

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.

TITLE OF THE EVALUATION	Evaluation of EU cooperation with Montenegro
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	DG NEAR UNIT A4
INDICATIVE PLANNING (PLANNED START DATE AND COMPLETION DATE)	Q4 2019 Q4 2020
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	<p>Links:</p> <p>DG NEAR: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/montenegro_en</p> <p>EUD Montenegro: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/montenegro_en</p>

The Roadmap is provided for information purposes only. It does not prejudge 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

The [EU Better Regulation guidelines](#) emphasise the need of systemic and timely evaluation of EU's activities, instruments, programmes and policies. The external, strategic country evaluation of EU's cooperation with Montenegro is included in the multiannual evaluation plan of DG NEAR for the period 2019 - 2023.

This evaluation aims to address EU's strategy towards Montenegro, i.e. EU support for the reforms that the country is implementing with regard to its enlargement perspective. The evaluation particularly targets EU financial assistance and policy dialogue with the objective to develop recommendations for future programming and implementation, and strengthen EU's accountability.

At the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, the EU agreed that all countries of the Western Balkans have a clear perspective of EU membership, subject to fulfilment of a set of conditions, i.e. [Copenhagen criteria](#) and conditions set under the [Stabilisation and Association Process \(SAP\)](#). The Commission's 2018 Communication¹ reaffirmed a credible enlargement prospect for the Western Balkans and a merit-based approach for each country.

Montenegro submitted an application for membership in 2008 and became an EU Candidate Country in December 2012. Accession Negotiations started in June 2012 and to date (July 2019), 32 out of 35 chapters have been opened and three have been provisionally closed. Montenegro continued to implement its obligations set in the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA). Regular political and economic dialogue has continued through the SAA structures and the Economic Reform Programme.

The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is the main EU financial instrument in Montenegro. Its objective² is to support Montenegro in adopting and implementing political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms in order to comply with the Union's values and to progressively align to the Union's rules, standards, policies and practices, with a view to Union membership. This evaluation will cover initiatives implemented with the financial support granted through both IPA I and IPA II.

Montenegro participates in regional cooperation initiatives and programmes and has a constructive approach in its bilateral relations with its neighbours.

Purpose and scope

This evaluation is a strategic country level evaluation of EU's financial assistance and policy dialogue in Montenegro. Its goal is to determine the extent to which the financial assistance and related policy dialogue have

¹ A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans, COM (2018) 65 Final

² As specified in Articles 1 & 2 of Regulation 231/2014 of the Council and European Parliament and the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II)

contributed to the country's reform efforts and progress towards the goal of EU membership.

The evaluation will focus at programming level, rather than the project level, although project data can be used to inform the strategic level if appropriate.

The evaluation will focus on sectors that have been supported by the financial assistance in question. It will notably focus on the results and impacts at sector level, with an emphasis on the three evaluation fundamentals (rule of law, economic governance and public administration reform), as well as assistance to support infrastructure, as well as TAIEX, Twinning, and the impact of multi-country and regional assistance where appropriate. It shall also examine the impact, appropriateness and relevance of the various implementing modalities used to deliver the assistance, including direct management, indirect management by the beneficiary country and indirect management by other bodies³.

The evaluation will cover the period 2012 – 2019.

In accordance with the EU Better Regulation guidelines the evaluation criteria for the assessment are: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, coherence and EU-added value. Also the sustainability criteria, foreseen as a possibility under the guidelines, will be assessed, as it is a key consideration regarding support to a potential future EU Member State.

The evaluation shall lead to:

1. Conclusions based on objective, credible, reliable and valid findings, based on multiple and relevant data sources ("triangulation").
2. The identification of a set of lessons learnt and case studies, including success stories and cases that will provide useful lessons for the Commission proposal for the Instrument for Pre Accession III (IPA III) and are of publishable quality in order to illustrate the results of the assistance to citizens and other stakeholders.
3. A number of strategic, operational, targeted and usable forward-looking recommendations to enhance the implementation of IPA III and the overall EU strategy for Montenegro.

B. Better regulation

Consultation of citizens and stakeholders

This evaluation will not require the launching of an on-line open public consultation (OPC) as this evaluation falls outside the definition of evaluations presented in the Better Regulation guidelines. Not being linked to legislative and non-legislative initiatives, delegated acts or implementing measures, no impact assessment is required for this study. Only the evaluation roadmap will be the subject of stakeholders' consultations, and will require their comments and feedback.

The stakeholders of the evaluation are:

- The European Commission i.e. DG NEAR, and other DGs, as appropriate.
- The EU Delegation to Montenegro.
- The relevant national and local authorities in Montenegro, notably the National IPA Coordinator and representatives of the national IPA Monitoring Committee.
- Civil society organisations, media and other such bodies, as appropriate.
- Financial institutions and other organisations implementing IPA in the Western Balkans.
- Other relevant donors, EU Member States and international organisations and bodies, including those financed by IPA (e.g. OECD SIGMA)
- Other relevant actors identified by the evaluation team.

The stakeholders shall be included in each stage of the evaluation, from inception to final reporting phase. They shall be consulted via phone or face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires.

Data collection and methodology

Data will be collected during the Inception, Desk and Field phases of the evaluation. The choice of consultation activities (e.g. face-to-face interviews, focus groups, surveys) shall allow for the collection of detailed data from a broad sample of stakeholders, as well as for triangulation with data collected through research.

The evaluation process will be carried out in four phases: an Inception Phase, a Desk phase, a Field Phase, and

³ Including the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) the Instrument for Stability (IfS 2007-2013/lcSP 2014-2020) and grants blended with loans from International Financial Institutions (e.g. EIB, EBRD, and CEB).

a Synthesis Phase. In terms of methodology, the following key elements can be already pinpointed:

1. A draft set of evaluation questions will be presented in the Terms of Reference and the evaluation team, in consultation with the Inter-service Steering Group, will finalise and complete these questions (with Judgement Criteria (JC) and indicators for each JC and relevant data collection sources and tools) during the inception phase.
2. The indicators will need to allow crosschecking, triangulation and strengthening the evidence base on which the evaluation questions shall be answered. The information gathered for each indicator will be presented in a coherent and readable manner as an annex of the data research reports and final report.
3. A range of evaluation tools will be used for collecting, structuring, processing and analysing the data sets generated and collected throughout the evaluation process: these may include an inventory, a literature review, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and surveys, quantitative analysis, as appropriate.
4. The final evaluation report shall also include case studies, including good practices that will provide lessons for IPA III. These must be of publishable quality in order to illustrate the results of IPA financial assistance to citizens and other stakeholders.

The evaluation team should submit deliverables in the form of reports and slide presentations at the end of each phase of the evaluation.

A non-exhaustive list of data sources includes:

1. EU policy and strategy documents towards Montenegro, e.g. Indicative Strategy Papers, Multi-annual Indicative and Planning Documents (MIPDs), Programming and Action documents, Decisions and Financing Agreements;
2. Reporting documents, e.g. annual reports, European Court of Auditors reports, Results Oriented Monitoring reports;
3. National and international statistics;
4. Previous evaluations, studies and reports from other international organisations, e.g., WB, EBRD, UN, WTO, OECD;
5. Studies conducted in the framework of regional cooperation in the Western Balkans;
6. Other reliable and well-documented sources.