



**Multi-Annual Evaluation Plan
for the Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA
Cross-Border Cooperation Programme**



Section I: Introduction

1. Programme Context

a) Overall objective of the programme

"The Strategic Goal of the Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA CBC Programme is to achieve more balanced and sustainable socio-economic development of the Romanian-Serbian border area."

b) Eligible area

- Romania:

Timiș, Caraș-Severin, Mehedinți

- Serbia:

Severno-Banatski; Srednje- Banatski; Juzno-Banatski; Branicevski; Borski

c) Programme budget

Year	Community Funding
2007	4.274.252
2008	7.302.563
2009	7.982.247
2010	8.141.892
2011	8.304.731
TOTAL	36.005.685

Priority	Community Funding	National Contribution	Total	EU Co-financing rate
Economic & Social Development	18.002.843	3.176.972	21.179.815	85%
Environ & Emergency Preparedness	9.361.478	1.652.026	11.013.504	85%
Promoting	5.040.796	889.553	5.930.349	85%

"people to people" exchanges				
Technical Assistance	3.600.568	635.395	4.235.963	85%
TOTAL	36.005.685	6.353.946	42.359.631	

2. Regulatory Context

According to the Commission Guidance Paper on ongoing evaluation: **“the establishment of an evaluation plan is recommended not only under the Convergence Objective** (as referred to in Article 48[1]) **but also under the Regional competitiveness and employment objective and the European territorial co-operation objective**, taking into account the proportionality principle (Article 13)”.

Even though it is not mandatory, the drawing up of such Evaluation Plan represents good practice in evaluation management. The task of organising the evaluation of an operational programme over a seven years period demands a planning instrument to identify evaluation priorities and to ensure that evaluation is integrated into the programme implementation system in an effective manner.

The Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA Cross - Border Co-operation Program has been prepared in line with Council Regulation (EC) No.1085/2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, the Commission Regulation (EC) 718/2007 implementing IPA Regulation.

Article 109 “Evaluation” of the IPA Implementing Regulation (EC Regulation no. 718/2007 implementing Council Regulation no. 1085 / 2006 establishing an instrument for pre-accession assistance - IPA) states that the *“Participating countries shall jointly carry out an ex-ante evaluation covering each cross-border program”* and that *“During the programming period, participating countries shall carry out evaluations linked to the monitoring of the cross-border programme”*.

An important amendment to IPA programme evaluation was brought following the entry into force of Commission Regulation no. 80/2010 amending EC Regulation no. 718/2007 implementing Council Regulation no. 1085/2006 establishing an instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA), which states the following aspects:

“Programmes shall be subject to ex-ante evaluations, as well as interim and /or ex-post evaluations, as appropriate, in accordance with specific provisions laid down under each IPA component in Part II of this Regulation and in accordance with Article 21 of Regulation (EC, Euratom) no. 2342/2002. The results of the evaluation shall be taken into account in the programming and implementation cycle”.

The main aspect is represented by the flexibility provided by this amendment in relation to the timing and / or need for interim and ex post evaluations.

Along this line, Article 21 of the EC Regulation no. 2342/2002 provides specific details to evaluation as follows:

*Article 21
Evaluation*

2. All programmes or activities shall then be the subject of an interim and/or ex post evaluation in terms of the human and financial resources allocated and the results obtained in order to verify that they were consistent with the objectives set, as follows:

(a) the results obtained in carrying out a multiannual programme shall be periodically evaluated in accordance with a timetable which enables the findings of that evaluation to be taken into account for any decision on the renewal, modification or suspension of the programme;

(b) activities financed on an annual basis shall have their results evaluated at least every six years.

Point (b) of the first subparagraph shall not apply to each of the projects or actions conducted within those activities, for which the requirement may be met by the final reports sent by the bodies which carried out the action.

Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA Cross-Border Cooperation programme shall be subject to ex-post evaluation to be conducted and completed by 2015.

