2021-2027
Evaluation plan

Summary

INTRODUCTION

The present document has been prepared by the Managing Authority (MA) and the Joint Secretariat (JS) with the inputs and support of the Member States in compliance with the Common Provision Regulation (Regulation (EC) N° 2021/1060) taking specifically into account:

- Article 8 regarding involvement of partners
- Article 9 on Horizontal principles
- Article 16 on Performance framework
- Article 40 describing the Functions of the Monitoring Committee
- Article 41 setting the performance review and its follow up
- Article 43 setting the final performance report
- Article 44 setting requirements for an evaluation plan including assessment of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and Union added value of the Programme
- Article 72 regarding the Functions of the Managing Authority

In addition, the evaluation plan builds on the following relevant European Commission (EC) guidance document:

- Commission Staff Working Document (SWD (2021 198 final): Performance, monitoring, and evaluation of the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, and the Just Transition Fund in 2021-2027

All modifications or adjustments of this evaluation plan are to be reviewed and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC).

The evaluation plan is crucial for the Interreg Euro-MED Programme as it helps to assess the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Programme's activities and projects. It also helps to ensure that the Programme is meeting its objectives and targets and making progress towards its goals.

The present evaluation plan therefore intends to clarify the programme's approach for evaluating its activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. It broadly defines the evaluation questions, and mentions indicators, data sources, and methods that will be used to assess the Programme's performance and achievements. It also specifies the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation team and stakeholders involved in the evaluation process.

The Programme approaches the evaluation as a systematic and rigorous exercise based on sound evaluation principles and practices. The evaluation team will therefore be encouraged to use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyse data, including surveys, interviews, case studies, and statistical analysis. The data will be analysed and interpreted in light of the Programme's objectives and expected outcomes.

The means used in the evaluation plan will also include regular monitoring and reporting of progress towards the Programme's objectives, as well as periodic evaluations of the Programme's activities and projects. The performed evaluations are aimed at providing ongoing feedback, with opportunities for stakeholders to provide input and recommendations for improving the Programme's performance and impact.

Overall, a well-designed and executed evaluation plan is essential for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme and for ensuring that it continues to make a positive impact on the lives of the people and communities it serves.

I. OBJECTIVES, COVERAGE AND COORDINATION

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The evaluation plan sets out the Interreg Euro-MED Programme Strategy to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of its operations cofinanced by Interreg fund for the 2021-2027 implementation period.

Therefore, the main objective of the programme evaluation is to enable the Programme Authorities to adopt proper management decisions during the whole programming period. These decisions will be based on reliable and sound feedback on the performance and quality management of the Programme in regard to its objectives and to its necessary contribution to achieving the Union's policy objectives to become smarter, greener and closer to citizens (Art. 5 Regulation (EC) N°2021/1060). Evaluation also monitors whether the programme is in line with the European Green Deal, the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations and the Territorial Agenda 2030.

In operational terms the evaluation plan supports the Programme implementation by ensuring:

- A smooth evaluation process and an evaluation framework during implementation
- Good quality of evaluations (operational and impact) through proper planning
- Timely and relevant evaluations regarding the Programme's implementation phase and reporting requirements towards the Commission
- Appropriate financial and human resources for evaluation activities
- A proper follow up and communication of the evaluation findings and results
- A process for adopting corrective or adaptive/adjustment measures
- An input for the 2027 + programming process

The keys to performing relevant and reliable evaluations being the availability and quality of data, the Interreg Euro-MED Programme has put a strong emphasis for this programming period on the development of methods and mechanisms to monitor and collect accurate and reliable data on the Programme performance. This quality standard is expected to facilitate the adaptation of the evaluation plan in case this becomes justified by the findings of the exercise during the Programme implementation.

1.2 COVERAGE AND RATIONALE

The evaluation plan covers actions implemented throughout the transnational cooperation area of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme 2021-2027 that comprises 69 regions from 10 EU Member states and 4 IPA candidate/potential candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain.

