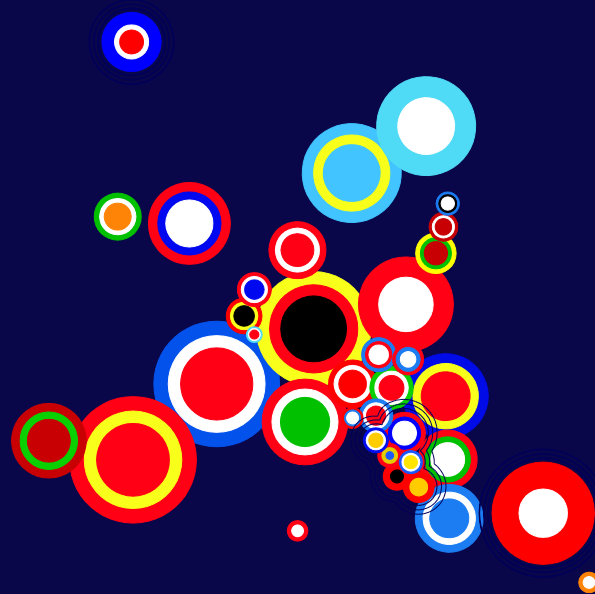




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

SERBIA Negotiations and Communication Facility



Action Summary

The contents of the IPA 2015 Action is being proposed at the point when the Republic of Serbia has recently completed the analytical examination of the EU acquis (screening process) for all 35 chapters and has embarked with the implementation of the sector approach in line with the requirements of the new IPA for period 2014-2020 (IPA II). In order to maintain the momentum of important reforms, administration in Serbia will necessitate properly configured assistance.

The Action will secure the support to unforeseen priority needs relevant to the accession negotiations, acquis alignment and institution building in various sectors, including proper implementation of EU assistance. Furthermore, the Action aims to optimise the value of the EU assistance, strengthen its impact, transfer it to other contexts, and integrate it in a sustainable manner into the broader European accession context by supporting the visibility and communication interventions that will raise the profile of IPA II funded Actions and IPA II programme as such.

Action Identification	
Programme Title	Annual Action Programme for Serbia (2015)
Action Title	Negotiations and Communication Facility
Action ID	IPA 2015/038-441.03/Serbia/Negotiations and communication facility
Sector Information	
IPA II Sectors	Democracy and Governance
DAC Sector	15110
Budget	
Total cost (VAT excluded) ¹	EUR 8,100,000.00
EU contribution	EUR 8,100,000.00
Management and Implementation	
Method of implementation	Direct management
Direct management: EU Delegation in charge	EU Delegation
Implementation responsibilities	For Result 1 - Serbian European Integration Office For Result 2 - Ministry of Youth and Sports For Result 3 - Serbian European Integration Office
Location	
Zone benefiting from the action	Republic of Serbia
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A
Timeline	
Deadline for conclusion of the Financing Agreement	31 December 2016
Contracting deadline	3 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement
End of operational implementation period	6 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement

¹ The total action cost should be net of VAT and/or of other taxes. Should this not be the case, clearly indicate the amount of VAT and the reasons why it is considered eligible.

1. RATIONALE

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Support to Negotiations and policy development

The formal start of Serbia's accession negotiations commenced with the first intergovernmental conference, which took place on 21 January 2014. The January conference's conclusions stated that Serbia had already achieved the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria, including improvement of relations with Pristina, sufficient fulfilment of the political criteria and conditions of the Stabilisation and Association Process and achievements in the establishment of a functioning market economy. Moreover, the EU indicated its own high expectations of the country to be in a position to take on the obligations of membership in the medium term in nearly all *acquis* fields². Within the negotiating framework it was decided that the three most important chapters for Serbia are the following: 35 – normalisation of relations with Pristina, 23 – judicial system and fundamental human rights and 24 – justice, freedom and security. These are the opening chapters and will remain open until the end of the accession negotiations. However, it was also made clear that Serbia needs to continue improving the business environment, developing a competitive private sector, tackling high unemployment rates and continuing regional cooperation. In its Enlargement Strategy 2014, the Commission outlined its approach in above areas which aims at focusing on fundamentals ("fundamentals first"). These fundamentals are closely linked to the Copenhagen criteria and the conditionalities of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

The analytical examination of the EU *acquis* (screening process) has been completed for all 35 chapters in March 2015. In this process, it was determined that Serbia is in lack of specific knowledge and expertise in certain areas. The implementation of the National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis* 2014-2017 (NPAA), which includes the approximation of Serbian legislation with EU *acquis* and the enforcement of that legislation, require necessary expertise, knowledge and experience. In addition, Serbian administration needs support for EU *acquis* related reforms, but also in the view to the implementation of priorities identified in the AP, NPAA, Regular Progress Reports, Indicative Strategy Paper (ISP) and other relevant strategic documents.

In the light of assisting Serbia in advancing its EU agenda, a need emerged to establish an envelope under IPA 2015 programme to support specific Actions which cannot be programmed in advance. The envelope will provide the possibility to respond to emerging tasks in a more flexible and immediate way and will complement the needs which might appear in certain sectors in the regular course of country developments, even if they are not strictly interrelated with the outcome of screenings or negotiations per certain chapters, but are nevertheless, directly or indirectly also accession driven. In particular, Actions will be supported in those areas in which an urgent or unforeseen task would come up during the accession negotiations or which have a high priority. Through the envelope, support will be provided to any Actions found necessary to support the measures the EU could take in line with the recent developments, but which can't be identified at this stage of programming, as they will depend on the progress made with advancement of Serbia's legislation and institution building.

The envelope shall also be dedicated to the support for smaller scale projects, typically to be implemented through twinning/twinning light (but not exclusively). Therefore, it is expected also that the support for Independent State Bodies, such as State Audit Institution or National Bank of Serbia, etc., would be programmed under this envelope (if not addressed with other sectoral actions).

