

# THEMATIC PRIORITIES FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

Assistance may, as appropriate, address the **following thematic priorities**:

(a) **Compliance with the principle of good public administration and economic governance.** Interventions in this area shall aim at: strengthening public administration, including professionalization and de-politicization of the civil service, embedding meritocratic principles and ensuring adequate administrative procedures; enhancing the capacity to strengthen macroeconomic stability and supporting progress towards becoming both a functioning market economy and a more competitive economy; supporting participation in the multilateral fiscal surveillance mechanism of the Union and systematic cooperation with international financial institutions on fundamentals of economic policy, as well as strengthening public financial management.

(b) **Establishing and promoting from an early stage the proper functioning of the institutions necessary in order to secure the rule of law.** Interventions in this area shall aim at: establishing independent, accountable and efficient judicial systems, including transparent and merit-based recruitment, evaluation and promotion systems and effective disciplinary procedures in cases of wrongdoing; ensuring the establishment of robust systems to protect the borders, manage migration flows and provide asylum to those in need; developing effective tools to prevent and fight organised crime and corruption; promoting and protecting human rights, rights of persons belonging to minorities – including Roma as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons – and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of the media.

(c) **Strengthening the capacities of civil society organisations and social partners' organisations, including professional associations,** in beneficiaries listed in Annex I of the IPA II Regulation and encouraging networking at all levels among Union-based organisations and those of beneficiaries listed in Annex I of the IPA II Regulation, enabling them to engage in an effective dialogue with public and private actors.

(d) **Investment in education, skills and lifelong learning.** Interventions in this area shall aim at: promoting equal access to quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education; reducing early school-leaving; adapting vocational education and training (VET) systems to labour market demands; improving the quality and relevance of higher education; enhancing access to lifelong learning and supporting investment in education and training infrastructure; particularly with a view to reducing territorial disparities and fostering non-segregated education.

(e) **Fostering employment and supporting labour mobility.** Interventions in this area shall aim at: sustainable integration of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) into the labour market, including through measures stimulating investment in quality job creation; supporting integration of the unemployed; and encouraging higher participation in the labour market of all under-represented groups. Other key areas of intervention shall be to support gender equality, the adaptation of workers and enterprises to change, the establishment of a sustainable social dialogue and the modernisation and strengthening of labour market institutions.

(f) **Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.** Interventions in this area shall aim at: integrating marginalised communities such as the Roma; combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation; and enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, such as health care and social services of general interest, including through the modernisation of social protection systems.

(g) **Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures, in particular by investing in projects with high European added value.** The identified investments should be prioritised according to their contribution to mobility,

sustainability, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, relevance to connections with Member States, and coherence with the Single European Transport Area.

(h) **Improving the private-sector environment and competitiveness of enterprises**, including smart specialisation, as key drivers of growth, job creation and cohesion. Priority shall be given to projects which improve the business environment.

(i) **Strengthening research, technological development and innovation, in particular through improving the research infrastructure**, an enabling environment and promotion of networking and collaboration.

(j) **Contributing to the security and safety of food supply** and the maintenance of diversified and viable farming systems in vibrant rural communities and the countryside.

(k) **Increasing the ability of the agri-food sector to cope with competitive pressure** and market forces as well as to progressively align with the Union rules and standards, while pursuing economic, social and environmental goals in balanced territorial development of rural areas.

(l) **Protecting and improving the quality of the environment, contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, increasing resilience to climate change and promoting climate action governance and information**. IPA II funding shall promote policies to support the shift towards a resource-efficient, safe and sustainable low-carbon economy.

(m) **Promoting reconciliation, peace-building and confidence-building measures**.

## Thematic priorities for assistance for territorial cooperation

**Assistance for cross-border cooperation** may, as appropriate, address the following thematic priorities:

(a) **Promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders** through, inter alia: integrating cross-border labour markets, including cross-border mobility; joint local employment initiatives; information and advisory services and joint training; gender equality; equal opportunities; integration of immigrants' communities and vulnerable groups; investment in public employment services; and supporting investment in public health and social services;

(b) **Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation**, risk prevention and management through, inter alia: joint actions for environmental protection; promoting sustainable use of natural resources, resource efficiency, renewable energy sources and the shift towards a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy; promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems and emergency preparedness;

(c) **Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures** by, inter alia, reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services and investing in cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities;

(d) **Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage**;

(e) **Investing in youth, education and skills** through, inter alia, developing and implementing joint education, vocational training, training schemes and infrastructure supporting joint youth activities;

(f) **Promoting local and regional governance** and enhancing the planning and administrative capacity of local and regional authorities;

(g) **Enhancing competitiveness, the business environment and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises**, trade and investment through, inter alia, promotion and support to entrepreneurship, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, and development of local cross-border markets and internationalisation;

(h) **Strengthening research, technological development, innovation and information and communication technologies** through, inter alia, promoting the sharing of human resources and facilities for research and technology development.