

WP5: Technical Assistance

Supporting EUSAIR embedding into IPA III programmes

INCEPTION REPORT

Introduction to the Technical Assistance Team

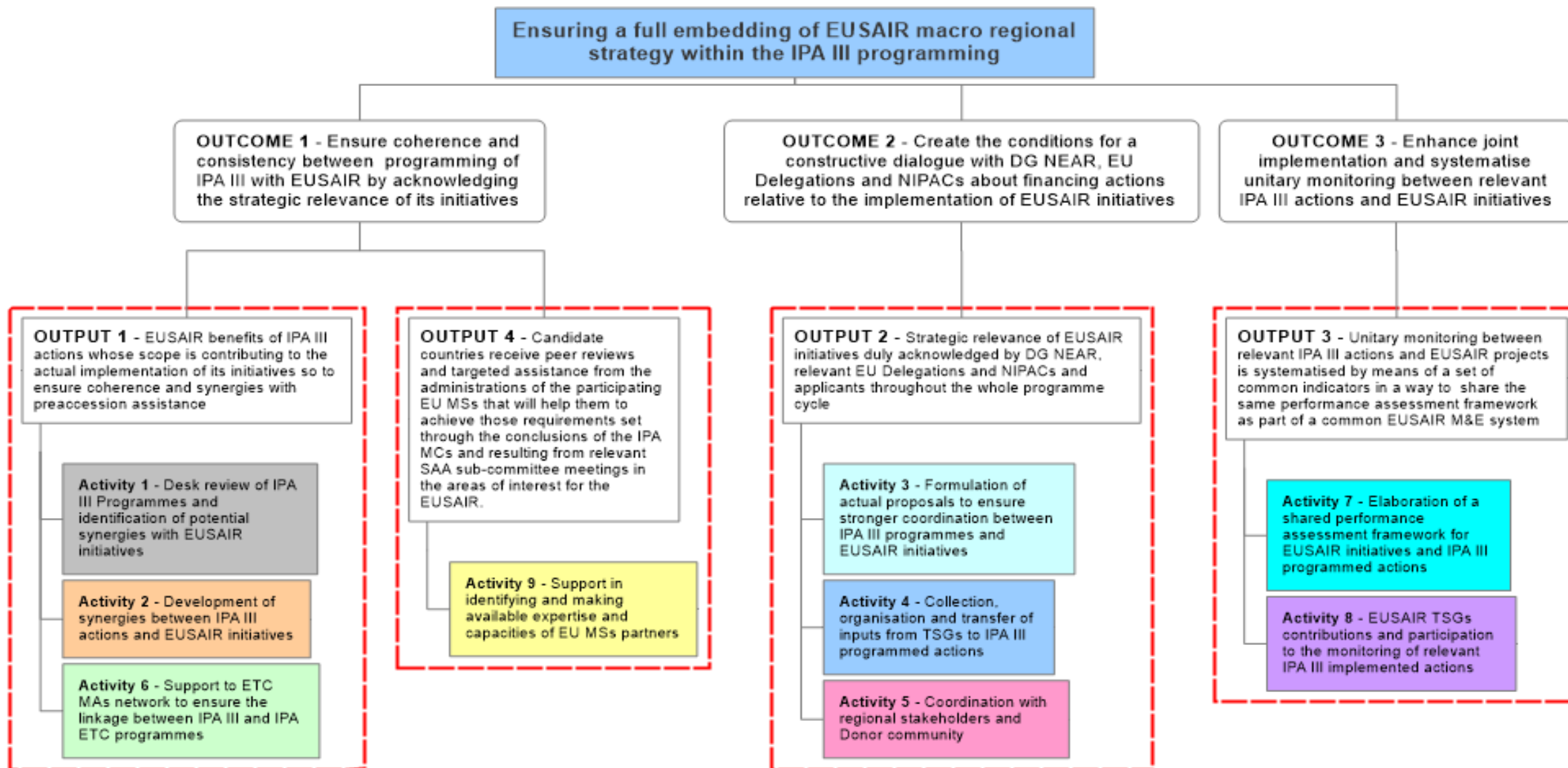
The service contract has been awarded to **Naxta Srl**, Bologna
The company is specialised in both the management of **ETC projects** and in **IPA programming**



