

Kolarctic CBC Programme 2014–2020

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan 2020–2021



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annexes 1 to 4 available upon request)

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ACRONYMS

JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
MA	Managing Authority
BOs	Branch Offices
EU	European Union
EC	European Commission
ENI CBC Programmes	European Neighbourhood Instrument Cross border Cooperation Programmes
TO	Thematic Objective
COI	Common Output indicators
SOI	Specific Output indicators
RI	Result Indicators
JOP	Joint Operational Programme
M&E Plan	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
RMP	Risk Management Plan
PQM	Project Qualitative Monitoring
ROM	Result-Oriented Monitoring

1. Management of the annual Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The Kolarctic Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) 2014–2020 Programme (the Programme hereinafter) complements national cross-border activities by focusing on cooperation between the European Union Member States (Finland and Sweden) and Norway and Russia. Within the Programme context, Norway participates as an EEA and Schengen country and has an equal status with the EU Member States of Finland and Sweden. The CBC is a practical implementation of the strategic partnership between the European Union and the Russian Federation, who have a large boundary.

Cross-border cooperation is oriented on principles such as multi-annual programming, equal partnership and co-financing. Furthermore, the Programme is based on the experiences and best practices gained during the implementation of its predecessors, Kolarctic Neighbourhood Programme during the 2004–2006 and Kolarctic ENPI CBC Programme 2007–2013. As in the previous programmes, Norway is contributing national funding equal to the community funding for Norwegian project activities. The Russian Federation contribution corresponds to the national co-financing from EU Member states (Finland and Sweden).

Programme monitoring and evaluation is a process of continued gathering of information and its analysis, in order to determine whether progress is being made towards specific objectives and expected results. It aims at improving the quality of the Programme design and implementation, as well as at assessing and improving its consistency, effectiveness, efficiency and impact. The findings of monitoring and evaluations are taken into account in the programming and implementation cycle to ensure adequate risk management and informed decision-making for efficient delivery of the programme.

The Joint Operational Programme (chapter 5.6) includes a description of monitoring and evaluation processes, roles and responsibilities, as well as an Indicative Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the whole Programme duration. In addition, the Managing Authority draws and implements annual monitoring and evaluation plans that complement and specify the Indicative Plan.

The main objective of the annual Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (M&E Plan) is to provide a systematic framework that enables implementation of relevant monitoring and evaluations activities and tools in each specific point of the programme cycle. It is also relevant for allocating necessary resources for these activities, and therefore contributes to efficient Programme management.

The Annual M&E Plan is expected to:

- Reflect the monitoring and evaluation activities implemented in the previous year
- Present the results and data of internal monitoring activities for the relevant Programme actors and stakeholders

- Define the objectives for the year to come, taking into account the results of previous M&E activities and the stage of Programme implementation.
- Suggest the best tools and methods to achieve the objectives and allocate sufficient resources for using them.

In addition, the description of Monitoring and Evaluation processes, methods, tools and concepts

- Gives an overview of the Monitoring and Evaluation framework for Programme actors, projects and other relevant stakeholders;
- Specifies and describes the monitoring and evaluation methods to be used (e.g. frequency and responsibilities);
- Serves as a guideline for collecting data on specified indicators.

The Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Plan follows the principles laid out in ENI CBC Implementing Rules, Joint Operational Programme, DG NEAR Guidelines on linking planning / programming, monitoring and evaluation; and Description of management and control system.

1.1 Monitoring and Evaluation plan in the Programme control systems

An effective annual M&E Plan is part of the mandatory documentation produced for each budget year in the Managing Authority. Specifying the annual Work Plan, M&E Plan describes the current situation and findings of previous monitoring and evaluation activities, addresses possible challenges, and lays out a plan for the monitoring and evaluation process to be carried out during the following budget year. The Managing Authority is responsible for drawing up the annual Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, allocating sufficient resources for its implementation, and ensuring the monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out according to the plan.

The Joint Monitoring Committee checks that the plan is adequate for providing information about the progress and direction of the programme, and thus enables informed decision-making about the course of the Programme. Joint Monitoring Committee approves the annual Monitoring and Evaluation plan, which is then submitted to the European Commission by the 15th of February.

1.2 The roles of implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The Managing Authority, Branch Offices, Project Beneficiaries, Committee Members, auditors, evaluators, European Commission and other relevant stakeholders participate in implementation of tasks laid out in the M&E Plan.

The Managing Authority is responsible for organization and implementation of internal monitoring systems on project and programme levels, as well as providing information for external monitoring and evaluation activities (including external experts and auditors) on the programme. The Managing Authority is to provide Programme decision-makers relevant and verified data and information to evaluate the status of the Programme.

The Branch Offices participate actively in organisation of monitoring and evaluation activities and collection of information both on project and programme levels.

Project Lead Beneficiaries are obliged to set up a monitoring and evaluation processes for their projects in order to collect and report information about the projects' progress and achieved results to the Managing Authority. The processes includes both quantitative and qualitative aspect, as well as external auditing. The Managing Authority lays out the necessary conditions and principles for reporting, and is responsible for compiling the reported data in order to facilitate conclusions on the Programme level.

External experts and evaluators carry out external monitoring and evaluation activities for the Programme. External monitoring provides information about the Programme's progress in delivering the intended activities, and evaluations produce organised and analysed data, which allows the Programme to incorporate the lessons learned into decision-making processes.

The European Commission and the Russian Federation can launch at any moment evaluation or monitoring of the Programme or of a part thereof.

2. Overview of the project and programme monitoring and evaluation activities in the previous year 2019-2020

Kolarctic CBC 2014-2020 programme activities have been in full force during 2019-2020. The projects of the first, second and third calls for proposals as well as Large Infrastructure Projects were contracted between October 2018 and January 2020. At the end of the budget year, the Programme has 29 ongoing projects. The complete list of ongoing projects is available in Annex 1. In early 2020, the Programme organized the 4th Call for Proposals, which was open for micro projects. By the end of the Call (31st of March, 2020), the Programme had received 53 applications.

With the start of the projects, the previously planned monitoring and evaluation systems and practices have now been launched to a large extent. The MA and BOs are collecting feedback from the projects, developing guidance for projects, and when necessary, adjusting the processes of data collection and processing.

The global COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020 required some adjustments. Due to the restrictions and closure of state borders, the programme administration and projects have had to modify and / or postpone some of the planned activities. The MA and BOs have started the work to monitor the impact of restrictions on the projects programme progress. Impact assessment and evaluation of the situation are expected to continue.

