Project Fiche – IPA National programmes / Component I

1 IDENTIFICATION

Project Title	Control and eradication of rabies – phase II		
CRIS Decision number	2013 / 024-190		
Project no.	10		
MIPD Sector Code	Agriculture and rural development		
ELARG Statistical code	03.12 - Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy		
DAC Sector code	12250 - Infectious disease control		
Total cost (VAT excluded) ¹	EUR 2 000 000		
EU contribution	EUR 2 000 000		
Management mode	Centralised		
EU Delegation in charge	EU Delegation to Albania		
Implementation management	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration / Directorate of European Integration Director Ariana Misha (SPO) Blvd."Deshmoret e Kombit" 1002-Tirana, Albania Tel.: +355 42 227920 Cel.: +355 672084014 Email: anamisha@yahoo.com web: www.mbumk.gov.al		
Implementing modality	Stand-alone project		
Project implementation type	One supply contract		
Zone benefiting from the action(s)	Albania		

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The total project cost should be net of VAT and/or of other taxes. Should this not be the case, clearly indicate the amount of VAT and the reasons why it is considered eligible.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Project context: issues to be tackled and needs addressed

Animal diseases have a great influence in reducing livestock productivity and adversely affect the rural livelihoods and commercial livestock enterprises. Zoonotic diseases also threaten public health.

The IPA 2008 "Improving consumer protection against zoonotic diseases – Albania" (PAZA) project, which began in December 2009, has strengthened the state veterinary service following the reorganization of the Ministry of Agriculture and the establishment of the National Food Authority. The implementation of the PAZA Project will end in March 2013 but it will be necessary to continue a range of activities, particularly to establish effective disease surveillance, in order to meet the EU standards in this field.

The IPA 2012 project - Improve Consumer Protection Against Zoonotic Diseases / phase II - is a direct follow-up of the PAZA project and has an integrated approach aiming at the continued improvement of public and animal health, through the establishment of adequate monitoring, to promote animal and human health and access to markets.

The IPA 2012 project has also a component concerning rabies vaccination, which concerned the boundary areas of Albania, and is complementary to the IPA 2008 multi-beneficiary project on animal disease eradication, whose main objective was to eradicate, monitor and control animal diseases such as rabies at regional scale. This IPA 2013 project intends to launch a second vaccination campaign against rabies in order to cover the entire territory of Albania and consolidate/protect the results achieved at regional level under the IPA multi-beneficiary project.

2.2 LINK WITH MIPD AND NATIONAL SECTOR STRATEGIES

The project will contribute in achieving the "expected results" foreseen under section 3.6.3 of the Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document for Albania for the period 2011–2013, which are: "For the coming three years the main specific objective is to improve the level of knowledge about food quality and safety standards. A higher productivity and competitiveness of the agricultural and agro processing sectors within the country and abroad by lowering the costs, increasing the quality, and ensuring high food safety standards."

In addition in the National Plan for the Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement 2009-2014 has been foreseen short term and mid term activities with regard to tracing, vaccination and ear-tagging of animals with the aim to reduce and eliminate dangerous animal diseases.

Under the framework of the Government's Integrated Planning System (IPS), the Albanian government has committed funds to support the food safety and veterinary through construction or rehabilitation of laboratories, provision of laboratory equipment and construction of small slaughterhouses. More specifically in the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013 is stressed that: "The public programmes that support agricultural and rural development will be consolidated in accordance with EU practices, with the aim to support sustainable development in this area, and the Payments

Agency will be established in the long term. Modern systems of food safety will be introduced gradually and the institutions that guarantee its standards will be consolidated."²

According to the **Agriculture and Food Sectoral Strategy 2007-2013**, the main policy objectives of the Government of Albania in the field of agriculture are: increase of economic efficiency of the agricultural and agro-processing sector, expressed through increased productivity and product quality; guaranteed higher standard of food safety for the entire population; improvement of agricultural marketing.

