

FOLLOW-UP ACTION PLAN OF THE EX-POST EVALUATION OF EU ASSISTANCE TO CROATIA IN THE PERIOD 2007-2013

RECOMMENDATIONS, FINAL REPORT	RESPONSES EU SERVICES: (I) ACCEPTED OR NOT, (II) ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN	FOLLOW UP (by who ; by when)
ON STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT		
RECOMMENDATION 1		
Adopt a comprehensive strategic approach towards capacity development		
<p>EU pre-accession support for capacity development should be part of a strategic approach that goes beyond the immediate requirements of the <i>acquis</i> and aims at meeting capacity needs after accession, including in terms of managing European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).</p>		
<p><i>Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EU Delegations/Office</i></p> <p><i>Main associated actors: NIPACs, EU integration structures and line Ministries</i></p>		
What worked and should continue?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU in-depth contextual analyses carried out to inform the design of the support, including through the screening process - Use of EU analyses to fix the priorities of EU pre-accession capacity development assistance - Explicit emphasis put on the reinforcement of various capacity development areas (e.g. staff competences, structures and procedures, policy development initiatives, etc.) at programming and intervention levels - The ‘opening’ and ‘closing’ benchmarks which have been recognised as a successful instrument to accompany the accession process 		
What should be strengthened?	How this should be done?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should deepen its understanding of the countries’ needs in terms of capacity development during pre- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should undertake an in-depth understanding of the needs of partner countries in terms of capacity development through documentary analysis and consultation with a full range of stakeholders. This understanding should cover the following dimensions of 	
	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>In line with Commission’s new approach both on enlargement policy framework and pre-accession assistance.</p> <p>To be also highlighted that part of the recommendation was and is already part of the current Commission’s approach.</p> <p>ii) Actions to be undertaken</p> <p>As reflected in the <i>Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) COM/2018/465 final</i> and in the <i>Commission communication COM(2020) 57 final</i> ‘Enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans New methodology’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stronger emphasis is put on strengthening institutional capacities development in the draft IPA III programming framework, which is under preparation. Such document is the key strategic document for IPA III programming. • Strengthening of institutional capacities takes place in IPA III both through the implementation of dedicated actions, which are under direct budget implementation, and through the use of Indirect Management by Beneficiary Countries (IMBC). • For IMBC the final objective under IPA III is to move to the implementation of multi-annual 	<p>By Who:</p> <p>NEAR Senior Management</p> <p>NEAR Directorate A: A4, A5</p> <p>NEAR Directorate C: C3</p> <p>NEAR Directorate D</p> <p>NEAR CoTES</p> <p>EUDs (political and cooperation sections)</p> <p>Commission Line DGs</p> <p>By When:</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for Pre-accession assistance design (under new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)).</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for the implementation of the New methodology.</p> <p>CoTEs PAR through 2020 and beyond</p>