The Multi-Annual Evaluation Plan was elaborated under the coordination of the Central Evaluation Unit of the Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments within the Romanian Ministry of Public Finance.

Section II: Co-ordination and Management of the Evaluation Plan

1. Role of Multi - Annual Evaluation Plan

The evaluation process is based on 3 main stages:

- The Programme Multi-Annual Evaluation Plan and Programme Annual Evaluation Plans;*
- Operational procedures to be applied to each evaluation;*
- Follow-up process to implement evaluation recommendations.*

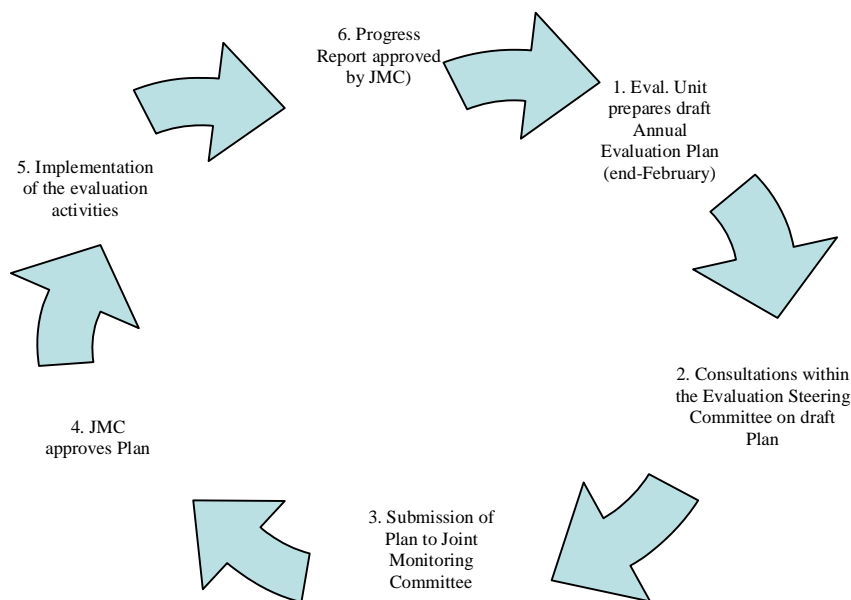
This Multi-annual Evaluation Plan has been elaborated by the Evaluation Unit established within Department for Programme Management Assistance - Directorate for International Cross-Border Cooperation - Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, which acts as Managing Authority for the Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA Cross - Border Cooperation Programme.

It represents a management tool for the implementation of the programme. It will be included as an annex to the Romanian National Strategic Reference Framework Evaluation Plan.

It sets out an evaluation strategy throughout the programme implementation period, with a provisional character, proportionate with the financial allocation. The nature of this multi-annual plan is indicative (given the obvious difficulty of specifying evaluation priorities so far in advance). Therefore, the effective management of the evaluation process is best organized around a more specific and detailed Annual Evaluation Plan, which will be coordinated with the implementation of the programme TA Priority Axis. For those years where evaluations are foreseen, separate Annual Evaluation Plans shall be drafted and shall be approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee, with prior endorsement of the Evaluation Steering Committee. The Annual Evaluation Plan shall detail evaluations that the Managing Authority intends to carry out during the respective year, whereas the Multi-Annual Evaluation Plan is a forward-looking document, in the sense that it identifies in advance evaluations that the Managing Authority intends to carry out throughout the entire programming period.

Both the Multi-annual Evaluation Plan and the Annual Evaluation Plan will be submitted for approval to the Joint Monitoring Committee.

