

EVALUATION ROADMAP			
TITLE OF THE EVALUATION	Ex-post evaluation of EU assistance to Croatia in the period 2007-2013		
LEAD DG RESPONSIBLE UNIT	DG NEAR A3 (EVALUATION SECTOR)	DATE OF THIS ROADMAP	10/2016
TYPE OF EVALUATION	Ex-post Evaluation	PLANNED START DATE	Q4/2016
		PLANNED COMPLETION DATE	Q1/2018
		PLANNING CALENDAR	http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/index_en.htm
This indicative roadmap is provided for information purposes only and is subject to change.			

A. Purpose
(A.1) Purpose
<p>DG NEAR will undertake an Ex-post evaluation of EU assistance to Croatia in the period 2007-2013. The evaluation is aimed at providing assessment and evidence on the contribution of EU assistance in the period 2007-2013 to support Croatia in meeting the Copenhagen criteria¹ so as to facilitate its accession to the European Union.</p> <p>This evaluation will also feed the whole ex-post evaluation of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), which was the main financial instrument for delivering financial assistance to enlargement countries during the 2007-2013 period. This ex-post evaluation is planned for 2020.</p>
(A.2) Justification
<p>The ex-post evaluation is required by the Financial Regulation (EU) 966/2012 Article 30. Furthermore, in light of current pre-accession assistance, it is considered useful to extract some lessons that could be used both by the EU and by candidate/potential candidate countries.</p>

B. Content and subject of the evaluation
(B.1) Subject area
<p>The enlargement process reinforces peace, democracy and stability in Europe and allows the Union to be better positioned to address global challenges. The transformative power of the enlargement process is aimed at generating far-reaching political and economic reforms in the enlargement countries which also benefit the Union as a whole.</p> <p>At the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, the EU granted all countries of the Western Balkans a clear perspective of EU membership, subject to fulfilment of the necessary conditions, in particular the Copenhagen criteria and the conditions of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). The SAP is the European Union's policy towards the Western Balkans, established with the aim of eventual EU membership. The SAP was launched in June 1999 and strengthened at the Thessaloniki Summit in June 2003 taking over elements of the accession process.</p>

¹ Established by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 and strengthened by the Madrid European Council in 1995, the so-called Copenhagen criteria are:

- stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- a functioning market economy and the ability to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU;
- ability to take on the obligations of membership, including the capacity to effectively implement the rules, standards and policies that make up the body of EU law (the 'acquis'), and adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

Croatia was the second country to sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU on 29 October 2001. This agreement entered into force on 1 February 2005.

The June 2004 European Council granted the status of candidate country to Croatia. Accession negotiations with Croatia were opened in October 2005 and closed in June 2011.

In the course of the negotiations, Croatia agreed to a number of commitments set-up in two Accession Partnerships², which had to be implemented by the date of accession, at the latest, unless specific transitional arrangements were agreed. Such partnerships identified priorities for action in order to support efforts to move closer to the European Union within a coherent framework. The priorities were adapted to Croatia's specific needs and stage of preparation. The Partnership also provided guidance for financial assistance to Croatia.

Linked to the set priorities, EU pre-accession assistance aimed at supporting Croatia in its progressive alignment with the standards and policies of the European Union, including where appropriate the *acquis communautaire*, with a view to membership. Pre-accession assistance aimed at helping to strengthen Croatia's administrative capacity in preparation for managing the larger amounts of EU funding available after accession.

The IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance)³ was established by the Council of the European Union (EU) in July 2006 as the Community's main legislative instrument under the 2007-2013 financial framework to underpin EU policy and provide financial assistance to the eight recipient beneficiaries which are candidate countries or potential candidate countries for membership of the EU (including Croatia).

The financial allocation for the IPA programme for Croatia in the period 2007-2013 was EUR 1,839 million. IPA consisted of five components:

- Component I Transition Assistance and Institution Building (TA-IB),
- Component II Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC),
- Component III Regional Development,
- Component IV Human Resources Development, and
- Component V Rural Development.