2.1 Monitoring on project level

Day-to-day monitoring

The Managing Authority has set up a framework for systematic collection of information about the ongoing projects' progress. Monitoring information consists of quantitative indicator data, qualitative description of activities, and reflection of the intervention logic. At the time of writing (4th of May), 23 interim reports have been submitted in PROMAS. The project's contact person in the Managing Authority has compared the narrative parts of interim reports to the approved project plans, and based on the enclosed information and material, checked that the Programme rules have been followed and that the activities are in accordance to the project's work plan and objectives. Projects also report their progress in reaching the target values of set output indicators. The MA is currently working on the process of verifying the reported indicators in PROMAS.

According to the submitted interim reports, projects are following the project plans and Programme rules and regulations well. The MA has approved all the submitted narrative parts of interim reports, and has not withheld payments due to significant shortcomings in following the project plan. In case of minor shortcomings in reporting or project implementation, the MA has approved the narrative parts of reports with comments that may include recommendations and requests for the next reporting period. In case of more significant changes in the project plan or schedule, the Lead partners have been asked to submit a project update in PROMAS.

In Project Qualitative Monitoring (PQM) questionnaire attached to the Interim Report, and during discussions with the contact person in the MA, some projects have indicated a need to revise the set target values and / or definition of indicators. The contact persons in the Managing Authorities help the Lead partners to determine the most suitable ways of collecting reliable data. Together with the Branch Offices, the MA is currently working on a material to help the projects to collect relevant information systematically.

In addition to checking written reports, the projects' contact persons in the MA and the Branch Offices are regularly in touch with the Lead partners and Partners. Email consultation, phone calls, and participation in project events and meetings (online and offline) are significant part of day-to-day monitoring.

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused delays and adjustments of project plans in all ongoing projects. The Managing Authority has asked the projects to evaluate the extent into which the restrictions will influence the timely implementation of project plans, and the projects' ability to reach the set objectives. Changes to project plans, budgets and implementation times will be made when considered necessary. It is likely, that the outbreak and consequent cancellation of events will result in underachievement of some output indicators.

On-the-spot verifications

The MA has updated the list of projects for the on-the-spot verifications with the contracted projects from the 3rd Call for Proposals, and prepared the process of on-the-spot verifications. Implementation of the plan has not started due to restrictions of travel and physical meetings in the spring and summer 2020.

Results-Oriented-Monitoring

The Programme personal responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation activities participated in a webinar organised by TESIM on March 2020. During this reporting period, the activities concerning Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) on project level will include making a timetable for the ROM report, taking into consideration the project implementation schedules and the recommendation of not doing the ROM within 6 months of start/end of project implementation. Other actions include selecting the ROM projects before the end of the year.

2.2 Monitoring on Programme level

Programme Progress

The Managing Authority has monitored the quality of the Programme implementation by collecting data on Progress Indicators. The indicators measure how the Programme Management (Including MA and BOs) carries out activities in general administration, calls for proposals, assessment and selection of applications, management of ongoing projects, as well as finances. The activities listed above are also known as critical points, which are all interconnected.

The purpose of the progress indicators is to measure what happens in programme implementation from the angle of each critical point and to focus on the results achieved in the programme implementation. Data for the progress indicators is collected once a year and the results are presented to the JMC. The progress indicators offer JMC a look into the Programme progress and if it is needed to change or modify the programme implementation to the right direction. These results shall also be reported in the annual report according to the implementation regulation.

The purpose of progress indicators is to:

- Alarm whether Programme implementation is improving or not
- Help to define priority activities
- Make Programme progress measurable and easy to measure by JMC
- Help JMC to make decisions
- Assist National Authorities with data for internal reporting on the Programme implementation
- Help Programme bodies to define the ownership of the performance (responsible body).

Table 1. Progress Indicators

Objective	Progress Indicator	Baseline / Target values	Values 2020	Owner
Critical point: administrative issues				
Well-coordinated decision-making process	Number of the physical JMC meetings (at least 1 meeting per year)	2018: 5 meetings 2022: 10 meetings	8 physical meetings	JMC, MA&BOs
	Number of the JMC Written procedures	2018: 7 WPs 2022: 14 WPs	12 Written Procedures	
Well-coordinated MA and BOs work: meetings on regular basis, exchange of information, etc	Number of the MA and BOs meetings	2018: 5 meetings 2022: 20 meetings (4 meetings a year)	2020: 15	MA&BOs
Critical point: Calls for proposals				
All planned Calls for Proposals are launched	Number of Calls for Proposals	2018: 2 CfP 2022: 3 CfP	4 Call for Proposals have been launched; GC conditional until EC approval	JMC, MA&BOs

	Number of followers on social media	550 per month 2018: 458 2019: 650	Facebook: 417 (4 th of May) Twitter: 398 (4 th of May)	
Active involvement of MA and BOs in fulfilment of task on dissemination of information on the eligibility requirements and what applications are expected by the programme and how to apply in the 4 th Call (consultations on the Call for proposals for potential applicants)	Number of implemented consultations by MA (discussion about the project) Number of implemented consultations by BOs per country	2018: 20 2022: 30 2018: RU 20, SE 20, NO 20 2022: RU 20, SE 20, NO 20	2020: Consultations by phone and email (exact amount not counted). RU:90 NO: 80 SE: 30	MA&BOs
Critical point: applications				
Increased Cross-border cooperation relevance of the applications	Average score for the Cross-border cooperation relevance in the project quality assessment of the received applications (the Evaluation Grid is used)	2018: 3.43 / weighted 6.9 2022: 3.43 / weighted 6.9	Updated after the 4 th Cfp RAG process	MA&BOs