This envelope will cover a series of demand-driven requests such as twinning and technical assistance, which will include as well short-term advisory assistance, study visits to EU Member States, attendance to accession related conferences and meetings/workshops by the Serbian administration, as well as the possible needs arising from the implementation of IPA interventions..

² http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/140676.pdf

Visibility and Communication Interventions

Despite the fact that the EU has provided more than € 3 billion in grants to Serbia over the past 15 years, and is the biggest donor in Serbia, and although EU investments represent a real opportunity for the economic and social development of the Serbia, the communication and visibility activities around the EU funds so far have not managed to capture the imagination of citizens. This can be illustrated by the analysis of the results of research³ on the attitudes of the citizens related to EU integration which indicate that support for EU membership fell from 72% in 2004 to 44% in December 2014.

This is also confirmed in the report of SEIO from December 2014 on the Public Opinion Poll, where more than half of the population believes that Russia is the largest donor to Serbia in the last 15 years, while only 29% of the population thinks it is the European Union. The same research indicates that a low number of respondents among the general public are informed on the EU funds, can name a action or an area financed from the EU funds, or are interested in topics related to EU funds.

Providing accurately information to the public about the accession and negotiation process is essential. In parallel with the political and technical process, a special aspect of the EU integration and Serbia's membership to the EU is the communication and visibility about this process and the need for citizens to understand and support the integration, but above all, to support the structural reforms that are being implemented. This is also the key message of the Communication Strategy of the Government on the accession process to the EU. Together with the Communication Strategy on the IPA funds, the documents form the basis that defines obligations of the Government to regularly and systematically communicate with citizens.

The SEIO is in charge of the task to inform the public about the accession process/negotiations between Serbia and the EU, as well as about the necessary reforms that run in parallel with this process and the consequences of membership.

It is also evident that the Government needs to communicate better to public what the EU accession and membership means. The lessons learned on informing and building up domestic awareness concerning the process of European integration could be drawn from the successful example of the visa liberalization process, which was a successful example of using an important topic for the everyday citizen, and linking it to the wider process of EU accession and the key issues concerning EU values and principles. A similar approach will be performed through this action, in the use of a topic which is close to the needs of citizens across Serbia, such as the improvement of the local community infrastructure, as a vehicle for communicating the broader messages about value of the EU to the everyday lives of people in Serbia.

Finally, as of the IPA 2013 programme, Serbia is in charge of the management of EU funds and project implementation. Covering all aspects of the accreditation criteria involves paying specific attention to communication and information exchange among all actors. Implementation of pre-accession assistance under indirect management requires a coherent set of activities to publicise information about assistance under IPA II in accordance with the EU regulations⁴.

In that respect NIPAC TS is responsible for coordinating overall information and visibility activities on IPA and additionally takes the lead role in preparing and implementing the strategy for communicating with the general public, media and public administration on the overall IPA II programme.

³ Conducted by SEIO twice a year

⁴ Articles 10, 24 and 25 of the COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA II)

Each institution in the operating structure needs to assign the function of IPA Visibility Officer. According to revised data from the National Fund (February 2015), 20 officers for IPA visibility have been currently appointed and a network of these civil servants has been established.

The tasks of the Visibility Officers, in addition to the preparation of communication action plans, are also the implementation of specific communication activities and reporting on those activities to NIPAC TS. Bearing in mind the complexity of the topics on EU funds, it is essential that officers are professionally trained and qualified for the realization of these communication platforms.

Additionally, in every institution there are already officers for public relations (PR) or departments that deal with PR. IPA Visibility Officers are required to communicate with already existing PR structures in their ministries/institutions, but currently an appropriate model of coordination is missing. Likewise, IPA Visibility Officers are not sufficiently qualified to perform activities related to PR.

Therefore, the proposed Action aims to support the visibility and communication interventions that will raise the profile of IPA II funded Actions and IPA II programme as such, in the context of better recognition of EU values, policies and accession process on the ground.

The Action aims to promote EU assistance as a vector for improvement of the people's daily life and therefore to show that accession process goes well beyond the approximation of regulations and standards but represents a concrete opportunity in achieving better conditions of life. In order to avoid miss-perception among the citizens, public sector (including local self-government), civil society, the business world and academia, directly or indirectly involved in EU-related matters, the Action aims at finding new elements to foster motivation among these groups by giving tangible evidences of EU assistance.

Also, the Action seeks to tackle the visibility and communication activities aimed at increasing public knowledge and understanding of the EU during the accession negotiation process, as well as raising the visibility and the profile of IPA II funded Actions and IPA II programme, increasing awareness among various target audiences and ensuring successful communication about the activities and results that will be accomplished.

Thus, the Action is to optimise the value of the EU assistance, strengthen its impact, transfer it to other contexts, and integrate it in a sustainable manner into the broader European accession context. The strategy to approach this aim is to react on different levels:

- (i) **Level of direct tangible activities with greatest impact** on individuals or groups of individuals (citizens, academia, local self-government, CSOs, etc.);
- (ii) **Level of activities with influence on systems and implementation of a strategic framework** to communicate about the Actions and the implementation of specific communication and visibility activities with final goal to raise awareness of citizens about the EU and IPA funds

In order to achieve this complex task, the Action has focused on a single issue which has figured high on the list of topics that concern citizens in their everyday activities, and where it is considered that substantive improvements can lead to a significant increase of understanding, acceptance and awareness by the citizens of the meaning of EU assistance, and the value and impact of the EU in their everyday lives.

