



Management Plan 2018

DG NEAR



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INTRODUCTION

In line with and in support of the mission of the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, DG NEAR takes forward the EU's neighbourhood and enlargement policies and thereby contributes to **stability and security in all partner countries concerned**. Particular emphasis is placed on promoting the rule of law and respect for human rights, economic development, as well as democracy and good governance. DG NEAR's policies help to improve the quality of people's lives through integration and cooperation in many areas, to make Europe become safer and more prosperous and increase the weight of the EU on the international scene. The work of DG NEAR is strongly linked to President Juncker's political priorities. In particular, it contributes to the following priorities:

- A Stronger Global Actor (*general objective 1*)
- Towards a European agenda on Migration (*general objective 2*)
- A Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy (*general objective 3*)
- Jobs growth and investment (*general objective 4*)

DG NEAR contributes to these four general objectives by working towards seven specific objectives laid out in its Strategic Plan 2016-2020:

DG NEAR supports, through its **enlargement policy**, the countries with an EU accession perspective in implementing the reforms necessary for meeting the obligations of EU membership and supports the process of accession negotiations. DG NEAR places particular emphasis on **the fundamental areas of rule of law, public administration reform and economic development**, as well as reaping benefits of closer integration with the EU before accession and ensuring continued progress in the accession negotiations where relevant (*specific objective 3*). DG NEAR also seeks to improve regional co-operation within the Western Balkans and with the EU, including developing infrastructure, economic and human connectivity, and to improve good neighbourly relations among Enlargement countries with a view to overcoming the legacy of the past (*specific objective 4*). In 2018 the Commission will adopt a connectivity investment package to be endorsed at the Western Balkan-6 summit.

As set out in President Juncker's Letter of Intent of 13 September 2017, DG NEAR will work to maintain a **credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans**. In particular, a **strategy for the EU accession of Serbia and Montenegro as frontrunner candidates in the Western Balkans** will be adopted in February 2018, with a particular emphasis on the rule of law, fundamental rights and the fight against corruption and on the overall stability of the region. In April, DG NEAR will also publish the 2018 Enlargement package, taking into account the Economic Reform Programmes and completing the recalibration exercise. DG NEAR will support preparations of the EU Western Balkan Summit to take place in Sofia in May 2018.

With **Turkey**, DG NEAR will maintain dialogue on all strands of joint cooperation and, as a result of its close monitoring of developments in the country and following political guidance from the Council, conduct a reorientation as well as readjustment of pre-accession funding to further concentrate its support to the rule of law, notably fundamental rights, and to civil society, as appropriate.

DG NEAR further develops and implements the revised **European Neighbourhood Policy** (ENP), which sets out a new framework for building more effective partnerships between the EU and its neighbours, with supporting stabilisation as an overarching priority. The regions DG NEAR is working with are broadly characterised by a very unstable environment both politically and economically and affected by the refugee crisis. In 2018, the further roll-out of the 2015 revised ENP will continue to aim at **increased stability in the neighbourhood in political, economic, and security related terms**

(*specific objective 1*), on the basis of Partnership Priorities agreed with Neighbourhood countries. DG NEAR will also continue to work towards a **strengthened Eastern Partnership**, to support regional cooperation between **southern neighbours, including through the Union for the Mediterranean**, and to **promote cross border cooperation between Member States and partner countries** (*specific objective 2*).

In the **South**, discussions on Partnership Priorities with Morocco and Israel will be underway in 2018. Partnership Priorities and compacts agreed with Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan will continue to be implemented. The 2016 Joint Communication on "Strengthening EU support for Tunisia" will be rolled out. Following the announcement by HRVP Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn in August 2017, the EEAS and DG NEAR will carry out a review of EU support to the **Middle East Peace Process (MEPP)**, taking into account the intra-Palestinian reconciliation process, with a focus in the near term on the situation in Gaza. 2018 will also be the starting point of a three-year results-oriented approach with the Palestinian Authority that will link EU direct financial assistance to actual progress in key reforms.

DG NEAR will co-lead with EEAS and ECHO the preparation of the second Brussels conference on the future of Syria and the region, which will consider how to promote a political transition in Syria, including post-agreement planning, and the needs of neighbouring countries hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees, such as Lebanon and Jordan.

In the **East**, following the key priority areas agreed at the Riga summit in 2015, a set of concrete deliverables ("**20 deliverables for 2020**") were endorsed at the Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2017. In 2018 DG NEAR will work to further intensify co-operation in the framework of the revised architecture of the Eastern Partnership in order to enhance support for the implementation of the "20 Deliverables for 2020". DG NEAR will contribute to the implementation of the recently agreed revised Association Agendas with Georgia and Moldova. The implementation of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement concluded with Armenia in 2017 will start, while Partnership Priorities with Belarus should be agreed and negotiations for a new agreement with Azerbaijan should be completed. DG NEAR will continue contributing to the implementation of the reform and stabilisation process in Ukraine.

Migration flows will remain a central challenge in 2018. DG NEAR is playing a pivotal role in supporting a more effective management of migration, in particular by driving forward policies and programmes aimed at **stemming the influx of irregular migrants to the EU, by addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration in Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries** (*specific objective 5*). In 2018, DG NEAR will work hand in hand with partners and neighbouring countries which are most affected through short term measures, such as helping governments cope with irregular migration and refugee flows, and boosting long term prospects including support to vulnerable migrants, education for refugees and improving livelihoods. DG NEAR will in particular monitor the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016, and after political endorsement, start implementation of a second phase of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey.

In the Neighbourhood region, DG NEAR will stay engaged in dialogues on migration and mobility, and will continue mobilising tools such as the **EU Regional Trust Fund** in response to the Syrian crisis and the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in Africa. **The North of Africa Window of the EU Emergency Trust Fund** will operate, inter alia, with the priorities defined in the Communication on the Central Mediterranean Route and the Malta Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the EU as well as in the Paris Declaration adopted in August 2017. This means concretely that funds will support in particular protection of migrants along the migration route, including assisted voluntary return and reintegration; stabilisation of host communities in Libya with a particular focus on the delivery of basic services (health, education, water and energy) for Libyans,

internally displaced persons and migrants alike; reinforcement of the capacities of authorities to manage migration flows, including through enhanced border surveillance. DG NEAR will also continue to support the implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Processes in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The EU's **energy security** depends on the energy security of its neighbours. In this respect, DG NEAR promotes the external dimension of the Energy Union in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries, and aims at **increased energy security and more effective climate policies** in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries as well as **increased energy connectivity** between the EU and Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries (*specific objective 6*). In particular, DG NEAR will promote energy efficiency measures, in close coordination with International Financial Institutions, and in accordance with the EU's 'Energy Efficiency First' principle and the High level Energy Efficiency Initiative.

Increased prosperity in the EU is also to be achieved by expanding opportunities for EU companies, investors, and consumers beyond its borders. DG NEAR contributes to this objective through **increased economic and trade opportunities between the EU and Enlargement/Neighbourhood countries** (*specific objective 7*). In 2018, policy actions will include taking forward work on the proposed mandate for negotiation of a modernised Customs Union with Turkey when political circumstances are ripe, monitoring the Stabilisation and Association Agreements, supporting the Economic Reform Programmes (ERP) and development of the Regional Economic Area with the Western Balkans countries, as well as delivering financial assistance to DCFTA states (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and supporting the DCFTA negotiations in Morocco and Tunisia.

The ambitious **External Investment Plan** for the Neighbourhood and Africa that was announced by President Juncker in September 2016 was launched on 28 September 2017, with the adoption of the Regulation for its first pillar, the European Fund for Sustainable Development. The roll-out of the Plan in the course of 2018 will be a major opportunity to engage with the public and private sectors in the partner countries and in EU Member States in order to boost growth and improve the economic situation of our neighbouring countries. The private sector in particular should find in the many innovative features of this Plan the incentives necessary to increase significantly their investments in the Neighbourhood countries.

Financial assistance under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance and the European Neighbourhood Instrument will continue to be delivered in support of the above mentioned objectives. In 2018, one important output of DG NEAR will be its contribution to the work on the **future Multi-Annual Financial Framework** and on the preparation of a Commission proposal.

