

Chapter 4. Overall conclusions and recommendations

The first annual measurement of evaluation culture based on the ECI has revealed a good diffusion of evaluation culture within the Structural Instruments management system, quantified in an average achievement of the ECI of 63.35% of the maximum available score of 100%.

A good level of diffusion of the evaluation culture is determined by a good average achievement across Operational Programmes showing more satisfactory results for OPTA, OP ACD, ROP and SOP T, while SOP Environment, SOP HRD and SOP IEC show poorer performances.

At the level of dimension, demand side and dissemination/utilization of evaluation results appear to be the most developed, whereas there are areas for improvement regarding the supply side and the institutionalization of the evaluation culture.

In order to provide solid recommendations concerning either strategic changes in the design KAI 1.2 or future activities that may be undertaken under the KAI in order to increase the level of diffusion of evaluation culture, we have cross-correlated at the level of criteria of the ECI, all the evidences collected during the first measurement cycle.

Figure 15 - Structure of conclusions and recommendations table

ECI CRITERIA	CONCLUSIONS OF THE FIRST ANNUAL MEASUREMENT				RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF EVALUATION CULTURE	
	PERFORMANCE	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	KAI 1.2 RESPONSE	OPERATIONAL	STRATEGIC

Following this approach, for each criteria we have summarized the key strengths and weaknesses related to evaluation culture emerging from the analysis of both primary and secondary sources, described the relevant activities developed under KAI 1.2 contracted projects and differentiated our recommendations into:

- ▶ Operational recommendations, i.e. short term actions that are implementable under the current structure of KAI 1.2 (KAI 1.2 ACTIONS) or by other means, without requiring any changes in the logic of intervention of KAI 1.2.
- ▶ Strategic recommendations, i.e. recommendation requiring changes in the logic of intervention of KAI 1.2 and that therefore may require modifications of the existing programming and implementation documents.

Table 21 - Conclusions of the annual measurement and recommendations for improvement

ECI CRITERIA	CONCLUSIONS OF THE FIRST ANNUAL MEASUREMENT				RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF EVALUATION CULTURE	
	PERFORMANCE	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	KAI 1.2 RESPONSE	OPERATIONAL	STRATEGIC
(1) The architecture of Evaluation with specific regard to the linkage between Evaluation, Programming and monitoring (responsibilities, coordination, linkage with other functions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IN LINE WITH ECI AVERAGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The architecture of the evaluation system is in place with dedicated Evaluation Units established and operational at Programme level, effectively coordinated by the Central Evaluation unit set-up within ACIS and formally collaborating on technical issues within the Evaluation working Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main downside concerning architecture relates to the fact that Evaluation Units are organized within compartments performing also other functions (programming in most cases) and that there is a lack of formal procedures linking evaluation to programming and monitoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was no specific need to address this area considering that the architecture has been in place since 2007. 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support analysis related to the reorganization of Evaluation Units into dedicated compartments, bearing in mind that the implementation of changes is subject to Programme Level approval. Support development of procedures aimed at formalizing links between evaluation, programming, monitoring (e.g. schedule periodic meetings to assess data needs in relation to multi-annual evaluation plan requirements, programming needs) 	
(2) The financial and human resources allocated to Evaluation under the NSRF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TOP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The human resources allocated to evaluation are adequate both in terms of number (average 3 persons per evaluation unit in line with international benchmark), skills and low turnover rate. The financial resources are also adequate and in line with the international benchmark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There appears to be a tendency towards downsizing of evaluation units, driven by the need to strengthen the capacity on Programme implementation issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and professional development of staff at OP and NSRF level. 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support staff development and propose targeted criteria for selection of staff to be assigned to evaluation functions. OTHER ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor headcount of staff dedicated to evaluation in order not to jeopardize the current level of diffusion of 	

