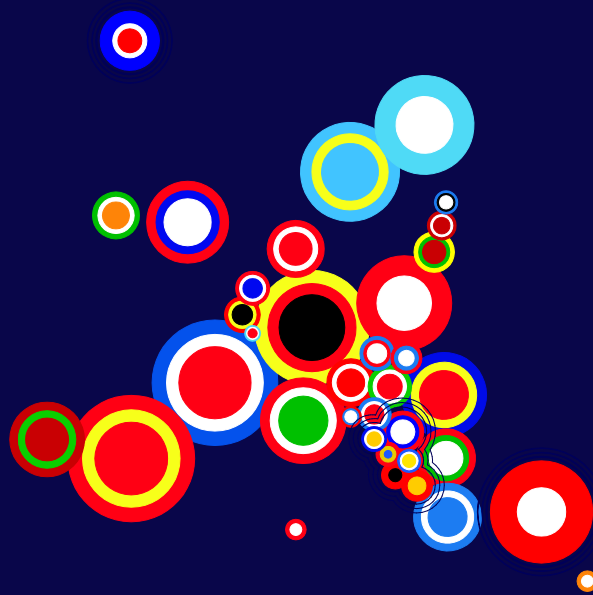




## INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

### SERBIA

#### Preparatory measures for full participation in Erasmus+



#### **Action Summary**

This action will facilitate the Serbia's harmonisation with the EU regulation on the Erasmus+ programme through the preparatory measures for the participation in the programme actions to be managed by a designated National Agency. The preparatory measures include the capacity building of the structure designated to become the future National Agency, information campaigns for the potential programme beneficiaries and implementation of some pilot activities in line with the Erasmus+ rules and procedures.

As the Erasmus+ is the only EU programme whose management is delegated by the Commission to a National Agency in each participating country, preparatory measures are necessary for strengthening the capacities of the Beneficiary to manage the programme and for enabling Serbia to fully implement the relevant EU regulation.

In order to become a programme country Serbia needs to establish a National Agency which will manage the decentralised part of the programme at the national level or to give the mandate to one of the existing institutions or organisations, which will then take over the responsibilities for the indirect management of the funds at the national level. It is necessary that such a structure becomes accredited and operational before the closure of the negotiating Chapter 26: Education and Culture.

<b>Action Identification</b>	
<b>Programme Title</b>	Annual Action Programme for Serbia (2014)
<b>Action Title</b>	Preparatory measures for the full participation in the Erasmus+ programme
<b>Action Reference</b>	
<b>Sector Information</b>	
<b>ELARG Sectors</b>	<i>Education, Employment and Social Policies</i>
<b>DAC Sector</b>	11110, 11120
<b>Budget</b>	
<b>Total cost</b> (VAT excluded) <sup>1</sup>	4 500 000 EUR
<b>EU contribution</b>	3 500 000 EUR
<b>Management and Implementation</b>	
<b>Method of implementation</b>	<i>Direct management</i>
<i>Direct management:</i> <b>DG EAC</b> <i>Indirect management:</i> <b>Responsible Unit or National Authority/Implementing Agency</b>	The action will be sub delegated/cross-delegated to DG Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship, which is responsible for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme.
<b>Implementation responsibilities</b>	Results 1 - 3: Ministry in charge of Education
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The Republic of Serbia
<b>Specific implementation area(s)</b>	
<b>Timeline</b>	
<b>Deadline for conclusion of the Financing Agreement</b>	31 December 2015
<b>Contracting deadline</b>	3 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement
<b>End of operational implementation period</b>	6 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement

<sup>1</sup> 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

The Republic of Serbia has benefitted from different EU education and training cooperation programmes for more than 10 years as a partner country. Results achieved in Tempus, Youth in Action, Erasmus Mundus and in centralised actions of the Lifelong Learning Programme are encouraging: more than half Tempus IV projects are coordinated by Serbian higher education institutions; the number of applications for the Erasmus Mundus scholarships and Youth in Action projects are the highest in the region; the number of applications and selected Life Long Learning projects with participation of Serbia demonstrate that national institutions and organisations are able to compete with other programme countries.