Projects and programmes under the IPA started implementation in practice during 2009. For the purpose of the present evaluation, this means that previous pre-accession assistance being implemented from 2007 to 2009 and aiming at achieving the objectives and priorities set out in the COUNCIL DECISION of 13 September 2004 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Croatia and in the two Accession Partnerships mentioned above, will also be considered. In practice, this consists in projects and programmes financed under the 'Phare' Regulation⁴ (introduced in Croatia in 2005), under the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA)⁵, financing infrastructure projects in the transport and environment sectors and the special accession programme for rural development (Sapard)⁶.

(B.2) Original objectives of the intervention

In accordance with the priorities of the Accession Partnerships, the key priorities and objectives were the following:

1. Ensure proper implementation of all commitments undertaken in the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) in areas such as competition policy, in particular the need to adopt and implement a restructuring plan for the steel sector, and the acquisition of real estate. Conclude ongoing and

² COUNCIL DECISION of 20 February 2006 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Croatia and repealing Decision 2004/648/EC and in the COUNCIL DECISION of 5 February 2008 updating the COUNCIL DECISION of 20 February 2006 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Croatia and repealing Decision 2004/648/EC

³ Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006

⁴ Council Regulation (EEC) No 3906/89 of 18 December 1989 on economic aid to the Republic of Hungary and the Polish People's Republic (Phare Regulation) and its amending acts. It was until 2006 the main financial instrument of the pre-accession strategy for the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) which applied for membership of the European Union. The Phare programme for the period 2000-2006 had two main priorities, namely institutional and capacity-building and investment financing. Although the Phare programme was originally reserved for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, it was extended to the applicant countries of the Western Balkans.

⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 1267/1999 of 21 June 1999 establishing an Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-accession

⁶ Council Regulation (EC) No 1268/99 of 21 June 1999 on Community support for pre-accession measures for agriculture and rural development in the applicant countries of central and eastern Europe in the pre-accession period

forthcoming negotiations on trade matters linked to the SAA (such as on a protocol introducing a tariff quota on sugar, the enlargement protocol and further trade concessions on agricultural and fisheries products), and ensure proper implementation of their results.

2. Implement the strategy and action plan for judicial reform in consultation with interested bodies, including the adoption of necessary new legislation.
3. Adopt and implement a strategic framework for public administration reform.
4. Adopt and implement a national strategy for preventing and combating corruption and provide for the required coordination among the relevant government departments and bodies involved in its implementation, including making the Office for the Suppression of Corruption and Organised Crime fully operational. Ensure pro-active efforts to prevent, detect and effectively prosecute corruption, especially at high level.
5. Fully implement the Constitutional Law on National Minorities. In particular, take steps to ensure proportional representation of minorities in local and regional self-government units, in the State administration and judicial bodies, and in bodies of the public administration.
6. Complete the process of refugee return, including all cases of repossession, reconstruction and housing care for former occupancy/tenancy rights holder, and further enhance regional cooperation for accelerating the process of refugee return and local integration, in particular by contributing to implementing the Sarajevo Declaration.
7. Pursue efforts aimed at reconciliation among citizens in the region.
8. Maintain full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and ensure integrity of domestic war crimes proceedings.
9. Work to find definitive solutions to bilateral issues, in particular border issues with Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and resolve the Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone issue.
10. Improve the business environment and economic growth potential, in particular by reducing subsidies, restructuring large loss-making enterprises and increasing the efficiency of public spending.

The implementation of the Accession Partnerships was to be examined through the framework of the mechanisms established under the Stabilisation and Association Process, notably the annual Reports presented by the Commission.

