



NATIONAL CONVENTION ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Session 2, Working Group IV (Structural Funds)

Topic: Management and Implementation bodies of funding programmes – EU and

Slovakia case

18 January 2021

Recent Developments

- EU adopted on 22 December 2020 the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) Regulation for the period 2021-2027, and the NextGeneration EU regulation
- There are 5 objectives for 2021-2027 including: 1) Smarter Europe, through innovation, digitisation, economic transformation and support to SME-s; 2) a Greener, carbon free Europe; 3) a more Connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks; 4) a more Social Europe, delivering on the European Pillar of Social; 5) a Europe closer to citizens, by supporting locally-led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU.
- In June 2018 the European Commission finalised a proposal for the establishment of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for 2021-2027 - IPA III, while it has asked all Pre-accession countries to start preparations for the new financial framework and start building a mature project pipeline. BUT this is not launched officially as there are no templates and no Implementing regulation is in place.



- The beneficiary countries are now in competition for funds, because there would **no be country allocation**. This leads to a sense of competition even in terms of the speed of the preparation process.
- It is evidenced that the European Green Deal will play an important role as it is the new EU strategic framework for growth and a crucial policy framework for IPA III programming.
 - IPA III will have 5 thematic windows: 1. Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy (20%); 2. Good Governance, Acquis Alignment, Strategic Communication and Good Neighborly Relations (15%); 3. Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity (30%); 4. Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth (30%); 5. Territorial and cross border cooperation (5%). There is no longer a mix of the specific objectives with policy areas. The list of thematic priorities is expanded with more emphasis on societal challenges such as: migration, security, environment and climate change.
 - Another innovative element of IPA III is that the assistance will be targeted and adjusted to the specific situation of the beneficiary countries, taking into account further efforts needed to meet the membership criteria as well as the capacities of those beneficiaries. Assistance shall be differentiated in scope and intensity according to needs, commitment to reforms and progress in implementing those reforms



Recommendations

- The Albanian institutions should have in place the relevant strategic framework on time for participating in IPA III programming.
- The proposed Interventions should be well justified; and evidence-based strategies and fiscally-framed action plans should be prepared.
- There is a need for further transposition of the Union acquis into national legislation in such sector, and the country should continue the ratification and implementation of relevant international agreements.
- There is a need for ongoing advanced training in programming of the staff especially focused on IPA Units and Policy Departments in Line Ministries, to increase their administrative capacities to manage and implement the projects for IPA III.
- The absorption capacities remain an issue for Albanian institutions. There is a need to improve these capacities through analysing the problems and drafting strategies.
- The community of experts and CSOs should be included when programming and planning the EU funds, thus to use the principle of partnership among state actors and non-state structures.



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