The line ministries (Ministry in charge for Education, Science and Technological Development and the Ministry in charge for Youth and Sport) have been performing all the necessary activities for the current level of participation in EU education and youth programmes. The latter indicates that both Ministries have been participating in the programme implementation and they are responsible for the strategic decisions. The Foundation Tempus and the NGO "Let's..." have been acting as the focal points for these programmes, in charge of informing and training potential beneficiaries. The Foundation Tempus contributed also to programme implementation by monitoring and following the implementation of projects and providing support and guidance to project coordinators.

As a candidate country however, Serbia has the possibility to participate in all Union programmes on the same footing as the Member States. Such participation is an essential element of the pre-accession strategy. It aims at familiarising the candidate countries to the Union policies and working methods. For the Republic of Serbia participation in Union Programmes represents an opportunity to make acquaintance with the European institutions, legislation and their application in practice, with EU policies as well as with the system of values and mechanisms on which the EU is based.

In the period 2007 – 2013 the Republic of Serbia participated in 12 EU programmes: the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), Progress, Culture, CIP, CIP EIP, Fiscalis, Customs, Safer Internet, Lifelong Learning Programme, Europe for Citizens and two programmes, which was carried out through MB IPA: Tempus/Erasmus Mundus and Youth in Action. The European Commission established in November 2013 an Overview of the Union Programmes, in order to encourage greater participation by beneficiaries from Member States, candidate country and potential candidate country in programmes that are open to them. The new 7-years Financial Perspective brings about the opportunity for the Republic of Serbia to participate in new EU Programmes for period 2014-2020, with new modalities, administration and dynamic. A broad range of EU Programmes for Serbia, as a candidate county, are open in meeting EU requirements. Although most of new EU Programmes are the successors of the previous, some changes are introduced. In particular, significant change in the new programmes structure is the mergers of the education and youth programmes in to the Erasmus for all Programmes and of the Competiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) with the Programme for Research and Innovation (FP7) into Horizon 2020.

In 2014, Serbia signed an agreement with the Commission to participate in the new EU programme – Erasmus+ in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. It brings together the Lifelong Learning programme, Youth in Action, Erasmus Mundus and Tempus programme. It is designed to support Programme Countries efforts to efficiently use the potential of Europe's human and social capital, while confirming the principal of lifelong learning by linking support to formal, non-formal and informal learning throughout the education, training and youth fields. The programme also enhances the opportunities for cooperation and mobility with Partner Countries, notably in the fields of higher education and youth. Its participation however is currently limited to some programme actions only. This is due to the fact that, being Serbia a candidate country and considering that all EU Member States participate fully in EU Programmes, it is necessary to ensure that Serbia will be ready to participate fully in the on-going Erasmus+. According to the Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing "Erasmus+": the

Union programme for education, training, youth and sport (Celex: 32013R1288), certain pre-conditions need to be fulfilled. In order to become a programme country Serbia needs to establish a National Agency which will manage the decentralised part of the programme at the national level or to give the mandate to one of the existing institutions or organisations, which will then take over the responsibilities for the indirect management of the funds at the national level. It is necessary that such a structure becomes accredited and operational before the closure of the negotiating Chapter 26: Education and Culture. According to the information presented by the representatives of the European Commission at the Explanation screening for the Chapter 26, it takes at least two years to implement the preparatory measures necessary for accreditation and for the full participation in the programme. If such national agency is capable to manage the funds, it will be accredited and Serbia will be able to participate fully in the E+ programme. Most of the activities of the programme shall be managed by national structures established by the participating countries, to which the Commission delegates wide implementation tasks, including selection, contracting, payment, monitoring of projects. Full participation in Erasmus+ as a programme country is therefore conditional to the fulfilment of requirements concerning the capacity of these national structures (called the "national agencies"), to ensure sound financial management of the programme.