2.3 LINK WITH ACCESSION PARTNERSHIP (AP) / EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP (EP) / STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT (SAA) / ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

European Partnership

Although mentioned as a short-term priority in the Council Decision of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania that is "Improve control of animal diseases, including sampling and reporting", it appears that such priority is more than a short-term.

EC Progress Reports

The progress Report 2011 (chapter 12) stated that "Capacity to manage the implementation of disease eradication programmes, and to ensure timely communication of information, remains limited."

Albania's new Veterinary Law approved in November 2011 addressed the control of animal diseases (*e.g.* anthrax, tuberculosis, brucellosis, rabies and Newcastle disease). Nonetheless, no sufficient efforts were made to ensure alignment with the *acquis* and proper implementation, including disease surveillance and reporting.

The progress Report 2012 concluded that "There has been little progress in veterinary policy. Staff levels, particularly at central level, remain inadequate. A definition of the tasks, functions and responsibilities of the veterinary service is still lacking, thus hindering sound management of clinical waste, fallen stock and animal by-products, which have become serious issues in terms of bio-security"

Stabilization and Association Agreement

The project is in line with the provisions of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (namely Articles 70, 76 and 110); according to which Parties should cooperate in order to align the standards of consumer protection in Albania to those of the Community. Effective consumer protection is necessary in order to ensure that the market economy functions properly, and this protection will depend on the development of an administrative infrastructure in order to ensure market surveillance and law enforcement in this field. On the other hand, the approximation of legislation in this field is considered as priority in the Article 70 of the SAA.

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² National Strategy for Development and Integration, 2007-2013, pg 19

Article 110 of SAA regards the specific attention, which shall be given to cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation in case rabies (trans-boundary disease) becomes an important factor.

2.4 PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The principal reservoir and vector of classical rabies in Europe is the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). Based on data and reports from Albania and neighbouring countries, it is assumed that in Albania, as in most other European countries, fox-mediated sylvatic rabies is predominately responsible for rabies transmission to other wildlife species and to domestic animals.

Rabies, as referring to WHO reported cases, has been detected sporadically in Albania since 2001. Rabies occurrence has been limited to the north-eastern Albania. The rabies surveillance system, although weak, covers the whole country as it has identified suspect cases also in other parts of Albania. Low rabies awareness is present in areas where the disease has not occurred.

Oral rabies vaccination is used as the method of choice to control fox rabies; its use has greatly improved the rabies situation in European countries in the last two decades and sylvatic rabies has been eradicated in many European countries. The oral vaccination of foxes against rabies (OVF) aims to interrupt the infection cycle in a given area, and to prevent the local population from becoming re-infected. The first objective requires the rapid increase in the herd immunity, whereas the second is the maintenance of sufficient population immunity as long as the infection persists in neighbouring areas.

OVF can only be successful if applied on a long-term basis and a large scale; it is very resource intensive, requires multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional cooperation, and a high engagement of the public. The analysis of setbacks during the OVF campaigns in Europe has shown that rabies persisted in treated areas especially when vaccination areas were too small (less than 5,000 km²) or vaccination was stopped too early (before at least two years after the last case of rabies in the vaccination area).

It is important that vaccination campaigns continue with at least two annual campaigns for a period of minimum two years after the last reported case of fox-related rabies. If vaccination is stopped before rabies is eradicated in the region, the population immunity already achieved will wane in a very short time, and the resources deployed for the vaccination campaigns would have been wasted.

In the frame of the regional Western Balkan rabies eradication projects, OVF started in Kosovo in 2010 vaccination; since 2011 all countries in the Western Balkans, except Albania, regularly applied oral fox vaccination. It is evident that if one country does not efficiently participate in the current EU-supported regional project to eradicate rabies from the Balkans, it places all neighbouring countries at risk of rabies being reintroduced, and reduces the possibility of finally eradicating rabies from the region.