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<p>accession (see also Recommendation 3).</p>	<p>administrative capacity: institutional capacity; policy planning capacity; law-making capacity; administrative data and statistical capacity; investment planning; human resources capacity; and management capacity. It should also cover all institutions, including line ministries/institutions, both at central and sub-national levels. The EU should reflect this assessment (including how general PAR rules are actually reflected at institution level) in the reports it produces within the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Process and of accession negotiations so as to guide the definition of the priorities to be supported.</p> <p>- The EU should use the guidance it produced when undertaking administrative capacity assessments. These are mostly both: 'Addressing capacity development in planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation A Guidance note' and the Budget support Risk Management Frameworks (that foresee capacity assessment in terms, among other things, of government effectiveness).</p> <p>This in-depth administrative capacity assessment should enable the EU to address public administration reform in line with the Commission's reinforced approach to public administration reform (which reflects the continued commitment to the principle of "fundamentals first" in the accession process). This should in turn ensure that the countries' future needs in terms of capacity development as soon as the country completes accession, including needs related to the management of ESIF (which have a magnitude much greater than that of the pre-accession funds), are well taken on board.</p>	<p>operational programmes without ex-ante controls.</p> <p>Furthermore, actions to be (or continued to be) undertaken are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement PAR CoTE work plan (PAR mainstreaming element): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of a screening tool to assess administrative capacity in the (sector) beneficiary institutions with SIGMA support (linked to IPA III programming and design of future TA/twinning support) ○ Promotion /dissemination of PAR mainstreaming and the new screening tool in EU Delegations and possibly with beneficiaries with SIGMA support; coordination of its potential use in the framework of the regional ENP East EU4Environment programme; preparation of a policy note for senior management on rolling out of the approach ○ PAR mainstreaming (administrative capacity) comments/amendments in the IPA III programming framework and IPA III strategic response template ○ PAR mainstreaming comments in the document "Main administrative structures required for the alignment with the acquis" document, preparation of any relevant correspondence to line-DGs and subsequent meetings (ISG on Enlargement) ○ TA for capacity development in line with the Principles of Public Administration provided by SIGMA ○ PAR mainstreaming comments to all IPA and 	
<p>- The EU should adopt a whole-of-government</p>	<p>EU pre-accession support should:</p> <p>- In line with the "fundamental first" approach, continue</p>		

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<p>approach to supporting capacity development in order to favour an in-depth change of institutional behaviour and culture in the countries supported and enable countries to function well in the demanding and competitive environment of the EU as Member States</p>	<p>going beyond the consolidation of <i>acquis</i>-related reforms and institutional capacity-building for <i>acquis</i> transposition and implementation to encompass the economic, social, administrative and territorial development of the countries;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustain and deepen ongoing efforts to address public administration reform in a comprehensive way. EU assistance should ensure that the new rules, procedures and systems developed in line with <i>'The principles of public administration'</i>¹ under PAR interventions, including SIGMA, are implemented at the level of the institutions. The various administrative capacity needs identified through the assessments for all institutions (including line ministries/institutions) should be addressed in line with PAR requirements. 	<p>ENI country and multi-country programmes during quality review process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaching Twinning team/ HQ and EUD PAR colleagues to address PAR mainstreaming comments in sector twinning fiches (minimum 3 training sessions) ○ Awareness raising on PAR mainstreaming in sector work (i.e. regular Twinning RTA trainings 3-4x year, Institution Building Days, coordination meetings with other donors, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PAR and PFM policy advice and advocacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comments on draft PAR/PFM strategic documents in line with the Principles of Public Administration ○ Policy dialogue – Western Balkans ○ Contribution to preparation and participation in annual PAR Special Groups (6x) and mid-term technical meetings (6x), possibly involving line institutions (Montenegro, Kosovo* , North Macedonia) ○ Contribution to preparation and participation in the PFM dialogue meetings; ○ Contribution to the review of government annual PAR and PFM monitoring reports. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should make sure that the interim benchmarks and benchmarks enable having a whole-of-government approach 	<p>The choice of benchmarks is critical since it catalyses progress in the reforms supported and more generally in the accession negotiations. Benchmarks should reflect a shared and qualitative understanding of the key areas/aspects to be supported within the accession process and better capture the complexity of capacity development.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should reinforce its strategic approach to capacity development support linked to sector and structural reforms 	<p>The EU should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verify that the policies/ strategies to be supported during pre-accession have been prepared on the basis of evidence and in consultation with internal and external stakeholders, and have been costed (in line with the general requirements introduced under PAR) - Further support partner countries in prioritising reforms and determining a proper reform sequence for the 		