In consultation through the sector working groups for IPA programming, including through the SECO mechanism established by SEIO to harness the civil society participation, and in consultation with authorities at national and local levels, the topic of the local community infrastructure in smaller and less developed municipalities across Serbia was selected as the ideal entry point for a larger visibility campaign. This campaign would harness the relevance of further improving the local community infrastructure, in particular the sports infrastructure, which is a rallying point for the citizens of the municipalities, to the agenda and visibility of the EU, fostering awareness and knowledge of the EU accession processes the EU values and the impact of the EU to the lives of citizens in Serbia. Therefore, at the level of direct tangible activities with greatest impact on individuals or groups of individuals, the Action seeks to improve the quality and quantity of community related infrastructure in municipalities throughout Serbia by providing assistance for the *provision of relevant sport*

infrastructure. Having in mind the favourable impact of this action on the awareness of the youth in Serbia about the EU funds and values, and having in mind the activities so far carried out at national level to improve the community infrastructure in this specific field, the Action will be conducted with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS) and local self-governments. The action will link the first section of support to the communication platforms on the EU with the concrete and visible improvements at community level through the construction, reconstruction, renovation and rehabilitation of the local sports facilities.

Previously undertaken analysis by that ministry confirms that the sports infrastructure built in previous periods of the countries development, has been in recent decades significantly devastated. The action has been selected as a good pilot case of linking concrete support to communities across Serbia through IPA with strong visibility of the EU, having in mind the success of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in the previous work with local self-government on the construction, equipping and maintenance of sports infrastructure and the important visibility that has been gained in that context. another reason for selecting this pilot action has been the low risk of the construction efforts to fail, having in mind the significant preparatory work of the Ministry in this field, whereby mature projects are already prepared, relevant permits obtained and the action has already been tested, since the MoYS, with budget funds, financed the construction, reconstruction, renovation and rehabilitation of sports facilities the period 2008 - 2014, with 482 projects and in total amount of 3,638,024,478.20 RSD (approx. 30,317,000.00 EUR).

Interventions in this field will tackle projects divided into groups: (i) Construction, reconstruction, renovation and rehabilitation of sports facilities; and (ii) Projects "Finish uncompleted" (sports facilities whose construction was terminated due to lack of funds).

These two groups are further divided into three sub-groups of sports facilities: community pools, school sports facilities and general sports facilities.

On the third **level of activities with influence on systems and policy**, the Action concentrates on systems and institutions and development of the administrative capacity for effective communication required under IPA II. The Action will streamline the 'dissemination' as a planned process of providing information on the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the results of IPA programmes and initiatives to various actors. Also, the Action will 'mainstream' requirements set in the IPA II IR with regards to functions and responsibilities of the operating structures (Article 10), information, publicity and transparency (Article 24), and visibility and communication (Article 25), focusing on capacity strengthening of the civil servants in charge of communication on EU funds (IPA Visibility Officers).

Finally, with regards to the **implementation of a strategic framework**, the Action will help to implement a variety of communication and visibility interventions, in line with the IPA Communication Strategy and related Action Plan, with the purpose of increasing the public knowledge and understanding of the EU role and financial contribution through IPA in achieving the objectives of Serbia's accession to the EU and explaining implications of EU accession. Attaining this goal will support the implementation of IPA by increasing the understanding of its role, objectives and achievements and the support provided among potential beneficiaries, general public, implementing bodies, and other stakeholders. It will also contribute to enhancing the capacities for a smooth transition into future management of the Structural Instruments, given the almost identical regulatory requirements for information and visibility related activities.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

Financial assistance will be granted in line with, and in support of, the **Enlargement Strategy and the Indicative Strategy Paper (ISP) for Serbia**. These documents stresses, among others, that support shall be concentrated on those interventions that bring the greatest added value in relation to the **Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (Europe 2020)** and the flagship initiatives of the EU to boost growth and jobs. Furthermore, the objectives agreed under the SEE 2020 Strategy represent important benchmarks for the reform efforts of the beneficiaries and the financial assistance under IPA II will be used to support meeting these targets.

Support to negotiations and policy developments

The support to negotiations and policy developments will be mobilised in response to immediate priority needs relevant to the accession negotiations, but which do not fall under the identified sector-based areas. Also assistance will be provided for *acquis* alignment and institution building in various sectors, and policy developments unforeseen at the moment of the programming process.

The Action will enhance the institutional ability to implement activities that help Serbia meet the full range of its priorities deriving from the **European Partnership and Indicative Strategy Paper, as well as from the Stabilization and Association Agreement**.

The **Progress Report on** Serbia adopted by the European Commission is a guide to the types of issues which may be part of the envelope. The Commission concluded that Serbia sufficiently meets the political criteria, but needs to continue to focus in particular on the rule of law, including the full exercise of freedom of expression, public administration reform, together with economic governance. The report also points out that Serbia continues to sufficiently fulfil the political criteria with continued European orientation of the government and that the government remained actively engaged towards its goal of EU accession. The report stresses out that Serbia still needs to implement comprehensive reforms such as constitutional reforms and better acknowledging the role of independent regulatory bodies. Areas of support may include, but are not limited, to the following: the implementation of the 2013-2018 strategies on judicial reform and fight against corruption and their monitoring and coordination mechanisms; with regard to the programme of economic reforms, efforts are still needed to address the very high budget deficit, by streamlining government spending, restoring fiscal discipline and improving tax collection; a wide range of structural reforms remains to be carried out, including related to the efficiency of the education system, the privatisation and restructuring of State owned enterprises, the streamlining of State aid and the improvement of the business environment. Finally, the report points out that Serbia needs to develop and implement a robust monitoring mechanism for *acquis* alignment across the board and to ensure that human and financial resources are allocated to allow effective enforcement of reforms.

Visibility and Communication

The Action is targeted to increasing the public awareness and transparency of the activities and results achieved by of the EU through the pre-accession assistance and informing potential beneficiaries about possibilities within the IPA II. This is essential to ensure public awareness of EU actions in line with: The action plan of the Commission 'Communicating Europe'; Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Actions; Communication Strategy for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union (adopted by Serbian Government in December 2011); IPA Communication Strategy (internal Governmental document for the IPA Visibility Officers in Serbian Government, published in December 2013); The White paper of the Commission on a European communication policy.

