Chapter 2. First annual measurement of evaluation culture

2.1 Definition of Evaluation Culture and its dimensions

The literature review concerning the concept of evaluation culture has brought a series of aspects into light, widely acknowledged by all sources analysed (see Annex 1).

The discourse on evaluation culture stems in most sources from:

▶ the main purposes of evaluation, i.e. accountability and learning and

▶ the strong links existing between the concept of evaluation culture and the overall administrative capacity of a country and the maturity of its democracy, these elements being distilled in the last years in the "good governance concept" (i.e. the "environment" of the evaluation "system").

Several sources identify levels of "maturity" of evaluation culture and debate upon the influence that endogenous vs. exogenous inputs have had on it. Generally it is argued that evaluation culture is stronger in countries where this has been fostered bottom-up. However, external inputs, including especially the ones under the EU Cohesion Policy, have had an important impact, stronger in southern and central and eastern European countries.

From the literature it is clearly shown that evaluation culture is "constructed" as a result of internal and/or external factors and it is an incremental process, where evaluation "champions" are often the determining factor in pushing forward the process.

Some sources sub-sum culture to capacity (EC, US GAO - Government Accountability Office) while academic literature argues that the two do not contain, but rather reinforce each-other. However, the "chicken-and-egg" dilemma (where the cycle needs to start/starts, with "culture" or with "capacity") is solved to a more limited extent – De Peuter and Pattyn being an exception in this respect.

No clear delineation is possible between the two concepts; moreover, further than using the two concepts as interchangeable, a myriad of other "concepts" are spread all over literature, without being clearly defined, e.g. evaluation "system", "policy", "practice", "process", "procedures", "capabilities", even "innovation", but used with different meanings.

Although particular attention is given to the sources available after 2008, no major shifts were identified in defining and using the two concepts in comparison with the benchmark framework developed by the European Commission which is still valid to a large extent.

To conclude on the literature review, in terms of clear-cut "definitions", De Peuter and Pattyn's (2008) seem to be the most accurate and easy to use:

▶ Evaluation culture is the pattern of shared beliefs and values of policy makers and evaluators which provide them with rules for behaviour that lead towards a practice of evaluation[1];

▶ Evaluation capacity is associated with "more operational aspects and components which are deemed necessary for conducting an evaluation. In that sense, evaluation capacity is strongly linked to the evaluation practice itself. They both relate to personnel related issues as well as technical facilities and instruments in support of evaluation".

Without trying to replicate/double the effort made by De Peuter and Pattyn, in order to reach the overall objective of the project:

▶ Firstly we collected from literature the elements identified as being related to each of the two concepts (see Annex 2);

▶ Secondly, we eliminated overlapping elements within each concept, clearing out from the "capacity" concept all elements presented in literature as "culture" related.

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[1] Stemming from Davies (1984) definition of "culture": "culture is the pattern of shared beliefs and values that give members of an institution meaning, and provide them with the rules for behaviour in their organisation"

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▶ Thirdly, we organized the elements in "clusters" which we also labelled (see Table 1).

The purpose of this third step was not to replace the work done at EU level (i.e. EC benchmarking framework and EVALSED) but to:

1. differentiate (artificially in some cases) between "culture" and "capacity";
2. have an extensive list of elements related to the two concepts in order to adequately and comprehensively design an evaluation culture measurement index to be used for measurement purposes.

As it can be seen in the table below, different elements can actually be assigned to different levels of the 4 identified by EVALSED (evaluation demand, evaluation supply, evaluation architecture, institutionalization of evaluation) and other sources (i.e. individual, institutional, inter-institutional and societal), or to more than one level but differentiated in each case:

Table 1 Evaluation Culture and Evaluation Capacity: key elements

Evaluation culture	Evaluation capacity
CONTEXT – GOOD GOVERNANCE 1. democratic and competitive **political** system and decentralised policy-making process; 2. a thriving social science community or communities and, within this, a **university** system that is hospitable to the social sciences; 3. a sizeable group of social scientists who are interested in conducting policy-oriented research; 4. strong empirical traditions; 5. strong **civil society** and **involved mass media**;	**INPUT – what you need to carry out evaluations** 1. data quality 2. skills/analytic expertise 3. human resources (internal and external) 4. financial resources 5. instruments 6. methods and standards
MENTAL FRAMEWORK/VALUES (ALSO CONTEXT) 1. a commitment (also at political level) to self-examination, to learning and improving through analysis and experimentation, to evidence-base policy and accountability, to "measurement-oriented "performance culture"/ "managing" for results"/performance-based framework; 2. no blame-culture which discourages learning (both ways, evaluation does not blame and evaluation results are not interpreted as blame); 3. evaluation is accepted, welcomed, encouraged and valued as an essential part of achieving success; 4. independency of evaluation 5. awareness of intrinsic value of evaluation	**FRAMEWORK – how you obtain/ensure what you need to carry out evaluations** 1. Architecture: "how evaluation systems are organised and coordinated" including coordination through a network of dedicated evaluation units or functions which should ensure consistency in evaluation; 2. **Focus on national and sector levels, as well as central and local levels;** 3. Data collection mechanisms; 4. Recruitment, training, professional development provisions, legal rules (e.g., regulating employment), normative assumptions (e.g., about equal opportunities or open competition); 5. Provisions for effectively organising timely, high-quality evaluations, including for public procurement and for other necessary instruments; 6. Provisions for accessible evidence base and an organisational memory; 7. Diffusion and feedback mechanisms; 8. **Articulated policies and regulatory activity;** 9. Development of concepts and tools, including capacities to keep score on development effectiveness and quality assessment 10. Coupling with policy and management decisions (dialogues between policy makers and evaluation specialists).
...APPLIED IN LEGAL PROVISIONS 1. legal embedding of evaluation 2. the existence of an evaluation policy that expresses the commitment of leadership or the organization to learning, accountability, and evaluation principles, designed in an open and collective manner; 3. determining an institutional framework for evaluation which ensures that a system exists to implement and safeguard the independence, credibility, and utility of the evaluation.	**PRACTICE** 1. evaluation routinely undertaken; 2. regular flow of evaluations; 3. well-defined market (re supply side).

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Evaluation culture	Evaluation capacity
...APPLIED AT HUMAN RESOURCES LEVEL	

...APPLIED AT HUMAN RESOURCES LEVEL
1. policymakers educated, specialised and with professional background connected to evaluation;
2. civil servants trained in the social sciences (as opposed to strict legal training);
3. participation in M&E activities;
4. M&E champions present;
5. ownership of evaluation.

..APPLIED IN PRACTICE
1. the integration, in all political field and at all levels of administration and government, of evaluation into management strategies and practices;
2. triggering demand of evaluation in response to the need for empirically based knowledge and use the evaluative evidence to inform decision-making;

NETWORKING (INTER-INSTITUTIONAL TIES) FOR ENHANCING
1. existence of a professional society which strives towards greater professionalism in evaluation within which multiple competent evaluators exchange their experiences, define their best practice and where standards are set;
2. the presence of institutions that bridge the academia-government gap;
3. presence and involvement of international professional networks.

Source: elaboration of Commission Study "Developing Evaluation Capacity"

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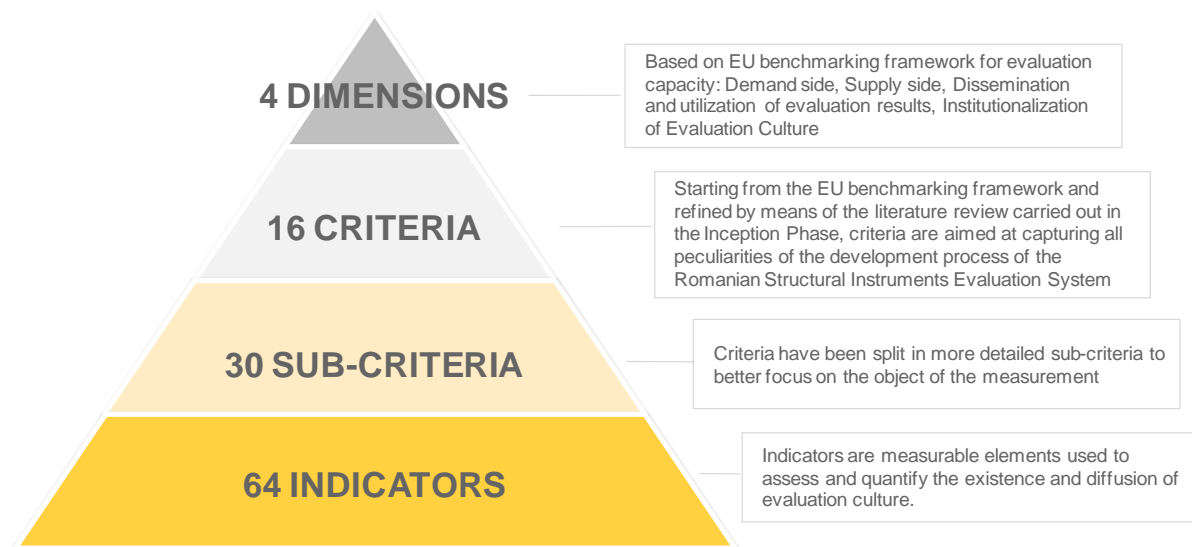
2.2 Methodology

The framework presented in the previous section has been the starting point for the development of a tool aimed at measuring the achievement of evaluation culture among the structures involved in the management of Structural Instruments. Such tool, the **Evaluation Culture Measurement Index (ECI),** includes an "artificial" distinction between[2]:

▶ evaluation culture as *"the pattern of shared beliefs and values of policy makers and evaluators which provide them with rules for behaviour that lead towards a practice of evaluation"*

▶ evaluation capacity as *"more operational aspects and components which are deemed necessary for conducting an evaluation"*.

The **ECI** is composed of 4 dimensions, 16 criteria, 30 sub-criteria and 64 indicators (as exemplified in graphical terms in Annex 4):

▶ **Dimensions:** represent the main components of the Evaluation System, i.e *Demand side, Supply side, Dissemination and utilization of evaluation results, Institutionalization of Evaluation Culture*;

▶ **Criteria** and **sub criteria**: related to both capacity and culture, capture peculiarities of the development process of the Romanian Structural Instruments System (SIS);

▶ **Indicators**: the extensive list of relevant elements - related to both capacity and culture – adequately and comprehensively asses Evaluation Culture among stakeholders of Romanian Structural Instruments[3].

Figure 1 – The Evaluation Culture Measurement Index Framework

In order to quantify the ECI, for each indicator we have defined a scoring methodology, minimum and maximum score available and the corresponding primary and secondary sources of information as synthesized in Table 2 – ECI: sources of information.

Finally, based on the aggregation of the minimum and maximum score available for each indicator we have determined the minimum and maximum scores available for the Evaluation Culture Measurement Index (ECI) being respectively 126 points and 477 points.