¹ See: <http://www.sigmaxweb.org/publications/Principles-of-Public-Administration-2017-edition-ENG.pdf> . These Principles were developed by OECD/SIGMA in close coordination with the European Commission. They were developed for the enlargement context in 2014 and updated in 2017, and adopted for the ENP context in 2016.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should ensure that staff across the administration is aware of the future challenges linked to post-accession and of the importance of being well prepared to handle them 	<p style="text-align: center;">sectors/areas to be supported;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design and implement its support along the reform sequence chosen. - The EU should promote further the conduct of awareness-raising activities (such as public information campaigns) by the partner countries 		
IMPROVEMENT OF PRACTICES AT STRATEGY, PROGRAMMING AND INTERVENTION LEVELS			
<p>RECOMMENDATION 2</p> <p>Address the limitations linked to the EU programming approach and instruments.</p> <p>The EU should build on the assets brought by its programming approach and instruments and address the limitations of some of its practices and instruments.</p> <p><i>Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EU Delegations/Office</i></p> <p><i>Main associated actors: NIPACs, EU integration structures and line Ministries</i></p> <p>What worked and should continue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU leadership in driving the accession process; - The EU technical expertise introduced during the accession negotiations and through specific interventions; - The framework for managing the assistance: a single instrument to channel EU pre-accession assistance and multi-annual programming; - The high-quality monitoring performed by the Commission at policy level, which is a way of encouraging sustained political commitment to sector and structural reforms; - Instruments such as Twinning which have been relevant and effective for supporting the 		<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>In line with Commission’s new approach both on enlargement policy framework and pre-accession assistance.</p> <p>To be also highlighted that part of the recommendation was and is already part of the current Commission’s approach.</p> <p>ii) Actions to be undertaken</p> <p>Actions to be (or continued to be) undertaken are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoTE PAR assessment of the WB6 strategic responses required under IPA III which reflects better alignment with the policy approach/benchmarks (Q4) • Under IPA III “alignment of the strategic approach” has to be aligned • CoTE PAR assessment of the monitoring and 	<p>By Who:</p> <p>NEAR Senior Management</p> <p>NEAR Directorate A: A4, A5</p> <p>NEAR Directorate C: C3</p> <p>NEAR Directorate D</p> <p>NEAR CoTES</p> <p>EUDs (cooperation and finance and contracts sections)</p> <p>By When:</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for Pre-accession assistance design (under new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)).</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for the</p>

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development of administrative capacities and promoting legislative changes in Croatia;		evaluation systems under the public policy eligibility criteria for SBS disbursement operations. This assessment is complemented by NEAR M&E quality control. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoTE PAR assessment of the M&E systems under the Risk Management Framework annual exercise • Twinning manual has been revised in 2017, to bring PAR elements, ongoing trainings to RTAs • Improve, develop links between SIGMA/TAIEX/twinning (a new strand of work) 	implementation of the New methodology. CoTEs PAR thorough 2020 and beyond
What should be strengthened?	How this should be done?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should make better use of the benchmarks in its programming documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The MIPDs should explicitly refer to the benchmarks and/or show the linkages between the benchmarks and the support envisaged. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should improve intervention design and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should further support the review and improvement of the log frames defined at intervention level so as to ensure that they are consistent throughout the results chain and that the objectives and indicators defined are fit for purpose. - The EU should ensure that implementing partners carry out a proper monitoring of the performance and results reached through EU funded interventions. M&E systems and practices should draw on /or lead to the establishment of in-country systems and build on the guidance produced by DG NEAR and SIGMA. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should maximise experience sharing of technical expertise through instruments such as Twinning, Taiex, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should: i) make sure that the expertise requested by the ToR is relevant to the needs (i.e. going beyond the request of expertise who knows how to draft laws and focusing on expertise supporting the law-making process in full and making sure that legislative changes will be implemented), and ii) improve the selection procedure of the experts to guarantee as much as possible the relevance and quality of the expertise 		