Integral part of the Action to be carried out will be definition of visibility and communication activities in order to fulfil the requirements on information, publicity and transparency in accordance with Articles 10, 24 and 25 of Commission Implementing Regulation (Eu) No 447/2014 Of 2 May 2014⁵, and ensure appropriate visibility of the IPA II programme.

This Action shall also support improving promotion of EU-funded or EU-related activities, raising awareness, improving the understanding of the EU policies and processes and showing results and impacts of IPA assistance on the ground. Regular and relevant information sharing would improve the aid effectiveness and achieve more transparent EU aid, in line with the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and the EU Transparency Guarantee (EUTG). Information on EU assistance needs to

⁵ COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA II)

be regularly published and made available for the wider public. In order to achieve greater absorption, information on how to access IPA funds should also be made available in a common format that meets the needs of the European Commission, the Government and all nongovernmental stakeholders.

In this context, the existing evidence suggests that investments into sports infrastructure are more likely to be successful in generating growth and jobs if they are conceived from the outset as part of an integrated, place-based development effort adapted to specific local conditions (e.g. part of wider urban regeneration or social inclusion effort) and with the ambition of achieving financial self-sustainability. Sports activities include both grassroots and professional activities, for instance related to tourism, health or to the experience industry. The health and social inclusion benefits to wider society as a whole from promotion of sport and access to appropriate sport facilities are, of course, well known and documented. These aspects will be harnessed as part of the concrete and tangible part of the more general visibility and communication action across Serbia.

SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT

This stand-alone Action has cross-cutting nature. In terms of IPA 2015 Programme and following the logic of the ISP, this Action is presented within the Public Administration Reform sector.

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Support to negotiations and policy developments

Support to negotiations and policy developments was included in previous IPA programmes in order to support in particular the horizontal departments in institutions, in charge of programming and implementation and coordination and European integration process. It helped strengthen the link between the policy agenda and financial assistance by allowing a faster response to a limited number of immediate priority needs. This envelope has also proven to be instrumental to enhancing capacities for alignment and implementation of *acquis* requirements.

The experience gained so far concerning the demand for usage of the previous similar IPA Actions, demonstrates high interest expressed by the national administration and the purposefulness of disposing of such a programming and financing tool incorporated in the national IPA package. As expected, this proved to be relevant in particular for sectors with diversified and voluminous *acquis* such as environment, agriculture and rural development, internal market, but also justice and human resources development. In that respect it ensures the reserve of funds to be mobilised with the aim to respond to emerging tasks related to the institution building and further strengthening of administrative capacities of institutions responsible for implementation of the *Acquis* and to foster exchange of best practice in a flexible and immediate way.

Visibility and Communication Interventions

The lessons learned so far show that communication in the process of European integration, the process that lasts more than a decade, is neither easy nor simple job. European integration is the process that has been carried out by different institutions, partially in irregular intervals: the NIPAC/NIPAC TS, Ministries to the extent to which EU projects with which they were cooperating required so, European Union Delegation in Serbia exponent of the largest donor and direct political partner to Serbia towards European integration, non-governmental organizations dedicated to these issues through project awareness campaigns, embassies of EU Member States, certain media, institutes and colleges. The main challenge in sharing the information about IPA so far has lain in the process of planning, cooperation and coordination between the institutions and entities who have been communicating initiatives within their own mandates. There has not been a coherently defined and coordinated message in public appearances, while coordination in the communication activities between the institutions and beneficiaries involved in IPA implementation has been insufficient, lacking an integrated approach and a common platform. As a result, there is some awareness of the existence of IPA, whereas in-depth knowledge concerning the details is still quite scarce. The process was lacking strategic vision and only in November 2011, the Government adopted the Strategy for Communication of the Republic of Serbia in the process of approaching to the European Union, while IPA Communication Strategy was finalised in 2013.

The activities planned through this AD follow the good practices which have been performed in a set of local-based projects, both from IPA funding, and funded by bilateral donors. These include:

- A large EU intervention EU PROGRES implemented in municipalities in Serbia was an excellent opportunity to highlight the importance of its implementation in municipalities and improvements to which it has led, thus making important area for the promotion of European integration in the local community.
- The programme of support local governments, EXCHANGE, implemented by the CSO Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, was an opportunity for sharing the messages and views on the improvement of the local community, lifestyle changes, as well as the problems and difficulties, opportunities to speak up language that encourages positive thinking about the process of European integration at the local level.
- Programme of improvement of preschool education IMPRES that offered many opportunities for better conditions in kindergartens and more professional education of preschool children.
- Programme of improvement of municipal infrastructure MISP. The results of the projects were a good opportunity for enhancing the visibility of EU funded projects since it led to the enhancement and improvement of the local community.
- The project of support to local Governments in the Process of European Integration, which was funded by the Kingdom of Sweden provided to municipalities an opportunity for networking and raising the level of international cooperation and exchange of experience and considerable support in the expert and practical cooperation in the sphere of European integration.
- With regards to visibility aspects and sustainability related to sport infrastructure, MoYS in cooperation with the Government of the Kingdom of Norway and the Football Association of Serbia implemented the project which led to building of 78 fields with artificial grass for training and competitive activities in the field of various sports activities. The finalised sport courts were handed over to local governments to use and maintain.

A thematic evaluation appraised the information and communication (IC) programmes during the period 2007 – 2010⁶, in particular the intervention logic, and provided a judgement on the performance and recommendation for the future. New Evaluation on IPA information and communication programmes⁷ is on-going.

The evaluation assessed that although the objectives set out on IPA IC are clear and defined in an unambiguous manner with coherence and internal logic in objective setting at the different levels⁸, evaluation results suggest that objective setting could be optimized with more SMART objectives and more comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and needs assessment systems. The evaluation reveals that *“the EUDs have been recognized as a very important information source for multipliers and the leading or one of the leading institutional actors communicating on enlargement”* while *“the governments in all countries place relatively low importance on communicating enlargement”*.

