Project for the Framework Agreement in the field of evaluation – LOT 1, SMIS 37659

Framework Agreement for evaluating the Structural Instruments during 2011-2015

Lot 1 – Evaluations

Subsequent Contract n. 9 - Ex-Ante Evaluation Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020

Ministry of European Funds, Romania

Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014 - 2020

31 October 2014

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List of Abbreviations

AC OP	Administrative Capacity Operational Programme
CF	Cohesion Fund
CLLD	Community-led Local Development
COP	Competitiveness Operational Programme
EC	European Commission
EO	Equal Opportunities
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
HC OP	Human Capital Operational Programme
IB	Intermediate Body
ITC	Information Technology and Communications
LIOP	Large Infrastructure Operational Programme
MA	Managing Authority
MEF	Ministry of European Funds
NRDP	National Rural Development Programme
NRP	National Reform Programme
OP	Operational Programme
OPTA	Operational Programme Technical Assistance
PA	Priority Axis / Partnership Agreement
R&D	Research and Development
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
S.O.	Specific Objective
SCPAC	Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity
SMIS	Single Management Information System
SOP	Sectoral Operational Programme
TA	Technical Assistance
T.O.	Thematic Objective

Executive Summary

Purpose and scope

This is the final ex-ante evaluation report of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020. The general objective of the ex-ante evaluation of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020 is to ensure added value and to improve the quality of the programming document which will be negotiated with the European Commission, according to the new regulations regarding the funds of the Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020 and to deliver valuable judgments and recommendations on programming issues.

The main evaluation themes addressed are External Consistency, Intervention Logic of the Programme, Programme Performance and Strategic Contribution. These themes are further detailed into eleven evaluation questions provided by the Terms of Reference issued by the Ministry of European Funds of Romania.

Methodology and ex-ante evaluation process

The methodology of the ex-ante evaluation was described in the Inception Report and is summarized at the beginning of each evaluation question. As recommended by the Commission guidelines, the evaluation process was iterative and interactive and included constant communication between the Evaluation Team and the Ministry of European Funds, the Programmer, as key stakeholder in charge of the coordination of the elaboration of the plan as well as interviews, expert panels , workshops and focus groups with representatives of MA OPTA, but also with beneficiaries.

Between April 2014 and July 2014, the evaluation team provided two feedback reports on the draft versions of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance prepared by the Ministry of European Funds, and two Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Reports.

More precisely, in April 2014, the Evaluation Team delivered the first Feedback Report which provided recommendations regarding the quality of needs assessment and the structure of the existing OP. Based on this report, the Ministry elaborated a new version of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance in April 2014, marking the start of the second iteration. This second cycle was ended in May 2014, when a second Feedback Report was provided by the evaluation team.

The first version of the Drat Ex-ante Evaluation Report was delivered on 27 June 2014, and it was based on the third version of the Operational Programme from 13 June 2014. On 10 July 2014 a revised version of Operational Programme Technical Assistance v3 was received, and it was the base for the second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report. The second version of the Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report was provided on 21 July 2014 and it took into consideration the first official version of the Operational Programme, sent to the European Commission on 6 August 2014.

Moreover, punctual and ongoing feedback was provided from March 2014 up to date. These interactions were complemented with feedback meetings aimed at clarifying the conclusions and recommendations of the ex-ante evaluator and agreeing on future modifications of the Operational Programme.

On 24 October the second official version of Operational Programme Technical Assistance was received, and it is the subject for this evaluation report.

Findings and recommendations

The findings and recommendation of the evaluation, together with a description of the iterative process and table of conclusions and recommendations are presented in 11 chapters, correlated with the 11 evaluation question included in the Terms of Reference.

The ex-ante evaluation evidenced that the Operational Programme Technical Assistance is the result of an active partnership process, during which all stakeholders were consulted and informed at each stage of elaboration. The first version of Operational Programme Technical Assistance was available for consultation in March 2014, and representatives from other ministries, public institutions, but also private stakeholders, had the opportunity to influence the content of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance.

The Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020 is structured into three priority axes, which focus respectively on beneficiaries' capacity and information and publicity (Priority Axis 1), on the European Structural and Investments Funds legal and procedural framework (Priority Axis 2), and on human resources management (Priority Axis 3).

The Programme addresses both horizontal issues for all Operational Programmes (in terms of support for projects beneficiaries, communication activities, system support, information management system support, and human resources management) and programme-specific ones for Large Infrastructure Operational Programme, Competitiveness Operational Programme and Operational Programme Technical Assistance (covering these programmes' needs to support beneficiaries', communication, the management structures, and the human resources).

Overall, there are no outstanding aspects in terms of recommendations related to the Operational Programme Technical Assistance. The programme has progressively incorporated recommendations that were made throughout the evaluation process, therefore at the moment recommendations do not concern inconsistencies of the programme, but suggestions for adding up value to it.

External Consistency

The strategic consistency of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance was assessed against the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Common Strategic Framework, the country specific Council recommendations on the National Reform Programme and the Partnership Agreement. Given the specificity of Operational Programme Technical Assistance, to provide transversal support for the implementation of operational programmes, in most of the cases consistency with these strategies is indirect.

Operational Programme Technical Assistance has been found to be complementary with Europe 2020 Strategy, the Common Strategic Framework, the country specific Council recommendations and the Partnership Agreement along aspects such as management structures capacity, information and communication, human resources management, and beneficiaries' capacity.

In terms of consistency with EU 2020 Strategy, Operational Programme Technical Assistance is consistent with the flagship initiative "Digital agenda for 2020" and "An agenda for new skills and jobs". Also, regarding thematic objectives included in the Partnership Agreement, Operational Programme Technical Assistance is related to thematic objective 11 that concerns an enhanced institutional capacity. Consistency with the country specific Council recommendations refers to support for the use of financial instruments, for conduction of studies and evaluations and support for ESIF structures staff.

At national level, the evaluation focused on consistency with other technical assistance interventions provided under the Regional Operational Programme, Human Capital Operational Programme, Administrative Capacity Operational Programme, National Rural Development Programme. Minor overlaps have been eliminated during the evaluation process and currently only complementarities exist.

With respect to the Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity complementarities were identified in areas such as information and publicity activities, realisation of guides and methodologies aimed at facilitating internal processes at the level of management structures, development of information management systems, and training and counselling for staff.

With respect to consistency with European Union Strategy for the Danube Region, Strategy Regarding the Marine Basin of the Black Sea; Horizon 2020; Horizon 2020, COSME, Creative Europe, Social Change and Innovation, Connecting Europe consistency has been identified on a series of aspects related to communication activities or information systems.

Intervention logic

The logic of intervention of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance is coherent and follows a logical structure, starting from identification of needs definition of specific objectives and setting of expected results. Result indicators are relevant for the set specific objectives, and the defined actions contribute to their achievement.

The output indicators are clear and relevant. In terms of contribution of estimated outputs to results, there is a causal link between all the estimated outputs and their correspondent result indicator, and the assumptions underlying the results chain are plausible.

With respect to external factors which can influence the indicators, some of the most important include economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacities, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, potential infringements during the implementation process, the level of complexity of the structural instruments implementation system.

Programme Performance

In terms of human resources and administrative capacity to manage the Programme, room for further improvement was identified in the area of clear assignation of staff, work load, number of staff from implementation structures.

Moreover, the new institutional arrangement and the role of Ministry of European Funds as a coordinator of European Structural and Investment Funds, of MA and also of a beneficiary represent a challenge from the point of view of human resources and administrative capacity. Consequently, it is desirable to provide a clear definition of the structures and staff in charge of management and implementation of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance, to increase headcount in understaffed units, and to simplify project implementation procedures.

Also, additional restructuring action is recommended, to avoid the conflict of interest at the level of the Managing Authority of Operational Programme Technical Assistance. The evaluators acknowledge that the implementation of part of these recommendations cannot be approached by the Operational Programme, but at higher institutional levels in the Ministry of European Funds.

With respect to monitoring and data collection, the programming document does not contain yet a detailed description of the planned arrangements for the timely collection and aggregation of statistical data and their publication. In order to fulfil the conditionality on Statistical data and indicators, the Programmer is elaborating "Indicator Fiches" for each of the indicators. Complete and accurate introduction of data in SMIS is essential for the performance and monitoring of the Operational Programme, especially in the context of a relatively low performance of the system in 2007-2013 characterised by flaws of data stored in SMIS and their reporting reliability.

Strategic contribution

In relation to contribution to EU 2020 strategy, considering that Operational Programme Technical Assistance will provide specific technical assistance support to Competitiveness and Large Infrastructure Operational Programmes, it will have a stronger indirect contribution to the achievement of Headline Targets on R&D, CO2 emission reduction, renewable energies and energy efficiency.

Given its nature, Operational Programme Technical Assistance will have a horizontal influence over all Operational Programmes financed from European Structural and Investment Funds, and will also provide support for European Territorial Cooperation programmes beneficiaries, while it will also have

a specific contribution to Large Infrastructure Operational Programme, Competitiveness Operational Programme, and Operational Programme Technical Assistance itself.

In terms of horizontal principles, the minimum legal requirements regarding equal opportunities in terms of gender equality and non-discrimination are respected by the OPTA. Moreover, Operational Programme Technical Assistance will provide support to the functioning and capacity strengthening of the Working Group related to horizontal principle related to equal opportunities in terms of gender equality and non-discrimination that is mentioned in the Partnership Agreement.

Furthermore, information and publicity activities supported by the Operational Programme will include initiatives aimed at promoting equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Throughout the evaluation process, the recommendations to explicitly refer to the equal opportunities principle in the process of Operational Programme Technical Assistance programming and implementation were incorporated by the programmer and included in the OPTA.

With respect to sustainable development aspects, the Operational Programme mentions a set of horizontal interventions that will be financed during 2014-2020, such as training, communication activities or studies and evaluation, and no recommendation has been made in this respect.

1. Introduction

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

This report is the ex-ante evaluation of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020, its purpose being to ensure the consistency between the Operational Programme and the European, national strategies, to assess the intervention logic of the Programme, the programme performance and the strategic contribution.

Based on the terms of reference, these broad themes are addressed through 11 evaluation questions as presented in the table below.

Table 1: Evaluation themes and questions

External Consistency	Intervention Logic of the Programme
EQ 1.1 To what extent is there consistency between the selected thematic objectives, the appropriate priorities and objectives of the programme, on one hand, and on the other, the Common Strategic Framework, the Partnership Agreement and the specific recommendations addressed to each country on the grounds of Art. 121 par. (2) of the Treaty and the relevant recommendations of the Council, adopted on the grounds of Art. 148 par. (4) of the Treaty? EQ 1.2 To what extent is there consistency with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies)?	EQ 2.1 How is the internal consistency of the programme ensured? EQ 2.2 Are the proposed support forms the most appropriate? EQ 3. To what extent is the allocation of financial resources consistent with the Programme objectives? EQ 4. To what extent the indicators proposed in the program are relevant and clear? EQ 5.1. How will the estimated outputs contribute to results? EQ 5.2. To what extent are the results influenced by external factors, including by other instruments? EQ 5.3 Are quantified target values of the indicators realistic, having in mind the funding available? EQ 6. To what extent are the selected indicators and intermediate and final targets (milestones) for the performance framework adequate?
Programme Performance	**Strategic contribution**
EQ 7. To what extent are the human resources and administrative capacity adequate to manage the Programme? EQ 8. To what extent are the monitoring and data collection procedures adequate to perform evaluations?	EQ 9. To what extent the programme contributes to the European Union strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, considering the selected thematic objectives and priorities, taking into account the national and regional needs? EQ 10. Which is the relation of the Programme with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies)? EQ 11.1 Are the planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent discrimination adequate? EQ 11.2 Are the planned measures to promote sustainable development adequate?

Programme overview

The OPTA is structured into three priority axes that are consistent with the identified needs, and focus respectively on beneficiaries' capacity and information and communication (Priority Axis 1), the

strengthening the regulatory, procedural framework of ESIF and the information management system (Priority Axis 2) and human resources policy and salaries reimbursement (Priority Axis 3).

The first priority axis is divided into two specific objectives:

- SO 1.1 refers to strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries of ESIF projects, and two actions are envisaged for it: one that provides horizontal training and one that provides horizontal assistance, both for ESIF beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, and specific training for OPTA, LIOP and COP.
- SO 1.2 concerns the effective communication and transparency regarding ESIF and EU Cohesion Policy, and it is also composed of two actions: one regarding information dissemination activities and information and publicity activities regarding ESIF and OPTA, LIOP and COP, and one referring to activities targeted at the development of partnership culture for the coordination and management of ESIF.