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[2] De Peuter and Pattyn, 2008

[3] Where appropriate, the same indicators have been used for NSRF and Programme level, and for the various institutions/bodies involved in SIS where appropriate

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Table 2 – ECI: sources of information

Source of information	
Primary sources	▶ Online survey addressed to the wider stakeholders' evaluation community; ▶ Focus group composed of key institutional stakeholders of the evaluation community which provided feedback on the methodology for the measurement of the evaluation culture ▶ Focus group composed of key institutional stakeholders of the evaluation community which provided feedback on the preliminary results of the first annual measurement; ▶ Focus group with stakeholders of the broader evaluation community in Romania, providing feedback on the contents of the first draft of this report ▶ Interviews with project managers of KAI 1.2 projects (ACIS Central Evaluation Unit staff);
Secondary sources	▶ Relevant National documents, EU and national methodological guidance, Programming and Operational documents at OP and NSRF level, Evaluation reports; ▶ International benchmarking

In order to quantify the current value of the indicators during the first measurement cycle, we have proceeded as follows:

▶ for indicators quantified through primary sources (survey), a score is assigned based on the average score provided by questionnaire respondents;

▶ for indicators quantified through secondary sources, a score is assigned on behalf of the evaluation team.

For indicators quantified through international benchmarking, a score is assigned based on specific survey covering 5 EU countries (Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Lithuania) and 18 Operational Programs (Table 3 – International Benchmarking: Countries and OP covered).

Table 3 – International Benchmarking: Countries and OP covered

Country	Operational Program
Bulgaria	▶ OP Transport ▶ OP Regional Development ▶ OP Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy ▶ OP Environment ▶ OP Technical Assistance ▶ OP Administrative Capacity ▶ OP Human Resources development ▶ Rural Development Programme ▶ OP Fisheries Development
Germany	▶ OP of the state of Brandenburg for the ESF programming period 2007-2013
Hungary	▶ NSRF
Italy	▶ Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013 of Lombardy Region under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective, co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) ▶ Cross-border cooperation operational programme 2007-2013: Italy – Switzerland ▶ Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013 of Lombardy Region under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) ▶ Solid Funds (EBF, IF, ERF, RF)
Lithuania	▶ OP Human Resources Development ▶ OP Economic Growth ▶ OP Cohesion Promotion

With specific reference to the benchmark analysis, its aim was to define threshold for (see Annex 4 - Evaluation Culture and Evaluation Capacity Framework):

▶ Adequacy of human/financial resources allocated to the Evaluation Function at OP level;

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▶ Efficiency of the Evaluation Function (in terms of number of evaluations accomplished per year);

▶ Degree of involvement of academia/research centers in the programming phase and OP implementation;

▶ Significance of demand for evaluation;

▶ Respondence of evaluation to the need for empirically based knowledge[4];

▶ Effectiveness of the organization of professional evaluators in creating a network of evaluation experts.

The scoring obtained for each indicator has then been summed-up at the level of sub-criteria, criteria and dimension, compared to the maximum score achievable at the corresponding level and presented in terms of percentage. The diffusion of evaluation culture (ECI) is therefore calculated as the "average distance"[5] (measured as percentage) of each criteria to its maximum achievable score.

## 2.3 Results at the level of ECI, dimensions and criteria

The results of the first annual measurement are presented in this section, starting from aggregate level (dimensions and criteria) and then in further details.

Overall results by dimension

The first annual measurement gives satisfactory results (Figure 2) both in the pattern of shared beliefs and values of policy makers and evaluators (*Evaluation Culture*) and in operational aspects and components deemed necessary for conducting an evaluation (*Evaluation Capacity*).

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 evaluation culture**.

Figure 2- Overall Index and results by dimensions
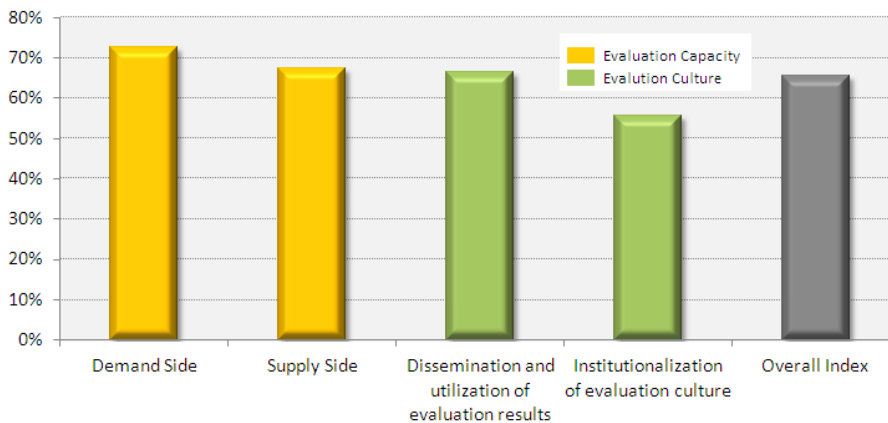
Results by criteria

The good level of diffusion of evaluation culture derives from an average achievement across the 16 criteria of 63.35% of the maximum available score (this is the result of the first annual measurement of the ECI) as shown in the following pictures, where the minimum value is registered under criteria (10) Legal Context of the Evaluation (28,6%) and the maximum value under criteria (2) Financial and human resources allocated to Evaluation (90%).

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[4] Respondents were asked whether the evaluations carried out wre triggered in response to the need for knowledge.

[5] This distance, in terms of percentage, is calculated as the ratio between the actual value and the maximum achievable score.

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Figure 3 – Results of evaluation culture by criteria
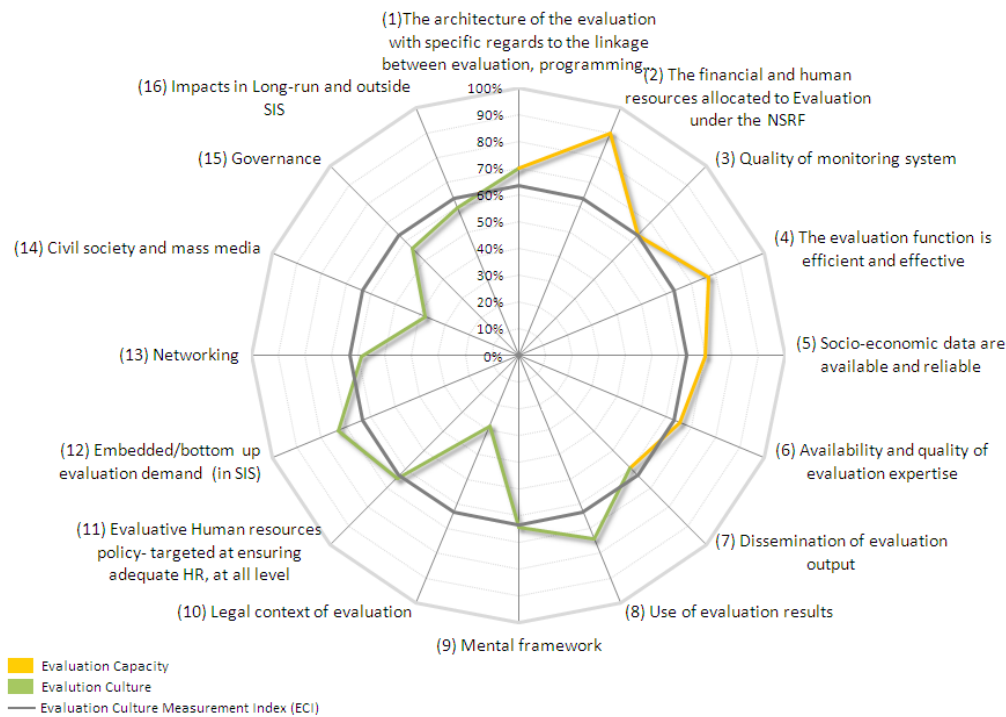
With respect to the overall average, the top performing and least performing criteria in terms of distance from the maximum achievable values are as follows:

Table 4 – "Top Performing" and "Least Performing" Criteria

TOP PERFORMING	LEAST PERFORMING
▶ Financial and human resources allocated to Evaluation under the NSRF ▶ Evaluation function efficiency and effectiveness ▶ Use of evaluation results ▶ Embedded bottom-up evaluation demand	▶ Legal context of evaluation ▶ Networking ▶ Civil Society and mass media involvement ▶ Governance Index

2.4 Results by sub-criteria and indicators

In the following sections results are more deeply examined. Sub criteria and top/least performing indicators are analyzed in order to provide preliminary conclusions and recommendations.

(1) The architecture of the evaluation

The architecture of the evaluation system seems to be coherent with the international good practices:

▶ **Dedicated Evaluation Functions (EF) always exist** (both at NSRF and at OP level): EFs are generally organized in units that don't report solely to the head of Managing Authority[6]. In fact, with the exception of the Evaluation Central Unit, established at the level of ACIS with

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[6] ROP Evaluation Unit reports solely to the head of the Managing Authority.

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responsibility for OPTA and NSRF evaluations, Programme Evaluation Units are organized within compartments linked to other functions with a closer link to Programming.

▶ **Mission, roles and tasks of EFs are clearly defined and assigned:** evaluation procedures are in place[7] and provide for clear tasks and responsibilities of the evaluation function.

▶ **A mechanism for coordination among EFs of different Programmes exist and is considered effective**: the Evaluation Central Unit (ECU) set up at the level of ACIS, in addition to being responsible for evaluation of the NSRF and OPTA has the function to coordinate the evaluation of Structural Instruments in Romania, including also the development of evaluation capacity. ECU also ensures the secretariat of the Evaluation Working Group, which operates based on a mandate commonly agreed by all evaluation units within the Managing Authorities. The main task of the EWG is to analyze and agree, at a technical level, upon structures, systems and procedures related to the evaluation of Programmes financed by Structural Instruments and for issuing recommendations aimed at improving the coordinated evaluation of the NSRF and OPs. During the dissemination workshop it was emphasized that the level of active participation of EWG members to discussions has room for improvement.

▶ **However linkage among evaluation function and other functions could be strengthened** through the formalization of procedures linking evaluation to programming and monitoring.

Figure 4 – The architecture of the evaluation: top/least performing sub Criteria and average score of criterion
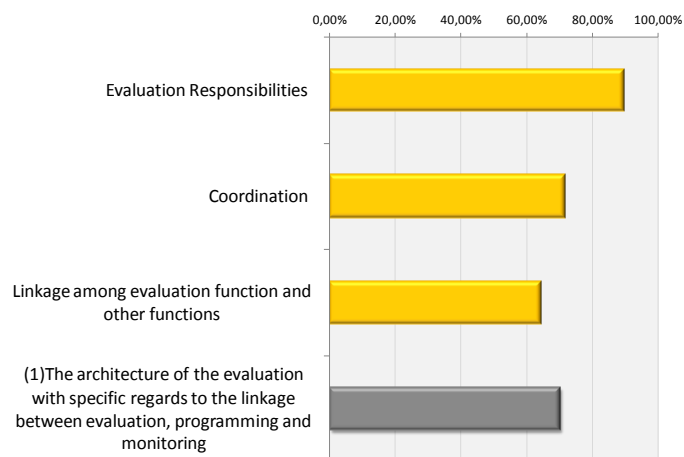
(2) Financial and human resources allocated to Evaluation

On the basis of the findings, the first annual measurement concluded that resources allocated to evaluation are adequate both in terms of human resources and availability of financial resources:

▶ in the Romanian SIS **the average number of people working for the EF is 3 persons, in line with the results of international benchmark analysis;**

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[7] With the apparent exception of SOP ENV which has only a general procedure for programming and project development that includes, only marginally the evaluation function.

