

INTERREG V A ITALY CROATIA CBC PROGRAMME 2014-2020

EVALUATION SERVICE REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 ART. 54, 56 AND 114

ANNEX B - TERMS OF REFERENCE

AUGUST 2020

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List of acronyms

AA	Audit Authority
AIR	Annual Implementation Report
CBC	Cross-border Cooperation
CA	Certification Authority
CP	Cooperation Programme
EC	European Commission
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESI	European Structural and Investment
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EU 2020	Europe 2020 Strategy
EUSAIR	EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
EUSALP	EU Strategy for the Alpine Region
EUSDR	EU Strategy for the Danube Region
EWG	Evaluation Working Group
FLC	First Level Control
IP	Investment Priority
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JS	Joint Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
NA	National Authority
NC	National Committee

NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
PA	Priority Axis
PF	Performance Framework
SO	Specific Objective
TF	Task Force
TO	Thematic Objectives
ToR	Terms of Reference

0. Foreword

In accordance with the provisions of the Regulations (EU) No 1303/2013 and No 1299/2013, the Organizational Unit AdG Italia-Croazia, Managing Authority of the Italy-Croatia cross-border cooperation Programme, intends to launch a call for tenders to award the independent evaluation service of the Programme. The purpose of these technical specifications is to define the minimum terms of the service required aimed at selecting a service provider to carry out the ongoing evaluation of the INTERREG V A Italy – Croatia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 with the objective to assess the Programme efficacy and efficiency, to highlight achieved results based on robust evidence, to draw lessons learnt during the current programming period and collect useful information for the elaboration of the post-2020 Cooperation Programme.

With a planned overall budget of EUR 209.016,39, the evaluation services is expected to start during the second semester of the year 2020 and end during the first half of 2023.

Detailed information on the evaluation context, its specific objectives and tasks, deliverables, timing and requirements are given in the following pages.

1. Background and context

1.1 Italy Croatia CBC Programme at a glance

INTERREG V A Cross-border Cooperation Programme Italy – Croatia 2014-2020, hereinafter referred to as the “Programme”, is designed in the framework of the European strategy for a smart, inclusive and sustainable growth and the relevant national and regional strategic documents (Europe 2020 Strategy).

The overall aim of the Programme is **to increase the prosperity and the blue growth potential of the area by stimulating cross-border partnerships able to achieve tangible changes**. The Programme area includes the following administrative units at the NUTS III level:

- ✓ ITALY: Provinces of Pordenone, Udine, Gorizia, Trieste (Friuli Venezia Giulia), Venezia, Padova, Rovigo (Veneto), Ferrara, Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, Rimini (Emilia Romagna), Pesaro e Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno, Fermo (Marche), Campobasso (Molise), Teramo, Pescara, Chieti (Abruzzo), Brindisi, Lecce, Foggia, Bari, Barletta-Andria-Trani (Puglia).
- ✓ CROATIA: Counties (županija) of Primorsko-goranska, Ličko-senjska, Zadarska, Šibensko-kninska, Splitsko-dalmatinska, Istarska, Dubrovačko-neretvanska (Adriatic Croatia region), Karlovačka (Continental Croatia region).

The Programme cooperation area covers over 85.562 km² and, according to the last census (2011), the population is 12.465.861 inhabitants.

In the period of 2014-2020, the Italy - Croatia Programme is focused on the following Priority Axis (PA) and Specific Objectives (SO):

Thematic objective (TO)	Investment Priority (IP)	Priority Axis (PA)	Specific Objective (SO)
01 - Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	1b	PA 1 - Blue Innovation: aiming at enhancing the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy in the cooperation area	1.1 - Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area
05 - Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	5a	PA 2 - Safety and resilience: to improve climate change monitoring and planning of adaptation measures tackling specific effects in the cooperation area	2.1 - Improve the climate change monitoring and planning of adaptation measures tackling specific effects, in the cooperation area
	5b		2.2 - Increase the safety of the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster.
06 - Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	6c	PA 3 - Environment and cultural heritage: making natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development	3.1 - Make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development.
	6d		3.2 - Contribute to protect and restore biodiversity.
	6f		3.3 - Improve the environmental quality conditions of the sea and coastal area by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches.
07 - Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	7c	PA 4 - Maritime transport: aimed at improving the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area	4.1 - Improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the Programme area.

The Programme is co-funded:

- 85% by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for Italian and Croatian partners with a budget of 201.357.220,00 EUR
- 15% by National co-financing (ruled by respective Member State).

The Programme estimated total budget is 236.890.849,00 EUR, divided for each PA as follows:

Priority Axis	ERDF (85%) €	Co-financing (15%) €	Total €
1 Blue Innovation	24.162.867,00	4.264.036,00	28.426.903,00
2 Safety and resilience	51.346.091,00	9.061.075,00	60.407.166,00
3 Environment and cultural heritage	70.475.027,00	12.436.770,00	81.911.797,00
4 Maritime transport	43.291.802,00	7.639.730,00	50.931.532,00
5 Technical assistance	12.081.433,00	2.132.018,00	14.213.451,00
Total €	201.357.220,00	35.533.629,00	236.890.849,00

The Programme enables regional and local stakeholders from the two countries to exchange knowledge and experiences, to develop and implement pilot actions, to test the feasibility of new policies, products and services and to support investments.

At the end of the year 2019, three set of calls for proposals had been launched: one for “Standard+” projects (stemming from previous cooperation and capitalizing the achievements of 2007/2013 ETC programmes involving the Italy-Croatia area), one for “Standard” projects under the four Programme Priority Axis and one for “Strategic” projects tackling specific strategic themes identified through an institutional top-down approach.