Expert	Role
Giulia Righetti	Project Director
Ruggero Tabossi	Team Leader
Svetlana Olenik	IPA Programming expert
	Senior experts
	Junior experts
	Backstopping

Contract duration
36 months
July 2024 - June 2027

Intervention logic of the service Contract



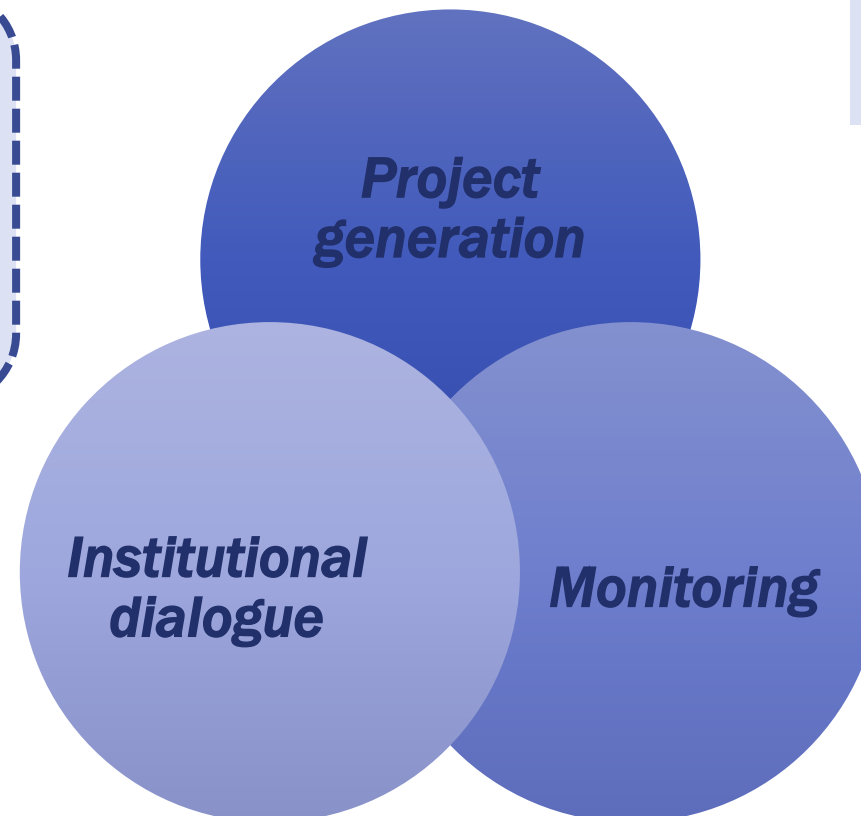
The technical assistance framework

EMBEDDING OPPORTUNITIES and SOURCES

- ➔ IPA III Bilateral annual programmes
- ➔ IPA III Bilateral multiannual programmes
- ➔ IPA III Multi-country actions
- ➔ IPA III CBC Programmes
- ➔ IPA III IPARD
- ➔ WBIF
- ➔ ETC Interreg Programmes
- ➔ EU Programmes
- ➔ RGF
- ➔ National funds

MAIN INTERLOCUTORS

- ➔ DG NEAR (HQ and EUDs)
- ➔ NIPAC Offices
- ➔ TSGs



Expected deliverables

PROVIDING AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK	
The collection of IPA III National / Multi-country Programmes A comprehensive report on IPA III programming	Activity 1
Quarterly updating on IPA III programming relevant to each TSGs	Activity 2
Annual papers with recommendations on concurrent and convergent activities	Activity 5
Relevant additions related to the initiatives carried out by regional stakeholders and Donor	
CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR SUITABLE EMBEDDING	
The formulation of specific reports relevant to each TSG	Activity 1
Working papers on how to embed EUSAIR TSGs inputs in the programming of IPA III	Activity 4
Methodological outline for the MAs network	Activity 6
Matchmaking reports for peer to peer actions	Activity 9
DEVELOPING A CONSISTENT MONITORING FRAMEWORK	
Guidance document on how to establish of a PAF, including indicators' passports and their validation	Activity 7
Working reports for monitoring IPA III actions	Activity 8
Contributions to the annual monitoring of IPA III implementation	
ENSURING SECRETARIAL SUPPORT	
Secretarial support related to the meetings held with DG NEAR and guidance materials	Activity 2
Secretarial support related to the meetings held with NIPAC Offices and guidance materials	Activity 3
Secretarial support related to the transnational events held with MAs network	Activity 6