Due to the lack of comprehensive monitoring and evaluative data, the extent to which IPA IC financial assistance has contributed to the strategic objectives (effectiveness) couldn't be assessed with certainty. Evaluation assessed that communication activities are clearly visible and effective for those with an interest in enlargement while the communication towards the “non-informed” audiences and the broader public has overall been less effective. Although, media coverage has been significant, knowledge and understanding of EU issues among journalists remain uneven. The most effectively

⁶ Thematic Evaluation of IPA-funded Information and Communication Activities. The assignment was undertaken by EPEC between January 2011 and May 2011 within the framework contract of DG BUDG No BUDG06/PO/03. The evaluation was commissioned by DG Enlargement (DG ELARG).

⁷ Budget/budget line IPA 2013 Information and communication programme / 22.02.10.02

⁸ for the overall IC strategy, for EUDs managed activities and for centrally managed activities

targeted wider public group has been youth. Effective targeting of low skilled stakeholders (e.g. farmers) remains yet to be adequately developed.

In general, the evaluation emphasizes the information and communication activities so far had soft and indirect impact on public knowledge, but it is unlikely to have had any significant positive impact on public opinion: *“The communication efforts are too marginal and the contextual factors impacting on public opinion too significant.”*

In relation to efficiency, evaluation reveals insufficient availability of human resources in institutions to effectively and efficiently implement IC activities.

So far some experiences have been captured and some lessons were learned:

- Citizens generally first focus on important issues for their own experience and their families and do not generally do see European issues as a priority.
- Messages, facts and explanations that are sent to the citizens, still contain a large number of general phrases and political platitudes.
- The process of European integration mainly tackles changes and reforms of national legislation, and then is followed by harmonisation of the regulations at the local level. As was the case in many countries that have gone through the process of EU integration, if the level of central government is lacking sufficient expertise and understanding of the process of these changes, timely informing on the changes that have occurred in the transition process will be lost.
- The beneficiaries' sense of ownership is the key to the success of the project. Therefore, a close and regular involvement of the beneficiaries from the very early stages of the Action (including civil society, sports associations at local level, the local communities, schools and citizens) and throughout the entire project cycle is of utmost importance. Finally, experience shows that municipalities very often underestimate or even neglect the costs for maintenance of facilities implemented for and handed over to them, so this aspect needs to be communicated and agreed upon from the outset.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
Serbian administration effectively conducts accession negotiations and successfully manages overall EU integration and pre-accession assistance geared towards EU membership	- Degree of development of Serbia positions in negotiating EU accession - Degree of support to EU membership among the population in Serbia	- Government reports and reports of the Negotiating team - Report on the Public Opinion Pool carried out by SEIO	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Efficient carrying out of accession negotiations and fulfilling the requirements of EU membership including the effective usage of available funds for priority reforms while providing support to interventions that will raise the profile of IPA funded Actions and IPA programme as such in the context of better recognition of EU values, policies and accession process	- Degree of fulfilment of EC recommendations contained in annual Progress Reports for the Republic of Serbia - Trust in the European Union index in Serbia.	- EC progress report - SEIO reports - Eurobarometer survey	Continuous support of the GoS of the European Integration process Continuous support of the Member States to Serbia's European Integration process Future allocation by the government of appropriate levels of human and financial resources Budgetary constraints are not increased
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Result 1 Prompt implementation of accession related actions in the sectors covered by the EU acquis and policy dialogue with the E, including smooth implementation of IPA assistance is ensured	Degree of response to specific and urgent needs emerging from the European Integration process	Steering committee reports; IPA Monitoring Committee reports; MIS	There is inter-ministerial agreement about priority projects that should be supported under the envelope for negotiations and policy developments
Result 2 Tangible evidence of EU assistance promoted as a vector for improvement of the people's daily life by facilitating development and promotion of sports through construction/reconstruction and adaptation of sport infrastructure in Serbian municipalities	- Number of sport facilities completed and operational - Degree of application of publicity and visibility measures as relevant per each contract	- Reports on implementation of the Action - Annual Ministry of sport and Youth Reports	Final beneficiaries will allocate funds for maintenance costs Continuous commitment and cooperation between National and Local institutions in planning and implementation of the project
Result 3 Reinforced implementation of visibility and communication activities as required under IPA II and in line with IPA communication strategy (and Action Plan) while enhancing media coverage and knowledge and understanding of EU issues among journalists and wider public	- Degree of quality of visibility and communication material - Degree of application of publicity and visibility measures/tools as relevant over the project cycle in relation to: programming, procurement and implementation % of fulfilment of annual Action Plan for implementation of the Communication Strategy for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the EU	- SEIO report - Eurobarometer survey - Report on implementation of annual Action Plan for implementation of the Communication Strategy for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the EU (SEIO report)	Line Ministries/institutions have outreach and capacity to efficiently deal with visibility and communication activities as required by IPA II

ACTIVITIES	MEANS	OVERALL COST	ASSUMPTIONS
Activities to achieve Result 1: 1.1. Implementation of the support to negotiations and policy developments Activities to achieve Result 2: 2.1. Support to development of sport infrastructure in selected municipalities 2.2. Supervision of works Activities to achieve Result 3: 3.1. Implementation of activities with influence on systems and policy focusing on capacity strengthening of the civil servants in charge of communication on EU funds (IPA Visibility Officers) 3.2. Support to implementation of visibility and communication activities in line with IPA communication strategy (and Action Plan) objectives and results, communication tools and channels, target audience and monitoring and evaluation requirements 3.3. Support for activities promoting a better informed public about EU/EU accession through the media	Works, supply, service contracts, twinning, and grants	Total Budget of the Action EUR 8 100 000	Financial viability of municipalities All necessary prerequisites such as solving of all land ownership and other legal issues, appointment of municipal staff to follow up implementation agreements for proper maintenance etc. are met by the selected municipalities Final beneficiaries will continuously support and monitor the implementation of the activities The designated (operating) structures have sufficient staffing capacities and remain committed to the process. Quality expertise available

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

Result 1 - Ensured implementation of a number of accession related actions of various actors (such as public institutions, ministries, local administrations etc.)

