

3.1.3 Enhance export profile of strategic sectors, including through implementation of the Industrial Development & Business Support Strategy 2030

Summary of checks performed by relevant authorities on the steps for which funding is requested, including weaknesses identified and any corrective actions taken

In accordance with the national legal framework on public internal control, financial management and internal audit, the RGF Regulation and the applicable Commission Implementing Decision, the competent authorities conducted a comprehensive verification process for this reform step.

This included the systematic collection and review of relevant evidence by the Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, Trade and Innovation (MIETI), with internal audit units exercising their functions in accordance with their mandate. The checks and verifications were performed through the relevant layers of the control system, including the units responsible for implementation of this reform step, the Reform Agenda coordination unit in MIETI, the Secretary General of the Ministry and management of Accreditation Directorate.

The Reform Agenda coordination structures within the Office of the Prime Minister carried out additional checks and verifications to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the reported information and supporting evidence.

The step under review	6 testing laboratories supported and 4 certification bodies supported and ready to provide international accreditation
Baseline	No support provided for laboratories and certification bodies in 2023
Deadline of the step	June 2026
Actual results	The progress to date is as follows: 1. Terms of Reference have been prepared for the selection of an expert who will support the development of a support scheme for conformity assessment bodies. 2. With the support of LuxDev, project KSV/023- “Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in Kosovo”, an expert has been contracted and is currently working on the development of the support scheme for conformity assessment bodies (CABs). 3. Two questionnaires for testing laboratories and business have been drafted by the Expert and distributed to the groups. 4. KIESA has allocated a budget of EUR 450,000 for the implementation of this activity. 5. Scheme for support conformity assessment bodies is expected to be finalized and approved by July 2026. After the approval, the scheme will be published by KIESA. The Lux Development project KSV/023 “Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in Kosovo” has supported Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, Trade and Innovation with expert to work on the support scheme.

Evidence provided	1. Terms of Reference for the selection of an expert.
Checks performed in the verification of the step and related findings	During the verification of this reform step, all relevant evidence was reviewed and summarised in the control checklist, while all supporting documents were properly stored to ensure a complete audit trail. The conducted checks and verifications confirmed that: • all required documents, as specified in Annex 1 of the Reform Agenda, were provided and attached to this report; • the submitted evidence is consistent with the description and requirements of the reform step set out in the Commission Implementing Decision; • the submitted documentation confirms the fulfilment of the reform step; • the submitted documentation confirms the period in which the reform step was fulfilled. Based on the checks and verifications conducted, the evidence provided confirms the progress of the reform step and the relevant implementation period. No related findings were identified.
Compliance with general principles and DNSH principle	The implementation of this step does not contravene/contravenes the general principles outlined in Article 4 and 11(4) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1449 and Article 3 of the Facility Agreement. The implementation of this step does not contravene/contravenes the ‘Do No Significant Harm’ principle (DNSH).
Double funding	As indicated above, technical assistance provided under a bilateral project with the Government of Luxembourg supported the Ministry in the design of the support scheme. Based on our assessment against the applicable RGF double-funding guidelines, this support does not constitute double funding.
Clear conclusion on the achievement of the step	This reform step has not been fully achieved by June 2026. It is in grace period.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Support of the Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, Trade and Innovation (MIETI) for designing of the support scheme to establish the certification bodies ready for international accreditation and expansion of accredited services in testing laboratories

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND CONTEXT

The missions will take place in the context of the project “Sustainable and inclusive growth” in Kosovo. This area is relatively new and follows SDG 8 of the United Nations, defined as “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. Both governments see the area as an opportunity to open a way to diversify their partnership on topics of high interest, such as the green transition, digital transformation, strengthening the innovation ecosystem and the capacities in cybersecurity.

The KSV/023 “Sustainable and inclusive growth in Kosovo” project aims to contribute to sustainable economic growth by supporting innovation, inclusiveness, and social development in a greener Kosovo. The project aims to encourage innovation and local and foreign investments in an e-secured and transparent environment. The assumption is that through fostering innovation and foreign investments, more jobs are created, resulting in an improvement of the government finances.

The project’s first component is establishing the Sovereign fund of the Republic of Kosovo (SFRK). The fund promises to improve government finances and attract foreign investments, which would lead to economic growth. The counterpart is the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

The second component will improve cybersecurity, as Kosovo has a growing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector undergoing a digital transformation, which needs protection against hybrid cybersecurity threats. The partner is the Ministry for Internal Affairs (MIA).

The third component refers to entrepreneurs' stimulation of innovation in the private sector to increase the value added to products and services and overcome barriers to export, leading to economic growth. The Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade (MIET) will implement it.

