



GUIDELINES ON MANAGING UNION PROGRAMMES IN ALBANIA



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISË
**MINISTRIA PËR EVROPËN
DHE PUNËT E JASHTME**



Project funded by
European Union

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR UNION
PROGRAMS IN ALBANIA**

Implemented by



GUIDELINES ON MANAGING UNION PROGRAMMES IN ALBANIA



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRIË
**MINISTRIA PËR EVROPËN
DHE PUNËT E JASHTME**



Project funded by
European Union

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR UNION
PROGRAMS IN ALBANIA**

Implemented by



This document is produced by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA) of Albania with the support of EU funded project “Technical Assistance for Union Programmes in Albania” (EuropeAid/137244/DH/SER/AL). The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of MEFA and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.



Contents

1.	UNION PROGRAMMES AT A GLANCE	8
1.1	What are Union Programmes?.....	8
1.2	Who manages Union Programmes?.....	8
1.3	Participation in Union Programmes of EU Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries.....	9
1.4	Actions for participation in EU Programme.....	12
1.5	Union Programmes vs. Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA)	13
2.	UNION PROGRAMMES IN ALBANIA.....	14
2.1	Status of Union Programmes in Albania..	14
2.2	Union Programmes Implementation Mechanism in Albania	15
2.3	Payments of Financial Contribution for Participation in Union Programmes.....	24
2.4	Union Programmes Implementation Aspects.....	26
	ANNEXES.....	32

Acronyms	
ACA	Albanian Customs Administration
AKKSHI/NASRI	National Agency of Scientific Research and Innovation
ARTI	Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation
CfP	Call for Proposal
DDFFA	Department for Development Financing and Foreign Aid
DG	Directorate General
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Economic Area
EfC	Europe for Citizens
EU	European Union
FA	Framework Agreement
EUD	European Union Delegation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDT	General Directorate of Taxation
HoNSO	Head of NIPAC Support Office
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IMCEU	Inter-Ministerial Committee for European Integration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

JP	Justice Programme
MC	Ministry of Culture
MEFA	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
MES	Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth
MoFE	Ministry of Finances and Economy
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MTBP	Medium Term Budget Programme
NAO	National Authorising Officer
NIPAC	National IPA Coordinator
NCP	National Contact Point
NCUP	National Coordinator of Union Programmes
NF	National Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPM	Office of the Prime Ministry
PNC	Programme National Coordinator
PRAG	Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAP	Stabilisation and Association Process
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
UP	Union Programme

1. UNION PROGRAMMES AT A GLANCE

1.1 What are Union Programmes?

The EU has established **European Union Programmes** in order to promote cooperation, primarily among Member States, in fields related to different EU policies (i.e research, competitiveness and innovation, media, education, health, youth, culture, environment, customs policy, fight against poverty, fight against youth unemployment, etc.).

European Union Programmes are multi-annual financial instruments structured to support common EU internal policies. The policies behind the Union Programmes (UPs) are closely related to the priorities of the strategy Europe 2020 – delivering the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Union Programmes help promote EU values and policies. As key EU values are respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, it is important to share these values throughout all European Union Programmes. These values are built into every project announcement and call for project proposal under Union Programmes.

In short, EU Programmes are defined by the EU policy they are helping to implement and the budget heading from which the financial resources are streamlined. Upon those two prerequisites, the legal framework is built by the Commission, Parliament and Council.

In principle, all EU Member States are eligible to participate in European Union Programmes. Candidate Countries to join the EU can also participate in a particular European Union Programme.

1.2 Who manages Union Programmes?

European Union programmes are implemented according to the centralised implementation model, in which the financial management and implementation of the particular programmes are under authorities of the Directorate General (DG) of the European Commission in charge of each programme. Different Directorates General of the European Commission are responsible for the implementation of the individual Union Programmes according to their scope of work.



Each programme establishes its own rules of management. Each Union Programme has a Programme Guide providing detailed information on the eligibility criteria for each of the programme's actions. Presently, most of them are designed for seven years period in accordance with EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2014- 2020. Each European Union Programme has a separate and distinct legal basis for implementing rules. DGs also manage the budget and set the priorities, targets and criteria for the programmes on an on-going basis, following consultations with the Programme Committees. The Programme Committee typically consists of representatives of all programme countries and representatives of EC. Furthermore, they (Programme Committees) guide and monitor the general implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluating the programmes at European level. The DGs can establish executive agencies under their auspices to whom they transfer implementation powers. Financial control and audit is conducted or supervised by the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors and OLAF (European Anti-Corruption Office).

The annual plan (in some programmes the work plan) is an important document for each Union Programme. It is very specific, with definition of all call for proposals and tenders that will be published during the year. Some EU programmes have just one annual plan for the whole programme. The biggest ones, like Horizon 2020, have several work plans for different parts of the programme. Sometimes, the annual plan bears the name of the Guide for the particular programme.

1.3 Participation in Union Programmes of EU Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries

Most of the European Union Programmes are also open to EU accession countries. The idea of involving the Candidate Countries in European Union Programmes was first put forward at the meeting of the European Council in Copenhagen in June 1993. Work on putting the idea into practice started in 1997. In 2003 during the European Council meeting in Thessaloniki, it was decided to open the European Union Programmes to countries outside the EU and EEA, so that all countries in the Stabilisation and Association Process may participate. In all countries, opening up the opportunity to participate in European Union Programmes was considered as the best way for various actors in society to fully comprehend the policies and methods of working within the Union, as well as being a useful tool in support of countries' efforts on their way to EU membership.

Currently, all Western Balkan countries participate in different European Union Programmes, in particular in education, vocational training, youth, research, energy, the environment, small and medium-sized enterprises and public health.

Each non-EU member country with the possibility to participate in Union Programmes decides on its own participation in a particular programme, according to its needs and priorities. As some programmes are rather vast, and have different sub-programmes, sometimes eligible non-EU member country can decide to participate only in a particular sub-programme or component and not in the whole Programme.

Non-EU member countries, not contributing to EU budget, are obliged to pay a fee for participating in the Union Programmes. The fees are different for each specific Programme. They cover estimated cost of participation of its citizens in a given programme. The size of these contributions is negotiated with the Commission and set down in the Agreement of the Programme. The amount of the so called participation fee depends on each programme's specificities and scope – calculations are based on the ratio of national GDP/EU-28 GDP and other factors (population, energy consumption...etc).

The Western Balkan countries can receive co-financing of participation fee in Union Programmes through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (IPA II) or any other external aid for which they might be eligible.

For countries that have concluded a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, the Framework Agreement for participation in Union Programmes is annexed to the SAA as a protocol.

European Union Programmes can provide the following benefits to accession countries:

- Support the country to strengthen democracy and the rule of law;
- Contribute to political, economic and institutional stability in the country, as well as to the stabilisation of the region;
- Provide an appropriate framework for political dialogue in a given area,
- Support the efforts of the country to approximation of its legislation to EU;
- Support the country's efforts to complete the transition into a functioning market economy;
- Promote harmonious economic relations and develop gradually a free trade area with EU;
- Foster regional cooperation in all the fields covered by this Agreement.

A pre-condition for the actual participation of a non-EU country in the European Union Programmes is establishment of the legal basis for each individual programme, i.e. negotiation and signature of a joint Agreement (an international agreement between the relevant national authority and the responsible European Commission service).

A number of pre-conditions may be attached to participation of accession countries in a certain programmes, such as:

- Appropriate administrative capacity to manage the Programme (i.e. Erasmus + Programme is managed through bodies set up in each participating country; certain preparatory measures have to be taken before these bodies can be set up and access to the programme is subject to checking of institutional capacities for enforcing the programme rules and ensuring sound financial management);
- Coming into line, before participation, with the acquis and the way the acquis is implemented in practice

The countries of the Western Balkans are therefore encouraged to be selective when deciding in which programmes they want to take part and should take a gradual approach to participation, in line with their administrative capacity and their ability to take advantage of what the programmes have to offer.

Countries are advised to select:

- general, pan-European programmes;
- programmes that fit the priorities identified in the Framework

Agreement between the country and the EC

- programmes that meet the country's needs.