(B.3) How the objectives were to be achieved

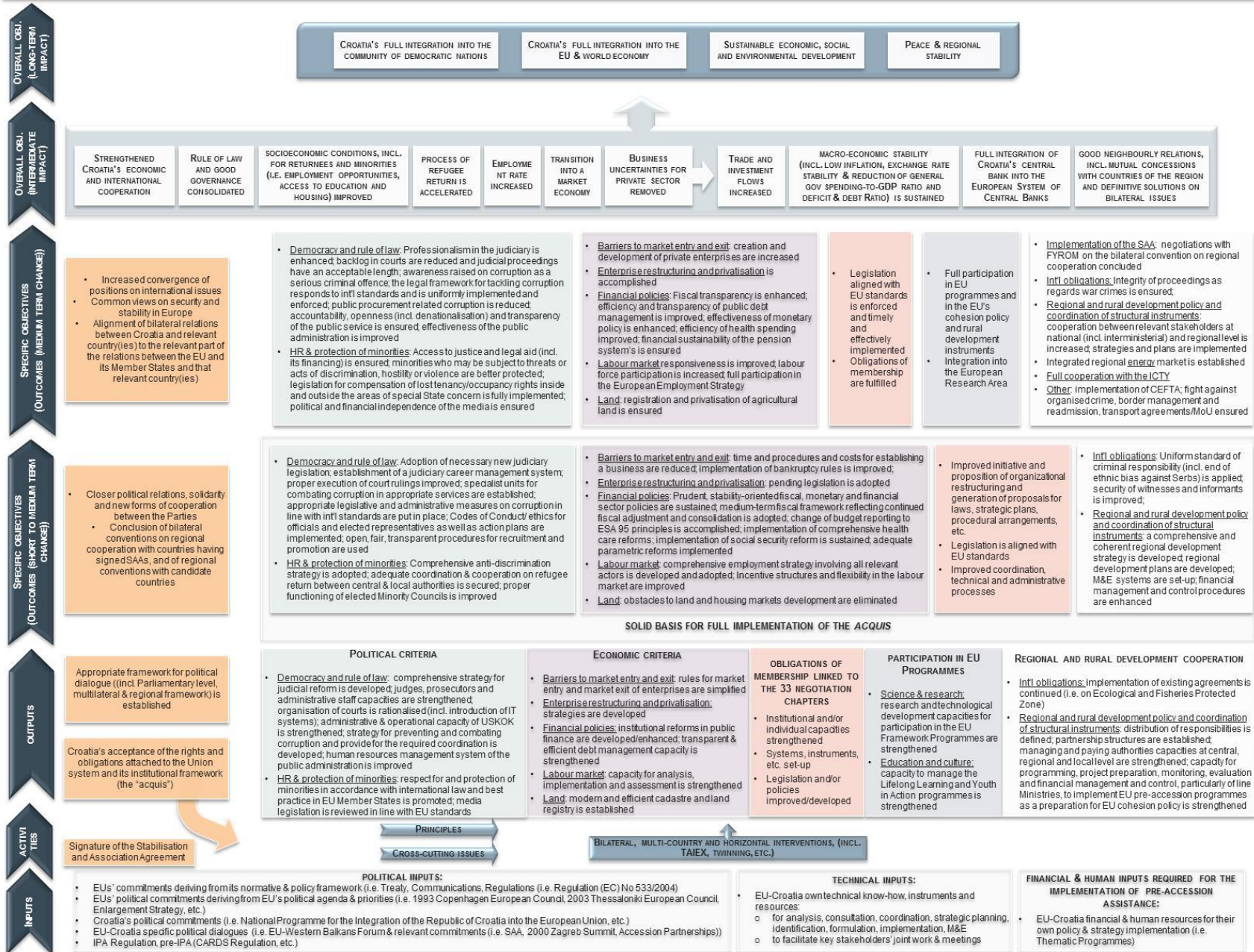
The SAA and the two Accession Partnerships provide the framework for EU pre-accession assistance. Such framework is structured around:

1. Political criteria: linked to Democracy and the rule of law, Human rights and protection of minorities
2. Economic criteria: linked to Barriers to market entry and exit, Enterprise restructuring and privatisation, Financial policies, Labour market and Land reform.
3. Obligations of membership linked to the 33 negotiation chapters ⁷ organised around policy areas such as: agriculture, consumer and health protection, economic and monetary Union, energy, financial control, justice and home affairs, social policy and employment, tax, transport, etc.
4. Participation in Community Programmes: linked to science and research and education and culture
5. Regional cooperation: linked to international obligations and regional and rural development policy and coordination of structural instruments.

The diagram here below presents the intervention logic for Croatia's commitments for EU membership.

⁷ Refer to COUNCIL DECISION of 20 February 2006 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Croatia and repealing Decision 2004/648/EC

INTERVENTION LOGIC OF CROATIA'S COMMITMENTS FOR EU MEMBERSHIP



Part of the task of the evaluation will be to further strengthen the intervention logic underpinning EU pre-accession assistance.