PART 1. MAIN OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR

General objective 1 – A Stronger Global Actor

Specific objective 1: Increased stability in the Neighbourhood in political, economic, and security related terms

The central objective of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as revised in 2015 is stabilisation. The 2016 Global Strategy confirmed this strategic approach with its emphasis on resilience. In 2018, the roll-out of the revised ENP will continue to be co-led by DG NEAR and the EEAS based on the four priorities of the review and in line with the Eastern Partnership Brussels Summit declaration: good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights; economic development for stabilisation; security and migration and mobility. There will be close cooperation with Member States throughout the process. In this framework, DG NEAR will contribute to the implementation of the recently agreed

revised Association Agendas with Georgia and Moldova; launch the implementation of the new Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with Armenia and contribute to the conclusion of negotiations for a new agreement with Azerbaijan.

Through the Support Group for Ukraine, DG NEAR will continue contributing to the implementation of the reform and stabilisation process in Ukraine, including support to internally displaced people (IDP) following the conflict in the Donbass. The entry into force and implementation of the Association Agreement with Ukraine is a major, positive development which shall be further deepened.

DG NEAR will implement agreed Partnership Priorities with **Algeria, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon**, which put the accent on cooperation and socio-economic stabilisation to promote enhanced growth and job creation, security, the rule of law and regional stability. With Lebanon and Jordan, in particular, cooperation shall be deepened irrespective of the refugee situation. Partnership Priorities will be negotiated with both **Israel and Palestine**, as part of the rollout of the revised ENP in the south. In addition, DG NEAR will take forward the review of EU support to the two-state solution in the context of the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP), with a focus in the near-term on Gaza.

Should the political conditions allow for it, discussions on Partnership Priorities with **Morocco** will also be engaged in 2018, allowing for the adoption of a new Single Support Framework up to 2020. Commissioner Hahn's visit to **Tunis** in September 2017 has also paved the way for new Strategic Priorities to be concluded in 2018. In the short term and starting in the first semester of 2018, the EU aims to agree with and engage Tunisia on a 6-month roadmap on key reforms. In 2018, DG NEAR will continue to support the political and economic stabilisation in **Libya**. Actions will seek to support the Libyan population, in particular to address urgent needs in terms of access to water, health, electricity, sanitation, education and more generally damaged infrastructures in Libyan municipalities beyond those located in the migration routes. In **Egypt**, DG NEAR will intensify its efforts to coordinate with Member States its support to economic stabilisation and socio-economic development of the country, as well as to reduce migratory pressure on the EU.

DG NEAR will pursue the setting of a positive agenda with the whole region through the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and **regional cooperation programmes**. Regional cooperation in the Neighbourhood South will focus on youth empowerment, environment and transport. These actions will complement bilateral efforts in favour of youth, job opportunities and economic growth. Where appropriate, DG NEAR will use the opportunities offered by the renewed partnership between the EU and Africa – including North Africa – to foster its policy-oriented approach in those regions.

New regional programmes on security based on the ENP revision and the Joint Communication on Security Sector Reform (2016). will be launched in the Southern Neighbourhood, with the effect of reaching out to new partners and institutions (NATO, Interpol, Europol ...) and effectively addressing current challenges with partner countries (CT, prevention of radicalisation...). DG NEAR will actively contribute in the work of the Security Union Task Force.

With ENI funding – both through ongoing and new programmes - DG NEAR will continue working with public institutions, the business community, young people and civil society organisations in the partner countries. These programmes will help Partner Countries implement structural reforms and deliver on the priorities agreed in the framework of the revised Association Agendas and Partnership Priorities.

In 2018, DG NEAR will continue strengthening the capacities of civil society, particularly in the context of shrinking spaces, and the development of key regional institutions in the

Southern Neighbourhood, to promote spaces for exchange and dialogue, to accompany the necessary reforms and deliver results that matter for people's daily lives. 2018 will also see the launch of a regional hub for structured dialogue with civil society in the Southern Neighbourhood, and of a major programme for Youth, Culture and media.

Neighbourhood countries affected by the refugee crisis will continue to be a focus of attention. DG NEAR will continue implementing the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis as well as the Compacts for Lebanon and Jordan and will continue implementing activities under the North Africa window of the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in Africa.

The **TAIEX and Twinning instruments** will continue to support fundamental rule of law and economic reforms and contribute to strengthening institutional capacity, stability and prosperity across enlargement and neighbourhood countries.

The Commission will present its post-2020 **Multi-annual Financial Framework** (MFF) package in 2018, followed by proposals for the next generation of financing instruments. DG NEAR will actively contribute to this process, in particular the preparation of an Impact Assessment for the next generation of instrument(s) covered under "Heading IV" of the current MFF, including for Neighbourhood countries, and the drafting of the new regulation.

Relevant general objective: A Stronger Global Actor		
Specific objective: Increased stability in the Neighbourhood in political, economic, and security related terms		Related to spending programmes: ENI, ENPI
Main outputs in 2018:		
All new initiatives and REFIT initiatives from the Commission Work Programme		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Multi-annual financial framework (<i>initiative to be launched with a 2025 perspective</i>)	Comprehensive proposal for the future Multi-annual Financial Framework beyond 2020 followed by proposals for the next generation of programmes and new own resources (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Art. 311 TFEU plus sectoral bases)	Q2 2018
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Implementation of the revised Association Agendas and Partnership Priorities	Multiannual and annual programming documents are in line with the revised Association Agendas and Partnership Priorities	Throughout 2018
Revised Partnership Priorities and new agreement with Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Priorities revised and agreed with Azerbaijan Agreement with Azerbaijan concluded and signed 	First half of 2018 December 2018

Partnership Priorities with Morocco and subsequent new Single Support Framework for 2018-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political dialogue with Morocco resumed (EEAS in the lead); • Partnership Priorities and 2018-2020 SSF drafted and approved; 	By end of 2018
Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council on "Strengthening EU support for Tunisia" rolled out and the EU-Tunisia privileged partnership further deepened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue the implementation of the provisions of the joint communication and of the Single Support Framework 2017-2020 • Adoption, implementation, and regular update, of a Roadmap of short-term (6 month) measures to implement key reforms • Draft, finalise, and adopt strategic priorities for the period 2018-2020 • Continue brainstorming on the future of the EU-Tunisia relation beyond 2020) 	Throughout 2018
<p>Multiannual programming process and joint programming (2018–2020) with 4-5¹ Neighbourhood South countries</p> <p>Multiannual (2017–2020) programming process with Azerbaijan</p> <p>Multiannual (2018–2020) programming process with Ukraine (2018–2020)</p> <p>Multiannual (2018-2020) regional programming process for Neighbourhood South and East</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch and completion .of Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon Single Support Frameworks (SSF) for 2017-2020, • Completion • Implementation started through the adoption of 2018 Annual Action Programme for Ukraine • Completion 	by end of 2018
<p>ENI annual programmes</p> <p>2018 ENI country action programmes and regional programmes for all countries of the Eastern Partnership region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption 	Throughout 2018

¹ Depends on a pending decision on the revision or extension of Libya's programming document

<p>Relevant Special Measures (including Syria and possibly Libya).</p> <p>ENI umbrella programme allocations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decided 	
<p>Coordinated efforts with the International Financial Institutions to support Partner Countries in their implementation of structural reforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint programmes for structural reforms agreed with the International Financial Institutions Annual AMICI Mapping updated (for the South) 	<p>At least one joint programme approved per region (Western Balkans, East, South) by the end of 2018</p>
<p>Strategic framework for supporting Security Sector Reform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to the roll-out of the ENP review for the Security Chapter Support to the implementation of the Joint Communication on Sector Security Reform (2016) 	<p>Throughout 2018</p>
<p>EU support to the two-state solution in the context of the MEPP reviewed, with a focus in the near-term on Gaza</p> <p>Link established between direct EU financial assistance and actual progress in key reforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COM/EEAS "stand-alone" Joint Staff Working Document Adoption of action document including an incentive based approach 	<p>Throughout 2018</p>
<p>Capacities of civil society in the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood strengthened</p> <p>i) bedding in of the mechanism for structured dialogue;</p> <p>ii) preparation of programme for youth, culture and media;</p> <p>iii) implementation of Young Mediterranean Voices initiative at</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern Neighbourhood : Number of Programme in preparation to support civil society capacities; The new Civil Society Hub is established and running; 2018 Civil Society forum South is held; a new co-operation framework on youth, media and culture is formulated based upon sector wide evaluation; Eastern Neighbourhood: Civil Society Forum with its Working Groups reformed and contributing to policy discussions, in particular, within EaP multilateral architecture. 	<p>Throughout 2018 (ENI Committee Autumn 2018 for youth, culture, media programme)</p>

regional level and especially targeting young women and men.		
Support the Development of key regional institutions	Anne Lindh Foundation: new leadership is in place; flagship "Youth Med Voices" programme launched (with EU support)	By the end of 2018
Implemented TAIEX activities contributing to AA/DFCTA priorities and security sector reform;	Events took place	Throughout 2018