Assumptions and risks

SOLE PRECONDITION:

the factual and proactive collaboration of the DG NEAR



RISKS	CHANCES	IMPACT
Unavailability of DG NEAR or NIPACs to align IPA programming with EUSAIR	HIGH	HIGH
Untimely responsiveness or lack of capacity that neutralises embedding	MEDIUM	HIGH
Lack of inter and intra-institutional coordination	HIGH	MEDIUM
National priorities may not align perfectly with EUSAIR's strategic objectives	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Limited technical expertise and administrative capacity in project implementation	HIGH	HIGH
Lack of capacities of candidate countries in proceeding with their Reform Agenda	HIGH	LOW

Most effective risk mitigation strategy will rely on the close coordination within StEP WPs and with concurrent projects supporting EUSAIR governance

IPA III

**main findings of the inception phase:
actual opportunities for EUSAIR embedment**

Desk analysis undertaken during the inception phase

REVIEWED:

78 Annual Bilateral Action Documents (2021-2024)

11 Bilateral Multiannual Operational Programmes

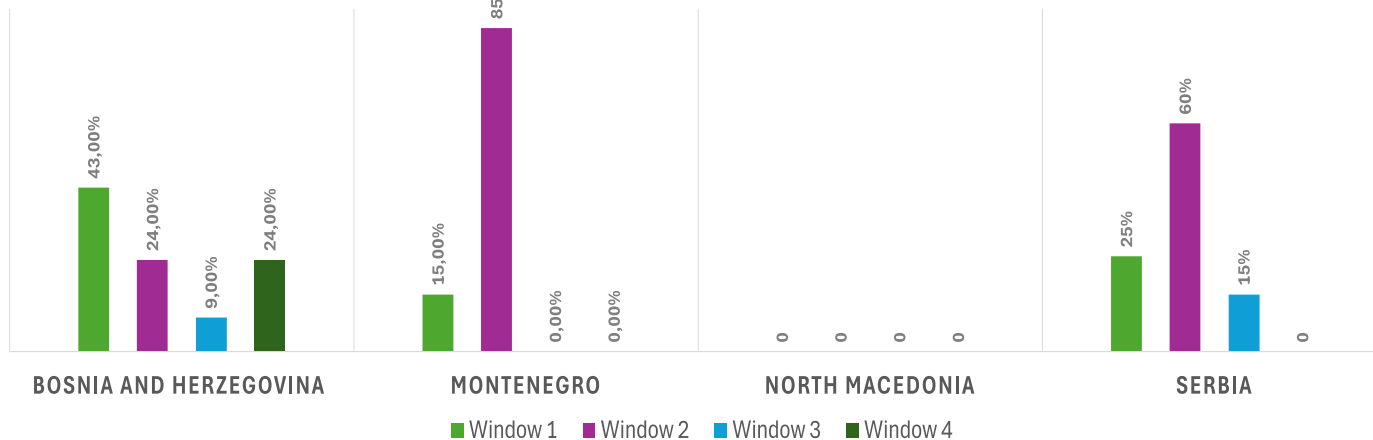
10 Multicountry Action Documents 2021-2024