The Programme area is overlapping with other ERDF Programmes (regional, national, cross-borders, transnational and interregional Programmes), Programmes using ESF, EAFRD and EMFF, other Union instruments and other Mediterranean initiatives or Macro Regional or Sea-basin Strategies. It also has a close connection to NDICI, IPA via its proximity with NEXT MED and ADRION Programmes. However, a joint evaluation plan or joint evaluations with other Programmes are not considered feasible as geographical and thematic overlaps with other Programmes are only partial and as intervention logic differs between Programmes.

1.3 ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT EVIDENCE AVAILABLE

This evaluation plan builds on the evidence gathered during the implementation of the previous MED Programmes. During the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods, several studies and evaluations were undertaken by the Programme and provided relevant information for the development of the 2021-2027 Interreg Euro-MED cooperation Programme.

Thus, the Programme has always aimed to innovate based on the experience gained from previous programming periods and in particular on the topic of capitalisation and governance.

Indeed, regarding the capitalisation of results, the evaluation of the 2007-2013 experience had highlighted the importance of stimulating the production of solid results, the need to use thematic experts in a flexible and continuous way to process project data, the need to ensure access to results and the imperative to give more weight to results and facilitate their transfer and integration.

In response to these needs, the 2014-2020 Programme had broadly:
- modularised the "classic" type of projects and launched specific calls for transfer;
- created the typology of horizontal projects;
- proposed a governance platform project that defined the terms of reference for strategic projects;
- linked all these projects through mutual benefit relationships, defining the Programme architecture, supported by coordination mechanisms led by the JS;
- set up a web platform for the project sites.

In terms of governance, the Programme had ensured that the selected thematic projects contributed to the improvement of multi-sectoral, multi-level and transnational territorial governance, both through the production of data to improve decision-making in a multi-sectoral approach and through the direct mobilisation of all stakeholders. Only projects with the potential to produce replicable, integrable or transferable data had been proposed for programming. In terms of national and supranational coordination, the Programme had entrusted a dedicated governance platform project with the task of developing strong transnational working relationships (Liaising) between the participating national authorities and the programmes, initiatives and strategies

working in the Mediterranean and the conduct of an experiment to integrate results (Mainstream) into regional programmes co-financed by the EU (ERDF, ESF, ...).

Following these adjustments during the 2014-2020 period, the latest programme evaluation (2021) highlighted benefits and points for improvement that the Interreg Euro-MED Programme could take into account to design the current programme. Thus the evaluation pointed out:

1) In terms of support for the production and consolidation of quality data, their reuse, their valorisation and the development of synergies between projects:

- the continuation of "modular" type projects, but only simple modules;
- the processing of the results of thematic projects by partnerships of experts constituted by horizontal projects to create synergies;
- the grouping of all modular projects into thematic communities, taking care to better integrate moments of exchange into the projects' specifications (budget forecasts, work plan) in order to integrate coordination mechanisms into the heart of the projects;
- the continuation of the mutualisation of the hosting of sites with an improvement in functionality;
- the consolidation of a Programme library collecting key projects deliverables whose consultation is monitored with statistical tools and whose usefulness is assessed with satisfactory surveys;
- the establishment of rules for the delivery of usable data to continue to support the replicability and reuse of knowledge (regarding rough data, but adaptability of more structured productions);
- encouraging the pooling of certain dissemination activities.

2) In terms of support for the transfer and integration of results into policies:

- the continuation of joint work to disseminate and increase impact through horizontal projects and governance projects, with better correspondence between the thematic issues, which will involve aligning governance projects with the themes addressed by the modular projects;
- the organisation of methodological support by the Joint Secretariat and between projects (such as the coordination of the share of mainstream experience from PANORAMED to Horizontal projects and Strategic projects), which will be better included in the project terms of references with collaboration and coordination mechanisms included in the project work plan;
- the collective mobilisation of thematic networks which will benefit from a greater capacity of projects to coordinate their efforts through integrated coordination mechanisms.