The OVF should be continuously monitored as long as oral vaccination is applied. Regular evaluation of the ORV should take place the recommended and agreed standards along a clear control and eradication strategy to be adapted. The potential involvement of other animal species in the epidemiology of rabies should be closely monitored to timely apply appropriate control measures.

The current spread of rabies in Greece, which was previously free of the disease (five rabies cases were reported from September to December 2012 with one case in close proximity of

Korca region where rabies has not previously been reported) could lead to a rabies epidemic in Albania. A rabies emergency plan will be developed and enforced in Albania to guide rapid response in an emergency situation.

To demonstrate the success of the OVF, the number of rabies cases is expected to decrease. Therefore, and as mentioned above, rabies surveillance should be urgently improved in Albania. According to the EFSA, rabies surveillance should be based on indicator animals in order to estimate the disease incidence and to estimate the risk to human health. Indicator animals are individuals suspected of having the disease. This includes animals to which humans might have been exposed (through biting, scratching or licking on broken skin), animals showing clinical signs or abnormal behaviour suggestive of rabies, animals found dead and road-kills. Animals imported and showing clinical signs suggestive of rabies are included in this surveillance. Special attention should be paid to potential reservoirs species.

The laboratory identification of rabies virus needs improvement and quality control according to OIE and EU standards. For post-vaccination monitoring, serological diagnosis and biomarker/tetracycline testing need to be established.

The implementation of OVF and its monitoring will generate an increased workload for Veterinary Administration staff, in particular at district level and on the central level in the diagnostic and epidemiology fields. Nevertheless as pointed out in the EC report for 2012, the implementation of the vaccination campaigns requires that appropriate staffing is ensured at central level of the State Veterinary Service.

The first vaccination campaign against rabies is expected to be implemented in autumn 2013 and funded under IPA 2012 programme with the first monitoring made by IPA 2008 programme using the current capacities established by the project for the monitoring of other zoonotic diseases.

2.5 LINKED ACTIVITIES AND DONOR COORDINATION

Activities under this project will complement the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, in synergy with EU and other projects, to achieve improved surveillance and control on the zoonotic diseases.

- The IPA 2008 "Improving consumer protection against zoonotic diseases Albania".
 The project is planned to terminate on November 2013 after have carried out the monitoring of the first vaccination against rabies.
- The IPA 2012 "Improving consumer protection against zoonotic diseases Phase II. The second phase will regard follow up actions for the eradication of diseases considered under the IPA 2008 project (brucellosis, anthrax, tuberculosis, classical swine fever) and continue with the other vaccination campaigns against rabies.
- IPA 2008 Multi-beneficiary Project Western Balkans Animal Disease Eradication. The aim of this project is to improve regional and cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans and, thereby ensuring that the control and eradication of rabies and classical swine fever is harmonized and coordinated at a regional level.

2.6 LESSONS LEARNED

One important lesson learned so far includes that the control and eradication of main zoonotic diseases cannot be considered simply as a physical intervention of vaccination campaigns. It is closely related with the institutional and administrative set up of the whole veterinary system and in particular of an improved animal diseases surveillance system.

Furthermore, animal surveillance system cannot be implemented on a spontaneous basis. It should be built on regular basis and supported by the necessary financial resources.

In addition, the expression "control and vaccination campaign" should not literally refer to provisional tasks at the Central Veterinary Service. Consolidated structure with clear division of responsibilities needs to be set ahead.

Finally, examples from the vaccination against brucellosis in small ruminants during 2012 have shown that awareness of the public is of crucial importance to achieve cooperation and effectiveness of the actions.

3 DESCRIPTION

3.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

To contribute to increased livestock health and productivity and improved protection of public health in Albania in line with the EU regulations for the control and monitoring of zoonotic agents.

3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE PROJECT

The specific objective is to reduce the presence and associated risks of rabies in the country by undertaking an effective vaccination on the population of red foxes.

