



# 1 PREFACE

## Contract background

The evaluation was carried out through a contract under Framework Agreement no. 23/22.08.2011 for the evaluation of Structural Instruments during 2011-2015, Lot 1 – Evaluations. The Beneficiary is the Ministry of European Funds (MEF), through the Unit for Analysis, Programming and Evaluation. The project started on 26 September 2012 and has been extended twice, to 26 May, respectively 31 July 2013. The reason for extension was the unavailability of data needed to support the analyses asked for through Terms of Reference (ToR). The cut-off date for the report was also extended, to 31 March 2013.

The project was implemented by a consortium of companies consisting of CPD (Estonia), the consortium leader, NTSN CONECT (Romania) and GEA Strategy and Consulting (Romania)<sup>4</sup>.

## The evaluation questions and the structure of the Evaluation Report

The evaluation had to answer to the following four evaluation questions:

- 1) Does the pre-financing instrument serve its objective as it is defined by the NSRF/ Operational Programmes and the relevant legislation? Are there alternatives that serve better the same purpose?
- 2) How was the pre-financing scheme used by the beneficiaries? Does its use facilitate the achievement of the pre-financing objectives, as they are defined by the programming documents or legal norms?
- 3) Are there identifiable differences or changes in the use of the scheme? In what respect can these differences and changes be attributed to internal or external factors?
- 4) Which are the optimal pre-financing rates, applicable to the various types of projects and beneficiaries, as to accelerate the implementation process? What would be the impact on the national budget?

The Evaluation Report is divided into an introductory part, a main section and annexes. The first four chapters aim to make the reader familiar with the contractual and technical background of the evaluation; the methodology used by the evaluation team; the main characteristics of the pre-financing mechanism employed by Romania within the 2007-2013 programming period; and the econometric model used to provide answers to some of the evaluation questions. The main section of the report follows the four evaluation questions. Chapters 5 to 8 provide answers, in the form of findings and conclusions, for each question and sub-questions of the ToRs. The recommendations of the evaluation are presented separately, in Chapter 9, under the form of a Conclusions and Recommendations table.

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