Specific objective 2: Strengthened Eastern Partnership; support regional cooperation between southern neighbours, including through the Union for the Mediterranean; promote cross border cooperation between member states and partner countries

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) has been reconfirmed as a key element of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) at the Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2017. In line with the ENP review and the key priority areas agreed in Riga in 2015, the EU has developed a set of concrete deliverables ("20 deliverables for 2020") which were endorsed by the Brussels Summit. The Eastern Partnership multilateral architecture has consequently been revised and streamlined in order to better support the implementation of the "20 Deliverables". In 2018 DG NEAR will focus on targeted work in this context both at bilateral and regional level, while promoting priority projects in key strategic areas such as transport connectivity, energy efficiency, local currency lending, intra-regional trade, civil society, youth, the harmonization of digital markets and strengthening strategic communication.

In the Southern Neighbourhood, DG NEAR and the EEAS will work to further invigorate regional cooperation and give priority where appropriate to the **Union for the Mediterranean** in its regional cooperation efforts.

Through its regional programming, DG NEAR will support the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean in order to find common, consensual approaches in fields such as employment and employability, environment, industrial cooperation, sustainable urban development and women rights. DG NEAR will also continue its cooperation programme with the League of Arab States.

Where appropriate, regional cooperation activities will include the participation of African neighbours of ENP countries, in line with the renewed EU-Africa Partnership.

Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) will also remain an important element of the EU policy towards its neighbours in the East and South.

Relevant general objective: A Stronger Global Actor		
Specific objective: Strengthened Eastern Partnership; support regional cooperation between southern neighbours, including through the Union for the Mediterranean; promote cross border cooperation between member states and partner countries		Related to spending programmes: ENI, ENPI
Main outputs in 2018:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Follow-up of 2017 Brussels Summit commitments and of the "20 Deliverables for 2020". Putting in place the revised Eastern Partnership architecture as a delivery mechanism for the "20 Deliverables for 2020"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platforms and Panels, operational and monitoring the implementation of the "20 Deliverables". • New key initiatives including "Youth and Education Package" have clear work programme. 	All by the end of 2018
At least one sub-granting scheme from to civil society in each of the EaP countries 49 Civil Society Fellows in the Eastern Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic partners identified and sub-granting calls launched in all 6 countries • Fellows are selected and trained 	By end of 2018
Support the UfM sector policy dialogue with partner countries; Provide institutional support to the UfM;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union for the Mediterranean declarations are followed up through yearly sector dialogues involving the full range of relevant stakeholders; • Recommendations by the Task Force for the UfM Roadmap are endorsed by Senior Officials Meetings (SOM); 	Throughout 2018
2018 ENI Multi-country Programmes for both East and South	2018 Programmes adopted by the Commission	Throughout 2018
Advancing TEN-T long-term investment action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single prioritised investment pipeline agreed upon • Related institutional and regulatory reforms initiated • Strategic investment projects on transport interconnection funded by the NIF 	Throughout 2018
Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX)	Implemented regional TAIEX activities	Throughout 2018

Specific objective 3: The enlargement countries are more ready to join the EU, in particular in the fundamental areas of rule of law, public administration reform and economic development, reaping the benefits of closer integration with the EU before accession.

DG NEAR will continue to support the enlargement process with candidate countries and potential candidates and to maintain a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans. DG NEAR will ensure this by fostering and monitoring progress with regard to alignment with the Copenhagen political and economic criteria, alignment to EU standards and legislation under the 35 chapters of the acquis and as well as with regard to the development of adequate capacities to implement the acquis. DG NEAR will also ensure the monitoring of the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA) with Western Balkans countries. The Commission will continue to report as appropriate to EU Member States on the relevant progress.

As set out in President Juncker's Letter of Intent of 13 September 2017, DG NEAR will prepare a strategy for the EU accession of Serbia and Montenegro as frontrunner candidates in the Western Balkans, with a particular emphasis on the rule of law, fundamental rights and the fight against corruption and organised crime, and on the overall stability of the region. The findings of the sector evaluation of public administration reform and of the evaluation on economic governance will be taken into account. The Strategy is planned to be adopted in February 2018.

In the spring, DG NEAR will prepare the **2018 Enlargement package**, including the country reports, taking into account the Economic Reform Programmes and will complete the recalibration exercise. TAIEX and Twinning activities will continue to help the countries meeting the recommendations of the package and of the accession negotiations monitoring benchmarks. Adoption is foreseen for April 2018.

DG NEAR will take forward on-going work with negotiating countries (in particular with **Serbia and Montenegro**) to progress on accession negotiations, including preparation of the necessary documents and reports. It will report to Council when there has been sufficient progress in relation to its conditional recommendation to open accession negotiations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania. After receipt of replies from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the questionnaire, DG NEAR will take forward the preparation of the Commission's opinion on the application for EU-membership submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina, as requested by the Council in September 2016. It will also continue to promote the implementation of the European Reform Agenda in Kosovo, which is guiding the implementation of the SAA.

DG NEAR will maintain dialogue on all strands of joint cooperation with Turkey and, as a result of its close monitoring of developments in Turkey and following political guidance from the Council, conduct a reorientation as well as readjustment of pre-accession funding to further concentrate its support to the rule of law, notably fundamental rights, and to civil society as appropriate.

These policy-related objectives will be supported through actions financed by IPA. In 2018, the revision of strategy papers for IPA beneficiaries will be completed in the framework of the mid-term review, including its performance reward, to make sure our financial assistance programmes can be adapted to evolving circumstances and to best help to deliver on reforms.

The Commission will present its post-2020 **Multi-annual Financial Framework** (MFF) package in 2018, followed by proposals for the next generation of financing instruments. DG NEAR will actively contribute to this process, in particular the preparation of an

Impact Assessment for the next generation of instrument(s) covered under "Heading IV" of the current MFF and the drafting of the new regulation.

Relevant general objective: A Stronger Global Actor		
Specific objective: The enlargement countries are more ready to join the EU, in particular on the fundamental areas of rule of law, public administration reform and economic development, reaping benefits of closer integration with the EU before accession.		Related to spending programmes: IPA I and IPA II
Main outputs in 2018:		
All new initiatives and REFIT initiatives from the Commission Work Programme		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Credible Enlargement Perspective for the Western Balkans (PLAN/2017/2171)	Adoption by College	February 2018
Multi-annual financial framework (<i>initiative to be launched with a 2025 perspective</i>)	Comprehensive proposal for the future Multi-annual Financial Framework beyond 2020 followed by proposals for the next generation of programmes and new own resources (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Art. 311 TFEU plus sectoral bases)	Q2 2018
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Contribute to draft Council Conclusions	Adoption	March 2018 (tbc) June 2018
Contribute to the preparations of the EU23 Western Balkans Summit in Sofia and a possible summit declaration	Adoption	May 2018
Communication on the Enlargement package, including country reports	Package is completed and published, with the Economic Reform Programmes exercise fully integrated.	April 2018

