

1.1.3. Deliverables

This Evaluation Report contains:

- ▶ a presentation of the evaluation methodology used to answer to each evaluation question, including the methodology for choosing best practices examples (Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Annex 1)
- ▶ an explanation of the concept of equal opportunities and an inventory of the relevant areas/ topics in the European context and in the one regarding Cohesion Policy (Chapter 1)
- ▶ an overview of the condition of Vulnerable Groups in Romania (Chapter 1)
- ▶ findings for each evaluation question, covering all operational Programmes and aspects: implementation rules, mainstreaming of subjects regarding equal opportunities, specific interventions targeted or dedicated to vulnerable groups; access to financing for vulnerable groups (Chapter 2)
- ▶ best practice examples: 3 best practices (and 2 faulty practices) related to the mainstreaming of topics relevant to equal opportunities through Structural Instruments programming and implementation arrangements (Chapter 2 and Annex 5) and 7 best practice projects targeting areas/topics relevant for equal opportunities or vulnerable groups (Chapter 2 and Annex 8)
- ▶ conclusions and recommendations pointing out a distinction between the current programming period and the future one (Chapter 3)
- ▶ a reference framework of trends, policies and agreements related to vulnerable groups (Annex 1)
- ▶ an inventory/ data base of the projects addressing the equal opportunities issues (per specific target groups) on different types of interventions (Annex 10)

Additionally, 3 best practices related to the mainstreaming of topics relevant to equal opportunities through Structural Instruments programming and implementation arrangements and 7 best practice projects targeting areas/topics relevant for equal opportunities or vulnerable groups have been provided in electronic and hard copy format suitable for dissemination to the wider public.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. Evaluation Framework

The Evaluation has been carried out according to the plan presented in the Evaluation Framework included in Annex 1, which details for each question an evaluation grid consisting of:

- ▶ evaluation assumptions, that is the judgment criteria used to specify the meaning of the evaluation questions;
- ▶ analytical approach, that is the kind of analysis we will perform to answer the evaluation questions, given the judgement criteria;
- ▶ methodological tools, i.e. the tools we will use (e.g. desk research, interviews, questionnaires) in order to implement the analytical approach;
- ▶ primary sources of information, i.e. the sources (i.e. people) who can provide data and information on the specific issue;
- ▶ secondary sources, i.e. the sources we will use based in existing documents, publications, reports or tools, providing data and information already available.

Table 2: Structure of the Evaluation Framework

Evaluation question, as per the Tender Book	Evaluation assumptions	Analytical approach	Evaluation tools	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources	Evaluability
Q2.3: Can be identified cases of good practice in mainstreaming / integrating the subjects on equal opportunities into the Structural Instruments framework?	There are components of the OP management systems that are very effective in supporting equal opportunities	(1) Definition of criteria for the selection of best practices (2) Collection of relevant information for the selection of the best practices (3) Analysis of practices for mainstreaming the equal opportunities related provisions in the aforementioned stages, as compared to the criteria agreed with ECU for identification of good practices (4) Identification of practices in the implementation of the programme that properly address equal opportunities (in any stage of programmes implementation) (5) Benchmarking with practices used in other member states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Desk analysis according to the check-lists presented in par. 3.3.3 ▶ Interviews with MA ▶ Focus group for selecting the relevant criteria ▶ Meeting with ECU to define the selection criteria ▶ Case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Representatives of MAs, Social partners attending Monitoring Committee, Associations fostering equal opportunities, Trade unions MAs ▶ ECU ▶ MAs 	(1) Documents on Programmes as in Q2.1 (2) Best Practices/ bad practices in promotion/integration of equal opportunities at EU level	High

1.2.2. Evaluation tools

The following table provides a view of the evaluation tools used, with details on the stakeholders involved, the type of information collected and the correspondence with the evaluation question:

Evaluation Tool	Stakeholders involved	Information collected	Evaluation questions addressed
Desk Research		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Relevant documents at European level ▶ Relevant documents at national level 	▶ Q1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Programming documents ▶ Implementation documents for selected KAIs/Operations ▶ Evaluation Reports (ex ante, thematic, interim) ▶ Monitoring (Monitoring documents, indicators, collecting and validating the data, reporting) ▶ Literature on best practices on mainstreaming equal opportunities in Structural Instruments in Member States ▶ Annual Implementation Reports 	▶ Q2
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Annual Implementation Reports ▶ SMIS and SIM-POSDRU data 	▶ Q3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ SMIS and SIM-POSDRU data 	▶ Q4
Experts' panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ International experts on EO ▶ National experts on EO ▶ Representatives from the Ministry of Labour Directorates with competences related to Equal Opportunities issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding of the National and European Framework for the implementation of the equal opportunities principle ▶ Definition of equal opportunities relevant for Structural Instrument in Romania, including a "list" of relevant areas/topics and vulnerable groups 	▶ Q1
Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ MAs, social partners – members in Monitoring Committees of the OPs, representatives of the trade unions, representatives of the associations which deal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Criteria for best practice selection in mainstreaming the equal opportunities principle in Programme stages ▶ Criteria for selecting best practice projects, i.e. projects particularly effective in addressing equal opportunities issues of vulnerable groups 	▶ Q2 ▶ Q4