The aim of the activities supporting this result is to enable the implementation of a number of accession related actions of various actors (such as public institutions, ministries, Independent State Bodies, local administrations etc.) in order to meet specific and urgent needs identified in the course of the pre-accession and negotiation processes. The envelope will support implementation of needs and gap analyses, action plan drafting, strategy development, legal work, training, study tours, Serbia's participation in activities for the exchange of information, networking, participation in workshops, conferences and similar activities. The aim is also to provide additional support to the smooth implementation of IPA assistance.

The general outcome to be achieved under the envelope is to strengthen the capacities of the institutions in fulfilling their respective pre-accession roles and functions. The activities to be carried out relate to identification of the capacity building needs of relevant institutions and contracting and implementation of:

- Twinning/twinning light type of actions with EU Member States for Acquis related issues or institution building
- General type of actions: technical assistance, grants and other types of contracts under PRAG rules

Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO), by its legal mandate as a NIPAC Technical Secretariat, will interact with the institutions eligible for assistance in order to consolidate the quality of proposals and allocate the funds available to a number of sub-Actions which will be implemented and co-financed by the final beneficiaries. This is the case irrespective of the implementation system, i.e. whether it is direct or indirect.

Upon receiving the proposals from the beneficiaries, SEIO will, in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union and Ministry of Finance, select the Actions for financing following a number of fundamental criteria and principles:

- Actions will be based on priorities identified in the AP, NPAA, Indicative Strategy Paper (ISP) and other relevant strategic documents focusing on preventing shortages identified in the annual Progress Report in order to reinforce administrative capacity of Serbia's institutions.
- The Actions will target very specific areas where support is required in relation to the challenges and requirements of the EU integration process and to the negotiation chapters and preparation of relevant administrative structures for future accession
- The Actions should make the commitment of the beneficiary to achieve the guaranteed result explicit
- Size and budget of Actions will be subject to individual assessment
- Type of assistance – technical assistance, twinning light, twinning, or other kind of support eligible under PRAG rules- will be subject to individual assessment depending on the nature of assistance requested.
- The degree of maturity of Actions as well as the absorption capacity of the related beneficiary institutions will be important factors when deciding on giving priority to and sequencing the projects.
- Relevance of the action in ensuring the smooth implementation of IPA assistance.

Actions to be implemented through twinning or twinning light require the full commitment and participation of the senior management of the beneficiary institution. In addition to providing the twinning partner with adequate staff and other resources to operate effectively, the senior management

must be fully involved in the development and implementation of the policies and institutional change required to deliver the project results.

In case needed, the funds could be also used to support the smooth implementation of IPA assistance.

Due to the nature of facility type projects for the time being it is not possible to foresee the precise timing of contracting and disbursements.

Result 2 Tangible evidence of EU assistance promoted as a vector for improvement of the people's daily life through construction/reconstruction and adaptation of sport infrastructure in Serbian municipalities

The result is the direct link to the wider communication and visibility aspect of this Action document, and will be used to communicate directly the EU funding and values to local level communities across Serbia.

In order for the process to be successful, only mature and planned projects could be considered, having in mind that the overall communication aspect needs to be about fast, successful and tangible support to the local infrastructure. For this reason, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has prepared a list of projects of (re)construction and capital maintenance.

The list has been completed on the basis of already mature projects prepared through the mechanisms of the:

- Public invitation of the MoYS for the programmes to be financed in 2015
- The proposal of the MoYS after a public invitation of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development in 2013 (projects from previous tenders of the MoYS)
- Records of unfinished sports facilities.

Sector for Project Management of the MoYS has reviewed the documentation and performed selection of projects (based on the legal and property rights, urban issues and minimal requirements of technical readiness for implementation) that were appointed during a public call for funding in 2015 and a public invitation of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development from 2013 year. For the project selection, a method has been applied that is generally used in approving applications that have been received within the deadline, and it includes: first - formal review and evaluation of the fulfilment of prescribed conditions and criteria with regard to completeness and project readiness for implementation; second - the evaluation of the projects in accordance with the Rules on financing programs that provide general interest in the field of sport.

The proposed projects are divided into two groups:

- (i) Construction, reconstruction, renovation and rehabilitation of sports facilities
- (ii) Projects "Finish uncompleted" (sports facilities whose construction was terminated due to lack of funds).

Each project has been assessed on the basis of its maturity and readiness for implementation and those projects have been marked as with "complete documentation". Each has been prepared by the local self-government, in close communication and cooperation with local level stakeholders, including the local sports associations, local schools, local community and civil society.

Result 3 - Reinforced implementation of visibility and communication activities as required under IPA II and in line with IPA communication strategy while enhancing media coverage and knowledge and understanding of EU issues among journalists and wider public

Activity 3.1 - Implementation of activities with influence on systems and policy focusing on capacity strengthening of the civil servants in charge of communication on EU funds (IPA Visibility Officers)

The activities envisaged shall focus on capacity building of the civil servants in charge of communication on EU funds (IPA Visibility Officers) in following way: (i) provision of specialized training aimed at consolidating PR related skills in domain of EU funds; (ii) training and preparation for the development of communication action plans; (iii) establishment of mechanisms of

formalization of the network of IPA Visibility Officers; (iv) the practice of selected IPA Visibility Officers in the implementation of communication activities related to above activities.