36 Indicative Bilateral Priorities/Actions 2025-2027

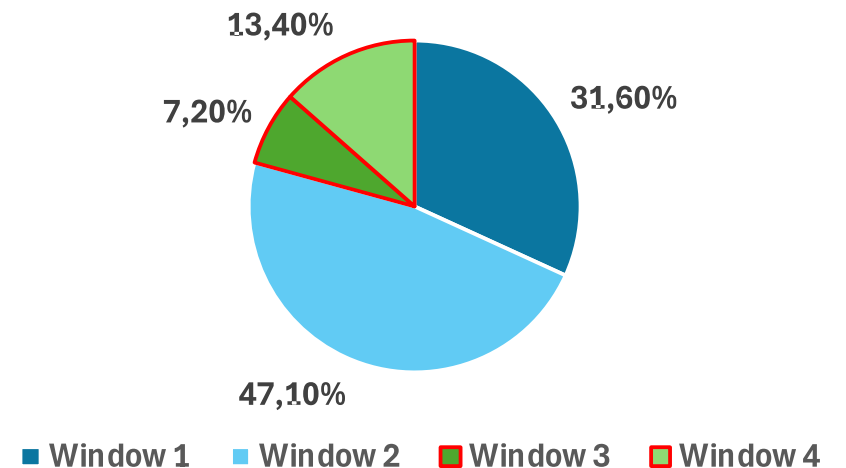
14 Indicative Multi-country Priorities/Actions 2025-2027

Bilateral and Multi-country IPA 2025-2027

BILATERAL IPA: % SHARE OF THE INDICATIVE 2025-27 BUDGET (IF ALREADY KNOWN)



Multi-country IPA: % share of the indicative 2025-27 budget (if already known)



Potential EUSAIR and IPA III alignment

EUSAIR Pillar 1 - Blue Growth

- Aligns with IPA III Window 4 Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth (*fisheries*)
- Also links to IPA III Window 2 Administrative capacity and EU Acquis Alignment (*maritime governance*)

EUSAIR Pillar 2 - Connecting the Region

- Aligns with IPA III Window 3 Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity (*transport, digital economy, energy*)

EUSAIR Pillar 3 - Environmental Quality

- Aligns with IPA III Window 3 Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity (*environment and climate change*)

EUSAIR Pillar 4 - Sustainable Tourism

- Aligns with IPA III Window 4 Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth (*private sector, rural development*)
- Secondary alignment with IPA III Window 3: Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity (*eco-friendly tourism*)

EUSAIR Pillar 5 - Improved Social Cohesion

- Aligns with IPA III Window 4 Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth (*education, employment, inclusion, health*)

Actual alignment with IPA III Bilateral programmes 2021-2024

Pillar 1: Blue Growth

Alignment is **limited**. Coastal countries like AL, MNE, and BiH have some initiatives that indirectly support blue growth, but there is a noticeable lack of targeted actions directly addressing the pillar's objectives

Pillar 2: Connecting the Region

There is **moderate** alignment, with several countries undertaking projects to improve transport and energy infrastructure. However, the focus is often on national improvements rather than enhancing regional connectivity.

Pillar 3: Environmental Quality

Alignment is **strong**. Numerous IPA actions focus on environmental protection, waste management, and climate change mitigation, directly supporting pillar's objectives.

Pillar 4: Sustainable Tourism

Alignment is **limited** and mostly indirect. While some IPA actions support environmental improvements and cultural development that could benefit tourism, there are few initiatives directly targeting sustainable tourism development.

Pillar 5: Improved Social Cohesion

There is **strong** alignment. IPA actions frequently target social inclusion, employment, education, and support for vulnerable groups, directly supporting the pillar's objectives.

Actual alignment with IPA III Multi-country programmes 2021-2024

Pillar 1: Blue Growth

Limited alignment.
Indirect support through SME and innovation initiatives.

Pillar 2: Connecting the Region

Strong alignment on sustainable transport and digital connectivity.
Lack of specific focus on maritime transport and energy networks.

Pillar 3: Environmental Quality

Strong alignment on green transition and environmental protection.
Gaps in addressing specific challenges like habitat protection and biodiversity conservation.

Pillar 4: Sustainable Tourism

Mostly **partial** or complementary alignment.
Lack of direct focus on sustainable tourism initiatives.

Pillar 5: Improved Social Cohesion

Considerable alignment through youth empowerment, employment, and social protection programs.