As part of the evaluation the assumptions and the intervention logic behind EU pre-accession assistance design should be tested and validated and, if appropriate, reconstructed.

C. Scope of the evaluation

(C.1) Topics covered

Considering that the EU membership of Croatia is a direct consequence of the actual achievement of the agreed commitments, as monitored regularly by the Commission up until Croatia's accession in July 2013, the present ex-post evaluation will be mainly focused on capacity development related results, mainly on their achievements and sustainability. From a sectorial point of view, special emphasis should be given to Rule of Law and Economic Governance. Other areas that could be focused on are related to public administration reform (civil service reform; administrative decentralisation process; training and strengthening of relevant bodies).

Croatia's capacity to manage post-accession funding has been already assessed in 2011 by the Court of Auditors Report on whether EU assistance has improved Croatia's capacity to manage post-accession funding⁸. The present ex-post evaluation will take stock on the extent to which the Court of Auditors' relevant recommendations⁹ were followed. It will also assess the extent to which institutional capacities for Croatia's progressive alignment with the standards and policies of the European Union with a view to membership, including where appropriate the *acquis communautaire*, were effectively and sustainably developed/strengthened.

Whilst relevant projects and programmes will be analysed, they will not be evaluated in the context of this evaluation. Being a strategic evaluation, EU projects and programmes will only be assessed to the extent to which they sustainably contribute to capacity development and strengthening.

The thematic scope will be further detailed with the finalisation of the Evaluation questions, for which a proposal is set out here below, and with the consequent identification of case studies.

Specific evaluations carried out should also be taken into account. The Contractor should come up with an integrated assessment, also taking into account the findings of these evaluations.

(C.2) Issues to be examined

In line with the Better Regulation guidelines on evaluations introduced by the Commission in 2015 and with DG NEAR Guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation¹⁰, the evaluation criteria to be covered are: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, (external) coherence¹¹ and to a lesser extent EU added value. Nevertheless as mentioned earlier, some evaluation criteria are more largely covered since the evaluation itself is more oriented on the retrospective assessment/judgement on effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the assistance rather than on the assessment of the relevance and EU added value.

Evaluation questions to be further developed at inception stage are:

1. To what extent did Croatia's historical momentum, growth and membership opportunities, and other existing contextual factors affected the institutional context of the EU pre-accession assistance?
2. To what extent did the reform records of the government and the sectorial political economy affect the institutional context of the EU pre-accession assistance action?
3. To what extent has the EU pre-accession assistance programming approach and implementation procedures affected the capacity of the actions to achieve the expected results in terms of capacity development and/or strengthening?

⁸ Based on an analysis of a sample of 16 projects financed by IPA Components I, II, III and IV and by the previous financial instruments CARDS, Phare, ISPA and Sapard.

⁹ The evaluation team is expected to propose a set of case studies. The actual utilization of the Court of Auditors report will depend on these.

¹⁰ Refer to http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/monitoring-and-evaluation/index_en.htm.

¹¹ Idem

4. To what extent did the EU pre-accession assistance contribute to the sustainable production of objectively verifiable changes in:
- staff competences (legal, financial, management...);
 - institutional procedures and functions (policy and financing, stakeholders' involvement, accountability and supervision);
 - the organisational and internal functioning (institutional structure, decision process, internal mobility and competition)

in key targeted institutions at central, regional and/or local levels (i.e. Croatian ministries, agencies and re-regional and local authorities involved in the programming and management of EU pre-accession assistance)?

How did external factors (political, institutional, sectorial, societal, etc.) affect such changes?

5. To what extent did the EU pre-accession assistance contribute to the production of objectively verifiable changes on individuals, institutions and initiatives, which were not targeted? How did external factors (political, institutional, sectorial, societal, etc.) affect such changes?
6. To what extent are Croatian targeted institutions more capable than before to generate the plans (strategic or other levels) that reflect their stated needs, mission and various changing environments and to then mobilise the resources and management to execute them?
7. To what extent are Croatian targeted institutions more capable than before to achieve and monitor the results stated in national plans/policies in a sustainable manner?
8. To what extent are now Croatian targeted institutions in a position to constantly adapt in response to changing external environments and conditions?
9. To what extent are the Croatian targeted institutions accountable and able to work in a coordinated and efficient manner as part of a larger network of interested stakeholders?