FLOW OF ANNUAL EVALUATION PLAN ACTIVITIES



2. Role and Functions of Evaluation Unit

The most part of the evaluations carried out for the Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA Cross - Border Cooperation Programme shall be conducted internally by the Evaluation Unit, **with support of the Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme, Serbian National Authority - Ministry of Finance of Republic of Serbia and Joint Technical**

Secretariat Antenna or together with external evaluators **as well as combined (internal - Evaluation Unit and external - for specific technical part - external evaluators)**. The Evaluation Unit may carry out additional evaluations, if needed, mainly ad-hoc evaluations, as well as any other evaluations which could be requested by the Joint Monitoring Committee.

Planning for the evaluations that will be carried out shall commence at least 4-6 months in advance of their intended start date. In case of evaluations conducted externally, the first stage in the process will be the drafting Terms of Reference, which shall clarify both the scope of the evaluation and the exact evaluation questions that need answering. In case of the evaluations conducted internally, the Annual Evaluation Plan shall represent the basis for designing a proper methodology to conduct the evaluation. *The Programme Evaluation Steering Committee endorses the draft Terms of Reference, the Multi-annual Evaluation Plan, the Annual Evaluation Plan, depending on whether it is an external or an internal evaluation.*

The Evaluation Unit contains two persons. The staff of the Evaluation Unit will be partly working for this programme and partly for other 3 territorial cooperation programmes.

The responsibilities of the Evaluation Unit experts are:

Current tasks

- representing the Evaluation Unit at meetings of the Evaluation Working Group, and participate in any other evaluation coordination events as organised by the Evaluation Central Unit established within the Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments - Romanian Ministry of Public Finance;
- drafting the programme Multi-Annual Evaluation Plan and Annual Evaluation Plans and submitting them to the programme Joint Monitoring Committee for approval, with prior endorsement by the Evaluation Steering Committee. **Note 1): The approval of the Multi-Annual Evaluation Plan by the Joint Monitoring Committee is foreseen in the programme evaluation procedure, in terms of time periods. In case of minor changes, the approval takes place by written procedure. Note 2): In case of the Annual Evaluation Plan, an Evaluation Steering Committee shall be established, to which the specific tasks shall be assigned, as described below. The Evaluation Steering Committee was established for the Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA Cross-Border Cooperation programme and the core membership consists of representatives of the programme Serbian National Authority - Ministry of Finance of Republic of Serbia, a representative of DG Regional Policy, European Commission, and a representative of Central Evaluation Unit, Romanian Ministry of Public Finance- Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments. The written procedure referred to in Note 1) is further on described:**
 - In case of applying the written consultation procedure, the Secretariat (**Evaluation Unit- within Department for Programme Management Assistance**) submits to the ESC members the necessary documents for adoption in a written form (post, currier, fax or email), with the confirmation of receipt. Any additional points or comments of the

participants regarding the presented documents shall be sent in form of a consolidated position to the Secretariat (**Evaluation Unit**).

- The objections or the agreement on the documents transmitted according to the written consultation procedure can be submitted to the Secretariat in written form (post, fax, e-mail) within maximum 5 working days from the date the documents were transmitted.
 - If no objection was received by the deadline, the proposal is considered approved in the sent format.
 - In case objections are received, the Secretariat (**Evaluation Unit**) transmits all received objections to the MA. The MA formulates its position regarding the received objections, position which is consequently transmitted by the Secretariat (Evaluation Unit) to the ESC members. The lack of reaction on proposals/objections is equivalent with the agreement with MA position.
 - The Secretariat (**Evaluation Unit**) submits to the ESC members the final version of the documents adopted under the written consultation procedure.
 - Material errors in approved documents may be corrected by the Secretariat (**Evaluation Unit**), with the prior approval of the MA, under the condition that the Secretariat consequently informs all the ESC members and all interested parties.
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- financing of evaluation activities: **The evaluation projects are represented by annual evaluations, provided in Annual Evaluation Plans, analysed by the Managing Authority, endorsed by the Evaluation Steering Committee and approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee. These stages are in accordance with the approved programme evaluation procedure. The programme includes a priority axis for technical assistance used for implementing it.**
 - participating in training and evaluation capacity building activities as organised by the Evaluation Central Unit established within the Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments - Romanian Ministry of Public Finances.
 - being the key liaison point with major stakeholders for evaluation purposes;
 - drafting the evaluation procedure for **the Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA Cross- Border programme.**