The second priority axis includes two specific objectives:

- SO 2.1 refers to the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF, and two actions are aimed to contribute to it: one that refers to activities for the improvement of framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF, and for OPTA, LIOP and COP management, and the second one which refers to evaluation function and evaluation culture at ESIF level.
- SO 2.2 refers to the information management system and it consists of one action that includes activities for the development, improvement and maintenance of SMIS 2014+, MySMIS 2014 and of other related applications.

The third priority axis has one specific objective.

- SO 3.1 concerns the development of an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff and will be implemented through two actions: one is the implementation of a horizontal human resources policy and development of management capacity, and the of the one refers to reimbursement of salary costs staff in the system for ESIF coordination, management and control, and management system of OPTA, LIOP and COP.

Ex-ante evaluation process

This report is based on the second official version of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance received by the Evaluator on 24 October 2014, and earlier assessments of draft versions of the OP that were provided between March and July 2014 on the existing sections of the programming document.

The *first feedback* of the Evaluator was provided on 07 April 2014 based on the first draft version of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance made available by the Ministry of European Funds on 19 March 2014. The report covered mainly the aspects of external consistency with European and National strategies, and the needs analysis included in the first section of the Programme.

A second revised version of the Programme was received by the Evaluator on 30 April 2014 and the *second feedback* was provided on 19 May 2014, covering the Intervention Logic and a benchmarking analysis with Member States concerning Technical Assistance actions implemented in the current programming period and planned for the future one.

On 15 June 2014 the evaluators received the third version of the OPTA, based on which the draft ex-ante evaluation report was elaborated and submitted on 27 June 2014. This report covered all the evaluation questions included in the Terms of Reference.

On 10 July a revised version of the OP was received, based on which the second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report was elaborated and submitted on 21 July 2014. This report covered all the

evaluation questions included in the Terms of Reference and was aligned with the first official version of the OP submitted to the EC on 6 August 2014.

The assessments included in this report are therefore based on the iterative evaluation process and references are made, in the report, to earlier assessments and comments provided by the ex-ante evaluator.

Report Structure

The report is structured according to the evaluation themes and questions included in the Terms of Reference, which are briefly summarized as follows:

- **Overview** of the ex-ante process and methodology (Chapter 2).
- **External consistency** with European and National Strategies as well as other Operational Programmes (Chapter 3).
- **Intervention Logic** of the Programme in terms of internal consistency (Chapter 4), appropriateness of financial allocations (Chapter 5) and system of indicators (Chapters 6, 7, 8).
- **Programme Performance,** including Human resources and administrative capacity (Chapter 9) and Adequateness of the procedures for monitoring and data collection (Chapter 10).
- **Strategic contribution** to Europe 2020 (Chapter 11) and other relevant instruments (Chapter12) and treatment of horizontal themes (Chapter 13).

Each chapter provides a brief overview of the methodology planned in the Inception Report, of the evaluation activities performed, tools used and of the evaluation findings. Conclusions and recommendations are presented at the end of each question as well as in a summary table of included in Chapter 14.

Overview of the evaluation process

This report was elaborated by the following evaluation team: Klaudijus Maniokas, Darius Zeroulis, Indre Motijunaite, Vytautas Krasnauskas, Michele Scataglini and Iulia Băiașu. The duration of the evaluation project was 18 months, between 11 November 2013 – 10 May 2015. The initial execution period of six months was extended in order to adjust to the programming process steered by the Ministry of European Funds and the European Commission, until the approval of the Operational Programme and elaboration of the Evaluation Plan and Guideline on Indicators according to EU requirements and guidance provided by the Ministry of European Funds. The total budget of the ex-ante evaluation contract was 346,987.73 RON, excluding VAT (430,253.63 RON with VAT).

The cut-off date of the evaluation process is 31 December 2014 for the ex-ante evaluation report, the date at which the evaluation team submitted the report based on the OPTA version approved by the EC. For the Evaluation Plan and the Guideline of Indicators the cut-off date is 27 April 2015, the date when the Final ex-ante evaluation report was submitted to the Beneficiary.

Preliminary versions of the Evaluation Report (including the Evaluation Plan and the Guideline of Indicators) were submitted throughout the evaluation process, and they were presented in detail in the Intermediary Progress Report no. 1 (submitted in May 2014) and the Final Progress Report (submitted in May 2015). An overview of the draft evaluations report submitted and their correspondent versions of the operational programme is presented in the table below:

Version of the Evaluation Report	Version of Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2104-2020
Concept note regarding the Operational Programme, received on 12.02.2014. This document presented the strategic orientation of OPTA	*Feedback Report with respect to the concept note regarding OPTA strategy*
Version 1 of OPTA from 19 March 2014. This version included	*Feedback Report no. 1*, regarding Sections 1 and 2 of the OP

Sections 1 and 2 of the OP and allowed answering the EQ 1.1, 1.2 și 2.	included in the first version of OPTA *Benchmarking analysis with other Member States*, regarding technical assistance interventions in 2007-2013 and initiatives for 2014-2020, submitted on 5 May 2014
Version 2 of OPTA from 28 April 2014. This version presented an elaborated version of Section 2 and allowed a more detail answer for EQ2	*Feedback report no. 2*, referring only to the detailed logic of intervention included in the revised version of the OPTA, as requested by the Beneficiary *Punctual feedback regarding the actions proposed for the specific objectives*, based on the revised version of OPTA actions received on 16 May 2014. The feedback was submitted on 5 June 2014
Version 3 of OPTA from 15 June 2014 was the first full version of the OP which allowed answering all EQs	*Draft Ex-ante evaluation report* – the first full report, based on the complete version of the OP received by the evaluation team in June 2014. This report answers all evaluation questions, and was submitted on 27 June 2014
Version 4 of OPTA – the first official version of the OP, from 10 July 2014 was a revised version of the OP received in June, and it was the first official version submitted to the European Commission for approval in August 2014	*Revised draft ex-ante evaluation report*, based on the revised OP received by the Evaluation team on 10 July 2014. This ex-ante evaluation report was submitted on 21 July 2014 and accompanied the first official version of OPTA
Revised version of the first official version of the OP received on 20 October 2014. This version was the second submitted to the EC, and approved by the EC on 18 December 201	*Ex-ante Evaluation Report* based on the second official version of the OP, received by the evaluation team on 20 October 2014. This version of the OP was approved by the EC. The report was submitted on 31 October 2014.

2. Ex-ante evaluation process and methodology

The full methodology for the ex-ante evaluation was provided in the Inception Report prepared by the Evaluator and approved in April 2014. The methodology was developed by taking into account the requirements of the Terms of Reference, the legal framework for European Structural and Investments Funds for 2014-2020 as well as based on the guidance document made available on the Website of DG Regio as listed in Table as presented in the Table below.

Table 2: Key documents and sources

Document
Relevant documents at European level
The Partnership Agreement
Common Strategic Framework
Strategy Europe 2020
European Union Strategy for the Danube Region
Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional development
Proposal for Regulation of the European Parliament and Council regarding the Cohesion Fund and the abolition of Council (EC) Regulation no. 1084/2006
Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions, DG Regional Development
European Evaluation Helpdesk: Draft ideas on minimum requirements for the Evaluation Plan. Working Paper for the Good Practice Workshop: From Ongoing Evaluation towards the Evaluation Plan. Vienna, 14 May 2012.
The recommendations of the Council for the National Reform Programme 2013
The Procurement Innovation Platform
Relevant principles in the field of sustainable development, on national and EU level
Relevant EU regulation
Information and publications regarding the practices of other Member States
Relevant regulations in the field of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, on national and EU level
Relevant documents at national level
National Reform Programme 2011-2013
The strategy regarding the consolidation of the public administration capacity
The documents related to the other Operational Programmes
Needs analysis – Section 1 of the OP
„Relevant delegated and implementing acts
Prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania
Legislative framework
Evaluation of the way the provisions from the field of equal opportunities have been transposed in the framework related to Structural Instruments in Romania
Implementation documents (for TA OP)
Forms of assistance from the 2007 – 2013 programming period
Statistical data

Document
Protocols of consultation of the stakeholders and documents on the consulting activity
Other consultative documents related to this operational programme
Evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013
Other monitoring systems/ indicators in similar programmes
Relevant documents regarding the simplification cost options
The programme monitoring and data collection procedures
Relevant documents of Technical Assistance OP
Draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020
Relevant annual reports of implementation of the current programming period

The ex-ante evaluation criteria were developed and detailed in the Inception Report and are summarized in table 2. The ex-ante report is structured according to the four overall assessment areas and the criteria set out in the Inception Report.

Table 3: Analyses performed

Evaluation Theme	Analyses performed
External consistency	▶ Consistency analysis with the Priorities and Flagship initiatives of the EU 2020 Strategy ▶ Consistency analysis with the Common Strategic Framework ▶ Consistency analysis with the Thematic objectives and priorities identified in the Partnership Agreement ▶ Consistency analysis with National Reform Programme and Council Recommendations for Romania ▶ Technical assistance axis of Regional Operational Programme ▶ Technical assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme ▶ Administrative Capacity Operational Programme ▶ National Rural Development Programme ▶ Fisheries Operational Programme
Intervention logic	▶ The clarity, coverage of relevant themes and use of evidence of the assessment ▶ Consistency between the Programme strategy and the identified needs ▶ Analysis of the Intervention logic in terms of consistency between needs and specific objectives, specific objectives and expected result, specific objectives and result indicator, and actions and specific objectives
Programme Performance	▶ Analysis of functions, structures, human resources, systems and tools used / proposed to be used for the programme ▶ Analysis of administrative organization and approach to implementation
Strategic contribution	▶ Analysis of the contribution to EU 2020 Strategy ▶ The relation of the Programme with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies) ▶ Analysis whether the planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent discrimination are adequate ▶ Analysis if the planned measures to promote sustainable development are adequate

The ex-ante evaluation has been an iterative and interactive process, where the ex-ante evaluator provided on-going commentary on the programme development, participated to meetings with EC representatives as well as meeting organized by the Ministry of European Funds for the coordination of the work of all the ex-ante evaluators. The ex-ante process has included until now the events and outputs illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Ex-ante process 2013-2014

Event	Date	Activity or output
Kick-off meeting	November 2013	Activity planning for the evaluation
Evaluation launching conference	December 2013	Information of stakeholders regarding the evaluation
Concept note on OPTA 2014 – 2020 Draft	December 2013	Feedback of the evaluation team on the concept note
Submission of evaluation team feedback on concept note	24 February 2014	Written feedback on the concept note
Receipt of V1 of the Draft OPTA including Section 1 and Section 2	19 March 2014	Preparation of Feedback report no. 1
Submission of Feedback report no. 1	07 April 2014	Feedback of the evaluation team on the first version of the Draft OPTA
Meeting with programmers to discuss the findings of Feedback report no. 1	24 April 2014	Discussion and clarifications regarding the findings of Feedback report no. 1 Agreement with evaluators to prepare a benchmarking document related to management and control systems, actions and indicators.
Receipt of the V2 of the Draft OPTA	30 April 2014	Preparation of Feedback report no. 2
Submission of Benchmarking analysis document	5 May 2014	Benchmarking analysis document
Receipt of updated V2 of the Draft OPTA	14 May 2014	Review, no action taken. Agreed to focus Feedback no. 2 on version received on 30 April
Submission of Feedback report no. 2	19 May 2014	Feedback of the evaluation team on the second version of the Draft OPTA
Expert panel on OPTA internal consistency	22 May 2014	Discussion and clarifications regarding the needs assessment and the intervention logic of OPTA
Expert panel on OPTA external consistency with technical assistance axes of ROP and HC OP, and with AC OP	22 May 2014	Discussion and clarifications regarding the risks of redundancy and complementarities identified between OPTA and the technical assistance axes of ROP and HC OP, and with AC OP
Workshop with beneficiaries regarding the internal consistency of OPTA	23 May 2014	Discussion and clarifications regarding the needs assessment and the intervention logic of OPTA, from a beneficiaries' perspective
Receipt of a new version of V2 of OPTA, with redefined categories of actions	23 May 2014	Punctual feedback expected on redefined categories of actions
Receipt of V3 of OPTA, including all sections of the OP	15 June 2014	Preparation of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report
Submission of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report	27 June	Draft Ex-ante evaluation Report
Meeting with programmers to discuss findings and recommendations of the draft ex-ante evaluation report	8 July 2014	Clarification on the findings and recommendations of the draft ex-ante evaluation report and agreement on next steps in the evaluation process
Receipt of a revised version of V3 of OPTA, dated 10 July 2014	10 July 2014	Preparation of Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report
Elaboration of second version of the ex-ante evaluation report	21 July 2014	Submission of the final ex-ante evaluation report

Event	Date	Activity or output
Receipt from the Programmer of official comments of the EC on the first official version of OPTA	8 October 2014	Preparation by ex-ante evaluation team of feedback on punctual aspects related, as requested by the Client
Feedback on punctual aspects related, as requested by the beneficiary	10 October 2014	Submission of feedback on punctual aspects related, as requested by the beneficiary
Workshop on indicators and financial allocation	14 October 2014	Support for the programmer in integrating EC comments regarding indicators and financial allocation
Receipt of final version of the operational programme	24 October 2014	Final ex-ante evaluation report of OPTA
Focus group with MA representatives on human resources and administrative capacity, and monitoring and data collection	28 October 2014	Information regarding human resources and administrative capacity, and monitoring and data collection
Elaboration of the final ex-ante evaluation report of OPTA	31 October 2014	Submission of the final ex-ante evaluation report of OPTA
Elaboration of the first version of Guideline of indicators of OPTA	7 January 2015	Submission of the first version of Guideline of indicators of OPTA
Elaboration of the first proposal for the Evaluation plan	31 January 2015	Submission of the first proposal for the Evaluation plan
Elaboration of the second proposal for the Evaluation plan and of Guideline on Indicators of OPTA	25 February 2015	Submission of the proposal for the Evaluation plan and Guideline on Indicators of OPTA
Elaboration of final version of the Guideline on Indicators of OPTA	17 March 2015	Submission of final version of the Guideline on Indicators of OPTA
Elaboration of the final version of the Evaluation plan of OPTA	20 March 2015	Submission of the final version of the Evaluation plan of OPTA

The Programme was subject to a public consultation by the Ministry of European Funds from March 2014 until the publication of the second version of the OPTA in May 2014.