3) In terms of coordination of actors covering the Mediterranean, emphasis put on

- the involvement of national institutions in governance projects with an increased participation of National Contact Points to support networking activities and mobilisation of targets;
- the development of working relations and processes and cooperation with initiatives, programmes and strategies covering the Mediterranean, and even with European institutions in a more structured way and with the reinforced participation of the Joint Secretariat thanks to roadmaps developed with major Mediterranean actors;
- the implementation of structured consultative and participatory processes reinforced by the intervention of the Joint Secretariat.

The current design of the Programme is the result of these 2 evaluation exercises performed over the 2 previous programming periods.

Amongst other novelties, the Programme structure is organised around 4 main crosscutting missions and a Result Amplification Strategy (RAS) has been set up[1].

The whole architecture of Interreg Euro-MED is designed to maximize its impact: different typologies of projects (modular and strategic for experimentation and transfer in the territories at different levels and for different actors; thematic and institutional communities for network capitalisation and for European and national *mainstream*) are working in a complementary and coordinated way, thanks to governance projects and a close collaboration with the Joint Secretariat.

1.4 COORDINATION AND EXCHANGE

Generally speaking, the Interreg Euro-MED Programme exchanges with **all other Programmes also present in the Euro-MED area** with the aim to better coordinate actions and develop synergies. Thus, we consult different Programmes during the drafting of the Terms of Reference for calls for proposals, in order to exploit existing results and avoid duplication of actions.

Equally, during the elaboration of the Programme, we identified how the Interreg Euro-MED Programme could support complementary actions, develop synergies with different priorities from existing initiatives on the Euro-MED space and enhance most relevant and beneficial specificities of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme. Since the programming period has started, the Programme has set agreements and roadmaps to undertake concrete liaising and coordinating activities resulting in labelling the governance approach of the Programme by the UfM (Union for the Mediterranean) and roadmaps with different actors such as West-MED initiative or EIT-Urban mobility programme. Moreover, evaluation outcomes from other programmes and macroregional strategies should be taken into account.

To enhance coordination between multi-level bodies, Programmes, strategies and initiatives in the Mediterranean, the Interreg Euro-MED Programme has chosen to

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[1] Cfr the Interreg Euro-MED Result Amplification Strategy
https://interreg-euro-med.eu/wp-content/uploads/documents/published/en/programme-documents/programme-documents/result-amplification-strategy/results-amplification-strategy.pdf

finance governance projects with the priority "better governance in the Mediterranean" (Interreg specific objective). These projects are divided in two categories: 1) Thematic Community projects, that facilitate exchanges and development of synergies between thematic projects. 2) Institutional Dialogue projects, that support the effective cooperation of all stakeholders concerned by the Programme missions in the Mediterranean. They optimise conditions for transfer and mainstreaming of project results into practices and public policies, in order to improve the governance at transnational level **within and beyond the Programme area**.

Both types of projects will contribute in a coordinated manner to implement the "Results Amplification Strategy", elaborated to amplify the results of Thematic Projects and impact more sustainably the territories with a better coordination, and where possible integration of (inter)sectoral practices and policies.

Furthermore, **National Contact Points** are invited to provide feedback on already existing solutions related to the themes of the Programme.

Finally, Sustainable Tourism being a transversal topic, a new coordination mechanism has been set up to improve complementarity and synergies in the Mediterranean area:

Agreed **between Interreg Euro-MED – IT/FR Marittimo – Next-MED**, the idea consists of designing a pilot multi-programme coordination mechanism and testing a flagship project on sustainable tourism as its first application. This could later involve - on a voluntary basis - all interested Interreg Programmes.
This experimental approach encourages dialogue between the Managing Authorities involved and will enable other forms of cooperation/exchange of procedures to be explored.

Results of these coordination mechanisms, with other Programmes, initiatives, and with Governance projects, will be assessed closely under the impact evaluation.

The JS members involved in the EWG are all participating in the Interact Thematic Network on results and evaluation.

II. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

2.1 EVALUATION FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The evaluation process and the management process of the evaluation of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme is mainly coordinated by the **Managing Authority (MA)**, the **Joint Secretariat (JS)** and the **Monitoring Committee.**

Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat
The Managing Authority oversees all activities related to the set up and implementation of the evaluation plan[2].

