

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON “WINDOW 2” OF IPA III 2021-2027 “ GOOD GOVERNANCE, EU ACQUIS ALIGNMENT, GOOD NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION ”

Skopje, North Macedonia

October 12-13, 2022

Background

The new financial perspective IPA 2021-2027 (IPA III) is based on lessons learnt from previous perspectives IPA 2007-2013 and IPA 2014-2020, in order to ensure further, smooth implementation of defined goals and priorities, which are in line with the EU enlargement strategy and along the line of commitment of the Western Balkan countries regarding future membership in the European Union. The allocation for the Instrument for Pre-Accession, supporting beneficiaries on their path to fulfilling the accession criteria in MFF 2021-2027, will be 14.162 billion €. For the period 2021-2027, the new instrument **should allow for sufficient flexibility** to take into account evolving circumstances. No fixed or indicative national/geographical envelopes will be established, although a principle of "fair share" allocation for beneficiary countries will be integrated, as well as a "performance-based principle".

The IPA III Regulation has been adopted in September 2021, with a retroactive application from 1 January 2021. Beneficiaries submitted the revised **"Strategic Response" documents**, which describe how each beneficiary plans to utilize IPA III Financial Assistance and in particular, to provide an articulation of actions planned across the key thematic priorities within each of the five thematic windows. The quality of the Strategic Response is of utmost importance, having in mind that *this is the key document for planning and programming of IPA III which should clearly show how countries are planning to utilize the resources for achieving the reforms and development goals.*

The drafting process of the Action Fiches and the Action Documents for IPA 2021 and 2022 proved challenging for the following reasons, which were further worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on meetings: (i) the lack of National Sector Strategies covering the period post-2020 (in many cases extended to 2022 through Action Plans); (ii) difficulties in coordination by lead institutions, due to the large number of stakeholders involved; (iii) delays in the finalization of the IPA III legal framework and particularly the absence of methodological guidance and the programming framework; iv) the request to anticipate the preparation of Action Fiches before drafting the Strategic Response; v) insufficient availability of technical assistance in some Beneficiaries to support preparation of Action Documents and supporting documents and (v) criteria and timing for the maturity assessment were not realistic.

In order to tackle, discuss, debate and brainstorm on the challenges as well as to envisage the future steps on all the aspects related to IPA III, ReSPA and GiZ, in coordination with DG NEAR services are organizing **a set of activities throughout the Western Balkans** which are bringing together representatives of NIPAC Offices, departments in charge of Strategic Planning, IPA Unit of relevant Line Ministries, renowned experts from the region and beyond as well as representatives of the European Commission and EU Delegations. The set of activities consist of a Regional Conference as well as 4 separate regional workshops, each of them dedicated to a specific thematic Window of IPA III framework, aiming to foster clarity and well-established processes in advance as a lesson learnt.

The present workshop will be focused on **Window 2 "Good Governance, EU acquis alignment, good neighbourly relations and strategic communication"**, which consists of the following indicative thematic priorities: Good Governance, Administrative capacity and EU acquis alignment, Good neighbourly relations and reconciliation, and Strategic communication, monitoring, evaluation and communication activities.

PROGRAMME

DAY I: Wednesday, 12th of October 2022

08.30	<i>Welcome coffee and registration of participants</i>
09.15 – 09.30	<p>Welcoming words and introduction of the main objectives of the Workshop</p> <p>Gentian Xhaxhiu, ReSPA Programme Manager</p> <p>Olivera Dimic, GIZ Regional Project on Promotion of EU Integration</p> <p>EC/ EU Delegation to North Macedonia</p>
09.30 – 10.45	<p>Session 1: IPA III Programming guidance: novelties and challenges, key selection criteria</p> <p>Ritva Heikkinen, Team Leader of the programming team, DG NEAR, European Commission</p> <p><i>Followed by questions, answers and discussion</i></p>
10.45 – 11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.15 – 12:30	<p>Session 2: Programming of Window 2: Priorities and challenges; Link with Accession Negotiations requirements</p> <p><i>Representative¹ of Albania</i></p> <p><i>Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina</i></p> <p><i>Representative of Montenegro</i></p> <p><i>Representative of North Macedonia</i></p> <p><i>Representative of Serbia</i></p> <p><i>Representative of Kosovo*</i></p> <p><i>Followed by questions, answers and discussion</i></p>
12:30 – 14.00	<i>Lunch</i>

¹ Representative shall be selected by the administration themselves; they can be Window coordinators or representatives from NIPAC Offices.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

14.00 – 15:30	<p>Session 3: Preferred methods of budget implementation (budget support/ action documents); Selection criteria and supporting documentation;</p> <p>EC/ external expert</p> <p>IPA beneficiaries to present some lessons learned</p> <p><i>Followed by questions, answers and discussion</i></p>
19.30	<i>Social and networking dinner</i>

DAY II: Thursday, 13th of October 2022

09.00	<i>Welcome coffee and registration of participants</i>
09.15 – 09.20	Recap of Day I
09.20 – 10.55	<p>Session 4: IPA III Results Framework</p> <p>Ivica Lekic, Team Leader for Monitoring and Evaluation, DG NEAR</p> <p><i>Followed by questions, answers and discussion</i></p> <p>Selecting Indicators for Window 2 Interventions</p> <p>Colm McClements, Team Leader, Capacity Development on Monitoring and Evaluation, PROMEL Team, DG NEAR</p> <p><i>Followed by questions, answers and discussion</i></p>
10:55 – 11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.30 – 12.00	<p>Session 5: Mainstreaming of cross-cutting themes in programming Window 2: green agenda / gender mainstreaming</p> <p>DG NEAR</p> <p><i>Followed by questions, answers and discussion</i></p>
12.00 – 12.30	<p>Session 6: The way ahead</p> <p>Operational conclusions, closing remarks</p> <p>Inma Perez Rocha, ReSPA expert</p> <p>Gentian Xhaxhiu, Programme Manager, ReSPA</p> <p>Olivera Dimić, Senior Project Manager, GIZ</p>
12.30 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>

	End of the Workshop and departure according the travel schedule
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