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▶ **competences and expertise of EF staff are considered almost adequate** (both at OP and at NSRF level). Training activities for the evaluation function staff have been financed under OPTA KAI 1.2 Evaluation as well as under the technical assistance of ROP and SOP HRD;

▶ there is a **low rate of staff turnover**;

▶ the average **evaluation budget share compared to OP financial allocations is in line with international practices**, amounting to 0.27% computed on 4 of the 7 OPs (including the substantial weight of OPTA) versus an average of 0.34% resulting from international benchmarking among 16 OPs.

Figure 5 – Financial and Human Resources allocated to Evaluation: top/least performing Sub Criteria and average score of criterion
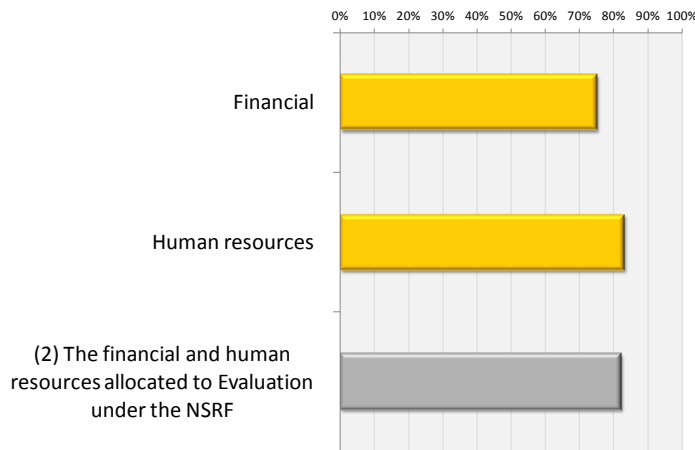
(3) Quality of the monitoring system

The **quality of the monitoring system is valued as adequate**, both at OP and NSRF level (in the first case the average score achieved is 3,73 points - out of 5 - versus 2,83 in the latter case). Also the **quality of individual indicators is considered higher at OP than at NSRF level** (average score of 3,10 points - out of 5 - versus 2,90 in the latter case).

Moreover the **average time required to obtain information from the monitoring system is valued as adequate** (between 2 weeks and 1 month) without substantial difference between OP and NSRF levels.

Figure 6 – Quality of the monitoring system: top/least performing Sub Criteria and average score of criterion
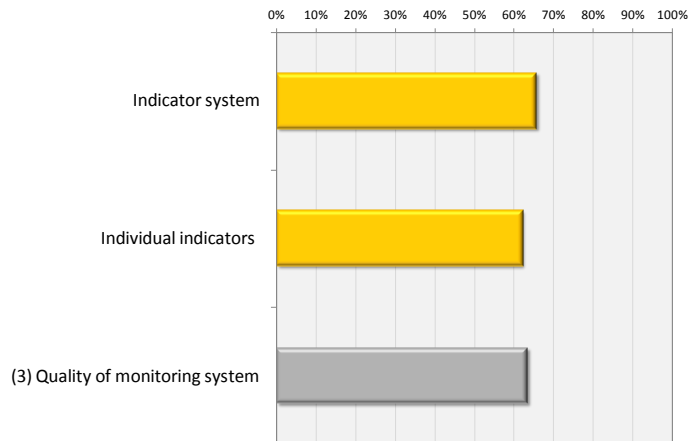
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> **(4) The evaluation function is efficient and effective (planning, management, quality control and learning)**

The demand side dimension, which refers to the commissioning side of the evaluation process, is supported by **efficient and effective activities of planning, management, quality control and learning:**

▶ **Multiannual and annual plans always exist and are entirely or partially revised when necessary.** The degree of accomplishment of plans varies by OP ranging from full accomplishment (NSRF[8], ROP) to medium (SOP IEC, SOP HRD, OPTA) and low level of accomplishment (SOP T). Delays, in some cases substantial, are registered between the execution of evaluations and the date on which they were scheduled in the multiannual plans.

▶ **Evaluation Steering Committees (ESC) are in place with clearly assigned roles and responsibilities** as described in OPs and further detailed in multiannual plans, operational procedures and internal functioning regulations with the apparent exception of SOP Environment for which limited evidence was found. A new approach concerning ESCs composition is wide spreading mainly for NSRF evaluations and consists in inviting thematic experts to take part to the ESC according to the evaluation theme analyzed. The **activity of ESCs is considered of medium effectiveness**.

▶ **A formalized process of the involvement of Evaluation Units in Managing Authority decision-making process most of the times exists**. Evaluation Unit members participate to Monitoring Committee meetings where they present evaluation findings, Action Plans, Annual and Multi-annual evaluation Plans. Also, some of the Evaluation Units, such as the Evaluation Central Unit, or the SOP HRD Evaluation Unit, have clearly stated responsibilities related to provision of advice and analyses to support decision-making.

▶ Based on the assessment of respondents the **Terms of References are of medium-high quality**.

▶ **In 2006 the Evaluation Working Group adopted a set of Evaluation Standards** linked to those used at EU Level (DG Regio, EU Regulations) and a number of tools developed within the projects financed under KAI 1.2 have also been disseminated (see chapter 3).

▶ **Internal procedures related to the EF (design/implementation/use) are partially updated, as a result of the experience gathered**. Furthermore, based on the interviews with ECU Stakeholders it results that evaluation procedures have been recently revised in the context of the project "Evaluation Capacity Development for the Evaluation Units within MAs and ACIS" and were at the time of drafting of this report, in the process of consultation among MAs.

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[8] For the NSRF a revised multi-annual plan yet in course of formal approval has been taken into account.

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Figure 7 – Evaluation function efficiency and effectiveness: top/least performing Sub Criteria and average score of criterion
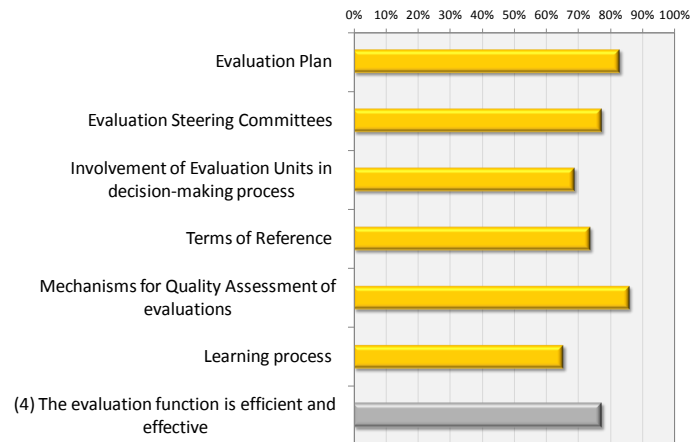
(5) Socio-economic data availability and reliability

Survey results underline that key socio-economic data (i.e. GDP, employment, unemployment, R&D investment) at national and regional (NUTS II) level are available in a timely manner.

On the other hand, alternative data sources for key socio-economic indicators are considered only partially available and their consistency of medium level.

Figure 8 – Socio-economic data availability and reliability: top/least performing Sub Criteria and average score of criterion
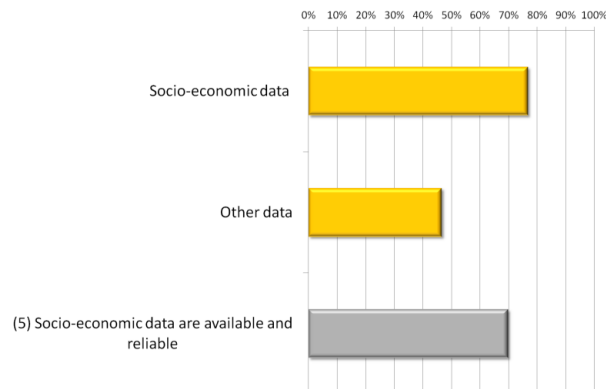
(6) Availability and quality of evaluation expertise

The Romanian **evaluation market is considered as partially competitive** since evaluation services are most of the times assigned to a limited number of players. Furthermore in the evaluation market **international firms are more present than local firms** and the involvement of universities in evaluation activities is not yet developed.

The supply side has, to some extent, the thematic and methodological expertise required and based on the feedback of survey respondents, the **evaluation reports,** assessed by means of specific check-lists for quality control, **are of medium /almost high quality.**

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Figure 9 – Availability and quality of evaluation expertise top/least performing Sub Criteria and average score of criterion

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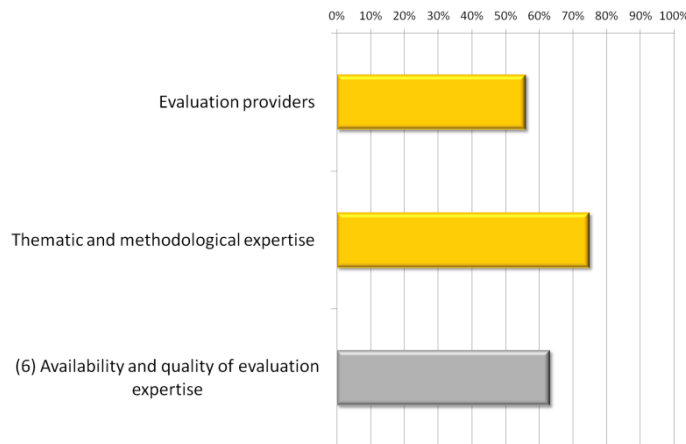
(7) Dissemination of evaluation outputs

This criterion, composed of a single sub-criterion is one of the least performing and registers a 59% achievement of the maximum available score. An analysis at the level of indicator evidences that:

▶ **According to the survey response, only between 50-75% of the reports carried out at OP level during the last 12 months are publicly available** in full format while the percentage is lower (25-50%) at NSRF level.

Considering that based on stakeholders feedback provided with the occasion of the focus group for the validation of preliminary results of the survey, different interpretation could be attributed to the concept of "public availability" of the report (i.e. the report is publically available if at least the summary format is published or only if the full report is published), a desk based analysis of the reports published on the website of the Evaluation Working Group was also performed, confirming substantially the results at OP level, but providing a much more positive outlook for the publication of NSRF level reports, all of which were published at least in summary format.

Overall in fact 78% of the reports produced are publicly available either in full or summary format, with the vast majority however being published only in summary format.