The above mentioned requirements make necessary that the body designated to become the future National Agency implements preparatory measures with the assistance of the Commission Directorate General Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship, which is in charge of this Union programme. According to the information presented by the representatives of the European Commission at the Explanation screening for the chapter 26, it takes at least two years to implement the preparatory measures for the full participation in the programme. During the two preparatory years national authorities shall conduct all activities necessary for establishment of the agency and building its functionality and operations in order to fulfil all requirements concerning the capacity of these national structures, to ensure sound financial management of the E+ programme. Such requirements make necessary that Serbia implements preparatory measures with the assistance of the Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture, which is in charge of E+ Programme.

Having in mind the nature of the indirect management of the Erasmus+ programme, the long term perspective of Serbia's participation in EU programmes and the existing capacities, the relevant ministries will propose to the Government either the establishment of the new agency that will manage these funds or the nomination of an existing organisation as a national agency for the Erasmus+ programme. International Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Serbia on the participation of Republic of Serbia in Erasmus+ is signed on June 11th 2014.

## **SECTOR APPROACH ASSESSMENT**

This is a stand-alone Action. In terms of IPA 2014 Programme and following the logic of the Strategy paper this Action is presented within the Human Resources and Social Development sector.

## **RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES**

As stated several times in various *conclusions of the European Council*, participation of the candidate countries in Union programmes on the same footing as the Member States is an essential element of the pre-accession strategy. It aims at familiarising the candidate countries to the Union policies and working methods.

The *Framework Agreement on participation in the EU Programmes*, signed with Serbia on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005, which came into force on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005, establishes the general principles of participation of Serbia in all Union programmes on the same footing as the Union Member States.

The continuation of participation of the Republic of Serbia in Union EU Programmes is reflected and supported by the *Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020 (the Strategy Paper)* through continuation of IPA support "to co-financing Serbia's contribution for its participation in the EU programmes, subject to the national prioritisation process among the different programmes". Setting down the priorities of the IPA support, the Strategy Paper defines results / targets that are expected to be achieved during defined period, in order to enable Serbia in fulfilling accession agenda. In this regard, since each

Union Programme is reflecting the Strategy Paper Serbia's participation in specific Union Programmes will additionally support Serbia's efforts in accession criteria. Therefore, participation in the Erasmus + programme is in line with priorities defined in HRSD sector.

*The EC Progress Report 2013* acknowledges that Serbia participates in a number of EU programmes

This Action shall contribute to all sectors of *the "Priorities for International Assistance in period 2014-2017 with 2020 projections" (NAD)*, by facilitating the preparation of Serbia's accession to the EU, as well as by enhancing the absorption of funds and the implementation of projects efficiency. Participation in the Erasmus + programme is in line with priorities defined in HRSD sector.

The *NPAA 2014-2018* also recognise the importance of Serbia's participation in Union EU Programmes, particularly reflected in the in numerous Sections through identification of measures and priorities for preparations for inclusion in the new EU programmes 2014-2020 – COSME, and HORIZON 2020, Copernicus, Erasmus +, etc.

Furthermore the Action is in line with *Enlargement Strategy* in a way that proposed activities will contribute to the achievement of full compliance with all membership criteria.

#### **LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Participation of Serbia in the Union Programmes is of primary importance to Serbia's European efforts. This participation was therefore, encouraged by providing EU funds under National IPA Programmes for 2007 (EUR 2 000 000), 2008 (EUR 5 000 000), 2011 (EUR 6 000 000) and 2013 (EUR 6 500 000).