Involvement of organisations that have not participated in the Kolarctic programme previously in the approved applications	Number of new (to the programme) organisations acting as applicants or partners in the approved applications	2018: 45 2022: 48	Updated after the 4 th Cfp RAG process	MA&BOs
Critical point: assessment and selection process				
Efficient project assessment process	Time from after the Call is closed to the award decision (max 4 months)	2018: 2,8 months 2022: 2,8 months (on-time scheduled assessment according to the work plan)	Updated after the JMC meeting	JMC, RAGs, MA&BOs
Efficient contracting process	Duration of GC negotiation	2018: 2 mos 2022: 2 mos	Updated after the 4 th GCs signed	MA&BOs
The projects with high RAGs score and ready to be selected for financing by JMC have got	Number of applications that have not been selected by the JMC to be financed due to the lack of	2018: 3 2022: 0	Updated after the JMC meeting	NA, JMC, MA&BOs

the national co-financing approval	national co-financing			
Visibility of decision making process of JMC	Number of applications that have got high RAGs scores and available national co-financing but have not been selected by JMC due other justified reasons	2018: 4	Updated after JMC meeting	JMC
Critical point: ongoing standard projects and LIPs				
Efficient implementation of the ongoing projects	Number of ongoing projects implemented without delay	2018: 0 2022: set after the 4th Call	2020: We have not received request for extending the implementation period.	MA&BOs, AAs
	Number of projects (per country and total) marked with "red flag" (projects with risks of not delivering results) during the risk assessment	2018: 0 2022: set after the 4th Call	5 projects have a red flag (4 FI LP, 1 SE LP).3rd and 4th Call not flagged. Flag system functionality under revision	
	Number of projects with amendment in regards of declared project results in the application form	2018: 0 2022: set after the 4th Call	Zero. Addendums concern payments, partners, and budget changes.	

	<p>Number of LIPs implemented without delay</p> <p>Number of LIPs marked with "red flag" during the risk assessment</p>	<p>2018: 0</p> <p>2022: set after the 3rd Call</p> <p>2018: 0</p> <p>2022: set after the 3rd Call</p>	<p>We have not received requests for extension</p> <p>April 2020: 3 LIPs flagged as red</p>	
Improved synergy of financed projects by the Kolarctic Programme between projects of other Programmes in the Barents region	Number of ongoing projects with potential for synergy effects with projects of other Programmes	<p>2018: 12</p> <p>2022: 15</p>	<p>April 2019: 12</p> <p>The figures would not have changed, as 4th Call is not counted.</p>	MA&BOs
All ongoing projects have been finalised	<p>Number of on-time finalised standard and micro projects</p> <p>Number of standard project with extended implementation period</p> <p>Number of finalised LIPs</p>	<p>2018: 0</p> <p>2022: set after the 4th Call</p> <p>2018: 0</p> <p>2022: set after the 4th Call</p>	<p>April 2020:0</p> <p>April 2020: We have not received extension requests</p>	MA&BOs

		2018: 0 2022: set after the 3th Call	April 2020: 0	
On-time delivered interim reports (narrative and financial parts)	Percentage of on-time delivered narrative reports of ongoing projects	2018: 0 2022: 70%	2020: 100%	MA&BOs
	Percentage of on-time delivered narrative reports of LIPs	2018: 0 2022: 70%	2020: 100%	
Critical point: financial issues				
Payments to projects is efficient	How soon the payment order is made after the payment request has been received and the report approved	2018:0 2022: max 30 days	No unexpected delays, payments done within the time limits. NO BO: 14 days	MA, BO Norway
Projects recoveries are paid	Amount of the recoveries related to the payments	2018: 0 2022: Less than 1% of the payments	No recoveries until end of April 2020.	MA, BO Norway
TA budget is used in accordance with the sound financial management	The relation of the estimated TA budget to the incurred costs	2018: Realized costs vs. budget, less or equal to 100 % 2022: Realized costs vs. budget,	The budgeted costs has not been exceeded, some savings from the first years. Until end of 2019 ca. 35% of the total TA budget is used.	JMC, MA, BO Norway

		less or equal to 100 %		
Level of the use of financing in the projects related to the budgeted	How well the costs are estimated and approved budget is realistic	2018: 0 2022: 100% (or over 95 %)	Only the first reports have been checked, can be estimated later.	MA, BO Norway
Level of the needed budget amendments	How well the estimated budget relates to the activities	2018: 0 2022: max 1 per project	Total number of contract addendums due to the budget changes by 31.5.2020: 3	MA, BO Norway

According to the information available in the table above, the programme implementation is proceeding on expected rate. In addition to the indicators presented, the MA may add that processing of some narrative parts of interim reports exceeded the 45 working days' time limit due to the change in personnel. Further, regarding the payments, some projects have indicated minor delays or financing difficulties that are caused by late submission of Payment Request by the Lead Partner and consequent delays of payments from the MA.

To avoid the situations described above in the future, the MA will enhance its processes by focusing on internal coordination of work as well as communication with final beneficiaries about the documents required for reporting and payments. As concrete measures, the instructions for reporting in Project Implementation Manual have been updated, and since the outbreak of COVID-19 and resulted specific conditions, payments have been enabled based on scanned Payment Requests, while the original paper versions can be posted later.

Programme Outcomes

In addition to following the Programme's strategic progress, the MA monitors the implementation of programme-funded activities by compiling projects' Output indicators. In the autumn 2019, an indicative analysis on Output indicators was made to compare the cumulative target values of all contracted projects against to the Programme's targets.

For Priority Axis 1, the cumulative target numbers of indicators SOI 1.1 and 1.2 (participating males and females), as well as SOI 3¹, did not reach the Programme targets. In turn, the projects' target values for SOI 2², COI 2³, SOI4⁴, COI 16⁵ and COI 17⁶ exceed the Programme's target values by 390 % or more.

For Priority Axis 2, the number of participating institutions/organizations cooperating across borders towards fluent mobility of people, goods and knowledge; number of participating males and females; and number of border crossing points with increased throughput capacity remained behind the Programme's target values (target value to be amended in 2020). However, the contracted projects' estimates for SOI 6⁷, SOI 7⁸, COI 36⁹ and COI 38¹⁰ are from two to fourfold the target values set by the programme.

Based on the data it seems that overall the projects are expecting to fulfil and exceed the Programme's target values. However, some major differences in specific indicators (individual projects' targets exceeding the programme targets even by 100 or 1000 folds) shows that the indicators' definitions and target values will have to be revised certain cases.

In the autumn 2019 and spring 2020, the Programme received the first interim reports. This has served as a basis for checking how well the monitoring systems in projects are working, how their results are reported to the MA, and to what extent the reported information serves the needs to monitor and evaluate the progress toward the set programme outcomes.

In April 2020, an analysis on first reported Output indicators for the projects contracted during the First Call for Proposals was carried out. The monitoring concerns only the projects contracted in Priority Axis 1 (10 projects), because there was only one project contracted for the Priority Axis 2 (data not sufficient for programme level comparison). The cumulative data from all projects is presented in the table below.