Preparations for the Enlargement package 2019	Guidance note issued and process launched.	September 2018
<p>Accession negotiations:</p> <p>This includes preparing Benchmark Reports, and Draft Commission Positions (DCP), as well as monitoring progress in fulfilling the rule of law interim benchmarks for Serbia and Montenegro in view of preparing non-papers (twice a year) to the Member States and interim benchmark reports (IBAR).</p>	Progress on accession negotiations with Montenegro/Serbia through preparation and submission of DCPs and benchmark assessment reports to COELA on chapters where the necessary conditions have been fulfilled	<p>Throughout 2018</p> <p>Several reports/DCPs per year, as necessary</p>
Albania: follow-up to the Commission's conditional recommendation to open accession negotiations	Commission recommendation/report to the Council on Albania's progress towards the required reforms	Once conditions are met in 2018
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: follow-up to the Commission's conditional recommendation to open accession negotiations	Commission recommendation/report on the country's progress towards the implementation of the political agreement and the Urgent Reform Priorities	Once conditions are met in 2018
Kosovo: Progress in delivery of reform commitments under the SAA assessed	Kosovo report and the SAA fora	By end of 2018
Commission Opinion on the merits of Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for EU membership	Adoption by College, prepared on basis of in-depth analysis of detailed answers from BiH on all areas of the EU acquis and necessary follow up; deployment of expert missions; comprehensive stakeholder consultation and – possibly drafting of the opinion itself.	By the end of 2018
<p>Coordination of the Economic Reform Programmes (ERP) exercise for the Enlargement countries and adoption together with Enlargement package as integrated process</p> <p>Key economic recommendations feed fully and directly into the overall conclusions and recommendations for the enlargement policy</p>	2018 assessments and draft council conclusions adopted according to schedule fixed in 2017	<p>April 2018 (assessments)</p> <p>June 2018 (council conclusions)</p>
Implementation and/or adoption of comprehensive public administration reform (PAR) programmes and public financial	Number of countries in which PAR and PFM strategies and/or action plan are implemented/updated in line with the Principles of Public Administration	At least 5 countries in 2018.

management reform programmes (PFM) to support the development of horizontal capacities to implement the acquis.		
Complement the enlargement process through Initiatives at multi-country level in close co-operation with civil society, regional organisations, public administrations and IFIs.	Initiatives implemented	Throughout 2018
Monitoring the Stabilisation and association agreements (SAAs) and the implementation of structural reforms in Western Balkans countries, and the Association Agreement in Turkey	SAA and AA Council, Committee, and Sub-committee / Special Groups meetings held with Western Balkans countries.	All WB countries: 1 SA Council 1 SA Committee 7 Sub-committees + 1-2 PAR Special Group (and, for Kosovo, a normalisation Special Group)
Monitoring of implementation of EU-Turkey Statement, including Joint Action Plan on Migration	Periodical reports	Throughout 2018
High level event on freedom of expression in Western Balkans and Turkey	Event organised, in cooperation with the European Parliament	May 2018
Revised Indicative Strategy Papers 2014-2020 for IPA beneficiary countries	Adoption	Q2 2018
2 nd Western Balkans media days	Event	Q3 2018
2018 IPA II country and multi-country action programmes	Adoption	Q3/Q4 2018
Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument - TAIEX	Implemented TAIEX events in the field of rule of law and public administration reform.	Throughout 2018

Specific objective 4: Enlargement – Improved connectivity within the Western Balkans and with the EU. Improved good neighbourly relations among Enlargement countries with a view to overcoming the legacy of the past.

Good neighbourly relations are a fundamental element in the Stabilisation and Association Process and are also reflected in the accession negotiations. The EU's

approach to promoting good neighbourly relations and fostering economic cooperation is multifaceted, comprising of political, economic, social and cultural dimensions.

DG NEAR will continue to promote **regional co-operation in the Western Balkans**, as a facet of enlargement. It will contribute to the 'Berlin Process' (leading to the fifth Western Balkans summit, under UK chair, in summer 2018) and activities under the Western Balkans 6 (WB6) format. In particular it will continue to develop infrastructure connectivity, covering energy and transport and both infrastructure development and policy reforms, and to support the development of a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans (with a strong digital element) based on EU standards.

Connectivity is at the very heart of the Commission's efforts to support integration among the individual countries and between these countries and the EU. The efforts in the framework of the 'Berlin process' and the WB6 cooperation also serve to drive forward the countries' European perspective. They also contribute to building bridges in the region, developing good neighbourly and people to people relations and promoting peace and reconciliation. In addition, the planned Regional Economic Area will deliver significant economic benefits to the countries of the region.

The **connectivity agenda** is therefore an essential element of DG NEAR's contribution to the Commission's objective of the EU as a stronger global actor. This is a long-term process, but in 2018 the Commission will adopt its 4th annual connectivity investment package to be endorsed in summer 2018. In addition, the countries are expected to ensure the implementation of connectivity reform measures to open markets, remove barriers to integration and create a transparent regulatory environment.

Significant funding and co-financing will be continued through the Western Balkans Investment Framework in order to support investments boosting jobs and growth and promoting connectivity in the region. This will be complemented by loan-financing from International Financial Institutions. The Western Balkan countries and their National Investment Committees must ensure that the single project pipelines become credible planning and prioritisation mechanisms ensuring that the countries have the budgetary resources and fiscal space to take up the necessary loan financing to get all the projects implemented on time.

Looking beyond connectivity and economic co-operation, DG NEAR will also continue to work closely with the region in dealing with the legacy of the past. Actions range from fighting impunity to support for housing care solutions for refugees and displaced persons. There will be a considered reflection as to the extent to which the accession process can trigger progress on sensitive issues such as missing persons and compensation and restitution for acts committed during the conflicts in the region. The Kosovo Serbia dialogue is one very specific mechanism for dealing with the legacy of the past where the level of ambition is very high. DG NEAR will continue to support the practical implementation of the dialogue wherever possible. In parallel to actions with the national authorities DG NEAR will continue to support civil society at the regional level and seek to facilitate the strengthening of cultural ties across the region.

Relevant general objective: A Stronger Global Actor		
Specific objective: Improved connectivity within the Western Balkans and with the EU. Improved good neighbourly relations among Enlargement countries with a view to overcoming the legacy of the past		Related to spending programmes: Multi-country IPA I and IPA II
Main outputs in 2018:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Progress on the connectivity reform measures on transport and energy; Progress in completing the Core transport network and the Core transport corridors; progress in implementing the Projects of Energy Community Interest and the set-up of the seat, administrative arrangements, etc. of the Transport Community Treaty.	Endorsement of the 2018 connectivity package for the Western Balkan	Mid 2018
2018 IPA II Multi-country Programmes prepared in line with national and regional needs	Programmes adopted by the Commission	Mid - 2018
IPA I and II implementation/budgetary execution	Benchmarks for KPIs on contract and payment are met.	December 2018
Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX)	Implemented TAIEX activities in the field of energy, transport, connectivity).	Throughout 2018

General objective 2 – Towards a New Policy on Migration

Specific objective 5: Stem the influx of irregular migrants to the EU, by addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration in Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries. Promote mobility and mutually beneficial migration.

The **current migration situation** (refugee crisis, mixed migration flows on Central Mediterranean Route) is a challenge of global dimension. After contributing to reduce the flow of migrants in the Eastern and Central Mediterranean routes in 2017, DG NEAR will continue to work hand in hand in 2018 with partners and neighbouring countries which are most affected combining short term measures, for example assisting forcibly displaced and host communities to increase resilience and self-reliance and prevent secondary displacement, with measures boosting long term prospects, including education for refugees.

DG NEAR will in particular monitor the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016, as well as continuing implementation of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, after political endorsement of a second tranche. DG NEAR will also contribute to improving cooperation between and stepping up consultation with the countries along the Western Balkans route and provide financial assistance where appropriate.

DG NEAR will stay engaged in dialogues on migration and mobility with the Neighbourhood Countries as a follow up to the reviewed ENP, including as part of broader regional processes. Furthermore, DG NEAR will continue to support the implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Processes (VLAP) in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

DG NEAR will continue mobilising tools such as the **EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis, the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in Africa** and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey.

The indicative work programme of the North of Africa window (EU Trust for Africa) presented to Member States will be followed up as far as the Central Mediterranean route and neighbouring countries are concerned. Quality support on migration policies and programmes will be continued and will in particular materialise through support provided during identification and formulation, monitoring and evaluation phases and through the participation in peer-review missions.

One important root cause for migration towards the EU is refugee movements in the EU neighbourhood, triggered by armed conflict and political repression. In this context, the Syrian conflict, which has led already to the displacement of more than 5 million people, stays a key priority for DG NEAR's work. The EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis will continue to **address longer-term resilience needs of Syrian refugees** and Internally Displaced Persons in countries receiving them (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and the Western Balkans), as well as supporting host communities and their administrations. The Trust Fund may also be adapted to finance transition and reconstruction needs in a post-conflict Syria.