Table 5- Publication of evaluation report by OP

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	Evaluations finalized	Evaluations published			Not published
		Full or summary	*Full format*	*Summary format*	
SOP IEC	2	2		2	
OP DAC	2	0			2
ROP	4	3		3	1
SOP ENV	1	0			1
OP TA	1	1		1	
SOP TRANSP	0	0			
SOP HRD	4	4	4		
TOTAL - OP LEVEL	14	10	4	6	4
% - OP LEVEL		71%	29%	43%	29%
NSRF LEVEL	4	4		4	
% - NSRF LEVEL		100%		100%	
TOTAL	18	14	4	10	4
%		78%	22%	56%	22%

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▶ Only 1 public debate has been organized on average in the last 12 months both for evaluations carried out at OP and NSRF level. On the other hand the **awareness activities financed under the OPTA are considered effective**.

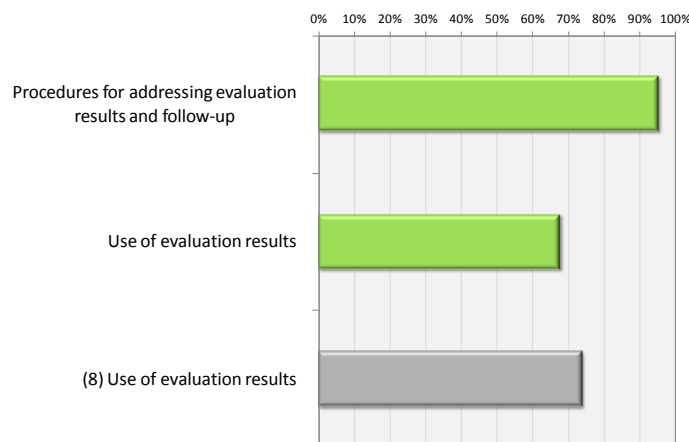Table 6 – Dissemination of evaluation outputs: top/least performing indicators

Criteria	Sub criteria	Indicators	Achieved Score	Max Score	Contribution to ECI
(7) Dissemination of evaluation outputs	Dissemination	40. Evaluation reports publicly available (out of total available) – OP Level	2,77	4	🟢
		40. Evaluation reports publicly available (out of total available) – NSRF LEVEL	1,75	4	🔴
		41. Public events / debates organized to discuss evaluation results – OP Level	2,36	4	🟡
		41. Public events / debates organized to discuss evaluation results – NSRF LEVEL	1,67	4	🔴
		41.a OPTA dissemination activities contribute to the dissemination of evaluation outputs	5,05	7	🟢

🟢   Positive contribution (Score achieved above the average score)
🟡   Neutral contribution (Score achieved in line with the average score)
🔴   Negative contribution (Score achieved below the average score)

(8) Use of evaluation results

▶ **Procedures for addressing evaluation results and follow-up are in place** (both at OP and NSRF level) with the responsibilities being assigned to a decision making body (Monitoring Committee /Managing Authority): a **follow-up mechanism**, based on an Action Plan drafted upon approval of the Evaluation Report, **is foreseen for all Programmes** either in the evaluation procedures, internal functioning regulations or MEPs.

▶ Respondents consider that **the use of evaluation results has a considerable impact both on the programming and on the implementation process** (this impact is considered higher at Programme Level than at NSRF level).

Figure 10 – Use of evaluation results: top/least performing Sub Criteria and average score of criterion

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(9) Mental framework

This criterion is composed of a single sub-criterion and registers a 64% achievement of the maximum available score. An analysis at the level of indicator evidences that:

▶ Evaluation is **considered to some extent an essential part for achieving success at institutional level** both by management/executive staff and policy makers but there is room for improvement, especially among policy makers.

▶ **Evaluation providers are largely independent** from Clients' interests.

Table 7 – Mental Framework: top least performing criteria

Criteria	Sub criteria	Indicators	Achieved Score	Max Score	Contribution to ECI
(9) Mental framework	Values	45. Evaluation (as analysis of own "mistakes" fear of which determines the "control" culture) is welcomed, encouraged and valued as an essential part of achieving success at institutional level (MA/ACSI) by **policy makers**	2,88	5	○
		46. Evaluation (as analysis of own "mistakes" fear of which determines the "control" culture) is welcomed, encouraged and valued as an essential part of achieving success at institutional level (MA/ACSI) – by **management/executive staff**	3,27	5	○
		47. Evaluation is independent (supply side)	3,44	5	○

○   Positive contribution (Score achieved above the average score)
○   Neutral contribution (Score achieved in line with the average score)
○   Negative contribution (Score achieved below the average score)

(10) Legal context of evaluation

This criterion is composed of a single sub-criterion and registers the lowest score (28% of the maximum available score), with the scoring methodology based on a desk research analysis and interviews with Institutional Stakeholders of Structural Instruments evaluation. Regarding specific elements of the legal context we found that:

▶ The legal provisions regulating evaluation transpose EC legislation (Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006) into the National Legal Framework (G.D. No. 457/2008) and complement it with additional provisions such as the formalization of multi-annual evaluation plans at OP and NSRF Level.

▶ There are legal provisions hampering directly or indirectly evaluation:

• Public Procurement – Government Ordinance 34/2006, determining blockages and delays in the acquisition process;

• Ordinance no. 34/2009 based on the agreement with the IMF, World Bank and EU, freezing the hiring of personnel in public administration;

• Programming documents and eligible costs orders, limiting the types of target groups eligible for capacity development actions (e.g. supply side of the evaluation).

• Public finance law 500/2002, limiting the possibilities of involvement of OP Evaluation Unit staff in projects organized by the Central Evaluation Unit.

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(11) Evaluative Human resources policy

This criterion is composed of a single sub-criterion and registers a 64% achievement of the maximum available score. An analysis at the level of indicator evidences that:

▶ **More than half of the civil servants have a background in social sciences**;

▶ Though **there are evaluation champions** (i.e. persons supporting the evaluation process) both at Programme and NSRF Level, the **degree of participation of civil servants** (other than those dedicated to evaluation) in evaluation activities **has substantial room for improvement**;

▶ There are **valid options for education/training** in the field of evaluation in Romania and they do not cover all developmental and training needs.

   Nevertheless, based on the opinion expressed in occasion of the Focus Group for the validation of preliminary findings **the number of available training options is considered rather limited**.

Table 8 – HR policy: top/least performing indicators

Sub criteria	Indicators	Contribution to ECI
Human resources policy	50. Civil servants, at all levels, are trained in social sciences (as opposed to strict legal training)	⭕
	51. Civil servant, at all levels, participate widely and openly in evaluation activities	🔴
	52. Evaluation champion(s) is/are present	🟢
	54. Existence of evaluation training/education options on the market	⭕

🟢   Positive contribution (Score achieved above the average score)
⭕   Neutral contribution (Score achieved in line with the average score)
🔴   Negative contribution (Score achieved below the average score)

(12) Embedded demand for evaluation (in SIS)

This criterion is composed of a single sub-criterion and registers a 73% achievement of the maximum available score. An analysis at the level of indicator evidences that:

▶ **The demand for evaluations is low compared to other Member States**: the average number of evaluations procured by OP in Romania in the period 2009-2011 is 1 compared to an annual average of 3 resulting from international benchmarking.

▶ At Programme level, the percentage of **evaluations triggered in response to a need of knowledge** (and not in response to a compliance requirement) **is 64% (85% at NSRF level) compared to 80.5% resulting from international benchmarking.**

Table 9 – Embedded demand for evaluation (in SIS): top/least performing indicators

Sub criteria	Indicators	Contribution to ECI
Embedded demand for evaluation (in SIS)	55. There is significant demand for evaluation (all types/all levels)	🔴
	56. Evaluation is triggered in response to the need for empirically based knowledge (not as an obligation) (OP level)	🟢
	56. Evaluation is triggered in response to the need for empirically based knowledge (not as an obligation) (NSRF level)	🟢

🟢   Positive contribution (Score achieved above the average score)
⭕   Neutral contribution (Score achieved in line with the average score)
🔴   Negative contribution (Score achieved below the average score)

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(13) Networking

This criterion is composed of two sub-criteria revealing that:

▶ **There is an insufficient contribution of the national organization of evaluators** to the creation of a network and to the dissemination of good practices (the achieved score is about 50% of the maximum score available).

Based on the information provided in occasion of the dissemination workshop, 3 such organizations currently exist, respectively EVALROM, ADER and an association of project evaluators. EVALROM, founded with the support of pre-accession assistance, has not been able to provide a substantial contribution to the dissemination of evaluation knowledge nationally and this has lead to the creation of the newly born ADER. A key factor for the functioning of such organizations, as confirmed by the workshop participants appears to be the availability of public funding.

▶ **There is an effective mechanism of cooperation between Government and academia** which allows a better policy formulation (the achieved score is about 70% of the maximum score available).

Nevertheless, based on the opinion expressed in occasion of the Focus Group for the validation of preliminary findings **this result should be interpreted cautiously given that the involvement of academia has been very limited so far.**

As emerged in occasion of the dissemination workshop, the recent organization of a public event on evaluation topics, through collaboration between the Ministry for European Affairs – Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments, Universities and ADER, may represent a turning point in this respect.

Figure 11 – networking: top/least performing Sub Criteria and average score of criterion
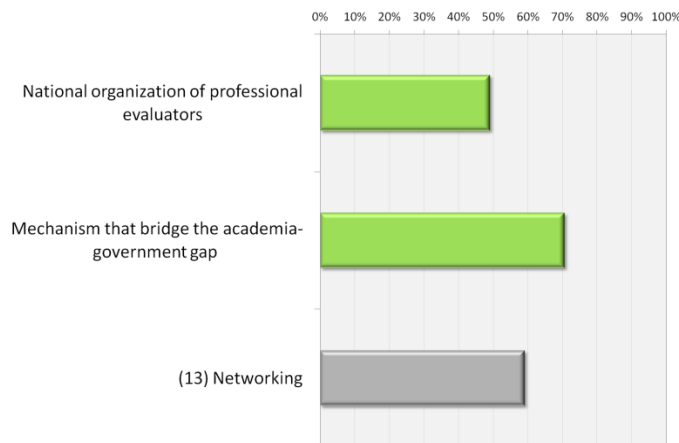
(14) Civil Society and Mass Media

This criterion registers the second lowest result (approximately a 40% achievement of the maximum available score). Indeed respondents reveal that:

▶ there is a **"low" level of participation of civil society in evaluation-related activities**;

▶ the **number of public events realized (per year) related to evaluation and dissemination is very low** (50% of respondents declare a number between 0-3)

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Figure 12 – Civil society and top/least performing Sub Criteria and average score of criterion

