitoring arrangements (including data to be collected, responsibilities, tools and frequency of monitoring activities) are expected to take into account relevant principles indicated in Strategic Plan of Rural development 2018-2021 – Framework document and to be detailed in the Implementation Manual to be developed at the start of the Action. Also, the stakeholders' administrative monitoring and evaluation resources and mechanisms are to support the Action monitoring and evaluation system.

Results 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3: the lead implementing partners under twinning contracts and contractors under supplies contracts will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation in line with contractual requirements in close cooperation with the stakeholders. Supplementary to that, specific indicators may be included in the procurement related stage.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline (value + year) (2)	Target 2020 (3)	Final Target (2023/2024) (4)	Source of information
CSP indicator				
Total investment generated via IPA II in agri-food sector and rural development (EUR)	0 (2017)	0	EUR 16 000 000	European Commission reports DG AGRI Action reports
1.1. New generated value in relation to IPA funds disbursed through this action (%)	0 (2017)	0	40% (2024)	Action reports Agri authorities in BiH reports
1.2. Employment rate in agriculture (sex disaggregated)	18% (at least 1/3 women) (2016)	18% (at least 1/3 women)	18.5% (at least 1/3 women)	
2.1. Agricultural products export rate ²³	8% (2017)	17%	20%	
1.1.1. Number of agri-food operators (physical and legal entities) supported through IPA action with projects which increase quality/quantity of agricultural products	0	0	320 (2024)	Action reports
1.1.2. Number of new jobs created, including for youth and for women in rural areas (sex disaggregated)	0	0	600 (2024) (out of which 100 women and 100 youth)	
1.2.1. Status of approximation of policy actions with the EU	Not satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Good	Agri authorities in BiH reports Vet/food/phyto authorities in BiH reports/records Action reports
2.1.1. Status of acquis alignment in the veterinary sector ²⁴	59	60 (2020)	64 (2023)	Official Journal, EC country report Veterinary authorities in BiH reports/records

²³Compared to the baseline year. The indicator should detail specifically the export rate to the EU in addition to the overall export rate.

2.1.2. Animal health status (number of outbreaks) ²⁵	58	<3%	<5% (2023)	Action reports EU notification systems (like ADNS, OIE etc.)
2.2.1. Status of acquis alignment in the food safety sector ²⁶	99	111	114 (2023)	Official Journal, EC country report Food authorities in BiH reports/records
2.2.2. Number of food samples taken through official controls	53 149	On-going	At least 2% increase	Action reports EU notification systems/ RASFF Public health reports
2.3.1. Status of acquis alignment ²⁷ in the area of Plant health, seed and seedling material, plant protection product	50	min 51	min 56	Official Journal, EC country report Phytosanitary authorities in BiH reports/records
2.3.2. Plant health status ²⁸	0	1	1	Action reports EPPO reports

(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.

²⁴ Number of EU Regulations and Directives fully transposed in the national legislation supported by IPA 2018 assistance

²⁵ The animal health status in the country is stable and mostly refers to preventive measures. The only affecting factor (disease) at this point is brucellosis in small ruminants that defines the indicator. There are also parameters like number of vaccination campaigns successfully implemented, number of laboratories accredited etc. that may also be considered in support of the performance measurement.

²⁶ Number of EU Regulations and Directives fully transposed in the national legislation supported by IPA 2018 assistance

²⁷ Number of EU Regulations and Directives fully transposed in the national legislation supported by IPA 2018 assistance

²⁸ Status is defined by the state of quarantine harmful organisms. The country reports on it to EC and European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO).

5. SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

There is a sufficient strategic framework for the sector in place in the form of the Strategic plan of Rural Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018 – 2021 – framework document. The Strategic plan includes an indicative action plan with measures and a time frame. This Plan also includes indicators that can serve as a basis for monitoring of the Strategic Plan implementation, also defining one of support measures as establishing systems for monitoring and evaluation of public policies in agriculture and rural development. Therefore, further strengthening of relevant institutional systems of monitoring and evaluation of policies is required.