The fourth component relates to the support for digitalization at Parliament in replacing its non-functional electronic voting system as it will improve not only transparency and accountability of voting but also is expected to enhance information services to the public and remove a specific hurdle on the path to integration into the European Union (EU). The counterpart is the Parliament of Kosovo.

Therefore, the project is structured around four results, which are:

- Result 1: the SFRK is ready for implementation;
- Result 2: civil servants’ cyber security capabilities are improved;
- Result 3: the innovation fund for the development of private companies is up and running;
- Result 4: an e-voting system for Parliament is operational.

The budget is 6 500 000 EUR for three years. The implementation mandates and bilateral agreements have been signed, and the project started on November 1, 2023.

The current mission will focus on Result 3, respective to the stimulation of innovation in the private sector, for increasing added value of products and services in overcoming barriers to export, thus leading to economic growth. This measure is led by the Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, Trade and Innovation (MIETI).

The government of Kosovo approved the Strategy for Industrial Development and Business Support-2030 (SIDBS) on June 29, 2023. In the analysis of the situation, the strategic document emphasizes the weaknesses in the production sector of Kosovo, where product quality controls at the enterprise level are very necessary, while the lack of certifying bodies for products and the insufficient number of testing laboratories with relevant methods for performing product quality controls also negatively affects the competitiveness of enterprises and export

growth. The Strategy for Industrial Development and Business Support 2030 (SIDBS) identify certification and testing capacities as key enablers for product innovation and industrial transformation.

Certification and testing of products by internationally recognized certification bodies and testing laboratories is evidence to prove the safety and performance of the respective products and a prerequisite for increased export.

In this respect, KSV/023 project is supporting the Department of Industry (DoI) to engage a consultant for designing the scheme for supporting Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) to get accredited in the National Accreditation Bodies (NABs) in EU or in the region.

This support scheme shall target, the NABs who have signed a Multilateral Agreement / Bilateral Agreement (MLA/BLA) with European Accreditation Corporation (EA) for construction products. Further, this support should consider the design of measures related to the extension of accreditation fields for testing laboratories through new services and equipment specific to construction products.

The planned actions aim to improve access to testing and certification services for local construction products and improve their ability to get relevant certificates by manufacturers, compliance with EU market requirements, export growth and integration into European value chains.

This scheme contributes to the realization of Objective 1 of the Strategy for Industrial Development and Business Support 2030 (SIDBS). By strategically strengthening the expansion of industrial production and local value chains, while fostering innovation, digitalization, and technological upgrading within certification and testing services, improving access to local product testing and certification services, and enhancing the adoption of relevant certificates by manufacturers, the scheme strives to unlock Kosovo's industrial potential.

In particular, the scheme should promote the introduction of innovative testing methods, advanced technologies, and digital quality management systems, enabling conformity assessment bodies to respond to evolving market and regulatory requirements, including green and EU standards.

These efforts are essential not only for increasing economic sustainability but also for advancing sustainable development goals (SDGs), as closely aligning with the National Development Goals (DGs)).

2. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The main objective of the mission is to design a support scheme for the creation of certification bodies and their preparation for international accreditation within the above-mentioned context. Further, the expansion of accredited services in testing laboratories shall be considered, while embedding innovation, digitalization, modernization, and technological upgrading within Kosovo's quality infrastructure system.

The specific objective is to design a fully operational, implementable scheme for supporting:

- Establishing and strengthening of Certification Bodies (CBs) for construction products
- Expansion of accredited services in testing laboratories (*Extension of accredited fields for testing laboratories for construction products*)
- Facilitation of accreditation through EU-recognized National Accreditation Bodies (NABs).

3. TASKS

The contractor is expected to deliver the following as interpreted in and throughout the terms of reference, interpreted in accordance with the following;

Task 1: Situational Analysis

Analysis of the existing situation in Kosovo, collection of data from associations, laboratories and other actors for the possibility of creating certification bodies is foreseen in this task as part of the deliverables, complemented further with the points in the table below. The assignment as described in this first task shall consider the development of the list of international accrediting bodies that can be contracted for the possibility of evaluating

and accrediting the certification bodies established in Kosovo and their interconnection concerning the expansion of the areas for testing laboratories.

Task 2: Design of the Support Scheme

The consultant shall design a fully operational scheme for two windows, expressed in the analysis as:

- **Window 1: Establish and strengthen Certification Bodies (CABs) - construction products;**
Support the creation and operational readiness of new Certification Bodies for construction products, aligned with EU accreditation requirements.
- **Window 2: Support for expansion of accredited services in testing laboratories.**
Expansion of Accredited Services in Testing Laboratories - Support existing laboratories to expand their scope of accredited services through technological upgrading, innovation, and digitalization.

