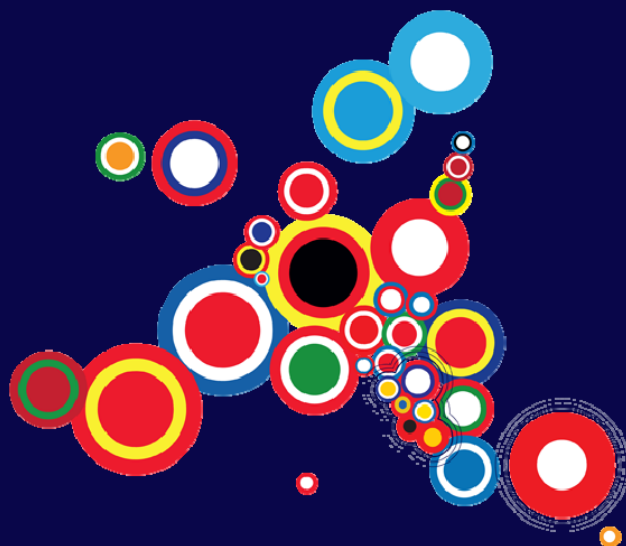




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

MONTENEGRO EU Integration Facility



Action summary

The Action aims at providing flexible support to the Chief Negotiator / NIPAC Office in addressing specific needs identified in the course of implementation of EU assistance – IPA II, supporting accession negotiation process and preparing programmes/ADs and other documents for future funding, reinforcing the institutional capacities for managing accession process and EU funds. This objective will be achieved through the capacity building interventions, preparation of well-targeted, mature and good quality actions or sector documents, preparation of tender documentation or other preparatory studies or through the implementation of activities that will ensure the effective and timely implementation of IPA programmes. Some needs related to the negotiation process not addressed in the rest of the programme could also be addressed.

| Action Identification | |
|---|---|
| Action Programme Title | Annual Action Programme for Montenegro for the year 2015 |
| Action Title | EU Integration Facility |
| Action ID | IPA/2015/037-894/1/ME/EU Integration Facility |
| Sector Information | |
| IPA II Sector | Democracy and Governance |
| DAC Sector | 43010 |
| Budget | |
| Total cost | EUR 2,450,654.66 |
| EU contribution | EUR 2,450,654.66 |
| Management and Implementation | |
| Method of implementation | Direct management |
| <i>Direct management:</i> EU Delegation | EU Delegation to Montenegro |
| Implementation responsibilities | / |
| Location | |
| Zone benefiting from the action | Montenegro |
| Specific implementation area(s) | / |
| Timeline | |
| Deadline for conclusion of the Financing Agreement | At the latest by 31 December 2016 |
| Contracting deadline | 3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement, with the exception of the cases listed under Article 189(2) Financial Regulation |
| End of operational implementation period | 6 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement |

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Montenegro applied for EU membership in December 2008 and was granted candidate status in December 2010. In June 2012, following the endorsement by the European Council, the accession negotiations with Montenegro were opened, marking the start of a more intensive phase in the accession process. The screening process was completed in May 2014, when the last screening report was processed by the Council. Montenegro's efforts in the context of accession negotiations will have to focus on fully meeting the political and economic Copenhagen criteria for EU membership, as well as the ability to assume the EU *acquis*. So far, there are 20 (out of 33) negotiation chapters opened and 2 chapters provisionally closed.

In terms of EU financial assistance, Montenegro has been benefiting from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) since 2007. IPA I covered the period 2007-2013 (EUR 235.7million) and IPA II covers the period 2014-2020 (indicatively EUR 270.5 million). The basis for programming assistance in the next seven-year period (2014-2020) is the *Indicative Strategy Paper for Montenegro (2014-2020)* (ISP) which introduces a sector approach to programming. The ISP has been prepared by the European Commission, in consultation with various national stakeholders, other donors and EU Member States and it was adopted by the Commission on 18 August 2014. There are 8 sectors identified by the ISP which will be supported by IPA during this 7 years financial perspective. In addition to the ISP, the Government of Montenegro has developed and adopted the Economic Reform Programme (ERP) and the Employment and Social Reforms Programme (ESRP) in the first half of 2015, which together with the Development Directions of Montenegro make a basis for strategic prioritisation of the interventions needed for further development of the country.