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<p style="text-align: center;">provided through Twinning, Taiex, etc.</p> <p>- The EU should lighten EU procurement procedures</p> <p>The EU should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplify EU procurement procedures to reduce the time lapse between programming and contracting of EU projects. - Enhance and/or further promote the flexibility of EU procedures so that partners can more easily adapt the project design to changes in context when this is needed. 		
<p>RECOMMENDATION 3</p> <p>Further assess and strengthen the administrative absorption capacity of partner countries, including handling of post-accession</p> <p>The EU should better take into account and further strengthen the level of administrative absorption capacity of partner countries during the pre-accession period with a view to reinforce the management, programming and implementation of ESIF.</p> <p><i>Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EU Delegations/Office</i></p> <p><i>Main associated actors: NIPACs, EU integration structures and line Ministries</i></p> <p>What worked and should continue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU analyses of the administrative capacity of the institutions to be supported, which should however be deepened (see below). - The legislative framework for the 2007-2013 period allowed Member States to use Technical Assistance funding for paying salaries, bonuses or top-ups to employees directly involved in the implementation of Structural Funds. The Council however highlighted as of 2009 the lack of sustainability with salary top-ups in its Conclusions on an Operational Framework for Aid Effectiveness. The European Parliament, Committee of Budgetary Control, concluded in its 2011 report "<i>Pre-accession financing for Bulgaria and Romania</i>:" 	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>In line with Commission's new approach both on enlargement policy framework and pre-accession assistance.</p> <p>To be also highlighted that part of the recommendation was and is already part of the current Commission's approach.</p> <p>ii) Actions to be undertaken</p> <p>Refer to Actions proposed under Recommendation 1.</p> <p>Furthermore, actions to be (or continued to be) undertaken are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a screening tool to assess administrative capacity in the (sector) beneficiary institutions with SIGMA support (linked to IPA III programming and design of future TA/twinning support) • Training to disseminate the screening tool and 	<p>By Who:</p> <p>NEAR Senior Management NEAR Directorate A: A4, A5 NEAR Directorate C: C3 NEAR Directorate D NEAR CoTES EUDs (political and cooperation sections) Commission Line DGs</p> <p>By When:</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for Pre-accession assistance design (under new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)). Beyond 2020 for the</p>

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<p><i>What lessons can be learnt for future enlargements</i>³ that salary top-ups are not a sustainable solution. The Principles of Public Administration, which the Commission advocates in the enlargement context as a benchmarking and a monitoring framework for public administration reform efforts of IPA beneficiaries, also underline the importance of having a fair and transparent salary system based on job classifications, and where any kind of top-up schemes should be limited. The EU should therefore pursue the application of such principles since receiving bonuses or top-ups strengthened the differentiation between staff working on EU funds and other staff and did not favour a whole-of-government approach.</p>		<p>raise awareness on the relevance of using the admin capacity assessment for programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local governance work will contribute to the post-accession absorption capacity. 	<p>implementation of the New methodology.</p> <p>CoTEs PAR thorough 2020 and beyond</p>
What should be strengthened?	How this should be done?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EU should better take into account the administrative absorption capacity of partner countries when defining the priorities of and programming its pre-accession capacity development support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EU should guide and support countries in undertaking sound capacity assessments early in the pre-accession process to be able to assess the existing level of administrative capacity within the partner country and related risks. This could include making use of the EU guidance mentioned under Recommendation 1. The EU should use these assessments to tailor its capacity development support to the level of administrative capacity of the countries. Its support should include specific capacity building interventions per sector/institution to improve horizontal PAR. The EU, drawing on the assessments made by the partner countries, should have a comprehensive action plan for mitigating and monitoring the key risks 		

³ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/453224/IPOL-IN_ET\(2011\)453224_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/453224/IPOL-IN_ET(2011)453224_EN.pdf)

