Evaluation Plan

Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme 2021-2027

MAY 2023

CONTENTS

A. OBJECTIVES, COVERAGE AND COORDINATION

1. PROGRAMME LEVEL EVALUATION

Evaluation of Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme 2021-2027 (further on referred to as the Programme) aims at assessing both the performance and effects of the Programme. The evaluation criteria related to effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, inclusiveness and non-discrimination are expected to be covered. As well, the impact, sustainability, EU added value and visibility of the programme and its contribution to the EU strategic goals and priorities are aimed at a later stage.

The current EvalPlan sets out an evaluation strategy for the entire implementation period of the programme and has been drawn up by MA in cooperation with NA, building on the input of the Evaluation Unit. The drafting process took into account the provisions of the applicable EU regulations (Interreg Regulation – no. 1059/2021, Common Provisions Regulation – no. 1060/2021, ERDF-CF Regulation – no. 1058/2021, IPA III Regulation – no. 1529/2021) and Better Regulation Guidance [1] and followed closely the Staff Working Document on performance, monitoring and evaluation issued by the European Commission[2], the Better Regulation Guidelines[3] and also took into account the Guide for Drafting the Evaluation Plans of the 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy in Romania[4] developed under the service agreement to improve monitoring and evaluation capacity in the context of EU-funded programs in Romania (2021-2027) signed between MEIP and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. As well, the feedback received from the EC Evaluation Helpdesk on the previous generation of evaluation plans drafted by the Evaluation Unit was also used in selecting the types of information to be included in this plan.

Abbreviations and glossary of terms

MA	Managing Authority which is responsible for managing the programme with a view to delivering the objectives of the programme
NA	National Authority is the counterpart of the Managing Authority, responsible for the coordination of the programme management in Serbia. It takes part in ESC.
MC	Monitoring Committee. Overall monitoring of the Programme implementation lies within the competencies of the MC. MC shall examine the progress made in carrying out evaluations, syntheses of evaluations and any follow-up given to findings. MC shall approve the EvalPlan and any amendment thereto.
JS	Joint Secretariat. It assists the MA and the MC in carrying out their respective functions. The joint secretariat shall also provide information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under Interreg programmes and shall assist beneficiaries and partners in the implementation of operations. It may participate in ESC meetings.
MA Unit	Unit MA Romania-Serbia within MDPWA/ Directorate General European Territorial Cooperation/ Directorate MA for European Territorial Cooperation Programmes in charge with managing the Programme

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[1] https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en

[2] The Staff Working Document on performance, monitoring and evaluation of the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund in 2021-2027 – EC website

[3] https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en

[4] https://www.evaluare-structurale.ro/en/web/guest/resurse-metodologice - Guide

Evaluation Unit	Evaluation Unit within MDPWA/ Directorate General European Territorial Cooperation/ Directorate MA for European Territorial Cooperation Programmes ensuring the evaluation function for the Interreg programmes
MDPWA	The Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration in Romania, hosting the MA for the Interreg programmes, including Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme. The organisational chart detailing the location of the relevant departments can be found as annex.
MEIP	The Ministry of European Investment and Projects in Romania. Institution coordinating the management of EU funds in Romania, in which ECU is located.
ECU	Evaluation Central Unit. Unit within MEIP which plays a central role in the overall evaluation set-up of EU funds in Romania. It takes part in ESC.
Interreg funds	The ERDF and the external financing instruments of the Union that support the Interreg Programmes (in this case, IPA III)
ERDF	The European Regional Development Fund. In line with Regulation (EU) no. 1058/2021, the ERDF shall contribute to reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions within the Union, and to reducing the backwardness of the least favoured regions through participation in the structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind and in the conversion of declining industrial regions, including by promoting sustainable development and addressing environmental challenges
IPA III	The Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance. With its general objective established in Regulation (EU) no. 1529/2021, the instrument also supports Interreg programmes involving IPA countries
NDICI	The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe. With its general objectives established in Regulation (EU) no. 947/2021, the instrument also supports Interreg programmes involving countries in the neighbourhood area.
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
ESC	Evaluation Steering Committee. It supervises the evaluation process, coordinating in terms of: Terms of Reference (for evaluations conducted externally), quality of the evaluation reports.
EvalPlan	Evaluation Plan. The EvalPlan is an instrument for planning the evaluation activities for the whole programming period, which is approved by MC. Its role is to improve the quality of evaluations carried out during the programming period. The ToR are drafted starting from the provisions of the EvalPlan.
ToR	Terms of Reference. A written document presenting the scope of the evaluation, the key questions, the indicative methods to be used, the resources, schedule and reporting requirements.
Effectiveness	How successful EU action has been in achieving or progressing towards its objectives, looking for evidence of why, whether or how the changes are linked to the EU intervention
Efficiency	The costs and benefits of the EU intervention as they accrue to different stakeholders, identifying what factors are driving these costs/benefits and how these factors relate to the EU intervention, depending on data

	availability; otherwise, qualitative analysis may concentrate on the identification of inefficiencies
Relevance	How well the objectives of the EU intervention being evaluated (still) match the (current) needs and problems
Coherence	How well the intervention works internally and with other EU interventions
EU added value	The value resulting from EU interventions that is additional to the value that would have resulted from interventions initiated at regional or national levels
Inclusiveness	The capacity of the programmes to include and assist different segments of population and especially the more fragile and distant ones from public support
Non-discrimination	The extent to which all the individuals – or the individual organisations – have an equal and fair chance to access opportunities made available by the programme
Visibility	How the communication activities of the programme make the EU policy visible to the interested population and appraise the public awareness of the EU financial and policy effort
Impact	The changes associated with a particular intervention which occur over the longer term
Sustainability	Whether the benefits of a project or programme are likely to continue after its finalisation

2. ROLE AND MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION PLAN

The EvalPlan represents a practical management tool for the implementation of the Programme by providing the framework for the implementation of quality evaluations to be used effectively by MA, in order to contribute to the implementation of an evidence-based programme. As well, the generated findings can become roots for setting the elements for the next programming period.

The **objectives** of this EvalPlan are:
- to improve the quality of evaluations carried out during the programming period, through proper planning and agreed procedural steps;
- to facilitate informed programme management and policy decisions aiming at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme and at streamlining the next programming period;
- to set the guiding framework for the impact evaluation of the Programme;
- to ensure the proportionality with the financial allocation of the Programme and the practicality in terms of alignment with the expected evolution of the Programme.

In addition, the EvalPlan ensures that the evaluation criteria mentioned in the regulations are taken into account while performing the evaluations of the Programme, in line with art. 3(1) of the Interreg Regulation: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value, as well as inclusiveness, non-discrimination, visibility.

Formal arrangements

The EvalPlan is submitted for approval to the MC within one year from the adoption of the Programme, in line with art. 35(6) of the Interreg Regulation. It may be later amended in line with the evolution of the Programme, amendments to it being subject to MC decisions. In case of emerging needs, additional ad-hoc evaluations to the ones clearly indicated in the EvalPlan may be carried out.

3. COVERAGE AND RATIONALE

This EvalPlan covers Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme 2021-2027 for the entire programming period, taking into account that the impact evaluation has to be completed by 30 June 2029 according to art. 35(2) of the Interreg Regulation. For the impact evaluation, the interventions of the 2014-2020 CBC programme between Romania and Serbia in certain fields are also covered, their aggregated effect being analysed.

The Programme is part of the Interreg A strand in line with art. 3(1)(b)(i) of the Interreg regulation, namely external cross-border cooperation between adjacent border regions of one Member State and one IPA III beneficiary. The CBC strand is supported by the EU to promote integrated and harmonious regional development between neighbouring border regions. The neigbouring NUTS III border regions covered by the Programme are 3 counties of Romania (Timiş, Caraş-Severin, Mehedinţi), representing 9% of the national territory, and 6 districts of Serbia (Severnobanatski, Srednjobanatski, Južnobanatski, Podunavski, Braničevski, Borski), representing 20.8% of the national territory. The Programme territory has a population of roughly 2.2 million and covers 548 km of border length, out of which 235 km being represented by the Danube river. Along the border there are 8 road border crossings, 2 railroad crossings and 1 fluvial crossing.

The Programme is funded by ERDF, IPA III (total Interreg funds of 74,566,827 euro) as well as match-funding from the two participating countries, adding up to a total budget of 87,725,681 euro and was approved by the European Commission in July 2022.

The performance framework overview table of the Programme is presented in Annex A, which correlates the types of actions, the estimated budget, the output and result indicators and the intervention fields, by specific objective.

Analysis as regards a shared Evaluation Plan

Besides Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme, MDPWA is MA for two internal CBC programmes (Interreg VI-A Romania–Bulgaria Programme, Interreg VI-A Romania-Hungary Programme), two external CBC NDICI programmes (Interreg NEXT Romania-Republic of Moldova Programme, Interreg NEXT Romania-Ukraine Programme) and one transnational cooperation NDICI programme (Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme).

The territorial distribution of the Interreg Programmes that Romania acts as Managing Authority for during 2021-2027 is all around the country borders, covering NUTS III and NUTS II regions from a variety of countries – EU member states, candidate and neighbouring countries. Part of the NUTS III regions covered by Romania-Serbia Programme are shared with other two CBC programmes, which are ERDF-financed programmes with a significantly higher budget share. Therefore, a common Evaluation Plan for more Interreg programmes that would also cover Romania-Serbia Programme is considered unfeasible to be put into practice.

4. ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT EVIDENCE

The first step in designing the future is learning from the past.

In order to root the evaluation of the future programme in the available evidence, the direct sources of information on the previous programming period that contain evaluation-related useful evidence have been analysed and are detailed below.

General observation

In addition to programme-targeted evaluations, the Interreg programmes in Romania were also covered by overarching evaluations carried out at Partnership Agreement level. As experience has shown, although evaluation usually brings valuable findings, these findings often come too late or are based on the information available up to a cut-off date that is well back in time. In some cases, especially as regards the financial data and indicators' targets, at the time the recommendations are issued, the bodies of the respective programme had to already make decisions based on monitoring and projections, while the

pertinent recommendations of the evaluators had sometimes been already implemented at the time they were made. This is considered a risk derived from the length of programme evaluations.

<u>Annual implementation reports for the 2014-2020 Programme</u>

The annual implementation reports prepared by the programme are scarce in terms of issues affecting the performance of the programme and measures taken, pointing to no major holdbacks in implementation. According to the annual implementation reports for 2017 and 2018 the issues that might have affected the performance of the programme were tackled by revising the programme, including the financial allocations, which also impacted the rate of achievement of the indicators. As well, the second call for proposals targeted the underachieved indicators. It can be therefore concluded that the managing structures monitored closely the evolution of the programme and followed closely the expected evolution of the programme indicators based on the financed projects and took timely measures to ensure a high rate of achievement.

As regards tackling the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual implementation reports for 2020 and 2021 pointed out that the programme had taken several measures in order to support the projects under implementation, among which the electronic signature of documents, allowing the suspension/prolongation of the implementation period, using the economies for projects selected from the reserve list of the second call for proposals.

<u>2014-2020 Programme evaluations</u>

Indeed, the evaluations performed for the 2014-2020 programme showed that programme implementation was effective in terms of procedures, processes and electronic monitoring system, as well as the support provided to applicants and project partners. Overall, the programme was found to have along its lifecycle a smooth implementation with a low risk of decommitment and high probability to achieve the majority of objectives in terms of output indicators.

The previous Romania-Serbia CBC programmes were not evaluated on standard terms as regards efficiency. The analysis performed was mainly qualitative and followed the efficiency of the implementation systems in order to identify possible inefficiencies. The evaluation of the current programme may go deeper in examining the administrative costs and in identifying any underused simplification opportunities. Applying fully-fledged cost-benefit analysis methods, however, may still be challenging on programme level.

Since no major issues were identified as regards efficiency or effectiveness and the management and control system is a roll-over of the previous one, the analysis should focus on whether there are bottlenecks or major issues faced on this circuit and whether the new elements were effective in practice - as the use of the HIT, more extensive use of SCOs, financing of operations of strategic importance, large infrastructure and limited financial value projects, TA flat rate. Evaluating the efficiency of project submission, contracting and implementation and the support granted by the Programme authorities to beneficiaries would be more useful in practice if organised as an ongoing process.

A quality assessment of the result indicators was performed pointing that at least 4 indicators were not fully adequate since the phenomena measurements were not directly linked to the changes the projects could actually make. The evaluation also concluded that the indicators proposed for the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme 2021-2027 are in line with the regulations and recommendations of the European Commission and avoid the deficiencies of the result indicators from the previous programming period.

The evidence brought by the evaluation of the previous programme was also integrated in the programming process for the 2021-2027 programme, proving that the programme is oriented towards performing useful evaluations and towards making practical use of the evaluation results.