					evaluation culture.	
(3) Quality of monitoring system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IN LINE WITH ECI AVERAGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the indicator system is considered adequate and capable of providing timely information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of improvement have been indicated in relation to the indicator system at NSRF level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated project has addressed the improvement of the indicator system, nevertheless results were not considered satisfactory. 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further pursue improvement of the indicator system. 	
(4) The evaluation function is efficient and effective (planning, management, quality control and learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning of evaluation is ensured by the existence of multiannual/annual plans. • Single evaluation assignments are effectively managed by Evaluation Steering Committees (ESCs) set-up at Programme level producing terms of reference of medium-high quality. • In the case of NSRF two positive tendencies are noted, respectively the role of the EWG as ESC of evaluation assignments under LOT 2 of the FA on Structural Instrument Evaluation and the invitation of thematic experts to take part to ESC discussions. • Standards aligned with the EU Level have been adopted and procedures are in place for design, implementation and use of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree of accomplishment of plans is not always satisfactory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing projects have addressed directly the quality of evaluation competences and expertise of evaluation staff both at OP and NSRF level by deploying different training activities as well as tools and methodologies. • Number of human resources allocated to evaluation and evaluation budget shares have been adequately addressed at different levels. 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the planning process of evaluations for 2014-2020 in order to align from an early stage the evaluation demand with the data needs (criteria 5). OTHER ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly update multiannual evaluation plans based on feasible schedules and actual needs. Plans should not exceed in level of details in order to allow sufficient flexibility in the drafting of the Terms of Reference. 	

		evaluation which are partially updated as a result of the experience gathered and provide for the involvement of Evaluation Units in decision making.				
(5) Socio-economic data are available and reliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IN LINE WITH ECI AVERAGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-economic data are available in a timely manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other data such as micro-data at beneficiary level are only partially available and their consistency is considered of medium level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific action undertaken. 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support development of statistical baseline for micro-data that may prove of particular use for counterfactual analyses in the future programming period (criteria 4). 	
(6) Availability and quality of evaluation expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IN LINE WITH ECI AVERAGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a supply side in possession of the required thematic and methodological expertise active in the Romanian market composed of both national and international companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is room for improvement in the quality of evaluation reports. The number of national companies as well as the involvement of universities in evaluation is still low. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large multi-annual framework contracts have attracted a number of international players in the national evaluation market. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KAI 1.2 specific objectives and eligible activities should be revised as a pre-condition for building further evaluation capacity on the supply side with specific focus on national companies and academia.
(7) Dissemination of evaluation outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IN LINE WITH ECI AVERAGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of Evaluation Reports are publicly available on the website of the Evaluation Working Group (www.evaluare-structurale.ro) and public debates have been organized in order to present and discuss evaluation findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all the evaluation reports are publicly available and some of them are published only in terms of Executive Summary. The average number of 1 public debate organized per OP in the last 12 months appears to be low. The Communication of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the EWG website Publication on the EWG website of the evaluation reports Organization of international conferences Planned organization of wider dissemination events under LOT 2 of the Framework Agreement on 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a study aimed at identifying the most appropriate communication channels, tools and language use, in order to reach relevant stakeholders. Deploy targeted communication campaigns once the study is finalized. 	

Measurement report of evaluation culture in the context of EU Cohesion Policy in Romania
First measurement cycle

			evaluation towards stakeholders is not fully effective.	Structural Instruments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed in projects financed under KAI 1.2 components related to wide dissemination of evaluation evidences, leveraging as well on the available web resources to increase visibility. 	
(8) Use of evaluation results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TOP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures for addressing evaluation results and their follow-up are in place. The use of evaluation results is considered as having a considerable impact both on the programming and implementation process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No weakness identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific action undertaken. 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See recommendation under criteria 7 on communication. 	
(9) Mental framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IN LINE WITH ECI AVERAGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation is considered <u>to some extent</u> as an essential part for achieving success at institutional level and the requirement of independency is understood and respected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of evaluation is not yet fully understood by policy makers and management /executive staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity Building Projects financed under KAI 1.2. 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed in projects financed under KAI 1.2 targeted communication sessions towards policy makers. 	
(10) Legal context of evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LOW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The national legal provisions regulating evaluation are the transposition of the EU Legal Framework and provide for the additional requirement of preparation of multiannual and annual evaluation plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are elements of the Romanian legal framework hampering evaluation, in particular public procurement rules, national ordinances on staff hire and rules on expense eligibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific action undertaken. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address rules on eligibility of expenditure that are limiting the types of target groups eligible for capacity development actions