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<p style="text-align: center;">identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should better prepare staff of the partner countries to handle the management, programming and implementation of ESIF post-accession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should ensure that capacity development support provided during the pre-accession period targets the wider administration - The EU should better inform the wider administration of the challenges ahead after accession, including in terms of managing, programming and implementing the ESIF 						
<p>RECOMMENDATION 4</p> <p>Further enhance beneficiaries' ownership.</p> <p>The EU should systematically ensure the ownership by beneficiaries.</p> <p><i>Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EU Delegations/Office</i></p> <p><i>Main associated actors: NIPACs, EU integration structures and line Ministries</i></p> <p>What worked and should continue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The implication of stakeholders at programming and intervention levels, although it could be more systematic (see below). <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">What should be strengthened?</th> <th style="text-align: left;">How this should be done?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should give more prominence to countries' authorities and beneficiary institutions in the programming and implementation of the assistance to maximise ownership </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should systematically involve the countries' authorities (e.g. NIPAC, CFCA, MoF, line ministries, etc.) and/or beneficiary authorities right from the start of the intervention cycle, including in the selection of expertise so as to more systematically guarantee the </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		What should be strengthened?	How this should be done?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should give more prominence to countries' authorities and beneficiary institutions in the programming and implementation of the assistance to maximise ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should systematically involve the countries' authorities (e.g. NIPAC, CFCA, MoF, line ministries, etc.) and/or beneficiary authorities right from the start of the intervention cycle, including in the selection of expertise so as to more systematically guarantee the 	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>In line with Commission's new approach both on enlargement policy framework and pre-accession assistance.</p> <p>To be also highlighted that part of the recommendation was and is already part of the current Commission's approach.</p> <p>ii) Actions to be undertaken</p> <p>Refer to Actions proposed under Recommendations 1 and 3.</p> <p>Beneficiaries' ownership is at the core of IPA III strategic approach.</p> <p>Furthermore, actions to be (or continued to be) undertaken are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA provided by SIGMA on PAR and Chapter 32/managerial accountability contribute to empowering middle management (delegation of decision-making), which is the key to ensure they 	<p>By Who:</p> <p>NEAR Senior Management</p> <p>NEAR Directorate A: A4, A5</p> <p>NEAR Directorate C: C3</p> <p>NEAR Directorate D</p> <p>NEAR CoTES</p> <p>EUDs (political and cooperation sections)</p> <p>Commission Line DGs</p> <p>By When:</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for Pre-accession assistance design (under new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)).</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for the implementation of the New methodology.</p>
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<p>- The EU should ensure that its support targets and reaches all levels of the administration, and particularly the level of middle management so as to ensure that continuity is ensured when political changes lead to turnover of staff at senior level</p>	<p>relevance of the choices made</p> <p>- The EU should design and implement interventions specifically targeting all levels of the administration, particularly the middle management level</p>	<p>stay in administration after accession</p>	<p>CoTEs PAR thorough 2020 and beyond</p>				
<p>RECOMMENDATION 5</p> <p>Put stronger emphasis on the monitoring of policy reforms both during and after accession</p> <p>The EU should put stronger emphasis on reinforcing the monitoring and evaluation capacities of beneficiary institutions.</p> <p><i>Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EU Delegations/Office</i></p> <p><i>Main associated actor: NIPACs, relative to strategy, programming and interventions, and line Ministries</i></p> <p>What worked and should continue?</p> <p>- N/A (very little focus was put on the reinforcement of M&E capacities)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">What should be strengthened?</th> <th style="width: 50%;">How this should be done?