The evaluation has also showed that projects implemented under all priority axes for the 2014-2020 programme meet their targets and achieve their expected results, generating a positive, visible and sustainable impact in institutions and communities where they are implemented. However, the number, scale and scope of the projects funded by the

programme did not allow a conclusion on a significant contribution of the programme to the progress observed in the programme area in the financed fields. The previous impact evaluation therefore pointed out that while the financing was making a difference, the fact that it was limited to the budget of an IPA CBC programme that covered several NUTSIII regions made it difficult to disentangle its effects in the bigger picture for each and every specific objective financed.

<u>Policy context</u>

Policy wise, thinking about the overall aims of the two funds that feed into the allocation for this Programme, the **ERDF** aims to contribute to the objective of strengthening the economic, social and territorial cohesion and to reducing disparities between the level of development of the various regions and **IPA III** aims to support the IPA beneficiaries in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required to comply with Union values and to progressively align to Union rules, standards, policies and practices with a view to future Union membership, thereby contributing to mutual stability, security, peace and prosperity. However, the aim of the **CBC programmes** is more targeted in the regulations, as they are listed to promote integrated and harmonious regional development between neighbouring border regions. Moreover, the regulations no longer require impact evaluation at the level of each priority, so evaluation may be approached differently for this Programme, given the findings of the previous Programme's impact evaluation.

Therefore, as regards this particular programme rather than evaluating the separate contribution that the programme brings to the environmental protection and risk management (be it nature protection and preservation, renewable energy, energy efficiency or climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience), to social and economic development (be it access to inclusive education and training, access to health care or enhancing the role of culture and tourism) or to increasing border management capacity (enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders), it would make more sense to evaluate at programme level how the support received from the Interreg funds brought its contribution to what the CBC programmes are set to achieve, which is the integrated and harmonious regional development in the eligible area, highlighting the peak fields.

<u>Continuity of interventions</u>

In order to use this approach, the first step is analysing whether the interventions under the 2021-2027 programme may be considered a continuation of the interventions of the 2014-2020 programme and in case new intervention fields emerged, these should undergo a regular impact evaluation centred on the programme's contribution to the developments in these new fields. To this end, a comparison is made in the table below, which also took into account the types of actions covered by the two programmes:

Present 2021-2027 interventions	Related 2014-2020 interventions/projects
(PO2)(vii) Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution	(PA2) (code 085) Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature protection and green infrastructure
4.31 mil. euro	5.39 mil. euro
(PO2)(ii) Promoting renewable energy in accordance with Directive (EU) 2018/2001, including the sustainability criteria set out therein	(PA2)(S.O. 2.1.) Enhancing protection and sustainable use of natural resources / projects 12, 300, 363
3.89 mil. euro	2.3 mil. euro
(PO2)(i) Promoting energy efficiency and reducing green-house gas emissions	(PA3) (code 044) Intelligent transport systems (including the introduction of

	demand management, tolling systems, IT monitoring, control and information systems)
3.63 mil. euro	3.5 mil. euro
(PO2)(iv) Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches	(PA2) (code 087) Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks e.g. erosion, fires, flooding, storms and drought, including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures + (code 088) Risk prevention and management of non-climate related natural risks (i.e. earthquakes) and risks linked to human activities (e.g. technological accidents), including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures
12.12 mil. euro	10.5 mil. euro
(PO4)(ii) Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and life-long learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training	(PA1)(code 102) Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility + (code 109) Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability + (code 116) Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups + (code 113) Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment
6.71 mil. euro	5.77 mil. euro
(PO4)(v) Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family-based and community-based care	(PA1)(code 053) Health Infrastructures
16.48 mil. euro	17.20 mil. euro
(PO4)(vi) Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation	(PA4) Attractiveness for sustainable tourism
8.29 mil euro	8.15 mil. euro

(ISO1)(a) Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders - implemented exclusively by a strategic importance project selected by the joint working group during the programming process (border management)	n/a
11.73 mil. euro	n/a

As it can be noticed from the table above, all interventions, apart from the ones under ISO1, may be considered similar to the ones implemented in the 2014-2020 programme (as also derived from the project-level analysis performed for establishing the targets in the Performance Framework Methodology Paper, as the targets for all the chosen indicators could be established by extrapolating the relevant information as regards the projects financed in the previous programming period). Additionally, similar interventions benefit from a largely similar budget as the ones in the previous programming period, as well. Therefore, it can be expected that the impact of the 2021-2027 programme in these fields would also prove in practice hard to be disentangled from other factors, because of the limited budget and area covered.

However, given the slightly higher budget in both programming periods for climate change adaptation and risk prevention, for health care, for sustainable tourism and for education and training, as well as the operations of strategic importance and large infrastructure projects expected to be financed in these fields by the 2021-2027 Programme, the impact evaluation may be highlighted in these three fields, especially if it takes into account the combined interventions for the two programming periods.

As regards ISO1, since the entire priority will be implemented through a single operation of strategic importance, its impact may be analysed in a targeted way.

Additional relevant information on the programming document for 2021-2027

In search of the major trends that could translate into future evaluation questions, the analysis of the 2021-2027 programming document showed clear focus on partnership, on capitalization (especially as regards health, climate change adaptation and risk prevention), commitment to horizontal principles (equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women, sustainable development, DNSH - "do no significant harm"), alignment with EUSDR and EUSAIR (common pillars on green and sustainable energy, environmental protection, biodiversity and natural habitats, strengthening the institutional capacity and cooperation, border management and security, but also related to culture and tourism, promoting common cultural and touristic values, sustainable and responsible tourism), consideration of the core principles of the New Bauhaus Initiative, promotion of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions and of strategic use of public procurement.

5. COORDINATION MECHANISMS

In Romania, ECU, as part of MEIP, plays a central role in the overall evaluation set-up of EU funds and is in charge of both Partnership Agreement-level evaluation and ensuring the methodological coordination of the overall evaluation process and promoting capacity building at system level. At a higher level, the Coordination Committee established for the Partnership Agreement approves Evaluation Plans for national programmes, while also supervising the use of evaluation results.

In addition, the National Evaluation Working Group, also leaded by ECU, plays an active role in coordinating methodological efforts at national level. The group gathers representatives of all MAs' evaluation units, including the Evaluation Unit, which ensures the evaluation function for the Interreg programmes that Romania acts as Managing Authority for. The undertaken coordination efforts are key in creating consistent practices across the system

and in sharing good evaluation practices, as well as providing the means and the place to both give and receive adequate guidance and support on evaluation matters.

In Serbia, the responsibility for the evaluation activities as regards the Programme rests with the National Authority, which at its turn consults the relevant bodies which need to be involved for a particular evaluation. The input is submitted by the NA directly to the MA or as part of the ESC activity.

The NA is responsible with ensuring the evaluation related activities on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, in coordination with MA, in supervising / coordinating the implementation of recommendations deriving from the evaluations (follow-up to the recommendations) on the territory of the Republic of Serbia and in supporting the MA in taking the evaluation results into account in the next programming process.

As regards the coordination mechanisms established at EU level, the information received by MEIP by taking part in DG Regio's Evaluation Network is shared with the relevant national actors, including the Evaluation Unit.

In addition, Interact is playing an important role in favouring the exchange of knowledge and best practices between the Interreg programmes, by organizing periodical events focused on evaluation themes, organizing online courses, developing and upkeeping an online library with all presentations and briefing documents and by hosting a platform on results and evaluation for posting updates and having dialogues on various evaluation topics.

B. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

1. THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

The evaluation function for the Programme is ensured by the Evaluation Unit, which supports the MA in its responsibilities connected to programme evaluation.

The evaluation activity is linked to monitoring and audit activities, but there is a strong distinction between these processes. Monitoring measures the performance of a programme, but does not assess its quality, effectiveness and impact, as evaluation does. Audit verifies the compliance of an implementation system with the existing rules, but does not appraise the influence of the implementation on the final effects, as evaluation does. As audit and monitoring cannot be confused with evaluation, evaluation is not to be used for audit or monitoring purposes. These different instruments all contribute to the effective management of the Interreg funds and reciprocally integrate their findings, but each of them covers a specific area of investigation and pursues different objectives.

According to the European Commission in the Staff Working Document on performance, monitoring and evaluation, the task of programme evaluation is to assess the effects of the programmes, in a wider context, as performance judgment cannot be made purely on indicator achievement values (indicators measure 'what', but do not explain 'why'). Evaluations should be an essential part of the life cycle of a programme. They are intended to increase knowledge of what works and what does not and in which context in order for decision makers and other stakeholders to make timely decisions to support the implementation of programmes and to draw conclusions for policy making.

Institutional details

As it may be seen in the specific organization chart that can be consulted in Annex B, the Evaluation Unit is located within the General Directorate for European Territorial Cooperation, Directorate MA ETC Programmes. Its staff is functionally independent of the staff of the units within the Directorate that perform the functions of MA for each Interreg programme that Romania acts as MA for, as well as of the staff of the other structures within the General Directorate involved in the connected processes and functions (e.g. accounting function, MA and NA for the other Interreg programmes, monitoring, authorisation, electronic monitoring system, payments, irregularities, first level control). Therefore, the implementation of the Programme and the evaluation of the Programme are located within

the same organisation but are assigned to different units, ensuring independence and impartiality. The Evaluation Unit is directly subordinated to the Director of MA ETC Programmes and its activity includes regular workflows with the other units within the General Directorate and other supporting departments within the ministry. The decision-making process follows the internal procedural rules established at ministry level, the documents being approved by respecting all hierarchical necessary steps.

As regards the relationship with the coordinating bodies, the Evaluation Unit acts as the main Interreg counterpart for ECU in all aspects related to evaluation, participating in working groups, meetings and any other related trainings. As well, the activity of the Evaluation Unit also implies regular workflows with other departments within MEIP (e.g. reporting on the status and developments of the Interreg programmes; submitting positions on the documents discussed in the CPR-related committee and expert group and in the preparatory bodies of the Council of the EU with implications on Interreg – especially SMOR; participating in the meetings of the Monitoring Committee of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme).

The Evaluation Unit currently consists of three full-time positions. Two of the currently employed evaluation officers have economic background and have been involved in evaluation activities for two and eleven years respectively, having gained over time the skills and expertise needed for managing evaluation contracts and participating in various trainings on evaluation topics. A third evaluation officer recently joined the team, with sociologic background and extensive experience in conducting evaluations of communication strategies and activities in regional operational programmes. The staff of the Evaluation Unit has deep Interreg knowledge and carries out various horizontal tasks as well, having an overview of the programming and implementation of the Interreg programmes in Romania. As regards evaluation-related tasks, the three evaluation officers are partly working for Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme and partly for the other Interreg programmes that Romania participates in.

To ensure the sustainability of programme evaluation activity, the evaluation officers make use of the common Interreg virtual workspace where all important information is stored electronically. As well, all internal procedures are followed, as regards both processes (e.g. archiving, risks, anti-fraud, security of IT systems, data recovery in case of disaster) and human resources (e.g. annual evaluation of staff, workload analysis, training plan, substitution plan, programming of annual leaves to ensure continuity).

Evaluation Unit's responsibilities directly related to the evaluation function are:

General tasks

- ➢ coordinating the evaluation activities of the Interreg programmes in line with the relevant regulations;
- ➢ drafting, revising and implementing the Evaluation Plans; organising timely programme evaluations and following the monitoring of the resulting recommendations;
- ➢ managing procurements and contracts for evaluation activities;
- ➢ supporting evaluation teams for programme evaluations carried out at the initiative of the Commission or of ECU;
- ➢ representing the Evaluation Unit at evaluation coordination events organised by ECU (e.g. Evaluation Working Group);
- ➢ participating in training and evaluation capacity building activities organised by ECU, Interact or other bodies;
- ➢ being the key liaison point with major stakeholders for evaluation purposes;
- ➢ contributing to developing and refining indicators for the Interreg programmes;
- ➢ ensuring the evaluation reports are disseminated and made available to the public;
- ➢ tracking progress on the follow-up given to the findings of evaluations.

Tasks related to the evaluation, commissioned externally

- ➢ convening the Evaluation Steering Committee and participating in its decision-making process;
- ➢ attending and reporting to meetings of the MC or facilitating the participation of the contracted experts, if required by MA Unit;

- ➢ commissioning of evaluation contracts (preparing tender documentation, drafting ToR, participating in the evaluation committee for choosing successful tenderers);
- ➢ once contracted, monitoring and supervising the activities undertaken during the evaluation exercise (facilitating the meetings of key stakeholders with the evaluators, liaising with the evaluators contracted to provide evaluation services, facilitating suitable levels of access for consultants to key stakeholders during the course of their evaluation work, ensuring proper access for evaluators to the relevant monitoring and other available data, managing the Unit repository, which holds all relevant evaluation materials);
- ➢ quality controlling of all evaluation reports submitted under the terms of an evaluation contract (endorsing inception reports, ensuring evaluators meet deadlines for report submissions, commenting on draft reports, assessing the final evaluation reports against the evaluation grids and submitting the reports to the ESC).