3.3 RESULTS

The expected result of this project is:

Result 1: Potential prevalence in the country and trans-boundary transmission of rabies reduced due to oral vaccination of foxes in accordance with the established requirements and making use of the best experiences in the region.

3.4 MAIN ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Implement the oral vaccination of foxes in the territory of Albania

(Contract 1.1: Supply Contract financed by EU contribution)

Following the experience in the WB countries with rabies vaccination, a supply contract that includes the vaccines and vaccination will be used to cover the treatment of the boundary areas of Albania

3.5 ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT IMPACT, CATALYTIC EFFECT AND CROSS BORDER IMPACT

Project impact - This overall effort will contribute to reduce animal losses and especially human casualties due to better national and regional control of diseases.

Catalytic effect – Confidence of population in government policies and capacity to implement those will be increased.

Cross-border impact - The vaccination against rabies guided under the IPA Multi-beneficiary Project for Western Balkans is assumed to ensure the complementarity of the actions in the whole region and avoid the transmission of the disease between border areas.

3.6 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability of the project will depend at large on the administrative capacity at Central Veterinary Service to implement an effective surveillance system. Lack of financial resources to sustain the surveillance system will mean failure to control diseases and protect consumer health.

3.7 ASSUMPTIONS AND PRE-CONDITIONS

In order to start the project the following pre-conditions will be ensured:

 Government allocates the necessary funding to satisfy the requirements of disease surveillance system with regard to staffing, field mobility, reporting and laboratory analysis;

The assumptions are:

- Central veterinary service adequately staffed to meet the tasks and responsibilities related to the implementation of vaccination.
- Sufficient amount of funding has been provided to ensure the mobility of the field staff and the work of laboratories.
- Effective cooperation among various institutions and agencies to facilitate actions related to the vaccination process such as Ministry of Defence (flight permits), Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior (public awareness and information), Ministry of Environment (information on wild game) etc.
- Effective cooperation of the project with the ministry staff at central and local level;
- Good communication and exchange of strategies with countries in the regional in terms of animal disease eradication

4 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The supply contract financed with the IPA contribution will be managed by the EU Delegation to Albania under centralized mode.

4.1 Indicative Project budget (amounts in EUR) (for centralised management)

				SOURCES OF FUNDING								
PROJECT TITLE TOTAL EXPENDITU RE		IPA CONTRIBUTION		NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION				PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION				
	IB	INV	EUR	EUR	% (2)	Total	% (2)	Central	Regional/Loca	IFIs	EUR	% (2)
	(1	(1)	(a)=(b)+(c)+(d)	(b)		EUR		EUR (x)	EUR (y)	EUR (z)	(d)	
Contract 1.1 Supply contract		X	2 000 000	2 000 000	100%							_
TOTAL IB												
TOTAL	INV	7	2 000 000	2 000 000	100%							
TOTAL PI	ROJE	ECT	2 000 000	2 000 000	100%							

Amounts net of VAT

⁽¹⁾ In the Activity row, use "X" to identify whether IB or INV

⁽²⁾ Expressed in % of the Total Expenditure - column (a)

4.2 INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (PERIODS BROKEN DOWN BY OUARTER)

Contracts	Start of Tendering/ Call for proposals	Signature of contract	Project Completion
Contract 1.1	Q4 2013	Q2 2014	Q4 2018
Supply Contract			

4.3 CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

4.3.1 Equal Opportunities and non discrimination

There is no specific concern.

4.3.2 Environment and climate change

There is no specific concern

4.3.3 *Minorities and vulnerable groups*

Minorities will equally benefit from the protection of consumer health against rabies.

4.3.4 Civil Society/Stakeholders involvement

Relevant stakeholders consulted during the formulation of the project fiche are:

- Directorate of Animal Health within the Ministry of Agriculture;
- Civil society, farmers and agribusinesses.

Stakeholders were consulted during various meetings and workshops organized by the Directorate of Animal Health with the support of IPA 2008 Project (PAZA).