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[2] cfr Art 72 *Functions of the managing authority* (CPR) Regulation (EU) 2021/1060
 cfr Art 74 *Programme management by the managing authority* (CPR) Regulation (EU) 2021/1060
 cfr Art 75 *Support of the work of the monitoring committee by the managing authority* (CPR) Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

Under the overall responsibility of the Managing Authority[3] of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, the Joint Secretariat is responsible for:

- Ensuring the performance of the evaluations of the Programme related to one or more of the following criteria (by external experts): **effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence** and **Union added value**, with the aim to improve the quality of the design and implementation of the Programme. Evaluations may also cover other relevant criteria, such as inclusiveness, non-discrimination and visibility.
- Drawing up and submitting the evaluation plan to the Monitoring Committee no later than one year after the approval of the Programme.
- Carrying out an impact assessment by 30 June 2029[4].
- Ensuring the necessary procedures to produce and collect data necessary for evaluations.
- Publishing all evaluations on the Programme website[5].

Monitoring committee

The monitoring committee (MC), representing the Participating States, has a steering and deciding role with regards to the development and implementation of the evaluation plan. According to the Interreg Regulation, the MC[6]:

- approves the evaluation plan and any amendments.
- examines the progress made in carrying out evaluations, syntheses of evaluations, and any follow-up given to findings[7].

2.2 EVALUATION PROCESS

Evaluation Working Group

To ensure quality of the process and in compliance with the EC recommendations on the involvement of partners in the evaluation, an **Evaluation Working Group** (EWG) will systematically discuss and advise technical and methodological proposals independently from the external experts.

The EWG, composed of the Joint Secretariat and national experts assigned on a voluntary basis by Member States, will be in charge of:

- Discussing technical proposals prior to submission to the MC
- Enhancing the technical/methodological quality of the evaluation process

Namely, the EWG will support the:

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[3] cfr Art 35 "*Evaluation during the programming period*" (CPR) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059
[4] In addition to the evaluations referred to in paragraph 1
[5] cfr Art 36(2) *Responsibilities of managing authorities and partners with regard to transparency and communication* Regulation (EU) 2021/1059
[6] cfr Art 30 *Functions of the monitoring committee* Regulation (EU) 2021/1059
[7] cfr Articles 30/1(d) CPR) Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

- Drafting of this evaluation plan
- Elaboration of terms of References (ToRs) for services of external evaluators
- Elaboration and/or fine-tuning of evaluation questions
- Discussion and approval of draft evaluation reports
- Proposing and implementing follow-up activities based on evaluation findings
- Reporting to the MC

Within the Evaluation Working Group, functions and responsibilities of the Joint Secretariat members and the pool of national experts are well defined. While the Joint Secretariat takes full responsibility for the tasks it is assigned, the pool of experts will mainly provide technical and methodological expertise independently from the external expertise.

2.3 INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Relevant partners shall be involved by the member states as stated in the Art 8 of Regulation n.2021/1060[8]. Wider partnership in the MC is considered one of the levers also ensuring involvement in evaluation activities[9].

Managing authorities shall involve the relevant partners in the evaluation of Programmes within the framework of the monitoring committees and, where appropriate, specific working groups established by the monitoring committees for this purpose[10].

According to Article 8 the MA shall consult the partners on the reports summarising the findings of evaluations carried out during the programming period. The major anchor point is the role of partners in the MC – the minimum requirements are set out in Article 8 of the CPR. Article 30/1(d) of the Interreg Regulation confirms the role of the MC in evaluation: The MC shall examine the progress made in carrying out evaluations, syntheses of evaluations, and any follow-up given to findings

At the MA/JS level, programme partners are involved in the implementation via consultations when drafting the ToR for calls for proposals. During the whole programming period these partners will be consulted through surveys, interviews, panels of experts, etc. but also, when relevant, by the JS and invited to Programme events as speakers and as participants. In addition, the coordination process between Programmes shall provide a relevant framework to involve Programme partners in the evaluation process (see Coverage and mechanisms of coordination).