Tasks related to the evaluations carried out internally (should such evaluations be deemed necessary)

- ➢ drafting the Evaluation scope and timing and submitting them to ESC consultation and endorsement;
- ➢ carrying out the evaluations (undertaking activities to support the evaluation project - collection of relevant data, including desk research, consultations with relevant stakeholders within the evaluation scope, etc., drawing up draft evaluation reports and final evaluation reports and submitting them to ESC for consideration).

2. THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Regulatory requirements

According to the regulations, programme evaluations may address one or more of the following criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value with the aim to improve the quality of the design and implementation of programmes. Evaluations may also cover other relevant criteria, such as inclusiveness, non-discrimination and visibility, and may cover more than one programme. Other criteria relating to the needs of programmes may be addressed.

In addition, an evaluation for each programme to assess its impact is to be carried out by 30 June 2029.

All evaluations are published on the Programme's website.

The regulatory provisions require MA to draw up the current EvalPlan which is approved by the MC, as well as any amendment thereto. The MC also examines the progress made in carrying out evaluations, syntheses of evaluations and any follow-up given to findings.

Involved bodies

The evaluation process is led by the Evaluation Unit. Evaluations commissioned to external experts are commissioned, monitored and supervised by the Evaluation Unit. The evaluation officers within the Evaluation Unit may also carry out certain studies or evaluations, if deemed necessary during the implementation process.

Evaluation Steering Committee

An ESC shall be convened for the Programme and shall oversee the implementation of the EvalPlan and corresponding evaluations. The ESC shall convene for each evaluation exercise.

The **core membership** of the Committee will remain the same for the duration of its existence, and will include:

- ➢ The Head of MA (or his/her substitute);
- ➢ A representative of the Serbian NA;
- ➢ The evaluation officers within the Evaluation Unit (who also provide secretarial support: convening the Committee, organising consultations);
- ➢ A representative of the European Commission;

> ➢ A representative of ECU.

The MA and NA may also invite sectorial or academic experts for evaluations with technical nature.

The **functions of ESC** are:

- methodological function - to analyse and approve the preparatory and methodological documents for programme evaluations and the related deliverables, with a view to increasing their quality;
- partnership function - to ensure representation and consultation of the key actors in the CBC programme in planning and implementing the programme evaluations;
- ownership function – to involve the key actors in the CBC programme from the design phase and ensure they are aware of the evaluation results and any measures that need to be taken.

The ESC is consulted in the following indicative **stages**:

a. Evaluation Planning

- Approval of ToR, including the criteria for selecting the evaluators to ensure their functional independence (for evaluations commissioned externally)/of the Evaluation scope and timing (for evaluations carried out internally);

b. Evaluation Management

- Consultation on the inception report (for evaluations commissioned externally);
- Consultation on draft evaluation reports;
- Endorsement of the final evaluation reports, based on the quality grid previously filled in by the Evaluation Unit.

Monitoring Committee

In line with the regulations, the functions of the MC as regards evaluation are to approve the current EvalPlan and any other subsequent amendments to it and to examine the progress in carrying out evaluations, syntheses of evaluations and any follow-up given to findings.

Therefore, in line with the European Code of Conduct on Partnership[5] the MC decides on the execution of the evaluations by analysing and approving the EvalPlan, examines the progress in carrying out evaluations whenever there are developments to be presented and discussed and analyses the response to the evaluation recommendations proposed by MA and the implementation status of accepted recommendations.

The division of responsibilities between the Evaluation Unit, ESC and the MC, in relation to programme evaluation is presented in Section B.3 – Involvement of stakeholders.

Evaluation Central Unit

ECU provides the Evaluation Unit both guidance and the relevant information received as part of the Evaluation Network coordinated by the European Commission. As well, it is part of the ESC of the Programme. The EvalPlan approved by the MC is also sent to ECU for information.

Procedural flow

The drafting process of the EvalPlan **before submission to MC**

The activities undertaken for drafting the EvalPlan are the following:

1. Thorough consultation of the applicable regulatory, procedural and guidance provisions and of the relevant available evidence;

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[5] Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds

2. Collection of proposals of evaluation questions from the stakeholders and analysis how the raised aspects can be included in the EvalPlan;

3. Drafting by the Evaluation Unit of a first version of EvalPlan;

4. Sending the draft EvalPlan to the MA Unit;

5. Analysis of the comments received and revision of the plan by the Evaluation Unit, if necessary;

6. Sending, directly or through the MA Unit, the revised EvalPlan version to the interested parties indicated by the respective unit;

7. Analysis of the comments received and revision of the plan, if necessary;

8. Proposing the MA to submit the EvalPlan to the MC for analysis and approval (administrative steps for formal internal approval prior to the MC consultation are performed by the MA Unit);

Drafting of preparatory documents for commissioning evaluations externally

Planning for the evaluations that will be carried out by external experts shall begin at least 9 months in advance of their intended start date. The first stage in the process will be the drafting of the ToR, which builds upon the information included in this EvalPlan.

Drafting of the ToR is one of the key tasks of the Evaluation Unit. The ToR document serves as a guide to drafting offers and performing evaluations and is a central part of the public procurement dossier for contracting the evaluation services.

After it is agreed with the MA Unit, the draft ToR document is consulted in the ESC, following the procedural flow described in Section B.2 – The evaluation process. Once the ESC has approved the draft ToR and once funds have been secured in the MDPWA budget in order to finance the evaluation, the public procurement process can begin. The ToR approved by ESC may be adjusted during the internal institutional approval process prior to launching the public procurement. The contracting time depends on the evolution of the public procurement process.

Carrying out evaluations with internal expertise

If the Evaluation Unit carries out the evaluations, the following steps should be followed:

1. Drafting a document on the Evaluation scope comprising the methodology to be used in order to perform the evaluation and a timetable for the activities to be carried out;

2. Producing a draft evaluation report (deadline - 6 months from the approval of the Evaluation scope and timing)

3. Submitting the draft evaluation report to ESC for comments;

4. Drafting the final evaluation report based on the comments from the ESC;

5. Sending the final evaluation report to ESC members for approval;

6. Approval of the final evaluation report by ESC, after treating any additional comments or observations.

Upon request or if deemed necessary during the drafting process, the Evaluation Unit may also provide interim versions of the evaluation reports between the draft report and the final report.

ESC consultations

After the ToR (for evaluations commissioned externally)/the Evaluation scope and timing (for evaluations carried out internally) is finalised by the Evaluation Unit and agreed with the MA Unit, the ESC consultation process may be launched.

The Evaluation Unit informs the members of the ESC, by e-mail, about the intention to launch an ESC consultation procedure and about the topics to be analysed. The members of the ESC will be asked either to confirm, by e-mail, their availability to participate, or to appoint, also by e-mail, a designate to take part in this process.

In case one member does not confirm participation and does not appoint a designate, the activity of the ESC can continue without the respective member. However, the consultation process cannot be held without the participation of the head of MA (or his/her designate), NA representative (or his/her designate) and at least one representative of the Evaluation Unit.

During an evaluation exercise, the number of consultations among ESC members will depend on the complexity and duration of the evaluation. For evaluations commissioned externally, the Evaluation Unit performs a first quality check on the deliverables received from the evaluators prior to their submission to ESC. The deliverables are sent to the ESC for consultation or approval only after they pass this first quality check. ESC members should take the necessary time to study the circulated documents so that they are in a position to contribute effectively to the ESC consultation. The decisions shall be taken by **consensus** by the members who confirmed participation and take part in the consultation process.

In order to provide the members with the opportunity to thoroughly consult the documents, as a general rule the consultations shall take the form of written procedure, via e-mail. If deemed necessary by the members of ESC, an online consultation meeting may be convened.

Steps for the **written procedure**:

1. For the written consultation procedure, the Evaluation Unit submits to the ESC members via e-mail the necessary documents, with delivery and read receipt. Any additional points or comments from the participating institutions regarding the presented documents shall be sent to the Evaluation Unit by the member in the ESC, in the form of a consolidated position.

2. The objections or the agreement on the documents transmitted according to the written consultation procedure can be submitted to the Evaluation Unit by e-mail within maximum 5 working days from the date the documents were transmitted for interim evaluation reports and within maximum 7 working days for final reports. The deadline may be extended at the written request of one member, should the implementation calendar of the contract allow such extensions. Deadlines may be also set shorter.

3. If no objection was received by the deadline, the proposal is considered approved in the sent format.

4. In case objections are received, the Evaluation Unit formulates its position and sends it to the ESC members, together with the revised report, if necessary. The lack of reaction on proposals/objections is equivalent with the agreement with the received position.

5. The Evaluation Unit submits to the ESC members the final version of the documents adopted under the written consultation procedure.

6. Material errors in approved documents may be corrected under the condition that the Evaluation Unit consequently informs all the ESC members and all interested parties.

The Evaluation Unit, at the time of announcing via e-mail the intention to launch a consultation procedure, or the ESC members, while replying to this e-mail, may propose to organise an online meeting of the ESC instead of a consultation via written procedure.

3. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

In line with the Programme's commitment to fully apply the partnership principle, the programming document states that a similarly large partnership as the one established for the programming phase would be used for the public consultations launched during the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Programme.

Therefore, also following the Guide for Drafting the Evaluation Plans of the 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy in Romania, the process of collecting questions for the EvalPlan also included an open online questionnaire via EUSurvey addressed to beneficiaries and stakeholders that

was promoted on the programme website and on social media, doubled by a questionnaire that was handed out to MC members during the Committee's first official meeting. Possibly reflecting the recently finalised programming stage, the proposals received pointed out to higher interest for the relevance criterion and also touched upon a balanced use of funds, inclusiveness and non-discrimination. The proposed questions presented in Annex F could not be introduced as such among the evaluation questions listed in this plan, but all the themes proposed are translated into wider evaluation questions. In addition, based on the input of the Evaluation Unit resulted from the analysis of the available evidence presented in Section A.4, the evaluation questions proposed were consulted with the relevant programme structures, resulting in a final set of questions, grouped by evaluation criteria, that are included in Section C.2 - Fiches of the planned evaluations.

In line with article 15 of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership, MA also involves the relevant partners in the evaluation of the Programme within the framework of the MC, where evaluation-related matters are presented, discussed and, in the particular case of the EvalPlan, approved.

Given the fact that for any programme-related process the involvement of the stakeholders brings in added value, a specific working group for programme evaluation may be established by the MC. Nevertheless, taking into account that the work of any group has to be based on constant and active input in order to bring useful results, such a group may be established only if enough participating members express their active interest in programme evaluation.

The responsibilities in relation to programme evaluation are divided between the Evaluation Unit, ESC and the MC (as forum for the involvement of stakeholders) as follows:

Tasks	Evaluation Unit	ESC	MC
1. EvalPlan	Responsible for drafting	-	May submit proposals of evaluation questions prior to the drafting of the plan or during the approval process Approves the plan
2. ToRs, including the criteria for selecting the evaluators to ensure their functional independence (for evaluations commissioned externally)/of the Evaluation scope and timing (for evaluations carried out internally);	Responsible for drafting	Analyses and approves the ToRs/the Inception Report	- (should a specific MC working group on programme evaluation be established, it is kept up-to date on the progress of the ToRs/the Evaluation scope and timing, which may be analysed upon request)
3. Selection of Evaluator (for evaluations commissioned externally)	Participates in the Evaluation Committee for selecting the evaluator established in line with the public	-	-

	procurement applicable rules		
4. Draft and final evaluation reports (and Inception Report for evaluations commissioned externally) – quality aspects	Assesses the quality of the evaluation report and process based on the standards recommended in the official relevant documents.	Analysis and endorsement of the inception/evaluation reports, on the basis of the recommendations made by the ETC Evaluation Unit.	- (should a specific MC working group on programme evaluation be established, it is kept up-to date on the progress of the reports, which may be analysed upon request)
5. Management of the evaluation	Direct contact point for programme evaluations, contract management for evaluation commissioned externally	Analysis of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations; may make proposals on the response to evaluation recommendations	Is being informed on the recommendations in the evaluation report, on the proposed response to evaluation recommendations
6. Follow-up	Tracks the progress made; MA uses a follow-up table to monitor the progress achieved in implementing the agreed evaluation recommendations	-	Is informed by MA on the progress achieved in implementing agreed evaluation recommendations

4. THE SOURCE OF EVALUATION EXPERTISE

Given the fact that the evaluation function is ensured by the three evaluation officers within the Evaluation Unit for six Interreg programmes, the evaluations carried out for the Programme shall be, as a general rule, commissioned to external experts following internal procedures and the public procurement applicable rules.

