

EVALUATION ROADMAP

Roadmaps aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's work to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to share any relevant information that they may have.

TITLE OF THE EVALUATION	Evaluation of EU's cooperation with Republic of Moldova (2014-2020)
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	DG NEAR A4
INDICATIVE PLANNING (PLANNED START DATE AND COMPLETION DATE)	Q1 2020 – Q4 2020
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/moldova_en https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/moldova/ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/moldova/1538/republic-moldova-and-eu_en

The Roadmap is provided for information purposes only. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by the document, including its timing, are subject to change.

A. Context, purpose and scope of the evaluation

Context

Relations between the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Moldova (hereafter Moldova) are deep and multifaceted. The two sides are deepening their relations with the [EU-Moldova Association Agreement](#), which was signed in June 2014 and entered into force in July 2016. It includes a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and an Association Agenda (AA) aimed at furthering economic integration and political association between Moldova and the EU.

The roadmap for the implementation of the Association Agreement is defined in the [revised Association Agenda 2017-2019](#) around 13 key priorities. These include among others strengthening the independence of the judiciary, prevention of and fight against corruption, increasing energy security and energy efficiency and trade-related reforms.

Moldova is a priority partner country within the [Eastern Partnership](#), the eastern dimension within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Partnership countries and the EU commit to deepening their ties, including through free trade agreements, eventual visa liberalisation and EU-funded projects. The Eastern Partnership offers both bilateral and multilateral measures for enhanced cooperation.

Moldova benefits from a [Mobility Partnership with the EU](#), which organises cooperation in the field of migration, including areas such as legal migration, development and fighting against illegal migration. Moldova is also a partner country within the [Black Sea Synergy](#) and is a member of the [Energy Community](#).

The EU Assistance to Moldova was guided during 2014-2017 by the Single Support Framework (EUR 335 - 410 million), a multiannual programming document focusing on the following key sectors: public administration reform; agriculture and rural development and police reform and border management. Dedicated programmes have been launched to support the DCFTA implementation and the engagement with civil society.

The 2017-2020 Single Support Framework (EUR 284 - 348 million) focuses on the four Eastern Partnership priorities: governance, economic development, connectivity & people-to-people; as well as the following cross-cutting issues: civil society, strategic communication, and gender – all in line with the new EU-Moldova Association Agenda 2017-2020 and the [20 Deliverables for 2020](#). Main implementation modalities include budget support, technical assistance including through service providers, twinning and high level advice and grants. In addition, the EU supports several infrastructure projects in the transport, energy, water and SME development sectors in and around Moldova, with over EUR 400 million loans mobilised, through the [Neighbourhood Investment Platform](#).

Moldova receives support also through thematic instruments like the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LA). During the period of 2014-2017 Moldova has been allocated EUR 3.1 million in total under the EIDHR and EUR 3.2 million in total under CSO-LA.

Moldova benefits from the [Macro-Financial Assistance programme](#) of up to EUR 100 million, as approved by the Council and the European Parliament in September 2017.

An important number of donors and EU Member States are present in the country including European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Investment Bank (EIB) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Donor coordination is well in place in Moldova and it is structured around different sector working groups.

The Joint Programming process started in 2015 laid the foundations for European partners to join forces to provide a response that was well coordinated with other development partners' support to Moldova. A Joint Analysis and a Joint Response/Strategy were completed in 2016 and 2017, respectively, and are aligned with [Moldova's National Development Strategy "Moldova 2020"](#). The Joint Response – titled "[European Joint Development Cooperation Strategy for the Republic of Moldova](#)" (updated in 2018) – was developed with inputs from Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom along with the European Investment Bank and like-minded donors such as Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The Joint Strategy is designed to ensure enhanced coordinated policy dialogue, as well as joint monitoring of reform implementation in accordance with the EU-Moldova AA/DCFTA.

Purpose and scope

The main objectives of the study are:

- to provide the relevant external co-operation services of the European Union and the wider public with an overall independent assessment of the European Union's cooperation with Moldova during 2014-2020;
- to identify key lessons and to produce recommendations in order to improve the current and future European Union's strategies, programmes and actions. In particular, the study should provide lessons in order to inform the preparation of the programmes to be launched by the EU in Moldova under the new MFF.

The study will assess the overall contribution of EU cooperation to the achievement of the 13 priorities of the revised Association Agenda, and, in particular, the cooperation objectives set in the Single Support Frameworks (2014-2017; 2017-2020). It will assess the performance of EU assistance in the following sectors:

1. agriculture and rural development,
2. economic development,
3. public administration reform, including public finance management,
4. strengthening institutions and good governance, including rule of law,
5. connectivity, energy security and efficiency, environment and climate change,
6. mobility, people-to-people contacts, education, and
7. Transnistrian conflict settlement.

The study will also assess cross cutting issues like environmental protection and climate change, promoting the digital economy and society, gender and human rights, and communication.

The trade and trade related matters including EU financial assistance to DCFTA will not be subject of this study. A specific *ex-post* evaluation to cover this area will be launched by DG TRADE next year. The two assignments will be coordinated and feed each other with information. As far as Macro financial assistance programme is concerned, it will be subject of a dedicated evaluation in 2022.

B. Better regulation

Consultation of citizens and stakeholders

Not being an evaluation in the sense of the Better Regulation guidelines as it does not refer to a major initiative, the present study will not develop an on-line open public consultation ([OPC](#)). Furthermore, this evaluation not being linked to legislative and non-legislative initiatives, delegated acts or implementing measures, no impact assessment is required.

However, targeted consultation activities will be undertaken to gather data, opinions and test hypotheses.

The main stakeholders to be consulted (either via interviews, workshops and/or surveys) during the evaluation exercise include:

- National authorities and institutions of all levels in Moldova responsible for the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of EU external action support, beneficiaries of EU external action support and other national and local stakeholders;

- EU stakeholders (non-exhaustive list): the EC relevant services, the EU Delegation in Moldova, the EEAS, the Committee of the Regions and EU Member States;
- International stakeholders (non-exhaustive list): relevant international organisations including international financial institutions, the Council of Europe, relevant civil society organisations and research institutions.

The list will be further defined during Inception phase.

Data collection and methodology

The evaluation process will be carried out in four phases: an Inception Phase, a Desk Phase, a Field Phase, and a Synthesis Phase. Among the pool of main methodological techniques, the following key elements can be already pinpointed:

- A. Evaluation Questions: a draft set will be presented in the Terms of Reference and the evaluation team, in consultation with the Inter-service Steering Group, will finalise and complete it (with Judgement criteria, indicators, relevant data collection sources, and tools) during the inception phase. When relevant, cross-cutting issues will be considered. The indicators will need to allow cross-checking, triangulation and strengthening the evidence base on which the questions are answered. The information gathered for each indicator will need to be presented as an annex of the desk and final reports.
- B. Data collection: several tools will be used for collecting, structuring, processing and/or analysing data throughout the evaluation process: Inventory of interventions, Literature review, Interviews, Case studies, Survey, Quantitative analysis.

Deliverables in the form of reports and/or slide presentations should be submitted at the end of the corresponding phases.

Key sources of information already available are:

- EU policy and strategy documents towards partner regions;
- EU and Moldova policy and strategy documents;
- EU interventions related documents (incl. Results Orientated Monitoring reports);
- Relevant audits of the European Court of Auditors;
- Previous evaluations, studies, etc.

The Terms of reference will provide a non-exhaustive list.