

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) offers rationalised assistance to countries aspiring to join the EU for the period 2007-13 on the basis of the lessons learnt from previous external assistance and pre-accession instruments. The aim of the IPA is therefore to enhance the efficiency and coherence of aid by means of a single framework. This framework incorporates the previous pre-accession and stabilisation and association assistance to candidate countries and potential candidate countries while respecting their specific features and the processes in which they are engaged.

ACT

Council Regulation (EC) No [1085/2006](#) of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

SUMMARY

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is the Community's financial instrument for the pre-accession process for the period 2007-13. Assistance is provided on the basis of the [European Partnerships](#) of the potential candidate countries and the Accession Partnerships of the candidate countries, which means the Western Balkan countries and Turkey. The IPA is intended as a flexible instrument and therefore provides assistance which depends on the progress made by the beneficiary countries and their needs as shown in the Commission's evaluations and annual strategy papers

Nature of the IPA

The beneficiary countries are divided into two categories, depending on their status as either candidate countries under the accession process or potential candidate countries under the [stabilisation and association process](#), namely:

- candidate countries (Annex I to the Regulation): the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Croatia, Turkey;
- potential candidate countries as defined at the [Santa Maria da Feira European Council](#) of 20 June 2000 (Annex II to the Regulation): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia including Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

The annexes will be amended as and when changes in the status of the countries occur, pursuant to a Council decision adopted by qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission.

Exceptionally, and in the interests of coherence and efficiency, other countries may benefit from measures financed under the IPA provided these measures form part of a regional, cross-border, trans-national or worldwide framework and do not duplicate other programmes under Community external aid instruments.

The IPA was designed to address the needs of the beneficiary countries within the context of pre-accession in the most appropriate way. Its main aim is to support institution-building and the rule of law, human rights, including the fundamental freedoms, minority rights, gender equality and non-discrimination, both administrative and economic reforms, economic and social development, reconciliation and reconstruction, and regional and cross-border cooperation.

To ensure targeted, effective and coherent action, the IPA is made up of **five components**, each covering priorities defined according to the needs of the beneficiary countries. Two components concern all beneficiary countries:

- the "support for transition and institution-building" component, aimed at financing capacity-building and institution-building;
- the "cross-border cooperation" component, aimed at supporting the beneficiary countries in the area of cross-border cooperation between themselves, with the Member States or within the framework of cross-border or inter-regional actions.

The other three components are aimed at candidate countries only:

- the "regional development" component, aimed at supporting the countries' preparations for the implementation of the Community's cohesion policy, and in particular for the [European Regional Development Fund](#) and the [Cohesion Fund](#);
- the "human resources development" component, which concerns preparation for cohesion policy and the [European Social Fund](#) ;
- the "rural development" component, which concerns preparation for implementation of the common agricultural policy and related policies and for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development ([EAFRD](#)).

Candidate countries are therefore prepared for full implementation of the Community *acquis* at the time of accession, while potential candidate countries are led to align themselves progressively on the Community *acquis*. As for the nature of the measures provided to both groups of countries, the potential candidate countries have access to measures which are similar to those provided under the last three components, but within the framework of the first two components. The difference is in the way these measures are implemented, since for the components preparing for implementation of the structural and agricultural funds the beneficiary country is required to manage Community funds in a decentralised manner.

Management and implementation of the IPA

The IPA is based on **strategic multi-annual planning** established in accordance with the broad political guidelines set out in the Commission's enlargement package, which now includes a **Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework (MIFF)**. The MIFF takes the form of a table presenting the Commission's intentions for the allocation of funds for the three forthcoming years, broken down by beneficiary and by component, on the basis of the needs and the administrative and management capacity of the country concerned and compliance with the Copenhagen criteria.

The strategic planning introduced under the IPA is made up of **multi-annual indicative planning documents**, with the MIFF constituting the reference framework. They are established for each beneficiary country and cover the main intervention areas envisaged for that country.

As regards action on the ground, **annual or multi-annual programmes** (depending on the component) based on the indicative planning documents, are adopted by the

Commission. They are implemented in three ways: by centralised, decentralised or shared management.

Assistance under the IPA can take, inter alia, the following forms:

- investment, procurement contracts or subsidies;
- administrative cooperation, involving experts sent from the Member States;
- action by the Community acting in the interest of the beneficiary country;
- measures to support the implementation process and management of the programmes; and
- budget support (granted exceptionally and subject to supervision).