

## EVALUATION ROADMAP

Roadmaps aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's work to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to share any relevant information that they may have.

<b>TITLE OF THE EVALUATION</b>	Evaluation of EU support to local authorities in enlargement and neighbourhood regions (2010-2018)
<b>LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT</b>	DG NEAR A4
<b>INDICATIVE PLANNING (PLANNED START DATE AND COMPLETION DATE)</b>	Q1 2019 – Q1 2020
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-rights-and-governance/local-authorities_en">https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-rights-and-governance/local-authorities_en</a> <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/node_en">https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/node_en</a>

**The Roadmap is provided for information purposes only. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by the document, including its timing, are subject to change.**

### A. Context, purpose and scope of the evaluation

#### Context

This evaluation is included in the [multiannual strategic evaluation plan for 2018-2022](#) of DG NEAR — Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations. This evaluation is in line with the EU Better Regulation, which emphasises the need of systemic and timely evaluation of European Commission programmes, activities, instruments and non-spending activities in order to demonstrate accountability and to promote lesson learning to improve policy and practice.

Adhering to the [principle of subsidiarity](#), the EU aims at promoting the role of Local Authorities as policy and decision-makers, in favour of transparent and accountable policymaking and service delivery at the local level. This is likely to empower them, and to boost local development via increased democratic participation, justice, human rights, active citizenship, participation of women and youth in the public sphere, and multi-level accountability.

In the past two decades, the importance of Local Authorities (LAs)<sup>1</sup> and Associations of Local Authorities (ALAs)<sup>2</sup> in addressing the complexities of sustainable development and fighting poverty have been increasingly recognised, by both the EU and its partner countries. The [European Charter on development co-operation in support of Local governance \(2008\)](#) sets out principles and modalities for better effectiveness of co-operation in support of local governance and decentralisation in partner countries. The [Communication Local Authorities: actors of development \(2008\)](#) highlights the importance of local authorities' emergence as key actors in development and identified the first elements of a response strategy at EU level. It sought to launch a process to reinforce the participation of local authorities in the design and implementation of development activities, in a coordinated and strategic manner.

More recently, the 2013 Communication ["Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes"](#) defines the EU strategic priorities to support LAs and their Associations in partner countries to unlock their development potential: e.g. increase the capacities of local authorities and strengthen local governance structures, promote a territorial approach to development, support municipal authorities in rural and urban areas, explore opportunities for coordination with regional authorities, support the creation of conducive environment for empowering local authorities in the definition and implementation of local policies, promote enhanced political, administrative and fiscal autonomy of local authorities through decentralisation reforms and capacity and institutional development, and support to urban

<sup>1</sup> COM (2013) 280 final «Local Authorities» will refer to public institutions «with legal personality, component of the State structure, below the level of central government and accountable to citizens. The term encompasses different tiers of government, e.g. villages, municipalities, districts, counties, provinces, regions, etc.

<sup>2</sup> COM (2013) 280 final The term «Associations of Local Authorities» is to be understood as umbrella organisations based on membership and representativeness at sub-national, national, sub-continental, continental and international level.

development. In addition, the [Staff Working Document on EU Cooperation with Cities and Local Authorities in Third Countries](#), published in 2018, calls for a cluster based and integrated approach promoting cross-sector cooperation that takes into account the diversity of cities and their wider territorial context while building on urban-rural linkages when working with LAs.

In the enlargement context, the existence of an effective, efficient and democratic local government system is one of the key indicators to be taken into account when assessing the degree of compliance of a candidate with the so-called "[political criteria](#)" for EU accession – i.e. system consisting of a number of elected local authorities, representing their respective local communities, and entrusted with a number of public tasks and responsibilities to be managed by them, under conditions of autonomy vis-à-vis the central government and administration and which are directly responsible for the management of a sufficient amount of the country's public resources.

Local authorities play furthermore a key role in meeting the Copenhagen criteria and ensuring the implementation of the EU acquis. This role is particularly important in the following sectors: economic and social cohesion, agriculture and food safety, environment, public procurement, and social policy. Local and regional authorities also make an important contribution to communicating enlargement, as they are closest to citizens.

The [EU's enlargement policy](#) focuses on the "fundamentals first" approach, which promotes reforms in the areas of rule of law/fundamental rights, public administration reform, and economic development and competitiveness early on in the accession process. The Commission pays attention to local self-government notably the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs. Local authorities have a key role to play in fulfilling the "fundamentals" on the ground since they are both policy makers and service providers according to the rights and obligations embedded in the respective national legislations.

The [European Neighbourhood policy \(ENP\)](#), reviewed in 2015, confirms the EU's commitment to support good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights as one of its four main themes. The ENP highlights that accountable public administration at central and local government level is key to democratic governance and economic development.

Public administration reform (PAR) is considered essential in both the Enlargement and the Neighbourhood policy framework. The Commission promotes public administration reform in line with the [Principles of Public Administration](#) since 2014, which by analogy also apply to local authorities. Similar to state administration, local authorities are expected to professionalise their civil service, improve service delivery to citizens and businesses, ensure inclusive and evidence-based policy and legislative development at local and regional level, ensure accountability of their operations and sound management of public finances.