Activity 3.2 - Support to implementation of visibility and communication activities in line with IPA communication strategy (and Action Plan) objectives and results, communication tools and channels, target audience and monitoring and evaluation requirements

The Action will help to implement the visibility and communication activities for the purpose of increasing the public knowledge and understanding of the EU during the accession negotiation process and explaining implications of EU accession in Serbia.

Implementation of the pre-accession assistance requires a coherent set of activities to timely and properly publicise the information about the assistance under IPA in accordance with the EU regulations and guidance, and as relevant over the project cycle, in relation to programming, procurement and implementation. Visibility of IPA Programmes and their impact on the citizens is essential for ensuring public awareness of the EU actions and creating a consistent image of the measures taken.

The Action will provide support in the development and implementation of EU-related visibility and communication activities in line with the IPA communication strategy (and Action Plan) and under the guidance and supervision of the NIPAC/NIPAC TS. Strategy has been prepared within the responsibilities of the National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC Technical Secretariat), taking into consideration the IPA Implementing Regulation, the Manual of Procedures for the Implementation of the Programmes under the IPA, the Communication Strategy for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union, and the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions.

Activity 3.3 - Support for activities promoting a better informed public about EU and EU accession through the media

Considering the media's impact on the establishment of public awareness and in creating opinion on EU and EU integration of Serbia, the government's key partners in the implementation of communication activities and the transfer of information regarding the EU and the accession process are electronic, broadcast and print media (national, regional and local media).

Broad public support for the accession process is essential as well as maintaining the reform momentum and the credibility of the EU integration. Therefore, the Action intends to support a series of interventions aimed at enabling and promoting a better informed public about the EU and its policies with particular emphasis on subjects related to the EU accession.

The aim of envisaged activity is to familiarise media professionals with sources of information as well as information tools and techniques with a view to strengthening their professionalism and to contribute to the development of free and independent media, and to better equip media professionals to inform about EU policies as well as subjects related to the reform process on the way to EU membership in a user-friendly language and form accessible to the general public or relevant specific audiences;

The Action is to bring the following types of interventions: interventions aimed at increasing the professional skills of journalists, platforms of cooperation and operational networking between media, and between media and relevant institutional structures involved in visibility and communication activities (according to IPA II rules) with the objective to result in concrete communication synergies, including co-productions of programmes, support production of schemes for radio/TV or web content, organisation of workshops, organisation of press trips to the EU, etc.

As a form of further improving relations between NIPAC and the media, the Action will support further developing trust and relations with journalists by motivating them to report on EU in objective, timely and accurate way. It would also be particularly necessary to encourage the media to provide an information about issues from certain areas important for the EU accession of the Republic of Serbia, as well as to implement programs, reports and reportages that will relate the everyday life of EU citizens to those of the Republic of Serbia, with particular attention paid to successful examples.

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Results under this Action will be implemented in the modality of direct management, with EU Delegation being responsible for contract implementation and monitoring.

For Result 1: The lead institution is the Serbian European Integration Office while end recipients of the assistances may be line ministries and other responsible public institutions

For Result 2: The lead institution is the Ministry of Youth and Sport while end recipients of the assistances are the municipalities

For Result 3: The lead institution is the Serbian European Integration Office

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

The implementation of this Action will require great deal of coordination since several beneficiaries are going to be involved, from national to local level.

Activity 1.1 will be implemented through several twinning/twinning light and/or service, supply, works contracts. Steering Committee that will be established for these activities will have a decision making role in selecting individual projects. The Steering Committee will be co-charred by the SEIO and EUD. Potential applicants will be obliged to submit project proposals for agreement and approval to the SC. The potential project proposals should be submitted based on the priorities defined in the Indicative Strategy Paper, the National Priorities for International Assistance and annual EC Progress Reports or Screening Reports. Projects will be submitted first in the form of the concept and will be assessed by the Steering Committee members. After the initial approval of the project concept, project will be developed in the full format and submitted to the Steering Committee for approval.

Activity 2.1 will be implemented through several works and supply contracts

Activities 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 will be implemented through single service contract.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

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

Project monitoring will be conducted through direct participation in the project approval committee as well as regular reporting provided by the implementing agency. The action further foresees monitoring from the EU Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) team.

The implementing authority will provide regular reporting on the implementation of the project, and on ensuring the beneficiary's needs and concerns are met and addressed. The implementing authority will ensure the flexibility of accommodating the needs within the framework of the project's mandate. The assessment will be used to provide suggestions for the future implementation of similar programming and draw out lessons learned from the current phase.

The project may be evaluated at the interim or ex-post stages under the supervision of the Commission's Evaluation Unit. The project may be audited by the Court of Auditors – in line with the standard European Commission procedures.

The monitoring of the action will be based on the four clusters of indicators as set below:

- Resource Indicators (indicators which provide information on the financial and human resources allocated by the experts' team to reach the results as described in the log frame)
- Output Indicators (indicators which represent the product/output of the each implemented activity);
- Impact Indicators (indicators, which represent the consequences of each implemented activity such as backlog reduction or number of court case decisions enforced)

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Baseline year	Milestone year 2017	Target year 2020	Final Target (year) (5)	Source of information
Overall Objective (CSP indicator) Not applicable					
Result indicators					
Result 1 Degree of response to specific and urgent needs emerging from the European integration process	0 (2015) -	100% of funds contracted	100% of funds disbursed		CFCU reports; CFCU database on ex-ante controls; IPA Monitoring Committee reports; MIS
Result 2 Number of sport facilities completed and operational	-0 (2015)	At least 2	17	17	Reports on implementation of the Action
Result 3 % of fulfilment of annual Action Plan for implementation of the Communication Strategy for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the EU	n/a	100%	100%	100%	Report on implementation of annual Action Plan for implementation of the Communication Strategy for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the EU (SEIO report)
Result 3 Trust in the European Union index in Serbia.	43% (2015)	47%	54%		Eurobarometer survey NIPAC TS - SEIO reports

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

The Action is oriented on bringing closer European values and understanding the EU policies and accession process towards those who are involved professionally, but also towards citizens. This also includes Europe's environmental policies and legislation.

