



# TESIM

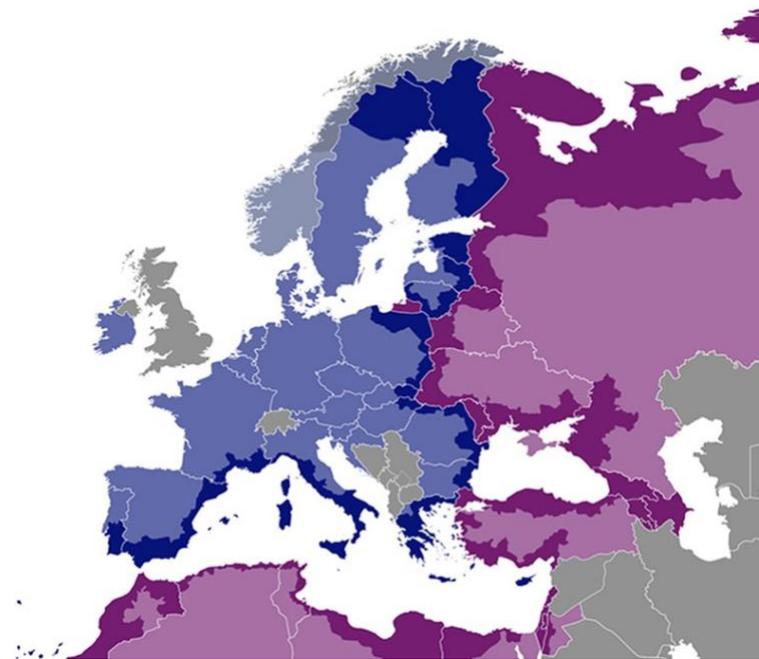
Technical support to the implementation  
and management of ENI CBC programmes

## Monitoring and evaluation network of ENI CBC programmes

Online event

18 January 2023

**Meeting notes**



## Background and general information

The aim of this event was to gather ENI CBC programmes for a joint reflection on matters related to monitoring and evaluation activities, more specifically on two topics: review of the large infrastructure projects and programme ex-post evaluations.

The meeting took place online and gathered 40 representatives from 13 ENI CBC programmes. The meeting also benefitted from the participation of the representatives of the Evaluation and European Semester Unit (B2) and CBC team (D1) from DG REGIO.

## Review of the large infrastructure projects

The review of large infrastructure projects (LIP) carried out by TESIM served as a basis for the presentation and discussion on the lessons from the implementation of LIPs and beyond, as many reflections and recommendations were applicable to the regular projects. A short overview of the main outcomes of the review already took place during the CCG meeting held at the end of November 2022, but the session during the networking event went beyond this general introduction, highlighting specific examples and recommendations put forward to the Managing Authorities (MA) and Joint Technical Secretariats (JTS), as well as highlighting conclusions related to the visibility of the cross-border cooperation.

The presentation by **TESIM experts** shortly outlined the rationale and methodology of the exercise, as well as the limitations, given that the review was carried out by independent experts and it took place before the programme implementation disruption, namely:

- ❑ The review builds on the opinion of independent experts, with TESIM's quality review ensuring a harmonised approach in terms of scoring.
- ❑ Experts worked based on the documents made available to them by programmes/projects, as well as the information gathered during interviews.
- ❑ Individual reviews picture the situation in a period going from early December 2021 to early February 2022.
- ❑ The conclusions consider the state of the projects at the time of each review, including the likelihood of catching up with delays.

Furthermore, the presentation focused on the main highlights for each of the seven categories addressed in the review, and they were illustrated by project examples. For more information, please refer to TESIM presentation. During the presentation the participants were asked to react on the conclusions of the review, and many of them expressed their support to the statements and the recommendations.



In response to the conclusions related to project intervention logic and performance, **Dzmitry Sharko from the Lithuania-Russia Programme JTS** expressed his support to the conclusions on the importance of the soft activities in the LIPs. He also asked about the approach to project indicators and intervention logic during the programme implementation disruption when the project activities are only implemented on the EU side of the border, given that the definitions of project and programme indicators refer to “joint” or “cooperation” activities (for example, “Number of social service professionals participating in cross-border exchanges and activities” or “Number of cross-border cultural events organised with the support of the programme”), which are not possible in the current circumstances.

To this, **TESIM** explained that the LIP review was carried out before the programme implementation disruption and that it does not take into consideration the effects of the one-sided project implementation that started as from March 2022. **The representatives of DG REGIO CBC team** added that the collection and reporting of indicator data before and during the programme implementation disruption is referred to in the new regulation 2022/2192; in particular, Article 8 specifies that, as of the date on which the programme implementation disruption started, the indicators and related target values used for the assessment of cross-border cooperation impact and benefits “shall be those achieved by the beneficiaries in the Member States”. This logic therefore applies as well to planned cross-border events which can be included in the indicators if at least the part to be carried out on the Member State side has been implemented. A short narrative to justify this should be provided in the technical report.

## Ex-post evaluations of ENI CBC programmes

As the ENI CBC programmes are in their final stage of implementation, many of them consider or have already launched their ex-post evaluations. This session combined the practical inputs on the ex-post evaluations launched by DG REGIO and Karelia CBC programme with the practical advice on issues to consider provided by TESIM.