(C.3) Other tasks

None

D. Evidence base

(D.1) Evidence from monitoring

Programming documents, programme statements, action documents, annual reports, Results Orientated Monitoring and available evaluations.

(D.2) Previous evaluations and other reports

First Mid-term meta evaluation of IPA I

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/20110912_meta_eval_final.pdf

Second Interim evaluation of IPA I

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2013/ipa_interim_meta_evaluation_report.pdf

Third Interim evaluation of IPA I assistance

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/key_documents/index_en.htm?key_document=08012624887c0cc9

Evaluation to support the preparation of pre-accession financial instruments beyond 2013

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/20110912_final_report.pdf

Interim evaluation of CBC programmes IPA I

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/20120304_2_cbc_wb_1_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/20120304_2cbc_wb_2_en.pdf

Country Program Interim Evaluation of EU Pre-accession Assistance to Croatia, 2009.

Court of Auditors Report on whether EU assistance has improved Croatia's capacity to manage post-accession funding: <http://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/NewsItem.aspx?nid=1526>

<p>IPARD ex-post evaluation (to be available by the end of 2016)</p> <p>Annual IPA reports 2007-2013 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/key-documents/index_en.htm?key_document=08012624887c0cc9</p> <p>- Other relevant studies, evaluations, related to IPA performance : http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm</p> <p>- Annual Enlargement packages http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm</p> <p>- Annual and special reports of the EU Court of Auditors http://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/AuditReportsOpinions.aspx</p>
(D.3) Evidence from assessing the implementation and application of legislation (complaints, infringement procedures)
Not applicable
(D.4) Consultation
<p>The main objectives of the consultation activities will be to gather data, opinions and test hypotheses.</p> <p>The main stakeholders to be consulted during the entire evaluation exercise from inception to final/reporting phase, (either via interviews and/or surveys) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NIPACs, authorities and structures responsible for management, implementation, reporting and auditing the assistance (including for pre-IPA assistance), beneficiaries of pre-accession assistance and other national stakeholders in candidate and potential candidate countries; • The Permanent Representation of Croatia to the European Union, • EC stakeholders (non-exhaustive list): DG NEAR, DG EMPL, DG REGIO, DG AGRI, DG JUSTICE, DG ECFIN, EC Representation office in Croatia, etc. • Other: EU Member States and other donors, etc.
(D.5) Further evidence to be gathered
Further evidence may be obtained through field trip visits

E. Other relevant information/ remarks

<p>Given that there will be an overarching evaluation of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance which this evaluation will feed in, the better regulation guidelines will not fully apply to this evaluation. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - instead of a 12-week open public consultation, there will be targeted consultations as outlined in section D above; - at the end of the process, instead of a Staff Working Document, there will be a management response to the final evaluation report and a short summary of the evaluation in the Annual Activity Report.
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Planning	
Key milestones (indicative)	
<i>[Indicate the expected dates for the steps which apply to this evaluation. Where a step does not apply e.g. no external contract, the row can be deleted. A milestone with date can be added as appropriate.]</i>	
Steering Group set up	3 rd quarter/2016

Public Consultation	N/a
Stakeholder Consultation	<p>The main stakeholders to be consulted during the entire evaluation exercise from inception to final/reporting phase, (either via interviews and/or surveys) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NIPACs, authorities and structures responsible for management, implementation, reporting and auditing the assistance (including for pre-IPA assistance), beneficiaries of pre-accession assistance and other national stakeholders in candidate and potential candidate countries; • The Permanent Representation of Croatia to the European Union, • EC stakeholders (non-exhaustive list): DG NEAR, DG EMPL, DG REGIO, DG AGRI, DG JUSTICE, DG ECFIN, EC Representation office in Croatia, etc. • Other: EU Member States and other donors, etc.
Submission to the Regulatory Scrutiny Board	N/A
Final Report	1 st quarter/2018
ISC launch	N/a
Deadline for Report to Council and European Parliament	N/a
Dissemination Plan	1 st quarter/2018
Action Plan	This will be the management response. 2 nd quarter/2018