¹ Number of participants in cross-border activities implemented by projects enhancing the culture and/or traditional livelihoods of indigenous people

² Number of participating young entrepreneurs / SMEs cooperating across borders for business cooperation and development

³ Number of enterprises substantially and actively involved in projects as final beneficiaries

⁴ Population benefitting from cross-border activities in the fields of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions

⁵ Surface area covered by improved shared environmental monitoring capacity or joint monitoring actions

⁶ Number of persons actively participating in environmental actions and awareness raising activities

⁷ Population covered by developed transport and communication networks as the direct consequence of the Programme support

⁸ Number of participants in cross-border activities implemented by projects improving the border management and border security, mobility and migration management

⁹ Increased throughput capacity of private cars on land border crossing points

¹⁰ Increased throughput capacity of persons on land border crossing points

Table 2. Indicators reported in the Interim reports - priority 1

Priority Axis 1, Indicators reported in 1st Interim Reports, Projects from the 1st Call for Proposals			
Indicator	Cumulative reported in the first Interim Report	Cumulative target for the whole projects' duration	Programme target (all CfPs)
SOI 1. Number of participating institutions/organizations cooperating across borders for viability of Arctic economy, nature and environment	101	154	310
SOI 1.1 Number of males	158	264	2,000
SOI 1.1 Number of females	142	289	2,000
SOI 2. Number of participating young entrepreneurs/SMEs cooperating across borders for business cooperation and development	13	48	15
COI 2. Number of enterprises substantially and actively involved in projects as final beneficiaries	16	102	35
SOI 3. Number of participants in cross-border activities implemented by projects enhancing the culture and/or traditional livelihoods of indigenous people	0	110	676
SOI 4. Population benefiting from cross-border activities in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions	500,000	1,500,000	660
COI 16. Surface area (km ²) covered by improved shared environmental monitoring capacity or joint monitoring actions	614,000	1,250,102	1,650,000

COI 17. Number of persons actively participating in environmental actions and awareness raising activities	484	1,235	536
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Overall, the projects are reaching the set indicators well. Most projects are reporting the indicators collected during the first quarter of total project implementation time. However, when looking at individual projects and their reported indicator values, we see projects that reported 0 values, and projects that have exceeded the set target values by more than 200% during the first reporting period. This may suggest a misunderstanding of indicator definitions or errors in data collection and reporting. To clarify the issue to the projects, the MA has updated the table of programme output indicators with more explicit definitions. The table is enclosed in chapter 4.1.

In further analysis of the monitoring data, the MA will include also projects from later CfPs, and data from second reporting periods. Based on the perceived irregularities in reported indicators, the MA will develop the processes of verifying the reported indicators, and consider a possibility for complementing the list of existing indicators with additional data collection from the projects. Overall, the data from collected indicators seems adequate in most parts, and as the projects are still in an early stage and the irregularities are small, changes in the improvement of data collection can be made.

When collating the data from the reports, the MA considers the feedback given to the Programme in ROM mission that EC carried out in 2018. The final monitoring report points out that Programme's Common Output indicators and the programme Specific Output indicators do not capture all project outputs and therefore all possible programme outputs. It was recommended, that in the course of the Programme implementation, the MA and BOs:

- Should discuss and define explicit and appropriate outputs (and not solely their indicators); review and adjust outcomes where needed; and ensure output and outcome indicators are valid measures of the expected outputs and results.
- Should explore the possibility of using complementary priority level indicators that capture intermediate outputs (whose values can be aggregated from projects under implementation) and lower-level outcome indicators (that also can be aggregated from projects under implementation) which register earlier changes predictive of the wider changes to be captured by current programme outcome indicators.

The necessary measures for development of complementary indicators and data collection are in a planning stage.

2.3 Evaluations on project and programme level

Evaluation activities were not carried out during the budget year 2019-2020.

3. Overview of the project and programme monitoring and evaluation activities in the year 2020-2021

3.1 Monitoring on project level

The project level monitoring and evaluation will continue with the ongoing projects. Checking the interim reports, discussions with lead partners and participation in project events are the main ways of collecting information about the projects' progress.

All ongoing projects have been asked to review their project plans and indicators as the situation with COVID-19 proceeds, and evaluate to what extent, by which means and in which schedule the set outputs and objectives can be reached. During the summer and autumn 2020, the MA contact person will be in touch with each lead partner and discuss the accuracy and viability of set indicators, outputs and objectives. This process will take into account both changes brought along the COVID-19 outbreak with subsequent restrictions, and when relevant, the perceived needs to revise the chosen indicators, set target values, and information collection methods in cases when the difference between the set project targets and reported values or the programme and project targets are not aligning. The recommendations from programme level ROM analysis (discussion and definition of outputs, review of outcomes; possible need for complementary indicators) will be taken into account. Project updates will be requested when necessary.

In the late 2020 and early 2021 the MA and BOs will design and carry out a complementary round of data collection, where the influence of the COVID-19 outbreak for the project implementation and relevance and viability of objectives will be examined. The material will give an overall picture about the impact of COVID-19 on the projects, and provide information for Programme level target setting.

In order to develop the monitoring activities in projects and the usability of collected data for verifiable monitoring of outcomes on programme level, the MA will develop guidance and information events (e.g. webinars) for project actors. The aim is to support the projects in organizing and carrying out effective and verifiable monitoring and evaluation processes that, on one hand, signal the projects' progress activities and results, and on other, provide data that is compatible for monitoring the progress towards Programme outputs and objectives.

New micro-projects from the 4th Call for Proposals will be contracted in the autumn 2020, and the MA will carry out risk assessment processes accordingly. Due to the restricted budget and implementation time of micro-projects, the feasibility of current flag system for risk assessment will be checked and revised when needed.

The MA and BOs will start preparations for the first on-the-spot verifications, and carry them out when the situation with COVID-19 allows on-site visits. The financial unit of the MA has developed the process of on-the-spot verifications, and will organize training for contact persons and Branch Offices. In case the restrictions for physical meetings and crossing the state-borders remain in place after 2020, alternative processes of carrying out physical on-site checks will be developed. The MA has selected the projects for on-the-spot verifications according to the criteria described in the chapter 5. In addition, MA can carry out partial or complete on-the-spot verifications for projects outside the list when necessary.

The Result-Oriented-Monitoring for selected projects will be carried out in 2021-2022. In the autumn 2020 the MA will finalize the selection criteria and list of projects selected to the ROM process, which the CBC Coordinator will implement. The CBC Coordinator may start the desk research on projects as soon as the projects are selected.