On 21 September 2017, during the EU hosted ministerial event in the margins of the UNGA72, the High Representative/Vice-President of the European Commission announced that the EU would host a second Brussels conference on Syria in spring 2018, together with EU Commissioners for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. **The conference constitutes the next step in a Brussels process, which aims to maintain the focus of the international community on the Syria conflict, to ensure that humanitarian needs are met and that efforts in support of refugee-hosting countries in the region are maintained.**

Relevant general objective: Towards a New Policy on Migration		
Specific objective: Stem the influx of irregular migrants to the EU, by addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration in Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries. Promote mobility and mutually beneficial migration.		Related to spending programmes: IPA and ENI
Main outputs in 2018:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Monitoring of negotiations and alignment by candidate countries and potential candidates with EU standards and acquis related in particular to chapter 23 and 24.	Monitoring reports	Throughout 2018
Support to the continuous implementation of the VLAP benchmarks, notably in the areas of migration, organised crime and anti-corruption. Post-visa liberalisation monitoring in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova (VLAP); contribution to reports on VLAP implementation TAIEX technical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on VLAP implementation in the context of the new regulation (suspension mechanism). • Implemented TAIEX activities 	Throughout 2018
Implementation of Facility for Refugees in Turkey: Contract all remaining allocated funds under NEAR responsibility; All steps taken to mobilise a second tranche of the Facility in 2018 pending the necessary political decision	Contracts signed	Throughout 2018
EU regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis: implementing initiatives	Initiatives launched and implemented	Throughout 2018
Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa – North Africa: implementation of the work	Work programme implementation	Throughout 2018

programme		
Second Brussels conference on Syria (1) Support the political process under the aegis of the United Nations in Geneva to reach an intra-Syrian framework political agreement on a transition; (2) Maintain international engagement in delivering assistance; (3) Contribute to post-conflict preparations.	Conference held	Spring 2018
Implementation of the Lebanon and Jordan 'Compacts' and of output papers of Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region	% of EU implemented commitments made in both compacts (to be found in the Implementation Report jointly drafted by the partner country and the EU	Q1/2018, in preparation of the second Brussels Conference for Syria
Support migration management in Ukraine: implementation of €28 million programme "Support for Migration Management and Asylum Management in Ukraine"	Continued implementation	Throughout 2018

General objective 3 – A Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy

Specific objective 6: Increased energy security and more effective climate policies in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries as well as increased energy connectivity between the EU and these countries.

DG NEAR will help work towards this objective by assisting candidate countries with alignment to EU standards as well as through their participation in the Energy Community. Increase energy cooperation with Turkey, in particular through high level energy dialogue.

A strengthened energy dialogue will also be achieved with Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood partners, through the implementation of the reviewed ENP. A particular emphasis will be given to Energy Efficiency, in line with the EU's 'Energy Efficiency First' principle and the High level Energy Efficiency Initiative. Furthermore, activities will be aligned with the implementation needs stemming from the Paris Climate Agreement, notably the implementation of the commitments made by the countries under their National Determined Contributions (NDC).

Relevant general objective: A Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy		
Specific objective: Increased energy security and more effective climate policies in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries as well as increased energy connectivity between the EU and these countries.		Related to spending programmes: IPA and ENI
Main outputs in 2018:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Participate and support Energy Community Treaty	Level of enforcement of existing Energy Community Acquis (in particular through Berlin Process connectivity reform measures)	July 2018. By the time of the Summit in the United Kingdom,
	Application of the 2016 Winter Package, through the Energy Community Once these texts are approved, this will be transposed in the EnC countries, allowing them to apply to those countries as well as between the EU and EnC Contracting Parties.	December 2018.
Contribute to the alignment with "acquis" by candidate countries	Outputs related to negotiations and alignment by candidate countries to EU standards, acquis on related chapters (Energy etc.) and Energy Community Treaty obligations. High Level Energy Dialogue with Turkey, in Turkey.	Throughout 2018 Serbia and Montenegro, in particular, should make further progress to full alignment
Contribute to the alignment with "acquis" by Ukraine as member of the Energy Community	Outputs related to negotiations and alignment by Ukraine to EU standards and Energy Community Treaty obligations. Ministerial meeting with Ukraine under the Memorandum of Understanding for a Strategic Energy Partnership, in Kyiv.	Throughout 2018
Contribute to the ENP review roll-out – Priority actions on Energy and Climate Change Policy: strengthened energy dialogue with Neighbourhood partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened energy dialogue with Neighbourhood partners. • Action Plan developed as follow-up to the first EaP Ministerial on Environment and Climate Change • Euronest Parliamentary Assembly (Committee on Energy Security) kept regularly informed of technical assistance and policy dialogue • Regional and sub-regional measures further developed 	Throughout 2018

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calendar of meetings of the UfM Energy Platform is implemented with all partners' participation. 	
Enlargement and ENP – High level Energy Efficiency initiative	Implementation of new regional programme supporting renewable energy and energy efficiency in the Western Balkans Implementation of measures agreed for Tunisia, Georgia and Ukraine	December 2018
Identify and manage the Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP) projects on climate.	Progress towards the 20% target of climate-related funding in investment projects	Throughout 2018
ENP review roll-out – Priority actions on Energy Development of enhanced co-ordination with IFIs on energy efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU4Energy national work plans are developed for the newly established programme. Contracting and implementation of Energy Efficiency / Renewable Energy instruments in Western Balkans Implementation of new regional actions for the Southern Neighbourhood on energy security and climate change, mitigation and adaptation (€19 million) are launched Actions are in place in MENA countries, SEAPC/SECAPS are adopted and implemented 	December 2018 Throughout 2018 December 2018
Contribute to ENP review roll-out: actions related to climate policy	New regional programmes on climate action and green economy formulated	December 2018
Implement ENP priorities on environment including support to green economy, implementing the Barcelona Convention on the Depollution of the Mediterranean	Successful experiences in green economy promotion are scaled up and extended to new countries (Algeria); number of green businesses increase.	December 2018
Implement Energy Efficiency initiatives, including specific programme on Energy Efficiency for Ukraine, subject to Ukraine fulfilling the conditions	Adoption of Annual Action Programme	2018
Contribute to the implementation of the high-level energy efficiency initiative, including Establishment of Energy Efficiency Fund in Ukraine Bilateral Energy Efficiency programme in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated national workshops held in at least two other countries (in addition to GE & UA) and priorities decided Strategic investment projects on Energy Efficiency funded by the NIF 	Throughout 2018

Georgia defined		
Implement TAIEX and Twinning events to align and implement of EU standards and legislation/acquis. Enhanced cooperation with CLIMA (ECRAN programme)	TAIEX events implemented	Throughout 2018

General objective 4 – A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment

Specific objective 7: Increased prosperity in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries and in the EU through increased economic and trade opportunities between the EU and these countries.

DG NEAR will contribute to this specific objective through a variety of policy-related actions. These include following the discussion and adoption of the mandate for a **modernised Customs Union with Turkey when political conditions are ripe**, monitoring the **Stabilisation and Association Agreements**, coordinating the Economic Reform Programmes (ERP) for the Enlargement countries, and supporting the development of a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans.

In the Neighbourhood, DG NEAR will continue implementing **financial assistance to Morocco and Tunisia to accompany them in the DCFTA negotiations**. 2018 will also see the launch of regional actions aimed at boosting trade, competitiveness and investment in the Southern Mediterranean, notably through blending operations with EIB and EBRD, and further support to the implementation of the Agadir Agreement.

The ambitious External Investment Plan for the Neighbourhood and Africa that was announced by President Juncker in September 2016 was launched on 28 September 2017, with the adoption of the Regulation for its first pillar, the European Fund for Sustainable Development. The roll-out of the Plan in the course of 2018 will be a major opportunity to engage with the public and private sectors in the partner countries and in EU Member States in order to boost growth and improve the economic situation of our neighbouring countries. The private sector in particular should find in the many innovative features of this Plan the incentives necessary to increase significantly their investments in the Neighbourhood countries.