A number of comments were received and included in the Operational Programme concerning primarily the aspects of public procurement and state aid, shortage of staff in ESIF structures and of trained and skilled staff, need for SMIS improvement, need to clearly distinguish between horizontal and specific actions of OPTA, to delimit OPTA from Administrative Capacity OP, simplification of procedures for project implementation, coordination and communication with other MAs and IBs. The proposals and suggestions received from relevant stakeholders were taken into consideration and introduced in the structure of the OPTA.

3. EQ 1: External Consistency

This chapter is structured in two sections:

- **Section 3.1** analyses the consistency between the priorities and objectives of the OPTA, and the Common Strategic Framework, the Partnership Agreement and the country specific recommendations provided by the Council, representing the main strategic documents with which consistency should be ensured.
- **Section 3.2** analyses the consistency between the priorities and objectives of the OPTA, and the Technical Assistance Axes of other Operational Programmes, respectively the Administrative Capacity Operational Programme and the Strategy for the Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity.

3.1. EQ 1.1: External consistency with EU documents and strategies

EQ 1.1	To what extent is there consistency between the selected thematic objectives, the appropriate priorities and objectives of the programme, on one hand, and on the other, the Common Strategic Framework, the Partnership Agreement and the specific recommendations addressed to each country on the grounds of Art. 121 par. (2) of the Treaty and the relevant recommendations of the Council, adopted on the grounds of Art. 148 par. (4) of the Treaty?

3.1.1. Description on the evaluation process

The analyses presented in this section are aimed at assessing the consistency between the specific objectives of the OPTA and:

- Priorities and Flagship initiatives of the EU 2020 Strategy
- The Common Strategic Framework
- Thematic objectives and priorities identified in the Partnership Agreement
- National Reform Programme and country specific recommendations of the Council for Romania.

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and collection tools applied to each of the OPTA versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 5: Data collection tools used for EQ 1.1

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Consistency table with Europe 2020 Strategy	☑	☑	☑	☑
Consistency table with Common Strategic Framework	☑	☑	☑	☑

Consistency table with country specific Council recommendations	☑	☑	☑	☑
Consistency table with Partnership Agreement	☑	☑	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis	☑	☑	☑	☑
Interviews (with Ministry of European Funds representatives)	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 6: Feedback received for EQ 1.1

Feedback Report n. 1 dated 07 April 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
Council country specific recommendations,NRP 2011-2013: the programmer should address actions aimed at improving public procurement, in the context of ESIF.	Implemented
Feedback Report n. 2 dated 19 May 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A: feedback report no. 2 focused entirely on the internal logic and the external consistency with the technical assistance axis of ROP and HC OP, and with the AC OP.	N/A
Draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendation was made	N/A
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendation was made	N/A

3.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current report is provided based on the application of all the data analysis and collection tools planned in the Inception Report.

Table 7: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current evaluation Report
Data analysis tools	
Consistency table with Europe 2020 Strategy	☑
Consistency table with Common Strategic Framework	☑
Consistency table with Council country specific recommendations	☑
Consistency table with Partnership Agreement	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis	☑
Interviews (with Ministry of European Funds representatives)	☑

Findings

Section 1 of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance makes reference to a number of key EU and National strategic documents, outlining explicitly its alignment to them. These documents

include the Common Strategic Framework, ERDF Regulation (Regulation (EU) No. 1301/2013), the Partnership Agreement, the Strategy Europe 2020 and the National Reform Programme.

Consistency with Europe 2020 Strategy

Specific Objective 2.2 *Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users* is **consistent** with the flagship initiative **Digital agenda for 2020***,* as it will finance the development and maintenance of SMIS 2014+, MySMIS+ and other related applications, and it will contribute to the creation of *interoperable applications* within the information management system of ESIF.

Specific Objective 3.1 *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF* is **consistent** with the flagship initiative **An agenda for new skills and jobs,** because it will help people from EFIS system to *acquire new skill and adapt to a changing labour market.*

The programme covers transversal aspects related to the implementation process of all OPs and it is not policy-oriented as are the other Operational Programmes. Therefore, consistency cannot be assessed for policy areas related to innovation, poverty, youth mobility, resource efficiency or industrialisation in the context of globalisation**.**

Given the specificity of OPTA, consistency is **not applicable** for the following flagship initiatives of EU 2020 Strategy: Innovation Union, Youth on the move, Resource efficient Europe, An industrial policy for the globalization era, European Platform against poverty.

A synthetic presentation of the results of the analysis focusing on the consistency with the EU2020 Strategy is provided in the table below while the detailed analysis can be found in Annex 1.

Table 8: Consistency with Europe 2020 Strategy

EU 2020 Strategy Priorities and Flagship Initiatives	Corresponding OP TA Specific objectives	Consistency assessment
Smart growth		
► **Digital agenda for 2020**: creating a single digital market based on fast/ultrafast internet and interoperable applications	SO 2.2. Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	**YES** The action related to this **specific objective**, *Development, improvement and maintenance of SMIS 2014+, MySMIS 2014+ and other related applications, as well as of the digital network and support for the SMIS 2014+ Central Unit, of the network of coordinators and training the users of these information systems* exhibits a direct **consistency** with the **Digital Agenda flagship initiative**.
Inclusive growth		
► **An agenda for new skills and jobs**: for individuals – helping people acquire new skills, adapt to a changing labour market and make successful career shifts, and collectively – modernising labour markets to raise employment levels, reduce unemployment, raise labour productivity and ensuring the sustainability of our social models	SO 3.1: Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF	**YES** The two actions of this **specific objective**, 3.1.1. *Implementation of a horizontal human resources policy and development of management capacity for the ESIF coordination, management and control system*, and 3.1.2. *Ensuring financial resources for the remuneration of staff in the system for ESIF coordination, management and control, and management system of OPTA, LIOP, COP and ETC OP* are **consistent with the EU 2020** Agenda for new skills and jobs flagship initiative

Consistency with the Common Strategic Framework

The OPTA is consistent with **Thematic Objective 11 of** the Common Strategic Framework "*Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration".* More specifically consistency relates to actions aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the ERDF and.

Consistency is ensured through the following OPTA Specific Objectives:

- SO 2.1. *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF*
- SO 3.1. *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF*

Table 9: *Consistency with the Common Strategic Framework*

Common Strategic Framework	OPTA	Consistency
Thematic Objectives	**Specific objectives**	
TO 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration		
▶ Actions to strengthen the **institutional capacity** and the **efficiency of public administrations and public services** related to the implementation of the ERDF, and in support of actions under the ESF to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration	SO 2.1. Improving the **regulatory, strategic and procedural framework** for the coordination and implementation of ESIF SO 3.1. Developing an **improved human resources management policy** that ensures adequate stability, **qualification** and motivation **for the staff** that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF	**YES – consistency is identified** Specific Objective 2.1 is aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of the ESIF system, while Specific Objective 3.1 refers to an improved human resources management policy, qualification and motivation of the staff working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds.

Consistency with Council country specific recommendations for the National Reform Programme 2014

Consistency was identified between the OPTA and the National Reform Programme in the area of Priority Reforms, more specifically of those aimed at **Increasing the efficiency and transparency of public administration**:

- OPTA Specific Objective 1.1 *Strengthening the capacity of ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects* is consistent with the NRP priority **to launch and implement the JEREMIE instrument to guarantee** the interest subsidy and credit risk taking, because action 1.1.2. *Horizontal assistance for ESIF beneficiaries and specific assistance for OPTA, LIOP and COP*, is related to **promotion of financial instruments among beneficiaries**.
- OPTA Specific Objective 2.1 *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF*, is consistent with NRP action concerning the **redefinition of the strategic, institutional and legislative framework in the area of public management**, as actions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 will finance **analyses, studies related to programming, implementation, monitoring and control**, horizontal training related to public procurement, irregularities, conflicts of interests etc.
- OPTA Specific Objective 3.1 *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF*, is consistent with the NRP action to

organize **specialised training programmes in the context of increasing the efficiency and transparency of the public administration**, because action 3.1.1 finances specialised training for ESIF staff, in fields such as team management, conflict management, time management, leadership and others.

- OPTA is also **consistent** with the **Council country specific recommendation** to improve the **quality of regulations through the use of impact assessments, and systematic evaluations**, through **Action 2.1.2** Evaluation at the level of Partnership Agreement and OPTA, LIOP and COP and improving the evaluation culture for ESIF.

A synthetic presentation of the results of the consistency analysis with the Council country specific recommendations is provided in the table below. The detailed analysis can be found in Annex 2 - Consistency with Council country specific recommendations for the National Reform Programme 2014.

Table 10: Consistency of OPTA with the National Reform Programme 2104 and Council Recommendations

National Reform Programme 2014	Council country specific Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
Priority reforms			
► **Increasing the efficiency and transparency of the public administration**: ► Continuing decentralization ► Redefinition of the strategic, institutional and legislative framework in the area of public management, according to the national programmatic and strategic approved documents ► Organizing specialized training programs ► Defining regulations for quality control mechanisms ► **Improving national housing conditions:** ► Develop National Strategy Habitation. ► Develop the legal framework for the establishment, organization and functioning of homeowners associations and condominiums' management ► Develop a housing law	► Strengthen governance and the quality of institutions and the public administration, in particular by improving the capacity for strategic and budgetary planning, by increasing the professionalism of the public service through improved human resource management and by strengthening the mechanisms for coordination between the different levels of government. ► Significantly improve the quality of regulations through the use of impact assessments, and systematic evaluations.	SO 3.1. Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF SO 2.1. Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	**YES** Consistency is identified with **Increasing the efficiency and transparency of the public administration,** particularly with the key actions: - **organizing specialized training programs** by: PA 3. Increasing the efficiency of the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania: Action: 3.1.1. Implementation of a horizontal human resources policy and development of management capacity for the ESIF coordination, management and control system Consistency is identified with the key action concerning the **redefinition of the strategic, institutional and legislative framework in the area of public management** by**:** PA 2. Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF: Action: 2.1.1. Activities for the improvement of framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF, and for OPTA, LIOP and COP management OPTA is also consistent with the Council Recommendation to **improve the quality of regulations through the use of impact assessments, and systematic evaluations,** through SO 2.1 Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF, action: 2.1.2. Evaluation and the level of Partnership Agreement and of OPTA, LIOP, and COP, and activities to increase the evaluation culture for ESIF
► **Improving the management of EU funds:** ► Review and implementation of The priority measures' plan to strengthen the absorption capacity of structural and cohesion funds ► **Continue the reform of the public procurement system** ► Adopting the national strategy on public procurement for the period 2014-2020 ► Implementing measures of the 2014 Action Plan of the National Strategy on public procurement	► Step up efforts to accelerate the absorption of EU funds in particular by strengthening management and control systems and improving public procurement.		