Tasks related to the evaluation projects, commissioned externally:

- convening the Programme Evaluation Steering Committee;
- participating in the Evaluation Steering Committee;
- attending and reporting to meetings of the Joint Monitoring Committee;

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- in case of evaluation contracts, the specific tasks are related to:
 - drafting Terms of Reference, together with the Managing Authority, which are submitted, for endorsement, with the Evaluation Steering Committee;
 - liaising on contracting procedures with the Managing Authority;

 - once contracted, **monitoring and supervising the activities undertaken during the evaluation exercise**, through a process of:
 - organising the meetings of key stakeholders and the evaluators;
 - liaising with all 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 all relevant monitoring and other data.
 - manage the Unit repository, which should hold all relevant evaluation materials

 - **quality controlling** all evaluation reports submitted to the Evaluation Unit under the terms of an evaluation contract, through a process of:
 - ensuring evaluators meet deadlines for report submissions;
 - commenting on draft reports, together with Managing Authority, before being sent to Evaluation Steering Committee for endorsement (according to the programme evaluation procedure, the draft evaluation report should be submitted to the Evaluation Steering Committee meeting within 2 or 3 months after the start of implementation of the evaluation);
 - assessing and grading draft and final evaluation reports.

Tasks related to the evaluations carried out internally

- Drafting the evaluation scope and timing and submitting them to the Evaluation Steering Committee for consultation and endorsement;
- Carrying out the evaluations. In this respect, the Evaluation Unit will:
 - undertake activities to support the evaluation project (collection of relevant data, including desk research, consultations with relevant stakeholders within the evaluation scope, etc.)
 - draw up draft evaluation reports (following the above point) and submit them to the Evaluation Steering Committee, **in keeping with the exact time periods stated by the Evaluation Procedure manual approved for the Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA Cross- Border Cooperation Programme: *the draft evaluation***

report should be submitted for endorsement to Evaluation Steering Committee members within 2 or 3 months after the start of implementation of the evaluation

- draw up final evaluation report (*within 6 to 7 months after the start of the implementation of the evaluation*);
- submit the evaluation reports to the Managing Authority and to Evaluation Steering Committee for consideration.

Dissemination of evaluation findings

- A summary of the evaluation report findings shall be available in 5 working days after the approval of the final evaluation report for all bodies and authorities involved in programme implementation, being posted on the programme website: www.romania-serbia.net;
- Tracking progress on implementation of evaluation recommendations, through setting a schedule for implementing authorities to report on implementation progress.

3. Evaluation Steering Committees

The programme Evaluation Steering Committee will oversee implementation of this Plan. The core membership of the Committee will remain the same for the duration of its existence, and will include:

- The Head of the Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA Cross - Border Programme Managing Authority (or his or her designate);
- A representative of the Serbian National Authority - Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia;
- The Evaluation Unit within Department for Programme Management Assistance - Directorate of International Cross - Border Cooperation;
- A representative from DG Regional Policy, European Commission;
- A representative of the Evaluation Central Unit **established within the Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments - Romanian Ministry of Public Finance**;

Additional members shall be invited onto the Committee for each evaluation as the Managing Authority decides, based on the partnership principle. The Managing Authority could also invite independent sectoral experts on to the Evaluation Steering Committee for evaluations of Priority Axes of a technical nature.

The Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) is also responsible for endorsing the Annual Evaluation Plans, which provides a detailed overview of the implementation of an evaluation within a certain year. ESC endorses both Multi - Annual and Annual Evaluation Plan also by written procedure, as provided in the programme evaluation procedure.