Additional and updated information on the Programme strategy, its state of play and details on financed projects can be found on the Italy Croatia CBC Programme website: www.italy-croatia.eu

1.2 Regulatory framework

In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the evaluation service under this ToR will be carried out on the basis of the INTERREG Italy Croatia CBC Programme Evaluation Plan (Version n. 2 of 14/02/2020), which has been drafted in line with the following regulatory framework and European Commission guidance documents:

- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 laying down common provisions on European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds: art. 54 “General provisions”, art. 56 “Evaluation during the

programming period”, art. 110 “Functions of the monitoring committee” and art. 114 “Evaluation”;

- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 on specific provisions for the ERDF support to the European Territorial Cooperation goal: recital 26 and art. 14 “Implementation reports”;
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of ESI Funds: art. 16 “Involvement of partners in the evaluation of programmes”;
- INTERREG V A Italy – Croatia CBC Programme 2014-2020 (CCI 2014TC16RFCB042) adopted by the European Commission with Decision C(2015) 9342, later amended with Decision C(2017) 3705, Decision C(2018) 1610, Decision C (2019) 277 and Decision C(2020) 3760;
- Evaluation Plan of the Italy – Croatia Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 (version 2 - 14th February 2020);
- European Commission “Guidance document on monitoring and evaluation”, March 2014;
- European Commission “Guidance document on evaluation plans. Terms of Reference for Impact Evaluations. Guidance on Quality Management for External Evaluations”, February 2015.

The Programme has been subject to an independent ex-ante evaluation with the aim to improve Programme quality and to optimize the allocation of budget resources. Recommendations of the Ex-ante evaluation have been taken into account when drafting the Cooperation Programme.

As provided for under art. 54 (3) of the of Reg. (EU) No 1303/2013 together with the Cooperation Programme (CP) provisions, evaluations shall be carried out by external experts that are functionally independent of the authorities responsible for Programme implementation. In compliance with art. 56 (3) of the of Reg. (EU) No 1303/2013 together with par. 5.3 of the CP, all evaluations shall be examined and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC), then sent to the EC. In line with art. 114 of Reg. (EU) No 1303/2013, by 31 December 2022, the Managing Authority (MA) will submit to the Commission a report summarizing the findings of evaluations carried out during the programming period, including an assessment of the main outputs and results of the Programme. In compliance with Article 57 of the of Reg. (EU) No 1303/2013, the ex-post evaluation lies in the responsibility of the EC.

Where relevant (see § 4), the 2021-2027 regulatory framework shall be considered , including Interreg, ERDF and CPR (draft or, later, adopted) regulations and the Border Orientation Paper “Cross-Border Cooperation in the Adriatic-Ionian Area”.

2. Evaluation purpose and target audience

The overall objective of the evaluation service is to support the Italy - Croatia CBC Programme in improving its management and implementation through the **assessment of its effectiveness, efficiency and impacts**.

In particular, according to the Programme Evaluation Plan, the evaluation service will be focused on two main activities: the ongoing evaluation and, in the framework of the additional evaluations foreseen in the mentioned Evaluation Plan, the Territorial and socio-economic analysis for the 2021-2027 Programme.

In line with the Programme Evaluation Plan, the evaluator is expected to provide crucial information for decision-makers, Programme bodies and for reporting so as to promote a shared vision on Programme needs and outcomes and make timely adjustments aimed at further developing or readdressing implementation, valorize achieved results and guarantee adequate Programme performances.

Particular attention shall also be paid to the Programme **synergies with other policy instruments**, such as other European Territorial Cooperation and mainstream programmes producing effects in the cooperation area as well as to its **contribution to macro-regional strategies**, in particular to EUSAIR, but also to EUSALP and EUSDR, where appropriate, **and the EU 2020 Strategy**.

Moreover, evaluation activities shall be addressed to draw **lessons learnt** during this first edition of the Italy - Croatia CBC Programme and collect useful **inputs, at Programme and project levels, in view of the forthcoming EU programming period**.

To these ends, with particular reference to the ongoing evaluation, two types of evaluation are envisaged by the Evaluation Plan:

- **Operational (process) evaluation** aimed at appraising the Programme efficiency and effectiveness. Evaluation analysis are expected to highlight both strengths and bottlenecks detected during implementation and propose suggestions for improvement;
- **Impact evaluation** with the objective to assess the Programme (medium term) impacts on the cooperation area and beneficiaries, at Programme and Priority levels, and drawing lessons learnt in the current programming period. In this framework, particular attention will be also paid to the CBC added value and the CP specific contribution to macro-regional and EU 2020 strategies.

The first users of the ongoing evaluation findings will be the Programme bodies with particular reference to the MA and MC, that will share and agree on the necessary follow-up actions to be undertaken at Programme level.

Once approved, evaluation findings will be reported in the Annual Implementation Report (AIR) to be submitted to the EC as required by art. 50 of the Reg. (EU) No 1303/2013 and made available for the wider public through the Programme website and other communication initiatives and tools so as to reach target groups and main stakeholders, where considered appropriate.

In addition, the Programme will promote the findings of evaluations through different communication activities as foreseen in the communication strategy with the twofold objective to disseminate evaluation results and strengthen relevant stakeholders' evaluation capacities.

The Evaluation Plan also foresees **additional evaluations that may be deemed useful** in case of emerging urgent needs, for instance, where monitoring reveals a significant gap from the goals initially set or where proposals are made for the revision of the CP or Performance Framework (PF). In this framework, a first additional evaluation is explicated in the present ToR: it consists of the above mentioned socio-economic analysis for the 2021-2027 Programme, for the purpose to collect hints to feed the future preparation for Post 2020, to be carried out as far as possible in coordination with other Programmes (e.g. ADRION).

In this case, the first users of this additional evaluation will be the 2021-2027 Task Force (hereafter TF), that will collect and analyse the main results of the provided analysis in order to support the drafting of the future Programme.

3. Ongoing Evaluation

3.1. Specific objectives and tasks

The evaluation service will be aimed at assessing Programme efficacy and efficiency by analyzing several aspects relating both the managing/implementation and strategy levels. In addition to drawing conclusion and recommendations for improving implementation, the aim is to **catch and valorize Programme results** in terms of **realizations** (Programme/projects outputs and outcomes), of **improved administrative capacities** (referred to Programme bodies, stakeholders and beneficiaries), **enhanced cooperation and networking capacities** and practices along with **thematic and strategic contribution to wider EU strategies**.