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>- The EU should put strong emphasis on the establishment and/or strengthening of M&E systems (at country/institution/sector levels) and statistics systems (at national/local levels) so that the countries (and the EU) are able to closely follow the implementation of policy reforms</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>In line with ongoing public administration reform efforts supported by DG NEAR (PAR CoTE, M&E sector):</p> <p>- The EU should continue putting stronger focus on the reinforcement of M&E capacities of partner countries at strategy and programming levels</p> <p>- The EU should continue supporting</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		What should be strengthened?	How this should be done?	<p>- The EU should put strong emphasis on the establishment and/or strengthening of M&E systems (at country/institution/sector levels) and statistics systems (at national/local levels) so that the countries (and the EU) are able to closely follow the implementation of policy reforms</p>	<p>In line with ongoing public administration reform efforts supported by DG NEAR (PAR CoTE, M&E sector):</p> <p>- The EU should continue putting stronger focus on the reinforcement of M&E capacities of partner countries at strategy and programming levels</p> <p>- The EU should continue supporting</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>In line with Commission's new approach both on enlargement policy framework and pre-accession assistance.</p> <p>To be also highlighted that part of the recommendation was and is already part of the current Commission's approach.</p> <p>ii) Actions to be undertaken</p> <p>Refer to Actions proposed under Recommendations 1, 3 and 4.</p> <p>Furthermore, actions to be (or continued to be) undertaken are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAR and PFM policy advice and advocacy on the importance of reinforcing the M&E capacities of beneficiary institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comments on draft PAR/PFM strategic documents in line with the Principles of Public Administration ○ Policy dialogue – Western Balkans ○ Contribution to preparation and 	<p>By Who:</p> <p>NEAR Senior Management</p> <p>NEAR Directorate A: A4, A5</p> <p>NEAR Directorate C: C3</p> <p>NEAR Directorate D</p> <p>NEAR CoTES</p> <p>EUDs (political and cooperation sections)</p> <p>Commission Line DGs</p> <p>By When:</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for Pre-accession assistance design (under new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)).</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for the implementation of the New methodology.</p> <p>CoTEs PAR & NEAR M&E team thorough 2020 and</p>
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<p>- The EU should closely monitor the extent to which policy reforms are actually implemented during the pre-accession period and for a period of time afterwards. Post-accession monitoring could be a way of contributing to maintaining a political momentum.</p>	<p>specific interventions aimed at reinforcing the M&E capacities of partner countries. EU support should first ensure that the national legislation of partner countries requires the establishment of M&E systems (as it is the case for Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia) and subsequently target the sector level to make sure that these M&E systems are implemented.</p> <p>- The EU should undertake a closer review of the progress registered by the countries in terms of policy reform implementation during the accession negotiations through its annual reports and post-accession through the European Semester mechanism.</p> <p>- The EU should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Systematically request the production by countries of monitoring reports on the implementation of public policies o Use these reports to feed into the policy dialogue o Further support CSOs to monitor the implementation of policy reforms 	<p>participation in annual PAR Special Groups (6x) and mid-term technical meetings (6x), possibly involving line institutions (Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia) always based on the government monitoring and reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Contribution to preparation and participation in the PFM dialogue meetings; o Contribution to the review of government annual PAR and PFM monitoring reports o Assessment of the monitoring and evaluation systems (incl. statistical system) under the public policy eligibility criteria for SBS disbursement operations o Assessment of the M&E systems under the Risk Management Framework annual exercise o Dissemination of the SIGMA Toolkit on Strategy Preparation, Monitoring and Evaluation for preparing strategies; mostly still only for PAR/PFM strategies, needs to be for also sector strategies, which emphasises the need for M&E. o Statistics system needs to be developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAR and PFM policy advice and advocacy on the importance of reinforcing the M&E capacities of civil society organisations (i.e. WeBER I and II project). • NEAR M&E team capacity development work on reinforcing the M&E capacities of beneficiary institutions. 	<p>beyond</p>