The team of evaluators should preferably combine different experiences and skills: knowledge and experience in ETC/Interreg programmes; knowledge and experience in monitoring and measuring of regional development (for impact evaluations), knowledge and experience in data collection and visualization methodologies, knowledge and experience in stakeholder management.

In order to ensure the impartiality and functional independence of the evaluators and to minimise the risk of biased opinions or any unwanted interferences, the following measures are taken:

- inclusion in the ToR (endorsed by ESC) of provisions to ensure the independence of the evaluators (e.g. not MC members or observers, not having been involved in programming, in the calls for proposals, in the management of projects financed under the programme (depending on the type of evaluation);
- setting out clear award criteria and quality requirements;

- wide advertising of the public procurement procedure (including website and social media platforms);
- appointing a selection committee responsible for evaluating the bids against the criteria set out in the ToR, in line with applicable public procurement rules; the selection of the evaluators as part of a selection committee is performed, as a general rule, by different persons than the ones who drafted the ToR and are in charge of evaluation contract management;
- requesting signed declarations of impartiality and objectivity from the key experts and team leader to prevent any conflict of interest;
- as a general rule, performing of contract management and carrying out of ESC consultations not by the staff of the MA Unit, but by the evaluation officers in the Evaluation Unit, who are functionally independent from the other functions performed by MA, as regards both programming and implementation;
- carrying out any evaluations performed internally, if any, by the evaluation officers in the Evaluation Unit, who are functionally independent from the other functions performed by MA.

5. TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR STAFF DEALING WITH EVALUATION

Training for MA staff

Two of the current officers within the Evaluation Unit attended a full evaluation training programme designed specifically for the staff of evaluation units in Romania and organised under a TA project managed by ECU for supporting the evaluation capacity as regards EU funds. The training programme was delivered during 2019-2022 and covered various evaluation-related topics as the theory of change, indicators, evaluation design, quantitative and qualitative data analysis necessary in evaluations, evaluability and quality control. The support and guidance offered by ECU shall continue to cover the Interreg programmes during the 2021-2027 programming period.

Regardless of the framework, the MA staff dealing with evaluation should continue to be involved in capacity building activities, including carrying out self-studies, and should continue to regularly take part in trainings, offered especially by Interact and ECU, on programme evaluation and wider related topics.

Such capacity building activities may refer to:
- self-study of evaluation plans, ToRs and reports, especially for the Interreg strands/programmes;
- self-study of published papers, guidelines and handbooks on programme evaluations;
- participating in online learning platforms/communities/groups related to programme evaluations;
- seminars on planning and managing evaluations, quality controlling of the evaluation reports;
- workshops on qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and methods for impact assessment;
- meetings of the Evaluation Working Group, which allow exchange of information and good practices with other MAs, and meetings of the Evaluation Network in Romania, which allow wide exchange of ideas between the supply and demand sides;
- on-the job coaching;
- Interact events on evaluation and wider related topics, which allow exchange of information and good practices with other Interreg programmes.

Such capacity building activities are not budgeted separately in the current EvalPlan and should they entail participation costs for MA, these would be covered as part of the Programme's TA activities on a case by case basis, following internal administrative procedures.

Training for the other Programme structures

Evaluation-related capacity building initiatives may also be carried to support NA and JS staff in performing their duties. Should such activities entail participation costs, these may also be covered as part of the Programme's TA activities.

Training for MC members on evaluation-related aspects may also be considered, if such need arises during Programme implementation, to be financed under TA activities. As well, should general trainings be offered to MC members for this Programme (for new MC members, for example), then these trainings should also cover evaluation-related topics.

6. STRATEGY TO ENSURE USE AND COMMUNICATION OF EVALUATIONS

Dissemination of the evaluation reports

Final evaluation reports shall be distributed to MC members, NA, EC, MA, JS and ECU. According to the regulations, they shall also be published on the Programme website.

Evaluation results are integrated into the Programme's structures' day-to-day work (including information and communication wise), posted on social media, used whenever relevant during technical or higher-level meetings and events.

In order to facilitate the dissemination of evaluation results in a user-friendly format, final evaluation reports shall be required to be delivered together with eye-catching one-pagers and info graphics, as well as project stories and testimonials, in order to facilitate their presentation to decision-makers and their use in future communication activities related to the Programme.

Follow-up and monitoring of evaluation recommendations

Evaluation recommendations may be accepted, marked as already implemented at the time they were proposed, rejected or deferred for later consideration (e.g. taken into account for the next programming period). In order to ensure practical use of evaluation results, where a specific course of action is decided for an evaluation recommendation, the MA will monitor the progress achieved in its implementation, by using a follow-up table. The status shall be reported by MA to the MC whenever there is significant progress or upon previous request by an MC member.

In order to support the programme bodies in implementing the recommendations, but also to ensure that the recommendations made are of practical nature, tentative action plans for implementing each recommendation are also to be requested from the evaluation teams.

7. OVERALL BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTING THE EVALUATION PLAN

The overall budget for implementing the current EvalPlan, covering the external resources used, is 150.000 euro, split as follows:

- 60.000 euro for the implementation evaluation, including communication
- 90.000 euro for the impact evaluation, including communication.

The above-mentioned budget should cover all evaluation related external activities, including any necessary data collection.

The external resources used are backed up by the programme bodies' internal resources (mainly staff), required for coordinating evaluations, collecting programme data, supporting

external evaluators, decision-making, follow-up measures and dissemination and use of results. Any specific related costs are covered as part of the Programme's TA activities.

Evaluation functions and main activities	Timing	Estimated cost	Financial sources
Technical support and coordination of the MA, including Evaluation Unit	Continuously during the programming period	internal resources (mostly staff costs)	included under MA TA activities
Data provision	After calls for proposals are closed After project selection/contracting After the finalization of projects	internal resources (mostly staff costs)	included under MA/JS TA activities
Evaluation studies	September 2025-May 2026February-October 2028	external resources – 150.000 euro	TA – external services
Dissemination of results and events	After performed evaluations	internal resources (mostly staff costs)	included under MA/NA/JS TA activities
Capacity building initiatives	Continuously during the programming period	internal resources	included under MA/NA/JS TA activities

8. QUALITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Quality assurance in implementing the current EvalPlan is a process integrated in all related steps:

1. Evaluation timing

   The timing of the evaluations is planned in line with the expected evolution of the programme, so that evaluations are performed early enough to provide information to feed the decision-making process, but late enough in the programming period to benefit from a sound evaluation basis.

   Timings may be adjusted in line with the actual evolution of the Programme.

2. Drafting the ToR

   Ensuring quality will start with drafting the ToR in a clear manner which provides the potential bidders with the necessary information to draw up the offer, based on previous adequate planning. Clear award criteria and quality requirements are set. The ToR will be verified against the checklist in Annex C - Checklist for assessing the Terms of References. This checklist is designed to verify the pertinence of the ToR and the inclusion of all the needed items. It will be used by the Evaluation Unit while drafting the ToR to make sure that all necessary elements are included.

3. Selection of evaluators

   Following the applicable public procurement rules, the evaluators will be selected by a selection committee responsible for evaluating the bids against the criteria set out in the ToR. All needed administrative steps are followed and the technical offers are thoroughly assessed against a previously established evaluation grid, which takes into account the elements in the ToR needed to perform the evaluations in a qualitative manner. The selection of the evaluators is done with a 70/30 technical score/price ratio. As a general rule, to ensure impartiality the persons appointed in the selection committee are different from the person who drafted the ToR.

4. Contract implementation

To ensure mutual understanding of the scoping, methodology to be applied and expected results, contract implementation starts with a kick-off meeting between parties to clarify all aspects of the ToR and technical offer and an Inception Report is requested. In addition, at least one mid-term progress report will keep the evaluation commissioners informed on the activities performed and further steps to be taken. The contract also includes a procedure for the early termination of the contract conditional on the quality of the work provided.

As a general rule, the person who drafted the ToR will be appointed as the MA's contract officer. Both the Evaluation Unit and the ESC have a role to play in assessing the quality of the inception and evaluation reports.

As regards the reports that are delivered, the Evaluation Unit shall be responsible for assessing the quality of the inception and final evaluation reports, by using the checklists presented in Annex D – Checklist for assessing the inception report and Annex E – Checklist for assessing the evaluation report. The checklist for assessing the quality of the inception report sets out the major aspects that need to be taken into account. The thorough checklist for assessing the evaluation reports includes the most important aspects for each part of a report as well as general considerations, allowing a thorough analysis of the report's quality. The checklists have two intended purposes that are related to evaluation management: (1) they represent tools for the evaluation commissioners to assess the content of the reports (2) they are practical tools to guide the evaluators, while preparing the reports. Therefore, the evaluators can self-rate their own progress during the writing phase. They can also use the checklists to identify weaknesses or areas that need to be addressed in their reports. To this end, the checklists shall also be included in the ToR for each evaluation, to serve as guidance for the evaluators in drafting the reports.

The reports are then consulted in the ESC. While the checklists will represent a tool for the MA's contract officer to verify the evolution of the reports from one version to another (from draft reports to final reports), only the final reports are sent in the ESC together with the checklist filled in by the MA's contract officer.

5. Disseminating the evaluation results

Having in mind the quality of the process of disseminating the evaluation results, the reports are required to be delivered together with highly visual summarised content. Details can be found in Section B.6 – Strategy to ensure use and communication of evaluations.

6. Follow-up

The follow-up table used by MA for the progress achieved in implementing the agreed evaluation recommendations is a mean to ensure a structured way to both monitor achievements and keep the MC informed on all pending issues. As well, it ensures the practical use of the evaluation results and recommendations.

In case there will be a need to carry out evaluations internally, the Evaluation Unit will use the applicable elements of the checklist while drafting the Evaluation scope and timing and the subsequent evaluation reports, in order to ensure that the reports drafted internally follow as close as possible the standards requested from the ones commissioned to external experts.

C. PLANNED EVALUATIONS

The choices made below as regards Programme evaluation are well rooted into Section A.4 – Analysis of relevant evidence, where more details on the justification of those choices may be found.

The timings presented below are those anticipated at the time of writing the current EvalPlan and may be slightly adjusted in practice to the actual evolution of the programme, in order to reach the best need-benefit ratio, not requiring formal amendment of the EvalPlan. As well, practical experience has shown that timing delays may occur while applying the public procurement procedures needed to commit the evaluations. These kinds of delays are not regarded as needing to trigger EvalPlan amendments, should they not hinder the achievement of the final scope of the evaluations. However, major decisions as regards evaluation timing, scope, coverage or means of implementation need revisiting of the current document and formal EP amendment.

Assumptions on the expected evolution of the Programme

The following timetable as regards the finalisation of projects is taken into account in setting the timing of evaluations:

Call for proposals/ Projects	Allocation (Interreg funds)	Launching	Deadline	Estimated contracting time	Maximum duration of projects	Estimated end date of projects
1st Call (Priorities 1,2)	23,337,426	October 4th 2022	March 1st 2023	2nd Quarter 2024	24 months	2nd Quarter 2026
2nd Call	12,648,184	2nd Quarter 2024	March 1st 2025	2nd Quarter 2026	24 months	2nd Quarter 2028
Operations of Strategic Importance (Priorities 2,3)	20,230,000	December 5th 2019	October 4th 2022	August 2023	36 months	2nd Quarter 2026
Large Infrastructure Projects (Priorities 1,2)	11,072,415	December 5th 2019	October 4th 2022	August 2023	36 months	2nd Quarter 2026

The co-financing rate is 85%. The Programme only finances projects which dedicate at least 50% of their budget to investment activities.

Data collection

In order to minimise the risk derived from the length of evaluations, the Programme closely monitors the physical and financial achievements of the financed projects and keeps track of projections, so that informed implementation decisions may be made in due time based on own analysis. As regards the efficiency of the implementation system, users' feedback right away would be a valuable asset. The Programme may then be able to incorporate users' perceptions into the decision-making process, as an ongoing evaluation approach to streamline the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme, which is also in line with the Programme's participatory approach.

Therefore, **questionnaires** will be used at key points to collect users' opinions, their aggregated results feeding directly into informed evidence-based decisions. These questionnaires will be applied to all applicants after the calls for proposals are closed, to all unsuccessful applicants after project selection, to successful applicants after project contracting and to all beneficiaries after project finalisation. The actual questions in each questionnaire will be proposed by the Evaluation Unit and agreed with the MA Unit, while

the responses will be aggregated by the Evaluation Unit and sent to the MA Unit for consideration. This approach would also allow the beneficiaries and applicants to fill in the information while it is still fresh and prevent them from receiving very long questionnaires at the time programme evaluations are performed, generating a higher response rate. The aggregated responses shall also be ready to be provided to the evaluators for the subsequent programme evaluations or other programme structures and may be used in technical or MC meetings.