Having in mind the scale of reforms necessary for accession and the available IPA funds, a key challenge for Montenegro is to focus funds on strategic interventions, while efficiently leveraging national commitments and resource allocations to address the EU accession priorities, ensuring that these are well targeted to achieve impact. In this respect, the institutional structures for programming, implementation and monitoring need to be set up or upgraded and appropriate coordination capacities need to be strengthened. Horizontal coordination (intra-ministerial and inter-ministerial) remains to be tackled as well as consultation with other stakeholders that should take part in identifying priorities and programming IPA resources. In addition, sector priorities need to be more coherent, strategic and result oriented and translated into adequate measures, applying a sector wide approach and thus contributing to the policy objectives, and overall synergy of the accession process at country level. One of the major challenges for the Government of Montenegro (GoM), its administration and institutions is to strengthen the administrative capacities for applying a sector wide and integrated planning approach in designing relevant, well targeted and articulated sector programmes and specific actions, meeting strategic needs to the EU accession process and thus ensuring an effective use of the available EU financial assistance.

Although there are overall strategic documents which represent basis for identification of national priorities, identified sectors that will be subject to IPA II support do not have overall sector strategies, but rather strategies which cover specific areas within those sectors. Therefore, each sector is in the phase of developing/updating the sector planning documents which will be used as a second layer in identification of priorities and the needs within each sector. However, development of sector planning documents is extensive exercise which requires good strategic planning, strong linkage with the EU accession process as well as with the number of existing strategies, and it involves numerous stakeholders, thus representing additional challenge for Montenegro state administration.

National IPA Co-ordinator (NIPAC) is the main counterpart of the European Commission for the overall process of strategic planning, coordination of programming, monitoring of implementation, evaluation and reporting of IPA II assistance. Sector working groups are newly established structures which ensure application of sector approach. Having in mind the state of play of the accession

negotiation process, it is necessary to have a flexible instrument within IPA II, in order to provide timely assistance to the emerging needs in the accession process as well as in the programming of IPA II, thus increasing impact of the EU financial assistance.

Although there have been 20 chapters opened, there are still 11 negotiation chapters which require considerable efforts to invest in order to open and close the chapters. These efforts will include both human and financial resources and therefore EU Integration Facility will be used to address some of the challenges in these chapters identified during the screening and negotiation process. Having in mind that functions of Chief Negotiator and NIPAC are performed by one person, the link and coordination of the accession process and managing EU funds is present and visible, but it still needs support. While a series of institutional building actions were undertaken within the previous IPA programmes, the capacities of line ministries and state agencies remain relatively weak in terms of meeting the demands of EU funding. The capacity for identifying and preparing actions/programmes according to EU standards remains to be improved. This is of particular importance from the perspective of Montenegro's use of structural and cohesion funds, once it becomes a member state. Line ministries and other government institutions involved in IPA programming process are facing problems with the inadequate composition and quality of documentation related to preparation, implementation and monitoring of IPA programmes. Actions/programmes tend to be prepared without a proper feasibility (cost benefit) assessment, environmental impact assessment (when necessary) and with limited strategic positioning. In parallel, the number of IPA beneficiary institutions is increasing and more Agencies/Directorates/Departments/local governments/CSOs are getting involved in programming and, therefore, the demand for capacity building is still increasing.

Comparing it with IPA I, the NIPAC Office portfolio and mandate are more extensive in terms of programming, monitoring and evaluation of IPA II. In addition, preparation of the country for structural and cohesion funds (Chapter 22) is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. These two important and very much linked roles require additional strengthening of its capacities in order to be able to lead the processes and shape the needed structures. Furthermore, as required by the EC and the new WBIF methodology, the country has established the National Investment Committee (NIC) and will also prepare the single project pipeline by December 2015. The NIPAC Office will closely cooperate with NIC and its technical secretariat, particularly having in mind that NIPAC is a member of NIC.

Having all this in mind, support should be provided to the NIPAC Office in planning and coordination of programming of IPA-funded interventions. It is particularly important that financed projects target well the specific needs and that the funds are used in the most efficient manner possible. The EU Integration Facility will provide support in programming process, as well as in preparation of adequate accompanying cost-benefit analyses, feasibility studies and/or market analyses, which are prerequisites for good programme/action preparation.

