

Policy and Legal Advice Centre (PLAC IV)

Terms of Reference (ToR) for a Short-Term assignment

No. 53

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| Technical assistance requested: | One (1) Senior Non-Key Expert for the mapping and structuring of obligations and implementation steps under the EU Internal Market acquis within the EU accession framework |
| Project Title: | Policy and Legal Advice Centre (PLAC IV) |
| Ref: | NEAR/BEG/2023/EA-RP/0175 |
| Service Contract No: | (CRIS) 2024/454-315 |
| Main beneficiary: | Ministry of European Integration (MEI) |
| Others: | |
| Content of the assignment: | Technical assistance for the mapping and structuring of obligations and implementation steps under the EU Internal Market acquis within the EU accession framework |
| Budget Line/Expert category | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Non-Key Expert |
| Duration of the assignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Non-Key Expert – 50 working days |

1. Background information in relation to PLAC IV project

The overall objective of the PLAC IV is for the Serbian administration to effectively conduct accession negotiations and successfully manage overall EU integration and pre-accession assistance geared towards EU membership.

The purpose of the project is: "to achieve a high level of effective alignment of national legislation with the Union acquis and its implementation".

PLAC IV should achieve two results:

- R1: Enhanced compatibility of national legislation with EU legislation and its effective implementation;
- R2: Enhanced capacities of relevant national structures for successful carrying out of accession negotiations.

The Republic of Serbia is participating in the European Union accession process in accordance with the negotiating framework established by the Council of the European Union and the revised enlargement methodology (2020), which structures accession negotiations into six thematic clusters and reinforces the focus on fundamental reforms and gradual alignment with the EU acquis.

The EU Internal Market acquis constitutes a core component of the accession process and encompasses the regulatory framework governing the four freedoms, including free movement of goods, services, capital and workers, as well as related horizontal legislation in

the areas of competition policy, company law, intellectual property rights, and other Internal Market regulatory requirements.

Serbia's progress in the accession negotiations is assessed by the European Commission through the annual Enlargement Package, including the Country Report on Serbia. These assessments are based on the results of the screening process, the definition of opening, interim and closing benchmarks, and the monitoring of their fulfilment throughout the negotiation process.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) provides the contractual framework for Serbia's approximation to the EU acquis. In particular, it establishes the obligation for progressive alignment with EU Internal Market rules and supports implementation through structured dialogue mechanisms and monitoring of commitments under the Agreement.

The EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans (2023) further strengthens the policy framework for accelerated convergence with the EU Internal Market. It links progress in key reform areas with enhanced economic integration and access to EU financial and policy instruments, thereby reinforcing the importance of coherent planning, sequencing and implementation of accession-related obligations.

Within the accession framework, obligations related to the EU Internal Market arise from multiple sources, including screening reports, benchmarking exercises, European Commission recommendations, and SAA-related commitments. These obligations are cross-sectoral and require systematic consolidation to ensure consistent tracking of implementation requirements and the prioritisation of reform activities.

The Ministry of European Integration of the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: MEI) acts as the central coordinating institution for the EU accession process. It is responsible for the overall coordination of line institutions, the monitoring of the implementation of accession-related obligations, and the reporting on progress achieved within the accession framework. In this context, structured analytical support is required to consolidate obligations related to the EU Internal Market acquis and to systematise corresponding implementation steps in line with EU accession requirements and benchmarks.

a. Specific objectives

The objective of this assignment is to provide a comprehensive, structured mapping of Serbia's obligations under the EU Internal Market acquis that arose from the EU accession process. The assignment shall systematise all relevant obligations, benchmarks, and implementation requirements deriving from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, the EU negotiating framework, screening findings, and European Commission monitoring and reporting documents, as well as relevant policy initiatives, including the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans.

The purpose is to establish a consolidated, coherent reference framework of required implementation steps to further align with the EU Internal Market acquis. This includes structuring obligations across relevant policy areas and negotiation chapters, as well as identifying linkages and sequencing implementation requirements as defined under the accession methodology.

The output shall support the MEI in maintaining an integrated overview of pending and future obligations, and in facilitating structured planning and coordination of accession-related implementation activities.

The complexity and cross-cutting nature of the EU Internal Market acquis, together with the fact that obligations arise from multiple accession sources, require a consolidated and structured approach to their organisation.



In this context, a comprehensive mapping of obligations and implementation steps supports clearer planning, better sequencing of activities, and a more consistent overview of pending and future requirements under the EU accession framework.

b. Requested services

The requested Senior NKE is expected to provide the following services:

- Conduct a comprehensive mapping of Serbia's obligations under the EU Internal Market acquis within the EU accession process, including obligations stemming from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, screening conclusions, the negotiating framework, European Commission monitoring and reporting documents, the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, as well as relevant national strategic and planning documents, including the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) and negotiation-related documentation.
- Systematise and structure the identified obligations into a coherent framework of required implementation steps, ensuring clear linkages between relevant policy areas, negotiation chapters, horizontal EU Internal Market acquis requirements, and relevant cross-cutting integration frameworks, including the functioning of the Internal Market in relation to the Schengen framework in the context of mobility and free movement, as well as relevant integration models such as SEPA accession as a reference for structured economic integration processes.
- Develop a structured overview of outstanding and future obligations, including sequencing of required implementation steps in line with the EU accession methodology and relevant EU acquis and accession-related documentation, including national planning instruments, documents related to accession negotiations, as well as European Commission benchmarks and recommendations.
- Present the results of the mapping exercise to the beneficiary and provide clarification and methodological explanations as required.