During and after the implementation of the project, the monthly consultations with the Regional Branches of the Ministry will continue to exchange information regarding activities, problems and state of affairs regarding zoonotic diseases at local level. In addition, specific meetings with stakeholders can be arranged for when needs arise.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR Project Fiche		Project title and number: PF 17: Improve Consumer Protection Against Zoonotic Diseases – II Phase			
		Contracting period expires Contracting period expires three years from the date of conclusion of Financial Agreement			•
	Total budget		EUR 2 000 000		
	IPA budget:		EUR 2 000 000		
Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)		Sources of Verification		
To contribute to increased livestock health and productivity and improved protection of public health in Albania in line with the EU regulations for the control and monitoring of zoonotic agents.	Reported losses of livestock due to the disease Number of humans affected by the disease		Report s from Veterinary office Reports from Institute of Public Health		
Specific objective	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)		Sources of Verification		Assumptions
The specific objective is to reduce the presence and associated risks of rabies in the country by undertaking an effective vaccination on the population of red foxes		disease ed to control the disease ratory analysis on provided	Reports from the veterinary service Laboratory reports		Sufficient staffing of the SVS along with clear definition of the tasks and responsibilities has been ensured well in advance Sufficient amount of funding has been provided to ensure the mobility of the field

			staff and the work of laboratories.
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
Result 1 Potential prevalence in the country and trans-boundary transmission of rabies reduced due to oral vaccination of foxes in accordance with the established requirements and making use of the best experiences in the region	Rate of occurrence of diseases Cases and complaints addressed by population Samples received and analyzed in accordance with the monitoring plan On site verification of the process, number of wild animals receiving the vaccine, uniformity of territory coverage by vaccination Acceptance certificates	Supplier reports on the vaccination process Monitoring and laboratory reports Field survey reports	Full commitment of the Albania government with regard to the allocation of financial and human resources to ensure full staff mobility in the field and sustain the running costs of laboratories involved in animal surveillance system Central veterinary service adequately staffed to meet the tasks and responsibilities related to the implementation of vaccination. Sufficient amount of funding has been provided to ensure the mobility of the field staff and the work of laboratories. Effective cooperation among various institutions and agencies to facilitate actions related to the vaccination process such as Ministry of Defence (flight permits), Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior (public awareness and information), Ministry of Environment (information on wild game) Effective cooperation of the project with the ministry staff at central and local level, Good communication and exchange of strategies with countries in the regional in

			terms of animal disease eradication.
Activities to achieve results	Means / contracts	Costs	Assumptions
Activity 1: Implement the oral vaccination of foxes in the territory of Albania	1 supply contract Contract 1.1 supply contract financed by EU contribution for the vaccination against rabies	EUR 2 000 000	EU Funds released in time Tender process completed in time Effective cooperation of the project with the ministry staff at central and local level

Annex 2: Description of Institutional Framework

The public veterinary service is a unique system and covers the entire territory of Albanian Republic. It is organized and acts under the Ministry of Agriculture on Central and Regional level, Municipality and Commune.

The Directorate of Animal Health in the Ministry of Agriculture is the Central Competent Authority that covers the veterinary activity all over the territory of the country, and its main responsibilities are:

- 1. Elaboration of veterinary policies, prevention, control and eradication of contagious diseases programs in animals;
- 2. Elaboration of short-term, middle-term and long-term strategies of veterinary activities;
- 3. Improvement and approximation of veterinary legislation according to EU standard;
- 4. Monitoring of epizootic situation of contagious diseases in animals together with Veterinary Research Institute and NVEU in compliance with the obligations determined by OIE as well as informing the veterinary service and animal breeding centers;
- 5. Adaptation of programs, coordination and determination of measures related to control and prevention of contagious diseases in animals;
- 6. Elaboration of monthly reports for the animal contagious diseases and informing all Veterinarians and OIE for the situation of contagious diseases;
- 7. Supervision and implementation of the veterinary law and sub laws;
- 8. Supervision of the implementation of all rules and decisions coming from the veterinary law;
- 9. Administration of the financial means for animal health protection, public health and veterinarians training;
- 10. Retention of an annual reserve of financial means for vaccines and bio-products in case of emergencies for controlling the infective diseases of animals and zoonosis.