Some programmes are unlikely to be of any real impact to the countries in short run and may require some preparatory measures, either because they are geared towards very specific aspects of internal EU policies or the acquis, or because they require a certain level of preparation and capacities to be developed. The EC is always discussing the features of the various programmes with the countries and it helps them to select programmes that best meet their needs.

Effective participation in European Union Programmes will depend, above all, on the willingness to devote sufficient financial resources to it and on the availability of administrative capacity. The EU draws on its experience

in estimating the absorption capacity of each country and laying down appropriate rules on payment. It is essential to make sure that national contributions allocated to programmes are used in full, since unspent funds are not returned to the countries that contributed them.

1.4 Actions for participation in EU Programme

EU Parliament and Council of Ministers adopt necessary legal documents. European Commission establishes procedures for implementation, financing, monitoring and evaluation of the Programme



1.5 Union Programmes vs. Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA)

The ideas behind the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) Programmes and the Union Programmes is very different. The Union Programmes are primarily structured to support priority actions in EU Member States in policy domains where all EU countries have agreed to act together in a given period. Albania may choose to join them or not. Pre-accession assistance is structured around the identified short and medium term priorities of Albania's EU accession priorities and serves as the financial instrument to support their achievement. The main differences are shown in the figure below.

IPA	vs	Union Programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exclusively aimed at Candidate Countries to prepare them for EU accession ■ Projects primarily aimed at national authorities having a strong link with EU acquis implementation ■ No participation financial contribution required - co-financing at programme level via individual project co-financing ■ Managed by national structures within the Candidate Country - decentralised system (IPA assistance can also be managed under centralised/direct mode) ■ Legal basis - regulation provisions establishing the Programme, same set of implementing rules for all IPA Countries 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Primarily for Member States' co-operation in common EU policy areas ■ Projects generally involving equivalent partnership institutions/organisations from different Member States ■ Participation financial contribution at programme level required + co-financing of individual project ■ Often managed by EC services and executive agencies, sometimes establishment of specific implementation structures required at national level ■ Legal basis - each programme has specific legal basis and different implementation rules



2. UNION PROGRAMMES IN ALBANIA

2.1 Status of Union Programmes in Albania

Participation in Union Programmes is considered to be one of the best ways for various actors within Albanian society to fully comprehend the EU common policies and working methods. Union Programmes are also a useful tool in support of Albania's efforts on its way to EU membership. Participation in Union Programmes enables the transfer of good practice and know-how across EU sectoral policies. Legal basis include:

- A **Framework Agreement (FA)** between the European Community and Albania on participation in European Union Programmes was ratified in May 2005. This agreement includes specific existing programmes that respond to national needs and stipulates cooperation principles within European Union Programme.
- An Agreement is signed between relevant EC Directorate General and responsible national authority in Albania for each Union Programme that Albania participates. This Agreement regards cooperation in a specific EU programme.
- A Financial Agreement signed usually each year between the European Commission and Albania for adopting the respective IPA II Annual Programmes, which comprises inter alia the action for Support to participation in Union Programmes and Agencies.

Albania participates in 9 Union Programs for the period 2014-2020. The Union Programmes Albania participates in are as follows:

- Horizon 2020 – National Programme Coordinator: Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth; Albanian National Agency of Scientific Research and Innovation, (Agreement signed 1st July 2014);
- Erasmus + : National Programme Coordinator: Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, (Agreement signed 19th June 2014);
- COSME – National Programme Coordinator: Ministry of Finances and Economy, (Agreement signed 3rd March 2015);
- Creative Europe, Sub-Programme “Culture” – National Programme Coordinator: Ministry of Culture (Agreement signed 20th June 2014);
- Creative Europe, Sub-Programme “Media” – National Programme Coordinator: Ministry of Culture, (Agreement signed 9th October 2014);

- Programme for Employment and Social Innovation – National Programme Coordinator: Ministry of Finances and Economy, (Agreement signed 9th March 2015);
- Europe for citizens – National Programme Coordinator: Ministry of Culture, (Agreement signed 26 February 2015);
- Customs 2020 – National Programme Coordinator: Ministry of Finances and Economy, (Directorate General of Customs) (Agreement signed 27th July 2014);
- Fiscalis 2020 – National Programme Coordinator: Ministry of Finances and Economy, (Directorate General for Taxation) (Agreement signed 23rd November 2014);
- Justice Programme – National Programme Coordinator: Ministry of Justice (Agreement signed 28 September 2016)

A more detailed description of each Programme is in annex 1.

Additionally, as Albania does not contribute to the Union budget, a national financial contribution to the budget of each selected Union Programme is obligatory and paid annual by the Albanian authorities. The IPA II Programme for Albania has envisaged the possibility of co-financing the required “participation fee” for a maximum of 1 million Euro/year in total for all the programmes.

2.2 Union Programmes Implementation Mechanism in Albania

2.2.1 Management of Union Programmes in Albania

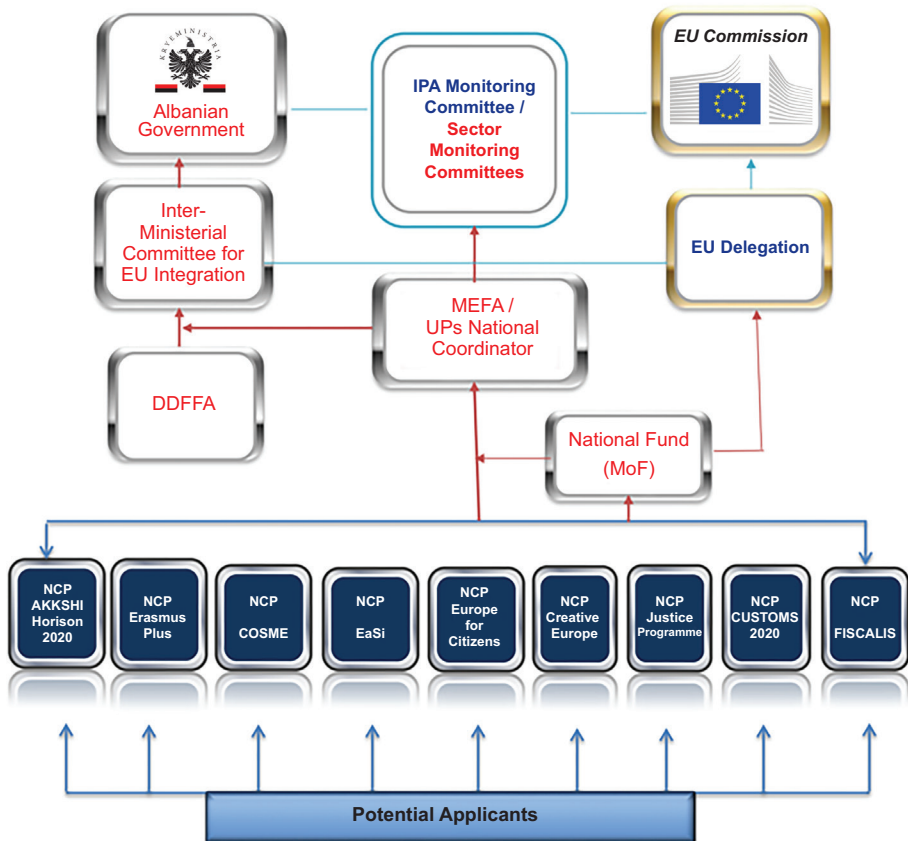
Successful participation in Union Programmes requires a high degree of ownership and active involvement by the beneficiary country in establishing its own working methods, gathering the necessary information on programmes, establishing networks and structures and informing the public. These are essential in order to obtain the benefits of participation in programmes and agencies.

Once Albania became legally entitled to participate in Union Programme, a specific operational mechanism was then established to support coordination of the Programmes and especially facilitate the participation of interested organisations and individuals. This means the creation of the necessary implementation structures for coordination of Union Programmes.

For most of the Union Programmes there is a legal requirement to assign a national institution as National Coordinator and within that to establish

a National Contact Point in charge of coordination Programme's activities in the country. The Albanian Government has authorised a national public institution, usually a particular administrative structure within a ministry, to take over the responsibility of coordination of the relevant programme.