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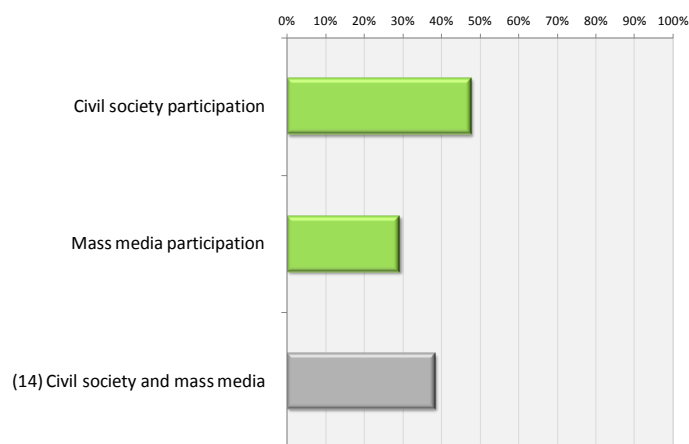
(15) World Bank Governance Index

The indicators falling under this sub-criterion are measured based on the World Bank Governance index for 2011[9] indicating the rank of Romania against all countries in the world for the following aspects:

▶ **Voice and accountability**: above world average

▶ **Political Stability**: above world average

▶ **Government effectiveness**: below world average

▶ **Regulatory quality**: substantially above world average

▶ **Rule of law**: above world average

▶ **Control of corruption**: above world average

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(16) Impacts in long-run and outside SIS

Institutions involved in the Structural Instruments (IBs, major beneficiaries, Audit Authority, Certifying Authority) **have internalized evaluation only in part**. The integration of evaluation both in the policy making process and in the administrative and operating aspects has room for improvement:

Table 10 - Effects beyond SIS: top/least performing indicators

Sub criteria	Indicators	Contribution to ECI
Effects beyond SIS	62. Institutions involved in SIS, other than MAs and ACSI (IB's, Beneficiaries, Audit Authority, Certification and Paying Authority) have internalized evaluation	○
	63. The integration, in all political fields, of evaluation into management strategies and practices	○

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[9] Kaufmann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi (2010), The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues, available at http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_chart.asp#

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Sub criteria	Indicators	Contribution to ECI
	64. The integration, at all levels of administration and government, of evaluation into management strategies and practices	⊙

⊙ Positive contribution (Score achieved above the average score)
⊙ Neutral contribution (Score achieved in line with the average score)
⊙ Negative contribution (Score achieved below the average score)

2.5 Results by Operational Programme

Based on available data resulting from the e-survey a comparison has been drawn among 8 Operational Programmes (7 Convergence Programmes and ETC Programmes, the latter being analyzed as a single Programme).

For this purpose a restricted version of the ECI was developed using only 11 criteria, 22 sub criteria and 50 indicators (Table 11) containing comparable and relevant information at Programme level.

Table 11 – Restricted version of ECI for OP comparison

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Indicators
(1) The architecture of Evaluation	Evaluation Responsibilities	3
	Coordination	2
	Linkage among evaluation function and other functions	4
(2) The financial and human resources allocated to Evaluation under the NSRF	Human resources	5
(3) Quality of monitoring system	Indicator systems	2
	Individual indicators	2
(4) The evaluation function is efficient and effective (planning, management, quality control and learning)	Evaluation Plan	3
	Evaluation Steering Committees	2
	Involvement of Evaluation Units in decision-making process	1
	Terms of Reference	1
	Learning process	2
(6) Availability and quality of evaluation expertise	Thematic and methodological expertises	2
(7) Dissemination of evaluation outputs	Dissemination	3
(8) Use of evaluation results	Procedures for addressing evaluation results and follow-up	2
	Use of evaluation results	1
(9) Mental framework	Values	3
(11) "Evaluative" human resources policy – targeted at ensuring adequate human resources, at all levels, for conducting evaluations	Human resources policy	4
(12) Embedded/bottom up evaluation demand (in SIS)	Embedded demand for evaluation (in SIS)	1
(13) Networking	Mechanisms that bridge the academia-government gap	1
(14) Civil society and mass media	Civil society participation	1
	Mass media participation	2
(16) Impacts in long-run and outside SIS	Effects beyond SIS	3

The compared analysis among Operational Programmes should be interpreted with caution due to the following limitations:

▶ the restricted version of the ECI is not able to capture all relevant dimensions of evaluation capacity and evaluation culture concepts;

▶ the lowest number of answers under analysis (i.e. only survey responses clearly related to each OP were used) give a higher degree of subjectivity;

In terms of results, the good level of diffusion of the evaluation culture is confirmed by an average achievement across the 8 OP included in the analysis of 67,1% of the maximum available score (see

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Annex 3 for the details). The first annual measurement gives more satisfactory results for ETC, OPTA, OP ACD, ROP and SOP T, while SOP Environment, SOP HRD and SOP IEC show poorer performances.

This first annual measurement also shows that according to most respondents:

▶ **there is significant demand for evaluation and evaluation is triggered in response to the need for empirically based knowledge (and not because is an obligation):** for OPTA, SOP HR and SOP T the top performing criteria is (12) Embedded/bottom up evaluation demand (in SIS) and also OPACD, ROP and ETC have a good performance under this criterion;

▶ **there are effective procedures for addressing evaluation results and follow-up:** OP ACD, SOP E, ETC show a satisfactory performance under criteria (8) Use of evaluation results;

▶ **an improvement of the evaluative human resources policy is required:** for OP ACD, ROP, SOP E, SOP HR and SOP IEC the least performing criteria is (11) "Evaluative" human resources policy.

Annex 3 presents the results by OP highlighting top and least performing criteria for each OP considered in the analysis.

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Chapter 3. Analysis of KAI 1.2 "Evaluation" of OPTA

The analysis of KAI 1.2 of OPTA included in this Chapter covers two different levels, respectively the internal consistency of the design of KAI 1.2 as described in the programming and implementation documents (section 3.1) and the analysis of the response in terms of project implemented (section 3.2), which are both aimed at providing recommendations that can contribute to the improvement of the level of diffusion of evaluation culture in the system of Structural Instruments.

More specifically, the analysis of internal consistency of KAI 1.2 is aimed at providing strategic recommendations on possible improvements in the design of KAI 1.2 that may require changes in the OP, FID or that should be taken into account for the future programming period while the analysis of the current response is aimed at providing recommendations of operational nature, in terms of projects that can be implemented under the current design of KAI 1.2.

3.1 Analysis of the design of KAI 1.2

3.1.1 Methodology

The objective of this analysis is to review the structure of KAI 1.2 "Evaluation" of the OPTA in terms of specific objectives, indicative operations and target groups, in order to provide recommendations concerning its design that may be functional to increase the level of diffusion of evaluation culture.

For this purpose our analysis starts from the logic of intervention of KAI 1.2 as expressed in terms of the general objective, i.e. to "support the development of a common culture of evaluation in the framework of the management system of EU Funds", the five specific objectives and the nine types of eligible operations identified in the OP and FID.

Figure 13 - Logic of intervention of KAI 1.2

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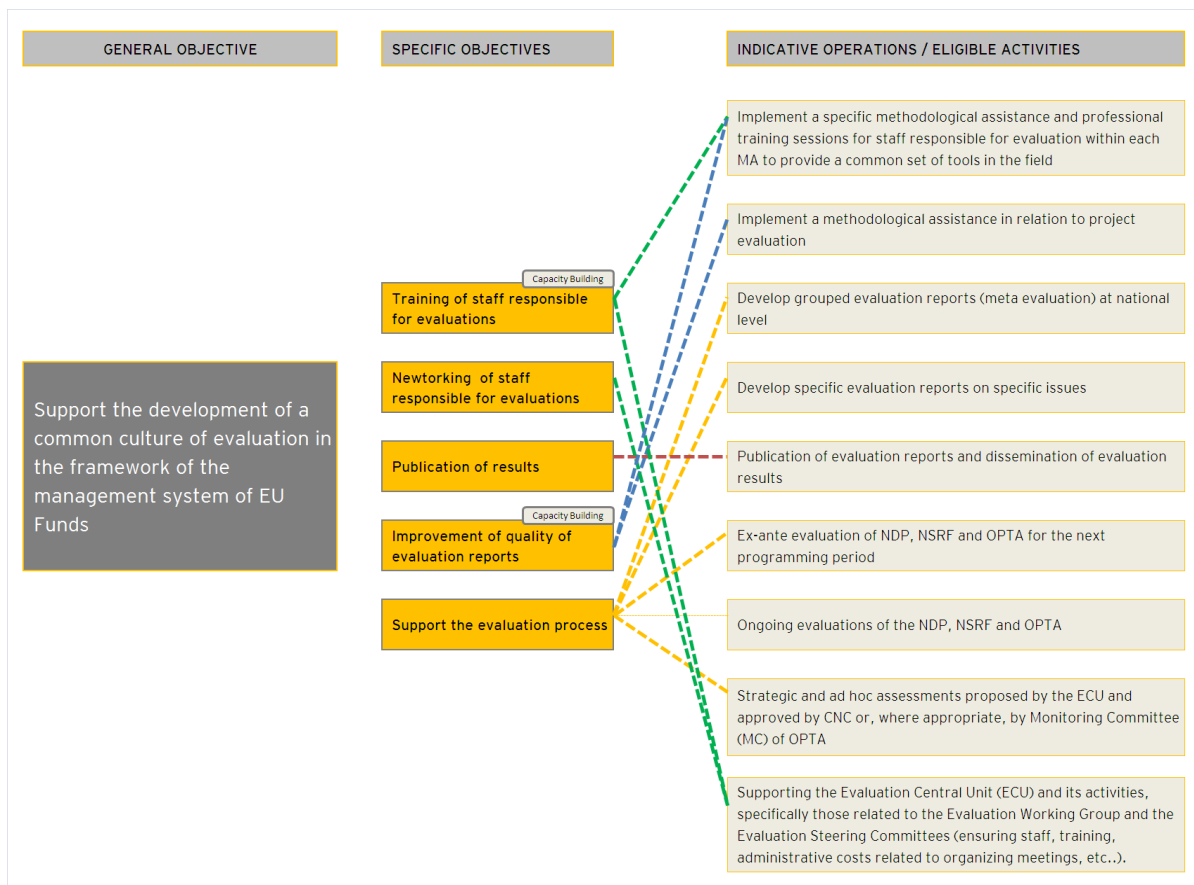
Taking into account the fact that at the moment of drafting of the OPTA and of the FID, there did not exist a comprehensive and a detailed definition of evaluation culture and that this has been introduced through the Evaluation Culture Measurement Index, the current design of KAI 1.2 has been assessed in terms of:

▶ coherence with the indicators, criteria and dimensions of the ECI, given that if KAI 1.2 is to support the development of evaluation culture, then its specific objectives and eligible operations must also be coherent, or in other words "serve", such aspects;

▶ coherence between the target groups of KAI 1.2 and the stakeholder groups indicated in the Research Panel which are part of the ECI methodology.

The two analyses as well as the detailed approach are presented in the following sections of this chapter.