Opportunities and challenges ahead... Bilateral Programmes

Pillar 1 Blue growth

Lack of direct alignment; shared objectives e.g. through innovation
Minimal integration of Blue Growth actions; landlocked countries pose challenges

Pillar 2 Connecting the region

Common priority to transport infrastructure and green energy initiatives.
Lack of focus on maritime transport, multimodal connectivity, urban nodes and energy networks

Pillar 3 Environmental quality

Mutual goals of environmental protection, sustainable resource management, and combating climate change.
Little direct focus on EUSAIR's marine/coastal biodiversity actions

Pillar 4 Sustainable tourism

Lack of direct alignment; **partial alignment** through economic development, job creation, etc.
No tourism-specific focus; requires cross-sector integration for alignment.

Pillar 5 Improved social cohesion

Common focus on education, employment, and social inclusion.
Inconsistent alignment across countries; limited focus on specific social cohesion actions.

Opportunities and challenges ahead... Multiannual Operational Programmes

Pillar 1 Blue growth

OPs focus on digital economy and environmental protection, **potentially supporting** blue and green technologies.
Minimal focus on fisheries, aquaculture, and maritime sectors.

Pillar 2 Connecting the region

Rail upgrades and digital connectivity in some OPs **align** with regional connectivity.
No focus on maritime transport or developing urban nodes as multimodal hubs.

Pillar 3 Environmental quality

OPs **support** environmental protection and pollution reduction.
Lack of focus on marine biodiversity and cross-border environmental cooperation.

Pillar 4 Sustainable tourism

Economic development programmes for SMEs and digital tools **can support tourism indirectly**.
No specific focus on sustainable tourism.

Pillar 5 Improved social cohesion

OPs **align** with education, employment, and social inclusion initiatives.
Limited focus on youth engagement and social innovation.

Opportunities and challenges ahead... Multi-country Programmes

Pillar 1 Blue growth

EU4Digital **complements** blue/green tech innovation; EU4Green **complements** sustainable practices in fisheries and aquaculture.
No specific focus on maritime governance, fisheries, or aquaculture; limited emphasis on maritime industries.

Pillar 2 Connecting the region

EU4Digital **partially aligns** with digital infrastructure for multimodal connectivity; EU4Energy **partially aligns** with energy networks and green energy initiatives.
No focus on maritime transport; insufficient attention to urban nodes as multimodal hubs.

Pillar 3 Environmental quality

Common focus on environmental protection, climate change mitigation.
No specific focus on marine/coastal biodiversity or transnational habitats; limited support for cross-border environmental projects.