<p>(11) “Evaluative” human resources policy - targeted at ensuring adequate human resources for conducting evaluations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IN LINE WITH ECI AVERAGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are evaluation champions (i.e. persons supporting the evaluation process) both at OP and NSRF level. • There are training options on the market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree of participation of civil servants (other than those dedicated to evaluation) has room for improvement. • The number of training options remains limited especially as concerns those provided by academia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and professional development of staff at OP and NSRF level 	<p>KAI 1.2 ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize dissemination events involving a wider number of civil servants to spread evaluation culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KAI 1.2 specific objectives and eligible activities should be revised as a pre-condition for supporting the academia in building additional training options on the market.
<p>(12) Embedded/bottom up evaluation demand (in SIS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a demand for evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall demand for evaluation as well as the number of evaluations triggered in response to a need of knowledge and not in response to a compliance requirement is lower than in other member states as results from international benchmarking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building activities implemented and / under implementation are supporting the creation of an embedded bottom up demand for evaluation. 	<p>KAI 1.2 ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed in projects financed under KAI 1.2 targeted communication sessions addressing stakeholders of Structural Instruments concerning the importance of evaluation. 	
<p>(13) Networking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There exists a national organization of evaluators. • There is a mechanism of cooperation between Government and academia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contribution of the national organization of evaluators to the dissemination of good practices is low. • The involvement of academia has been very limited up to date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressed to a very limited extent. 	<p>KAI 1.2 ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize dissemination events involving Institutional Stakeholders, Academia and Professionals as well as the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KAI 1.2 specific objectives and eligible activities should be revised as a pre-condition for supporting the activity of the national organization of evaluators and strengthening the links between Government and academia.

(14) Civil society and mass media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strengths identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of participation of civil society in evaluation related activities is low as well as the number of public events organized per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressed to a very limited extent. 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize additional dissemination and communication events 	
(15) Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political stability, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption are above the world average as measured by the World Bank Governance index. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government effectiveness is below the world average as measured by the World Bank Governance index. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed within the framework of KAI 1.2 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to improve Regulatory Quality, KAI 1.2 may support both capacity building and projects related to Regulatory Impact Assessment, in line with the new draft Regulations for 2014 - 2020 (see Annex IV COM (2012) 496 final)¹². 	

¹² Making regulatory systems more efficient is complex and widespread. It can include cutting administrative burden for business, making policy more evidence-based, promoting the functioning of markets and improving the public's understanding of the law. The quality of a country's regulatory system depends to a great extent on how regulations are conceived and made. An important part of making better laws is having a full picture of their impacts. Proposals can then be tailored to have the best effect, and to minimise negative side-effects. The European Commission is committed to examining the economic, social and environment impacts of its proposals. It has made impact assessment compulsory for major policy proposals and, since 2003, the Commission has completed over 150 impact assessments. The 2009 EC Guidelines (SEC(2009) 92) give general guidance and set out the procedures and steps for assessment of potential impacts of different policy options. Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) is a continuous process to help the policy-maker fully think through and understand the consequences of policy interventions in the public, private, and public sectors. It is a tool to enable the Government to weigh and present the relevant evidence on the positive and negative effects of public interventions, including by reviewing the impact of policies after they have been implemented. The latest survey of Indicators of Regulatory Management Systems of OECD Countries reveals that in 2005 all member countries routinely carried out some form of RIA on new regulations before finalising and implementing them. To reinforce performance of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, new conditionality provisions will be introduced to ensure that EU funding creates strong incentives for Member States to deliver Europe 2020 objectives and targets. These will include the obligation for MS of a mechanism for systematic assessment of the impact of legislation on Small and Medium Enterprises taking into account differences in the size of enterprises, where relevant.

(16) Impacts in long-run and outside SIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IN LINE WITH ECI AVERAGE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strengths identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions involved in Structural Instruments have internalized evaluation only in part. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressed to a very limited extent. 	KAI 1.2 ACTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize wider dissemination events to further spread knowledge of evaluation. 	
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