Relevant general objective: A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment		
Specific objective: Increased prosperity in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries and in the EU through increased economic and trade opportunities between the EU and these countries.		Related to spending programmes: IPA and ENI
Main outputs in 2018:		
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Turkey Customs Union: Support DG TRADE in following discussions by MS on the mandate and perspective of initiating negotiations when political	Negotiations initiated Decide planning reference: 2015/TRADE+/035	once political conditions permit

conditions are ripe.		
Support to the development of a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans	Implementation of measures in the agreed Roadmap of the Regional Economic Area.	Continuous, but monitoring of state of play at the UK summit in July 2018
External Investment Plan (EIP): secretariat and web portal set-up (following adoption of the EIP by the co-legislator)	Set-up of the secretariat and the web portal	by Q4 2018
Monitoring the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA) with Western Balkans partners and AA with Turkey	Reports on SAA/AA Council, Committee, Sub-Committee and Special group meetings.	For all WB countries: 1 annual SAA Council 1 annual SA Committee 7 Sub-committees + 1-2 PAR Special Group (and, for Kosovo, a normalisation Special Group)
Pursue technical support to economic and public institutions' reforms in Southern Neighbourhood countries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued support to ongoing economic, business climate and institutional reforms in countries like Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan; Contribute to economic diversification in countries like Algeria and Libya; Support economic diplomacy efforts by DG GROW in countries like Tunisia; Continued support to the private sector 	-Private-public economic dialogues increase at regional and country level -SMEs accessing services or finance increased -Number of women beneficiaries increased	Throughout 2018
Support economic growth, private sector development, trade and investments at regional level in the Southern Neighbourhood:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIF "Trade & competitiveness" facilities with EIB and EBRD to finance value chains in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan for 	June/September 2018

<p>Launch regional actions aimed at boosting trade, competitiveness and investment in the Southern Mediterranean, notably through blending</p> <p>Support UfM sector policy dialogue with Line DGs and Southern Mediterranean partner countries on economic cooperation through dedicated regional platforms. In particular, contribute to the preparation of two UfM Ministerial Conferences on Industrial Cooperation and Trade.</p>	<p>a total of € 50 mio,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first UfM Trade and Investment Ministerial takes place with all participants present; • Member countries of the AGADir agreement phase IV increase their support to the organisation as a demonstration of ownership. 	<p>Throughout 2018</p> <p>Throughout 2018</p>
<p>DCFTA with Morocco and Tunisia.µ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued participation in EU's awareness raising and negotiation efforts in relation to DCFTA with Morocco and Tunisia. • Ensure implementation of financial assistance to accompany the DCFTA negotiations. 	<p>Throughout 2018</p>
<p>DCFTA Facility for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in the context of the EU4Business initiative</p> <p>The DCFTA Facilitation programmes with the EIB and the EBRD will continue progressing positively in the provision of sub-loans to SME's and sustaining jobs.</p> <p>Improve technical and SPS standards leading to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs in the DCFTA signatory countries.</p>	<p>Positive conclusions/opinions reached by the DCFTA steering committee.</p> <p>Second Phase of EIB DCFTA Facility approved and launched.</p>	<p>Throughout 2018</p>
<p>Support to structural reforms, address gaps in access to finance and support the harmonisation of digital markets (EU4Digital) in the Eastern Partner countries</p> <p>Continued work in particular with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to support the implementation of structural</p>	<p>Structural reform facility established</p> <p>EU4Digital programme fully contracted</p>	<p>Throughout 2018</p>

<p>reforms.</p> <p>Roll-out across the Eastern Partnership region of additional measures to help address gaps in access to finance through support to local currency lending, as well as to the harmonisation of digital markets under the EU4Digital programme.</p>		
<p>Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility funding</p>	<p>Deployment of €50 million SME funding made available under EDIF for WB countries; move into bridging the gap between research and business</p>	<p>July 2018 – December 2018</p>
<p>Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument – TAIEX</p>	<p>TAIEX events took place</p>	<p>By end of 2018</p>

PART 2. MAIN ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR

A. Human resource management

The HR Modernisation project as laid down in the Communication on Synergies and Efficiencies continues to be rolled out in the Commission. HR services for DGs are now delivered by the Account Management Centres (AMCs). Within DG NEAR, the HR Business Correspondent coordinates strategic HR matters and prepares the related decisions of the DG's management".

In July 2017 the College adopted a renewed approach to its commitment to reach at least 40% female managers by the end of 2019. To this effect, the College repealed the indicative sub-targets per Directorate-General for female representation in middle management as set out in document SEC (2015) 336 and instead adopted quantitative targets of first female appointments to be made per Directorate-General and service at middle management level. For DG NEAR the number of first time female appointments to middle management positions to be filled between 1 May 2017 and 30 November 2019 is two. This is based on an estimation of four middle management opportunities occurring during that period.

DG NEAR will continue to monitor the rate of female representation in middle management to ensure that it meets its obligations by end 2019. At present, the DG NEAR obligation is 50% of available opportunities and to-date it has fulfilled 50% of this target. In 2017 representation rates in middle management stood at 35%. DG NEAR will continue to actively encourage (in its vacancy notices) applications from eligible female staff for middle management positions and managers are made aware of the importance of identifying female talent and providing the appropriate training and management opportunities for them. DG NEAR selection panels will continue to monitor appropriate gender balance in the pre-selection and selection phases of middle management selection procedures.

As part of its talent management policy, DG NEAR will continue to provide training and mentoring possibilities for potential managerial colleagues so that they are better prepared to participate in middle management selections including preparation for the Assessment Centre phase of the selection procedure.

The 2016 staff engagement index for DG NEAR (all staff) stands at 58% (6 percentage points below the Commission average). The breakdown for the index is 64% for staff in HQ and 53% for staff in EU Delegations. In 2017, DG NEAR invested extensively in teambuilding activities in all Directorates with the active participation of the "Our Near" Core Group, culminating in an all DG event in June 2017 which focussed on achieving a more open and collaborative DG and how to improve staff engagement and internal communication. This work will continue in 2018 and greater efforts will be made to improve staff engagement in the delegations where individual action plans for implementation at local level will be explored in addition to corporate and inter-institutional endeavours. In addition DG NEAR, along with the other external relation DGs has proposed and promoted a joint EEAS-Commission staff survey in 2018 with questions better adapted to the specific situation of staff in our delegations.

DG NEAR will monitor, via the Commission Staff Survey scheduled for mid-2018, the satisfaction rate amongst staff in 7 areas and take additional remedial actions where necessary to bridge the gap between the Commission average and the DG NEAR results.

In parallel DG NEAR will, in cooperation with the other external relation DGs and the EEAS, explore reasons for and solutions to the particular issues which affect all staff groups in the EU Delegations. In 2017 senior EUDEL agreed a common set of priority

actions to address the main concerns of staff working in EU Delegations covering, monitoring staff engagement, working conditions and work-life balance, local agents in delegations, mobility and career of contract agents in delegations and career development in EU external relations area. Work on these issues is ongoing and will continue in 2018.

In the DG NEAR 2016 staff survey results DG NEAR scored an average of 49% on the 11 well-being questions (some 8 percentage points below the Commission average). However, the results for staff in HQ are equal to the Commission average of 59% whilst those for staff in EU Delegations are at 42%.

DG NEAR will continue to promote working conditions which are conducive to achieving a better work life balance namely promoting teleworking opportunities – both structural and occasional – not only in Headquarters but also in EU delegations. In 2018 the EEAS will run a pilot exercise in 4 delegations which, if positive, should be rolled out to all delegations in the 2nd half of 2018.

To deliver on its overall human resource objective of effectively deploying resources, ensuring a competent and engaged workforce led by a gender balanced management, in 2018 DG NEAR will focus on 4 organisational management issues, namely:

- **Increase gender balance in middle management** representation in DG NEAR, and in particular increase the female representation in pre-management positions such as Deputy Heads of Unit and heads of sector;
- **Promote a more holistic approach** to staff wellbeing in line with the Commission's fit@work strategy;
- **Address the core issues** which contribute to the staff engagement index namely ensuring that all DG NEAR staff has the tools, training and information they need to do a good job and feel valued for the contribution they make to DG NEAR and the EU project.
Through participatory processes and supported by the Core Group called OurNEAR, **work will continue on** issues jointly identified by management and staff relating to a **shared identity, staff engagement, management practices and efficiency**.

Objective: The DG deploys effectively its resources in support of the delivery of the Commission priorities and core business, has a competent and engaged workforce, which is driven by an effective and gender-balanced management and which can deploy its full potential within supportive and healthy working conditions.