The recently conducted "Evaluation of participation of the Republic of Serbia in the EU Programmes in the period from 2007-2012", showed that existing capacities for both management and application to Union Programmes shall be additionally strengthened in order to maximise the benefits that Serbia can draw from programmes in which it participates. Experience shows that thorough preparation is needed before full participation in the programmes, for participation to take place in good conditions, and to avoid problems in the management of the programmes. Such preparatory measures have been implemented with the other candidate countries before their accession to the programmes

VAT exemption procedure has not been possible for all EU Programmes beneficiaries in Serbia in the previous financial perspective. The main reason lays in the fact that neither Framework Agreement that the Republic of Serbia signed on November 22nd, 2004 nor specific Agreements envisage VAT exemption obligation. Consequently the performance of the Serbian applicants in awarded projects as well in the overall Union programme will be seriously endangered considering the fact that Serbian applicants are under serious financial burden to cover these costs from their own resources. This rule should be especially ensured in the International Agreements for the new generation of Union Programme.

## 2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

### LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To improve and monitor the effectiveness of Serbia's preparations for meeting the all requirements for full participation in the Erasmus + programme.	Ex-ante compliance assessment concluding that National Agency for E+ is ready to assume its tasks	DG EAC supervisory and monitoring visits DG EAC acceptance of ex-ante Compliance Assessment	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Sound, efficient and successful implementation and absorption of the Erasmus + programme funds ensured	Specific tasks identified in the Work Plan agreed with the European Commission have been completed. Body designated to become the future NA fully operational	Intermediary and final activity reports of the NA DG EAC supervisory and monitoring visits Minutes of meetings Publications Workshop outputs Media sources	Timely submission by the national authorities of the ex-ante compliance assessment Government supports the conclusion of an agreement for full participation in Erasmus+ The responsible line ministries ensure the timely payment of the entry ticket and the necessary co-funding of the national agency
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<b>Result 1:</b> Administrative structures, appropriate infrastructure, adequate and well trained staff and management systems being in place and satisfying the requirements for sound financial management of Erasmus +	Number of staff recruited and trained Adequate premises secured Relevant equipment and software in place Manual of procedures in place in accordance with EU rules on E+, Job descriptions, segregation of duties	DG EAC supervisory and monitoring visits National agency reports submitted to the EC Evaluation reports of the EC Minutes of the meetings, Mission reports, Workshop outputs	Retention policy for the national agency staff Identification and removal of potential obstacles for the programme implementation

<p><b>Result 2:</b> Increased awareness of Serbia's public about the possibilities offered by Erasmus+ and readiness of the educational institutions, (universities, schools, faculties and colleges of applied studies) and organisations active in the youth field to apply</p>	<p>All relevant documentation concerning the programme translated, published and disseminated in the country; Number of promotional material, publications, leaflets Number of seminars, info days, promotional events held Presence in the media Number of applications for pilot projects submitted to the National Agency Increased capacities of at least 4 universities, 5 colleges of applied studies and 30 schools for participation in decentralised actions</p>	<p>Publications, leaflets, Press articles, other media sources Number of submitted applications to NA and contracted projects</p>	
<p><b>Result 3:</b> Capacity of the National Agency to manage the programmes in a satisfactory way tested on a sufficient scale before Serbia's full participation in the Erasmus + programme</p>	<p>Pilot projects managed according to the programme rules Agreed number of Calls for Proposals implemented Sound financial management of the pilot activities.</p>	<p>NA reports (intermediary and final; financial reports) Ministry in charge of education and science reports DGEAC monitoring visits reports</p>	
<p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p>	<p><b>MEANS</b></p>	<p><b>OVERALL COST</b></p>	<p><b>ASSUMPTIONS</b></p>
<p><b>Activities to achieve Result 1:</b> 1.1 Building institutional and human capacities of the structure designated as the national agency to manage programme 1.2 Training of staff and experts; travel and other costs related to participation in meetings organised by the Commission, study visits to the European Commission, Executive Agency and other National Agencies, training courses in general skills (e.g. languages, project management, accounting, presentation skills), training seminars for experts; 1.3 Equipping the national agency (equipment, software, setting up compatible network links and databases) and adapting the office space 1.4 Providing support to the daily activities of the national agency: personnel, premises, general office expenditure, data processing 1.5 Drafting of bylaws and procedures; Translation of the contracts models and their adaptation to the local needs 1.6 Twinning with the selected national agencies 1.7 Building capacities of relevant line Ministry for the supervision of the national agency: drafting of the procedures for the supervision of the national agency, drafting of bylaws and procedures, translation of the contracts models and their adaptation to the local needs, fine tuning of the national agency rules and procedures in line with EC recommendations</p>	<p>Direct grant without call for proposals (de facto monopoly in accordance with article 190 (c) of the Commission regulation on the rules of application of the Financial Regulation) - direct management through DG EAC</p>	<p>Total cost for the entire Action: EUR 4 500 000  IPA II contribution: EUR 3 500 000</p>	<p>Continuous political and financial support from the government  The responsible line ministries ensure the necessary co-funding of the national agency  The future National Agency which will be responsible for indirect management of Erasmus + Programme established by the end of 2015</p>