For the implementation evaluation performed externally, most relevant data will be available in Jems, programme strategic and implementation documents, DMCS and relevant procedures being also available. Given the 2021-2027 approach of the result indicators, it is expected that they will be measured by the Programme mostly based on Jems data, mirroring how successful EU action has been in achieving or progressing towards its objectives. Programme evaluation as regards effectiveness would therefore not have to measure the progress in achieving the indicators, but rather to analyse how the mechanisms behind worked, looking for evidence of why, whether or how the changes are linked to the EU intervention.

For some criteria (e.g. relevance) and for the impact evaluation, apart from the data available in Jems, the evaluators will have to base their work on other sources, including the statistical data in both countries. Therefore, collection of additional data from primary and secondary sources may be necessary to be performed by the evaluators as part of their contracts.

The territorial analysis performed for drafting the Programme revealed that the availability of comparable and homogenous statistical information at the level of NUTS3 units in the two countries represented a relevant constraint, affecting the level of detail that could be achieved. The foundation of the analysis was established using statistical data, its content being further complemented and enriched based on information from the analysis of county and district level documents and of documentation obtained through national and local level sources, in both Romania and the Republic of Serbia. A similar approach is expected to be needed for future Programme evaluations in order to form a sound evaluation base, depending on the exact methodology applied.

1. LISTS AND TIMETABLE OF THE EVALUATIONS

Planned programme evaluations are summarised below:

Code	Objective of the evaluation	Content and scope of the evaluation			Estimated Period	Type of evaluation	Planned Cost
		Priorities	SOs	Interventions			
OngoingEval	To provide users' feedback in order to streamline efficiency and effectiveness	All	All	All	May 2023-December 2029	Data provision	Internal resources
ImplemEval	To produce specific knowledge on the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, internal and external coherence, visibility and commitment to horizontal principles of the programme and to contribute to its management and performance	All	All	All	September 2025-May 2026	Implementation evaluation, including communication	60.000 euro

ImpactEval	To capture the policy-aimed effects of the cooperation programme as a whole, highlighting peak fields, while also analysing the mechanism that stand behind the effects	All	All	All	February-October 2028	Impact evaluation	90.000 euro

Additional evaluations

Additional evaluations may be carried out in case of emerging urgent needs, e.g. where programme monitoring reveals a significant gap from the goals initially set or where proposals are made for the revision of the programme.

These additional evaluations can address either issues regarding the entire programme or one or several priorities or specific objectives.

These evaluations cannot be anticipated at this stage and will be carried out either by external experts or by the Evaluation Unit.

Any ex-ante and SEA evaluations for the next CBC programme between Romania and Serbia, for the programming period 2028+, may also be financed as part of the Programme's TA activities, starting with 2026.

Retrospective evaluation

The Commission shall carry out a retrospective evaluation to examine the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of each fund by 31 December 2031. This evaluation shall focus in particular on the social, economic and territorial impact of the funds in relation to the supported policy objectives. Based on previous experience, Interreg is expected to be also covered under this evaluation. Should the Programme be part of the sample of Interreg programmes to be actively covered by this evaluation, all necessary data and support will be provided to the evaluators selected by the EC.

2. FICHES OF THE PLANNED EVALUATIONS

OngoingEval – Ongoing evaluation of the efficiency of the implementation system of the Programme	
Priority and specific objectives covered by the evaluation	all
Types of interventions to be evaluated	all
Type of evaluation	ongoing process evaluation
Focus and rationale of the evaluation	The Programme aims to incorporate users' perceptions into the decision-making process in order to streamline its efficiency and effectiveness. By collecting users' opinions, the aggregated results are available to feed directly into informed evidence-based decisions. Questionnaires are applied to all lead applicants after the calls for proposals are closed (to assess the application process), to all unsuccessful lead applicants after project selection, to successful lead partners after project contracting (to assess the selection and contracting processes) and to all beneficiaries after project finalization (to assess the implementation process and

	effectiveness at project level). The support granted by the programme structures to applicants and beneficiaries is also envisaged to be included, as well as the ease of reaching projects' objectives and the added value of the EU intervention.
	This approach not only supports the programme structures to adapt to the needs of the applicants and beneficiaries, but also allows the beneficiaries and applicants to fill in the information requested while it is still fresh and prevent them from receiving very long questionnaires at the time programme evaluations are performed, generating a higher response rate.
	The actual questions in each questionnaire are set before each process is launched, based on the proposals made by the Evaluation Unit that are discussed, adapted and agreed with the MA Unit. The responses are aggregated by the Evaluation Unit and sent to the MA Unit for consideration and use during Programme implementation. The overall themes/main evaluation questions presented below will serve as basis for formulating the questions addressed to the lead applicants/beneficiaries, adapted to the type of respondents. Additional questions than the ones derived from the themes/main evaluation question below may be added along the way to incorporate any emerging needs or aspects that need basis for decisions.
	The responses received would also be ready to be provided to programme evaluators or other programme structures and may be used by the programme bodies in technical or MC meetings.
When the evaluation will be implemented	May 2023-December 2029
Main evaluation questions	**Efficiency**
	Q1. Are the application, selection and contracting processes efficient? What can be improved? *(users' feedback on the application form and applicant's guide, selection and contracting process)*
	Q2. What are the major difficulties faced by the beneficiaries during the implementation of projects? *(feedback on difficulties faced during project implementation stages, including project finalisation)*
	Q3. Is Jems efficient? What can be improved? *(feedback on the practical use of Jems)*
	Q4. Are the simplification and result-focused actions taken at Programme level appreciated by users? What can be improved? *(feedback on Programme level actions taken – e.g. the use of SCOs, usefulness of the 50% investments rule)*
	Q5. Do the beneficiaries receive sufficient support from the Programme bodies to prepare projects and implement them? *(feedback on the support granted by the programme bodies to applicants and beneficiaries)*
	Q6. Are the potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries acquainted with the conflict of interest, irregularities, anti-fraud concept and preventive measures and/ or aware of the anti-fraud measures taken by the Programme bodies? *(checking the beneficiaries' and potential beneficiaries' awareness – question also used as instrument to raise awareness)*
	Effectiveness
	Q7. According to the beneficiaries, have the projects managed to reach their objectives? *(beneficiaries' perception on the extent to which project objectives were reached)*
	Q8. Were the expected outputs and results at project level easily reachable? *(users' feedback on the ease of reaching the expected outputs and*

	results)
	Q9. Were there any internal or external factors that affected, positively or negatively, the process of reaching the objectives/expected outputs and results? *(users' feedback on internal and external factors affecting project objectives/expected outputs and results)*
	Q10. Did the needs change from project submission to project implementation? If so, did the change affect project implementation? *(beneficiaries' feedback on the relevance of the needs covered any effect on effectiveness)* – also touching **relevance** criterion
	EU added value
	Q11. To what extent could the projects' results and outputs have been achieved without support from the Programme? *(users' feedback on the added value of the Programme for reaching the results and outputs)*
Methodological approach and possible methods	Method: qualitative research Tools: desk research, data collection through questionnaires and analysis
Data sources	administrative data on project lead applicants and project beneficiaries are needed to direct the questionnaires, available in Jems; to generate a high response rate, questionnaires reach the applicants and beneficiaries through their usual contact channels (e.g. JS officers, Jems)
How the evaluation will be implemented	internal expertise used, covering all calls for proposals and contracted projects
Planned cost (Euro)	internal resources used

ImplemEval – Implementation evaluation of the Programme, including the communication and anti-fraud strategies	
Priority and specific objectives covered by the evaluation	all
Types of interventions to be evaluated	all
Type of evaluation	implementation evaluation
Focus and rationale of the evaluation	The risk of decommitment and the achievement of objectives in terms of output and result indicators, as well as forecasting based on the contracted and selected projects, is constantly monitored by the programme bodies in order to make informed decisions, therefore it is not included in the evaluation process. User's feedback on efficiency aspects is also collected constantly and feeds the decision-making process. Since no major issues were identified by the evaluations of the previous programme as regards efficiency or effectiveness and the management and control system is a roll-over of the previous one, the evaluation does not cover once again on each and every part of this system and the procedural workflows. Instead, it investigates whether there are bottlenecks or major issues faced and whether the new elements were effective in practice - as the use of the HIT, more extensive use of SCOs, financing of operations of strategic importance, large infrastructure and limited financial value projects, TA flat rate. As regards efficiency, the evaluation focuses on identifying any underused simplification opportunities. The costs of the beneficiaries related to the communication activities are also examined, but as part of the evaluation of the communication strategy which is included in the implementation

	evaluation, in addition to the self-assessment done by the MA/ JS and adaptations based on the post-events feedback from the beneficiaries, which are taking place at Programme level in order to ensure a qualitative information and communication process. To deepen knowledge on the current programme, but also to feed into the next programming process, the evaluation also covers aspects related to the Programme's relevance, internal and external coherence and commitment to the horizontal principles. Therefore, the implementation evaluation is performed in order to produce specific knowledge on the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, internal and external coherence, visibility and commitment to horizontal principles of the programme and to contribute to its management and performance. The findings collected so far through the ongoing process evaluation shall also be provided to the evaluators to be used in their analysis.
When the evaluation will be implemented	September 2025-May 2026
Main evaluation questions	**Effectiveness** Q1. To what extent is the Programme delivery taking place as expected initially? *(whether the evolution of the programme is in line with the initial expectations of the Programme bodies)* Q2. Are there any internal or external factors that foster or affect the process of achieving the Programme's objectives and outcomes, at programme level or by specific objective? *(how does the delivery mechanism work and which factors have a contribution to achieving Programme outputs and results – e.g. use of HIT, use of SCOs, types of projects financed, effectiveness in achieving the set objectives with the 50% investments rule)* Q3. To what extent is the administrative and financial capacity of the Programme bodies and of the beneficiaries a success or hindering factor? *(whether the capacity of programme bodies and beneficiaries affects or supports Programme delivery towards objectives; TA flat rate is also to be investigated under this question)* Q4. Did the Programme take the necessary measures to effectively involve relevant partners in programme management and delivery? *(whether the measures taken by the programme to involve relevant partners in programme management and delivery are effective)* Q5. Are the anti-fraud strategic measures taken by the Programme bodies in order to prevent, detect and correct fraudulent activities effective? What can be improved? *(whether the responsibilities of the actors involved in preventing, detecting and responding to fraud are clearly set in the anti-fraud strategy and effectively put into practice and what can be improved to minimise the opportunities for individuals to commit fraud and to provide an effective response if fraud occurs)* **Efficiency** Q6. Are there any bottlenecks or major issues affecting the efficiency of the Programme's implementation system? *(whether the efficiency of the Programme is affected by deficiencies in the implementation system)* Q7. To what extent does the Programme use the available options to streamline and simplify operations? *(whether the Programme found the right balance to streamline and simplify operations or more options should be taken into account)* **Relevance** Q8. To what extent did the programme strategy respond to the needs

	identified at programming stage? *(whether the Programme strategy responded in practice to the needs identified initially in the programming stage)*
	Q9. To what extent is the programme strategy relevant to the current needs of the people in the cross-border area? *(whether the needs of the Programme area changed over time and are addressed by the Programme strategy)*
	Internal and external coherence
	Q10. To what extent are the interventions under the Programme internally coherent and able to create synergic effects? *(how well the Programme interventions work together and whether their interaction is capable of creating synergic effects)*
	Q11. To what extent is the Programme coherent with other EU interventions having similar objectives which also cover the eligible territory? *(how well the Programme works with the other EU interventions – complementarities, gaps)*
	Q12. To what extent is the Programme coherent with the strategies and initiatives in place? *(e.g. EUSDR, EUSAIR, New Bauhaus Initiative, green infrastructure, strategic use of public procurement)*
	Inclusiveness, non-discrimination and other horizontal principles
	Q13. Is the programme inclusive and accessible to all target groups?
	Q14. To what extent are the horizontal principles covered adequately and clearly within the guidelines for applicants and programme monitoring arrangements?
	Q15. How do the financed projects contribute to the application of the horizontal principles? *(e.g. this set of two questions aims to cover at least equal opportunities and non-discrimination (including minorities), equality between men and women, sustainable development, DNSH)*
	Visibility/Communication Strategy
	Q16. Do the communication activities/actions carried out by the programme authorities lead to the achievement of the general and specific objectives set out in the Communication Strategy?
	Q17. Are the communication activities/actions of the Programme taken in a fair, just and inclusive manner for all relevant parties of the Programme area (beneficiaries, stakeholders, general public)??
	Q18. Which are the instruments and tools that have the highest outreach to potential beneficiaries/beneficiaries/stakeholders/general public?
	Q19. How could the Programme's visibility be increased?
	Q20. How effective was the programme in supporting project communication activities and in reducing related costs on the beneficiaries? *(this set of five questions targets the evaluation of the communication strategy of the Programme, aims to point at what would be needed to reach more people in terms of Programme visibility and investigates the costs of the beneficiaries related to the communication activities)*
Methodological approach and possible methods	Method: mix of quantitative and qualitative methods Tools: data collection and analysis, desk research, interviews, surveys, stakeholder analysis, case studies
Data sources	programme strategic and implementation documents, DMCS and relevant procedures, Jems data, findings of the ongoing process evaluation
How the evaluation will	evaluation commissioned externally, following public procurement

be implemented	applicable rules (open procedure)
Planned cost (Euro)	60.000 euro

ImpactEval – Impact evaluation of the Programme	
Priority and specific objectives covered by the evaluation	all
Types of interventions to be evaluated	all
Type of evaluation	impact evaluation
Focus and rationale of the evaluation	The impact evaluation of the previous programme performed for each specific objective has showed that the projects implemented generated a positive, visible and sustainable impact in institutions and communities where they were implemented, but the number, scale and scope of the projects funded by the programme in the fields that continue to be financed in the 2021-2027 programming period did not allow a conclusion on a significant contribution of the programme to the progress observed in the programme area.