Main outputs in 2018:

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Increase number of women appointed to first time middle management functions.	Number of first time appointments	50% of HoU opportunities by end 2019. Appoint 1 woman to first time management position by end 2018
Promote an appropriate work life balance for staff	Staff request appropriate working conditions (part-time, flexitime and teleworking) to match their particular work life balance considerations	40% of colleagues in HQ teleworking by end 2018 (compared to 32.6% now) 100% of eligible requests for part-time working validated

<p>Promote awareness of fit@ work campaign including mental and physical health & wellbeing activities</p>	<p>Staff attend and participate in activities which increase staff understanding of the importance of mental and physical health to their overall well being</p>	<p>At least 6 fit@work workshops to be organised for DG NEAR on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ergonomics • Physical health • Nutrition • Social-psychological issues • Mental Health
<p>Roll out the 2018 Staff Engagement Action Plan tackling the staff engagement issues raised in the 2016 Staff survey namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared DG NEAR vision and purpose • Effective internal communication • Managing Performance • Enhancing 'people' management skills • Working conditions & work /life balance • Career advice, career paths, opportunities & mobility • Training & training budget. <p>Take 'temperature' mid-year on the 7 areas contributing to overall staff engagement</p>	<p>Adoption of the 2018 Action Plan by DG NEAR Senior Management</p>	<p>Adoption of Action Plan foreseen for April 2018</p>

B. Financial Management: Internal control and Risk management

The Authorising Officer by Delegation should have reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions including prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities.

The three objectives indicated below are the objectives of the Strategic Management Plan for the period 2016-2020. Main outputs, indicators and targets have been indicated for these three objectives. While objective 1 relates to the legality and regularity of underlying transactions (what we do), objective 2 deals with the cost effectiveness of the system and sound financial management (how we do it). Objective 3 is about the effectiveness of the anti-fraud policy of the DG.

Objective 1: Effective and reliable internal control system giving the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and the regularity of the underlying transactions.

Main outputs in 2018:

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Legality and regularity of the underlying transactions in the DG, ENI, IPA excl IMBC and IPA IMBC.	4 Residual Error rates established on the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions for budget implementation	RER DG, RER ENI, RER IPA excl IMBC, RER IPA IMBC below 2% for budget implementation
The Annual Audit Plan that has been approved is being implemented.	-1- % implementation of the Annual Audit Plan: year N -2-% implementation of the Annual Audit Plan: year N-1 -3-% implementation of the Annual Audit Plan: year N-2.	-1-At least 60% contracted -2-At least 40% final reports received -3-At least 60% final reports received
The controls in place are effective and detect ineligible expenditures, be it by ex-ante controls or by audits.	DG NEAR will use two sub sets of indicators: -1- Ineligible amounts identified by ex-ante controls, in relation to DG NEAR annual overall spending. -2- Ineligible amounts identified by audits as a % of the audited amount.	-1- Target below 2% for ineligible amounts by ex-ante controls (in relation to total spending of the DG). -2- Target below 2% for ineligible amounts identified by audits (in relation to the amounts audited).

Objective 2: Effective and reliable internal control system in line with sound financial management.

Main outputs in 2018:

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
-Execution of payments and commitments in DG NEAR are following forecasts.	-1-Accuracy of initial annual financial forecast for payments. -2- Accuracy of initial annual financial forecast for contracts.	1-Between 90% and 110% 2-Between 90% and 110%
-The RAL (RAC+RAP)	-3- RAL absorption period.	

<p>is correctly managed.</p> <p>-Pre-financing is cleared regularly.</p> <p>-Expired contracts are closed.</p> <p>-Payments are made on time.</p>	<p>-4- Reduction of Old RAL.</p> <p>-5- Reduction of Old Pre-financing.</p> <p>-6- Expired Contracts as a % of the contract portfolio.</p> <p>-7- % of payments paid within the EC internal target of 30 days.</p>	<p>3-Not more than 4 years</p> <p>4-Decrease by 25% at least</p> <p>5-Decrease by 25% at least</p> <p>6-Not more than 15%</p> <p>7-At least 66% (This percentage is based on historical figures and is also used as a benchmark in the key performance indicators).</p>
<p>The cost effectiveness of controls is assessed on a yearly basis.</p>	<p>Cost effectiveness of Controls</p>	<p>Costs of controls are under 5% of the DG overall spending.</p>
<p>The Internal Control Principles are assessed on an annual basis in Delegations and at Headquarters.</p>	<p>Assessment of Internal Control Principles.</p>	<p>The Internal Control Principles are assessed annually, through different means (KPIs in the EAMR, Survey or Desk review).</p>
<p>The action plans to audit recommendations from the Court of Auditors, the IAS and recommendations from the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers are being implemented.</p>	<p>Number of critical and very important recommendations overdue for more than 6 months, whose action plan has not been fully implemented yet.</p>	<p>No critical or very important audit recommendations overdue for more than 6 months after the date established in the action plan.</p>

Objective 3: Minimisation of the risk of fraud through application of effective anti-fraud measures, integrated in all activities of the DG, based on the DG's anti-fraud strategy (AFS) aimed at the prevention, detection and reparation of fraud.

Main outputs in 2018:

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
<p>Minimisation of the risk of fraud through application of effective anti-fraud measures, integrated in all activities of the DG, based on the DG's anti-fraud strategy (AFS) aimed at the</p>	<p>-1- Updated anti-fraud strategy of DG NEAR, elaborated on the basis of the methodology provided by OLAF.</p> <p>-2- Fraud awareness is increased for target</p>	<p>-1- The AFS will be updated every two years; the next update will be made by the end of 2018.</p> <p>-2- The target is to raise the anti-fraud awareness rate of</p>

prevention, detection and reparation of fraud.	<p>population(s) as identified in the DG's AFS.</p> <p>-3-Regular monitoring of the implementation of the anti-fraud strategy and reporting on its result to management.</p> <p>-4- The number of cases/suspected frauds reported to OLAF in 2017 and the number of cases closed.</p>	<p>over 10% for the whole of DG NEAR follow up of recently completed anti-fraud questionnaire; and, other training/awareness raising initiatives.</p> <p>-3- Implementation of the AFS will be reported on a yearly basis as part of the Management Report to the Commissioner, or as part of an equivalent management report.</p> <p>-4- Ensure the application of fraud awareness within the control system, demonstrated by the reporting of suspected cases of fraud to OLAF.</p>
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C. Better Regulation

- The main planned outputs linked to the Better Regulation objective in the Strategic Plan are listed in Part 1 under the relevant specific objective in the tables. They are presented in the tables under the headings "All new initiatives and REFIT initiatives from the Commission Work Programme" and "other important items".

D. Information management aspects

The year 2018 will focus on the sharing of information between HQ and NEAR EU-Delegations for all financial files (financing agreements, decisions and contracts). The objective is to avoid double creation of files in Ares/NomCom and to make the information available to all entities.

The policy of paperless office was implemented in 2017 and will be closely followed-up in 2018. Financial workflows will be harmonised for all the transactions.

Objective: Information and knowledge in the DG is shared and reusable by other DGs. Important documents are registered, filed and retrievable.

Main outputs in 2018:

<i>Output</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Target</i>
Electronic filing of registered documents in Ares	Percentage of registered and filed documents in Ares	100%
Ares/NomCom files accessible to the whole DG	Percentage of Ares/NomCom files	93%
Shared Ares/NomCom files between HQ and EU-Delegations for all financial files	Percentage of shared files	100%

Better use of electronic workflows in Ares	Percentage of purely electronic signatories in Ares	50%
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E. External communication activities

Better communication on the objectives and the results of the European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Policy will continue to be a priority for DG NEAR. Ensuring a more strategic and focused approach to communication and visibility is therefore indispensable. Target audiences are the wider public through online and social media channels as well as stakeholder communities, young people and media representatives through dedicated events, study visits and press trips.

As regards visibility, we will continue to share best practices, provide training to staff and implementing partners, and we will work jointly with DG COMM and DG DEVCO on the implementation of the new Communication and Visibility Requirements which are in force as of January 2018, including increased flexibility and pooling of resources. Information on the EU and EU assistance in individual partner countries will focus on thematic and country specific campaigns (e.g. #EU4business, #EU4Energy, #EU4Youth, EU for Georgia, EU4U, etc) to increase the EU identity of our projects and outreach activities. The visibility of projects and programmes will be strengthened through the systematic use of the title "EU for" in all partner countries.