National Reform Programme 2014	Council country specific Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
Improving the business environment ► **Diversification of financial instruments to support SMEs capable of rapid development** ► Creating a network of business angels ► Implementation of Program for Romanian –Swiss SMEs ► **Strengthening the guarantee and counter-guarantee instruments to stimulate investments in strategic sectors** ► The launch and implementation of the JEREMIE instrument to guarantee the interest subsidy and credit risk taking ► **Developing mentoring to support SMEs in accessing financial instruments** ► Launching and implementing the SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT ► Establishing the "credit" mediator institution ► **Increase the technological capacity of firms** ► Tax exemption on reinvested profits to purchase high-tech equipment ► **Simplifying administrative procedure and cutting red tape for entrepreneurs** ► Restructuring stop shop and PCU ► Simplification of formalities for setting up businesses / operating licenses ► The development of online services offered by NTC businesses, citizens and public institutions ► **Improve the promotion and development of exports by SMEs** ► Adoption and implementation of the National Export Strategy 2014-2020	► Improve and simplify the business environment in particular through reducing administrative burdens on SMEs and implementing a consistent e-government strategy. ► Step up efforts to improve the quality, independence and efficiency of the judicial system in resolving cases and fight corruption more effectively. ► Promote competition and efficiency in network industries, by ensuring the independence and capacity of national regulatory authorities, and by continuing the corporate governance reform of state-owned enterprises in the energy and transport sectors. ► Adopt a comprehensive long-term transport plan and improve broadband infrastructure	SO 1.1 Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects	***YES*** **Consistency** is identified with the NRP action related to financial instruments, through OPTA Priority Axis 1, Specific Objective 1.1 *Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects* action*:* *1.1.2 Horizontal assistance for ESIF beneficiaries and specific assistance for OPTA, LIOP and COP beneficiaries,* for actions related to promotion of financial instruments among beneficiaries.

Consistency with Partnership Agreement

The analysis of consistency with the Partnership Agreement is based on the PA version submitted to European Commission on 7 July 2014. Taking into account the horizontal nature of OPTA, when assessing consistency with the Partnership Agreement, the Evaluator focused on TO 11 *Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.*

The following consistencies were identified between specific objectives of the OPTA and proposed priorities for funding of TO 11 of the PA:

The OPTA SO 1.2 *Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy* is consistent with the following proposed priorities for funding:

- Strengthening participatory dimension, development of consultation and participation mechanisms in decision-making
- Strengthen the participation mechanisms to deliver efficient public services at local level

The OPTA SO 2.1 *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF* is consistent with the following proposed priorities for funding:

- Support the development for monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implemented strategies and policies
- Developing skills in the areas of strategic planning and budgetary programming, impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation
- Developing, introducing and supporting the use of management, monitoring and evaluation systems and tools for an improved institutional and public services performance and change of organizational culture
- Support for measuring administrative burden, transfer of know-how and best practices

The OPTA SO 2.2 *Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users*, is consistent with the following proposed priorities for funding:

- Support the development for monitoring mechanisms for the implemented strategies and policies
- Developing and use of IT tools and applications to enhance institutional capacity

The OPTA SO 3.1 *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF* is consistent with the following proposed priorities for funding:

- Create and implement an integrated strategic framework for human resources management in public sector

Table 11: Consistency with Partnership Agreement

Thematic Objective 11 of the PA	OP Technical Assistance	Consistency
Proposed priorities for funding	**Specific objectives**	**Consistency**
Support the development **for monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** for the implemented strategies and policies	SO 2.1: Improving the **regulatory, strategic and procedural framework** for the coordination and implementation of ESIF SO 2.2 : Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	**Yes** Consistency is identified with *Support for development for monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implemented strategies and policies*, by: PA 2: Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF, through actions: ▶ 2.1.1**.** Activities for the improvement of framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF, and for OPTA, LIOP and COP management ▶ 2.1.2. Evaluation at the level of PA and OPTA, LIOP and COP level and **improving the evaluation culture** for ESIF ▶ 2.2.1. Development, improvement and maintenance of SMIS 2014+, MySMIS 2014+ and other related applications, as well as of the digital network and support for the SMIS 2014+ Central Unit, of the network of coordinators and training the users of these information systems
Develop skills in the areas of **strategic planning and budgetary programming**, impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation (e.g. Training and methodologies, data-bases for indicators);	SO 2.1: Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	**Yes** Consistency is identified with *Developing skills in the areas of strategic planning and budgetary programming, impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation*, by: PA 2: Support for coordination, management and control of ESIF ▶ 2.1.1. Activities for the improvement of framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF, and for OPTA, LIOP and COP management
Strengthen **participatory dimension, development of consultation and participation mechanisms** in decision-making;	SO. 1.2: Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	**Yes** Consistency is identified concerning *the development of consultation and participation mechanisms in decision- making*: PA 1: Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects funded by ESIF and dissemination of information regarding these funds ▶ 1.2.2. Activities targeted at the development of partnership culture for the coordination and management of ESIF
Develop, introduce and support the use of **management, monitoring and evaluation systems and tools for an improved institutional and public services performance** and change of organizational culture	SO 2.1: Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	**Yes** Consistency is identified with *Developing, introducing and supporting the use of management, monitoring and evaluation systems and tools for an improved institutional and public services performance and change of organizational culture*, by: PA 2: Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF, through the following actions: ▶ 2.1.1. Activities for the improvement of framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF, and for OPTA, LIOP and COP management ▶ 2.1.2. Evaluation and the level of Partnership Agreement and of OPTA, LIOP, and COP, and activities to increase the evaluation culture for ESIF

Thematic Objective 11 of the PA	OP Technical Assistance	Consistency
Proposed priorities for funding	**Specific objectives**	**Consistency**
Create and implement an **integrated strategic framework for human resources management in public sector** and raise the professionalism and attractiveness of the public administration	SO 3.1: Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF	**Yes** Consistency is identified with *Create and implement an integrated strategic framework for human resources management in public sector and raise the professionalism and attractiveness of the public administration*, by: PA 3: Increasing the efficiency of the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania, through actions: ▶ 3.1.1. Implementation of a horizontal human resources policy and development of management capacity for the ESIF coordination, management and control system ▶ 3.1.2. Ensuring financial resources for the remuneration of staff in the system for ESIF coordination, management and control, and management system of OPTA, LIOP and COP
Support for **measuring administrative burden**, transfer of know-how and best practices	SO 2.1: Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	**Yes** Consistency is identified with *Support for measuring administrative burden, transfer of know-how and best practices:*: PA 2: Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF ▶ 2.1.1. Activities for the improvement of framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF, and for OPTA, LIOP and COP management
Strengthen the capacity and the mechanisms to manage and deliver efficient public services at all levels, including through participatory mechanisms	SO 1.2: Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	**Yes** Consistency is identified with the priority to *Strengthen the participation mechanisms to deliver efficient public services at local level*, by: PA 1: Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects funded by ESIF and dissemination of information regarding these funds, action: ▶ 1.2.2. Activities targeted at the development of partnership culture for the coordination and management of ESIF
Develop and use of IT tools and applications to enhance institutional capacity and efficiency at all levels of public administration.	SO 2.2: Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	**Yes** Consistency is identified with *Developing and use of IT tools and applications to enhance institutional capacity and efficiency at all levels of public administration*, by: ▶ 2.2.1. Activities for the development, improvement and maintenance of SMIS 2014+, MySMIS 2014+ and other related applications, as well as of the digital network and support for the SMIS 2014+ Central Unit, of the network of coordinators and training the users of these information systems

Conclusions and recommendations for EQ 1.1

Conclusions	Recommendations
Consistency with Europe 2020 Strategy	
C1. While the OPTA has **an overall indirect consistency** with the EU2020 Strategy, because it is a transversal programme which supports the other OPs that directly contribute to the EU 2020 Strategy, **a direct consisten**cy is observed for the following flagship initiatives of the EU 2020 strategy: **An agenda for new skills and jobs** and **Digital agenda for 2020.** C2. Direct consistency has been identified at the level of: ► ***SO 2.2.*** *Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users, as* OPTA will finance the d**evelopment and maintenance of SMIS 2014+**, MySMIS+ and other related applications, and it will contribute to the creation of **interoperable applications** within the information management system of ESIF ► **SO 3.*1*** *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF,* because actions of this SO will facilitate people from EFIS system to **acquire new skills and adapt to a changing labour market**	No specific recommendations
Consistency with the Common Strategic Framework	
C3. Overall, consistency of the OPTA with the Common Strategic Framework is observed with respect to Thematic Objective 11, through Specific Objectives 2.1 *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF* and 3.1 *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF.*	No specific recommendations
Council country specific recommendations (reflected in the National Reform Programme 2014)	
C4. Consistency of OPTA is identified with the Council country specific recommendations reflected in the National Reform Programme 2014 for 3 Specific Objectives of the OPTA: ► SO 1.1., on beneficiaries capacity, for actions related to promotion of financial instruments, is consistent with the NRP priority to launch and implementation of the JEREMIE instrument to guarantee the interest subsidy and credit risk taking ► SO 2.1., related to the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework is **consistent** with NRP key action concerning the redefinition of the strategic, institutional and legislative framework in the area of public management as actions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 finance **analyses, studies** related to programming, implementation, monitoring and control, horizontal training related to public procurement, irregularities, conflicts of interests etc. ► SO 3.1., related to human resources, is c**onsistent** with the action to organize specialised training programmes in the context of increasing the efficiency and transparency of the public administration of NRP, because action 3.1.1 finances **specialised training for FESI staff**, in fields such as team management, conflict management, time management, leadership and others C5. OPTA is also **consistent** with the Council Recommendation to improve the quality of regulations through the use of impact assessments, and systematic evaluations, through Action 2.1.2 Evaluation and the level of Partnership Agreement and of OPTA, LIOP, and COP, and through activities to increase the evaluation culture for ESIF.	No specific recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
Consistency with Partnership Agreement	
C6. Technical assistance is a horizontal and transversal component of ESIF and it is not directly linked to thematic objectives. However, given the nature of OPTA to ensure the capacity and instruments necessary for an efficient coordination, management and control of ESIF, and an efficient, well oriented and correct implementation of OPTA, LIOP and COP, OPTA is consistent with the Thematic Objective 11 mentioned in the PA. C7. Overall, consistency of the OPTA with Thematic Objective 11, *Enhancing institutional capacity and an effective public administration* of the Partnership Agreement has been identified for: ► SO 1.2, related to *communication transparency and credibility*, for PA priorities for funding which refer to strengthening participatory dimension consultation and participation mechanisms in decision-making, and to strengthening the participation mechanisms to deliver efficient public services at local level ► SO 2.1, related to the *regulatory, strategic and procedural framework* of ESIF, for PA priorities for funding which refer to development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, development of skills in the areas of strategic planning, use of management, monitoring and evaluation systems and tools for an improved institutional and public services performance. ► SO 2.2, related to the *development and maintenance of a functional and efficient information system* to improve the correct management of information needed for the coordination and control of ESIF, is consistent with PA priorities for funding which refer to development of monitoring mechanisms for the implemented strategies and policies, and development and use of IT tools and applications to enhance institutional capacity. ► SO 3.1., on *human resources management policy,* is consistent with PA priorities for funding which refer to *creation and implementation of an integrated strategic framework* for human resources management in public sector.	No specific recommendations

3.2. EQ 1.2 Strategic consistency with other relevant instruments

EQ 1.2	To what extent is there consistency with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies)?