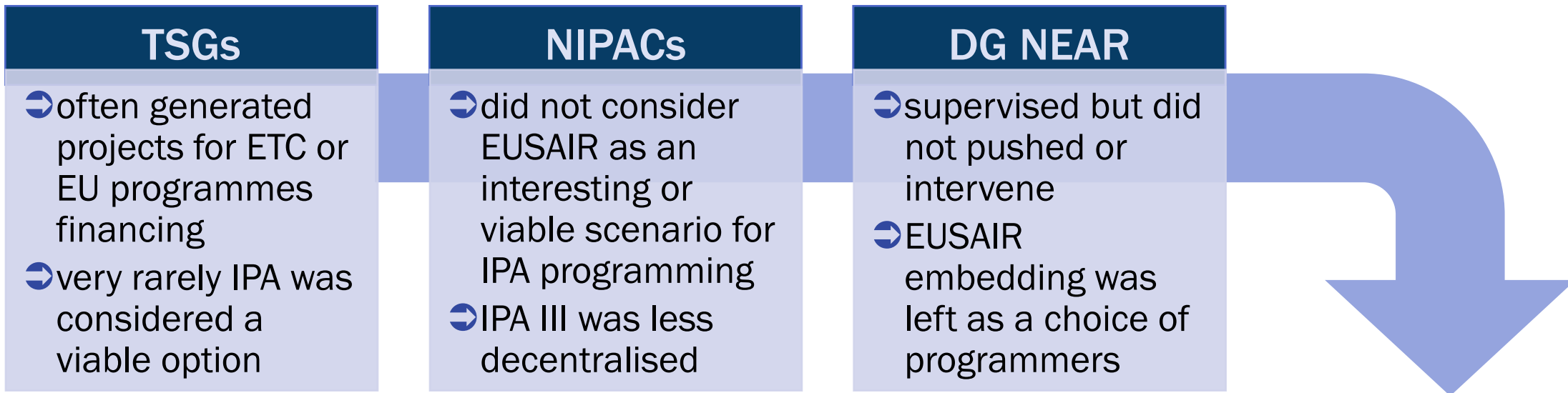
Pillar 4 Sustainable tourism

Economic development initiatives **can indirectly support** tourism; EU4Digital can support digital innovation in tourism.
No tourism-specific programmes; sustainable tourism needs better integration into broader economic/environmental initiatives.

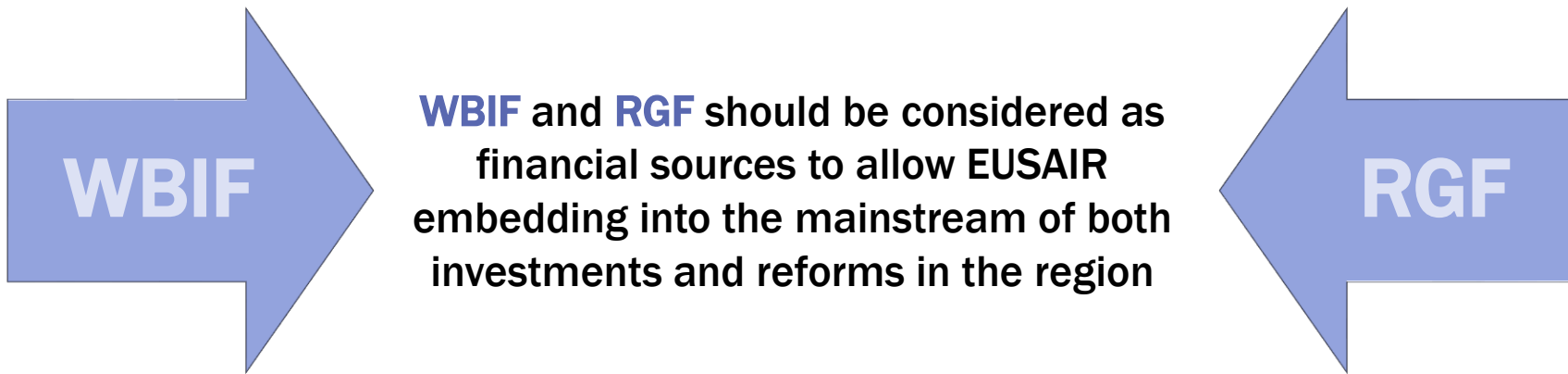
Pillar 5 Improved social cohesion

EU4Youth **supports** youth engagement, employment, and skills development; **emphasis** on social inclusion and equality.
Lack of detailed action alignment with specific social innovation projects; regional socio-economic differences challenge consistent integration.

Conclusions of the Inception phase



It is important to design effective and compelling modalities of interactions among stakeholders.
 It is necessary not to focus exclusively on IPA III, as actual possibilities for embedding are rather limited
 It will be useful to profit of IPA III OPs 2024-27 to test embedding possibilities for the post 2027 period



Next steps...

Activity	Milestones	Planned achievement
A1	➔ Analysis of IPA III programming (1/6)	December 2024
A2	➔ Specific updates for TSG on IPA III programming (1/8)	March 2025
A4	➔ Regular operational guidance on embedding (1/8)	March 2025
A5	➔ Annual papers with recommendations (1/2)	December 2025
A6	➔ Methodological outline for MA Network	July 2025
	➔ Transnational events	To be determined
A7	➔ PAF operational guidance	March 2025
	➔ Report with indicators' passports	April 2026
A8	➔ Annual contributions to IPA III monitoring reports (1/2)	Upon request of NIPACs
A9	➔ Periodic matchmaking reports	To be determined

The first analysis of IPA III programming will be presented to the stakeholders on late January/early February 2025

Thanks

Technical assistance team

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