An institutional framework for the sector is in place, with the BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, along with its administrative organizations: Veterinary Office of BiH, Administration for Plant Health Protection of BiH and the Office for Harmonization and Coordination of Payments Systems in BiH. The Food Safety Agency of BiH is an independent administrative organisation under the Council of Ministers of BiH. The competent authorities at the Entity level are the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Republika Srpska, and the Ministry for Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry of the Federation of BiH. Government of Brčko District of BiH has its Department for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management.

Donor and sector coordination within the agriculture and rural development sector in BiH takes place through the Working Group for Planning and Coordinating the International Assistance in the Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Sector and annual coordination meetings of donors, both chaired by MoFTER

The Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) with three-year general budget planning of institutions in BiH and general annual budget planning of institutions in BiH is in place. However, there is no mid-term, sector based budgetary planning process in BiH.

IPA II support to the sector will further strengthen the institutional capacities and competitiveness of the agriculture and rural development sector and will accelerate the sector alignment with the EU *acquis*.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Female labour force participation in BiH is significantly lower than what would have been expected for its level of development. The gender gap in labour force participation is more significant among poorer members of the population, and among individuals residing in rural areas. As related to that, women's share in total formal employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing in BiH is still less in double than men and with less economic opportunities (as largely in informal status). Therefore, women are to be more economically empowered by more access to finance, more employment opportunities and more of their self-business ideas to materialise, supported by their high level of initiative takers, responsibility and entrepreneurship potential. This is of particular importance for rural population, as it closely correlates with potential for higher social inclusion and depopulation.

To respond to these needs, a number of activities will be undertaken in this Action. Women will directly benefit from activities 1.1.1 – 1.1.3 as with offered opportunities for self-employment, start-ups or for upgrading their own farming or businesses, but also with more diversified economic activities. Activity 1.1.2 will tap in with specialised knowledge transfer and know how to support professionalising women (to be) engaged in the sector. Under Result 1.1, a portion of activities will encourage women, both young and older, including specific grants to women's rural entrepreneurs as well as to young farmers as a driving force of innovations, new technologies, digitalised farming etc. The Action also foresees development of gender indicators and coherent usage, monitoring and analyses of sex-disaggregated and gender data. The Action will analyse gender specific obstacles that women face in agri-food sector to mainstream and measure interventions in view of effective diversification and value chain upscaling. Particular attention will be paid to producers, specifically at small farm level given the small farm and fragmented plot structure that dominates in BiH, with a focus on informal workers in agriculture where women are in majority. Capacities of involved institutions will be developed also to reflect the essential role of women in farming and in rural economy of BiH.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Men and women still face unequal opportunities in the labour market. As the EC Country report for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016 indicates, legal provisions providing equality between women and men are broadly in place but their implementation continues to be ineffective.

There is a significant disparity between male and female labour participation rates in favour of males that is consistent across different populations and divisions. Across the country, a total of 65.7% of males aged 15-64 years are actively participating in the labour force compared to only 41% of females of the same age group. The gender gap is somewhat smaller among younger age groups (aged 15-24) at around 17%, but increases consistently across older age groups²⁹.

As for the sector in specific, *Strategic Plan of Rural Development of BiH 2018-2021 – Framework document* - indicates that rural women are more involved in performing agricultural tasks which are poorly paid or not paid at all while male labour works outside the holding and regularly generates monetary remuneration and other benefits (health and pension insurance). Also, women's devotedness to their family life and their businesses, as traditionally exposed in BiH society, often represents challenges in ensuring sufficient quality time for their trainings and skills improvements necessary for retaining competitiveness of their businesses. In career opportunities, women face employers that still may have unequal treatment of women with families and those yet to start with.

Therefore, the Action will not only provide for equal opportunities to services and direct assistance, but will also ensure capacities for delivering support in a gender sensitive way. It also includes gender sensitive language throughout the Action circle. It will enable equal access of men and women to trainings and information not only in their businesses but also across institutions. As for capacity building, principles of equal opportunities and gender sensitive practice will be duly reflected. It will also ensure their equality in approach to the sector resources and potential (in particular in rural economic niches, like production of local food/branding, organic etc.) to lead to more gender balanced value chains (largely dominated by men, with more of women's productivity made mostly at informal level), but also to more jobs and less depopulation in rural communities. Especially, equal access to grants and advisory support services will be ensured.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

With such a strong equal opportunities' dimension, the Action will also ensure that discrimination against any minorities and vulnerable groups is prevented. In fact, the particular component of rural development will provide for direct assistance to vulnerable categories of the population and minorities across the country via grants, aimed at creating conditions for more active labouring and more access to finance, but also for more socially responsible farming and value chains.