**DG REGIO’s evaluation team leader, David Alba**, started the session with an overview of the ex-post evaluation on ERDF and CF launched by DG REGIO in 2022. It aims at evaluation of these instruments at the level of the cohesion policy in general, at the level of the thematic objectives, as well as of the individual policy instruments. He outlined the importance of the agreement with the stakeholders in the design of the evaluation, as well as of the communication efforts to spread information in the community about the upcoming evaluation. On top of the final evaluation report and staff working document, the main deliverables will include reports on the thematic work packages, country specific fiches, a project data base as well as a compendium of the best practices in the “Cookbook for Cohesion Policy”.

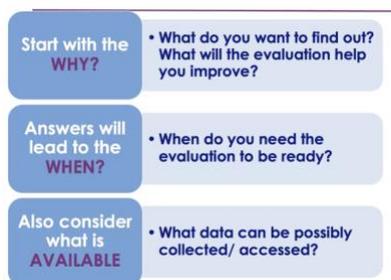
**Irina Ciocirlan from the evaluation team in DG REGIO** continued with the presentation of Work Package 11 of the ex-post evaluation, which specifically focuses on the ex-post evaluation of Interreg programmes, including ENI CBC and IPA CBC. For the purposes of



this evaluation, ENI CBC programmes form a separate strand, and for the clusters of programmes their theories of change will be developed. The five criteria defined in the Better Regulation (efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, coherence, and EU added value), as well as instrument-specific criteria were used to define the evaluation questions. Irina also explained the steps in the evaluation process, indicated the involvement of the ENI CBC programmes in the case studies<sup>1</sup> and shared the invitation to the seminar at the end of the evaluation process to discuss the findings.

**Sigita Baronaite from the Lithuania-Russia Programme** inquired if in this case, when the EC is carrying out the ex-post evaluation, such exercise also must be performed by the programmes themselves, especially considering that most programmes now operate under the implementation disruption. To this the **representatives of the EC** explained that there is no explicit requirement in the ENI CBC Implementing Rules to carry out the ex-post evaluation, and at the same time they encouraged programmes to use this tool to evaluate the performance and to draw lessons from the programme implementation. As the objective of the evaluation is to reflect on what has happened and what are the results and impacts of the programme, this is relevant also for the programmes that are in the disruption mode. The evaluation helps to take stock of what has happened, to look at the modified programme objectives and to gather its unintended impacts.

**Nikoletta Horvath from the MA of the Hungary – Slovakia – Romania - Ukraine ENI CBC Programme** informed about the programme plans to carry out an impact evaluation in 2023 that is supposed to capture the results of the programme. She also inquired about the sampling methodology for the selection of the programmes that will be part of the ex-post evaluation exercise launched by DG REGIO. **David Alba** explained that the contractors are at the moment in the middle of the clustering exercise which should enable the definition of a representative sample that will allow drawing of conclusions on the entire instrument.



The following presentation, delivered by **TESIM**, focused on the issues to take into account when ENI CBC programmes consider carrying out an ex-post evaluation of their own. As the ENI CBC Implementing Rules do not specify the types of evaluations that the programmes need to carry out, it is up to the programmes to steer the focus of these, based on the criteria and evaluation questions of interest for the involved stakeholders.

**Henna-Mari Laurila from the Karelia CBC Programme** explained the rationale of the recently launched ex-post evaluation, presented its objectives, and provided examples of the evaluation questions. The MA aims at using the conclusions of the evaluation in the final programme report, so it is planned to finalise the exercise by the end of 2023.

<sup>1</sup> The exact ENI CBC programmes that will be involved in the case studies will be defined at a later stage of the ex-post evaluation process.

**KARELIA**  
CBC // Cross-border cooperation

### What are we evaluating?

**The cooperation aspect:**

- the Programme's impact on the cooperation between Finland and Russia in general
- the impact of COVID-19 on cross-border cooperation
- achievement of cooperation goals set by the European Commission

**The broader circumstances:**

- the Programme's added value to the European level overall objectives
- the impact of COVID-19 on programme implementation
- the impact of the suspension of cross-border cooperation, caused by the Russian military aggression towards Ukraine, on programme implementation

After the presentation colleagues from other ENI CBC programmes raised their concerns about the plans to carry out interviews with the programme beneficiaries on the Russian side. To this Henna-Mari explained that they thought of addressing some beneficiaries representing the non-governmental sector to gather their views on the benefits from the cooperation, as well as the losses brought by its disruption. **Erminia Lazzara from the CBC team at DG REGIO** recalled the suspension of the Financing Agreements with the Russian Federation leading to suspension of contacts with the Russian side. She suggested the MA to consult Finnish national authorities about their view on consulting the Russian beneficiaries and promised to come back with EC's view on the matter.

In addition to the discussions, **TESIM** launched a poll on the timing of the ex-post evaluations in the ENI CBC programmes, and it came back with the following results:



TESIM also informed the participants about its plan to carry out a mapping and sum up the outcomes of the programme ex-post evaluations.

When it comes to the LIPs review, the individual reports are supposed to be shared with the programmes soon after the meeting, and the work on the final report of the exercise is on-going and should be finalised in February 2023.