DG NEAR will also continue working closely with the EEAS on strategic communication in all three regions. In the neighbourhood area, cooperation focuses on the implementation of the EU Neighbours information and communication programme OPEN through joint events, the Young Ambassadors Scheme, production of audio-visual material, social media campaigns, etc. This complements the activities to counter disinformation and misperceptions of the EU with positive messages and success stories of people who benefitted from EU assistance.

A similar regional information and communication program for the Western Balkans will be developed in 2018, complementing the ongoing communication activities of the EU Delegations which are financed through the IPA Information and Communication Support Measure. This program will be complemented by capacity building activities for government communicators in the region and closer cooperation with Member States on the ground. A series of workshops and mobilisation of experts from Member States as well as study visits are foreseen. Support to EU Delegations in tailoring their annual communication plans to address key issues and in developing positive messages for stakeholders and the wider public will continue. A particular focus will be on developing comprehensive communication activities around the milestones planned for 2018 (Communications in February and April, May Western Balkan Summit and Western Balkan-6 Summit).

Also the amount and impact of fake news and disinformation through both traditional and online media is a topic that needs to be further addressed. It takes various forms and its negative impact affects directly our immediate neighbourhood. We are looking therefore into options on how to better respond to this phenomenon, including through the use of the OPEN programme's Media Hub. This project aims to improve skills on independent and objective reporting, management of media as a business and networking among professionals. Part of our response will also be a public diplomacy initiative to reach out to relevant audiences in the EU Member States and partner countries. It will be complemented by cultural diplomacy activities in the context of the Year of European Cultural Heritage 2018.

The external communication activities will thus support the political priorities of the Commission, in particular priority number 9 "A Stronger Global Actor", as well as the

other priorities supported by the DG. In this regard, DG NEAR provides funding from IPA and ENI budget lines for rolling-out corporate communication activities in the Member States, namely the "EU that protects" campaign for which we will be putting the emphasis on cooperation with partner countries and what the EU does to improve people's lives and economic development, which is in the interest of the EU and its citizens. Also media monitoring, press briefings, citizens' requests, website development and digital transformation as well as social media activities will continue to be core areas for the Communication unit.

Objective: To increase knowledge and understanding of the European Neighbourhood Policy, including the use and objectives of EU funds for the neighbourhood

Main outputs in 2018:

Description	Indicator	Target
Press trips for EU journalists to the neighbourhood region	Number of participants	60
	Number of participants who declare the event met their expectations	>60% of participants
Training seminars on EU visibility and communication for beneficiaries in the neighbourhood	Number of participants	120
	Event met expectations	>65% of participants
OPEN Neighbourhood Regional Programme: campaigns, events and polling to improve perceptions of the EU in Neighbourhood countries	Number of visits to EU Neighbours website	>800,000
	Number of people reached on Facebook (average reach per post)	East: 15,000 South: 10,000
	Number of impressions - Twitter (monthly)	50,000
	Number of subscribers to news alerts	>10,000
	Number of people reached through events	>5,000
	Number of young people becoming part of Young European Neighbours network	>2,500

Objective : To increase knowledge and understanding of the enlargement policy, including the use and objectives of EU pre-accession funds

Main outputs in 2018:

Description	Indicator	Target
Press trips for EU journalists to the enlargement region	Number of participants	85
	Number of participants who declare the event met their	>60% of participants

	expectations	
	Better understanding of the policy/related funding	>50% of participants
Training seminars on EU visibility and communication for beneficiaries in the enlargement region	Number of participants	115
	Event met expectations	>65% of participants
Policy events co-organised with stakeholders	Number of participants	500
	Event met expectations	>60% of participants
	Better understanding of the policy/related funding	>50% of participants

Objective: Dissemination of information through DG NEAR website and social media

Main outputs in 2018:

Description	Indicator	Target
DG NEAR website*	Number of visits	1,500,000
	Number of unique visitors	1,000,000
	Number of page views	3,000,000
DG NEAR social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)	Number of people reached	Facebook / average reach by post: 60,000
	Number of impressions	Twitter: 2,500,000 (overall)
	Fan engagement rate:	Facebook: 4% / Twitter: 2%

*Online surveys foreseen in the future after finalisation of digital transformation project
For external communication overall spending by DG NEAR²:

Annual communication spending (based on estimated commitments):

Baseline (2017): EUR 7,500,000	Target (2018): EUR 7,500,000
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² Excluding funds for communication activities implemented by EU delegations in the enlargement and neighbourhood regions.

F. Example(s) of initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities of the DG

In 2018, DG NEAR will be looking to undertake a number of initiatives to improve and enhance the work of the Directorate-General. Such initiatives include notably:

- **A comprehensive new communication approach on assistance for the Eastern Partnership**

In 2018, a comprehensive communication approach will be further developed, based on the key actions taken in 2017 on communicating EU's assistance in the Eastern Partnership region. Notably, the launch of thematic initiatives grouping all EU assistance under key areas with short and understandable titles (e.g. EU4Business and EU4Energy), and the launch of a new visual identity for the Eastern Partnership - in light of the Eastern Partnership Summit on 24 November - will be the basis for our approach in 2018.

In 2018, public communication on EU support will be stepped up by focussing on tangible results, structured along the four priority areas of the Eastern Partnership. Moving away from a project-based communication to communicating as part of a wider context will ensure not only a greater impact in EU messages, but lead to a greater awareness by citizens on the impact of EU actions in their daily lives. Messages will focus on the "20 Deliverables for 2020", identified in the framework of the Eastern Partnership. This will be complemented by the roll-out of the new Eastern Partnership visual identity on to all projects and programmes in the region, which will ensure a coordinated visibility.

- **Blending, operational coordination and policy dialogue with Financial Institutions in the Southern Neighbourhood**

In the Southern Neighbourhood DG NEAR will continue actively engaging with IFIs for increased policy dialogue and will continue to seek to maximise the impact of EU assistance via blending, with notably Lebanon expanding its use of this modality for a first time. This will help meet the country's aspirations in terms of capital investment and economic recovery, and be in line with the 'Paris IV' Conference that France has proposed to organise in 2018. This use of blending under the bilateral envelopes shall complement the Neighbourhood Investment Platform and the European Investment Plan. DG NEAR intends to vigorously promote coordination with European Financial Institutions, which have signalled important additional outreach in the South. In addition, policy dialogue will be increased with IFIs and in particular with the World Bank with the organisation of a second EU MENA Day in March 2018.

Cooperation will also be intensified with Arab and Islamic Financial Institutions through joint actions conducted in close coordination with DG DEVCO.

- **OurNEAR**

In the context of the creation of DG NEAR with the start of the Juncker Commission, through a merger of ex-DG ELARG and the European Neighbourhood directorate of the DG DEVCO, the Director General decided in 2016 to launch a process towards a shared corporate identity. This started with the creation of a Core Group called OurNEAR with representatives from each directorate. The objective formulated for the Core Group was to "Facilitate the development of an open and Participatory Organisation Culture for DG NEAR to create Impact on the Policy Priorities of the DG and to create an enabling working environment". The first year up to June 2017 concentrated on team building

exercises for each of the directorates and introducing participatory practices leading up to a very successful NEAR staff seminar in June 2017. In 2018 the process will be further continued by building on the issues that were identified by staff and management as key to the functioning and well-being of the DG. In a DG that is characterised by extremely high workload and a difficult political environment, focus will be on actions related to staff engagement, management practices and nurturing higher efficiency with impact.

- **Migration to Opsys/IPA-APP IT applications**

To achieve its core business in the external assistance domain, DG NEAR is currently relying on a large portfolio of IT applications which are either developed by DEVCO or in-house. Against the background of Commission IT rationalisation, 2018 will mark the transition to a new corporate application (Opsys) developed by DIGIT with the help of RTD and DEVCO. In particular, the result management features currently available in the local MIS application will be migrated to the corporate Opsys application, resulting in savings for IT development, maintenance and support. Likewise, for functions specific enlargement, a transfer of IMBC (Indirect Management for Beneficiary Countries) from the local MIS application to IPA-APP is expected to reduce the time needed to phase out this application in 2021 by avoiding a costly migration to Opsys of very specific functions. Greater efficiency for staff is expected to result from these migrations as they will result in a gradual reduction of the number of IT applications.