

NOTE TO THE MANAGEMENT BOARD

Presentation of EFSA's activities with the IPA beneficiaries

European Union (EU) agencies, including the EFSA, are active contributors to the EU Instrument for the Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) programmes through the European Commission (EC) Multi-country programme entitled "Preparatory measures for the participation of IPA beneficiaries in EU agencies". The programme is supporting EU agencies by allowing them to carry out preparatory measures with the IPA beneficiaries in view of their participation in these EU agencies upon membership or earlier. The support aims as well at knowledge transfer and capacity building in the area of expertise of the EU agencies. Through the EC grant agreements EFSA is working with the EU pre-accession beneficiaries from 2006.

EFSA is working with the IPA beneficiaries to promote the understanding of the Authority's work, share expertise and create information exchange mechanisms. These activities cover the full range of EFSA's remit and EFSA is committed to continue supporting the EC in delivering these objectives with the aim of strengthening scientific cooperation and networking, as described in EFSA's strategic approach to its international activities and International Scientific Cooperation Work Plan 2017–2020.

Through the EC IPA grants, EFSA supports the IPA beneficiaries in food safety scientific expertise capacity building, transfer of risk assessment and communication methodologies and harmonisation of national food safety data collections, enhancing IPA capacity to generate scientific advice and perform data analysis, as well as IPA preparedness to face with food safety crisis and issues of mutual concern.

This action has an overall aim to increase the knowledge on the EU's food safety policy within the IPA society, as well as to promote trust in the EU food safety decisions that are based on solid science, thorough risk assessment and transparent communication on risks to the public, which are the core tasks of EFSA.

EFSA has started on **1 June 2019** the new Action: "Preparatory measures for the participation of IPA beneficiaries in the European Food Safety Authority 2019-2021". The action was planned to last until 31 May 2021. On 10 September 2019, DG NEAR contacted EFSA suggesting additional EUR 250,000 to extend the running contract 2019/405-828 to cover activities until **31 May 2022**. Therefore, the budget envelope of the IPA Programme agreement was increased to the total amount of **EUR 750.000** (total duration of Action **36 months**).

The new 3-year Programme will continue to build on the progress made within the Programmes in recent years and to involve the IPA beneficiaries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo¹, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey) in its work. The focus will be on the risk assessment capacity building, more involvement of the scientific community from the IPA beneficiaries in EFSA's working groups and projects and to enhance data exchange. It is crucial to progressively increase the involvement of IPA beneficiaries in the EFSA's scientific cooperation activities and networks and to build capacity and expertise able to contribute to EFSA's work before and after the accession, in particular in the collection and exchange of harmonised food safety data. Being part of the EFSA's networks will benefit the IPA beneficiaries, as they can focus on the issues prioritised by EFSA, detect problems at an early stage, prevent food crises and protect consumers from food-related risks.

The direct target groups are the competent food safety authorities and other relevant authorities responsible for food safety in IPA beneficiaries, in particular those with a similar remit as EFSA's. However, due to the broadness of EFSA remit (the entire food chain), the project is targeted not only to national food authorities, but also to other scientific, academic and civil society organisations and indirectly to entire population of each of the country involved.

¹This designation (*) is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.