The chart below summarises the institutional structure involved in management of Union Programmes in Albania.



2.2.3 National Coordinator of Union Programmes in Albania

The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA) is the overall National Coordinator of Union Programmes (NCUP) in Albania.

The Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania acts also as the National IPA II Coordinator (NIPAC) and has the main responsibility of ensuring the overall co-ordination of EU assistance to Albania. The NIPAC ensures a close link between the general accession process and the use of EU financial assistance, and is responsible for the monitoring of the programme. MEFA is the main counterpart of the European Commission for the overall process of strategic planning, coordination of programming, monitoring of implementation, evaluation and reporting of IPA II assistance as well as participation in Union Programmes.

The NIPAC Support Office is located within the Directorate of EU Funds. The Director of Directorate of EU Funds performs also as Head of NIPAC Support Office (HoNSO). The NIPAC Support Office Director is in charge of overall Union Programmes coordination on behalf of MEFA. Under this Directorate is located the Sector for Horizontal and Strategic Issues, which is in charge also for overall coordination on Union Programmes on behalf of MEFA. MEFA should ensure that it employs, at least one full time person (preferably more) as part of Sector for Horizontal and Strategic Issues, dedicated to coordination of Union Programmes.

Roles and responsibilities of National Coordinator of Union Programmes are the following:

- MEFA coordinates with the EC services overall participation of Albania in Union Programmes
- MEFA coordinates with EC Services initiation of the process for participation of Albanian in new Union Programmes
- MEFA coordinates on regular basis with EU Delegation in Albania on issues related to participation in Union Programmes
- MEFA coordinates with relevant Albanian institutions analysis and decision making process for participation in new Union Programmes and communicates the position of Albania to EC relevant structures
- MEFA provides information to the EC if required for the national or sector priorities and development in Albania in areas covered by Union Programmes,

- MEFA coordinates with EC / EUD regarding the IPA allocations as co-financing Albania's participation in Union Programmes
- MEFA should prepare and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with each institutions acting as National Coordinators of Union Programme in which Albania participates. The MoU should clearly indicate the roles and responsibilities of each party.
- MEFA coordinates and provides guidance to National Contact Points on coordination of Union Programmes, as follows:
 - verifying the competence of NCPs, and ensuring that they are properly endowed (sufficient staff; adequate training) and carry out their tasks effectively
 - ensuring that NCPs are in regular contact with EUD task managers and EC desk officers in charge of their programme
 - ensuring not just the timely budgeting of entry tickets but also that the unallocated administrative expenses envelope is used to cover relevant trips allowing NCPs to participate in their UPs steering committee meetings, etc,
 - monitoring and coordinating NCP communication with the various categories of stakeholders, ensuring such communication forms a coherent ensemble, and taking various initiatives to promote synergies between NCPs
 - monitor the delivery of training activities to be carried out by NCP, and help identifying training gaps, ensuring these gaps are addressed in such a way as to promote synergies and economies of scale
 - ensuring that NCPs provide comparable statistics, monitoring the key indicators and trends, producing an overall report for the cabinet, etc.
 - ensuring that NCPs have proper guiding documents (manuals etc) on each Programme and implement them properly
 - ensuring that NCP use harmonised reporting formats
- MEFA hold regular meetings with NCP (not less than quarterly) to discuss progress in Union Programmes. The National Fund would be associated to these meetings where necessary. The NIPAC would prepare the agenda, host the meetings, and ensure their follow-up. The EUD could attend as an observer. One of the subjects to be reviewed regularly would be the trend in participation rates and success rates, and all issues to do with the NIPAC's coordinating role.



- MEFA monitors on semi-annual basis the annual work of each Union Program as presented by the NCPs. Based on the monitoring results MEFA records and disseminate data of Albanian participation in Union Programmes
- MEFA holds meeting, at least twice a year at senior level (ministers or deputy ministers), with institutions acting as national coordinators of individual UPs, ensuring to reach the appropriate level of awareness of senior officials / ministers on the importance of UPs and role of their institutions.
- MEFA regularly monitors (not less than once per year) the participation rates in Union Programmes by Albanian stakeholders
- MEFA reports Albania`s participation rates in Union Programmes as well as co-financing trends to Albanian Government as well as in the context of IPA Monitoring Committee and relevant Sector Monitoring Committees.
- MEFA cooperates with the National Fund and Line ministries on the yearly payment of participation fee and facilitates (in cooperation with NF, as needed) communication related to payments with relevant EC services as needed.
- MEFA discusses with NF and line ministries on the status of payments of participation fee, and whether the funds have been allocated by the respective ministry in the MTBP for the coming periods
- MEFA discusses (if and as needed with other actors, such as OPM, MoF, Sector Monitoring Committees, others) the report prepared by the NF on the status of payments and reimbursement procedures
- MEFA facilitates networking with the national contact points / desks of other countries participating on the listed programmes in order to facilitate exchange of experience among Desks and foster the partnership among each countries stakeholders
- MEFA communication office, in liaison with NIPAC Office and NCPs prepares and coordinates the overall communication activities related to Union Programmes, including ICT communication tools, social media aspects, communication and use of House of Europe (in Tirana and EU Desks in 61 municipalities), public media, or any other actor involved
- MEFA promotes the visibility of Union Programmes at national level through awareness raising events, networking, website, and social media.



2.2.4 National Contact Points of Union Programmes

Upon signature of the Agreement between Albania and the EU on a given Union Programme, Albania is requested to establish the appropriate coordination structures and mechanisms to implement the Programme in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Regulation establishing the Programme.

An institution is assigned as the Programme National Coordinator (PNC) for each individual Union Programme (i.e Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth for “Erasmus Plus”, or Ministry of Culture for “Creative Europe”). A senior staff within the institutions is appointed (by the head of the institution) as the National Contact Point (NCP) for the given Union Programme.

The National Contact Point is a senior staff, within the Ministry / institution acting as Programme National Coordinator.

The act of appointment (or change) of the NCP for the given Programme must be communicated officially to the EC relevant services by the head of the institution acting as Programme National Coordinator. The NCP appointment becomes valid, only upon notification of acceptance in written by the EC services.

The NCP ensures overall operational coordination and consistency of the Programme, and liaises with the European Commission coordinating services on relevant policy matters for Albania, training, as well as financial matters. Albanian authorities have the obligation to ensure that measures are in place for the smooth operation of the NCP including sufficient administrative capacity and operational support.

Every NCP should be fully acquainted with the objectives, principles and content of that Programme for which they are responsible. NCPs should be knowledgeable about all aspects of the Programme, and also should be aware of opportunities provided. He/she is appointed within the structure to provide guidance, practical information and assistance on all aspects of participation in Programme.

Every institution acting as National Coordinator of the Programme should ensure that sufficient funding is allocated in the national budget to support operational management of the Programme, in particular this should ensure



funding for participation of the NCP in meetings of the Steering Committee of the Programme (3-4 trips per year) organised by the EC in Brussels, as well as funds for organisation of info-days and trainings for Albanian potential applicants.

The NCP should be accessible by e-mail and phone during working hours, with appropriate back-up arrangements in the case of absences.

Roles and Functions of NCPs, are:

(i) At National-Institutional Level

- Liaise with MEFA on overall management of Union Programmes in Albania
- Liaise with EUD in Tirana on matters related to Programme Implementation
- Dissemination of information and coordination within his/her Ministry/institution, or subordinate agencies on the Programme, its objectives, priorities, work programme, calls for proposals, application packages, etc
- Prepare an Annual Work Plan for the activities of the given programme in Albania and communicate it to MEFA, EUD and other relevant institutions. Disseminate the information of the work programme to the respective structures within the institutions and reflect the feedback when necessary.
- NCPs prepare a simple database of awarded projects as well provides analysis on the number of applications and success rates of the programme in the country. NCPs report the data to MEFA (at least on semi-annual basis).
- Prepare an annual report on Albanian participation in the given programme and disseminate it to the relevant stakeholder. The report should include data on the information days organised, trainings, workshops, data on applicants from Albania and results. The report will also have a specific section related to the meetings they have participated in, including the Steering Committee meetings in Brussels, or NCP events in Albania and abroad.
- Liaise with the National Fund and Financial Department of his/her institution on the yearly payment of participation fees and gathers all documentation that is necessary to submit and duly carry out the payment.
- Ensure that the funds for payment of the participation fee are

planned in the annual budget of the institution responsible on annual basis.