Environmental issues are certainly one of the least recognized topics amongst the general public in Serbia. Through awareness raising the project will help to mainstream the need of environmental protection and the role of individual citizens and civil society in that process, as well as an understanding of global trends and authorities' obligations in that arena.

In addition, the reconstruction works will be consistent with Environmental implications as set out in relevant Regulations consistent with the Law on Environmental Protection.

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

The Action seeks to eliminate miss-perception among the citizens, public sector (including local self-government), civil society, the business world and academia, directly or indirectly involved in EU-related matters. The Action aims at finding new elements to foster motivation among these groups: by giving tangible evidences of EU assistance to the many. CSOs are exercising the role of interlocutor between citizens and government, which includes advocating for constituent issues, holding the government accountable for its performance, exposing corrupt practices and protecting the rights of citizens, making EU values closer to citizens. The interconnecting and reinforcing activities envisaged by this Action will broaden and deepen CSO engagement with government in EU integration issues.

The cooperation with CSOs is facilitated by the Government's commitment as part of its European Agenda. Regarding mechanisms for dialogue, two official mechanisms exist: (i) Office for Cooperation with Civil Society; and (ii) Sectorial Civil Society Organisations - SEKO for the processes of IPA programming. Both are examples of good practices in terms of CSO representation in general.

The Government Office for Cooperation with Civil Society still is the main institutional mechanism for the support of developing the dialogue between the Government and CSOs through offering support to its institutions in understanding and recognizing the role of CSOs in policy shaping and decision making processes.

Office for Cooperation with Civil Society also established the mechanism that allows involvement of CSOs in negotiations on the accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union. During 2013 and 2014, Office for Cooperation with Civil Society in cooperation with the Negotiating team for the accession and relevant institutions for different negotiation chapters included CSOs in negotiations. CSO participation in this process so far included monitoring of explanatory screenings, participation in the preparation of the bilateral screening for some negotiating chapters and participation in briefing meetings that followed bilateral screenings.

In addition, NIPAC TS - SEIO established a consultation mechanism with the civil society organization (CSOs)⁹. This mechanism is based on the consultative process with Sectorial Civil Society Organizations (SECOs) and serves as a platform that enables exchange of information and contribution of CSOs in relation to planning development assistance, particularly programming and monitoring of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

⁹ Introduced in 2011

The promotion of gender equality is at the heart of European social and economic policies. Despite progress made over the past years, inequalities between women and men still remain in a number of domains.

The Action, as being focused on bringing closer European values, represents the tool that will mainstream and provide an effective guide to all actors, to better implement gender mainstreaming and thereby better serve the needs of citizens, both women and men.

Equal participation of women and men will be secured through appropriate information and publicity material, in the design of projects and accessibility to the opportunities they offer. Enforcement of those principles is likewise ensured through specific administrative procedures applied in accordance with the Law on non-discrimination.

No discrimination on the basis of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, sex or sexual orientation or on any other grounds.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

The Action will in no way harm the rights of any individuals, including minorities and vulnerable groups. Equally, having in mind the demands of enlargement, and that the EU has increasingly articulated its aspiration to represent not only stability and prosperity, but also democratic values, articulated in Copenhagen political criteria for membership, the Action, through its visibility and communication activities, shall spread the message that compliance with basic democratic standards is more than a condition for entry; it is a condition of membership.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

Strong dimension and focus on visibility activities through-out the Action, sets ground for capacitating national institutions, local governments, CSOs, etc. in further management of similar activities. Sustainability is primarily guaranteed through the fact that all Action activities stream out of existing national level policies and legislation. In this way, the Action is ensuring sustainability of its actions on mid-term and long-term perspective. The activities are conceptualised on the premises of overall compliance with the EU standards in implementing all activities.

The impact of the foreseen interventions related to sport infrastructure will be significant, as has been the case during previous and ongoing municipal infrastructure projects, because the interventions will have a direct effect on sustained local development and social cohesion. In addition, the foreseen multi-purpose facilities for sports and leisure will directly target some of the needs of Serbia's young population, allow them to grow up in a more appropriate environment. The Action will also continue to further improve the municipalities' abilities to provide adequate services to their citizens. In short, all resources that will be developed during implementation will be further integrated in the municipal growth. The direct involvement of the beneficiary municipalities from the very early stages of the project cycle will create a sense of ownership and greatly contribute to the sustainability of the Action. The Action will ensure that municipalities provide co-financing of projects, so that the implementers have ownership of the initiatives.

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.

Physical infrastructure actions, such as sport infrastructure are tangible in nature and offer the greatest possibility for significant communication activities, given the direct impact that the action is likely to have on improving people's lives. In addition to the basic requirements on visibility in the form of panels, plaques, signs and other visible indications, communication activities will need to be planned and carried out. They shall be aimed at explaining the impact of the action on improving people's daily lives.

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

Likewise, notably for the implementing arrangements which are supposed to take place under indirect management, communication shall be aligned with requirements of the relevant manual of procedures concerning communication. Beneficiary and Contractor shall respect the EC's visibility guidelines in all communication activities undertaken by the project (briefings, presentations, press conferences and other events) and in the production of all visual communication tools (publications, fax headers, business cards, advertising material etc.).

Standard formats will be used in press conferences (presentations or similar events), workshops, invitation for the events, etc., in a manner to ensure communicating to a broader public the fact that the sector support is funded by the EU and to promote best practices and achieved results. The potential outreach of the Action is very extensive, given the great number of stakeholders involved and the general interest of the public for the accession negotiations but also for the effective usage of EU funds.

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 and will promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to keep the EU Delegation and the Commission 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 sectorial monitoring committee.