The Food Safety and Veterinary Institute (FSVI) is the unique national reference laboratory; it is part of the national network of the veterinary service. The activity of the Veterinary Research Institute is expanded in the whole national territory. Within FSVI is organized the National Veterinary Epidemiology and I&R Unit (NVEU), the unit serves as a research and statutory body in the monitoring and prescribing control measures for infectious diseases.

The responsibilities of the FSVI and NVEU are:

- 1. The monitoring of the epizootic situation at national level on diseases caused by viruses, bacteria, moulds, parasites, toxic substances, as well as monitoring of zoonotic diseases;
- 2. The disease diagnosis and elaboration of most efficient disease eradication scheme;
- 3. The production of veterinarian bio-products, like vaccines, antigens, allergens, diagnostic preparations for disease diagnosis and eradication like antigens, hyperimmune sera, etc;
- 4. The micro-biological, chemical, toxic, and radio-biological control of fresh and processed products of animal origin, and of food for animal use locally produced, imported or for export destination;
- 5. The control of residues from anabolic and not authorized substances, bio-preparations and veterinary drugs, in the live animals and poultry, and in their products;
- 6. Engagement as a national center to train the staff of the regional veterinary laboratories, to train and certify the veterinary pharmacist.

Regional Veterinary service is part of 12 Regional Agricultural Directorates that cover the regional veterinary activities, and is headed by the Regional Chief Vet, and cover a total of 157 Official Veterinarians.

Their responsibilities comprise:

- 1. Control the implementation of the veterinary law and other regulations in the veterinary field;
- 2. Controls the epizootic situation in animals and the outspreading of zoonotic diseases with the help of public health protection;
- 3. Controls and takes measures to protect animals from rough treatment;
- 4. Suspends production, trade and the use of products for animals in case of the presence of pathogens and harmful substances that endanger animal and public health;
- 5. Prohibits the trade of animal skins, that have been slaughtered without veterinary examination, or that originate from animals that have died and for which there is no veterinary attestation on the non-contamination of the area, or when they have not been stored separately from the examined skins;
- 6. Suspends animal slaughtering, collection and processing of unprocessed materials and production of the products of animal origin if the prescribed requirements are not fulfilled;

- 7. Prohibits the issue of veterinary certificate in case of contagious diseases outbreaks or suspicion for contagious diseases;
- 8. Suspends establishments and other facilities used for breeding, production and animal markets, when they fall to meet the prescribed requirements according to this law and regulations;
- 9. Takes samples of products of animal origin, raw materials, additives, wastes, water, and other samples for bacteriological and chemical analysis and send them to regional laboratories and to the Food Safety and Veterinary Institute, in order to be analyzed for pathogens and residues with harmful effects on animal and public health;
- 10. Orders the prohibition of the veterinary activity that is not licensed and has shortages in documentation.

ANNEX 3: Reference list of relevant laws and regulations only where relevant

Law no. 10.465, dated 29.09.2011 "On the veterinary service in the republic of Albania".

ANNEX 4: Details per EU funded contract (*) where applicable:

Activity 1: Vaccination against rabies

Contract 1.1: Supply contract

The contract fully funded by EU contribution will regard the vaccination process against rabies to be carried out in 10 campaigns along 5 years. Purchasing of vaccines and vaccination will be carried out through one contract.

Preparation of the technical specifications and the tender dossier will take place during 2013 through the assistance provided under IPA 2008 project in view of the recent experience the WB countries have had with the vaccination against rabies.

ANNEX 5: Project visibility activities

The EC rules for the visibility will be implemented during the whole life of the project and displayed during seminars, workshops, training and other events.