Table 3 Indicative timeline – project level monitoring

PROJECT LEVEL MONITORING, indicative timeline for actions	Timing	Comments	Responsible actor
Day-to-day monitoring of projects	Ongoing, continuous		MA contact person
Checking the interim reports	According to the projects' reporting schedule	Focal points: Project's progress based on narrative description of activities and indicators (both programme and project specific), check of intervention logic and project implementation from PQM questionnaire.	MA contact person
Participating in project events	Ongoing, continuous	Emphasis on online meetings	MA contact person, Branch Offices

Meetings with lead partners	Ongoing, continuous	Emphasis on reaching out to project on the impacts of COVID-19 situation in the summer and autumn 2020	MA contact person
Project updates	When necessary	Emphasis on summer and autumn 2020 for the updates related to COVID-19 situation	MA contact person
Risk assessment / flagging the micro projects	Autumn 2020	Updates to the flag system to be considered	MA
Result-Oriented-Monitoring (ROM)	2020 – 2022		
Preparation of the selection process	Summer and autumn 2020	Flag system will be complemented with monitoring data from ongoing projects (criteria for monitoring critical points that may have impact on delivering intended results)	MA
Design of the ROM process	Summer and autumn 2020	Including desk work on project material and reports	MA, CBC Coordinator
ROM executed on the selected projects	2021-2022		CBC Coordinator
On-the-spot verifications	Autumn 2020; spring 2021	Timing to fit the schedule of purchases in the projects, other	MA (Financial department) with the help of

		project implementation and possibilities to travel	operative team and BOs
Questionnaire / survey on the impacts of COVID-19 on the projects	Autumn 2020, early 2021	Designed collaboratively with MA, Russian BO, other BOs and expert evaluation committee	MA, Russian Branch Office

3.2 Monitoring on Programme level

The Managing Authority will continuously collect data for progress indicators. During the summer 2020, an annual plan for systematic data collection will be revised to correspond the needs related to the current status of the programme cycle. The information on the Progress Indicators is reported to the JMC and to the European Commission annually (Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Annual Report).

Realisation of planned outputs and activities is carried out based on the data collected from interim reports. The MA will conduct cross cutting analysis of reported indicators and PQM questionnaires based on the interim reports in autumn 2020 and spring 2021. Based on the results of analysis necessary actions (including development of complementary indicators and their collection processes) will be taken. In this process, the MA will take into account also the project specific indicators and possibility to use them inductively for measuring and describing the programme level status in terms of implementation of activities and completing outputs. On the Programme level, output indicators target values will be complemented with the micro-projects indicator data (cumulative target values).

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Programme will design and send out questionnaire / survey for inquiring the impact of outbreak to the implementation, timetable and objectives. The data will be collected from all the ongoing projects and compiled to give an overall view on how the COVID-19 outbreak has affected the implementation of activities and delivery of outputs on the programme level. The information will be available for mid-term expert evaluators, who will carry out a mid-term evaluation for the Programme's result indicators and possible needs for revisions.

Table 4 Indicative timeline - programme level monitoring

PROGRAMME LEVEL MONITORING, indicative timeline for actions	Timing	Comments	Responsible actor
Programme progress monitoring	Ongoing, continuous		MA, BOs
Data collection plan for Progress Indicators	Summer 2020	Revision and fitting to the programme cycle	MA
Collecting data and reporting the progress indicators	Ongoing, continuous	Reported annually in M&E Plan, Annual Report	MA
Monitoring of programme outputs	Ongoing, continuous		
Completion of output indicator analysis (Programme target values and projects' cumulative target values) with data from contracted micro projects	Autumn 2020		MA
Cross-cutting analysis of the reported /realized output indicator values	Autumn 2020, spring 2021	Cross cutting analysis for checking programme's progress and evaluating monitoring practises carried out once per semester	MA
Introduction of complementary Programme Output indicators if necessary			MA
Analysis of the results of survey on COVID-19 impacts on project implementation and relevance of objectives	Preparation autumn 2020, data collection and analysis 2021	The results oriented towards programme level influence on output and further results and objectives	BOs and MA

3.3 Evaluation on project and programme levels

First reported data on Output indicators (SOIs and COIs), comparison analysis of target values set by the projects and programme, as well as the ROM evaluation carried out by the EC have revealed a need to clarify definitions of certain programme specific output indicators (SOIs), discuss explicit programme outputs and introduce complementary Indicators for intermediary outputs. By the end of 2020, the MA will use the data derived from interim reports and project qualitative monitoring to evaluate the need and content of new indicators, and suggest a plan for their deployment and data collection.

In the Indicative Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Joint Operational Programme), the Programme indicates an option for mid-term evaluation of the Programme Result Indicators. The evaluation, carried out by a committee of external experts, was linked to a possibility to receive extra funding for the CBC projects in 2018, which did not occur. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 has a serious impact on the region, the operational environment of the Programme, as well as implementation of project and Programme activities. In order to assess to what extent the set values for Programme's Results Indicators are realistic in the new situation, discuss their links to Programme Objectives, and possible needs for revision, the MA has decided to invite the expert committee to carry out a complementary mid-term evaluation in spring 2021. The preparation of mid-term evaluation will start in the autumn 2020. The experts will look into to changes in operational environment and evaluate them in relation to the Programme Result Indicators as well as the Objectives and intervention logic. The MA will support the work by providing data on implementation of project activities, delivery of outputs so far, and the impact of COVID-19 outbreak to the projects.

Table 5 indicative timeline - evaluation project and programme level

PROJECT AND PROGRAMME LEVEL EVALUATION , indicative timeline for actions	Timing	Comments	Responsible actor
Evaluation of project level monitoring systems and possible need of introducing	By the end of 2020		MA

new output indicators			
Complementary mid-term evaluation of programme Result Indicators in relation to COVID-19 outbreak and changes in operational environment	Preparation in Autumn 2020, evaluation in spring 2021		Committee of external experts

4. Monitoring and evaluation tools

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to allow decision-makers access to relevant information, take appropriate measures in solving possible problems and ensure impact and sustainability of results. Monitoring is carried out continuously and systematically, and it includes collection of data on specified indicators. Its focus is on the input, activities, outputs and outcomes levels, and by giving information about what the intervention is doing, it aims at identifying implementation problems, and measuring progress in relation to expected outputs, outcomes and impact.