In case of external evaluations, ESC takes note of the decision on the selection of the evaluator, after receiving the conclusions drawn up by the Evaluation Commission.

ESC is also responsible for endorsing the quality of evaluation reports, both internally and externally conducted.

4. Utilisation of Evaluations (publication and availability of evaluation reports, presentation and distribution of results, monitoring the use of recommendations)

As part of the final evaluation report, the evaluator will prepare a recommendations table as a stand-alone document to be distributed with the report (this is equally valid for evaluations conducted internally or externally). The Joint Monitoring Committee shall decide whether to accept, reject or adapt each recommendation. For recommendations that are approved by the Joint Monitoring Committee, a systematic follow up will then ensue to ensure that the report's recommendations are taken up. This shall require:

- A debriefing meeting organised by the Managing Authority, to focus on the means and the timing of implementing the recommendations;
- Submission of the follow-up table to the relevant institutions (including DG Regional Policy);
- Examination of implementation progress at the next Joint Monitoring Committee meeting.



Section III: Indicative Evaluation Activities

The programme will be subject to evaluations meant to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the assistance and the strategy and implementation. They will analyse problems that occur during the implementation and propose solutions to improve the operation of the system.

The following activities are proposed, in keeping with the current implementing of the programme:

Second half of 2010 - first half of 2011: Evaluation conducted internally by the Evaluation Unit, Department for Programme Management Assistance, within the Directorate for International Cross-Border Cooperation, focused on: data collection for monitoring and evaluation, efficient functioning of the call for project proposal mechanism, programme implementation system, quality of project proposals received, evaluation as to whether the initial objective is still relevant within the given socio-economic context, project contracting system, evaluation related to the relevance of the indicator system. Expected recommendations: improvement of the programme implementation system performance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, conclusions on number and quality of projects by priority axis or measure. This internal evaluation is conducted with support of the Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme, Serbian National Authority - Ministry of Finance of Republic of Serbia and Joint Technical Secretariat Antenna, using questionnaires, surveys and on the spot analysis. Considering the economic crisis occurred at the end of 2008, this evaluation shall also analyse the effect of the crisis on programme implementation.

End of 2011 - first half of 2012: *evaluation on reaching the target indicators set in the programme, evaluation on cross / cutting issues (gender equality and environment) - based on the programme document provisions, evaluation of the actual project implementation stage as to the planned one, contribution of the project implementation to the achievement of the programme axis objectives, evaluation of the financial progress of the programme. Conducted externally (or combined internally and externally), with support of the Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme, Serbian National Authority - Ministry of Finance of Republic of Serbia and Joint Technical Secretariat Antenna.*

2013 - 2014: Evaluation of project partnership efficiency and sustainability; efficiency of project implementation; evaluation on the implementation of the programme priority axes (results in relation to the objectives of the axes); evaluation in relation to the development of the implementation capacity of Joint Technical Secretariat as against 2007; evaluation of local community development (in relation to the Priority Axis "Promoting <people to people> exchanges"); evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Technical Assistance strategy provided for the Romania - Republic of Serbia IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme. Conducted externally, with support from the Joint Technical Secretariat of the programme, Serbian National Authority - Ministry of Finance of Republic of Serbia and Joint Technical Secretariat Antenna

Ad-hoc evaluations

Ad-hoc evaluations will be carried out where programme monitoring reveals a significant departure from the goals initially set **(this will be the case when more than half of the indicators of a priority axis are over 30% below target)**, or where proposals are made for the revision of the Programme.

Ad-hoc evaluations will address issues regarding the entire Programme or one or several Priority Axes or Measures.

These evaluations cannot be anticipated at this stage **and will be carried out either by external experts or by the Evaluation Unit. The results of the ad-hoc evaluation reports shall be presented to the Joint Monitoring Committee of the programme.**

Specific objectives, evaluation questions, tasks and expected results of interim and ad-hoc evaluations will be defined separately for each evaluation to be conducted.