The dimension of equal opportunities will also be a part of the sector performance monitoring and relevant data will be aggregated. Positive impact is therefore expected both under the sector economic indicators and its social dimension (quality of life, products quality, health risks resilience).

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

Due to the scope of domain, the Action will have a strong involvement of civil society and other non-state actors, like rural development and business support centres, local action groups, development agencies, professional trainings organisations, educational institutions and research institutes. The advisory support component will in particular provide for more synergies between farming and practice with an active engagement of the above groups. They will have direct access to grants support to rural development, to act in local partnerships. Therefore, they will have an active role in the design and implementation of rural community based actions to foster jobs, protect the environment and promote local quality products.

²⁹ Bosnia and Herzegovina: *Gender Disparities in Endowments, Access to Economic Opportunities and Agency*, World Bank 2015

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

The Action may support agri-environmental measures via grants for investments into climate change resilience, protection of grassland and natural heritage, energy efficiency based farming etc. As climate change increasingly affects farming practices, transmission of contaminants and toxins etc., specific support measures to increase adaptabilities to those risks may be financed.

The Action will also support value chains with the introduction of more innovative, greener technologies. Advisory support services will ensure the necessary environmental-friendly knowledge transfer and know-how. Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy measures and controls will contribute to practices compliant with relevant quality standards, general and specific sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, animal and plant health and protection regulations etc.

The Action will also tackle the field of waste (animal by-product) management both at policy and implementation level. It may enable measures to regulate and remove improper disposal of animal carcasses, pathogenic material and agricultural chemicals with negative effects both on environment and health.

Climate action relevant budget allocation: EUR 0
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7. SUSTAINABILITY

Development of new legislation/amendment of existing legislation shall be carried out respecting all national procedures, especially those related to (fiscal/ regulatory) impact assessments, public consultations, inter-ministerial coordination. Therefore, to support these processes and beneficiary institutions, projects should start by providing support to the beneficiaries with 'options analysis', regulatory impact assessments, concept papers, etc. prior to supporting them with drafting of legislation/amendments as *acquis* aligned, wherever applicable.

The sustainability will be ensured through capacity building of relevant stakeholders in information, advisory support and monitoring systems for better policymaking and gradual approximation to the EU policies. It will enhance the ownership and support of the governments in BiH to the sector policies. The Action performance measurement will be ensured which will enable proper trends and impact dynamics analyses, with relevant follow up mechanisms.

As the Action is based on the principles of *Strategic Plan of Rural Development 2018 – 2021 – Framework document* as well as of good governance and public administration, the sector administrative structures are expected to ensure appropriate accountability, inclusive and evidence based approach in policy and legal development.

Strong involvement of the sector base and non-state actors in concrete incentives and grants will ensure the ownership and viable sector linkages, both institutionally and across the sector (business) base.

8. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

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

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the Action has received funding from the EU in line with the EU communication and visibility requirements in force. All stakeholders and implementing partners shall ensure the visibility of EU financial assistance provided through IPA II throughout all phases of the programme cycle.

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

An integral part of each activity in the Action will be the definition of a communication strategy and related visibility activities. These activities will be carried out to raise the profile of the activities, increase awareness

among various target audiences and ensure successful communication of information on interventions and results to be accomplished.

Through the development of a communication strategy, communication objectives will be set, enabling the successful identification of visibility activities (to pull existing resources and create maximum impact when directed to the target groups). Furthermore, in the communication strategy the beneficiary will identify target groups (as recipients of the information), identify key messages (to be transferred to targets in a way to motivate them to perceive information in the desired manner) and set up the communication approach.

The following actions and tools should be carried out: definition of visual identity standards; preparation of written materials (factsheets, training compendia, manuals, etc.); production of branded material (panels, folders, promotional, including audio and video material content); website; events (trainings, retreats, workshops, round tables, initial and closing events) etc.

Visibility and communication aspects shall be complementary to the activities implemented by DG NEAR and the EU Delegations in the field. DG NEAR and the EU Delegations should be fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities carried out by the beneficiaries and the implementing partners.