- Coordinate the process to ensure that funds for the payment of participation fee are transferred to EC within the agreed deadline in the Agreement of the Programme
- Coordinate within the institutions to ensure that sufficient funding is allocated in the national budget to support operational management of the Programme, in particular for participation of the NCP in meetings of the Steering Committee of the Programme (3-4 trips per year) organised by the EC in Brussels, as well as operational funds for organisation of info-days and trainings for Albanian potential applicants.
- Monitor the activities of help-desk of the Programmes (in case where this exist, i.e Creative Europe, or Erasmus+).
- Participate in the meetings organised on behalf of the Ministry in relation to the respective Union Programme that is manages and reports on the events in Albania when needed.

(ii) *At International Level*

- Maintain regular communication with the respective DG and Desk of the Programme
- Provide information to the EC if required for the sector`s priority and development in Albania related to the programme,
- Network with the national contact points / desks of other countries participating on the listed programmes in order to facilitate exchange of experience among Desks and foster the partnership among each countries stakeholders
- Transfer know how of the online tools used by the contracting authority in terms of participant registration and online applications,
- Familiarise themselves with best practices of other national contact points / Desks (of countries participating in the programmes), to help increase NCP`s performance and better serve the final beneficiaries / the applicants in Albania.
- Ensure participation in Programme meetings/information days organised by the EC or other actor of the Programme.
- Ensure participation in the meetings of the Steering Committee of Programme organised by the EC services and provides input to the preparation of the annual work plan of the Programme.



(iii) **On Dissemination and Capacity Building**

- NCPs identify all / each call for proposals under the Programme and ensures that this information is disseminated timely to potential applicants in Albania
- Prepare a database of potential stakeholders in order to easily contact and disseminate information when calls are open, through email, social media, website, TV, etc.
- When calls for proposals under the Programme are launched, the NCPs prepare the information, first disseminates it in within the Ministry / Department / Agencies / partners and second wider dissemination to the potential applicants of relevance for the call for proposals.
- Organise info days on the specific call for proposals. When a Help Desk is in place, it delegates such services to the latter.
- NCPs provide support services to potential applicants, such as, partner search, training on project proposal preparation, training support in project management to the awarded applicants.
- NCPs promote the communication and visibility of the programme through awareness raising events, website, networking events, partnership events).
- NCPs use ICT services in order to share programme results and assist stakeholders on how to follow up the application process in each call for proposal,

2.2.5 Role of other institutions involved in Union Programmes

The rest of other institutions involved in Union Programme in Albania have either a support or monitoring role as below:

Institution	Roles and responsibilities related to Union Programmes
Inter-Ministerial Committee for European Integration (IMCEU)	The IMCEU monitors overall progress of Albania on European Integration agenda and IPA implementation including horizontal programmes (Union Programmes)
Department for Development Financing and Foreign Aid (DDFFA)	DDFFA has the overall responsibility on development policies and donor coordination in Albanian on behalf of Prime Minister. As such, DDFFA's role is particularly important on overall monitoring of UPs participation
National Fund	The National Fund functions as a central treasury entity within the Ministry of Finance and supports the NAO in fulfilling his tasks in respect of the management of IPA II accounts and financial operations. NF has also implementation responsibilities for the action "Support to participation in Union Programmes and Agencies".

2.3 Payments of Financial Contribution for Participation in Union Programmes

The participation of Albania in Union Programmes, including payment of the participation fees, follows the specific terms and conditions set out in the “Agreement” signed between EC and Albanian authorities for each individual Union Programme.

As mentioned earlier, since 2008, Albania has benefited from financial assistance under IPA for co-financing participation fee to a number of Union Programmes. IPA II Programme (2014-2020) continues to co-finance participation fees in Union Programmes for a total amount allocated of maximum 1 million Euro/year for all the programmes,

After the entry in force of the respective IPA II Financial Agreement, the National Authorizing Officer sends a specific request of funds to the EU Delegation for the co-financing of participation in Union Programmes. Once funds have been transferred by the European Commission, the National Fund will in turn transfer the IPA II contribution for the relevant participation fees to the line-Ministries which are responsible vis-à-vis the Commission to honour the annual cost of participation. The IPA II reimbursement is paid as a grant to Albania.

The following are the main steps related to payments and reimbursement of Union Programmes participation fees.

Step 1

Prior to Signature of the Agreement with the EC for a new Union Programme, the respective institution must duly plan in the next year national budget

Important

Despite of IPA II co-financing, each Albanian institution responsible for managing Union Programmes should plan in the MTBP / Annual Budget the full amount to be paid annually to European Commission as annual participation fee in the given Union Programme. The partial IPA II reimbursement comes only after the full amount of participation fees is paid to the EC and the respective IPA financial Agreement is in force.

the full amount of the **participation fee**¹ in the given Union Programme - as indicated in the respective Agreement. The Albanian institutions should ensure to plan in the Annual Budget the full amount to be paid for the participation fee (despite of the part expected to be co-financed by IPA II).

Step 2

European Commission sends the “call for funds” (often referred to as the “Debit Note”)² for the payment of participation fee to the respective institutions managing UP-s by the first quarter of the year. EC sends the “call for funds” to the Albanian Mission to EU in Brussels which transmits it to the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The MEFA duly informs the respective institution managing the respective Union Programme.

Important

Often Albanian institutions plan only a partial amount of the participation fee, with the justification that the rest will be covered by IPA II reimbursement. This has proved to be a bad practice because IPA II reimbursement becomes effective quite at least a year later because of the procedures of the approval of the IPA II Financing Agreement. The partial budget planning of the entry ticket exposes Albanian authorities to delays in payment of the full amount of participation fee, and as a result penalties are applied by the EC. The participation fees should be planned in full in the national budget regardless of IPA II reimbursement.

Step 3

Upon the receipt of the Debit Note, the respective institution managing a Union Programme makes the payment to the dedicated bank account.

The institutions should then submit the following documents to the National Fund, Ministry of Finances, asking for IPA II reimbursement:

- (i) Copy of the ratified Agreement between the respective institution and the EU for the participation in the programme;

1. This reference is an example taken from the Agreement on EaSI Programme. “The Republic of Albania shall pay its contribution to the annual costs in accordance with the call for funds request no later than three months after the date of the call. Any delay in the payment of the contribution shall give rise to the payment of default interest by Albania on the outstanding amount from the due date. The interest rate shall be the rate applied by the European Central Bank to its main refinancing operations, as published in the C series of the Official Journal of the European Union, in force on the first calendar day of the months in which the deadline falls, increased by 3.5 percentage points.

2. When the Agreement enters into force and at the beginning of each subsequent budgetary year, the Commission shall send to Albania a call for funds corresponding to its contribution of the costs covered by the Agreement. Reference Agreement of EaSI Programme

- (ii) Copy of the “Debit Note” sent from the European Commission;
- (iii) Payment evidence (SWIFT messages) - Bank extract showing the amount paid from the respective institution;
- (iv) Details of the exact bank account where the reimbursement amount shall be transferred by the National Fund.

Step 4

National Fund submits for approval to EUDAL the request for funds and its supporting documents for all the Union Programmes. NF cannot submit a request for funds to EUDAL without receiving all the supporting documents for the respective payment of participation fee to EC budget.

Step 5

Upon receiving the funds from the Commission, the National Fund transfers the respective funds to the institutions that manage their respective Union Programmes.

Important

Although the “participation fee” is paid at programme level by national authorities, individual projects (if selected) have to be co-financed by individual beneficiaries, according to the rules set by a particular call for proposals.

2.4 Union Programmes Implementation Aspects

2.4.1 Calls for Proposals

In general, participation in Union Programmes is project based.

Most of Union Programmes are implemented through calls for proposals. Some of the Programmes are implemented through public procurement (usually managed directly by EC services, with no involvement of beneficiary countries).