2.4 SOURCE OF EVALUATION EXPERTISE

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[8] Cfr Art 8 of Regulation N°2021/1060 "For the Partnership Agreement and each programme, each Member State shall organise and implement a comprehensive partnership in accordance with its institutional and legal framework and taking into account the specificities of the Funds".

[9] Recital 14 of the CPR stipulates that Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 [Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the ESIF] should continue to apply.

[10] Article 16 of the Code is on the involvement of partners in the evaluation of programmes.

Given the responsibilities of the team members of the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat in the implementation of the Programme, the **evaluation must be performed by external experts**[11] to avoid any potential conflict of interests.

The Managing Authority will **select evaluators through public procurement** and the Joint Secretariat will manage the contract under the overall responsibility of the Managing Authority.

The Joint Secretariat will draft the terms of reference and the selection criteria for the contracting of experts with the support of the pool of experts from the EWG.

Emphasis should be put on the quality of methodological approaches and mix of knowledge in the thematic fields of the Programme, skills and experience.

The Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat will coordinate the internal activities related to the evaluation. The JS will be in charge of monitoring, collecting data on project and Programme level and provide all necessary information for the external experts to perform evaluation activities.

The external experts will carry out the evaluation and will involve all relevant stakeholders in the process (Programme bodies, Member states representatives, administrations, economic and social partners, civil society, thematic experts, etc.) via surveys and interviews.

2.5 TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR STAFF DEALING WITH EVALUATION

Joint Secretariat staff appointed to the evaluation tasks have theoretical knowledge and former experience related to the evaluation process.

Some have also gained insight of evaluation issues and methods from the coordination of the 2014-2020 evaluation process.

Nevertheless, they regularly participate in seminars and training sessions organised at transnational and EU level by Interact Programme and trainings offered by the Commission. Other external trainings could be considered to increase the expertise of the Joint Secretariat.

2.6 STRATEGY TO ENSURE USE, AND COMMUNICATION

Evaluation is pointless if the results are not used: evaluation findings are essential to improve Programme delivery or to show-case remarkable achievements.

To improve the Programme implementation:

Evaluation questions and timing are relevant points, therefore, the evaluation plan should be updated once the outsourcing is contracted in order to fit the Programme implementation steps, enabling, for example, the findings to benefit the launch of call for proposals.

All findings from the evaluation will be communicated to the Monitoring Committee for discussion and decision making on the implementation of the Programme.

The Joint Secretariat will propose adjustments on the Programme implementation to the Monitoring Committee based on evaluation findings.

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[11] Cfr Art 35 *Evaluations shall be entrusted to internal or external experts who are functionally independent* Regulation N° 2021/1059.

Depending on the nature of the findings, the stakeholders might be consulted by the Joint Secretariat via surveys or interviews to design adaptive or corrective measures in addition to the evaluator's recommendations.

To show-case remarkable achievements and disseminate results:

To ensure the relevant use of the findings, evaluation will be cross-linked with communication and capitalisation, as fields of expertise with a view to mutual learning and synergies.

All documents, reports, summaries and means of communication will always **be first adapted to target public for a more relevant dissemination and effect**. Findings and adaptive measures will thus be also communicated to stakeholders during relevant meetings and seminars when findings are related to project implementing.

The results (including recommendations) will also be communicated to all stakeholders and published on the website.

Owner	What	How/ When	Use
Monitoring Committee	Final version of reports	Email prior to committees	Adjustments in programme implementation
Evaluation Working Group	Report on methods Data to be used Draft versions reports Final version	Via emails, phone/visio conference, web platform, discussed during EWG meetings, throughout evaluation process	Quality assurance Validation of work to be delivered
MA/JS	Final version reports	Email prior preparation of committees	Proposals for improvement based on findings to be suggested to the Monitoring Committee
Stakeholders	Final version reports	Published on website after review and validation by MC and in preparation of surveys, if applicable; presented during seminar for applicants	Awareness and preparation to answer surveys if applicable and understand programme adjustments, improvements
Public	Adapted version reports	Published on website, email, social network (channels and messages will be evaluated in com strategy)	Awareness
EC	Final report Impact evaluation report	Through SFC - 06/2029	Evaluation of ETC performance

2.7 BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION PLAN

The indicative technical assistance budget allocated to the implementation of the evaluation for the entire 21-27 programming period is €180,000.

III. MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION

This chapter describes the sources of information for the programme implementation and evaluation. The JS will continuously seek for improvements in data collecting (i.e. review of data collection).

Programme documents

The Programme documents contain valuable data to understand the goals of the programme and provide benchmarks for the evaluation.

Programme handbooks

The Programme has produced several manuals describing the procedures and rules to be followed by the various stakeholders (beneficiaries, national auditors, joint secretariat, etc.).

In addition, specific handbooks have been drafted to manage, implement and monitor the Results Amplification Strategy (RAS): "Set-up and Missions of the COMCAP Group", "Manage the implementation of the RAS", "Report on the implementation of the RAS", "Guidelines for the National Contact Points Network", "Guidelines for the Euro-MED4Governance Group". These 5 documents contain all procedures related to the implementation of the RAS as well as the means for following the progress.

JEMS

According to Art. 72 of the Regulation N° 2021/1060, the Interreg MED Programme records and stores electronically the data on each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verifications and audits in accordance with Annex XVII, and ensures the security, integrity and confidentiality of data and the authentication of users[12]. The main monitoring tool for the Projects is JEMS. This monitoring tool is used by different stakeholders of the Programme and contains information such as:

- Application form
- Eligibility and Assessment reports (comments and score) and decisions
- Partners declarations
- Partnership agreements
- Associated partners declarations
- Subsidy contract
- Amendments of subsidy contract
- Progress reports
- Declarative value for output indicators
- List of expenses

- National controller's certificates of expenses
- List of payments received
- Partners' bank information
- Etc.

Progress reports

Regular reports are submitted by the projects to communicate on the quantitative and qualitative progress. This information is analysed in the framework of the payment claims.

In addition, progress information on outputs and results related to the Programme indicators (as described below) is also provided.

Title of indicator	Type of indicators	Measurement units	Measurement time	Location of accountability
RC087 – Organisation cooperating across border	Output	Organisation	At project completion	Partners data in JEMS
RC0116 – Joint developed solutions	Output	Solution	At project completion	Declaration in final progress report in JEMS and evidence on the platform
RC083 – Strategies and action plans jointly developed	Output	Strategy/action plan	At project completion	Declaration in final progress report in JEMS and evidence on the platform
PSI1 – Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders	Result	Organisation	At project completion	Survey shared across programmes
RCR104 – Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	Result	Solutions	At project completion	Declaration in final progress report in JEMS and evidence on the platform
RCR79 – Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	Result	Joint strategy / action plan	At project completion	Declaration in final progress report in JEMS and evidence on the platform

Matrices and analysis performed by the JS and the governance projects

The JS performs analyses from data collected in the progress reports and exchanges with the projects. It produces regular reports.

Meanwhile, the governance projects will perform analyses of the thematic projects results, that will be available through their deliverables and diverse outputs.

Programme Web Platform and social media

The Programme has developed a web platform that enables to store and accounts complementary information on outputs and results that cannot be collected via JEMS (*to be confirmed*).

This platform supplies projects with interconnected websites and with management tools (basecamp, monitoring dashboard…) that contribute to complete the progress report of the projects.

In addition, the web platform along with the social media analytics tools provide essential data for the assessment of the communication activities and their impact as well as useful information about the Programme audience. The type of available data are: number of unique visits, unique views, time spent, country of connected person,

bounce rate, number of downloads, number of events and news published, number of forum participants, number of subjects and responses on the forum, number of followers (twitter), number of friends on Facebook, number of likes, number of connections on Linkedin, number of subscribers on our Youtube channel, level of engagement, engagement rate, number of printed publications, number of event participants, location of participants, type of participants, level of satisfaction, etc. and any relevant statistical information that can be monitored via online applications.