Thus, evaluation activities will be focused on the following themes:

- **Effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme management system** with reference to the overall management and control system, decision-making processes and Programme capacity to reach planned goals and targets through selected projects and delivery mechanisms (e.g. selecting criteria, timing for selecting projects, procedures/tools to limit administrative burdens on beneficiaries, monitoring system, etc.);
- **A specific analysis on the system of indicators** shall be performed to assess the relevance and efficacy of the current set of indicators following Programme objectives and expected results. It should also take into consideration the availability of data (both quantitative and qualitative information) and make proposals for possible improvements, also in view of the next programming period;
- **Effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme implementation** to highlight Programme progresses towards its general and specific objectives. Analysis should also be addressed to detect internal and external factors affecting Programme implementation and to identify solutions to overcome or minimize possible risks;

- **Efficacy of communication/dissemination activities** and ability to reach target groups and ensure well-functioning communication flows in the cooperation area and among stakeholders;
- **Relevance, consistency and complementarity of Programme objectives** so as to appraise whether the Programme strategy is still relevant and consistent with the cooperation area requirements and if the Programme is properly addressing these needs. The evaluation analysis is expected to be useful also for presenting lessons learnt and drafting proposals to better address development needs in the next future;
- **Cross-border cooperation added value and networking capacity** with particular reference to the Programme ability to involve relevant stakeholders and promote fruitful cross-border initiatives. Particular attention will be paid to the relevance of partnerships created at project level (typologies and roles of partners) as well as to the modalities adopted to involve relevant stakeholders. This analysis should focus on project partners' managing and administrative capacities needed for efficiently implementing projects activities so as to guarantee their contribution to the achievement of the planned objectives;
- **Thematic and territorial impacts of Programme implementation as well as contribution to EU 2020 targets.** The evaluation is expected to detect which conditions and mechanisms make it possible to reach the foreseen results as well as to highlight possible unintended impacts and related motivations. Lessons learnt from the first Programme cycle (referred to this programming period) should be drawn with the aim to build a comprehensive baggage of first-hand and updated information on Programme achievements and hints for the next programming period. Evaluation findings should also be used to assess the Programme contribution to macro-regional strategies (EUSAIR, in particular; EUSALP, EUSDR, where appropriate), to the EU 2020 Strategy and to national/regional strategies, when relevant.

The aforementioned themes will be developed in the framework of the planned types of evaluations (operational and impact) based on the specific Evaluation Questions (hereinafter, EQs) presented in the following section. Additional evaluations and relating EQs will be defined upon need.

Evaluation findings will feed AIRs as foreseen by articles 50 and 111 of EU Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, showing a summary of program evaluations conducted in the previous year and their main results. Such a contribution will include the response to the above mentioned EQs, the verification of the Programme strategy development and the quantification of output and result indicators, always taking into consideration the possible Programme refinancing in the next programming period.

3.2. Evaluation questions

Evaluation activities are expected to give response to the following EQs organized per themes and per typology of evaluation.

Possible additional EQs may be proposed by the evaluator in the Integrated Evaluation Design so as to better address possible Programme emerging needs (see Chapter 5 – Deliverables), in particular with regard to the next programming period.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme management system

Evaluation Question	Topic	Type of evaluation
Is the overall management and control system effective? What can be improved? How efficient and effective are the Programme management bodies (MA, CA, JS, MC, FLC) in the implementation of their functions? What can be improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficacy and efficiency of Programme management bodies (MA, CA, JS, MC, first-level control) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
How efficient are the interactions between the Programme bodies (MC, MA, CA, JS, AA, NAs, NCs, FLCs)? Are Programme bodies functions and responsibilities (division of tasks and workloads) clearly established and efficiently implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency of the Programme shared management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
How efficient are Programme bodies internal procedures, tools and communication modalities adopted to guarantee the proper shared management, coordination and supervision of the Italy-Croatia CBC Programme implementation? Was it necessary any fine tuning or training for the Programme staff?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency of the Programme shared management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the Programme shared management tools and procedures? What can be improved in the next programming period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency of the Programme shared management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
Are decision making processes at Programme level clear and transparent?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearness and transparency of decision-making procedures and mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational

How efficient are the project generation, selection and contracting processes with specific reference to each typology of call (capitalization, standard and strategic)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency and effectiveness of project selection and contracting processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
How effective are project selection and contracting procedures per typology of call (capitalization, standard and strategic)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of project selection and contracting procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
How effective are application procedures and tools (use of the SIU online application system, SIU users manual and application package: factsheets, glossary, templates, online tools and utilities)? Do they guarantee clear and complete information on the application process and do they succeed in limiting administrative burdens on applicants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of application procedures and tools (SIU system and application packages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
How efficient and relevant are projects selection criteria for both standard and strategic projects? Are they consistent with the Programme overall strategy and cross-border nature?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency and relevance of project selection criteria keeping in mind differences between standard and strategic projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
How effective is the Programme monitoring system? What can be improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of the monitoring system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
How effective are the project implementation rules?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of project implementation rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
How effective are the project implementation tools (manuals, factsheets, templates, online tools and utilities)? Do they guarantee clear and complete information on the implementation process and do they succeed in limiting administrative burdens on beneficiaries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of project implementation tools (SIU manuals and other project implementation tools) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
Did the use of simplified cost options prove to be efficient?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of project implementation rules with particular reference to the use of simplified cost options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
What are the major difficulties faced by the beneficiaries? What measures could be taken to overcome them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative burdens on beneficiaries and related corrective measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational

<p>Are there any specific factors hindering the effective use of Technical Assistance funds?</p> <p>Are there any steps in the use of Technical Assistance funds that could be made more efficient?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness in the use of Technical Assistance funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
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Focus on the indicators system

Evaluation Question	Topic	Type of evaluation
Has the selection of the overall set of common and Programme specific indicators turned out to be suitable and exhaustive for monitoring and evaluation purposes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of the overall set of common and Programme specific indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
Are baseline, milestones and target values based on a robust methodology and clearly defined?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequacy of baseline, milestones and target values to describe Programme achievements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
Is the set of indicators clearly described and measurable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of adopted indicators to measure both quantitative and qualitative Programme results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
Is information needed to quantify indicators available at a reasonable cost?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of quantitative and qualitative data needed to valorize indicators at a reasonable cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>Are indicators adopted at project level consistent with the Programme indicators system?</p> <p>To what extent is it possible to scale-up findings from project to Programme level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coherence of indicators used at project level with the Programme indicators system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>At this stage of the programming period, is the system of indicators still relevant according the Programme strategy?</p> <p>How could it be improved in view of the next programming period?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance, efficacy and actuality of the current set of indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational

Effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme implementation

Evaluation Question	Topic	Type of evaluation
<p>What is the progress towards the overall Programme goal, specific objectives and expected results?</p> <p>How effective is the progress in relation to the means and resources mobilized?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress towards Programme specific objectives and expected results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>To what extent has the Programme achieved its general and specific objectives?</p> <p>Were there any internal or external factors hindering the achievement of the Italy Croatia CBC Programme goals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Programme general and specific objectives with evidence of internal and external factors affecting it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
<p>Are there any risks/problems (including de-commitment risks) hindering the smooth Programme implementation?</p> <p>What specific actions should be taken in order to minimize the risks?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible risks affecting the Programme implementation and relating corrective measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>To what extent did the Programme achieve the expected results linked to the Performance Framework?</p> <p>How efficient were the corrective measures adopted?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of the Performance Framework and corrective measures adopted to overcome possible negative financial performances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>Considering the overall expenditure management process (from the reporting by the partners up to the Declaration of the expenditure to the European Commission), what are the performing elements that maximize and speed up the process and what are the main bottlenecks?</p> <p>If corrective measures were taken, were they effective in speeding up and improving the overall expenditure management process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible risks affecting the expenditure management process and relating corrective measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>To what extent has the Programme contributed to enhancing the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area?</p> <p>Have performances in the field of blue innovation improved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Specific Objective 1.1 (Priority Axis 1 "Blue innovation") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact

To what extent has the Programme contributed to improving the climate change monitoring and planning of adaptation measures tackling specific effects in the cooperation area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Specific Objective 2.1 (Priority Axis 2 "Safety and resilience") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
To what extent has the Programme contributed to increase the safety of the cooperation area from natural and man-made disaster?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Specific Objective 2.2 (Priority Axis 2 "Safety and resilience") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
To what extent has the Programme contributed to make natural and cultural heritage a leverage for sustainable and more balanced territorial development in the cooperation area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Specific Objective 3.1 (Priority Axis 3 "Environment and cultural heritage") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
<p>To what extent has the Programme contributed to protecting and restoring the biodiversity in the cooperation area?</p> <p>Has the Programme succeeded in strengthening the shared management and protection of cross-border ecosystems also for developing economic and employment opportunities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Specific Objective 3.2 (Priority Axis 3 "Environment and cultural heritage") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
<p>To what extent has the Programme contributed to improving the environmental quality conditions of the sea and coastal area by use of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches?</p> <p>Did the Programme succeed in improving the quality of the sea and bathing waters?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Specific Objective 3.3 (Priority Axis 3 "Environment and cultural heritage") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
To what extent has the Programme contributed to improve the quality, safety and environmental sustainability of marine and coastal transport services and nodes by promoting multimodality in the cooperation area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of Specific Objective 4.1 (Priority Axis 4 "Maritime transport") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
<p>What is the actual level of achievement of Programme output indicators?</p> <p>Which are the internal and external factors affecting the achievement of the set targets?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of achievement of expected outputs along with possible internal and external factors that might jeopardize the achievement of planned targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational

What is the actual level of achievement of Programme result indicators? Which are the internal and external factors affecting the achievement of the set targets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of achievement of expected results along with possible internal and external factors that might jeopardize the achievement of planned targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
Are the relevant target groups of the Programme successfully involved? How is the participation in terms of beneficiaries' type as well as in relation to the geographical coverage of the Programme area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type and geographical coverage of target groups successfully involved in the Programme implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
To what extent are horizontal principles integrated in the Programme management arrangements and in the activities of funded projects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of horizontal principles in Programme management arrangements and project activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
To what extent horizontal principles (sustainable development, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women) were integrated in the project selection, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success in promoting horizontal principles in project selection, implementation, monitoring and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational

Relevance, consistency and complementarity of the Programme objectives

Evaluation Question	Topic	Type of evaluation
Are the Programme objectives still relevant, consistent and complementary in the policy context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current relevance, consistency and complementarity of Programme objectives in the policy context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
Is the Programme properly addressing the current development needs in the Programme area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme capacity to properly address current development needs in the cross-border cooperation area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
Are there any stringent uncovered needs that could be tackled under this or future cross-border Programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible uncovered needs that may be tackled under the current or next cross-border Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational Impact

<p>Which are the main lessons learnt relating the elaboration of Programme strategy during this programming period?</p> <p>What can be improved to better address development needs in the next future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learnt and hints for the next programming period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
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Cross-border cooperation added value and networking

Evaluation Question	Topic	Type of evaluation
<p>Are created partnerships relevant and coherent with the Programme cross-border nature?</p> <p>Are all relevant stakeholders at cross-border level duly represented?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-border relevance and representativeness of created partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>Are created partnerships relevant according to Programme/projects objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance of created partnerships following Programme/projects objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>Are the partnerships of the financed projects balanced in terms of number of partners, represented areas, roles and budget?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance and quality of partnerships in terms of number of involved actors, represented cross-border areas, roles and budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>Are promoted partnerships based on previous experiences and how do they ensure their sustainability in time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strength and sustainability of partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>To what extent has the Programme contributed to improve partners' administrative competences/skills at Programme and project levels?</p> <p>Do involved partners efficiently contribute to achieving Programme/project expected results?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative capacities of involved partners at Programme and project levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact

Effectiveness and efficiency of the communication strategy

Evaluation Question	Topic	Type of evaluation
Do the communication activities carried out by the Programme lead to the achievement of the general and specific objectives set out in the Communication Strategy? If not, which changes are needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of the communication strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
<p>To what extent the communication strategy and relating activities have enhanced cooperation in involved public administrations and strengthened internal communication capacities?</p> <p>Are there any good practices that may be replicated in the next programming period?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancement of cooperation in public administration and improvement of internal communication through communication strategy and relating activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
To what extent communication activities have succeeded in raising awareness on Programme objectives and in involving relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries to reach Programme objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries through effective communication activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
Has the Programme raised awareness about its activities and achievements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme capacity to raise awareness on its activities and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational Impact
To what extent the communication strategy has contributed to improve the knowledge on EU funds and the CBC Programme objectives and opportunities in the cooperation area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of communication tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
<p>Were communication tools effective in increasing awareness on Programme objectives and offered opportunities?</p> <p>Which tools were most successful?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of communication tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational Impact
Does the communication strategy need to be updated for the remaining Programme period based on the evaluation findings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance of the communication strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
Have Programme bodies been efficient in ensuring a well-functioning communication flow in the Programme area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of communication flow in the Programme area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational
Have the Programme communication measures reached the relevant target groups efficiently?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme ability to reach key target groups through communication activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational Impact

Has the Programme contributed to increase the capacity of projects to communicate their own achievements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of beneficiaries capacity to disseminate projects results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational Impact
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Thematic and territorial impacts of Programme implementation as well as contribution to macro-regional strategies and EU 2020 targets

Evaluation Question	Topic	Type of evaluation
What change can be observed in relation to the objectives of the Programme? How they are distributed at a territorial level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme achievements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
To what extent can observed changes be directly attributed to the Programme? Are there unintended impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme added value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
What mechanisms delivered the impact? What are key contextual features for these mechanisms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme effectiveness and impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
Does the impact vary by subgroup within the main target group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme impacts on different target groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
Did the Programme succeed in achieving the expected impacts on the different target groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme impacts on different target groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
Will short-run effects of the intervention differ from those in the long run?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme results and impacts on the long run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
To what extent has Italy-Croatia CBC Programme contributed to the EU 2020 Strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme contribution to the EU 2020 Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
To what extent has Italy-Croatia CBC Programme contributed to EUSAIR macroregional strategy? The solutions adopted by the Programme in order to support the implementation of the EUSAIR through the projects have been effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme contribution to macro-regional strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact

Has the Italy-Croatia CBC Programme contributed also to other macroregional strategies (EUSALP, EUSDR) involving the cooperation area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme contribution to macro-regional strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
Which kind of synergies with other Interreg and mainstream programmes involving the cooperation area have been activated? To what extent such synergies produce enhanced results in terms of integration and complementarities and what is the Italy-Croatia CBC Programme added value?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synergies with other Interreg and mainstream Programmes involving the same cooperation area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact
What are the main lessons learnt during the 2014/2020 period concerning both the programming and implementation phases? What can be replicated or improved in the next CBC Programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learnt during the 2014/2020 programming period and proposals for the upcoming CBC Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact

3.3. Evaluation approach, methods and available data

Given the evaluation overall purpose and specific objectives, it is recommended to adopt a **theory-based approach** aiming to **assess whether the assumptions and predictions made during the programming phase are still valid (evaluation of the Programme theory of change)** and appraising at what extent, how and the reasons why the Italy-Croatia CBC Programme is achieving its objectives and producing the expected changes in the cooperation area.

This approach should be addressed to investigate the causal linkages between given inputs, activities and obtained outputs and results (including possible unintended and unpredictable effects) with the aim, on one side, to **detect and tackle possible criticalities for improving implementation** and, on the other, to start **collecting useful hints and evidence-based information to build the future Cooperation Programme**.

Moreover, in line with the Programme cross-border nature, it is advisable to make use of participatory methods foreseeing the involvement of Italian and Croatian Programme bodies, relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Thus, the use of a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods and tools is encouraged. In addition to desk analysis (i.e. literary review, overview of monitoring data, collecting statistical information at national and regional levels, etc), non binding examples of

methods and techniques could be the following: on-line surveys addressed to beneficiaries, interviews to Programme bodies, focus groups, case studies and any other methods and techniques alike.

Bidders are invited to make their own proposals on the combination of methods deemed most suitable for the evaluation purpose, clearly motivating their choice and outlining how different methods will be combined in order to reach evaluation goals. Bidders are also invited to state data needs and describe how primary information will be collected. All in all, the proposed methodology should be the most effective to guarantee comprehensive answers to the evaluation questions, to draw conclusions and design recommendations for future improvements.

The MA, responsible for the coordination and steering of the Programme evaluation, supported by the JS, will provide all necessary and available data and information to the evaluator for the proper implementation of evaluation activities.

Examples of available data include (see Annex 3 “Indicators and available data sources” for a more detailed non-exhaustive list of the data bases that will be made available to the evaluator):

- findings highlighted in the Programme ex ante evaluation;
- data exported from the managing and monitoring system;
- statistical data deriving from other regional and external databases;
- data deriving from communication tools and activities (surveys results, web analytics...);
- AIRs, communication documents and other programme-related materials considered relevant for evaluation purposes.

Additional and/or specific data sources (including other existing databases) will be shared and agreed by the MA/JS and the selected evaluator during the inception phase.

3.4. Deliverables

A kick-off meeting with the selected evaluator will be organized shortly after the Contract signature in order to discuss and agree on the evaluation process and work flow of each evaluation exercise, including the identification of data sources and the setting of possible intermediate steps, deliverables and specific deadlines for reporting.

- Within one month from the award of the evaluation service, the entrusted evaluator is expected to submit to the contractor an **Integrated Evaluation Design**, based on the proposed methodology and on the results of the kick-off meeting, including a working plan concerning the whole duration of the contract and a detailed time plan of each deliverable of the evaluation activities to be updated annually and delivered by December 2021, 2022, 2023. The purpose of the Integrated Evaluation Design is to target and focus the general framework of the evaluation process, to welcome improving analysis and feedbacks upon MA requests agreed with Programme Partners and the Evaluation Working Group. It shall include, at least:

- a. An overview on the Programme Framework, on the policies interested by the Programme at NUTS level, a framework of synergies with other Programmes financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), the set of indicators for each Investment Priority and Specific Objective of the Programme;
- b. A map of the internal and external actors to be involved;
- c. A mapping of the primary and secondary data available, acquirable and constructible, coming from Programme monitoring systems, official statistical sources, studies and research relevant to evaluation issues, or to be acquired through direct surveys;
- d. The precise definition of the evaluation objectives in consideration of a critical deep reading of the Cooperation Programme and its internal and external coherence;
- e. The refinement and updating of the evaluation questions proposed by the MA and the identification of the mix of methods of evaluation to be adopted and consequent feasibility analysis in terms of times, costs and appreciation of the results of the evaluation methods and of the investigations to be carried out.