3.2.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 1.2

The analyses performed under this evaluation sub-questions, are aimed at assessing the consistency between the specific objectives of the OPTA and:

- Technical assistance axis of Regional Operational Programme
- Technical assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme
- Administrative Capacity Operational Programme
- Technical assistance axis of National Rural Development Programme
- Fisheries Operational Programme
- The Strategy for consolidation of public administration capacity
- EU strategy the Black Sea
- EU strategy for the Danube Region
- Horizon 2020, COSME, Creative Europe, Social Change and Innovation, Connecting Europe

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OP versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 12: Data collection tools used for EQ 1.2

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
External consistency table with Regional Operational Programme	☑	☑	☑	☑
External consistency table with Administrative Capacity Operational Programme	☑	☑	☑	☑
External consistency table with Human Capital Operational Programme	☑	☑	☑	☑
External consistency table with National Rural Development Programme	☑	☑	☑	☑
External consistency table with Fisheries Operational Programme	☒	☐☒	☒	☒
External consistency table with Strategy regarding the Marine Basin of the Black Sea	☐☒	☒	☒	☒
External consistency table with the Strategy for consolidation of	☐☒	☒	☑	☐☑

public administration capacity				
External consistency table with EU strategy the Black Sea	☐☒	☒	☒	☒
External consistency table with EU strategy for the Danube Region	☐☒	☒	☒	☒
Horizon 2020, COSME, Creative Europe, Social Change and Innovation, Connecting Europe	☐☒	☒	☒	☒
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis	☑	☑	☑	☑
Interviews (with Ministry of European Funds representatives)	☒	☑	☑	☑
Expert panel	☐☒	☒	☑	☑

☒: Documents not available

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the box below:

Table 13: Feedback received for EQ 1.2

Feedback Report n. 1 dated 07 April 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
HC OP TA: potential overlaps on training activities	Implemented - Potential overlaps were clarified and avoided
ROP TA PA: Potential overlap with actions on horizontal support for the activation and strengthening of monitoring committees, committees, sub-committees and on support for closing 2007-2013	Implemented - Potential overlaps were clarified and avoided
AC OP: potential overlap with actions related to human resources in terms of stability, qualification and proper motivation of staff in public sector	Implemented - Potential overlaps were clarified and avoided
AC OP - Potential overlapping was identified with actions related to ensuring expertise and proper conditions for a correct and efficient functioning of the system	Not applicable anymore, SO 2.2. in OPTA v1 has been deleted
Feedback Report n. 2 dated 19 May 2014 – consistency tables with HC OP, ROP and AC OP prepared for expert panel	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
Operational Programme Human Capital	
OP HC TA OP: potential overlap in the areas of support for project beneficiaries, studies carried out to identify training needs, support for the Monitoring Committee and other committees, support for MA and IBs, development of a common "culture of evaluation", reimbursement of salary-type expenditure	Implemented
Regional Operational Programme	
ROP technical assistance axis – avoid potential overlap in the areas of: supporting the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies, organizational and logistic support for the Monitoring Committee, specific evaluation activities and specific studies of ROP, supporting ROP preparation for the next programming period	Implemented
Administrative Capacity OP	
AC OP - avoid potential overlap in the area of improving strategic and budgetary planning capacity for public authorities and institutions, in the area of partnership culture and of means of supporting human resource management activities	Implemented
Feedback Report n. 3 dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation

N/A: no specific recommendations were made with respect to external to Technical Assistance axis of Regional Operational Programme, Technical Assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme, Administrative Capacity Operational Programme, National Rural Development Programme	N/A
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A: no specific recommendations were made with respect to external to ☐Technical assistance axis of Regional Operational Programme, Technical assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme, Administrative Capacity Operational Programme, National Rural Development Programme	N/A

3.2.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data analysis and collection tools planned in the Inception Report.

Table 14: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	*Current Report*
Data analysis tools	
External consistency table with Regional Operational Programme	☑
External consistency table with Administrative Capacity Operational Programme	☑
External consistency table with Human Capital Operational Programme	☑
External consistency table with National Rural Development Programme	☑
External consistency table with Fisheries Operational Programme	☐☒*
External consistency table with the Strategy for consolidation of public administration capacity	☑
External consistency table with EU strategy for the Black Sea	☑
External consistency table with EU strategy for the Danube Region	☑
Horizon 2020, COSME, Creative Europe, Social Change and Innovation, Connecting Europe	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis	☑
Interviews (with Ministry of European Funds representatives)	☑

* At the moment this report was elaborated the Fisheries Operational Programme was not available

Findings on Consistency with the TA PA of other OPs

Regional Operational Programme

The consistency check between the OP Technical Assistance and the Technical Assistance Priority Axis of the **ROP** version dated August 2014 reveals a good number complementarities and no risk of overlap.

The findings of the analysis are summarised below while the detailed consistency check can be found in *Annex 3*.

OPTA Specific Objective 1.2 regarding dissemination of information and carrying out of informing and publicity activities is complementary with the ROP action **Support ROP's specific communication and promotion activities (production and distribution of information and promotion materials, conferences, forums, exhibitions, road shows, trainings for beneficiaries etc.),** because OPTA finances horizontal communication and promotion activities, while ROP finances specific communication activities for ROP.

OPTA Specific Objective 2.1 is complementary with ROP actions related to support the MA to manage the ROP, organizational and logistic support for the Monitoring Committee, and other committees involved in implementation, because OPTA provides horizontal support for the system, including ROP, in

the form of support for horizontal thematic working groups, for the activity of institutions which operate at ESIF system level such as the Audit Authority, the Certifying and Paying Authority, while ROP technical assistance provides specific support for ROP committees. OPTA is also complementary with ROP actions related to evaluation and specific studies, because OPTA finances horizontal studies and evaluation at the level of PA, while ROP finances specific studies activities for ROP.

OPTA Specific Objective 2.2 regarding **SMIS 2014+ and other related applications** is complementary with the ROP intervention of technical assistance to procure and install IT and office equipment necessary for implementation of the programme, because OPTA finances the overarching IT system (SMIS and related applications), while ROP finances IT and office equipment that allow the effective use of SMIS and other applications.

Human Capital Operational Programme

The consistency check between the OP Technical Assistance and the Human Capital Operational Programme was based on the OP HC version dated August 2014, the most recent version of the HC OP at the moment this report is written. A series of complementarities were identified, all other elements being neutral. The findings of the analysis are summarised below while the detailed consistency check can be found in *Annex 4*.

OPTA Specific Objective 1.1 related to **support for beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries** is complementary with HC OP interventions of technical assistance that support OP HC beneficiaries to develop and implement OPHC projects, *and that provide training for beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of OP HC to elaborate and implement ESF financed projects,* because OPTA provides horizontal support and training for ESIF beneficiaries, and specific for LIOP, OPTA and COP, while HC OP technical assistance provides specific support and training for HC OP beneficiaries.

OPTA Specific Objective 1.2 related **to information and publicity** is complementary with HC OP interventions of technical assistance that aim at creating and operating an efficient help-desk mechanism for beneficiaries, at the elaboration and implementation of the communication strategy and plan for OP HC, and of communication campaigns, because OPTA finances these types of activities for the system overall, including information and publicity activities on general aspects of ESIF, while HC OP finances these only for specific issues of the HC OP.

OPTA Specific Objective 2.1 related to **improving the framework and conditions** for coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP is **complementary** with the HC OP intervention of technical assistance to support the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies on various stages of HCOP implementation, because OPTA provides support for the MAs and IBs of OPTA, LIOP, COP, while HC OP provides support for the HC OP MA and IBs. Also, the two OPs are complementary on evaluation activities, because OPTA finances horizontal evaluations and specific for LIOP, COP and OPTA, while OP HC finances specific evaluations for OP HC.

OPTA Specific Objective 2.2 regarding **SMIS 2014+ and other related applications** is complementary with the HC OP intervention of technical assistance to procure and install IT and office equipment necessary for implementation of the programme, because OPTA finances the overarching IT system (SMIS and related applications), while HC OP finances IT and office equipment that allow the effective use of SMIS and other applications.

Administrative Capacity Operational Programme

The external consistency check between the OP Technical Assistance and Administrative Capacity Operational Programme (version dated July 2014) highlighted a series of complementarities which are summarized in the following paragraphs and presented in detail in *Annex 5.*

The action **of OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is **complementary** with the **ACOP** operations to consolidate structures, processes and competencies at the level of institutions and authorities from central public administration, because both OPs support networking and exchange of experience with

other national or European institutions, OPTA in the context of ESIF and AC OP in the context of national public administration.

OPTA Specific Objective 2.1 regarding the improvement of the framework and conditions for the **coordination and control of ESIF** and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP, **is complementary** with the **ACOP actions** to elaborate **guides and methodologies** to decrease administrative burden, actions to increase transparency, integrity and responsibility at the level of public authorities institutions, because they both finance actions related conflict of interest, incompatibilities, antifraud, OPTA at ESIF level, and ACOP at public administration level. Moreover, complementarity was identified with respect to **evaluations,** and their use for improving the regulatory process.

OPTA Specific Objective 2.2 regarding IT applications and the creation of IT mechanisms for cooperation and coordination between stakeholders is **complementary** with **AC OP**, because AC OP finances **the development, introduction and use of ITC tools**, while OPTA finances **IT systems and applications** that allow the collaboration and coordination of relevant stakeholders in managing the monitoring of the OPs.

OPTA Specific Objective 3.1 regarding **human resources management** is **complementary** with AC OP operations to strengthen the capacity of institutions and authorities from public administration to promote and support development at local level, because they both finance actions related to **networking and exchange of experience with other national or European institutions**: OPTA finances this type of activity for ESIF and project initiatives will be launched by the MEF, while AC OP finances this activity for the national public administration. Moreover, the two are complementary on human resources policy related measures, because they both finance actions related to **performance management, motivational policies, and human resources policy** in general. OPTA finances this type of activity for ESIF system and project initiatives will be launched by the MEF, while AC OP finances this activity for the national public administration.

National Rural Development Programme

The consistency check between the OP Technical Assistance and the National Rural Development Programme was based on the NRDP version dated 1 July 2014, revealing a number of complementarities as presented in the sections below and more extensively in *Annex 6*.

OPTA Specific Objective 1.1, Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects, on trainings for ESIF potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries is complementary with the NRDP technical assistance measure to *increase administrative and management skills of the staff from the level of the beneficiaries of the measure, through administrative activities related to the development of the program, supporting the implementing and audit activities of the programme, developing and updating the necessary software for the implementation of the programme, providing the technical and logistical support necessary,* because OPTA finances horizontal trainings for ESIF (potential) beneficiaries and specific for LIOP, COP and OPTA, while NRDP finances the increase of management competencies for NRDP beneficiaries' staff.

OPTA Specific Objective 1.2, Ensuring transparency and communication effectiveness regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy, regarding information and publicity activities concerning ESIF as well as for OPTA, LIOP and COP is complementary with the NRDP technical assistance measure aimed at *implementing a NRDP information and information and publicity strategy of the NRDP, through dissemination of information, communication and promotion actions, realized by the beneficiaries of the measure to maximize the impact of the NRDP at the national, regional, county and local levels,* because OPTA finances horizontal and LIOP, COP and OPTA specific information and publicity activities, while NRDP finances NRDP related information, communication and promotion activities. Moreover, the OPTA is complementary on actions related to partnership culture development, more specifically with the NRDP measure aimed at enhancing *Network collaboration through stakeholders' involvement and exchange of information and good practice,* because OPTA finances the development of partnership culture at the level of ESIF system, while NRDP finances stakeholders' involvement and exchange of information and good practice for NRDP only.

OPTA Specific Objective 2.1 Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF, concerning the improvement of the framework and conditions of ESIF system and management of OPTA, LIOP and COP, is complementary with the NRDP technical assistance measure *against corruption with impact on financial management, expenditures' transparency and controls' efficiency,* because OPTA finances activities related to antifraud, conflicts of interest, transparency, on a horizontal level and specific for LIOP, COP and OPTA, and NRDP finances this type of activities for NRDP only. Moreover, the two programmes are complementary on evaluation activities, because OPTA finances horizontal evaluations and specific for LIOP, COP and OPTA, and NRDP finances specific evaluation for **NRDP.**

Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity

The consistency analysis with the Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity focused on mapping the general and specific objectives of the Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity with the specific objective and actions of the OPTA, and underline, where the case, how consistency is ensured. The findings of the analysis are summarised below while the detailed consistency check can be found in Annex 6.

OPTA Specific Objective 1.2 related to dissemination of information and publicity is consistent with SCPAC action to finance information and promotion campaigns, reflected in Specific Objective II.5 of SCPAC *Quality, research and innovation in administration*, because they both finance information and promotion campaigns. Also, there is complementarity with respect to OPTA action to support *the partnership culture for the coordination and management of ESIF,* as SCPAC supports the c*onsolidation of associative structure capacity of the local public administration authorities.*

OPTA Specific Objective 2.1 concerning the *improvement of the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP* is consistent with SCPAC interventions related to **fraud prevention, identification of conflict of interest**, the realisation of **guides and methodologies** that facilitate internal processes, realisation of guides of good practice and promotion of best practices, support for the elaboration of methodologies and methodology frameworks for monitoring. Also, OPTA and SCPAC are complementary on activities related to increasing the "evaluation culture", on supporting impact evaluations and performance analyses on public services.

OPTA Specific Objective 2.2, action 2.2.1 *related to SMIS 2014+, MySMIS 2014+ and other related applications,* is consistent with SCPAC and its intervention related to *IT solutions for the efficiency of the public administration*, because they both finance the provision of IT solutions for public administration.

OPTA Specific Objective 3.1 related to a *horizontal human resources policy* is consistent with **SCPAC** intervention to adapt the policies and the human resources system to the objectives and demands of a modern administration*,* in respect to training and counselling activities for staff.