c. Outputs

The outputs delivered by the Senior NKE shall be as follows:

- Desk research and compliance analysis (Legal & Policy Mapping)

Review of documents: Analysis of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, screening conclusions, the negotiating framework, the latest European Commission reports on Serbia's progress and other monitoring and reporting documents, the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) and other relevant national strategic and planning documents (emphasis on clusters 2 - Internal market and 1 - Fundamental rights, especially Chapters 23 and 24).

SEPA case study: Analysis of the steps that led to success in the SEPA system (coordination of the National Bank, ministries and banks) in order to apply the model to e.g. recognition of industry or other standards.

- Qualitative gap analysis (Gap Analysis) and SWOT concept

The expert sets up a matrix model "Where we are now vs. Where we need to be".

Economic pillar: Quantification of savings - estimation of how much the economy loses due to being held up at the crossing points (using data from chambers of commerce and transport associations) versus zero minutes of waiting in Schengen.

- Semi-structured interviews and consultations with actors (Stakeholder Engagement)
 - The MEI (internal affairs, economy, finance);
 - Administration of customs and phytosanitary inspections;
 - Representatives of the business sector (Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Council of Foreign Investors).
- Formulation of the Roadmap through the RACI matrix where for each activity the following elements are defined: Responsible (Who implements the activity), Accountable (Who is the ultimate responsible decision maker), Consulted (Who to consult - e.g. civil society, NKEU, economy), Informed (Who is informed about the results)
- Proposal of key communication messages for stakeholders - how to communicate the possibility to accept one of the alternative models of EU accession in accordance with the statements of EU officials.

Reporting

The NKE shall provide the following reports by using the templates of the Project:

- Brief Mission Report with a description of activities and outputs provided at the end of each month, in which tasks under this assignment have been carried out, upon a Team Leader's request;
- Final Mission Report, no later than one week after completing tasks under this assignment. This report will include a description of all activities and outputs provided by the NKE in the context of this assignment.

Submission of reports:

- All reports prepared in the relevant quality shall be submitted to the Project Team Leader for review, comments and final approval. The reports shall be signed by the NKE and the Team Leader, responsible for endorsing the reports.
- The reports and all prepared documents shall be submitted to the project Team Leader in hard copy and electronic form.

d. Specifics

The NKE shall work under the guidance of the Team Leader and follow his instructions. The NKE shall collaborate with the project team, other experts involved, and representatives of the relevant beneficiary institutions. Prior to each planned short-term mission, the timing and duration shall be agreed upon with the Beneficiary and the PLAC team.

2. Expert's input

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| Total working days | 50 working days (WDs) have been planned for this assignment for Senior NKE |
| Period of the assignment | June 2026 - September 2026 |
| Starting day | The work is expected to be performed June 2026 onwards. However, the exact starting date will be agreed upon later. |
| Location/place of assignment | The base of operation will be in Belgrade, Serbia, and the Project will provide office facilities. |
| Working language | English and Serbian |



3. Expert's profile

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| <p>Qualifications and skills (25 points)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A level of education, which corresponds to completed university studies of at least 3 years in the relevant field attested by a diploma such as political science, law, economy, finance or similar, relevant to the assignment • Computer literacy • Be proficient in report drafting • Excellent communication and analytical skills • Proficiency in English language • Be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on |
| <p>General professional experience (25 points)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 10 (ten) years of general postgraduate professional experience related to the European integration process and the relevant EU acquis on Internal Market |
| <p>Specific professional experience (50 points)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 10 (ten) years of work experience in the process of European integration (preferably in government positions, negotiation structures or as an advisor on international projects). • Excellent knowledge of the mechanisms of the New Growth Plan for the Western Balkans and the functioning of the Acquis in the areas of the Single Market. • Experience in creating a Communication Plan. • Experience in organising consultations with stakeholders. |

4. Applications

Applications (EU format CV in English using this format:

www.ibf.be/public/events/17822/TEMPLATE_CV_EN_for_online_applications.docx) need to be submitted by e-mail to domi@ibf.dev with a copy to bortolameazzi@ibf.dev by **17:00 hrs, 17.6.2026** titled: "Application for the position – Senior Non-Key Expert for the mapping and structuring of obligations and implementation steps under the EU Internal Market acquis within the EU accession framework."

References must be available on request. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

The Project is an equal opportunity employer that encourages applications from women and minorities. All applications will be considered strictly confidential.

The advertised post is not available to civil servants or other officials of the public administration in the beneficiary country, Serbia.

For more information, please contact the Project Director at IBF: bortolameazzi@ibf.dev.