In line with the evaluation specific objectives, tasks and EQs (see Chapter 3 of this ToR), the evaluator is expected to develop the following deliverables:

- **Three Operational Evaluation Reports** (in the years 2021, 2022, 2023) analyzing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme management system (including monitoring) and Programme state of play, the relevance, consistency and complementarity of Programme objectives, the efficiency of the communication strategy as well as cross-border added value and networking;
- **Two Impact Evaluation Reports** (in the years 2022 and 2023), the first giving evidence of standard and standard+ projects results and the second mainly focused on strategic projects and overall Programme results with specific reference to Programme thematic and territorial impacts along with its contribution to the EU 2020 targets;
- **At least one Additional evaluation** for in-depth analysis on specific themes at Programme and/or Priority levels or for feeding the preparation of the post 2020 Cooperation Programme. The specific scope, subjects and timing of the evaluations will be defined upon need and will be duly included in the update of the Integrated Evaluation Design.

The above-mentioned reports will include preliminary or final response to EQs, according to the Programme state of play.

For each type of the evaluation (operational, impact, additional), the evaluator will have to deliver:

1. An **Inception Report** presenting a detailed description of the methodology, information sources and data collection methods that will be used for answering the related EQs. It will also include a time schedule for draft and final reports. This report, its attachments and the working plan shall be approved by the MA in accordance with the EWG;
2. A **Draft Evaluation Report** (to be submitted following the time schedule set in the Integrated Evaluation Design) foreseeing an overview of implemented evaluation activities

and preliminary evaluation findings to be shared with the MA/JS and the EWG that will provide appropriate and timely feedbacks;

3. A **Final Evaluation Report** showing a comprehensive picture of evaluation findings to be delivered in due time so as to be included in the AIR. As a minimum content, this report will include: an executive summary, the description of evaluation purpose and methodology, evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

All deliverables must be drafted in English, that is the Italy-Croatia CBC Programme language and will be subject to a conformity and quality control by the MA/JS.

Continuous dialogue between the evaluators and the MA/JS will be ensured through regular meetings (at least one per semester), at the MA/JS premises or via conference calls, so as to guarantee the quality and usefulness of evaluation outcomes. These exchanges will also be aimed at providing the evaluators with up-to-date information and practical insights into Programme implementation as well as to build a common understanding of the Programme and a common terminology so as to avoid misunderstandings. For these reasons, it is expected that meetings will be attended by the Team leader and the expert on the specific subject to be discussed.

Evaluators can be asked to present evaluation findings and recommendations at the Programme MC meetings.

In line with the quality management strategy for the evaluation process set in the Evaluation Plan, the MA/JS will closely follow the work of the evaluators by carrying out the necessary quality checks and providing feedbacks. In compliance with art. 56 (3) of the Reg. (EU) No 1303/2013 all evaluation reports will be made available to the MC. Furthermore, any report submitted by the evaluators will be made available to the EWG as well and undergo the quality management procedures put in place in order to be accepted by the MA, as contracting body.

Findings of all types of evaluations will be given suitable communication and will be used for drafting the AIRs as required by art. 50 of the Reg. (EU) No 1303/2013.

4. Territorial and socio-economic analysis for the 2021-2027 Programme

4.1. Main objective

A specific evaluation shall also be carried out in order to feed the future preparation for Post 2020. To this end, analyses shall highlight synergies and complementarity with other mainstream and Interreg Programmes (e.g. ADRION) and with EUSAIR Strategy covering the same area, so as to avoid overlapping and contributing to the preliminary elaboration of future CP logic of intervention.

4.2. Specific objectives and tasks

In accordance with art. 17 of the draft European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Regulation, each Programme has to identify a joint strategy for the Programme's contribution to the policy objectives set out in article 4.1. of draft Common Provision Regulation (hereinafter: CPR) and to Interreg specific objectives identified in article 14.4 and 5 of draft ECT Regulation¹.

Thus, the main objective of this first additional evaluation is to carry out a comprehensive **territorial and socio-economic analysis** of the 2021-2027 Programme area, that will support the drafting of the future Cooperation Programme for the next programming period 2021-2027.

This analysis should put the Managing Authority and the Task force 2021-2027 in a position to:

- identify the main challenges, needs and potentials of the 2021-2027 Programme area, also including a SWOT Analysis;
- highlight elements and contributions that the TF may use to identify the strategic topics that could be addressed by the future Italy-Croatia Programme, in accordance with the orientation paper provided by the European Commission (EC) or involved Member States;
- identify elements aimed at elaborating strategic territorial and thematic scenarios.

The specific objectives of the present work shall be:

- to carry out a **territorial and socio-economic analysis** through the identification of the main challenges, needs and potentials of the Italy-Croatia Programme area;
- to provide contributions for the **identification of strategic topics** that could be addressed by the future Programme through its CBC projects, in accordance with the orientation paper provided by the European Commission (EC), the inputs provided by the Programme TF and any other national and/or European documents relevant for the analysis²;
- to support the identification of **strategic territorial and thematic scenarios**.

Accordingly, the evaluation activities will be focused on the following themes:

- **Territorial and socio-economic analysis** shall identify the **needs** detectable in the area and their holders (e.g. specific target groups and stakeholders involved) and the existing potentials of the area that can be linked with the policy objectives set out in article 4.1. of the CPR;

1 The proposed legislative package for the new Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 can be found at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/2021_2027/

2 Additional documentation not publicly available shall be provided by the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat.