The websites of the Programmes contain a wealth of practical information on the specific programmes: funding opportunities, calls for proposals, supporting documents, etc. It is advisable to check regularly for updated information on funding possibilities. A list of the websites of all Union Programmes that Albania participates in is in the annex.

To be eligible, a grant application must be submitted via the relevant application form, by the stated deadline, and by a ‘legal person’ established in



one of the participating countries. The applicant must fulfil the requirements for eligibility as a beneficiary. The application must also respect the specific eligibility criteria for the particular action of the programme.

To be eligible, a grant application should be submitted via the relevant application form by the stated deadline and by a 'legal person' established in one of the participating countries. The applicant must fulfil the requirements for eligibility as a beneficiary.

How to apply

All Calls for Proposals (CfP) are published at the official sites of EC (relevant DG) or its executive agencies.

As already mentioned, each administrative body coordinating a Union Programme, or a part of it, at the national or EU level, has an obligation to inform potential beneficiaries about the programme – to promote programme benefits and explain implementation rules and procedures.

The Programme Guide as well as the Call for Proposals guidelines published indicate clearly where and how to apply for participation in the Union Programmes. For most of the Programmes application is done online on a platform managed by the European Commission services in charge of the Programme.

Important

There is not always a subscription or distribution list, so interested parties should ensure that they check regularly the website of the Programme or, national website that help dissemination information on the programme.

In the documentation of the CfPs several issues are clearly defined:

- Application deadline and submission procedures and forms (on line, on line and postal delivery)
- Objectives of Call for Proposals
- Eligible applicants, partners, projects and costs
- Evaluation procedures
- Contracting and implementation procedures.

After the closure of Call for Proposals, the evaluation process takes place. Besides checking the administrative compliance of the submitted proposals, the evaluation is usually done by external experts is done according to the rules of each programme. At the end of the evaluation process, the EC makes

the decision on the projects that will be co-financed based on the evaluation score and availability of the financial resources.

Partnership Strategy and Search

The philosophy of Union Programmes is based on promoting partnerships. In most of Union Programmes calls for proposals the partnership is a must. A partnership may be hard and it may slow down implementation and ask for complex decisions, but it has demonstrates advantages. So it is not surprising that the EU insist on partnerships of all forms and colours

There are calls for proposals in which partnership is desirable because it brings additional point for evaluation, so having a partner or not may be a line for project to be co-financed or not.

There are not many calls for proposals for single entities to apply.

Partnerships can be:

- Sector based (only tourism, or health, or sports, or science, etc.)
- Cross-sector based (sports and science cooperating)
- Among public entities, among private sector entities, or combination of public and private sector (be careful choosing according to programme and call for proposal criteria!).
- Cross-border – partners from

Building a Good partnership

For executive decisions during the project, there is a reasonable decision-making system needed. The tendency is to let the strongest partner decide, but it should be avoided, and any of the partners should have a say. Stable and reliable system of communications helps it, with the communication that is clear and understandable, available to all interested parties, transparent and regular. Well-functioning partnerships should have:

- Clear project management and leadership – every body knows who is responsible for what;
- Established structure with task and activities leaders responsible;
- Precise work plan, usually included in the project proposal to certain extend;
- Communication procedures, preferably simple and technologically available to all the partners, hopefully not too time consuming;
- Established archival and reporting system with strict and respected deadlines;



any of participating countries, or just from particular areas, counties, regions.

- Regional, with partners from regions defined by the EU – Adriatic, South-Eastern, Mediterranean, etc.
- International, with partners from various states, even continents.
- Pan-European.

Why the EU Insists on Partnerships for Projects?

- makes implementation of projects cheaper;
- makes sure that knowledge, information and results are disseminated broader;
- every partner in the project brings additional value, especially EU related values, but also professional, expertise-wise, “know-how”, capacity, etc.
- complex projects with strong demand for human and material resources would virtually be impossible without partnerships.

Formal Criteria for partnerships in EU programmes

- every partner must be a legal person,
- Partnership does not need to be formal prior to the application. In some call for proposals level of formalisation is left to the partners - sometimes only the project application and declarations suffice, sometimes there is a proposed (general) partnership agreement, sometimes partners must write their own consortium agreement or they are supplied by an agreement contract they have to fill in. Firmer agreements usually show up in cases when usage of intellectual property rights and results of the projects must be regulated (science, technology),
- Grant agreement regulates relations of the partners and the Contracting Authority in relations to the grant,
- all the partners must comply with the criteria of the call for proposal,
- partnership is always coordinated by one of the partners (called coordinator or leading partner, or sometime applicant, while others are co-applicants); that partner is responsible for the project.

Additional quality of partnerships is measured by:

- geographic representation and/or cross-sectors connecting;
- partners are complementary in capabilities and expertise;
- the partnership is led by someone with experience in EU co-financed



projects, therefore for the first application to a call for proposal it is advisable not to be a coordinating/leading partner.

Other players in the EU co-financed projects

The projects might include associates, which perform same tasks during the project, but they are not paid for it (besides travel and accommodation costs). They do not need to comply with criteria for partners.

Subcontractors deliver goods, works or services for financial compensation. The procurement from them must comply with regulations for public procurement.

How to find partners for projects?

For the most projects to be co-financed by EU funds there are partners necessary. Minimal number and registration form of eligible partners, and minimum of countries involved, are prescribed by each programme and fund, and can vary significantly. Frequent demand is for an example that there must be at least three/five partners from three/five different EU countries or candidate countries.

Make sure to find appropriate partners for the specific programme or call for proposal. If the call for proposal demands that at least one partner for the project must be a public body of the highest level (ministry or government agency, for example) or a SME of a particular scope and/or field, then make sure one of them indeed is the partner of that particular required profile.

Important

- Don't forget that you can set-up e-mail reports for those groups, so that you automatically receive new additions to news, search and discussions
- Don't forget to prepare, and publish when appropriate, your own "partner profile" and/or project idea. Additionally, often you can enter it into databases, lists or pages.
- Some of them offer e-newsletters (free) subscriptions for new content. Google Alerts or similar services can also be helpful.



Partners can be found among existing cooperation entities, business partners and associates

It is a quite obvious choice! The advantage of such approach is that the applicant to EU funds is already familiar with those already collaborated or done business with. Partner's capacity, capability, level of interest, reaction speed, reliability, experience and weak points are already known.





Using various formal and informal networks, forums, gatherings, online groups and databases, web pages, sites and portals of institutions, associations, coordination bodies, projects that got funding, etc.

Important

Use Albanian section of the Enterprise Europe Network – it can be very helpful for connecting you to partners in all EU Member states and beyond for all the Programmes - www.een.al

What can make partner search easier?

Whichever way you intend to join an EU co-financed project, it is important to have your own “partner profile” written down. The profile should indicate; what are your fields of expertise, scope, competencies; What is your operational and financial capacity; Your strengths, specifics, innovations, contributions, expertise; What is your project experience in general, what about EU project so far? If you haven’t participated yet, do you have personnel, associates, development agency, department or consultants with necessary “know how”, expertise, plans? What kind of projects do you plan? What kind of projects would you like to join, and what can you contribute to them?

If you intend to be the leading partner (coordinator), it is extremely important to have your idea or concept clearly written down, so that a potential partner might even pre-estimate its benefit, role, activities and results within the project. It is advisable to suggest some activities and expected contributions of the (potential) partner.

Prepared outline of partnership agreement/contract can also help, especially if it goes beyond prescribed contracts within the call for proposal documentation, if you need or want to regulate relations among partners in addition to prescribed agreement. Good examples are intellectual rights or usage rights for the results of the project. In some funds the contract template is given in broad terms, and the actual inter-partners contracts contributes to the evaluation of the project.