Task 3: Finalization of scheme design with Operationalization Tools

The expert/consultant should design the scheme for the support and establishment of certification bodies. The scheme must offer the possibility of benefiting and creating certification bodies in the identified sub-sectors. In addition, relevant stakeholders such as Ministries, sectoral associations, and Faculties will also contribute with their expertise to improve the scheme, ensuring alignment with the industry's best practices.

3.1. Deliverables and reports

Report title	Content	Deliverable	Schedule
Task 1: Situational Analysis	1.1 Market and Institutional Analysis • Mapping of existing CABs and testing laboratories in Kosovo • Identification of gaps in certification services for construction products • Analysis of demand from industry (manufacturers/exporters) • Mapping of relevant EU and regional NABs	Report 1 - Analytical report with identified gaps, needs, and priority intervention areas.	4 days (onsite, MIETI)
	1.2 Stakeholder Consultation • Stakeholder Consultation with Industry associations, Testing laboratories, Universities and technical institutes, relevant ministries and agencies.		
Task 2: Design of the Support Scheme	2.1 Scheme Design • Objectives and intervention logic • Target beneficiaries (CABs, laboratories, consortia, etc.) • Grants (investment, equipment, accreditation costs) • Technical assistance (capacity building, mentoring) 2.2 Eligibility and Selection • Technical and financial eligibility requirements • Evaluation criteria and scoring methodology • Prioritization logic (e.g., sectors, export potential, innovation) 2.3 Implementation Modalities • Application procedures • Evaluation and contracting process • Financial management arrangements 2.4 Support to Testing Laboratories • Accreditation scope expansion • Equipment upgrading	Report 2 - Draft Support Scheme	6 days (2 home days, 4 onsite days MIETI)

	- Cooperation with CBs 2.5 International Accreditation Linkages - Identification of relevant National Accreditation Bodies -NABs - Cooperation models (mentoring, twinning, outsourcing)		
Task 3: Finalization of scheme design with Operationalisa tion Tools	3.1. Prepare all implementation tools - Guidelines for applicants - Application forms - Budget templates - Business plan templates - Evaluation forms - Frequently Asked Question(s) FAQ 3.2. Finalisation - Presentation to MIETI and LuxDev - Incorporation of feedback - Finalisation of all documents and the executive summary	Report 3: Finalized Support Scheme Package (Including the executive summary version (1-5 pages max.)	7 days (5 home days, 2 onsite days, MIEI)

4. PROFILE(S) OF EXPERTS AND MISSION DURATION

The place of performance for the services will be in Pristina, Kosovo. The duration of the assignment is for a period of approximately 5 weeks, from May to July 2026.

The estimated amount for this mission is maximum EUR 9,500 (lump sum).

The expert is expected and required to get engaged on a diligent and priority principle in this project.

The expert shall consist of:

Local consultant:

(i) Qualifications and skills:

Educational Background:

- Advanced degree in economics, engineering, natural sciences, quality infrastructure, or related field.

(ii) General professional experience:

- Minimum 10 years of relevant experience.
- Experience linking accreditation with industrial policy objectives: competitiveness, export readiness, and compliance with international markets.

(iii) Specific professional experience:

Proven experience in:

- Designing and implementing support schemes / grant programmes for industry or SMEs
- Quality infrastructure, with specific experience in accreditation systems (ISO/IEC 17011), testing and certification
- Designing and/or managing proficiency testing and interlaboratory comparison schemes
- Cooperation with European and international accreditation frameworks (e.g. EA, ILAC) and alignment with international standards

- Demonstrated ability to integrate industrial policy objectives with quality infrastructure instruments, ensuring that accreditation, testing, and certification services effectively support industrial competitiveness, compliance, and export growth.

Knowledge of:

- EU standards and accreditation systems (EA, ISO/IEC frameworks)
- Kosovo's industrial and regulatory environment

(iv) Language:

- Fluency in English and Albanian

(iv) General Description Responsibilities.

The Consultant shall be responsible for the design, implementation framework, and delivery of a comprehensive, evidence-based support scheme for the establishment and strengthening of conformity assessment bodies (certification bodies) and testing laboratories in the construction products sector. The assignment shall include, but not be limited to, the conduct of a sectoral and institutional gap analysis in the field of construction products, the development of operational and technical modalities aligned with international quality infrastructure requirements (including accreditation, testing, and certification standards), and the definition of implementation mechanisms to ensure sustainability and compliance. The Consultant shall ensure that all outputs are fully aligned with national industrial policy objectives and delivered to MIETI and LuxDev in accordance with agreed timelines and quality standards.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF DELIVERABLES

All outputs will be subject to formal approval by the supervisor of the contract (MIETI/ Department of Industry). Payments will be linked to acceptance of deliverables.