3.1.2 Coherence of KAI 1.2 objectives with the ECI

In order to assess the coherence of KAI 1.2 with the ECI, our methodological approach consisted in analyzing the coherence between the specific objectives and indicative operations of KAI 1.2 with the indicators of the ECI. More specifically the following steps were undertaken:

Step 1 – Coherence at indicator level

▶ in presence of coherence between a specific objective (and indicative operation) of KAI 1.2 and an indicator of the ECI, i.e. when the objective may "serve" in principle the development of the related aspect of evaluation culture, the corresponding cell of the matrix was marked in green;

▶ in absence of coherence between a specific objective (and indicative operations) of KAI 1.2 and the indicators of the ECI, i.e. when none of the objectives "serve" the development of any aspect of the evaluation culture, the corresponding cells of the matrix were left blank;

▶ when an indicator of the ECI cannot be addressed through KAI 1.2 (as it relates to for example to factual/contextual aspects) the corresponding cell of the matrix were marked in grey.

Step 2 – Coherence at sub-criterion level

▶ based on the analysis at indicator level, we have considered that a specific objective of KAI 1.2 is coherent with a sub-criterion of the ECI in presence of coherence for at least 50% of the respective indicators, in such case the sub-criterion was marked in green, when the coherence is below 50% the sub-criterion was left blank, when over 50% of the indicators cannot be addressed by KAI 1.2 the sub-criterion was marked in grey.

Step 3 – Coherence at criterion level

▶ based on the analysis at sub-criteria level we have considered that the specific objectives of KAI 1.2 are coherent with a criterion of the ECI in presence of coherence for at least 50% of the respective sub-criteria, in such case the criterion was marked in green, when the coherence is below 50% the criterion was left blank, when over 50% of the indicators cannot be addressed by KAI 1.2 the criterion was marked in grey.

The detailed analysis of the correlations between objectives of KAI 1.2 and ECI indicators is presented in Annex 8, while the following tables presents the overall correlation at the level of the 16 criteria:

Table 12 – Coherence between KAI 1.2 objectives and ECI criteria

CRITERIA	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF KAI 1.2				
	Training of staff responsible for evaluations	Networking of staff responsible for evaluations	Publication of results	Improvement of quality of evaluation reports	Support the evaluation process
EVALUATION CAPACITY: DEMAND SIDE					
(1) The architecture of Evaluation with specific regard to the linkage between Evaluation, Programming and monitoring (responsibilities, coordination, linkage with				o	
				o	
				o	
				o	
		o			

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CRITERIA	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF KAI 1.2				
	Training of staff responsible for evaluations	Networking of staff responsible for evaluations	Publication of results	Improvement of quality of evaluation reports	Support the evaluation process
other functions)		○			
				○	
				○	
				○	
				○	
(2) The financial and human resources allocated to Evaluation under the NSRF					
				○	
	○				
	○				
(3) Quality of monitoring system				○	
				○	
				○	
				○	
(4) The evaluation function is efficient and effective (planning, management, quality control and learning)		○		○	
		○		○	○
		○		○	○
				○	
				○	
				○	
				○	
				○	
				○	
				○	
EVALUATION CAPACITY: SUPPLY SIDE					
5) Socio-economic data are available and reliable					
				○	
(6) Availability and quality of evaluation expertise					
EVALUATION CULTURE: DISSEMINATION AND UTILIZATION OF EVALUATION RESULTS					
(7) Dissemination of evaluation outputs			○	○	○
			○	○	○
(8) Use of evaluation results		○		○	.
		○		○	.
EVALUATION CULTURE: INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF EVALUATION/EVALUATION CULTURE - TO WHAT EXTENTIS EVALUATION EMBEDDED INGOVERNANCE OF SIS AND HAS FURTHE IMPACTS?					
Enabling context					
(9) Mental framework	○		○	○	
	○		○	○	
				○	
(10) Legal context of evaluation				○	
(11) "Evaluative" human resources policy – targeted at ensuring adequate human resources, at all levels, for conducting evaluations					
				○	
				○	
(12) Embedded/bottom up evaluation demand (in SIS)	○	○		○	
	○	○		○	
(13) Networking					
(14) Civil society and mass media					
			○		
(15) Governance					
IMPACT BEYOND SIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM					
16) Impacts in long-run and outside SIS			○	○	

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CRITERIA	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF KAI 1.2				
	Training of staff responsible for evaluations	Networking of staff responsible for evaluations	Publication of results	Improvement of quality of evaluation reports	Support the evaluation process
			⦾	⦾	
			⦾	⦾	

Based on such analysis it result that the following criteria of the ECI are not served by KAI 1.2:

▶ (6) Availability and quality of evaluation expertise;

▶ (11) "Evaluative" human resources policy – targeted at ensuring adequate human resources, at all levels, for conducting evaluations;

▶ (13) Networking.

3.1.3 Coherence between target groups of KAI 1.2 and ECI

The OP and FDI do not identify any category of target group, therefore in order to assess the coherence between the target groups of KAI 1.2 and the stakeholder groups indicated in the Research Panel (which are part of the ECI methodology) we have taken into account the target groups of contracted projects of KAI 1.2.

In the table below we have indicated in orange the research panel sub-categories that are addressed by the contracted projects of KAI 1.2 while the detailed list of target groups by project is included in Annex 14.

Table 13 – ECI Stakeholder groups addressed by KAI 1.2 projects

TARGET GROUPS OF KAI 1.2 PROJECTS	STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES				
	DEMAND SIDE				SUPPLY SIDE
	NATIONAL LEVEL	PROGRAMME LEVEL	USERS	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS	
CEU within ACIS ACIS	⦾				
Evaluation Units within MAs Personnel of other structures involved in SIS evaluation Members of the Evaluation Steering Committee		⦾			
Managing Authorities Policy makers in Romania			⦾		
Intermediate Bodies Common Technical Secretariats Members of the Monitoring Committee Structural Instruments beneficiaries Members of the National Coordination Committee European Commission Potential beneficiaries of SI: public administration, business, NGOs, the academic and research areas Officials from the various structures in charge of SI management in Romania (ACIS, MA, MC, ESC, AA, CPA)				⦾	

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TARGET GROUPS OF KAI 1.2 PROJECTS	STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES				
	DEMAND SIDE				SUPPLY SIDE
	NATIONAL LEVEL	PROGRAMME LEVEL	USERS	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS	
Consultants, specialists using CBA Universities and NGOs acting in the field of governance Evaluation supply side					⭘

The analysis shows that **the demand side** of the evaluation as defined in the research panel of the ECI has been adequately addressed, with the most addressed stakeholder sub-categories being the demand side at national level (ACIS Central Evaluation Unit), the demand side at Programme level (Evaluation Units) and the users of evaluation (Policy Makers and Managing Authorities). The **supply side**, though to a limited extent, has also been involved (consultants, universities, NGOs).

Overall therefore, while the target groups of KAI 1.2 are not clearly identified in Programming and implementation Documents all stakeholders sub-categories have been addressed by the current projects.

3.2 Analysis of the response to KAI 1.2

3.2.1 Methodology

The purpose of the analysis presented under this Chapter is to determine the contribution of the projects contracted under KAI 1.2 to the overall objective of KAI 1.2, which is the development of a common culture of evaluation in the framework of the management system of EU funds.

Based on the methodology presented in the Inception Report the projects contracted under KAI 1.2 have been analyzed in terms of their design, outputs and outcomes (results). The analysis has covered a total of 7 projects, each of which associated to a SMIS code[10].

Table 14 - Projects contracted under KAI 1.2

No.	Project Title	SMIS	Status	Period	Contracted ERDF Lei	Contracted ERDF EUR
1	Capacity development for Cost-Benefit Analysis	34843	Completed	2010-2012	3,854,054	856,456
2	Conducting Evaluations for the period 2009-2010	4534	Completed	2009-2011	1,920,000	426,667
2.1	A formative evaluation of the Structural Instruments in Romania	4534	Completed	2009-2010		
2.2	Challenges in the capacity of structural instruments beneficiaries	4534	Completed	2011		
2.3	Analysis of the transport and environment infrastructure investments	4534	Completed	2011		
2.4	Synthesis report of the interim evaluations carried out between 2009-2010	4534	Completed	2009-2011		
2.5	Operational Programme Technical Assistance Interim Evaluation	4534	Completed	2011		
3	Evaluation Capacity Development for the Evaluation Units within MAs and ACIS	5375	Completed	2009-2011	2,236,000	496,889
4	Framework Agreement for evaluating the Structural Instruments during 2011-2015, Lot 1 – Evaluations	37659	Implementation	2011-2015		
4.1	SC 1: Forecasting the absorption and evaluation of the options for reallocation of funds under"2007-2013 NSRF	37659	Implementation	2012	486,100	108,022

[10] For projects n. 2 and 4, given their nature of Framework Agreements the subsequent contracts have also been taken into account

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No.	Project Title	SMIS	Status	Period	Contracted ERDF Lei	Contracted ERDF EUR
4.2	SC 2: Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance	37659	Implementation	2012	355,000	78,889
4.3	SC 3: Examination of pre-financing rate applied to projects financed by Structural Instruments	37659	Implementation	2012	404,403	89,867
4.4	SC 4: Evaluation of the way in which provisions regarding equal opportunities have been mainstreamed in the Romanian Framework for Structural instruments	37659	Implementation	2012	471,803	104,845
5	Framework Agreement for evaluating the Structural Instruments during 2011-2015, Lot 2 – "Capacity Building in the Field of Evaluation, SC1: Examination of the evaluation culture	43465	Implementation	2012-2014	870,288	193,397
6	Framework Agreement for evaluating the Structural Instruments during 2011-2015, Lot 2 – "Capacity Building in the Field of Evaluation, SC2: Improving the use of evaluation in the policy-making and decision-making process in the field of structural instruments in Romania"	41649	Implementation	2012-2014	1,281,032	284,674
7	Support for the evaluation capacity development of the Evaluation Central unit personnel through attending training, conferences and seminars in the field of evaluation	40880	Implementation	2012-2015	549,331	122,074
	Total				12,428,011	2,761,780

For each of the above projects and based on the analysis of Project Application Files, their terms of reference (where applicable) and the latest available progress reports, a project fiche was prepared (see Annex 7) covering all the types of analysis foreseen in the Inception Report , i.e. design, outputs and outcomes (results).

3.2.2 Project design

In assessing the design of the projects we have made reference to the Logic of Intervention of KAI 1.2 and analyzed the contracted projects of KAI 1.2 in terms of:

▶ *external consistency*: consistency between the project objectives and the objectives of KAI 1.2

▶ *internal coherence:* links existing between the general and specific objectives of each project, the proposed activities and outputs. Moreover the analysis has covered the correlation between such outputs and the operational objectives of KAI 1.2.

The findings at project level have then been aggregated at the level of KAI, in order to provide an overall picture of the relevance of the response generated and are presented in this chapter.