Lastly, it is also fundamental that the stakeholders are able to build-in appropriate frameworks for monitoring and evaluation. Currently, the level of skills and knowledge relating to measuring outputs, outcomes and impact is still insufficient and therefore the institutions will benefit from further capacity building in this area, particularly on the concept of Results Oriented Monitoring.

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

The *Montenegro 2014 Progress Report* emphasised that the link between policy planning and available financial resources needs to be further developed. The *ISP* for Montenegro stresses throughout the need for further improvement in the capacity of the authorities to implement, monitor and evaluate sector strategies.

The *ISP* also states that in order to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of delivering assistance to Montenegro, the European Commission is making a gradual transition from a project-based approach under IPA I (2007-2013) to a sector-based approach under IPA II (2014-2020). IPA II

support will seek to strengthen the capacity of the national authorities to prepare national strategic documents, ensure sector coordination and monitor the implementation of such strategies and move towards multi-annual, performance-based budgeting.

In addition, IPA II support may also be mobilised in response to unforeseen priority needs relevant to the course of preparations for accession, which do not fall under the aforementioned priority sectors. This may include, but will not be limited to, ad hoc and short-term technical assistance, twinning projects and grants etc.

To increase the effectiveness of IPA II, all management modes, including direct management by the European Commission, indirect management by Montenegro or by accredited international organisations will be available; the decision on which mode to use will be made on a case-by-case basis with due regard to the management capacities of the beneficiary institution. Linked to this is also the capacity of Montenegrin national authorities to prepare mature actions and manage the implementation of EU funds in accordance with EU procurement and financial control standards.

SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

Montenegro currently meets some of the criteria for the sector approach in most of the sectors defined by the *ISP*. Lead institutions have been identified and sector working groups have been established. The Economic Programme (ERP) and the Employment and Social Reforms Programme (ESRP) are good basis for specific sector multi annual programming. In some other sectors, the need for development of new strategic documents focusing on the period from 2015 to 2020 is obvious. However, the capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate the sector strategies, as well as medium term budget planning, needs to be further improved.

Some sectors may benefit from the direct sector budget support, upon meeting the necessary eligibility criteria: namely a stable macro-economic framework, a credible programme to improve public finance management, transparency and oversight of budget, and credible and relevant sector strategies that are consistent with the EU accession strategy. Once these conditions are in place, sector budget support can be provided in those sectors where there is a good strategic basis for implementation of reforms. The first sector considered to be ready for this type of support is the sector of Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights (focused on Integrated Border Management – IBM).

Although the EU Integration Facility will be used to support all the sectors, it is part of the Democracy and Governance sector, and thus it will be also used to support strengthening of institutional and administrative capacities. The key strategy for this sector remains the Strategy for Public Administration Reform in Montenegro. According to the assessment of sector readiness, the PAR sector is classified in the range of sectors making gradual progress towards the sector approach. The score obtained 23.58 out of 36 helps to reflect that the sector strategic planning mechanisms do meet average quality standards but with important gaps.

The Government of Montenegro is in the process of developing new PAR Strategy and these recommendations will be addressed.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Project Preparation Facility funds under the previous IPA programmes have been utilised for delivering short-term assistance in: designing effective strategic plans in different sector areas, often followed by more detailed investment strategies; providing ad hoc support in particular chapters or future areas of negotiation; supporting planning and programming of the EU funded actions by assisting in stakeholder consultations; drafting the action documents and their annexes; and drafting the tender documentation and support the evaluations for the implementation of the EU funded actions.

In the context of preparation of IPA national programmes, it has become clear that beneficiaries require assistance in developing programmes/actions and that it is in particular necessary to provide a facility to enable limited support targeted specifically at the design-preparation phase before larger scale funds are committed to less-well defined and relatively high-risk actions.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