Table 15: Consistency table between OPTA and ROP TA, HCOP TA, AC OP, NRDP and Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity

Programme or strategy for which consistency is analysed	Operational Programme Technical Assistance				
	PA 1. Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects funded by ESIF and dissemination of information regarding these funds		PA 2. Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF		PA 3. Increasing the efficiency of the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania
	SO 1.1. Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects	SO 1.2. Ensuring transparency and communication effectiveness regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	SO 2.1. Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	SO 2.2. Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system to improve the correct management of information needed for the coordination and control of ESIF	SO 3.1. Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds
Regional OP **Technical Assistance Axis**		Actions related to information and publicity activities production and distribution of information and promotion materials, conferences	Actions related to support for Operational Programme management, at MA level Support for Monitoring Committees and other committees at OP level Evaluation activities	OPTA finances SMIS and related applications, and ROP finances procurement and installation of IT and office equipment necessary for implementation of the program	
Human Capital OP **Technical Assistance Axis**	Actions related to provision of support and training to beneficiaries, to implement and develop projects financed by each of the OPs	Creation of help-desk for project beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries Communication on OP related interventions, including information and publicity activities Elaboration of communication campaigns	Actions related to support for Operational Programme management, at MA level Specific studies that contribute to a more specific implementation of the OP	OPTA finances SMIS and related applications, and OP HC finances procurement and installation of IT and office equipment necessary for implementation of the program, which enable an effective use of the information management system	
Administrative Capacity **Operational Programme**		OPTA action regarding development of partnership culture is complementary with ACOP action to increase social partners' capacity to cooperate	Actions regarding evaluations, and their use for improving the regulatory process Actions for increased transparency, integrity which are financed by AC OP are complementary with actions related conflict of interest, incompatibilities, antifraud from OPTA.	AC OP actions regarding IT applications and the creation of IT mechanisms for cooperation and coordination between stakeholders are complementary with OPTA actions concerning SMIS and related applications	OPTA action regarding human resources management is complementary with AC OP actions related to networking and exchange of experience with other national or European institutions and development of system staff abilities
National Rural Development Programme	Complementarity on trainings provided to beneficiaries	Dissemination of information activities and publicity Actions related to development of partnership culture	Evaluation activities OPTA interventions related to antifraud are complementary with NRDP action against corruption		
Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity		**Actions related to information and promotion campaigns and partnership culture**	**Actions related to fraud prevention, identification of conflict of interest** **Actions for the increase of "evaluation culture".**	**IT solutions for the efficiency of the public administration**	**training and counselling activities for staff**

Moreover, consistency was analysed with the following strategies listed below.

EU strategy for the Black Sea

Consistency is identified between the OPTA and the EU strategy for the Black Sea in terms of support provided for development of projects in areas such as environment, energy and transport. While the EU strategy for the Black Sea encourages the modernisation of energy infrastructure in the Black Sea region, calls on the EU to support energy projects, supports intermodal transport infrastructure, the OPTA provides technical assistance to Large Infrastructure OP beneficiaries who may develop and implement energy, environment or transport projects, but also to the managing structures of LIOP to implement the programme.

The synthetic table below illustrates the consistency with the EU strategy for the Black Sea, and the detailed consistency table can be found in Annex 8.

Table 16: The consistency between OPTA and the EU strategy for the Black Sea

Black Sea Strategy	**OP Technical Assistance**	
Priority Actions	**Relevant Specific objectives**	**Consistency**
5. Energy **6. Transport** **7. Environment**	SO 1.1 Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects SO 2.1 Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	YES Consistency is identified with the Black Sea strategy because OPTA addresses the need for improvement of beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement projects in areas such as environment, transport or energy. The second action of the specific objective refers to assistance provided to beneficiaries, also in the form of specific assistance for Large Infrastructure OP beneficiaries, which cover the areas of energy, transport and environment.

EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Consistency is identified between the OPTA and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in terms of support provided for development of projects in areas such as environment, energy and transport. While the EU Strategy for the Danube Region has a priority in improving mobility and multimodality, in encouraging more sustainable energy and in environmental issues, the OPTA provides technical assistance to Large Infrastructure OP beneficiaries who may develop and implement energy, environment or transport projects and also to the managing structures of LIOP to implement the programme.

The synthetic table below illustrates the consistency with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, and the detailed consistency table can be found in Annex 9.

Table 17: The consistency between OPTA and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

National Strategy for Regional Development		**Operational Programme Technical Assistance**	
Pillars	**Priority Areas**	Relevant Specific objectives	Consistency
Connecting the Danube Region	Improve mobility and multimodality: (a) Inland Waterways (b) Road, rail and air links	SO 1.1 Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects SO 2.1 Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	YES Consistency is identified with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region because OPTA addresses the need for improvement of beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement projects in areas such as transport or energy. The second action of the specific objective refers to assistance provided to beneficiaries, also in the form of specific assistance for Large Infrastructure OP beneficiaries, which cover the areas of energy and transport. OPTA also provides support for the
	Encourage more sustainable energy		

National Strategy for Regional Development		Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
Pillars	**Priority Areas**	Relevant Specific objectives	Consistency
			management of LIOP, the programme through which projects related to infrastructure and energy will be financed.
Protecting the Environment in the Danube Region	Restore and maintain the quality of waters Manage environmental risks	SO 1.1 Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects SO 2.1 Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	YES Consistency is identified with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region because OPTA addresses the need for improvement of beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement projects in areas such as environment. The second action of the specific objective refers to assistance provided to beneficiaries, also in the form of specific assistance for Large Infrastructure OP beneficiaries, which cover the areas of environment. OPTA also provides support for the management of LIOP, the programme through which projects related to environment will be financed.

Horizon 2020

The two programmes – Horizon 2020 and OPTA - target different types of interventions, and they are neutral in all aspects.

COSME

Consistency is identified between OPTA and COSME programme in terms of initiatives taken to diminish the administrative burden for its users / target public. COSME aims at decreasing administrative burden on businesses by removing unnecessary reporting and information requirements, while OPTA aims at reducing the administrative burden in project preparation and implementation cycles for beneficiaries and ESIF system staff.

Table 18: The consistency between OPTA and COSME

COSME Priorities and Flagship Initiatives	Corresponding OP TA Specific objectives	Consistency assessment
More favourable conditions for business creation and growth		
COSME aims at lightening the administrative burden on businesses by removing unnecessary reporting and information requirements. As research indicates, SMEs are disproportionately affected by regulation. A special focus is thus needed to create more favourable conditions for them.	SO 1.1 - Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects SO 2.1 - Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	**YES** The action related to this **specific objective,** *regarding evaluations, and their use for improving the regulatory process, elaboration of guides and methodologies to decrease administrative burden* exhibits a direct **consistency** with the **More favorable conditions for business creation and growth action programme.**

Creative Europe

The two programmes – Creative Europe and OPTA - target different types of interventions, and they are neutral in all aspects.

Social Change and Innovation

Consistency is identified between OPTA and the PROGRESS programme of Social Change and Innovation, which supports development and coordination of EU policy in areas such as employment, social inclusion and social protection, working conditions, anti-discrimination and gender equality,

because OPTA supports communication activities on horizontal principles such as gender equality or anti-discrimination, and the functioning of working groups focused on these principles.

Table 19: The consistency between OPTA and Social Change and Innovation

Social change and Innovation Priorities and Flagship Initiatives	Corresponding OP TA Specific objectives	Consistency assessment
PROGRESS		
► The PROGRESS programme is a financial instrument supporting the development and coordination of EU policy in the following five areas: • Employment • Social inclusion and social protection • Working conditions • Anti-discrimination • Gender equality ► PROGRESS's ultimate objective is to help achieve the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy.	SO 1.2 - Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	**YES** The action related to this **specific objective**, *regarding the development of partnership culture to consolidate and implement mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and consultation between relevant stakeholders* exhibits a direct **consistency** with the **PROGRESS programme.**

Connecting Europe

Consistency is identified between OPTA and Digital Service Infrastructures of Connecting Europe on actions related to infrastructures of digital services, because OPTA finances SMIS 2014+, My SMIS which centralize the information on projects implemented in the ESIF system.

Table 20: The consistency between OPTA and Connecting Europe

Connecting Europe Priorities and Flagship Initiatives	Corresponding OP TA Specific objectives	Consistency assessment
Digital Service Infrastructures		
► DSIS will facilitate the cross-border and cross-sector interaction between European public administrations. This, in turn, will enable the provision of essential services for businesses and citizens in areas as diverse as electronic identification and procurement, and interoperable health services. ► Projects will be firmly centred on deploying a relatively small number of trans-European infrastructures based upon mature technical and organizational solutions, and aimed at supporting exchanges and collaboration with and within the public sector, across the EU	S.O. 2.2. Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	**YES** The action related to this **specific objective**, *Development, improvement and maintenance of SMIS 2014+, MySMIS 2014+ and other related applications, as well as of the digital network and support for the SMIS 2014+ Central Unit, of the network of coordinators and training the users of these information systems* exhibits a direct **consistency** with the **Digital Service Infrastructures.**

Conclusions and recommendations for EQ 1.2

Conclusions	Recommendations
Consistency with the Technical Assistance priority axis of Regional Operational Programme	
C1. *No risk of potential overlap has been identified* **C2. The following complementarities were identified** ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is **complementary** with the ROP, action Support ROP's specific communication and promotion activities (production and distribution of information and promotion materials because OPTA finances horizontal communication and promotion activities, while ROP finances specific communication activities for ROP ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.1** is **complementary** with ROP on actions related to support for the MA to manage the OP, to organizational and logistic support for committees involved in program implementation, because OPTA provides horizontal support for the system, including ROP, while ROP technical assistance provides specific support for ROP.	No specific recommendation
Consistency with the Technical Assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme	
C3. *No risk of potential overlap has been identified* **C4. The following complementarities were identified** ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.1** is **complementary** with HC OP interventions of technical assistance that support OP HC beneficiaries to develop and implement OPHC projects because OPTA provides horizontal support and training for ESIF beneficiaries, and specific for LIOP, OPTA and COP, while HC OP technical assistance provides specific support and training for HC OP beneficiaries ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is complementary with HC OP interventions of technical assistance that aim at creating and operating an efficient help-desk mechanism for beneficiaries, at the elaboration and implementation of the communication strategy and plan for OP HC, and of communication campaigns, because OPTA finances these types of activities for the system overall, while HC OP finances these only for specific issues of the HC OP. ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.1.** is **complementary** with the HC OP intervention of technical assistance to support the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies (including staff costs) on various stages of POCU implementation, because OPTA provides support for the MAs and IBs of OPTA, LIOP, **COP, while HC OP provides support for the HC OP MA and IBs. Also, the two OPs are complementary on evaluation activities.** ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.2 is complementary with the HC OP intervention of technical assistance to procure and install IT and office equipment necessary for implementation of the programme, because OPTA finances the overarching IT system (SMIS and related applications), while HC OP finances IT and office equipment that allow the effective use of SMIS and other applications.**	No specific recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
Consistency with Administrative Capacity Operational Programme	
C5. *No risk of potential overlap has been identified* **C6. The following complementarities were identified** ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is **complementary** with the ACOP operations to consolidate structures, processes and competencies at the level of institutions and authorities from central public administration, because both OPs support networking and exchange of experience with other national or European institutions ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.1**. is **complementary** with the ACOP operation to increase transparency, integrity and responsibility at the level of public authorities institutions, because they both finance actions related conflict of interest, incompatibilities, antifraud ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.2** is **complementary** with AC OP, because AC OP finances the creation of mechanisms for coordination and collaboration between relevant stakeholders, including IT solutions, while OPTA finances IT systems and applications that allow the collaboration and coordination of relevant stakeholders in managing the monitoring of the OPs **C7. OPTA Specific Objective 3.1** is **complementary** with AC OP operations to strengthen the capacity of institutions and authorities from public administration because they both finance actions related to networking and exchange of experience with other national or European institutions. Moreover, the two are complementary on human resources policy related measures, because they both finance actions related to performance management, motivational policies, and human resources policy in general. OPTA finances this type of activity for ESIF system and project initiatives will be launched by the MEF, while AC OP finances this activity for the national public administration.	No specific recommendations
Consistency with the National Rural Development Programme	
C8. No risk of potential overlap has been identified **C9. The following complementarities were identified** ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.1** is complementary with the NRDP technical assistance measure to increase administrative and management competencies of beneficiaries' staff, because OPTA finances horizontal trainings for ESIF (potential) beneficiaries and specific for LIOP, COP and OPTA, while NRDP finances the increase of management competencies for NRDP beneficiaries' staff ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is complementary with the NRDP technical assistance measure to implementing a NRDP information and promotion campaign through information, communication and promotion activities, because OPTA finances horizontal and LIOP, COP and OPTA specific information and publicity activities, while NRDP finances NRDP related information, communication and promotion activities. Moreover, the OPTA is complementary on actions related to partnership culture development, more specifically with NRDP measure to enhance network collaboration through stakeholders' involvement and exchange of information and good practice. ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.1** is complementary with the NRDP technical assistance measure against corruption with impact on financial management, expenditure transparency and control efficiency., because OPTA finances activities related to antifraud, conflicts of interest, transparency, on a horizontal level and specific for LIOP, COP and OPTA, and NRDP finances this type of activities for NRDP only. Moreover, the two programmes are complementary on evaluation activities.	No specific recommendations
Consistency with the Fisheries Operational Programme	