3. ANNEX

1. List of Programmes Albania Participates and relevant websites

Annex 1

Description of Union Programmes in which Albania participates

 Horizon 2020 - EU Programme for Research and Innovation	
2014-2020 EU Budget: Nearly €80 billion	National Coordinator/Contact Point : National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI) - under the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth: www.akti.gov.al www.arsimi.gov.al
Objectives:	<p>Horizon 2020 is EU's programme for research and innovation. By coupling research and innovation, Horizon 2020 is helping to achieve this with its emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges. The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.</p>
Albanian context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Horizon 2020 enable Albanian researchers to establish cooperation with the best international actors opening a wide range of opportunities and further integrate the country into the European Research and Innovation area; ■ The Government's top priorities are to stimulate growth and create new jobs, to offer assistance to public universities, to strengthen advice and career centres. Moreover, the Government intends to undertake policies in order to synchronise the coordination of scientific research abroad with



international developments. Within this framework, it aims to grant support for cooperation among national scientific researchers and scientific researchers abroad. The participation of Albania in Horizon 2020 will help the country to strengthen the current scientific research and innovation capabilities in the first place, and will as well contribute to further integrate the country into the European Research and Innovation area. Horizon 2020 has direct relevance to the National Economic Reform Programme of Albania.

- The Agreement has been ratified by the Albanian Parliament through Law no. 132/2014, date 02.10.2014 “On the Ratification of Agreement between the Republic of Albania and the European Union in the Framework Program “Horizon 2020 - Programme for Research and Innovation”

Action types

i. Research and innovation actions

Funding for research projects tackling clearly defined challenges, which can lead to the development of new knowledge or a new technology.

ii. Innovation Actions

Funding is more focused on closer-to-the-market innovation activities. For example, prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting and scaling-up innovation.

iii. Coordination and support actions

Funding covers the coordination and networking of research and innovation projects, programmes and policies. Frontier research grants – European Research Council Funding for projects evaluated on the sole criterion of scientific excellence in any field of research, carried out by a single national or multinational research team led by a ‘principal investigator’. The ERC funds excellent young, early-career researchers, already independent researchers and senior research leaders. Researchers can be of any nationality and their projects can be in any field of research.

iv. Support for training and career development - Marie Skłodowska-Curie

Actions

Funding for international research fellowships in the public or private sector, research training, staff exchanges. Early stage researchers or experienced researchers, research mobility programmes.

v. SME Instrument

This instrument offers lump sums for feasibility studies, grants for an innovation project's. Only SMEs can participate.

vi. Fast track to innovation

Continuously open, innovator-driven calls will target innovation projects addressing any technology or societal challenge field. Industry, including SMEs, with a minimum of three and maximum of five partners and a maximum EU contribution of €3 million per project.

Useful links

Horizon 2020 website

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020>

The Participant Portal:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/home>

ECAS FAQ:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/help.html>

IAM quick info guide:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/ShowDoc/Participant+Portal/portal_content/webcasting/iam-changes_quick-info.doc

The Participant Portal FAQ:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/faq>


The Participant Portal user manual:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/ShowDoc/Participant+Portal/portal_content/help/participant_portal_usermanual.pdf

Community Research and Development Information Service

http://cordis.europa.eu/home_en.html



		Programme for Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	
2014-2020 EU Budget: € 2.3 billion		National Coordinator/Contact Point : Ministry of Finances and Economy : www.ekonomia.gov.al	
Objectives:		<p>The COSME programme aims to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs, tourism sector, encourage an entrepreneurial culture, and promote the creation and growth of SMEs. Main areas of intervention are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Facilitate access to finance; ■ Support the internationalization and access to markets; ■ Create and environment favourable to competitiveness; ■ Encourage entrepreneurial culture 	
Albanian Context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The “Albanian Business and Investment Strategy 2014-2020”, which is an integral part of the draft of National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI 2015 - 2020), is in line with the targets set in the Programme COSME 2014-2020. Furthermore, the implementation of the Business and Investment Development Strategy for the period 2014-2020 is followed by a complete Action Plan, including three fundamental pillars: (i) Integrated growth; (ii) Smart growth; (iii) Sustainable growth. ■ COSME is seen as a major instrument for the realisation of the activities included in the Action Plan and, as a result, will support Albania’s economic development. COSME also has direct relevance to the National Economic Reform Programme of Albania. ■ The Agreement on COSME was signed on 3 March 2015 between the European Union and the Republic of Albania. The Agreement has been ratified by the Albanian Parliament through Law No.61/2015 on 11.06.2015. 			

Type of Actions:

i. Better access to finance for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

Ain is to provide enhanced access to finance for SMEs in different phases of their lifecycle: creation, expansion or business transfer. COSME mobilises loans and equity investments for SMEs, through:

- the Loan Guarantee Facility, providing guarantees and counter-guarantees to financial institutions (e.g. guarantee societies, banks, leasing companies) so they can provide more loan and lease finance to SMEs.
- the Equity Facility for Growth provides risk capital to equity funds investing in SMEs mainly in the expansion and growth-stage phases.

ii. Access to markets

- COSME provides support to European enterprises so that they can benefit from the EU's single market and make the most of opportunities offered by markets outside the EU.
- COSME funds the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) consisting of over 600 offices in more than 50 countries helping SMEs find business and technology partners on access to markets.

iii. Encouraging entrepreneurship

- COSME backs the implementation of the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan through a wide range of activities. These include mobility exchanges, research, best practices diffusion and pilot projects in areas such as entrepreneurship education, mentoring or the development of guidance and support services for new and potential entrepreneurs, including young, women and senior entrepreneurs.
- Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange scheme which helps new entrepreneurs acquire relevant skills to run and grow a business by working with an experienced entrepreneur in another country for one to six months.
- COSME especially focuses on digital entrepreneurship to help European businesses drive their digital transformation and fully benefit from the unprecedented new opportunities created in the digital era, which are crucial for their competitiveness and growth.



iv. Creating better framework conditions for competitiveness - favourable conditions for business creation and growth

- COSME supports actions to improve the framework conditions in which enterprises operate, in particular SMEs, by reducing unnecessary administrative and regulatory burdens.
- COSME supports the emergence of competitive industries with market potential, by helping SMEs to take-up new business models and integrate into new value chains.
- COSME promotes the development of world-class clusters in the EU, fostering cluster excellence and internationalisation with an emphasis on cross-sectoral cooperation, notably in support of emerging industries. The programme also aims at accelerating the digitalisation of the business community and promoting e-skills and e-leadership.

Useful links:

COSME Website

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cosme_en

Contact points

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/business-creation-growth/index_en.htm; http://ec.europa.eu/easme/cosme_en.htm

Access to Finance

<http://www.access2finance.eu>

helps businesses and entrepreneurs to find EU funding (loans, guarantees, equity, venture capital) supported by the European Union (EU).

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/access-to-finance/index_en.htm

Europe Enterprise Network

<http://een.ec.europa.eu>





ERASMUS Plus - Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport

2014-2020 EU

Budget:
€ 14.7 billion

National Coordinator/Contact Point: Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth

National Erasmus Plus Office in Albania
www.erasmusplus.al
www.arsimi.gov.al

Objectives:

Erasmus+ aims at boosting skills and employability as well as modernizing Education, Training and Youth. It is a result of the integration of Lifelong Learning Programme, Youth in Action, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink and the programme for cooperation with industrialised countries in the field of higher education. Erasmus+ creates possibilities to study, to be trained, acquire working experience abroad; enhance teaching quality; modernising education and vocational training systems; promote youth participation in society; support teaching and research on European integration; support European grass-roots sport.

Albanian context:

- Albania`s participation in ERASMUS is fully in line with priorities in the National Strategy of Higher Education.
- Albania fully participates in Erasmus Key Action 2 (KA2) “Capacity Building of Higher Education Institutions” through capacity building projects. Albania also benefits from KA1 Mobility of individuals in the field of higher education. Furthermore, Albania will fully participate in the Jean Monnet Programme of Erasmus +.

The Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Albania was signed on 19 June 2014. The Agreement was ratified by the Albanian Parliament on 11.09.2014.