Evaluation, in turn, is systematic and objective assessment of activities, outcomes and impacts, and it aims at determining the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Evaluation is done in specific moments of the intervention's cycle. Evaluation produces credible and useful information for incorporating lessons learned into decisions-making processes.¹¹

4.1 Monitoring at project level

Internal project monitoring

Detailed description and guidance for setting up internal project monitoring and evaluation processes are included in the Project Implementation Manual. Monitoring activities should provide the mechanism, by which relevant information is provided

¹¹ DG NEAR Guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation pg. 5 and 15 (https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2016/20160831-dg-near-guidelines-on-linking-planning-programming-vol-1-v-0.4.pdf)

to the right people at the right time to help them make informed decisions. The main task in this process is to point out those areas that are in need of monitoring:

- Operational progress (activities undertaken and results achieved);
- Financial progress (budget and expenditure);
- Preliminary response by target groups to project activities

Monitoring should highlight strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and enable responsible people to deal with problems, improve performance, build on successes and adapt to changing circumstances. Monitoring is an effective way to, for example, provide constant feedback on the extent to which the projects are achieving their goals; identify potential problems at an early stage and propose possible solutions; monitor the accessibility of the project to all sectors of the target group(s); monitor the efficiency with which the different components of the project are being implemented and suggest improvements; and improve project design.

Depending on the results of monitoring activities, the project management may initiate, for example, rescheduling of the project or some of its indicators and revision of the relevance of planned activities and set objectives. The Lead Partner always negotiates possible changes of the project plan with the MA.

When the projects' operational environment changes, the reported values of indicators are not in line with the Programme's target values, or otherwise necessary, the MA can encourage the project to revise their monitoring and evaluation systems and the Programme's expectations.

Day-to-day monitoring by the MA and BOs

In their day-to-day monitoring activities, the staff of the MA and BOs review project progress through the analysis of the reports submitted, have regular contacts with the lead beneficiary by e-mail and telephone and, whenever possible, attend important project events. In this process, the other project partners must be kept adequately informed. The MA and BO staff will manage all requests for project modifications and perform desk reviews and on the spot checks, when needed, in relation to the payment claims of the beneficiaries and to verify the respect of the grant contract provisions.

Projects are obliged to report regularly on the effects and tangible results of their activities. Monitoring is based on regular reports from the ongoing projects. The Managing Authority collects and compiles the reported data in order to facilitate conclusions on the Programme level.

The data consist of qualitative part (Project Qualitative Monitoring, PQM), and quantitative indicators. PQM monitors the progress of a project against time, resources and performance schedules during the projects implementation. It also helps to identify areas/problems requiring attention and action; and allows improving

project's implementation process towards projects' objectives and delivering planned results.

PQM system is performed as the Questionnaire, which is framed within the four quality criteria:

- Relevance - the appropriateness of project objectives to the problems which it was supposed to address (e.g. is the project plan still feasible and relevant?)
- Efficiency - the cost-effectiveness with which inputs and activities were transformed into results and the quality of the results achieved. Actual schedule compared with the activities from the work plan (e.g. have the project activities been implemented in accordance with the action plan (activities schedule)?)
- Effectiveness - the monitoring of the contribution made by results to achievement of the specific objectives of the project, and how assumptions have affected project achievements (e.g. are there any possible risks that might prevent the implementation of the project activities or the achievement of the expected results?)
- Sustainability - possibility of continuation of benefits produced by the project after the project ends (e.g. have any activities been implemented to enhance the sustainability of the project impact after the project end).

The Programme specifies a set of indicators for monitoring and evaluating its progress. They relate directly to the different specific objectives of the Programme.

Some cases of isolated but rather sizeable differences between project's reported and target indicator values and / or between target values set by the project and the Programme as a whole, suggested a need to clarify the indicator definitions to the projects. The Output indicator tables below have been modified slightly in order to make the collection of data and results more reliable. The comment column is added to clarify points that may be unclear, and can therefore be used also in the training materials produced for the projects.

Table 6 Priority axis 1 - indicators

Indicator	Description	Comments
SOI 1. Number of participating institutions/organizations cooperating across borders for viability of Arctic economy, nature and environment	Number of organizations or enterprises that have cooperated or started cooperation across borders with the help of your project's support* during your project time. The outcome of cooperation is expected to enhance viability of Arctic economy and / or nature and environment	*The support can mean, for example: Organizing a networking event, networking activities or networking platform Organizing workshops / seminars /conferences where participants from different organizations find ways to enhance viability of Arctic economy and / or nature and environment and solve economic or ecologic problems
SOI 1.1 Number of males	...working or participating in the project activities	Persons should be counted as participants when they: Actively participate in the project's cooperation events or activities that enhance viability of Arctic economy and/or ecology Are engaged in cross-border cooperation in the framework of your project
SOI 1.1 Number of females	...working or participating in the project activities	
SOI 2. Number of participating young entrepreneurs/SMEs cooperating across borders for business cooperation and development	Number of SMEs or new entrepreneurs participating in cross-border cooperation with the support* of you project activities.	By new/young entrepreneur we refer to entrepreneurs who have been running their business for maximum three years, and persons who are firmly committed to starting a business and are working on a concrete business plan. SME refers to small and medium size enterprises. We refer to the definition of EC source:

		https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en
COI 2. Number of enterprises substantially and actively involved in projects as final beneficiaries	Number of enterprises directly involved as final beneficiaries in cross-border activities organized by the project. Substantial and active involvement: To be counted as an enterprise "substantially and actively involved" in the activities produced by the projects, the enterprise belongs to the target group of the project and/or has been a direct beneficiary of support of any kind (incl. all forms of non-financial support such as such as guidance, consultancy, etc).	Enterprises are final beneficiaries, when they benefit from the project's support, activities and / or outcomes. Enterprises taking passively and/or occasionally part in smaller training or information events, business fairs, networking occasions, receiving leaflets, and other similar intermittent engagement, are not to be considered.
SOI 3. Number of participants in cross-border activities implemented by projects enhancing the culture and/or traditional livelihoods of indigenous people	Number of participants in project-organized cross-border activities that enhance the culture and/or traditional livelihoods of indigenous people; to strength their competence, maintain and develop their traditional livelihoods and create new source of income. Participants: Participation implies active involvement in the activities produced by the projects. Persons with indirect involvement (e.g.	

	receiving e-mails or leaflets, visiting websites, and other similar engagement) are not to be considered.	
SOI 4. Population benefiting from cross-border activities in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions	Indicator covers the population of a certain area expected to benefit from cross-border activities in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions. The cross-border activities in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions must be a direct consequence of the Programme support.	For collecting the information: Please think what is the area / unit that your solution covers. For counting the population, please focus on the project's target group: if the project focuses on energy efficiency of a residential block, the population in question would be the inhabitants and possible commercial tenants of the buildings. If the solutions concern mining technology, please count the users of the technology rather than the residential population of the municipality.
COI 16. Surface area (km ²) covered by improved shared environmental monitoring capacity or joint monitoring actions	Surface area covered by joint monitoring actions, or actions and leading to an improved capacity in joint monitoring as a direct consequence of the support. May e.g. include setting up compatible data, information exchange systems, new equipment, etc., in the fields of biodiversity loss, pollution, environmental risks,	

	climate change and ecosystems transformation.	
COI 17. Number of persons actively participating in environmental actions and awareness raising activities	Number of citizens/students/pupils etc. actively participating*** in environmental actions receiving Programme support and awareness-raising activities as well as with regard to the promotion of energy efficiency.	