Conclusions	Recommendations
N/A	
Consistency with the Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity	
C10. No risk of potential overlap has been identified **C11.** **The following complementarities were identified** ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is consistent with SCPAC action to finance information and promotion campaigns because they both finance information and promotion campaigns. Also, there is complementarity with respect to OPTA action to support the partnership culture, as SCPAC supports the consolidation of associative structure capacity of the local public administration authorities. ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.1** is consistent with SCPAC of interventions related to fraud prevention, identification of conflict of interest, the realisation of guides and methodologies that facilitate internal processes, realisation of guides of good practice and promotion of best practices, support for the elaboration of methodologies and methodology frameworks for monitoring. Also, OPTA and SCPAC are complementary on activities related increasing the "evaluation culture". ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.2** is consistent with SCPAC and its intervention related to IT solutions for the efficiency of the public administration, because they both finance the provision of IT solutions for the efficiency of the public administration ► **OPTA Specific Objective 3.1** is consistent with SCPAC action to adapt the policies and the human resources system to the objectives and demands of a modern administration, in respect to training and counselling activities for staff.	No specific recommendations
Consistency for the EU strategy for the Black Sea	
C12. Consistency is identified between the OPTA and the EU strategy for the Black Sea in terms of support provided for development of projects in areas such as environment, energy and transport because OPTA provides technical assistance to Large Infrastructure OP beneficiaries who may develop and implement energy, environment or transport projects, but also to the managing structures of LIOP to implement the programme	No specific recommendations
Consistency for the EU Strategy for the Danube Region	
C13. Consistency is identified between the OPTA and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in terms of support provided for development of projects in areas such as environment, energy and transport and also for the managing structures of LIOP to implement the programme.	No specific recommendations
Consistency for Horizon 2020	
C14. The two programmes – Horizon 2020 and OPTA - target different types of interventions, and they are neutral in all aspects	No specific recommendations
Consistency for COSME Programme	

Conclusions		Recommendations
C15.	Consistency is identified between OPTA and COSME programme in terms of initiatives taken to diminish the administrative burden for its users / target public.	No specific recommendations
Consistency for Creative Europe		
C16.	The two programmes – Creative Europe and OPTA - target different types of interventions, and they are neutral in all aspects.	No specific recommendations
Consistency for Social Change and Innovation		
C17.	Consistency is identified between OPTA and the PROGRESS programme of Social Change and Innovation because OPTA supports communication activities on horizontal principles such as gender equality or anti-discrimination, and the functioning of working groups focused on these principles	No specific recommendations
Consistency for Connecting Europe Programme		
C18.	Consistency is identified between OPTA and Digital Service Infrastructures of Connecting Europe on actions related to infrastructures of digital services, because OPTA finances SMIS 2014+, My SMIS which centralize the information on projects implemented in the ESIF system	No specific recommendations

4. EQ 2: Internal Consistency

This chapter is structured in two sections:

- **Section 4.1** addresses the issue of internal consistency starting from the national challenges and the relevance of the proposed objectives and planned actions to solve such challenges.
- **Section 4.2** analyses the appropriateness of the forms of support

4.1. EQ 2.1 Internal consistency

EQ 2.1	How is the internal consistency of the programme ensured?

4.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 2.1

The analyses performed under this evaluation sub-questions, are aimed at assessing:

- the clarity, coverage of relevant themes and use of evidence of the needs assessment
- consistency between the Programme strategy and the identified needs
- analysis of the Intervention logic in terms of consistency between needs and specific objectives, specific objectives and expected result, specific objectives and result indicator, and between actions and specific objectives

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OP versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 21: Data collection tools used for EQ 2.1

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Socio-economic analysis table	☑	☑	☑	☑
Consistency table between the Programme strategy and the identified needs	☑	☑	☑	☑
Programme Intervention logic table	☑	☑	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis (Needs analysis – section 1 of the OP, Section 2 of the OP)	☑	☑	☑	☑
Interviews with MEF representatives	☒	☑	☑	☑

Panel of experts	☒	☒	☑	☑
Workshop with beneficiaries	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 22: Feedback received for EQ 2.1

Feedback Report n. 1 dated 07 April 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
Needs assessment – provide more details on lessons learned and use qualitative and quantitative evidence, include information on public procurement, SMIS, on challenges raised by using new instruments such as ITI and CLLD, administrative burden on beneficiaries, clearly differentiate between OPTA beneficiaries	Implemented
Needs assessment – describe the challenges depicted form the current programing period related to horizontal principles	Not implemented
Needs assessment – make reference to particular development opportunities identified for Technical Assistance OP, and be structured with an introduction and conclusions	Implemented
Consistency between needs and strategy - the OP should address the need for transparent communication, for an information system, as well as how the operational programme addresses the deficient partnership culture. Also, each identified need should be addressed through only one specific objective.	Implemented
First level of logic of intervention – Reformulate Specific Objectives 1.1, 2.1 and 2.3 to make them more specific and SO 3.1 should indicate the change envisaged	Implemented
Feedback Report n. 2 dated 19 May 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
First level of logic of intervention – the programmer should specify regulatory framework difficulties that hamper the functioning of ESI funds system, should also include HR management policies	Implemented
First level of intervention logic – alternative indicators were proposed for some of the specific objectives of version 2 of OPTA. However, the set of indicators was redefined and the recommendations related to them are not applicable anymore.	N/A, the set of indicators was reformulated
First level of logic of intervention – it is recommended that for each specific objective one result indicator be used, in order to avoid overlapping between indicators and to ease the monitoring of the specific objective.	Implemented
Second level of logic of intervention – the needs analysis of the OPTA should include specific needs that related to the programmes which do not have a Technical Assistance axis, i.e. Large Infrastructure OP and COP, the need for identification, preparation and implementation of integrated territorial actions, the need of support for the coordination of the integrated development plans of the growth poles.	Implemented
Second level of logic of intervention – formulation of actions could be more detailed, and could comprise types of interventions that are financed, without providing a separate list of indicative operations. Furthermore, for each specific objective more than one actions could be provided	Implemented
Second level of logic of intervention – the need to provide technical assistance for FI development and implementation should be included in the needs analysis, as well as need to provide technical assistance for developing updating state aid schemes for COP or LIOP	Implemented
Second level of logic of intervention – Section 1 of the OPTA should include the need for support on strategic planning, necessary for the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities for obtaining ESI funds or post 2020 funds, the need for awareness campaigns for the risk of irregularities and fraud, conflicts of interest, incompatibilities	Implemented
Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report n. 3 dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation

The needs assessment should include among needs the principle of equal opportunity and its application in all programme implementation phase, to ensure that equal access and chances are provided to all stakeholders and (potential) beneficiaries of the programme	Implemented
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A: no specific recommendations were made with respect to needs assessments and with the overall Programme Strategy.	N/A

4.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data analysis and collection tools planned in the Inception Report. For each of the analysis performed, the following paragraphs include a summary of the Evaluator's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 23: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current Report
Data analysis tools	
Socio-economic analysis table	☑
Consistency table between the Programme strategy and the identified needs	☑
Programme Intervention logic table	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis (Needs analysis – section 1 of the OPTA, Section 2 of the OPTA)	☑
Interviews with MEF representatives	☑
Panel of experts	☑
Workshop with beneficiaries	☑

Findings

The needs assessment

The analysis of the needs for Technical Assistance measures, was based on an the assessment of the description of Section 1 of the OPTA against a number of criteria defined in the Inception Report and related to clarity, use of evidence and updated statistical data, coverage of relevant Technical Assistance themes, coverage of specific challenges and sub-regional areas, poverty and vulnerable groups as well as unique aspects of the area reflected.

The OP provides a clear and structured image of the national context in terms of needs for technical assistance, which are of two types, **horizontal ones** relevant to all Operational Programmes financed under European Structural and Investment Funds and **specific ones,** relevant to the 2 Programmes supported by the ERDF and Cohesion Funds that will be served by the Operational Programme Technical Assistance since they do not have a Technical Assistance Priority Axis.

The **horizontal needs** are centred on three main issues:

- **Beneficiaries and information and publicity**: beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of European Structural and Investment Funds do not have sufficient capacity for the development and implementation of projects which translates into an identified need for beneficiaries to receive support that develops their capacity, in terms of project management.

  Moreover, there is a further need for creation of awareness about the financing opportunities made available which results not only from EU legal requirements, but also from a level of awareness which can be improved and contribute to higher absorption of funds.

Furthermore, a closer cooperation and communication between relevant stakeholders and institutions of the ESIF implementation system is needed, in order to enhance the absorption of funds and implementation of projects.

- **ESIF system:** the existence of an overregulated system, complicated procedures, excessive bureaucracy and high administrative burden slowed and sometimes blocked the implementation processes at the levels of structures and authorities involved in the implementation of Structural Funds. Moreover, **SMIS functioning** was challenging, with little coordination and integration capacity with other applications. This situation led to the need to improve SMIS and related applications, to constantly maintain them and update the, to train users, to create guides and other support instruments that facilitate the use of the information system and enhance its monitoring and storage functions in ESIF implementation.
- **Human resources:** insufficient and demotivated staff contributed to a deficient management of structural funds, and Section 1 of the OPTA identifies the need to develop an integrated and long term human resources policy, the need to train staff, to provide clear lists of tasks and responsibilities for staff, and also to reimburse the salary cost for the staff of structures in the public administration that are part of the system for coordination and control of ESI.

The **specific needs** of **Large Infrastructure OP, Competitiveness OP** and **Technical Assistance OP** identified also according to the structure of the three major themes, and are the following:

- **Beneficiaries:** low capacity of beneficiaries to implement projects translates into the need for specific training at the level of **beneficiary** public institutions, on issues identified in the training needs analysis, strengthening capacity to prepare, implement and manage projects, as well as to develop major and strategic projects portfolios. Also, with respect to communication activity, the OP TA correctly identifies the need to support specific **information and publicity** needs of LIOP.
- **ESIF system**: the needs identified refer to support for **management structures** to implement the OPs, in terms of evaluation, projects contracting, monitoring, reimbursement requests approval, but also to develop a functional monitoring system at a centralised level. As far as the information system is concerned, no specific needs are defined for LI OP, COP and OPTA. However, this is not problematic, as the information system is a horizontal and overarching component of the ESIF system.
- **Human resources:** the needs identified refer to trainings that are specific to each OP, with an accent on major projects management (LIOP), state aid for research, evaluation and implementation of IT projects, of research projects etc. **Reimbursement of salary costs** will also be applicable to LIOP, COP and OPTA.

Overall Programme Strategy

Based on such needs the overall objective of the OPTA 2014-2020 is to ensure the necessary capacity and instruments for an efficient coordination, management and control of interventions financed by ESIF, as well as an efficient, well-oriented and correct implementation of OPTA, LIOP and COP.

In order to achieve this objective, the Programming document identifies three priority axes each corresponding to one the main challenges identified both at horizontal and specific level, with corresponding specific objectives and expected results.

The following sections present an analysis of the intervention logic of each priority axis, stemming from the consistency between the needs and the specific objectives and expected results set and continuing with an analysis of the relevance of selected actions to the achievement of such objectives.

PA 1. Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects funded by ESIF and dissemination of information regarding these funds

Section 1 of the Programme presents **needs** which refer to **beneficiaries' capacity** to manage projects, more specifically to identify projects, prepare qualitative project applications, to carry out public procurement, to prepare technical and economic documentation required for project activities.

Also, identified needs refer to **visibility and communication**, more specifically to a relatively low awareness level of the general public regarding the ESI Funds and lack of interest with respect to European Funds. Needs also include the Information Centre, which is an essential instrument for the implementation of the Communication Plan.

These needs are addressed through **two specific objectives**, one focusing on beneficiaries' capacity and one on information and publicity activities, as presented below.

Specific objective 1.1 **"Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects"** is consistent with the ***needs*** identified in section 1 of the OPTA, addressing the need for improvement of beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement projects. Moreover, the specific objective reflects a desired change in beneficiaries' capacity, and the specific objective is unique, without referring to multiple components.

This specific objective is estimated to lead to the expected result to increase the effectiveness of project preparation and implementation, result which is well correlated with the specific objective. Moreover, the SO 1.1 is consistent with the result indicator attributed to it, projects which have an absorption rate of more than 70%, out of all projects whose development was supported through OPTA (%), as it captures an effect of the actions on beneficiaries and it is relevant in measuring the beneficiaries' capacity.