<p><b>Activities to achieve Result 2:</b>  2.1 Organisation of an information and promotion campaign;  2.2. Preparation of tools that should facilitate the access to the programme information (publications, guides, on line applications);  2.3 Organisation of information days and training seminars for potential programme applicants (Strengthening capacities of the educational institutions, organisations active in the youth field (universities, schools, faculties and colleges of applied studies)</p>			
<p><b>Activities to achieve Result 3:</b>  3.1 Piloting the calls for proposals in line with the Erasmus+ rules and procedures  3.2 Pilot projects, which will allow to test at a sufficient scale the capacity of the National Agency to manage the programmes and give stakeholders the possibility to participate in some projects according to the programme rules (by applying to the National Agency).  3.3 Fine tuning of the national agency rules and procedures in line with EC recommendations</p>			

**Preconditions:**

- **The national authorities will decide on the operational structure (institutional arrangements) of the National Agency for Erasmus + and amend relevant legislation**
- **The Needs Assessment of the future National Agency for indirect management of Erasmus + Programme completed during 2015**
- **The relevant National Agency which will be responsible for indirect management of Erasmus + Programme established by the end of 2015**



## **ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION**

Activities related to the achievement of the above defined Results will assist the Republic of Serbia and support the implementation of the preparatory measures that are necessary for the full participation in Erasmus+ programme. These preparatory measures, financed under IPA 2014, need to support and strengthen future National Agency to complete its training and test its capacity to manage pilot projects at a wider scale. These preparatory measures will include support to the structure designated as a National Agency, support to the national authorities and capacity building of potential beneficiaries as well as piloting of a Call for proposals, selection and contracting of projects and their follow up. The support to the structure designated as the National Agency will include: The capacity building of the staff and experts who will participate in the selection of the projects submitted under the Erasmus+ calls of proposals; Equipping the structure and development of the information system; Adaptation of the office space allocated to the national agency. The structure designated as the National Agency will be supported by this Action to perform the following: Organisation of information and promotional activities for the participation in decentralised actions; Drafting of bylaws and other documents and procedures relevant for the work of the national agency; Translation of the models of grant agreements and guidelines for the external experts who will participate in the selection process; Development of the software that should facilitate the follow up of the project cycle management; Grant schemes that will ensure the piloting of the procedures established for the management of the decentralised part of Erasmus+, which will allow to test at a sufficient scale the capacity of the National Agency to manage the programmes and give stakeholders the possibility to participate in some projects according to the programme rules (by applying to the National Agency). It will provide feedbacks and experience to staff and beneficiaries before full participation in the programme. Accompanying measures, which will improve the capacities of the potential beneficiaries for the participation in the decentralised part of Erasmus+, will be implemented by a grant scheme organised by the National Agency. This important part of the Action will be implemented prior to the piloting of the first calls for proposals. The line ministries will be trained for the supervision of the National Agency: Training of the line ministries for supervision of the work of the structure that is designated as a National agency; Support to the national authorities for the preparation of Ex-ante Compliance Assessment; Implementation of mitigation measures in case the procedures need to be improved and Accreditation of the structure designated as a national agency.