Registration form

A common registration form has been created **via the web platform** and is used by the JS, the NCP and the projects to enable the collection and aggregation of information on the targets reached by the overall Programme.

Surveys

Surveys are/will be created (upon needs) **from the web platform** to complete the information collected through statistical tools and/or to enquire about the quality of the activities performed by the Programme bodies (incl. national contact points) in the framework of the Communication Strategy and the Results Amplification Strategy. The document on the "Report on the implementation of the Results Amplification Strategy" lists all the surveys created in the framework of the RAS.

National Websites and social media

National authorities publish information on their national websites and some of them use social media to inform the stakeholders about the Programme fundings and its results. National Contact Points collect data on the communication activities through their websites using online application (statistical data) and through registration forms mainly. More details can be found in the Communication Strategy of the Programme regarding the follow-up activities performed by the National Contact Points.

Training Platform: Euro-MED Academy

The Programme hosts a training platform that is co-managed by the JS and the Governance projects. The platform enables to collect data on the training activities carried out by the Governance projects with the targets and any statistical data that can be monitored via online applications.

Basecamp

A Basecamp workspace is provided by the Programme to each project to ease the communication and information flow between partners and upload working deliverables, outputs and result evidence. The JS has access to the projects' basecamp for qualitative information on the progress of the projects.

Carbon footprint tool

An online monitoring carbon footprint tool, developed by a project from Interreg MED previous programming period, is provided to the 21-27 projects. They can evaluate their carbon footprint impact during the implementation phase. After a testing phase by the first generation of projects, it is planned that all projects monitor the carbon footprint relevance of their activities. Its use by the JS for the assessment of the Programme activities and the transfer to similar uses is currently explored.

Project Libre

This application is used in order to follow the Results Amplification Strategy. It records all the activities performed by the JS under the 3 specific objectives of the strategy: REUSE, TRANSFER and COORDINATE. All the available data is listed in the specific handbook "Report on the implementation of the RAS".

IV. PLANNED EVALUATIONS

As it may not be realistic to cover the entire implementation of the Programme, the evaluation plan focuses specifically on a few significant elements that make the Interreg Euro-MED programme unique.

The EWG will discuss the exact focus of the evaluative questions in the ToR but also during the interactive and iterative process with the contractors.

The programme foresees a two-step strategy:

- First period of evaluation (2025-2026) focusing on the optimisation of the performance of the Cooperation Programme
- Second period of evaluation (2028) focusing on impact evaluations

The planned evaluations described below are subject to adaptation if deemed necessary (sequencing, timing, focus).

Title	Subject and rationale	Methods and data requirements	Data availability	Duration	Estimated budget
Operational evaluation	Process evaluation to ensure proper functioning of the Programme and more specifically its novelties **Key criteria:** • Effectiveness and efficiency **Key focus:** • Effectiveness of the Programme architecture in meeting the objectives of the Programme and the RAS, including the different types of projects and the fast lane process, also to reach/include appropriate beneficiaries on the ground • Effectiveness and efficiency of the Thematic Mission Approach • Efficiency of the use of the Technical Assistance budget • Effectiveness of the RAS and communication strategies • Effectiveness of the simplification for projects • Efficiency of the Programme tools **Non exhaustive list of evaluation questions:** • To what extent has the programme architecture contributed to achieving the objectives of the programme and the RAS? • To what extent has the thematic mission approach contributed to achieving the objectives of the Programme? • Is the management of TA optimal? • To what extent has the communication strategy and the RAS of the Programme contributed to enhance the visibility of the Programme? • How effective have the measures to simplify projects been? • How effective have the programme tools been?	External expertise Experts' methodology Surveys/Interviews/focus group amongst beneficiaries and governance bodies Monitoring tool data analysis	Data available on the monitoring tool and other tools (see part on data above)	12 months – 24 months (2025-2026)	70 000 € including VAT
Impact evaluation	**Impact evaluation to check and show-case programme achievements** **Key criteria:** • Relevance, coherence, EU added value	External expertise Experts' methodology Desk research JEMS data analysis Surveys Case studies Focus groups	Data available on the monitoring tool and other tools (see part on data above)	12 months (2028)	110 000 € including VAT