| OVERALL OBJECTIVE | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI) | SOURCES OF VERIFICATION | |
|--|--|--|---|
| To support Montenegro in successfully conducting the process of EU accession and managing the overall EU assistance | Progress in accession to the EU % of EU funds absorption | EC Progress Reports NIPAC Annual Reports | |
| SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI) | SOURCES OF VERIFICATION | ASSUMPTIONS |
| SO1: To strengthen overall capacities for accession negotiations, transposition of the <i>acquis</i> and implementation of EU policies; SO2: | Number of benchmarks met Annual/Multiannual Country Action Programme developed and approved | Financing Agreements EC Progress Report NIPAC Annual reports | Continued commitment of government structures to the accession process |
| RESULTS | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI) | SOURCES OF VERIFICATION | ASSUMPTIONS |
| R1: Legislative and institutional capacities of Montenegrin administration for transposition and implementation of the <i>acquis</i> and capacities for leading and carrying out the accession negotiations strengthened R2: Capacities and relevant documentation for identification, programming, implementation and evaluation of EU assistance developed | Number of tasks related to the accession negotiations completed; Number of Actions/Programmes prepared and submitted to NIPAC; Number of tender documentations, ToRs, feasibility studies, technical specifications, calls for proposals, etc. | IPA Monitoring Committee Reports NIPAC Annual Reports EC Progress Report | All relevant coordination mechanisms established and functioning |
| ACTIVITIES | MEANS | OVERALL COST | ASSUMPTIONS |
| R1 – A.1: Short term interventions at sectoral level to support achievement of objectives related to EU accession process, including provision of specific expertise, for harmonisation/implementation of national legislation, promotion of best practices, in line with the relevant European values, standards and practices, etc. R1 – A.2: Training/Coaching activities on leading and implementation of the specific accession requirements | Procurement: Services/supplies/works contracts and grants | EUR 2,450,654.66 | Low fluctuation in staff working in state administration Availability of staff for capacity building interventions |

R2 – A.1: Support for the strategic planning of EU assistance with the focus on sector wide approach and preparation for cohesion and structural funds

R2 - A.2: Technical assistance to specific sector/ sub sector working groups in preparation of sector strategies or multi-sector strategies, drafting of (pre-)feasibility and impact studies as well as in preparation of procurement documents

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

The specific objective of the EU Integration Facility is to provide effective and efficient response to emerging priorities linked to the EU accession process as well as to improve the quality and maturity of planning and programming documents and to support effective implementation of EU assistance. Therefore, the purpose of this Action is to provide high quality, cost-effective expertise to Chief Negotiator/NIPAC but also to sector working groups, line ministries and all other relevant institutions or stakeholders in the overall process of EU accession, IPA II programming and implementation and preparation for cohesion and structural funds.

This Action would focus mainly on technical support and capacity building related to the EU accession process and it should ensure effectiveness and impact of actions financed through IPA II. The EU Integration Facility shall provide flexible support to the national authorities aimed at addressing specific needs identified in the course of the implementation of IPA II, but it may also be used in ad-hoc circumstances where EU assistance is required and/or suggested.

It shall include, but is not restricted to, the following:

- Preparation of sector strategies and investment strategies, support to sector coordination;
- Technical support to programming and strategic planning;
- Capacity building of the stakeholders in the identification, programming, implementation and evaluation of IPA funds and preparation for cohesion and structural funds;
- Technical support to communication on the European Union financial assistance and IPA visibility;
- Technical assistance in the preparation and assessment of Terms of Reference, Calls for Proposals, Technical Specifications, Bills of quantities and other relevant documents for a variety of tender procedures;
- Technical support for development of pre-feasibility studies, conceptual designs, feasibility studies, environmental impact assessments, cost-benefit analysis, and other programming documentation;
- Technical support for conducting assessments and providing recommendations for further enhancement of capacities, systems and co-ordination mechanisms for establishment/implementation of indirect implementation and contracting within the sectors identified by the ISP;
- Support to legislative and institutional capacities for implementation of the *acquis*;
- Support to capacity building for accession negotiations;
- Support to activities for technical implementation of the accession requirements;
- Planning and execution of action monitoring visits and preparation of monitoring reports;
- Support to evaluation of IPA II.

This Action will provide capacity building in programming and identification of Sector Support Programmes/Sector Support Actions/Sector Support Oriented Actions/Stand-alone Actions to SWGs, line ministries and other stakeholders (other state bodies, independent regulators, local self-governments, social partners, civil society, etc.).

The capacity building intervention should support the Chief Negotiator/NIPAC Office to coordinate the overall process of EU integration, but it will simultaneously have an impact on capacities and ownership of line ministries, working groups for specific chapters, sector working groups and other stakeholders to carry out accession negotiations as well as programming of EU assistance which will be thus better linked with the EU accession process.