## **Purpose and scope**

The generic purpose of the evaluation is to provide an overall independent assessment and evidence on the contribution of EU external action to the achievement of the objectives and intended impacts of its policy towards local authorities in enlargement and neighbourhood regions during 2010-2018 period. The geographical scope will be current IPA II beneficiaries<sup>3</sup> and ENI partner countries<sup>4</sup>.

The analysis will cover from a normative and policy point of view the EU financial assistance and non-spending activities (i.e. policy dialogue, multi-stakeholder dialogue) since 2010. The evaluation will focus on aspects related to EU support to local governance (e.g. political, administrative and fiscal decentralization, human resource management, accountability, service delivery, engagement of civil society in the local decision-making, local democracy, capacity building) and local development (e.g. territorial approach, urban development/governance, response to local challenges<sup>5</sup>).

In accordance with the Better Regulation, the assessment will be made against the following evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, coherence and EU added value. Furthermore, sustainability, coordination and complementarity will also be considered. It will look in particular at:

- The proper targeting of assistance, including outreach questions;
- The results (outputs, outcomes and impact) of the assistance – in terms of changes supported - over time and against the Commission's strategic objectives in the enlargement and neighbourhood regions;

<sup>3</sup>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo (This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

<sup>4</sup>Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Palestine (This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue), Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. environment (access to water, wastewater management) and climate change, energy efficiency, access to social services, support to vulnerable groups.

- The extent to which the approaches and policy frameworks applied in the enlargement, neighbourhood east and south regions influenced those results;
- The level of coherence, coordination and complementarity of instruments (geographical and thematic), interventions and institutions providing support to local authorities, and of delivery at bilateral and regional levels;
- The extent to which certain principles were applied in practice (e.g. public administration principles, good administration principles).

The evaluation should also produce recommendations for future programming and policy purposes, particularly on how to engage with LAs and ALAs in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and in the context of the Commission proposal for Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument ([NDICI](#)) and the [Instrument for Pre-Accession III](#).

## B. Better regulation

### Consultation of citizens and stakeholders

Not being an evaluation in the sense of the Better Regulation guidelines as it does not refer to a major initiative, the present study will not develop an on-line open public consultation ([OPC](#)). Furthermore, this evaluation not being linked to legislative and non-legislative initiatives, delegated acts or implementing measures, no impact assessment is required.

However, consultation activities will be undertaken to gather data, opinions and test hypotheses.

The main stakeholders to be consulted during the entire evaluation exercise from inception to synthesis phase (final report) (either via interviews, workshops and/or surveys) include:

- National authorities and institutions of all levels in candidate countries, potential candidates and partner countries responsible for the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of EU external action support, beneficiaries of EU external action support and other national stakeholders;
- EU stakeholders (non-exhaustive list): EU Delegations/EU Offices in candidate countries, potential candidates and partner countries, DG NEAR, DG DEVCO, DG REGIO, the EC Secretariat General, the EEAS, the Committee of the Regions, the National authorities from partner countries and EU Member States, the local authorities and the associations of local authorities from the partner countries (including associations set up at European level);
- International stakeholders (non-exhaustive list): relevant UN agencies and other relevant international organisations including international financial institutions, the Council of Europe, relevant civil society organisations and research institutions.
- International and regional Associations of Local Authorities that unite national associations.

The list will be further defined during Inception phase.

### Data collection and methodology

The evaluation process will be carried out in four phases: an Inception Phase, a Desk Phase, a Field Phase, and a Synthesis Phase. Among the pool of main methodological techniques, the following key elements can be already pinpointed:

- A. Evaluation Questions: a draft set will be presented in the Terms of Reference and the evaluation team, in consultation with the Inter-service Steering Group, will finalise and complete it (with Judgement criteria, indicators, relevant data collection sources, and tools) during the inception phase. When relevant, cross-cutting issues will be considered. The indicators will need to allow cross-checking, triangulation and strengthening the evidence base on which the questions are answered. The information gathered for each indicator will need to be presented as an annex of the desk and final reports.
- B. Data collection: several tools will be used for collecting, structuring, processing and/or analysing data throughout the evaluation process: Inventory of interventions, Literature review, Interviews, Case studies, Survey, Quantitative analysis.

Deliverables in the form of reports and/or slide presentations should be submitted at the end of the corresponding phases.

Key sources of information already available are (this list will be further detailed once a set of case studies are defined (see below):

- EU policy and strategy documents towards partner regions;
- EU and Enlargement and partner countries policy and strategy documents;
- Enlargement and partner countries official documents;
- EU support interventions related documents (incl. Results Orientated Monitoring reports);
- Relevant performance audits of the European Court of Auditors;
- Previous evaluations, studies, etc.

The Terms of reference will provide a non-exhaustive list.