FOLLOW-UP ACTION PLAN OF THE EX-POST EVALUATION OF EU ASSISTANCE TO CROATIA IN THE PERIOD 2007-2013

RECOMMENDATIONS, FINAL REPORT	RESPONSES EU SERVICES: (I) ACCEPTED OR NOT, II) ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN	FOLLOW UP (by who ; by when)				
<p>RECOMMENDATION 6</p> <p>Favour political commitment for reform post accession</p> <p>The EU should define incentives allowing the partner countries to pursue post-accession the reforms initiated with a view to accession.</p> <p><i>Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR</i> <i>Main associated actor: SRSS</i></p> <p>What worked and should continue?</p> <p>- N/A</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">What should be strengthened?</th> <th style="text-align: left;">How this should be done?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>- The EU should examine options so that partner countries maintain the political commitment after accession to make progress on the reforms initiated during the pre-accession period as well as initiating new sector and/or structural reforms.</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>- Options so that reforms remain high on the agenda of new EU MS (and of the EU) would include both incentives and obligations in the post-accession context so that partner countries mainstream the reforms into their country political processes.</p> <p>- Further use the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) set up by the Commission to support the design and implementation of structural reforms.</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	What should be strengthened?	How this should be done?	<p>- The EU should examine options so that partner countries maintain the political commitment after accession to make progress on the reforms initiated during the pre-accession period as well as initiating new sector and/or structural reforms.</p>	<p>- Options so that reforms remain high on the agenda of new EU MS (and of the EU) would include both incentives and obligations in the post-accession context so that partner countries mainstream the reforms into their country political processes.</p> <p>- Further use the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) set up by the Commission to support the design and implementation of structural reforms.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>In line with Commission’s new approach both on enlargement policy framework and pre-accession assistance.</p> <p>To be also highlighted that part of the recommendation was and is already part of the current Commission’s approach.</p> <p>ii) Actions to be undertaken</p> <p>Refer to Actions proposed under Recommendation 4.</p> <p>Furthermore, actions to be (or continued to be) undertaken are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further accompanying of domestic demand (i.e. support to WeBER project) • Building planning mentality across administration (so all what is discussed in previous recommendations contributes to this). 	<p>By Who:</p> <p>NEAR Senior Management NEAR Directorate A: A4, A5 NEAR Directorate D NEAR CoTES EUDs (political and cooperation sections) Commission Line DGs</p> <p>By When:</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for Pre-accession assistance design (under new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)). Beyond 2020 for the implementation of the New methodology. CoTEs PAR thorough 2020 and beyond</p>
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PARTICIPATION, COMMUNICATION AND LESSON LEARNING						
<p>RECOMMENDATION 7</p> <p>Enhance citizens’ awareness of EU matters and empower civil society</p> <p>The EU should further enhance citizens’ awareness of EU matters and stakeholders”</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>In line with Commission’s new approach both on enlargement policy framework and pre-accession assistance.</p>	<p>By Who:</p> <p>NEAR Senior Management NEAR Directorate A: A2, A4, A5</p>				

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<p>engagement in government decision-making processes and monitoring of government performance, including regarding public services delivery.</p> <p><i>Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EU Delegations/Office</i></p> <p><i>Main associated actors: NIPACs, EU integration structures and line Ministries</i></p>		<p>To be also highlighted that part of the recommendation was and is already part of the current Commission's approach.</p> <p>ii) Actions to be undertaken</p> <p>Refer to Actions proposed under Recommendations 4 and 5.</p> <p>Furthermore, actions to be (or continued to be) undertaken are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue supporting beneficiary institutions in identifying priority reform sectors to communicate on, and help develop a list of relevant target groups and key messages for each sector • Continue strengthening the cooperation between project managers in cooperation section with IPA Visibility Officers in the EU Delegations • Continue supporting national authorities in strengthening the capacity of IPA Visibility Officers in the beneficiary institutions • Continue supporting beneficiary institutions in drawing from the results of successful IPA projects through peer to peer exchanges and sharing of the lessons learned • Continue increasing the use of EU Info Centres / Europe Houses managed by EU Delegations to bring the EU closer to the public • Continue assisting the beneficiary institutions in setting up or making use of the existing tools and resources for communication at the local level, such as human resources in municipalities or local EU information offices 	<p>NEAR Directorate D</p> <p>NEAR CoTES</p> <p>EUDs (political and cooperation sections)</p> <p>Commission Line DGs</p> <p>By When:</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for Pre-accession assistance design (under new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)).</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for the implementation of the New methodology.</p> <p>CoTEs PAR thorough 2020 and beyond</p>
<p>What worked and should continue?</p> <p>- Actions aiming at promoting citizens' awareness of EU matters and integration consequences and at involving civil society in public policy debate</p>			
What should be strengthened?	How this should be done?		
<p>- The EU should better communicate on the support it provides so as to raise awareness and understanding of EU issues throughout the whole administration, the private sector and the civil society</p>	<p>- The EU should encourage the adoption of public information strategies by the partner countries. These strategies and their related action plans and campaigns should cover different target groups, inform the administration and the wider public of EU matters and EU integration benefits, and encourage citizens to be active players in the EU accession process</p>		
<p>- The EU should put stronger emphasis on the empowerment of civil society</p>	<p>- The EU should further support: i) the development of an enabling environment for an effective role of CSOs; ii) the development of a constructive cooperation between governments and civil society; and iii) the capacity of civil society to engage in public policy debate and monitor government performance. The EU could for instance fund innovative projects where partner governments/civil society make common proposals or support civil society organisations to monitor governments' efforts so that</p>		