		Interviews			
	Key focus: • Programme achievements • Programme targets • Programme outputs and deliverables • Programme effective communication and appreciation **Non exhaustive list of evaluation questions:** • What are the results of the Programme and to what extent have they contributed to the achievement of the objectives set? • What are the benefits of the thematic missions approach? • What is the impact of programme outputs? • How have deliverables and outputs contributed to the construction of projects/setting up of governance documents? • What is the impact of the Programme communication strategy and RAS?				

Evaluation timeline

Years	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Operational evaluation						
Impact evaluation						

V. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The Joint Secretariat under the overall responsibility of the Managing Authority will ensure the quality of the entire evaluation process from the preparation to the communication and use of findings.

Preparation

· Drafting the Terms of Reference:

From the quality of ToR, will largely depend on the quality of the proposal from evaluators. Therefore, special attention will be paid to the drafting of the ToR. They will be developed in line with the Guidance Document on Evaluation Plans from the Commission and the EVALSED guidelines by the Joint Secretariat supported by a pool of national experts appointed by Member States within the EWG.

· Publicising the public procurement:

In order to enhance the quality of proposals, the launch for a public procurement will be broadly published using the website and social media to communicate the information.

· Selection of experts:

A tender will be selected by a selection committee under the overall responsibility of the Managing Authority in the framework of the French laws and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region rules.

Proposals will be assessed according to a list of strong criteria drafted by the JS. Impartiality and independency of evaluators as well as transparency in selection will be ensured.

Management of evaluation

· Support from the Evaluation Unit from the Commission:

The dialogue will be extended to the Officers of the Evaluation Unit of the Commission for any occurrence of issues that request higher level of EU strategic advice.

Product of evaluation

· Milestones and deliverables (including methods), intermediate and progress report:

Delivery of work and results will be foreseen and discussed with the selected evaluators during a kick-off meeting where all relevant elements from the ToR will be discussed.

Following that meeting, the evaluators will be requested to provide an inception report within a month. Elements from this inception report will be in line with the Guidance Document on Evaluation Plans. Methodological approach and tools will be provided to the Monitoring Committee as well as regular progress reports to assess timewise progress and quality of work carried out.

Quality criteria will be drafted for quality of data to be used, methodological approaches to be applied and quality of analysis to be performed.

Data and methods will be provided and reviewed by the pool of experts within the EWG prior to the start of the evaluation activity. Draft report will be provided and quality validated before the final versions of the reports are delivered.

· Ensuring accurate and reliable data collection:

As the key to any qualitative and useful evaluation is the quality of collected data, the Joint Secretariat has put the emphasis on the development of mechanisms and tools to monitor accurately the data coming for the project outputs such as the web platform and the use of JEMS. Ensured qualitative primary data shall enable solid and relevant evaluation process and results.

Data will be collected through the JEMS and/or common platform information system (such as number of participants, number of events) and through surveys on needs and satisfaction.

The data will be statistical and textual (feedback). A cross-referencing and analysis of the data in their context will make it possible to complete the annual assessment of the implementation of the activities, to assess their relevance and to propose adjustments.

· Ensuring suitable and operational recommendations:

When findings of the evaluation calls for recommendations from the evaluators, the Joint Secretariat will pay special attention to the suitable and operational quality of the suggestions, making sure that their implementation is feasible according to time, resources and Programme procedures and strategy.

Evaluation awareness and capacity building

· Means (trainings, fora, libraries, guides, templates, databases, peer learning reviews, maps…) will be developed to raise awareness of the partners involved in the production of outputs feeding the indicators and in the collection of project data.

Means will also be developed to build and enhance capacity of the JS team in collecting the Programme relevant data, in the follow-up of indicators and evaluation activities. In addition, the Officers at the JS in charge of the evaluation supervision are in a senior position, have some training on evaluation issues and have previous experience in programme evaluation.