Table 7 priority axis 2 - indicators

Indicator	Description	Comments
SOI 5. Number of participating institutions/organizations cooperating across borders	Number of institutions, organisations or enterprises have cooperated or started cooperation across borders with the help of your project's support* during your project time. The outcome of cooperation is expected to enhance viability of Arctic economy and / or nature and environment.	The support can mean, for example: Organising a networking event, networking activities or networking platform; Organising workshops / seminars /conferences where participants from different organisations find ways to enhance viability of Arctic economy and / or nature and environment and solve economic or ecologic problems; Organising / planning consulting activities, training programmes that lead to cooperation on

		abovementioned themes
SOI 5.1 Number of males	...working or participating in the project activities	<p>Persons should be counted as participants when they:</p> <p>Actively participate in the project's cooperation events or activities.</p> <p>Are engaged in cross-border cooperation in the framework of your project</p>
SOI 5.1 Number of females	...working or participating in the project activities	<p>Persons should be counted as participants when they:</p> <p>Actively participate in the project's cooperation events or activities.</p> <p>Are engaged in cross-border cooperation in the framework of your project</p>
COI 27. Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads, km	The length of roads where the capacity or quality of the road (including safety standards) was improved as a direct consequence of the support.	

<p>SOI 6. Population covered by developed transport and communication networks as the direct consequence of the Programme support, number of persons</p>	<p>Population of a certain area that benefit from cross-border activities targeted to development of transport and communication networks. The developed transport and communication networks must be a direct consequence of the Programme support. Indicator includes improvement of existing transport and communication networks or introduction of new transport and communication networks as a direct result of activities.</p>	
<p>COI 29. Number of additional ICT based tools developed supporting cross-border cooperation</p>	<p>ICT based tools developed to support cross-border cooperation. May include new joint databases, information exchange portals, other joint logistics or decision-support systems, etc. The developed tools must be a direct consequence of the Programme support.</p>	
<p>SOI 7. Number of participants in cross-border activities implemented by projects improving the border management and border security, mobility and migration management</p>	<p>Number of participants** in cross-border activities that aim to improve the border management and border security, mobility and migration management; development of border crossing corridors and joint networks between authorities.</p>	

<p>COI 35. Number of border crossing points with increased throughput capacity</p>	<p>The number of border crossing points with increased throughput capacity as a result of new or improved efficiency and security measures, improvement of infrastructure and/or equipment at the border crossing points, improvement of border management operations, customs and visas procedures, etc. Also includes newly constructed border crossing points.</p>	
<p>COI 36. Increased throughput capacity of private cars on land border crossing points</p>	<p>Estimated additional increase of the throughput capacity of private cars during 24 hours. The indicator measures the additional estimated theoretical maximum 24 h capacity and not actual traffic flows. The increase in capacity must be a direct consequence of the support.</p>	<p>Increased capacity in two directions over a border should be reported as summated throughput capacity increase for the entire crossing point.</p>
<p>COI 38. Increased throughput capacity of persons on land border crossing points</p>	<p>Estimated additional increase of the throughput capacity of persons during 24 hours. The indicator measures the additional estimated theoretical maximum 24 h capacity and not actual flows of persons. The increase in capacity must be a direct consequence of the Programme support.</p>	<p>Increased capacity in two directions over a border should be reported as summated throughput capacity increase for the entire crossing point.</p>

Project risk evaluation

It is important that the level and tools the MA selects for monitoring activities of particular projects are based on verifiable and relevant criteria, such as the size of grant, number of partners, and duration of the project. The relevant criteria allows defining the needs of the project and additional follow-up measures from the beginning of the project implementation. It does not mean that these projects are in the category of not delivering results and/ automatically have/will have problems. It is just giving an additional support to those projects where e.g. partnership consist of many partners (see criteria below), since naturally it requires lead partner to pay more attention to coordination and communication processes. Moreover, large budget implies many activities within the project and/ high cost value of activities, that in turn require smooth coordination and financial follow up of the Lead partner.

In the Programme, a flag system is used in the risk analysis of the selected projects. Each selected project is given a flag: red, yellow, green, based on the certain criteria below.

- Size of budget:

over 2 000 000 €	1 000 000 - 2 000 000 €	under 1 000 000 €
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- Number of Partners (including lead partner):

over 10	5-10	2-4
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- Duration (months):

31-36	19-30	up to 18
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The flag system is easy and efficient at the same time. By giving a flag with particular colour, it provides a snapshot on the result of the risk analysis: red (risk is high); yellow (risk is average), green (risk is low). The flag system will be develop further to serve the risk assessment for micro projects. It will also provide baseline information for development of monitoring process of ongoing projects which will, in turn, indicate the projects that will participate in the ROM process.

On-the-spot verifications

According to the implementing Rules (IR) Article 32 and Article 26, MA shall verify that services, supplies or works which have been performed, delivered and/or installed. MA shall put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures taking into account the identified risks. One element to detect the irregularities is on-the-spot verifications.

The frequency and coverage of the on-the-spot verifications shall be proportionate to the amount of the grant to a project and the level of risk identified by these verifications and audits by the Audit Authority for the management and control systems as a whole.

On-the-spot project verifications may be carried out on a sample basis. They are carried out in order to check the reality of the activities and the delivery and installation of the purchased products or services. It is also used to check the compliance of the agreements to the deliveries and payments as well as to check that programme´s visibility requirements have been fulfilled.

On-the-spot checks based on the documents provided by the beneficiaries are mainly conducted in their own premises or any other project-related sites. Check shall be planned beforehand in order to conclude it efficiently. MA shall inform the beneficiary about the coming on-the-spot check at least two weeks beforehand to ensure that persons who are responsible of the activities and needed documentation are available during the visit.