Therefore, for the current programming period the chosen approach is to evaluate at programme level how the support received from the Interreg funds brought its contribution to the integrated and harmonious regional development in the eligible area. Given the slightly higher budget in both programming periods for climate change adaptation and risk prevention, for health care and for sustainable tourism, as well as the operations of strategic importance and large infrastructure projects expected to be financed in these fields, the impact evaluation will be highlighted in these three fields, taking into account the combined interventions for the two programming periods.

As regards the newly financed field, increased border management capacity, its impact may be analysed in a targeted way based on a dedicated case study since it is implemented through a single strategic importance project.

Therefore, the impact evaluation aims to capture the policy-aimed effects of the cooperation programme as a whole, highlighting peak fields, while also analysing the mechanism that stand behind the effects. Besides the impact, the criteria directly covered are EU added value, sustainability and visibility. Other criteria, as effectiveness, relevance or coherence might need to be taken into consideration for answering certain evaluation questions (pointing to internal and external success or hindering factors). In assessing visibility, the impact of the communication activities/actions taken at Programme level shall also be evaluated.

The evaluation findings will be available and may also be integrated into the final performance report to be submitted to EC by 15 February 2031. |
| **When the evaluation will be implemented** | February-October 2028 |
| **Main evaluation questions** | **Impact**

Q1. To what extent do the cross-border interventions of the Programme contribute to promoting an integrated and harmonious regional development in the cross-border region?

Q2. Are there any unintended or spill-over effects of the cross-border investments, inside or beyond the eligible area?

Q3. What are the internal and external factors fostering or affecting the |

effects of the Programme?

(this set of three questions aims to capture the impact at programme level, from the cross-border perspective, including any unintended or spill-over effects, also analysing the "why" and "how" – e.g. effects of the response to the territorial needs, of internal or external coherence, of the focus on partnership and capitalisation, of the 50% investments rule, of the choice to finance operations of strategic importance/large infrastructure projects, of the limited funds available; the analysis should take into account both the current and expected contribution – based on the finalised and contracted projects)

Highlighted fields

Q4. To what extent do the cross-border interventions contribute to promoting climate change adaptation and risk prevention in the cross-border region?

Q5. To what extent do the cross-border interventions contribute to ensuring access to health care in the cross-border region?

Q6. To what extent do the cross-border interventions contribute to enhancing sustainable tourism in the cross-border region?

Q7. To what extent do the cross-border interventions contribute to improving the access to and the quality of education, training and lifelong learning across borders?

(this set of three questions aims to capture the impact of the current and previous programme in the three fields that had the highest budget shares; the analysis should take into account both the current and expected contribution – based on the finalised and contracted projects; relevant unintended effects and factors mentioned for the previous set of questions should also be analysed;

given the cross-border character, the analysis should focus towards:

- *alleviated risks and impact of climate change in the border area & developed preventive measures for risk prevention and resilience of the border area in front of disasters*

- *strengthened resilience of the healthcare sector in the border area*

- *economic, environmental and urban development of the cross-border area as an integrated touristic product*

- *improved access to and quality of education, training and lifelong learning across borders, through enhanced capacity and cooperation)*

Q8. What /are the three main concrete achievements of the Programme at strategic level?
(based on the two sets of questions above, the 3 main strategic achievements of the Programme are to be pointed out)

Q9. To what extent do the cross-border interventions contribute to increasing the institutional capacity of public authorities involved in border management?
(to capture the impact of the Programme on increasing border management capacity on the Romanian-Serbian border)

EU added value

Q10. To what extent could the results and outputs have been achieved without the EU intervention?
(whether the results and outputs would have been reached without EU funds – e.g. by the two participating states acting alone with national funds or by the beneficiaries without grants received for cooperation)

Sustainability

Q11. Are the Programme's outputs and results sustainable on long term?

	(whether the benefits are likely to continue beyond the interventions)
	Visibility
	Q12. Is the Programme successful in raising the awareness of the beneficiaries/potential beneficiaries of the Programme/general public on the positive impact of the EU financial contribution?
	Q13. Which communication activities/actions or instruments/tools were the most effective?
	Q14. How could this effect be increased in the next programming period?
	Q15. Are the communication activities/actions and instruments/tools taken/used by the Programme authorities involved in communication and visibility focused and dedicated to all categories of stakeholders/beneficiaries/general public (including youth, women, vulnerable and marginalised groups)?
	(this set of four questions aims to capture the impact achieved by the Programme's communication activities/actions)
Methodological approach and possible methods	Method: theory-based evaluation (realist evaluation and contribution analysis are taken into account at this stage, but the exact combination of methods is requested from the external evaluators) Tools: desk research, interviews, focus groups, expert panels, case studies, surveys
Data sources	programme strategic and implementation documents, DMCS and relevant procedures, Jems data, findings of the ongoing process evaluation
How the evaluation will be implemented	evaluation commissioned externally, following public procurement applicable rules (open procedure)
Planned cost (Euro)	90.000 euro

ANNEX A - PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW TABLE

	Specific Objective	Related Types of Actions	Estimated budget	Output Indicator	M.U.	Mile-stone 2024	Final target 2029	Result Indicator	M.U.	Base-line	Final target 2029	Code	Intervention field	Budget
Priority 1. Environmental protection and risk management	1.1. Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution (SO 2.7.)	– Investments in green infrastructure in urban areas (e.g storm-water management, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUSDS), green streets, green roofs, permeable paving, urban forests, natural cooling of buildings, subsurface detention, cisterns and rain barrels and blue and/or green infrastructure); – Expanding green infrastructure that connects habitats, strengthens ecological corridors and protected sites, reducing landscape fragmentation and ensuring their recreational potential; – Investments in measures improving the air quality;	1,000,000	RCO 36 - Green infrastructure supported for other purposes than adaptation to climate change	hectares	0	4	RCR 95 - Population havingaccess to new or improved green infrastructure	persons	0	2912	079	Nature and biodiversity protection, natural heritage and resources, green and blue infrastructure	2,861,187
		– Investments in activities dedicated to the control ofpollution and rehabilitation of rivers and brownfields; – Investments in activities dedicated to rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land, support tothe closure and rehabilitation of substandard and illegal landfills sites;	1,089,338	RCO 38 - Surface area of rehabilitated land supported	hectares	0	62	RCR 52 - Rehabilitated land used for green areas, social housing, economic or otheruses	hectares	0	12			
		– Investments in measures improving air quality monitoring (e.g: air quality monitoring networks);	363,113	PSO 01 - Air pollution monitoring systems installed	monitoring systems pollution	0	2	PSR 01 - Population covered by the installed air pollution monitoring systems.	persons	0	97.000			

Specific Objective	Related Types of Actions	Estimated budget	Output Indicator	M.U.	Mile-stone 2024	Final target 2029	Result Indicator	M.U.	Base-line	Final target 2029	Code	Intervention field	Budget
	-Development and implementation of conservation and protection measures of Natura 2000 sites on the Romanian side and equivalent natural protected areas on the Serbian side; -Investments in protection of landscapes and implementation of measures to conserve and restore ecosystems, biodiversity, forestry and to protect wildlife; - Implementation of measures for reducing pollution (e.g waste prevention, collection and treatment, sorting and 5R measures); - Investments in the field of natural resources, eco- systems and biodiversity, including technologies for environmental protection; - Investments in activities dedicated to the control of pollution and rehabilitation of rivers and brownfields; - Joint strategies and action plans tackling the issue of pollution, nature protection and biodiversity protection; - Testing of new tools, instruments, experiments, transfer of solutions between relevant stakeholders and increasing the cross-border cooperation in the field of biodiversity, nature protection, green infra-structure and reducing pollution;	1,638,757	RCO 84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	pilot actions	1	4	RCR 104 - Solutions taken upor up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0	4	073	Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land	1,089,338
											077	Air quality and noise reduction measures	363,113
	– Implementation of measures for raising awareness.	222,430	RCO 81 - Participations in joint actions across borders	participations	120	1200	RCR 85 - Participations in joint actions across borders after project completion	participations	0	120			
1.2. Promoting renewable energy in accordance with Directive (EU)	- Solutions developed through joint pilot actions in renewable energy (e.g. wind, solar, geothermal).	3,899,850	RCO 84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	pilot actions	1	5	RCR 104 - Solutions taken upor up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0	5	047	Renewable energy: wind	740,971
											048	Renewable energy: solar	1,130,956

Specific Objective	Related Types of Actions	Estimated budget	Output Indicator	M.U.	Mile-stone 2024	Final target 2029	Result Indicator	M.U.	Base-line	Final target 2029	Code	Intervention field	Budget
2018/2001, including the sustainability criteria set outtherein (SO 2.2.)											052	Other renewable energy (including geothermal energy)	2,027,923
1.3. Promoting energy efficiency and reducing green-house gas emissions (SO 2.1.)	– Investments in energy efficiency measures regarding public infrastructure; – Promotion of energy efficiency measures; – Demonstration projects and initiatives for reducingemissions of green-house gas and air pollutants; – Investment in supporting measures for reducing emissions of green-house gas and air pollutants.	3,631,093	RCO 84 - Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	pilot actions	1	3	RCR 104 - Solutions taken upor up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0	3	045	Energy efficiency renovation or energy efficiency measures regarding public infrastructure, demonstration projects and supporting measures compliant with energy efficiency criteria	3,631,093
1.4. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, taking into account ecosystem-based approaches (SO 2.4.)	– Restoration of natural areas (e.g. forests, river banks) to prevent floods and land-slides; – Development and implementation of measures such as restoration of Natura 2000 sites on the Romanian side and equivalent natural protected areas on the Serbian side, in relation to climate change impact; – Afforestation and reforestation of the areas vulnerable to floods and land-slides; – Development and implementation of measures and ecosystem-based approaches related to adaptation to climate change; – Development and implementation of measures in relation to climate change mitigation solutions; – Measures related to prevention and management of climate related risks, like: fires, storms, drought;	11,800,558	RCO 87 - Organisations cooperating across borders		3	15	RCR 84 - Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion		0	3	058	Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks: floods and landslides (including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems, infrastructures and ecosystem-based approaches)	1,711,197