- these analysis shall also support the identification of **2021-2027 strategic territorial and thematic scenarios**, providing strategic contributions to the Programme, with specific regard to the required thematic concentrations for post 2020, considering, in particular, the specific provisions set out in article 15 of draft ETC Regulation, in order to start an evidence-based dialogue with the relevant stakeholders.

4.3. Approach and methodology

The contractor shall propose a coherent methodological approach and indicate the tools to be used for the execution of these analysis. It is expected that the contractor shall analyse the existing Programme documents prior to start the requested analysis, in particular the territorial and SWOT analyses performed for the drafting of 2014-2020 Italy-Croatia Cooperation Programme³.

The **territorial and socio-economic analysis** shall be based on:

- a) **Desk research**, carried out according to the screening of the draft EC legislative package, existing literature and policy reports issued by the EC, the European Council or European Parliament or any other European institutions/agencies, international organizations and national institutions, universities and research bodies (e.g.: EUROSTAT; EC Joint Research Centre, ESPON, etc.) or relevant data bases (e.g.: the KEEP database - www.keep.eu);
- b) **Direct (primary) data collection**, with the aim of closing the gaps of available information (identified during the desk research). Data collection shall serve as empiric basis for the strategic territorial and thematic vision for the post 2020 Programme.

The outcomes of the analysis shall be presented and shared in a draft report to the Italy-Croatia 2021-2027 Task Force. On the basis of the received comments, the contractor shall prepare the final report on the analysis (see next paragraph).

As for the elements to support **2021-2027 strategic territorial and thematic scenarios** they should consist on the identification of development potentials, drivers and bottlenecks resulting from the territorial and socio-economic analysis; the contractor shall support the development of projections and scenarios according to those topics/sectors where CBC cooperation has a high potential to promote better integration across regions and which are of strategic relevance for regional development. The elements supporting strategic territorial and thematic scenarios shall provide strategic contributions to the decision makers at the Task Force level with regard to the required thematic concentrations for post 2020.

The elements aimed at supporting the strategic territorial and thematic scenarios shall be presented and shared in a draft report to the Italy-Croatia 2021-2027 Task Force. On the basis of the received comments, the contractor shall prepare the final report on the analysis (see next paragraph).

³ <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/docs-and-tools-details?id=42271&nAcc=3&file=1>

4.4. Deliverables

The specific evaluation for feeding the preparation of the 2021-2027 Cooperation Programme will consist in the following **two deliverables**:

- **one territorial and socio-economic analysis report**: containing the challenges of the Programme area identified at the territorial, economic and social levels (e.g. Blue Growth with its emerging sectors, maritime and terrestrial flows of goods, CB value chains, green economy; research and innovation; energy efficiency and renewable energies); SWOT analysis, focusing on the existing potentials (i.e. the presence of smart specialization strategies, the existence of effective relevant networks and clusters);
- **one strategic territorial and thematic scenarios for the 2021-2027 Italy-Croatia CBC Programme report**: based on the identified development potentials, drivers and bottlenecks resulting from the territorial and socio-economic analysis, the contractor shall support the identification of the main elements that should characterize the future Programme, based on the thematic concentration requested by the 2021-2027 legal framework, together with the respect of the horizontal principles. Furthermore, from this analysis should arise elements to support the identification of possible functional areas in the Programme area.

The participation in at least one meeting of the Task Force for the 2021-2027 Programme should be also considered, in order to present the outcomes of the territorial and socio-economic analysis and the report on strategic territorial and thematic future scenarios.

5. Time schedule

The timing for operational and impact evaluations is shaped on Programme implementation phases, taking into consideration the state of play of the financed projects, as well as the time for financed projects to achieve their first results.

The following table shows the expected timing for evaluation activities based on the planned Programme forthcoming phases and will be further detailed with the awarded evaluator as a result of the kick off meeting.

TYPE OF EVALUATION	2020				2021				2022				2023	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
OPERATIONAL EVALUATION			IR1	DR1	FR1		IR2	DR2	FR2		IR3	DR3	FR3	
IMPACT EVALUATION						IR1		DR1	FR1		IR2		DR2	FR2
ADDITIONAL EVALUATIONS:														
PRE ANALYSIS 2021-2027			DR1	FR1										
OTHER ADDITIONAL EVALUATIONS	To be defined upon need													

Table 1. IR: Inception Report. DR: Draft Report. FR: Final Report

Operational and Impact evaluation: the final reports will be delivered in time to feed the corresponding AIR.

6. Further support activities

The evaluator is also expected to support the MA, the MC, the EWG and the TF 2021-2027 by:

- participating to the MC/EWG/TF 2021-2027 meetings when requested. Video Conference presence will be accepted if agreed in advance;
- participating to at least one meeting per semester at the MA premises, except in cases of force majeure which prevent the presence in person;
- supporting the MA in information, dissemination and communication activities (one day per semester);
- supporting the MA in individuating further indicators of every Programme Priority Axes and Specific Objective, in order to improve the level of accuracy of the evaluation activity, with regard to the next programming period;
- supporting the MA in possible Evaluation Plan modifications; possible indicator set revision proposal.

In any case, the evaluator, shall:

- ❖ take into account any indications from the MA, including the outcome of the examination process of the MC/EWG/TF 2021-2027, participating, where required, to the meetings called by them;
- ❖ take into due consideration the Program Evaluation Plan;
- ❖ participate, where required, in meetings called by the MA, if deemed necessary;
- ❖ ensure, where required, adequate flexibility in the timing, in the objects and topics of the deliverables, in relation to the need to ensure compliance with deadlines and commitments to the contracting MA; these changes do not involve additional charges for the MA itself;
- ❖ guarantee the return of data, microdata and metadata, produced and acquired for the purposes of activities foreseen for this specification, properly organized and structured for their purposes consultation, subsequent research and possible publication (including metadata) to the MA.

Bidders are also expected to detail the mechanisms put in place to ensure the quality management of evaluation activities and deliverables.

7. Evaluation responsible bodies

As foreseen in the Evaluation Plan, evaluations will be carried out by an external, independent provider by means of an evaluation team meeting the functional independence from the authorities responsible for Programme implementation. In addition to the implementation of the evaluations required as a minimum, its roles and responsibilities will be, among others:

- collecting and analyzing data to report facts;
- drawing conclusions and recommendations to represent whether the CBC Programme has reached expected results;
- assisting Programme bodies in understanding how to monitor progresses and use results of the Programme implementation;
- making suggestions for improving Programme or organizational processes, including the monitoring process.