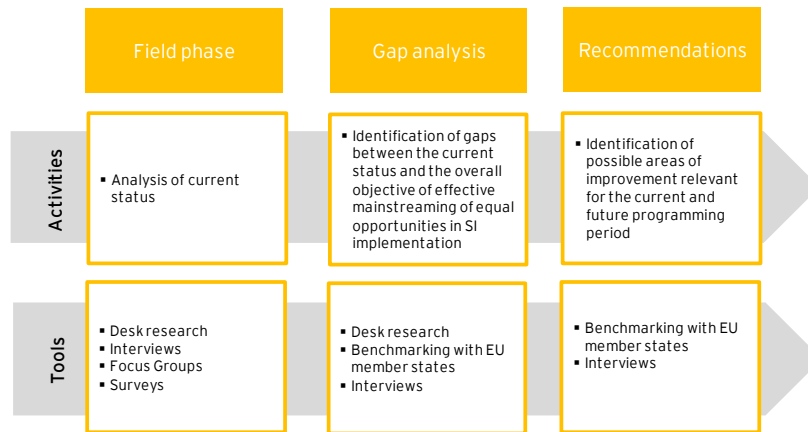
Evaluation Tool	Stakeholders involved	Information collected	Evaluation questions addressed
	with issues related to equal opportunities, social inclusions or vulnerable groups		
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviews with MA ▶ Interviews with ACIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ General overview on how the principle of equal opportunity has impacted programmes ▶ Discussion about relevant Key Areas of intervention within the OPs 	▶ Q2
	▶ Interviews with Romanian organizations representative of vulnerable group	▶ Definition of the final list of barriers affecting access to finance for vulnerable groups	▶ Q3
	▶ Interviews with MAs and Project beneficiaries for case study finalization	▶ Collection of information for finalization of case studies	▶ Q4
Survey			
Questionnaire to key informants	▶ Interlocutors indicated by the Managerial Authorities with regard to good practices	▶ Request for comparable information about projects on the basis of selection criteria for best practices	▶ Q4
Questionnaire to beneficiaries	▶ Beneficiaries of the projects selected as good practices	▶ Request for detailed information about good practices with particular reference to vulnerable groups' needs	
Benchmarking with Member States		▶ Best practices adopted in Member States in order to mainstream the equal opportunities principle in different phases of the Programme lifecycle	▶ Q2
		▶ Best practices adopted in Member States in order to remove barriers in access to finance for vulnerable groups	▶ Q3

The methodologies for selection of best practices in mainstreaming topics relevant to equal opportunities through Structural Instruments programming and implementation arrangements and for selecting best practice projects targeting areas/topics relevant for equal are presented respectively under Section 2.2.1 and 2.4.2.

1.2.3. Structuring recommendations

In order to structure our recommendations for the improvement of the current approach to equal opportunities issues within the Structural Instruments system (in particular for EQ2, EQ3), we have analyzed the existence of possible gaps between the evidence collected during the field phase, and the objectives ensuring an effective mainstreaming of the principle. The approach has been functional to the identification of critical issues related to the Programme and functional for proposing possible improvements to the processes and procedures adopted up to date. The analysis was built upon the information collected from primary and secondary sources and ad-hoc elaborations enabling the comparison between evidences collected and expected results.

Figure 1: Gap analysis approach



Based on such findings, we have drawn conclusions on areas of improvement in terms of reducing the gaps between the ideal situation related to the effective mainstreaming of the equal opportunities principle and the current status.

1.3. Context of the evaluation

1.3.1. The Romanian National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013

The Romanian National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 (NSRF) is the strategic document, planning the medium-term use of the Structural and Cohesion Funds based on the National Development Plan 2007-2013, linking the national development priorities and the priorities at European level – the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG) on Cohesion 2007-2013 and the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs 2005-2008.

The NSRF 2007-2013 envisages that EU Structural and Cohesion Funds will contribute to achieving the global objective of reducing the economic and social development disparities between Romania and the EU Member States, by generating a 15-20% additional growth of GDP by 2015.

This general NSRF objective is further detailed by four specific thematic priorities, respectively the development of basic infrastructure to European standards, Increase of long-term competitiveness of the Romanian economy, development and more efficient use of Romania’s human capital, development of an effective administrative capacity. Flanking these thematic priorities, Romanian NSRF contains a territorial priority, which addresses regional problem areas in order to prevent widening regional disparities.

The NSRF sets out the strategy that underpins the Operational Programmes which are co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. For the Convergence Objective, Romania has translated the general priorities of the NSRF into 7 OPs, for which the total EU contribution for the period 2007-2013 amounts to EUR 19.2 bn.

Figure 2: NSRF Structure