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<p style="text-align: center;">citizens can get engaged and keep governments accountable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue supporting the beneficiary institutions in setting up communication campaigns on priority sectors in both, traditional and online media and implement them jointly as relevant. Campaigns should be on a bigger scale and incorporate multimedia elements. Storytelling and relatable human stories should be the key campaign element • Together with the beneficiary institutions, continue engaging in and promote a dialogue and public debates with target groups to foster an effective two-way communication. • Further accompanying of domestic demand (i.e. support to WeBER project) • Continuous provision of advice on civil society to delegations and HQ unit's related to national and regional programming, in particular on the formulation of the regional Civil Society Facility , by leading the implementation of an innovative approach to civil society support. 	
<p>RECOMMENDATION 8</p> <p>Systematically draw lessons from experience</p> <p>The EU should try to systematically draw lessons from its experience with capacity development support in past and current candidate countries in order to further improve support to current enlargement countries.</p> <p><i>Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EU Delegations/Office, NIPACs</i></p> <p>What worked and should continue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholders met throughout the evaluation clearly learnt and drew lessons from past support, and were eager to share their valuable insights and learn from how pre-accession support was provided in other countries. One can expect that the situation is similar in 	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>In line with Commission's new approach both on enlargement policy framework and pre-accession assistance.</p> <p>To be also highlighted that part of the recommendation was and is already part of the current Commission's approach. Indeed, the experience emerging from pre-accession assistance to Croatia is at the origin of the PAR approach jointly developed with OECD-SIGMA.</p> <p>ii) Actions to be undertaken</p>	<p>By Who:</p> <p>NEAR Senior Management NEAR Directorate A: A4, A5 NEAR Directorate D NEAR CoTES EUDs (political and cooperation sections) Commission Line DGs</p> <p>By When:</p>

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<p>other accession countries or recent Member States. The EU and other (potential) accession countries could hence benefit from conducting regularly information gathering exercises to learn from the experience of stakeholders in different countries and thereby continuously inform its current and future support.</p>		<p>Actions to be (or continued to be) undertaken are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement PAR CoTE work plan (PAR mainstreaming element): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of a screening tool to assess administrative capacity in the (sector) beneficiary institutions with SIGMA support (linked to IPA III programming and design of future TA/twinning support) ○ Promotion /dissemination of PAR mainstreaming and the new screening tool in EU Delegations and possibly with beneficiaries with SIGMA support; preparation of a policy note for senior management on rolling out of the approach ○ PAR mainstreaming comments in the document “Main administrative structures required for the alignment with the acquis” document, preparation of any relevant correspondence to line-DGs and subsequent meetings (ISG on Enlargement) ○ TA for capacity development in line with the Principles of Public Administration provided by SIGMA 	<p>Beyond 2020 for Pre-accession assistance design (under new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)).</p> <p>Beyond 2020 for the implementation of the New methodology.</p> <p>CoTEs PAR thorough 2020 and beyond</p>
What should be strengthened?	How this should be done?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should regularly conduct information-gathering exercises to learn from the experience of stakeholders in different countries regarding capacity development support provided so as to identify ways of continuously improving the design and delivery of its support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EU should undertake exercises which have a clear learning objective (as opposed to an accountability objective). These exercises could be conducted in candidate countries where support is ongoing (for instance at mid-term), in a single country or in a more crosscutting manner for several countries, as well as in former candidate countries. 		