3

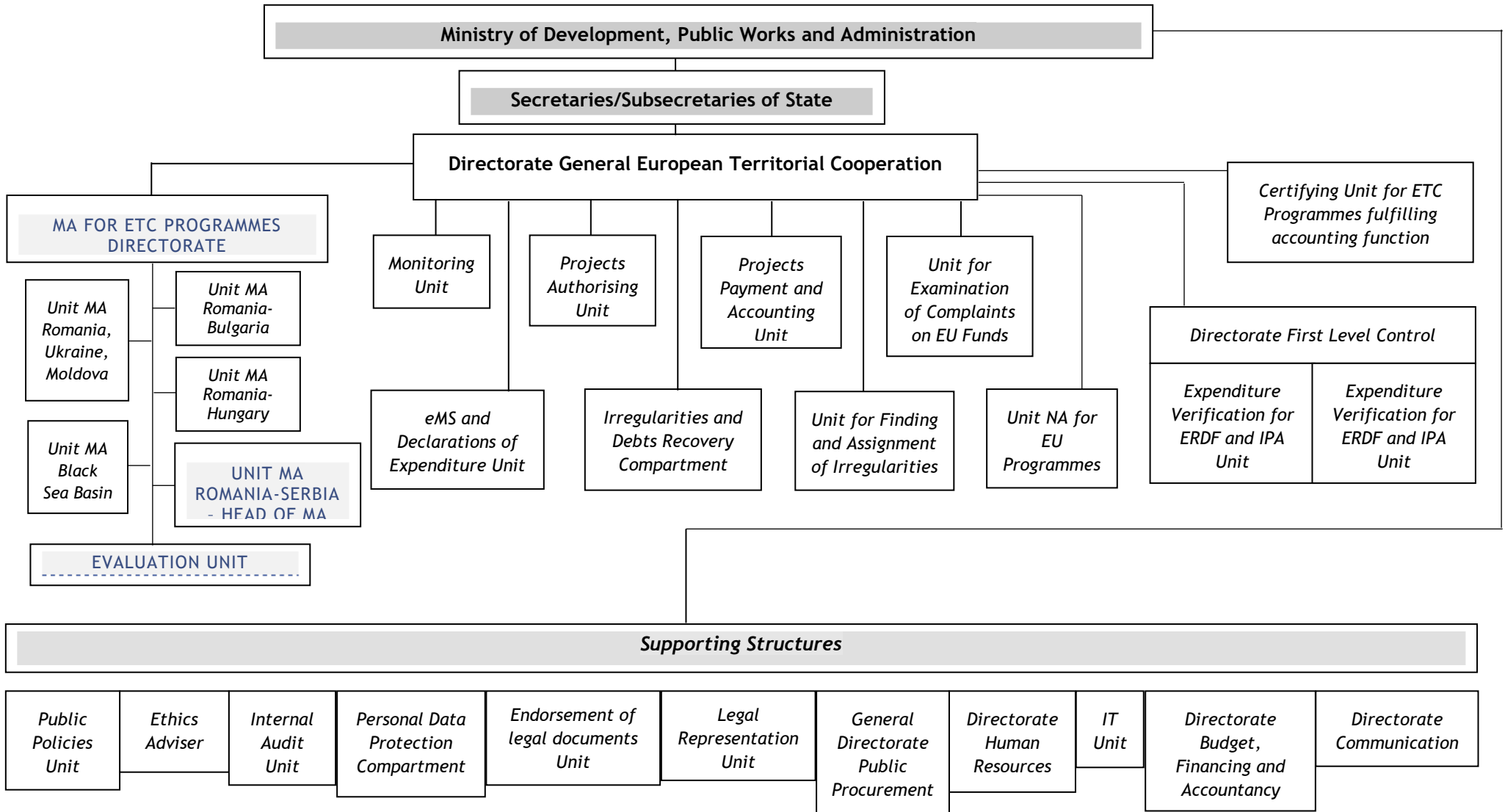| Specific Objective	Related Types of Actions	Estimated budget	Output Indicator	M.U.	Mile-stone 2024	Final target 2029	Result Indicator	M.U.	Base-line	Final target 2029	Code	Intervention field	Budget
	– Risk prevention and management of non-climate related natural risks (i.e. earthquakes) and risks linked to human activities (e.g. technological accidents), civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures. – Development and implementation of training products in the field of environment and emergency preparedness, including for children/ youth to respond to emergency situations; – Implementing joint works for flood prevention on Danube River, its tributary rivers and Danube basin, preferably with nature-based solutions; – Joint strategies and action plans for preventing natural risks and for enhancing climate change adaptation;			organisations				organisations			059	Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks: fires (including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems, infrastructures and ecosystem based approaches)	8,311,532
											060	Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks: others, e.g. storms and drought (including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems, infrastructures and ecosystem based approaches)	611,142

Specific Objective	Related Types of Actions	Estimated budget	Output Indicator	M.U.	Mile-stone 2024	Final target 2029	Result Indicator	M.U.	Base-line	Final target 2029	Code	Intervention field	Budget
	– Development and implementation of awareness measures in the field of climate change; – Development and implementation of awareness measures in the field of environment and emergency preparedness, including for children/ youth to respond to emergency situations;	422,284	RCO 81 - Participations in joint actions across borders	participations	136	136 1	RCR 85- Participations in joint actions across borders after project completion	participations	0	136	061	Risk prevention and management of non-climate related natural risks (i.e. earthquakes) and risks linked to human activities (e.g. technological accidents), including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems, infrastructures and ecosystem based approaches	1,588,971

	Specific Objective	Related Types of Actions	Estimated budget	Output Indicator	M.U.	Mile-stone 2024	Final target 2029	Result Indicator	M.U.	Base-line	Final target 2029	Code	Intervention field	Budget
Priority 2. Social and economic development	2.1. Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and life-long learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training (SO 4.2.)	- Elaboration of working procedures, joint platforms, joint events for online education and training; - Measures for developing highly technical skills and competences; - Joint measures for improving the link between the labour market and the education and training system; - Exchange of best practice or guidelines in the field of improving access to and the quality of education, training and lifelong learning across borders; - Development and implementation of joint actions to support adaptation of youth to market needs (e.g. digital skills); - Development and implementation of measures to ensure social inclusion and social innovation, as well as support for green and digital re-skilling and up-skilling; - Development and implementation of measures to support the creation of resilient and sustainable jobs and the employment of people with vulnerable background; - Investments in endowment of educational and training facilities; - Investments in joint IT solutions that will facilitate on-line education and training; - Investments in infrastructure and services for training, including technical and vocational and life-long learning;	6,712,445	PSO 02 - Investments in education, training and life-long learning services	investments	3	30	PSR 02 - Annual users of the supported investments in education, training and life-long learning services.	users/year	0	1800	149	Support for primary to secondary education (excluding infrastructure)	914,867
												150	Support for tertiary education (excluding infrastructure)	721,245
												151	Support for adult education (excluding infrastructure)	360,623
												122	Infrastructure for primary and secondary education	2,357,356
												123	Infrastructure for tertiary education	1,442,489
												124	Infrastructure for vocational education and training and adult learning	915,865

Specific Objective	Related Types of Actions	Estimated budget	Output Indicator	M.U.	Mile-stone 2024	Final target 2029	Result Indicator	M.U.	Base-line	Final target 2029	Code	Intervention field	Budget
2.2. Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family-based and community-based care; (SO 4.5.)	– Development and implementation of actions to sup- port digitalization in healthcare and health mobile as-sets; – Development and implementation of measures to improve accessibility effectiveness and resilience of healthcare systems and long-term care services across borders. – Investments in building/renovation/endowment of healthcare facilities (including laboratories); – Purchase of high-tech equipment for supporting telemedicine services; – Investment in improving healthcare and long-term care services for the elderly, through home care and community based care services; – Elaboration of joint working procedures, joint plat- forms, joint strategies for tackling cross-border medical threats; – Know-how exchange and capacity building activities (joint trainings, conferences, workshops).	16,485,77 7	PSO 03 - Investments in health care, family-based and community-based care services	investments	3	30	PSR 03 – Annual users of the supported investments in health care, family-based and community-based care services	Users/year	0	10.000	128	Health infrastructure	2,472,867
											129	Health equipment	10,715,756
											130	Health mobile assets	1,648,578
											131	Digitalisation in health care	1,648,576

Specific Objective	Related Types of Actions	Estimated budget	Output Indicator	M.U.	Mile-stone 2024	Final target 2029	Result Indicator	M.U.	Base-line	Final target 2029	Code	Intervention field	Budget
2.3. Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation (SO 4.6.)	- Investments in physical regeneration of cultural and touristic objectives, in the scope of their inclusion in the touristic and/ or cultural circuit;	2,646,190	RCO 77 - Number of cultural and tourism sites supported	cultural and tourism sites	0	3	RCR 77 - Visitors of cultural and tourism sites supported	visitors/year	0	3000	165	Protection, development and promotion of public tourism assets and tourism services	3,731,571
	- Development and implementation of measures to develop and promote tourism assets and services, ensuring social inclusion and social innovation; - Development and implementation of measures to protect, develop and promote natural heritage and eco-tourism, health tourism, business tourism, sport/ cyclo/ hiking-tourism; - Development and implementation of measures to protect, develop and promote cultural heritage and cultural services; - Joint actions in the field of development of sustain-able touristic and cultural services;	5,646,190	RCO 87 – Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	3	18	RCR 84 - Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	organisations	0	4	166	Protection, development and promotion of cultural heritage and cultural services	2,487,714
											167	Protection, development and promotion of natural heritage and eco-tourism other than Natura 2000 sites	2,073,095

Priority 3. Increasing border management capacity	3.1. Enhance the institutional capacity of public authorities, in particular those mandated to manage a specific territory, and of stakeholders (ISO 1.1.)	- Development and implementation of measures for strengthening of institutional capacities for improvement of services in the field of border management; - Developing common policies and strategies in the field of border management; - Investments in infrastructure and equipment for effective border surveillance, control and migration management; - Development and implementation of innovative solutions that utilize state-of-the-art technologies and large-scale IT systems to improve interoperability, security, convenience, waiting times and cost-effective-ness; - Development and implementation of measures to reduce vulnerability of the border and guarantee safe, secure and well-functioning border management.	10,557,000	RCO 87 - Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	0	5	RCR 84 - Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	organisations	0	2	171	Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and out-side the Member State	11,730,000
		- Sharing experiences, guidelines and procedures for improving assessment, prevention, preparedness and response in case of pandemics and emerging infectious diseases; - Joint trainings of border police personnel, as well as exchange of best practices and know-how on specific areas of activity.	1,173,000	RCO 85 - Participations in joint training schemes	participations	0	400	RCR 81 - Completion of joint training schemes	participants	0	340			

ANNEX B - Organisational chart of MA

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration           │
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                   │   Secretaries/Subsecretaries of State │
                   └──────────────────────────────────────┘

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        │   Directorate General European Territorial Cooperation       │
        └────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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MA FOR ETC PROGRAMMES DIRECTORATE

Unit MA Romania, Ukraine, Moldova	Unit MA Romania-Bulgaria
Unit MA Black Sea Basin	Unit MA Romania-Hungary
	UNIT MA ROMANIA-SERBIA – HEAD OF MA

EVALUATION UNIT

Monitoring Unit

Projects Authorising Unit

Projects Payment and Accounting Unit

Unit for Examination of Complaints on EU Funds

Certifying Unit for ETC Programmes fulfilling accounting function

eMS and Declarations of Expenditure Unit

Irregularities and Debts Recovery Compartment

Unit for Finding and Assignment of Irregularities

Unit NA for EU Programmes

Directorate First Level Control

| Expenditure Verification for ERDF and IPA Unit | Expenditure Verification for ERDF and IPA Unit |

Supporting Structures

| Public Policies Unit | Ethics Adviser | Internal Audit Unit | Personal Data Protection Compartment | Endorsement of legal documents Unit | Legal Representation Unit | General Directorate Public Procurement | Directorate Human Resources | IT Unit | Directorate Budget, Financing and Accountancy | Directorate Communication |

The present ToR Checklist[6] was produced as part of the Guide for Drafting the Evaluation Plans of the 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy in Romania and it was adjusted.

A checked box by a question indicates that item is not problematic.

Checklist	Yes
1. The administrative specifications	
1.1. Is the weight of price in comparison to the other selection criteria balanced and not excessive?	☐
1.2. Is the structure of the technical offer indicated (main contents, chapters, length, etc.)?	☐
2. The technical specifications	
2.1. Context, objectives and scope	
2.1.1. Is the policy context of the evaluation (EU regulation, Evaluation Plan, OP and other EU or national relevant decisions) explained?	☐
2.1.2. Are the main objectives and the users of the evaluation identified?	☐
2.1.3. Is the type of evaluation (e.g. preliminary study, implementation or process, impact, mix of different types) defined?	☐
2.1.4. Are the interventions to evaluate, the territory to cover and the period to examine (the scope of the evaluation) well-defined and clearly distinguishable?	☐
2.1.5. Is a brief description of the implementation and the advancement of the interventions to evaluate provided?	☐
2.1.6. Are the key stakeholders of the evaluation identified?	☐
2.1.7. Are the evaluation questions clearly stated? Are the key evaluation questions well-defined?	☐
2.1.8. Is the ToC of the interventions to evaluate clarified? Or, is the evaluator requested to identify the pertinent ToC?	☐
2.2. Methodology	
2.2.1. Is the general methodological framework suggested? And, is a request for major specification of the methodological approach made?	☐
2.2.2. Is expected data to use defined? And, is a request for major specification of necessary data and collection tools made?	☐
2.2.3. Is a request for clarifying the main methodological techniques and analyses to use clearly made?	☐
2.2.4. Are the main tasks to fulfil in the evaluation identified?	☐
2.2.5. Is a request for specifying the methods used to validate results and findings of the evaluation made?	☐
2.2.6. Are the main deliverables (reports, meetings) of the evaluation defined? And, are their main expected contents specified?	☐

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[6] The checklist uses different sources and adapts their contents according to the experience of the authors; in particular see: Evaluation Checklist, Gary Miron (2004); Checklist for preparing the Evaluation Report ILO (2021); EVALSED: The resource for the evaluation of Socio-Economic Development (2013)

Checklist	Yes
2.2.7. Are a risk assessment of the evaluation process and a specific quality control requested?	☐
2.3. *Professional qualifications*	
2.3.1. Are requirements for skills and experience of the team clearly defined? And, are these requirements coherent with the service requested?	☐
2.3.2. Are requirements for skills and experience clearly interpretable, sufficiently wide to be found in the market and not limit competition?	☐
2.3.3. Is the multidisciplinary composition of the team expressly detailed (if necessary)?	☐
2.3.4. Is the request of specifying the distributions of roles and responsibilities in the team made?	☐
3. Budget and Payment	
3.1. Is the maximum price for the evaluation stated?	☐
3.2. Is specified how the budget of the evaluation has to be presented (total cost, detailed budget for main voices, etc.)?	☐
3.3. Are the timing and the amount of the payments unambiguously defined?	☐
4. General	
4.1. Is the number of objectives and evaluation questions not excessive? Can they be addressed in a unique evaluation?	☐
4.2. If doubts on the feasibility of the evaluation exist, is a feasibility analysis included in the requests and a potential "plan B" defined (e.g. alternative approaches or the break of the contract)?	☐
4.3. Is the language used clear, simple and always well-focused on the main elements?	☐
4.4. Are all the requests sufficient and adequate to assess the proposals according to the adopted selection criteria?	☐

ANNEX D – Checklist for assessing the inception report

The present Inception Report Checklist[7] is used for assessing the quality of inception reports.