The preparatory measures will consist of a range of activities which will be implemented according to a work plan to be agreed between the body designated by the Serbian authorities to become the future National Agency and the Commission Directorate General responsible for this programme (DG Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship), including support and capacity building of this structure, information campaigns for the potential beneficiaries and participation in some pilot activities to test on a small scale the capacity of the future National Agency to manage the programme.

Activities to be implemented will include:

- Equipping the structure and development of the information system;
- Adaptation of the office space allocated to the future national agency
- Recruitment and training of the staff
- Training of experts who will participate in the selection of the projects submitted under the Erasmus+ calls of proposals;
- Study visits and job shadowing in the other programme countries;:
- Organisation of information and promotion activities for the participation in decentralised actions;
- Training of potential applicants
- Drafting of bylaws and other documents and procedures relevant for the work of the national agency;
- Translation of the models of grant agreements and guidelines for the external experts who will participate in the selection process;
- Development of the software that should facilitate the follow up of the project cycle management;
- Organisation of pilot calls of proposals and management of pilot projects that will ensure the piloting of the procedures established for the management of the decentralised part of the Erasmus+.

- Project cycle management will be monitored by the national authorities and the European Commission

The following issues have been identified as relevant **assumptions**:

- The responsible line ministries ensure the timely payment of the entry ticket and the necessary co-funding of the designated National Agency

The following issues have been identified as relevant **preconditions**:

- The national authorities will decide on the operational structure (institutional arrangements) of the National Agency for Erasmus + and amend relevant legislation
- The Needs Assessment of the future National Agency for indirect management of Erasmus + Programme completed during 2015
- The relevant National Agency which will be responsible for indirect management of Erasmus + Programme established by the end of 2015

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This Action Document under IPA II assistance was prepared and will be implemented and managed in accordance with provision of respective legislation, implementing and operating agreements and procedures.

In the context of the institutional framework for Human Resources and Social Development (HRSD) sector, the following institutions have been responsible for programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the interventions foreseen under this actions document: the Ministry in charge of Education and Ministry in charge of Youth, as well as SEIO as a NIPAC TS/Body responsible for coordination of programming, monitoring and evaluation (BCPME).

Other bodies and actors such as the CFCU as a Contracting Authority, NAO SO, NF, and EU Delegation have specific roles in the programming and implementation process in line with respective legislation and procedures and depending on the determined modality of implementation (Direct vs. Indirect).

As for the Results 1 to 3, the Ministry in charge of education is final beneficiary and end recipient of the support foreseen. The end recipient of the support foreseen under these result is also the Ministry in charge of Youth.

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

This Action Document under IPA II assistance will be implemented through direct management mode.

Activities related to this Action will be implemented through Direct grant without call for proposals (the body designated by the national authorities to become the future National Agency has a de facto monopoly in the area of intervention (article 190 (c) of the COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union) carried out by the DG EAC.

The Ministry in charge of education will be responsible for fulfilment of all preconditions related to establishment and the timely designation of the National Agency. The Ministry and future National Agency will secure that all institutions involved in implementation and monitoring are structured in a way to fulfil their tasks and responsibilities. They will supervise the work of this structure according to the EC guidelines and best practices from EU member states. The structure designated as the national agency will be responsible for the raising awareness of the relevant public in Serbia about the possibilities offered by the programme and implementation of the pilot projects to the E+ programme.

The organisation designated as the future national agency will prepare a detailed work plan and budget in consultation with the Commission Directorate General in charge of the Erasmus + programme (DG Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship). Once finalised and agreed, the work plan will be co-signed by the future National Agency and national authorities, and attached to the grant agreement to be signed by the Commission (DG Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship) with the future National Agency.

#### **4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

##### **METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)**

Monitoring of the progress of the implementation of this Action sector will be done in accordance with the rules and procedures for monitoring in applicable under direct management mode.