The timing of the check depends of the nature of the project and possible risks which MA has identified. A proper time for the on-the-spot check is during the implementation of the project when main activities are still ongoing and purchases have been done. Thus, if problems raise up during the check, beneficiaries have time to make corrections to procedures. When the project plan includes big investments or purchase of expensive items and if the implementation period is several years, MA may carry on several on-the-spot checks.

In the case when the sustainability regulations (IR Article 39, 3.) shall be obeyed, an additional visit might be needed after the project has been closed.

On-the-spot verifications are also connected to the Risk Management Plan of the programme. The projects with the high risk can be checked even though other criteria does not apply.

On-the-spot verification described in this M&E Plan concerns Finland, Sweden and Russia.

Norwegian BO will conduct needed verifications to the project activities implemented by Norwegian partners and financed from the Norwegian Kolarctic funds, thus not included in this plan.

The projects selected for on-the-spot verification is enclosed in Annex2. Annex 3 includes a detailed description of the selection criteria and the verification process.

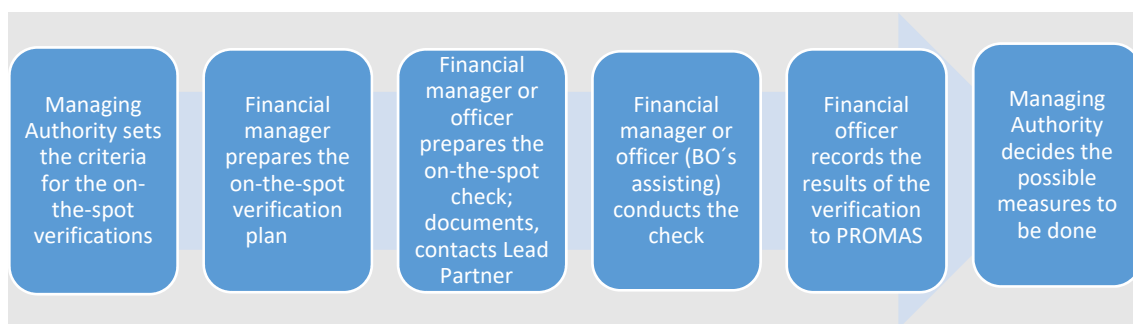


Figure 1. On-the-spot verification procedure.

Results-Oriented-Monitoring

Result-Oriented-Monitoring (ROM) done by the Managing Authority to the projects, allows for a quick look into how the projects are doing. The purpose of the project Result-Oriented-Monitoring is to make a quick review of the situation of the project and to formulate conclusions and recommendations that contribute to the improvement of the project and to the overall programme performance. In simpler terms, the ROM review offers a snapshot of the project, a conclusion, and finally recommendations for improvement.

Phases of Result-Oriented-Monitoring;

1. Project selection

Projects are selected for the ROM based on the risk analysis, which is based on the risk criteria. The risk criteria are the following:

- Projects having implementation problems or high operational risks;
- Projects covering topics for which there is a lack of sector expertise at the MA/BOs;
- Innovative projects

The risks criteria can additionally be supplemented with additional risks¹².

2. Preparatory phase and desk work

This phase includes looking at the materials that the projects have produced. These materials could be e.g. interim reports, project proposals, grant contracts, budget, logical framework, comparison of programme requirements and project results.

3. Field work and interviews

After looking into project materials and reports, the next step in Result-Oriented-Monitoring is fieldwork. Fieldwork would include interviewing the project lead partner, project partners, target groups for the project, and different stakeholders.

¹² ROM factsheet, TESIM (<https://tesim-enicbc.eu/download/factsheet-on-result-oriented-monitoring-rom/>)

4. Reporting and a short summary of the project

After all the above mentioned steps have been done, the final step is to make conclusions and recommendations based on the findings during the Result-Oriented-Monitoring. The final report and conclusions are based on a checklist and a report template, which will ensure that the outputs are consistent. Each criteria is scored on a scale 1-3, these scores are justified and the recommendations on how to improve the performance are provided per criteria.

Additional information on the Result-Oriented-Monitoring for projects can be found from ROM factsheet¹³



Figure 2. Monitoring actions, which influence the decision for projects to undergo Result-oriented-monitoring (ROM)

4.2 Monitoring on Programme level

Internal programme monitoring is done by a designated team comprised of representatives of the Managing Authority and Branch Offices. They carry out this task by reference to indicators and targets specified in the Programme and with the use of a monitoring system where data on implementation necessary for monitoring is collected. Data gathered from internal monitoring, including Programme level

¹³ ROM factsheet, TESIM (<https://tesim-enicbc.eu/download/factsheet-on-result-oriented-monitoring-rom/>)

Output and Progress indicators in terms of progress made towards the set indicator target values, will be aggregated in the Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and delivered on a regular basis to the Joint Monitoring Committee as well as to the EC and the Government of the Russian Federation to be examined and approved.

External monitoring may be conducted by the European Commission or Russian Federation. External monitoring will yield a twofold benefit: in cases where the projects selected for external monitoring have not undergone internal monitoring, it will increase the total number of monitored projects and will thus provide further assurance about the standard of project management and efficiency. In cases where projects undergo both internal and external monitoring, external monitoring missions provide a second view into the project and will support both the project management and the internal monitoring processes of the Managing Authority.

4.1 Evaluation at programme and project levels

Evaluation complements monitoring by providing an in-depth assessment of what worked and what did not work, and why this was the case. In its turn, information from systematic monitoring also provides critical input to evaluation. The scope of evaluation is broader than in monitoring.

Evaluation provides information about the strategic choices and their relevance, such as selection of thematic objectives and Programme priorities. It assesses whether the right choices were made.

The Programme will perform ex-post evaluations on both the Programme priorities as well as on thematic objectives and the Programme as a whole. These evaluations will be carried out by external experts and will focus on relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of benefits. The evaluation of the entire Programme will produce information that can be used both for the preparation of the future Programme and the improvement of the existing one.

The Managing Authority may as well carry out its own ad-hoc evaluations in order to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the implementation, especially when the Programme monitoring reveals significant divergence with the objectives set in the Programme.

The Joint Monitoring Committee makes decisions about the realization of evaluations and if they will be carried out at completion phase or ex-post.

5. Communicating on the Monitoring and Evaluation activities

The results of the monitoring and evaluation activities will be delivered by the MA to the JMC as the main decision-making body in order to take needed actions toward delivering Programme objectives. It will be done through reporting in Annual Reports and during JMC meeting on the annual basis.