External consistency

Based on the general and specific objectives of each project we have identified the strength of their correlations with the specific objectives of KAI 1.2, differentiating a strong correlation (marked in green) from a weak/indirect correlation (marked in orange). In case a project does not address one or more of the specific objectives the cell contains the wording "not applicable" (n.a.), however at least one of the specific objectives of the KAI should be addressed for the project to be considered consistent. The table below presents, for each contracted project, the identified correlation between its objectives and the specific objectives of KAI 1.2:

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Table 15- Correlation between general / specific objectives of projects and specific objectives of KAI 1.2

N.	PROJECT TITLE	KAI 1.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES				
		Capacity building		Networking of staff responsible for evaluations	Publication of results	Support the evaluation process
		Training of staff responsible for evaluations	Improvement of quality of evaluation reports			
1	Capacity development for Cost-Benefit Analysis	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎
2	Conducting Evaluations for the period 2009-2010	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	◎	◉
3	Evaluation Capacity Development for the Evaluation Units within MAs and ACIS	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉
4	Framework Agreement for evaluating the Structural Instruments during 2011-2015, Lot 1 – Evaluations	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	◎	◉
5	FA Lot 2, SC1 - Examination of the evaluation culture	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉
6	FA Lot 2, SC2 "Improving the use of evaluation in the policy-making and decision-making process in the field of structural instruments in Romania"	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉
7	Support for the evaluation capacity development of the Evaluation Central unit personnel through attending training, conferences and seminars in the field of evaluation	◉	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

When looking at specific projects, the analysis revealed that there are **three initiatives particularly effective in terms of design, as they address all the specific objectives of KAI 1.2**: "Evaluation Capacity Development for the Evaluation Units within MAs and ACIS"; Framework Agreement Lot 2 – "Capacity Building in the Field of Evaluation SC1 -Examining the evaluation culture" and Framework Agreement Lot 2 " Capacity Building in the Field of Evaluation - SC2 - Improving the use of evaluation in the policy-making and decision-making process in the field of structural instruments in Romania".

On the other hand, the project "Capacity development for Cost-Benefit Analysis" appears to be somehow disconnected from the remaining interventions financed. The link with KAI 1.2 objectives exists however, although indirectly, given that according to EVALSED, the online resource of DG REGIO, providing guidance on the evaluation of socio-economic development with specific focus on EU Cohesion Policy, Cost-Benefit is presented as "tool for judging the advantages of interventions from the point of view of all the groups concerned".

The remaining projects are either strictly evaluation or training projects and are therefore characterized by a strong direct link respectively with the specific objectives of capacity building or support to the evaluation process.

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Internal Coherence

For all projects we have analyzed the internal links existing **between their general and specific objectives, activities, outputs.**

Moreover we have analyzed the correlation of outputs with the operational objectives of KAI 1.2 differentiating, even in this case, a strong direct correlation (marked in green) from an indirect correlation (marked in orange), thus allowing us to understand whether the contracted projects are producing outputs coherent to the operational objectives of the KAI, or not.

In case a project does not address one or more of the operational objectives the cell contains the wording "not applicable" (n.a.), however at least one of the specific operational objectives of the KAI should be addressed for the project to be considered coherent.

The table below presents, for each contracted project, the identified correlation between its outputs and the operational objectives of KAI 1.2:

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Table 16- Correlation between project outputs and operational objectives of KAI 1.2

N.	Project title	KAI 1.2 OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES								
		Implement a specific methodological assistance and professional training sessions for staff responsible for evaluation within each MA to provide a common set of tools in the field	Supporting the Evaluation Central Unit (ECU) and its activities, specifically those related to the Evaluation Working Group and the Evaluation Steering Committees	Implement a methodological assistance in relation to project evaluation	Publication of evaluation reports and dissemination of evaluation results	Develop grouped evaluation reports (meta evaluation) at national level	Develop specific evaluation reports on specific issues	Ex-ante evaluation of NDP, NSRF and OPTA for the next programming period	Ongoing evaluations of the NDP, NSRF and OPTA	Strategic and ad hoc assessments proposed by the ECU and approved by CNC or, where appropriate, by Monitoring Committee (MC) of OPTA
1	Capacity development for Cost-Benefit Analysis	n.a.	n.a.	🟢	🟠	n.a.	🟠	n.a.	n.a.	
2	Conducting Evaluations for the period 2009-2010	n.a.		n.a.	🟠		🟢	n.a.		n.a.
3	Evaluation Capacity Development for the Evaluation Units within MAs and ACIS	🟢	🟢	n.a.	🟢	n.a.	🟢	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
4	Framework Agreement for evaluating the Structural Instruments during 2011-2015, Lot 1 – Evaluations	n.a.		n.a.	🟠		🟢	n.a.		n.a.
5	FA Lot 2, SC1 – Examination of the evaluation culture	🟢	n.a.	n.a.	🟢	n.a.	🟢	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
6	FA Lot 2, SC2 "Improving the use of evaluation in the policy-making and decision-making process in the field of structural instruments in Romania"	🟢	🟢	n.a.	🟢	n.a.	🟢	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
7	Support for the evaluation capacity development of the Evaluation Central unit personnel through attending training, conferences and seminars in the field of evaluation			n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

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In terms of internal coherence, as supported by the analyses included in the project fiches of Annex 7, we can conclude that all the projects are correctly designed, with general objectives further detailed in specific objectives, activities and outputs. Moreover as shown in Table 16, each project has at least one output that is coherent with the operational objectives of KAI 1.2.

When looking at specific projects, the analysis confirms the quality of the capacity building initiatives (recalled also in the section of analysis of External Consistency) addressing simultaneously the development of methodological assistance in the field of evaluation, professional training of staff and dissemination of evaluation results. For the last operational objective, it has to be noted that the projects go actually beyond the mere publication of results and include wider dissemination activities potentially including stakeholders outside the system of Structural Instruments.

The coverage of the operational objectives of the KAI is further described in the table below, where for each operational objective of KAI 1.2 we present a sample of the most representative outputs, either achieved or planned, depending on the status of the project:

Table 17 - Correlation between main outputs of projects and KAI 1.2 operational objectives

1) Implementation of specific methodological assistance and professional training sessions for staff responsible for evaluation within each MA to provide a common set of tools in the field
Comment: the operational objective is well covered and a considerable number of tools and methodologies functional to evaluation have been produced. Staff of Managing Authorities involved in the evaluation process has benefited of training sessions and notably internships have also been organized in other Member States.

TOOLS AND METHODOLOGIES

- Analysis of the current evaluation system including a **revision of the evaluation procedures**

- Updated **translation of the EVALSED Guide**

- An analysis report of the **training needs of the evaluation units' staff**

- **Manual on the evaluation of Structural Instruments** in Romania for beginner and advanced level

- Definition of evaluation culture and its dimensions and **development of methodology for the measurement of evaluation culture**

- Creation of an **evaluation knowledge management tool,** including the creation of a standard format of the evaluation report and of nomenclature relevant for public policy evaluation

TRAININGS

- **Advanced trainings** for the members of the evaluation units **and beginner trainings** in the field of evaluation for the members of the Evaluation Steering Committees

- **Internships** within the evaluation units of other Member States

2) Supporting the Evaluation Central Unit (ECU) and its activities, specifically those related to the Evaluation Working Group and the Evaluation Steering Committees (ensuring staff, training, administrative costs related to organizing meetings, etc..).
Comment: despite a specific project targeting the professional development of the staff of UCE, the strengthening of the capacity of the Evaluation Working Group has been pursued by supporting the activities and facilitating the debates of the Evaluation Working Group with external expertise. More broadly the consolidation of the Evaluation Working Group has been addressed by assigning to the EWG group the role of Evaluation Steering Committee within the projects financed under LOT 2 of the Framework Agreement for Structural Instruments evaluation.

- Support for the evaluation capacity development of the Evaluation Central unit personnel through attending **training, conferences and seminars in** the field of evaluation

- **Evaluation Working Group meetings** organized and facilitated

- Evaluation Working Group acting as Evaluation Steering Committee for projects implemented under LOT 2 of the

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Framework Agreement

3) Implement a methodological assistance in relation to project evaluation

Comment: an extensive number of deliverables have been produced on the topic of Cost-Benefit Analysis and a wide number of training sessions organized.

TOOLS AND METHODOLOGIES

▶ **Evaluation report regarding efficiency and effectiveness of practices related to CBA**

▶ **Case studies** on CBA

▶ **Manuals** regarding Cost Effectiveness Analysis and Multi-criteria Analysis

▶ Studies regarding financial and economic discount rates and IRR

▶ EC Guide for Cost-Benefit Analysis of investment Projects, translated into Romanian

TRAININGS

▶ Trainings to staff of the structural instruments management structures and potential beneficiaries, regarding CBA

4) Publication of evaluation reports and dissemination of evaluation results

Comment: besides the publication of evaluation reports on the publicly accessible website of the Evaluation Working Group a number of wider events targeting both stakeholders of the Structural Instrument Evaluation System and wider public have been organized or are planned within the context of contracts under implementation.

▶ **Evaluation Working Group website,** including a publicly accessible repository of relevant material and tools for evaluation practitioners and downloadable evaluation reports either in extended version or their executive summary

▶ **International conference in the field of evaluation**

▶ **Presentation of the results of the reports on evaluation culture** in the framework of meetings with relevant stakeholders (planned)

▶ **Debates of policy and decision makers** on key issues regarding the Structural Instruments resulting from meta-evaluations aimed at disseminating good practices and encouraging their wider use across Programmes (planned)

5) Develop grouped evaluation reports (meta evaluation) at national level

▶ Synthesis report of the interim evaluations carried out between 2009-2010

6) Develop specific evaluation reports on specific issues

▶ Examination of pre-financing rate applied to projects financed by Structural Instruments

▶ Evaluation of the way in which provisions regarding equal opportunities have been mainstreamed in the Romanian Framework for Structural instruments

7) Ex-ante evaluation of NDP, NSRF and OPTA for the next programming period

Comment: at the current state of Programming a single evaluation has recently been launched "Ex-ante Evaluation of the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020"

8) Ongoing evaluations of the NDP, NSRF and OPTA

▶ A formative evaluation of the Structural Instruments in Romania

▶ Operational Programme Technical Assistance Interim Evaluation

▶ Forecasting the absorption and evaluation of the options for reallocation of funds under 2007-2013 NSRF

▶ Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance

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> **9) Strategic and ad hoc assessments proposed by the ECU and approved by National Coordination Committee or, where appropriate, by Monitoring Committee (MC) of OPTA**
>
> **Comment:** this operational objective has been addressed only in part, mainly due to the fact that the National Coordination Committee has not been operational.
>
> ▸ Challenges in the capacity of structural instruments beneficiaries
>
> ▸ Analysis of the transport and environment infrastructure investments

3.2.3 Analysis of outputs

Programme indicators

Based on the information included in the progress and final reports of the contracted projects and on monitoring data made available by the Technical Assistance Department (DAT) of ACIS, we have quantified the achieved outputs of each project in respect of the set of output indicators included in the Framework Implementation Document for KAI 1.2.