IPA II monitoring process is organized and led by the EU Delegation and NIPAC TS. Monitoring process is aimed to improve programming, implementation and sustainability as well as timely identification, remedying and alleviation of potential issues in the process of programming and implementation of Actions

As for this Action, the EC (DG Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship) and the national authorities are responsible for the monitoring of the national agency. The EC will organise supervisory visits to the national agency and national authority in order to check whether the Erasmus+ rules and the procedures are implemented correctly.

## INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Description	Baseline 2014	Last 2013	Milestone 2017	Target 2020	Source of information
Progress made towards meeting accession criteria (EC)	Serbia meet the requirement for closing the Negotiation Chapter 26 (establishment of the National Agency for indirect management of Erasmus + Programme)	N/A	N/A	Yes	NA fully operational and implements Erasmus+ programme	DG EAC Reports EC progress reports
Administrative basis for Sound, efficient and successful implementation and absorption of the Erasmus + programme funds ensured	Specific tasks identified in the Work Plan agreed with the European Commission have been completed	N/A	N/A	Yes	100%	Annual Report of Ministry in charge of education
National Agency for management of Erasmus + operational	NA established, necessary administrative and staff capacities established and secured	No	No	Yes	100%	Annual Report of Ministry in charge of education
Manual of procedures in place in accordance with EU rules on E+	Rules and procedures relevant for the work of the national agency and management of Erasmus+	No	No	Yes	100%	Annual Report of Ministry in charge of education
Raised awareness and access to the programme information	Number of seminars, info days, promotional events held	N/A	N/A			NA Reports
Potential E+ programme applicants capacities strengthened	Increased capacities of at least 4 universities, 5 colleges of applied studies and 30 schools for participation in decentralised actions	N/A	N/A			NA Reports

The European Commission may carry out a mid-term, a final or an ex-post evaluation for this Action or its components via independent consultants, through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. In case a mid-term or final evaluation is not foreseen, the European Commission may, during implementation,

decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluations will be carried out as prescribed by the DG NEAR guidelines for evaluations. In addition, the Action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures set in the Financing Agreement.

## **5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

Cross-cutting issues will be addressed throughout the Action, so to ensure that those horizontal issues are appropriately mainstreamed whenever applicable in the envisaged activities. For the reference, best practices and EU standards would be used, but also the national legislation reflecting such standards and requirements as incorporated into domestic system.

### **ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)**

The action will have no negative environmental effects.

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

Civil society organisations will take part in the implementation phase of the Action Document as final beneficiaries of some activities under E + Programme.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

Based on the fundamental principles of promoting equality and combating discrimination, participation in the project activities will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access regardless of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, sex or sexual orientation.

### **MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS**

The Action Document will in no way harm the rights of any individuals, including minorities and vulnerable groups. Involvement of minorities through the participation in the E+ will be encouraged.

## **6. SUSTAINABILITY**

The structure designated as the national agency will continue to implement the decentralised actions of the Erasmus+ and other future EU education and youth programmes. It will be funded by the EC and national authorities.

Considering the problems faced by national agencies in the neighbouring countries, a retention policy will be adopted.

## **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 communication and visibility actions and tools will be fully aligned with the EU visibility guidelines (“Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions”). In regard to visibility following actions and tools should be carried out: definition of visual identity standards; preparation of written materials (factsheets, training compendia, manuals, etc.); production of branded material (panels, folders, promotional material); website; events (trainings, retreats, workshops, round tables, initial and closing events).

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

Communication and visibility will be ensured through information and promotion campaign that will be implemented from the very beginning of the action.

Visibility actions will be undertaken to underscore the ‘additionally’ benefits of national and EU funding working in union, to realise Serbian and EU strategic development objectives and to present the results achieved through Action implementation.

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 sectorial monitoring committees.

As the guides for the final beneficiaries will be used through the whole duration of the Erasmus+ programme, the visibility of the action will be sustained.