The main responsibilities and functions for the Programme evaluation process lies on the MA and the MC.

The MA, supported by the JS, is responsible for the coordination and steering of the Programme evaluation, guaranteeing an appropriate support to the evaluator during the execution of the Contract by providing the necessary data, feedbacks and continuous dialogue with the evaluator in order to ensure the quality and usefulness of evaluation outcomes. The MA also verifies that evaluations are conducted in a professional and ethical manner in compliance with the principles of impartiality and independence.

A permanent Evaluation Working Group (EWG), composed by representatives of the two national delegations, has been set up and will be involved during the whole evaluation process, as a consultative body, for the definition of evaluation themes and reports contents.

All evaluation reports will be submitted to the relevant Programme bodies for approval and follow-up actions will be agreed at Programme level, as follows:

- reports related to the ongoing evaluation will be submitted to the MC;
- reports referring to Territorial and socio-economic analysis for the 2021-2027 Programme will be submitted to the Task Force.

8. Required competences of the evaluation team

For the implementation of the evaluation service, it is expected that the evaluation team set up by the entrusted company will meet the following criteria (referred to the whole team):

- proven experience in the evaluation of ESI/IPA funds Programmes, with reference to all the members of the team;
- deep knowledge of European Territorial Cooperation objective and previous experience in the evaluation of Interreg programmes with particular reference to cross border cooperation;
- proven experience of the relevant macro-regional strategies;
- background in the analysis and evaluation of EU development policies, particularly on the themes handled by the Italy - Croatia CBC Programme, namely: blue innovation, safety and adaptation to climate change, preservation and promotion of environment and cultural heritage, sustainable transport;
- written and oral command of English language;
- proven experience in European cross border multi-disciplinary analysis;
- specialised technical expertise and knowledge related to data collection, special data analysis and mapping territorial trends.
- The team has to be composed at least by:
 - Team leader with experience in the evaluation of EU funded Programmes and in socio-economic and territorial development analysis related to ESI/IPA funds Programmes;
 - Senior expert in the evaluation of ESI/IPA funds Programmes;
 - Senior expert in socio-economic and territorial development analysis, European cross border multi-disciplinary analysis and data collection, special data analysis and mapping territorial trends;
 - Junior expert in evaluation of ESI/IPA Programmes and/or statistics with experience in managing data, quantifying indicators and processing surveys.

- It will be considered as a plus:
- Presence of additional senior experts in the evaluation of ESI/IPA funds Programmes with university degree;
- Presence of additional thematic experts: blue innovation, safety and adaptation to climate change, preservation and promotion of environment and cultural heritage, sustainable transport;
- Presence of an additional expert skilled in the evaluation of communication activities.

For the purpose of this ToR, professionals with at least 5 years of experience in ESI/IPA funds Programmes are considered as senior expert while junior expert should not have less than 3 years of experience.

Details on the minimum composition of the evaluation team are given in the table below (4 experts):

Expert by seniority	Description	English expertise	language
Team leader	Team leader with university degree and at least 7 years of proven experience in the evaluation of EU funded Programmes and in socio-economic and territorial development analysis, of which 5 years related to ESI/IPA funds Programmes (every two years of experience beyond the minimum requirements 1 point up to a maximum of 5)	C1:	“Effective operational proficiency” or “advanced”
Senior expert in the evaluation of ESI funds Programmes	Senior expert with university degree and at least 5 years of experience in the evaluation of ESI/IPA funds Programmes	C1:	“Effective operational proficiency” or “advanced”
Senior expert in socio-economic and territorial development analysis	Senior expert with university degree and at least 5 years of experience in socio-economic and territorial development analysis, of which 3 in European cross border multi-disciplinary analysis and specialised technical expertise and knowledge related to data collection, special data analysis and mapping territorial trends	C1:	“Effective operational proficiency” or “advanced”
Junior expert in statistics	Junior expert with no less than 3 years experience in evaluation of ESI/IPA Programmes and/or socio-economic and territorial development analysis and/or data management and/or quantification of indicators and/or drafting surveys.	B2:	Independent user level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Additional experts will be welcomed if duly justified and motivated.

The knowledge of other languages of the Programme area will be considered as a plus.

Proposals shall include the CVs in English (Europass format and an abstract of the skills and experiences relevant to the evaluation service, according to the template provided by the notice)

of the members of the proposed evaluation team and describe their roles and responsibilities within the working group. Any modification to the Evaluation Team will not be possible without the previous agreement with the MA.

Proposals shall include statement on the absence of any conflict of interest and the commitment to avoid situations of conflict of interest and to apply principles of impartiality in daily activities, in case of contract awarding, during the implementation of the evaluation exercise for each member of the evaluation team.

The MA will safeguard that evaluations are conducted in a professional and ethical manner in compliance with the principles of impartiality and independence of evaluators.

9. Budget and awarding criteria

The planned overall budget for the evaluation amounts to EUR 209.016,39.

In the selection process, the quality of the proposed evaluation team and methodological approach will be given the highest weight compared to the offered price. The best value for money is established by weighing technical quality against price on an 80/20 basis:

- Technical offer (including evaluation team) (80%)
- Price (20%)

10. Structure of the proposal and submission procedures

Proposals, drafted in English, should include:

- a description of evaluation purposes and rationale;
- a description of the proposed methodology, including evaluation approach, methods and tools for collecting primary and secondary information as well as data needs (including additional databases) for each one of the foreseen evaluations;
- information on the evaluation team competences and experiences, including CVs of the proposed members, taking into consideration the requirements indicated at the previous paragraph 8.

Annexes

1. Annex B1 - Evaluation Questions – Main elements
2. Annex B2 - Bids Evaluation Methodology and Grid List of indicators and available data sources
3. Annex B3 - List of indicators and available data sources
4. Annex B4 - Technical Offer content description and Template
5. Annex B5 - Individual professional skills resume