The aggregated values of each indicator have been then compared to the target values included in the Framework Implementation Document (FID) for KAI 1.2 determining the overall degree of achievement, which is represented in the radar chart below, where every angle of the radar is associated to one of the output indicators:

Figure 14 - Progress in the achievement of output indicators of KAI 1.2
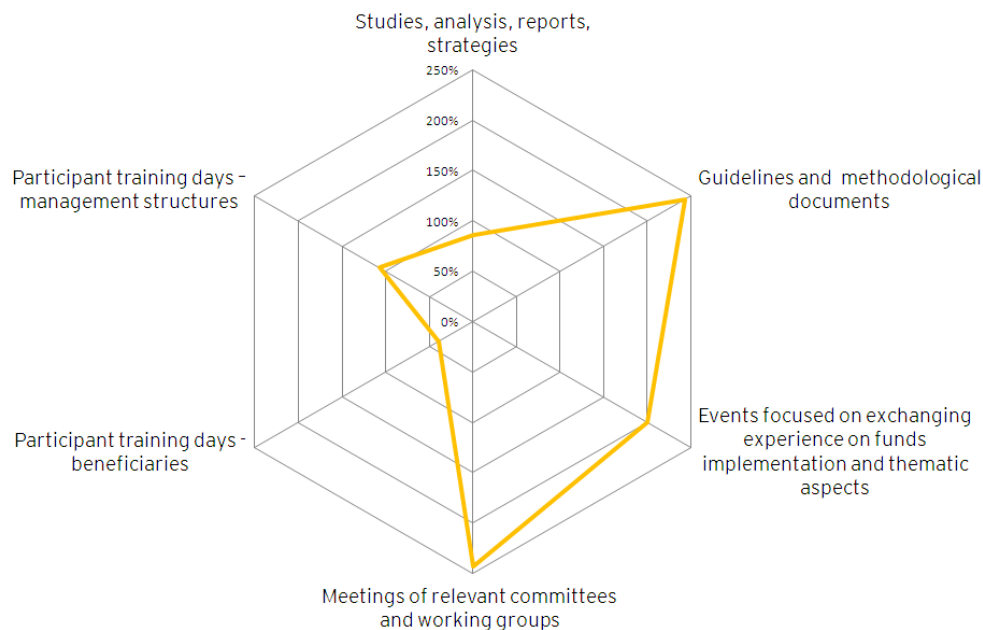
The analysis shows a strong performance of the KAI against the planned targets included in the FID:

▸ **over 200%** achievement is registered for 3 indicators, namely: Number of **Guidelines and methodological documents**, Number of **events focused on exchanging experience on funds** implementation and thematic aspect, number of **meetings of relevant committees** and working groups and;

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▶ **approximately 100%** achievement is registered for 2 indicators, namely Number of **participant training days – management structures (107%) and Number of Studies, analysis, reports** (87%)

▶ **below 100%** achievement is registered for a single indicator, namely and **Number of Participant training days – beneficiaries** (39%).

The figures in absolute terms are presented also in the table below:

Table 18 - Progress in the achievement of FDI output indicators of KAI 1.2

Output indicator	Target Value (a)	Achieved Value (b)	Degree of achievement (c) = (b) / (a)
Studies, analysis, reports, strategies	14	12	86%
Guidelines and methodological documents	7	17	243%
Events focused on exchanging experience on funds implementation and thematic aspects	3	6	200%
Meetings of relevant committees and working groups	7	17	243%
Participant training days – management structures	2200	751	34,14%
Participant training days - other structures	700	0	0%

Additional indicators

A second layer of analysis has been performed in relation to the additional project indicators, i.e. indicators that are specific to each project in order to identify any possible additional achievements not captured by the indicators included in the Framework Implementation Document.

Table 19- Additional achievements of KAI 1.2

Additional indicators	Achieved value	Type of activity
Communication and promotional events	8	Dissemination
Guidelines and other methodological documents translated	1	Methodological assistance
Number of memberships in associations/networks	6	n.a.
Number of presentations within committees and relevant working groups	7	Dissemination
Number of publications/subscriptions/books purchased	8	n.a.
Number of technical assistance days provided	306.5	Methodological assistance
Number of web pages implemented	1	Dissemination
Participant training days - beneficiaries	864	Training

The additional achievements are consistent with the operational objectives of the KAI being related either to dissemination or to methodological assistance. Of particular notice the **over 300 days of technical assistance** provided to the Evaluation Central Unit and the Managing Authorities in the context of the project "Evaluation Capacity Development for the Evaluation Units within MAs and ACIS".

3.2.4 Analysis of outcomes (results)

By outcomes (results) we intend the contribution of contracted projects to the general objective of KAI 1.2 which is to "support the development of a common evaluation culture in the framework of the management system of EU Funds".

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In order to assess how contracted projects contribute to this objective we have performed a qualitative assessment of the relevant dimensions of the evaluation culture index addressed by each project based on the analysis of project documentation and on the interview findings with ACIS project managers responsible for KAI 1.2 projects. The methodological approach adopted is further detailed as follows:

1. **Step 1 – Indicator level:** for each of the contracted projects we have identified the way in which each of the 64 indicators of the index is addressed, distinguishing the degree of incidence on each indicator in direct (marked in green), indirect (marked in orange) and no incidence. We have considered that an indicator is adequately addressed either in presence of at least one direct incidence or a minimum of 4 indirect incidences. This enabled us to identify whether the dimensions of the index (starting from the indicator level) are covered by existing projects. This level of detail is included in Annex 3 of the Report.

2. **Step 2 – Sub-criteria level:** based on the information at indicator level we have considered the respective sub-criteria addressed by existing projects if at least half of the indicators are addressed.

3. **Step 3 – Criteria level:** based on the information at sub-criteria level we have considered the respective criteria addressed by existing projects if at least half of the sub-criteria are addressed.

The table below provides an overview of the coverage of the index at the level of criteria and sub-criteria:

Table 20 - Incidence of contracted projects on sub-criteria and criteria

CRITERIA	SUB CRITERIA
(1) The architecture of Evaluation with specific regard to the linkage between Evaluation, Programming and monitoring (responsibilities, coordination, linkage with other functions)	Evaluation Responsibilities
	Coordination
	Linkage among evaluation function and other functions
(2) The financial and human resources allocated to Evaluation under the NSRF	Financial Resources
	Human Resources
(3) Quality of monitoring system	Indicator systems
	Individual indicators
(4) The evaluation function is efficient and effective (planning, management, quality control and learning)	Evaluation Plan
	Evaluation Steering Committees
	Involvement of Evaluation Units in decision-making process
	Terms of Reference
	Mechanisms for Quality Assessment of evaluations
	Learning process
5) Socio-economic data are available and reliable	Socio-economic data
	Other data
(6) Availability and quality of evaluation expertise	Evaluation providers
	Thematic and methodological expertises
(7) Dissemination of evaluation outputs	Dissemination
(8) Use of evaluation results	Procedures for addressing evaluation results and follow-up
	Use of evaluation results
(9) Mental framework	Values
(10) Legal context of evaluation	Legal provisions
(11) "Evaluative" human resources policy – targeted at ensuring adequate human resources, at all levels, for conducting evaluations	Human resources policy
(12) Embedded/bottom up evaluation demand (in SIS)	Embedded demand for evaluation (in SIS)
(13) Networking	National organization of professional evaluators
	Mechanisms that bridge the academia-government gap
(14) Civil society and mass media	Civil society participation

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CRITERIA	SUB CRITERIA
	Mass media participation
(15) Governance	Governance index
16) Impacts in long-run and outside SIS	Effects beyond SIS

The following comments apply:

(1) **The architecture of Evaluation with specific regard to the linkage between Evaluation, Programming and monitoring (responsibilities, coordination, linkage with other functions):** existing projects have not addressed particularly this criteria, a possible reason being that the architecture of the evaluation system is consolidated, having been in place since 2007.

(2) **The financial and human resources allocated to Evaluation under the NSRF:** 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. Number of human resources allocated to evaluation and evaluation budget shares are adequately addressed at different levels.

(3) **Quality of monitoring system:** the quality of the indicator system has been addressed by ACIS through a dedicated project financed under KAI 1.1, **nevertheless,** the results of the evaluation exercise were not considered satisfactory, thus the final report was not approved.[11].

(4) **The evaluation function efficiency and effectiveness (planning, management, quality control and learning):** this area has been extensively addressed by most projects. Further efforts could be possibly made in relation to the **formalization of a process for the involvement of Evaluation Units in the decision making process at Programme Level.**

(5) **Socio-economic data are available and reliable:** this issue has not been addressed directly under KAI 1.2, however, based on the interviews with the Central Evaluation Unit, a project is currently under implementation being financed under KAI 1.1, aimed at defining the need for socio-economic data in view of the preparation of the future Programming period.

(6) **Availability and quality of evaluation expertise:** due to the existing rules on eligibility of expenditure **the supply side could not benefit directly up to now of any support measure** under KAI 1.2. The number and type of evaluation expertise present on the market have been therefore driven exclusively by the demand side of evaluation.

(7) **Dissemination of evaluation outputs:** existing projects are fostering the dissemination of evaluation outputs, in most cases in terms of their publication on the website of the Evaluation Working Group (created with the support of KAI 1.2) but also through the organization of international conferences (such as the international conference organized under the project "Conducting Evaluations for the Period 2009-2010) and the (planned) organization of wider dissemination events under LOT 2 of the Framework Agreement on Structural Instruments.

(8) **Use of evaluation results:** generally this area is not addressed by the projects financed under KAI 1.2 but this have may been redundant given that at Programme Level there are procedures in place for monitoring upon the follow-up of evaluation recommendations.

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[11] Based on interviews with ACIS stakeholders

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(9) **Mental framework:** these aspects are targeted in particular by the Capacity Building Projects financed under KAI 1.2.

(10) **Legal context of evaluation:** has not been addressed by existing projects

(11) **"Evaluative" human resources policy – targeted at ensuring adequate human resources, at all levels for conducting evaluations:** the key aspect that still needs to be addressed is the shortcoming of evaluation training/education options on the market.

(12) **Embedded/bottom up evaluation demand (in SIS):** the capacity building activities implemented and under implementation are supporting the creation of an embedded bottom up demand for evaluation, however these aspects could be further addressed.

(13) **Networking,** (14) **Civil society and mass media,** (15) **Governance**, (16) **Impacts in long-run and outside SIS:** these aspects have been addressed to a limited extent. In particular no initiatives have been undertaken under KAI 1.2 up to date to support the functioning of a national organization of professional evaluators, the cooperation mechanism between academia and government, the participation of civil society in evaluation. On the other hand capacity building initiatives under implementation are expected to further strengthen the integration of evaluation outside the system of Structural Instruments.

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