Having in mind the numerous needs and rather limited funds, the key element for successful use of funds, in order to achieve the desired impact, is coordination. Therefore, the Chief Negotiator/ NIPAC Office in close cooperation with the EU Delegation to Montenegro established coordination mechanism which will ensure successful coordination and provide timely response to the emerging needs of Montenegro in the process of preparations for accession and the programming of IPA funds.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The key beneficiary of the Action is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (Chief Negotiator/NIPAC Office), which will coordinate and implement required technical support that various SWGs, working groups for specific chapters, line ministries and other stakeholders will also benefit from. The national stakeholders will request the assistance through the EU Integration Facility through submitting the request to NIPAC. The requests will be discussed internally on intra-governmental level, after which the list with justified needs/action proposals will be prepared and discussed with the EUD to Montenegro. This list of needs/action proposals will represent possible activities relevant for implementation of this Action. The final decision on the actions that will be supported by this EU Integration Facility will be established during the implementation of the Action by a Steering Committee composed of the EU Delegation and the NIPAC Office.

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

Activities will be implemented through the contracts for services/supplies/works, as well as through grants/twinning/twinning lights for an amount up to EUR 2,450,654.66.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of this Action will be conducted in accordance with the rules of direct management and respecting the requirements and provisions of IPA II regulations and those laid down in the Framework Agreement and in the respective Financing Agreement. Achieving of the Action results will be regularly monitored by the EU Delegation to Montenegro and National IPA Coordinator.

Implementation of this Action will be subject of special attention of Sectoral Monitoring Committee and IPA Monitoring Committee which shall measure progress in relation to achieving the objectives of the actions and their expected outputs, results and impact by means of indicators related to a baseline situation, as well as progress with regard to financial execution. The Sectoral Monitoring Committee will report to the IPA Monitoring Committee and will make proposals on any corrective action to ensure the achievement of the objectives of the action and enhance its efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

Moreover, in accordance with Article 8 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 447/2014, NIPAC shall take measures to ensure that the objectives set out in the Action are appropriately addressed during the implementation of EU assistance. Procedures for implementing monitoring activities are set out in the revised Manuals of Procedures aligned with new IPA

regulations. Best practices from the monitoring of implementation of previous actions and recommendations given by external monitoring in this sector will be also taken into consideration.

This action shall be subject to evaluations, in accordance with Article 30(4) of Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No. 966/2012 and with Article 22 of the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 447/2014. The results of evaluations shall be taken into account by the IPA Monitoring Committee and the Sectoral Monitoring Committee.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

| Indicator | Description | Baseline (2010) | Last available (2013) | Milestone 2017 | Target 2020 | Source of information |
|---|---|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| <i>ISP INDICATOR(s):</i> Progress in accession to the EU | Montenegro has opened 20 (out of 33 chapters) and the progress is measured with the number of opened/closed chapters | no 0 | no 6 | 33 opened | 33 open/closed | EC Progress Report |
| % of absorption of IPA II | % of absorption of IPA II demonstrated by the percentage of contracted and disbursed funds by programming years and in total | 0 | 0 | 60% - IPA 2014 30% - IPA 2015 | 100% - IPA 2014 100% - IPA 2015 100% - IPA 2016 70% - IPA 2017 30% - IPA 2018 | IPA Monitoring Committee Reports |
| <i>ACTION OUTCOME INDICATOR 1</i> Annual/Multiannual Country Action Programme developed and approved | Annual/Multiannual Action Programmes timely prepared by Montenegro and approved and adopted by the European Commission by passing the Commission Implementing Decisions and signing the Financing Agreements. | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 | Financing Agreements |
| <i>ACTION OUTCOME INDICATOR 2</i> Number of benchmarks met | There are number of requirements/ benchmarks related to accession process that Montenegro needs to fulfil | 0 | 2 | At least 10 | At least 20 | EC Progress Reports |
| <i>ACTION OUTPUT INDICATOR 1</i> Number of quality Programmes/ ADs prepared and submitted to the NIPAC | The prioritisation and needs of the Government in relation to the accession process and utilisation of EU assistance will be transposed into quality programmes/ ADs/ interventions | 0 | 0 | 3 | 8 | NIPAC Annual Reports IPA Monitoring Committee Reports |
| <i>ACTION OUTPUT INDICATOR 2</i> Number of tender documentations, ToRs, feasibility studies, technical specifications, calls for proposals, etc. | In order to implement Programmes/ADs, it is necessary to prepare various documents | 0 | 0 | 4 | 30 | NIPAC Annual Reports |