Type of Actions:

i. Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of individuals

- Mobility of individuals in the field of education, training and youth..
- Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree

ii. Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices good practices

- Strategic partnerships in the field of education, training and youth.
- Knowledge Alliances.
- Sector Skills Alliances
- Capacity building in the field of higher education
- Capacity building in the field of youth.

iii. Key Action 3: Support for policy reform

- Structured Dialogue: Meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth

Jean Monnet Initiative

The Jean Monnet activities aim is to promote teaching and research on European integration world-wide among specialist academics, learners and citizens, notably through the creation of Jean Monnet Chairs and other academic activities, as well as by providing aid for other knowledge-building activities at higher education institutions; to support the activities of academic institutions or associations active in the field of European integration studies and support a Jean Monnet label for excellence. In the light of its specific efforts to promote excellence in education and research on EU integration, the Jean Monnet Initiative will continue as a separate activity within the Programme and will share its delivery mechanisms.

Sport Action

- transnational collaborative projects;
- non-for-profit European sporting events of major importance;
- strengthening of the evidence base for policy making in the field of sport;
- capacity building in sport;
- dialogue with relevant European stakeholders.

Useful links:**EC Erasmus + web site:**

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/Erasmus-plus/index_en.htm

Erasmus + web EACEA: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus_en


Erasmus Plus Projects Results

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/>

Youth Component Albania: <http://www.beyondbarriers.org/>

National VET Agency

<http://www.akafp.gov.al/>

	<p>EaSI Programme for Employment and Social Innovation</p>
<p>2014-2020 EU</p> <p>Budget: € 919 million</p>	<p>National Contact Point: Ministry of Finance and Economy www.ekonomia.gov.al</p>
<p>Objectives:</p>	<p>EaSI programme supports initiatives aiming to modernise the labour markets, social security systems increase the rates of employment, in particular among young people, supporting job creation, promoting a highly skilled workforce, encouraging adaptation to change and the anticipation of restructuring, enhancing geographical mobility and promoting social innovation.</p> <p>EaSI brings together three EU programmes managed separately between 2007 and 2013: PROGRESS, EURES and Progress Microfinance</p>
<p>Albanian context:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In accordance with Europe 2020 and the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020, EaSI will contribute to tackling the pressing problem of youth unemployment. Young people will, therefore, be given a future and the prospect of playing a key



role in developing society and the economy in Europe, which is of particular importance in times of crisis

- The Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Albania was signed on 9 March 2015. The Agreement has been ratified by the Albanian Parliament through Law No.75/2015 on 09.07.2015.

Action types:

i) Progress: Modernizing employment and social policies

PROGRESS is the EU's main instrument to promote reforms in employment and social policies.

- promoting employment, in particular to fight youth unemployment; (min 20%)
- social protection, social exclusion and poverty reduction; (min 50%)
- improving working conditions; (min 20%)

Progress Activities:

- Analytical policy evidence gathering (research, studies, databases, opinion polls, reports)
- Mutual learning, awareness and dissemination (peer reviews and exchanges, knowledge transfers, good practices, benchmarking)
- Support for main actors (EU networks, NGOs, target groups, crosscutting)

ii) EURES: Promoting job mobility

EURES: a European job mobility network that provides information, guidance and recruitment/placement services to employers, jobseekers and any citizen wishing to take advantage of freedom of movement for workers.

- transparency of job vacancies, job applications and information for applicants and employers;
- development of services for the recruitment and placing of workers in employment;
- cross-border partnerships

EURES Components:

- **EURES Training:** specialized training modules on areas such as assistance to jobseekers, matching and placement, services to employers, greater use of ICT (min 32%)
- **EURES Job Mobility Portal:** On an average day, 1.5 million job vacancies are accessible to jobseekers on the EURES Portal. The Portal receives around 38 million unique visitors a year (min 30%)
- **Your First EURES Job:** boost young people's access to jobs across Europe. Proven successful, with job placements of around 5 000 young people all over Europe, this scheme will be continued from 2014 onwards as a 'targeted job mobility scheme'. (min 18%)

EURES Activities:

- development of multilingual digital platform for job vacancies applications;
- targeted mobility schemes (e.g. Your First EURES Job), following calls for proposals,
- EURES cross-border partnerships, information, counselling, placement and recruitment for cross-border workers;
- mutual learning among EURES actors and training of EURES Advisers;
- communication activities to raise awareness of the benefits of geographical and occupational mobility and activities and services provided by EURES

iii) Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship: Promoting access to funding

MF/SE facilitates access to microfinance for individuals and micro-enterprises, and capacity-building for micro-credit providers and support for social entrepreneurship.

Increase access to, and the availability of, microfinance for vulnerable groups to set up or develop their business and micro-enterprises;

- Build up the institutional capacity of microcredit providers;
- Support the development of social enterprises, in particular by facilitating access to finance.

Useful Links:**EaSI Website:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081>

European Social Fund

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp?langId=en>

European Employment Strategy

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=101>



Creative
Europe

Creative Europe Media and Culture Sub-Programmes

2014-2020 EU

Budget:
1.46 billion

National Contact Point: Ministry of Culture.

It has established 2 Help Desks (Culture Desk, operational since June 2014 and Media Desk, operational since June 2015):

www.kultura.gov.al

www.evropakrijuese.al

Objectives:

Creative Europe programme gives support to safeguard and promote the European cultural and linguistic diversity and support to strengthen the competitiveness of the sector. “Creative Europe” framework programme brings together the Culture and Media programmes. The aims of the programme are:

- To help the cultural and creative sectors seize the opportunities of the digital age and globalisation;
- To enable the sectors to reach their economic potential, contributing to sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion;
- To give Europe’s culture and media sector access to new international opportunities, markets and audiences.



Albanian context:

Albania participates in both the Culture sub-programme and the Media sub-programme of Creative Europe: the Culture sub-programme Agreement with Albania was signed on 20th June 2014 and MEDIA sub-programme as of 9 October 2014.

Action types:

- The Culture sub programme has 4 call for proposals yearly; (i) Literary translation strand; (ii) Cooperation projects; (iii) European Networks; (iv) European Platforms
- The Media sub programme has 14 call for proposals yearly.

Useful links:**Creative Europe Website:**

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/about_en

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/home/creative-europe>

Albanian National Center of Cinematography

<http://new.nationalfilmcenter.gov.al/>

Creative Europe Project Results

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/>

Creative Europe Desks

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/contact_en

EACEA – Education Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/homepage_en





Europe for Citizens Programme

2014-2020 EU

Budget:

€ 185 468 000
million

National Contact Point: Ministry of Culture

www.kultura.gov.al

Objectives:

Europe for Citizens aims to encourage cooperation between citizens and organisations from different countries and facilitate the development of a sense of belonging to common European ideals and to promote the process of European integration.

Albanian context:

- Albania has been participating in the Europe for Citizens since 2009.
- For 2014-2020, the Programme will be focused on two thematic areas: (i) European Remembrance; and (ii) Democratic engagement and civic participation. As a country that is leaving behind the transition period, Albania needs to further strengthen both its democratic engagement and civic participation.
- The Agreement with Albania for the new programme was signed on 26 February 2015.

Type of Actions:

i. European Remembrance

- Projects reflecting on European cultural diversity and common values with a clear European dimension.
- Projects addressing causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history (specially but not exclusively Nazism, Fascism, Stalinism and totalitarian communist regimes) and to commemorate the victims of their crimes.
- Projects concerning action which encourage tolerance, mutual understanding, intercultural dialogues and reconciliation, in particular aiming to reach the younger generation

ii. Democratic engagement and civic participation

- Town Twinning
 - Projects bringing together citizens from twinned towns to debate issues from the European political agenda. They will develop opportunities for societal engagement and volunteering at EU level
- Network of Towns
 - Towns are encouraged to cooperate with other towns on a long term basis to share resources or interests, gain influence or face common challenges
- Civil Society Projects
 - Promotion of societal engagement and solidarity: promote debate campaigns on the themes of common interest, making the link to the European political agenda
 - Volunteering: promoting solidarity among Union citizens and beyond
 - advocating on EU policy, and making links to EU policy agenda and policy making process
 - Debate campaigns on rights and responsibilities of Union citizens
 - Gathering opinion on different topics of EU policies
 - Promoting of voluntarism, promotion of solidarity among Union Citizens and beyond
 - initiatives that develop opportunities for mutual understanding, intercultural learning solidarity, societal engagement and volunteering at Union level.