A checked box by a statement indicates that item is not problematic. Details are included below each statement

Checklist	Yes
1. General quality statements	
1.1. All provisions in the Terms of Reference and in the Technical Offer are addressed	☐
Details: …	
1.2. All aspects agreed in the kick-off meeting are addressed	☐
Details: …	
1.3. The approach for data collection is reasonable, feasible and likely to provide all information needed to answer the evaluation questions (particularly as regards data availability at beneficiary level)	☐
Details: …	
1.4. The ratio between desk research and fieldwork is adequate to provide the information needed to answer the evaluation questions	☐
Details: …	
1.5. Statistical or other appropriate data analysis methods are proposed, whether the data are obtained from the national administrations or are generated by the consultant through surveys or by gaining access to administrative data	☐
Details: …	
1.6. Fieldwork is described and research methods are appropriate - such as interviewing methods - online, telephone or face to face, interviews with stakeholders, focus groups; the proposed questionnaires include all the appropriate questions (balance between open and closed questions, impartiality, clarity, specificity etc.) and the forms/models proposed are appropriate	☐
Details: …	
1.7. Identification of regions and projects for case studies is based on statistical or other appropriate analysis	☐
Details: …	
1.8. In case there is an association between economic operators, the coordination mechanism between the consortium members is established	☐
Details: …	
1.9. Quality control procedures for all deliverables are established	☐
Details: …	

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[7] This checklist was also used for the 2014-2020 programming period.

ANNEX E – Checklist for assessing the evaluation report

The present Evaluation Report Checklist[8] was produced as part of the Guide for Drafting the Evaluation Plans of the 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy in Romania.

Instructions: Rate each component of the report using the following rubrics. Place a check mark in the cell that corresponds to your rating on each checkpoint. If the item or checkpoint is not applicable to the report, indicate the "NA" cell to the far right. Comments may be added in the dedicated row in each section.

1=Not addressed, 2=Partially addressed, 3=Fully addressed, NA=Not applicable

Checklist	1	2	3	NA
1. Executive Summary				
1.1. The programme/ IP/ SO/ theme evaluated is well described	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.2. Evaluation questions and purpose of the evaluation are presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.3. A brief description of methods and analytical strategy (if appropriate) is provided	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.4. A summary of main findings and policy implications or recommendations is included	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.5. Length is adequate (in general no more than 10-12 pages, or around 10% of the report)	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.6. Comments:				
2. Introduction				
2.1. The introduction helps the reader in approaching the report	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.2. An overview of the report and the description of report structure are available	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.3. Objectives and scope of the evaluation are clearly presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.4. The programme/ intervention to evaluate, its expected use and relevant users are specified	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.5. References of the evaluation to the Evaluation Plan and other possible decisions of the MC are included	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.6. Evaluation questions and how they have been identified (e.g. interviews, surveys, discussion with the MA, meetings with MC and the stakeholders, etc.) are clearly described	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.7. Evaluation criteria included in the analysis are specified, as well as their relations with the evaluation questions	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.8. The target population of the programme/ IP/ SO (as relevant) and territorial areas covered by the intervention are clearly identified	☐	☐	☐	☐

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[8] The checklist uses different sources and adapts their contents according to the experience of the authors; in particular see: Evaluation Checklist, Gary Miron (2004); Checklist for preparing the Evaluation Report ILO (2021); EVALSED: The resource for the evaluation of Socio-Economic Development (2013)

Checklist	1	2	3	NA
2.9. The main stakeholders of the evaluation are clearly identified	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.10.　　　Comments:				
3. Background and context				
3.1. A description of the programme/ IP/ SO/ theme being evaluated (its strategy in terms of economic and social cohesion, strategic importance in the OP, etc.) is included	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.2. The cause-effect relations underlying the programme/intervention are explicitly presented (a ToC or other interpretative framework)	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.3. The implementation of the programme/ intervention is well described and allows to understand possible bottlenecks or difficulties	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.4. The main interactions with other relevant European or national policies are identified and described	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.5. A well-focused review of the related literature is available to identify what is already known (including aspects on previous and similar financing and lessons learned etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.6. Comments:				
4. Methodology				
4.1. Evaluation approach and its rationale are clearly described and fit the ToC and the evaluation questions	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.2. Sources of information and data are adequately presented (e.g. primary or secondary data, sampling method, statistical error, questionnaires, timing of data collection, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.3. Analytical techniques are well described and allow to understand the reliability of the results	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.4. The strategy of combining methods/approaches (if any) is justified and allows to answer the evaluation questions properly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.5. Possible limitations of the evaluation are specified (e.g. limitations related to methods, data sources, potential sources of bias etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.6. Comments:				
5. Main findings				
5.1. The methodology is correctly applied	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.2. Details of analyses and findings are clearly and logically described	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.3. Analyses and findings cover all main aspects as deriving from the cause-effect relationships identified with the help of the ToC or other interpretative framework used	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.4. Discussion of evaluation findings is objective and complete, including – where relevant – both negative and positive findings	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.5. Findings are supported by evidence and are consistent with methods and data used	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.6. All evaluation questions are addressed, and an explanation is included for questions that could not be answered	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.7. Findings with regard to the examined evaluation criteria and the evaluation questions are presented	☐	☐	☐	☐

Checklist	1	2	3	NA
5.8. Unintended and unexpected results are discussed (if the case, applying to impact evaluations)	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.9. Factors contributing to the success/failure of the programme /intervention are identified and discussed	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.10. Comments:				
6. Conclusions, lessons learned and emerging good practices				
6.1. Answers to all evaluation questions and values of interventions/ themes in relation to the evaluation criteria are provided	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.2. Conclusions are formulated by synthesizing the main findings into summary judgments of merit and worth (any limitations of the results should be also explained)	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.3. Conclusions are fair, impartial and consistent with the findings	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.4. Conclusions are clear, concise and their potential generalization (at the level of a larger target groups, in time or in the space) is clarified	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.5. Conclusions reflect the analysis of horizontal or cross-cutting themes (including trans-territorial relationships in ETC, gender and environmental sustainability) conducted in the evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.6. Lessons learned, including context and applicability are included (if the case)	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.7. Emerging best practices, including context and applicability are included (if the case)	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.8. Comments:				
7. Recommendations and policy implications				
7.1. Recommendations logically follow from conclusions, lessons learned and good practices	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.2. Recommendations indicate the action needed to improve the performance of the programme/intervention in a concise manner. Long sentences and paragraphs are avoided	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.3. Recommendations are based on priority or importance (e.g. high, medium, low)	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.4. Recommendations are sufficiently detailed (who is called upon to act, time frame for their implementation, costs and/or complexity, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.5. Recommendations were discussed and validated with implementers and stakeholders (if requested or useful)	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.6. Comments:				
8. Annexes and references				
8.1. A suitable style or format is used consistently for all references	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.2. Annexes included useful information, that could not be detailed in the text and help to understand context or other aspects presented	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.3. All annexes are referenced in the text and are included in the Annexes section, in the order they are referenced	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.4. Data and information in the annexes are clearly presented and actually integrate the text	☐	☐	☐	☐

Checklist	1	2	3	NA
8.5. Comments:				
9. General considerations				
9.1. The report is written clearly and set out logically	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.2. The report presents an independent point of view and is not influenced by any stakeholder	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.3. Specialized concepts are used only when necessary and clearly described (when useful, a glossary is included)	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.4. Cross-cutting issues such as: (i) gender; (ii) tripartite and social dialogue issues (iii) international labour standards, (iv) environmental sustainability and (v) medium and long- term effects of capacity development action are assessed (if requested)	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.5. All data is disaggregated by sex, age, ethnic group or other relevant demographic categories, where feasible;	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.6. Charts, tables and graphs are understandable and appropriately and consistently labelled	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.7. The report addresses the demand of the commissioner/s and is useful	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.8. Comments:				

Proposed questions	Proposed actions	Covered Yes/No	Related EQ
Questions collected via EUSurvey – September 2022			
In the 2007 - 2013 CBC Romania-Serbia programme an axis specific for Research & Development existed, It was renounced in 2014 - 2020. Why an axis "Reserach & Development", with focus on support developing cross-border cooperation in scientific research is not included?	This topic can be covered under a more general relevance question	Yes	ImplemEval Q8, Q9
What are the needs of the people living on both sides of the border?	This topic can be covered under a more general relevance question (e.g. How relevant are the Programme interventions to the citizens living in the area?)	Yes	ImplemEval Q8, Q9
How can the programme contribute to solving the needs of the people (NOT of the authorities, local/central institutions)?	This topic can be covered under a more general relevance question	Yes	ImplemEval Q8, Q9
Is (the programme) helping in decentralizing the decision making in the target area?	Since the programme does not aim decentralization, a specific question on this topic is not appropriate in the evaluation logical chain. Instead, a larger question on the unintended effects of the programme (impact evaluation) would also cover such effects, should they occur.	No	-
(Is the programme) Benefiting for minorities?	This topic can be covered under a more general inclusiveness and non-discrimination question	Yes	ImplemEval Q13
Questions collected during 1st MC meeting – September 19th 2022			
Let's thinking about participating institutions from Republic of Voivodina level. They are strong and they can eliminate smaller participants from cross-border area, In some cases, if they support smaller	This topic be covered under a more general inclusiveness question	Yes	ImplemEval Q13

municipalities it is ok, but if they using their power for themselves it is not good for small partners.			
Considering that only projects with minimum 50% of the budget on investment activities, it will be best to give more details about those activities, a list eventually	This is not an evaluation question, but a suggestion for the programme authorities that was taken into consideration in the launching process, as the categories of eligible investments are listed in the Applicant Guide. What could be considered in evaluation instead is whether this approach led to more effects, also in conjunction with the strategic projects.	No	-
Questions collected after 1st MC meeting – received from MC members			
Please detail GDPR measures neccesaires to be respected in a project.	This is considered to be a proposal for the applicant's guide.	No	-
I consider important to evaluate the measures according GDPR. Personal informations needs a special attention and GDPR is a potential criteria.	An evaluation question dedicated to the observance of GDPR would make sense only if during programme implementation recurrent GDPR-related problems come up. Otherwise, a more general question on problems hindering the implementation process should also point to any GDPR-related problems.	No only if problematic during implementation	OngoingEval Q2
For whom is the project relevant?	This is considered to be a proposal for project assessment that does not regard programme evaluation. The relevance criterion shall be covered by programme evaluation.	No	-
The project has taken into consideration the future developments in the targeted field of intervention?	This is considered to be a proposal for project assessment that does not regard programme evaluation.	No	-
Please describe briefly 3 concrete achievements of the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme at strategic level (in general / in policy field / in the eligible country and/or at EU level)?	This can be reformulated into "What are the 3 main concrete achievements of the Programme at strategic level?"	Yes	ImpactEval Q7
What is the added value of the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme from the Managing Authority perspective?	This is rather a question for MA than an evaluation question. The added value criterion shall be covered by programme evaluation, which includes interviews with MA among data collection tools.	No	-
What could be done to further increase the impact of the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme?	This topic will be included in the programme evaluation.	Yes	ImpactEval Q3

Do you see the relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme?	This topic can be covered under more general questions on the partnership principle.	Yes	ImplemEval Q4
Which are the main gaps hindering cooperation / a sound implementation of the projects implemented through the Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme?	This topic will be included in the programme evaluation.	Yes	OngoingEval Q2 ImplemEval Q6
What would be needed to reach more people in terms of Programme Visibility?	This topic will be included in the programme evaluation.	Yes	ImplemEval Q19
In my opinion, during the future evaluations, it is important to answer the questions about the impact of the program, effectiveness and visibility.	These topics will be included in the programme evaluation.	Yes	ImpactEval Q1-8,11-13 ImplemEval Q1-4,16-20