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

Environment protection legislation in Montenegro is comprehensive and is going through intensive process of harmonisation with the EU *acquis*. The proposed Action will give due attention to environmental issues. Among others, this will, for example, include increased use of electronic means, reduction in paper consumption (recto/verso prints), etc.

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

NIPAC office announced call for participation of civil society organisation in sector working groups. This activity resulted with nine (9) civil society representatives who are members of the sector working groups. In addition, the Action will encourage other partnerships with civil society representatives, in order to include non-state actors in decision-making on priority support as well as in tailoring of services to be provided by the Action based on the real and urgent needs. Besides the civil society, the Action is open to involve other stakeholders such as media, local authorities and institutions.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The Action will ensure that the internal policies, structures or operating procedures conform with and promote equal opportunity. In supporting legislative harmonisation, gender needs will be taken into consideration and provisions that enhance equal opportunities will be introduced. All Action activities will respect the principles of equal treatment and opportunities for women, especially trainings and awareness events. In addition, the Action will specifically contribute to the enhancement of the capacities of staff in all line ministries contributing towards the achievement of gender-related UN, EU, CoE and OSCE requirements for gender sensitive policies, legislation and programming as well as gender balanced representation in relevant operational structures, participation in capacity building interventions, etc. Finally, the concept of gender mainstreaming will be taken into account in all stages of programmes/ADs development so as to enable and encourage participation of women in all areas of policy development that this Action will help formulate and support.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Being the multi-ethnic society, Montenegro is committed to preserving the culture, history, language and religion of its national minorities. Thus the Action will implement mechanisms to ensure that in the legislative process, the internal policies, structure or operating procedures of the beneficiary institutions, the principle of equitable representation of ethnic minorities and the protection of their rights is taken into consideration.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

Improved programming and capacities to utilise IPA II resources will have direct impact on advancing and accelerating accession negotiations with the EU, which is the ultimate goal of the Government of Montenegro. Therefore, the Action will contribute to the progress and sustainability of achieved results within the reforms of the process of accession to the EU, supported by IPA II.

In addition, sustainability will be ensured through the established coordination mechanisms for programming and implementation of IPA II and acquired skills of the state administration in programming of IPA II, that will lead to successful implementation of projects and improved programming for next years. Specific knowledge on preparation of relevant documentation, both for programming and for implementation, gained through provision of expertise and/or trainings and coaching will ensure strengthened capacities. Having in mind that NIPAC will have the overall

responsibility for coordination of the IPA II, enhanced capacities of the NIPAC Office will have multiple impact on capacities of sector working groups, but also of working groups for specific negotiation chapters, through direct communication and coordination with the Secretariat of the Negotiation Group (which is part of the MFAEI).

Financial sustainability will be ensured through better programming of IPA II resources and this will enable utilisation of both IPA resources and State budget resources, contributing to financial sustainability of overall resources invested in reform and accession processes.

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 the responsibility of the beneficiary, and 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 Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions.

The use of *Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions* is compulsory. The contractor shall use the appropriate stationery in letterheads or fax headers sheets and report presentation format, but should add the phrase “*This Action/programme is funded by the European Union*” as well as the EU flag when relevant. Elements of the communication strategy may include: press release, press conferences, leaflets and/or brochures, newsletters, web pages, vehicle panels, promotional items, reports, audio-visual productions. Any supplies or equipment delivered under an EU-funded Action must be clearly identified and must visibly carry the EU logo and the mention “*Provided by the support of the EU*” in the operational language of the EU programme and in the local language.

Visibility and communication actions shall demonstrate how the intervention contributes to the agreed programme objectives and the accession process. 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. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to keep the EU Delegation fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities.

The beneficiary shall report on its visibility and communication actions in the report submitted to the IPA Monitoring Committee and the Sectoral Monitoring Committees.