Useful links:

Europe for Citizens Website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/europe-for-citizens-programme/>

Europe for Citizens Contacts

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens/contacts_en


European Commission - strategy & policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_fr.htm

EACEA – Executive Agency «Education, audio-visual and culture» - implementation :

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_fr.php



	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Justice Programme</h2>
<p>2014-2020 EU</p> <p>Budget: € 378 million</p>	<p>National Contact Point: Ministry of Justice:</p> <p>www.drejtesia.gov.al</p>
<p>Objectives:</p>	<p>The Justice Programme contributes to the development of a European area of justice based on mutual recognition and mutual trust. It promotes judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, judicial training, and effective access to justice in Europe, including rights of victims of crime and procedural rights in criminal proceedings.</p>
<p>Albanian context:</p> <p>The Justice Programme is very important in the present circumstances of fundamental Justice related reforms that Albania is undertaking. Components where Albania is eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters ■ Judicial training ■ Access to justice <p>The Agreement on the Justice Programme between Albania and the EU was signed on 28 September 2016. It was ratified by the Albanian Parliament via Law no. 11/2017 (Official Gazette no. 26, 20/2/2017) which entered into force on 7 March 2017</p>	
<p>Action types:</p> <p><i>1) Judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contribute to the correct implementation of EU civil law instruments ■ Raise awareness of these legal instruments <p>Expected Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ increased capacity of national practitioners, authorities to 	

address issues related to judicial cooperation, and to the application of the Union instruments;

- strengthened cooperation and exchange of information between competent national authorities in relation to judicial cooperation in civil matters, including taking into account the relevant case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union;
- increased awareness of legal practitioners and policy makers.

ii. Judicial Training

- Contribute to the effective and coherent application of EU law in the areas of civil law (including consumer law), criminal law and fundamental rights, to judicial ethics and the rule of law, by covering training needs' gaps in these fields. It also targets the specific training needs of court staff.

Expected Results:

- Increased knowledge of EU civil, criminal and fundamental rights instruments among legal practitioners;
- Improved mutual trust between legal practitioners in cross-border judicial cooperation;
- Improved cooperation of training providers of the different legal professions.

Actions:

- Training activities (staff exchanges, workshops, development of training modules,...)
- Mutual learning, cooperation activities, exchange of good practices, peer reviews, development of ICT tools...
- Awareness-raising activities, dissemination, conferences,...
- Support for main actors (key European NGOs and networks, Member States' authorities implementing Union law,...)
- Analytical activities (studies, data collection, development of common methodologies, indicators, surveys, preparation of guides...)

Useful links:

Justice Programme Website

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/programmes-2014-2020/justice/index_en.htm



Published calls of the Justice Programme on Participants Portal (not on DG JUST website) and on the same day

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/index.html>

Helpdesk contact form:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/api/contact/index.html>

DG Justice

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/index_en.htm

	
<p>2014-2020 EU</p> <p>Budget: € 234.3 million</p>	<p>National Contact Point: Ministry of Finance and Economy General Directorate of Taxation : www.tatime.gov.al</p>
<p>Objectives:</p>	<p>The Programme supports cooperation between tax authorities in the EU, to help maximise their efficiency and avoid mismatches in their work, which could hinder the functioning of the Internal Market.</p> <p>Operational objectives and priorities of the programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ to implement, improve, operate and support the European Information Systems for taxation; ■ to support administrative cooperation activities; ■ to reinforce the skills and competence of tax officials; ■ to enhance the understanding and implementation of Union law in the field of taxation; ■ to support the improvement of administrative procedures and the sharing of good administrative practices.

Albanian context:

- The Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Albania was signed on 23 November 2014. The Agreement has been ratified by the Albanian Parliament through Law No.1/2015, on 29.01.2015.
- Participation of Albania in the Programme is in line with the “Strategy Plan of Albanian Tax Administration 2014-2017”, which is based on the draft strategy for the Management of the Public Finance of Albania 2013-2020.
- The support in Albania has consisted in participation in workshops, seminars, conferences.

Type of Action types:

(a) Joint actions (bringing together officials from participating countries):

- seminars and workshops;
- project groups, generally composed of a limited number of countries, operational during a limited period of time to pursue a predefined objective with a precisely described outcome;
- bilateral or multilateral controls and other activities provided for in Union law on administrative cooperation, organised by two or more participating countries, which include at least two Member States;
- working visits organised by the participating countries or another country to enable officials to acquire or increase their expertise or knowledge in tax matters;
- expert teams, namely structured forms of cooperation, with a non-permanent character, pooling expertise to perform tasks in specific domains, in particular in the European Information Systems, possibly with the support of online collaboration services, administrative assistance and infrastructure and equipment facilities;
- public administration capacity-building and supporting actions;
- studies;
- communication projects;



- any other activity in support of the overall, specific and operational objectives

(b) European Information Systems building: the development, maintenance, operation and quality control of Union components of the existing European Information Systems and new European Information Systems established under Union law, with a view to interconnecting tax authorities efficiently.

(c) common training activities: jointly developed training actions to support the necessary professional skills and knowledge relating to taxation.

Useful links

Fiscalis Programme

https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/fiscalis-programme_en

Taxation and Customs Union

https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/home_en

		Customs 2020
<p>2014-2020 EU</p> <p>Budget: € 547.3 million</p>	<p>National Contact Point: Ministry of Finance and Economy</p> <p>Albanian Customs Administration : www.dogana.gov.al</p>	
<p>Objectives:</p>	<p>The Programme supports cooperation between customs authorities. The Customs 2020 programme is an invaluable tool for capacity building and experience sharing for the Albanian Custom Administration. As was the case with the previous programme, the Customs 2020 Programme will continue to strengthen the cooperation with other EU Member States participating in the programme.</p>	



Albanian context:

- The Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Albania was signed on 27 July 2014. The Agreement has been ratified by the Albanian Parliament through Law No. 184/2014 on 24.12.2014.
- Customs 2020 will be an important tool for creating networks with professionals from different countries, which will provide to the Albanian administration specific technical knowledge and expertise sharing in identifying, developing and applying best working practices in all areas of customs processes.
- The Customs 2020 programme is an invaluable tool for capacity building and experience sharing for the Albanian Custom Administration.
- The previous program, Customs 2013, has achieved significant results toward in capacity building of Albanian customs officers who have participated in the activities under the programme.
- The programme for 2015 has supported the ACA administration through participation in seminars, workshops (, project groups, and working visits.

Type of Actions:

(a) Joint actions (bringing together officials from participating countries):

- seminars and workshops;
- project groups, generally composed of a limited number of countries, operational during a limited period of time to pursue a predefined objective with a precisely defined outcome, including coordination or benchmarking;
- working visits organised by the participating countries or another country to enable officials to acquire or increase their expertise or knowledge in customs matters; for working visits organised within third countries only travel and subsistence (accommodation and daily allowance) costs are eligible under the Programme;
- monitoring activities carried out by joint teams made up of Commission officials and officials of the participating countries to analyse customs practices, identify any difficulties in

implementing rules and, where appropriate, make suggestions for the adaptation of Union rules and working methods;

- expert teams, namely structured forms of cooperation, with a non-permanent or permanent character, pooling expertise to perform tasks in specific domains or carry out operational activities, possibly with the support of online collaboration services, administrative assistance and infrastructure and equipment facilities;
- customs administration capacity building and supporting actions;
- studies;
- jointly developed communication actions;
- any other activity in support of the general, specific and operational objectives mentioned before;

(b) IT capacity building: development, maintenance, operation and quality control of Union components of the European Information Systems and new European Information Systems established under Union law;

(c) human competency building: common training actions to support the necessary professional skills and knowledge relating to customs

Useful links:

Customs 2020 Web

https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/customs-cooperation-programmes/customs-2020-programme_en

Taxation and Customs Union

https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/home_en



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISE
**MINISTRIA PËR EVROPËN
DHE PUNËT E JASHTME**



Project funded by
European Union

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR UNION
PROGRAMS IN ALBANIA**

Implemented by



HUMELICA CONSULTING INTERNATIONAL