In order to achieve the result of this objective, two main **actions** were defined for SO 1.1. The first action aims to respond to the problem of low capacity of beneficiaries by supporting *horizontal **trainings** for ESIF potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries and specific training for the beneficiaries of the OPTA, LIOP and COP.*

Specific actions, which are implemented through the forms of support of grants, cover horizontal training for potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries of ESIF, short term expertise, training and exchange of experience for ITI. As presented in the analysis of **forms of support,** these are appropriate and adequate for the specific objective and they will contribute to its realisation.

The second action refers to **assistance** provided to beneficiaries, more specifically to *horizontal assistance for ESIF beneficiaries and specific assistance for OPTA, LIOP and COP beneficiaries,* and it also includes Romanian beneficiaries of European Territorial Cooperation programmes. Specific **forms of support** here cover development of instructions, manuals, good practice guides and procedures. For OPTA, LIOP and COP beneficiaries, help desks will be supported, as well as assistance for project portfolios development. For the Danube Delta ITI interventions such as remuneration, logistic support for staff, event organising and preparation, coordination, update, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these strategic documents will be supported.

Specific objective 1.2 **"Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy"** is **consistent** with the development ***needs*** identified in Section 1 of the OPTA, addressing the need of transparent and more effective communication. The specific objective reflects **a desired change** in the **awareness level about ESIF an EU Cohesion policy**.

This specific objective will lead to the **expected result** of *increase of awareness level regarding EU co-financed projects*. This result captures well the component of the specific objective related to information and publicity. The **result indicator** attributed to the SO, *Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU*, is consistent with the specific objective and relevant for it.

In order to achieve the result of this objective, **two main actions** were defined for SO 1.2. The **first action** aims to respond to the need for information and publicity activities by supporting the d*issemination of information and carrying out of informing and publicity activities regarding ESIF as well as for OPTA, LIOP and COP.*

Specific actions, implemented through grants, cover conferences and information events, promotion activities related to ESIF, seminars and promotion activities for the mass-media, elaboration, translation, publication and dissemination of information materials, information campaigns via media, development and maintenance of portal www.fonduri-ue.ro, support for the Information Centre and the 41 regional centres, and other similar operations.

These specific actions are relevant and appropriate for the action regarding information and publicity, and are consistent with the specific objective. The **second action** refers to **support of collaboration and partnership culture** for relevant actors of the system, more specifically to *developing the partnership culture for the coordination and management of ESIF.* **Specific forms of support** refer to seminars, round tables, workshops, training sessions to facilitate network communication, which are relevant for the action related to partnership culture and to SO 1.2.

PA 2. Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF

Apart from needs of beneficiaries and communication activities, the OPTA identifies challenges in the area of the **system for coordination, management and control of ESIF**, as well as of the **information system** used for information management at ESIF system level.

The first category of needs covers the simplification of procedures and provision of instruments that reduce the bureaucracy, to improve capacity to carry out public procurement activities, and to better prioritise among strategic directions, based on objective information. It also refers to the need for evaluation, and the improvement of the evaluation culture. More specifically, it refers to perform both compulsory and ad-hoc evaluation on which to base decisions, but also to the need to train the staff in MEF on evaluation.

The second category of needs concerns the limitations of SMIS configuration and functioning, the need to update SMIS and related applications, and to familiarise users with SMIS specificity. These two categories of needs are captured in the specific objectives presented below.

Specific objective 2.1 **"Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF"** is consistent with the identified problems of the management system, related to the regulatory framework and procedures, and also indirectly including the evaluation need. Moreover, the specific objective reflects a **desired change in the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework**, and the specific objective is unique, without referring to multiple components.

This specific objective is estimated to lead to an **expected result** of an *improved regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF,* result which is well correlated with the specific objective. The **result indicator** attributed to it, *the share of beneficiaries who find the procedures for ESI funds appropriate,* is consistent with the specific objective, capturing the desired change that it proposes.

In order to achieve the result of this objective, two main **actions** are defined for SO 2.1. The first action aims to respond to the problem of weak regulatory, procedural and strategic framework by *improving the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP.* Specific **forms of support** here cover studies, analyses, strategies on programming, implementation, monitoring and control and related to ex-ante conditionality, exchange of experience and dissemination of good practice, logistic and functioning support for MAs and IBs, organisation of meetings for LIOP, COP and OPTA, activities that support the transposition of EU Directives regarding public procurement into national legislation. Through analysis it was observed that these forms of support are appropriate for the action they are part of and for the specific objective.

The second action of the SO refers to **evaluation,** more specifically to *evaluation at the level of PA and OPTA, LIOP and COP level and increasing the evaluation culture for ESIF.* **Specific actions,** provided in the form of grants, cover realisations of evaluation included in the Partnership Agreement, professional training for staff involved in evaluation, connection to European and international evaluation networks, development of a quality monitoring and evaluation system, development of a statistical system for ESIF. These forms of support are appropriate and relevant both for the action regarding evaluation culture, and for the SO 2.1.

Specific objective 2.2 **"Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users**" is consistent with the development needs included in Section 1 of the OPTA, which make reference to the limitations of the information

system which hamper the good management of the ESIF. Moreover, the specific objective reflects a **desired change** in **the information system**, and the specific objective is singular, without referring to multiple components.

This specific objective is estimated to lead to an **expected result** to obtain a *functional and integrated information system which generates correct and timely data, for a correct and efficient management of operational programmes*. This result captures well the component of the specific objective related to the information system, expected result which is well correlated with the specific objective. The **result indicator** attributed to it, *The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations at the level of the OP (AIR, performance framework reporting, expenditure declarations)*, is consistent with the specific objective, capturing the desired change that it proposes.

In order to achieve the result of this objective, one main **action** was defined for SO 2.2. to respond to the identified needs, *Development, improvement and maintenance of SMIS 2014+, MySMIS 2014+ and other related applications, as well as of the digital network and support for the SMIS 2014+ Central Unit, of the network of coordinators and training the users of these information systems.* Specific forms of support here cover studies and analyses regarding SMIS 2014+ and related software, elaboration of manuals of procedures, SMIS central unit – maintenance costs, administrative costs, training for users, Development, testing and installation of SMIS 2014+ and related applications, development, testing and installation of SMIS 2014+ and related applications, help-desk for users. Through analysis of specific action, provided through grants, it was observed that these types of intervention were used in OPTA 2007-2013 as well, but recorded a low performance, both in physical and financial terms. However, these are wide-spread measures for this type of activity, and benchmark has shown their use in other countries as well, underlining the fact that other factors such as excessive workload, lack of sufficient staff, poor communication, may be hampering the performance of such interventions.

PA 3. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania

The needs assessment of OPTA also makes reference to **human resources specific needs**, such as increasing the motivation of staff, developing their skills on themes that concern day-to-day activity but also specific topics. Moreover, the need to cover salary costs for structures in the public administration that are part of the system for coordination and control of ESIF. These needs are captured in specific objective 3.1, presented below. .

Specific objective 3.1 **"Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds"** is consistent with the identified needs included in Section 1 of the OP, addressing the issue of staff motivation, qualification and stability, as well as the development of an improved human resources policy. Moreover, the specific objective reflects a **desired change** in **management of information needed for the coordination and control of ESIF**, and the specific objective is singular, without referring to multiple components.

This specific objective is estimated to lead to an **expected result** of m*otivated, accountable, stable and highly qualified staff of the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds,* result which is well correlated with the specific objective. Moreover, the SO 3.1 is consistent with the **result indicators** attributed to it, *average of grades obtained at evaluation of staff from the coordination, management and control system* of ESIF and *annual average staff turnover in ESIF system structures: <10%,* as they captures an effect of the action ESIF structures' staff and are relevant in measuring the motivation, accountability and stability of staff.

In order to achieve the result of this specific objective, two main **actions** were defined for SO 3.1.

The **first action** aims to respond to the need to develop an improved policy for human resources management and quality by supporting *the implementation of a **horizontal human resources policy** and the development of the management capacity for the coordination, management and control system of ESIF.*

Specific actions, provided in the form of grants, cover innovative training sessions for staff, training activities, for staff in HR units in ESIF structures, continuous training on state aid, environment regulation, risk management, internal audit, financial management and control, European and national regulation, equality of chances, programming, monitoring, project monitoring and evaluation, management competencies, financial instruments, personalized training in human resources management, training on public procurement, development of human resources policies, analyses to identify training needs for staff. Moreover, exchange of experience activities, dissemination of good practices will be supported, as well as a performance audit regarding the impact of human resources policy implementation over the ESIF system. The forms of support analysis concluded that these operations are suitable for the action they are part of, because some were used in OPTA 2007-2013 as well, and they are used by other Member States.

The **second action** refers to need for **salary reimbursement** for the staff, more specifically to *ensuring the financial resources for the remuneration of the personnel in the ESIF coordination and control system and from the OPTA, LIOP and COP management system.* Specific forms of support here cover reimbursement of salary staff, which is the appropriate operation for this action.

Table 24: First level of intervention logic analysis

Needs identified	Specific objective	Expected results	Specific objective reflects change	Multiple objective
PA 1. Strengthen beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement ESIF financed projects, and dissemination of information regarding these funds				
1. Administrative capacity of beneficiaries in the preparation and implementation of projects financed from ESIF and information and communication regarding ESIF and partnership culture in the management and implementation of ESIF 1.1. The need to strengthen the project management capacity of beneficiaries of ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP as a robust basis for further development 1.2 The need for information and publicity regarding ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP, as well as the development of partnership culture in the implementation of ESIF	SO 1.1. Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects	Increased effectiveness in project preparation and implementation	YES **"strengthening** the capacity"	NO
	SO 1.2. Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	Increased awareness level regarding EU co-financed projects	YES "**Increased** awareness level"	NO
PA 2. Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF				
2. Administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of ESIF, including by ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS. 2.1. Need to improve the legal and procedural framework for the coordination and control of ESIF, as well as management of OPTA, LIOP and COP 2.2. The need to develop and improve SMIS, and electronic information exchange systems	SO 2.1. Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	Improved regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	YES "**Improved** regulatory, strategic and procedural framework"	NO
	SO 2.2. Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	Functional and integrated information system which generates correct and timely data, for a correct and efficient management of operational programmes	YES "Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system"	NO
PA 3. Increasing the efficiency of the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania				
3. Human resources involved in the coordination, management and control for projects financed with SI / ESIF - including training of staff from these structures. 3.1.1. The need for development of an improved human resources quality and management policy for the staff involved in the coordination, management and control of ESIF	SO 3.1. Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI fund	Motivated, accountable, stable and highly qualified staff of the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds	YES "improved human resources management policy"	NO

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion	Recommendations
Needs assessments	
C1. The needs identified in Section 1 of the OP provide a **clear and structured image of the local context** in terms of needs for technical assistance and they cover relevant themes. The **needs are structured around 3 major categories**, referring to beneficiaries and information and publicity, the ESIF system and human resources with a distinction between needs for horizontal support and specific support for LIOP, COP and OPTA. The needs are presented in a hierarchical structure, as displayed in the below: **1. Administrative capacity of beneficiaries** in the preparation and implementation of projects financed from ESIF and information and communication regarding ESIF and partnership culture in the management and implementation of ESIF - 1.1. The need to strengthen the project management capacity of beneficiaries of ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP as a robust basis for further development - 1.2 The need for information and publicity regarding ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP, as well as the development of partnership culture in the implementation of ESIF **2. Administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of ESIF,** including by ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS. - 2.1. Need to improve the legal and procedural framework for the coordination and control of ESIF, as well as management of OPTA, LIOP and COP - 2.2. The need to develop and improve SMIS, and electronic information exchange systems **3. Human resources** involved in the coordination, management and control for projects financed with SI / ESIF - including training of staff from these structures. - 3.1. The need for development of an improved human resources quality and management policy for staff involved in the coordination, management and control of ESIF C2. The main points outlined by the needs assessment are supported by **evidence information**, by making reference to a variety of reports, or other relevant national and European documents	*No specific recommendations*
Overall Programme Strategy	
C3. Overall, the logic of intervention of the OPTA is **coherent and follows a logical structure**, starting from identification of **needs** which are grouped into three categories. These needs are addressed through three **priority axes**. PA 1 has two specific objectives and it focuses on beneficiaries and information and communication activities. PA 2 has two specific objectives and it is centred on the ESIF system overall, and the information management system. PA 3 is concentrated around the human resources of the ESIF structures. The **specific objectives** are consistent with the needs identified, and they capture them appropriately. The **expected results** of these specific objectives correctly envisage a desired change. Moreover, the result indicators are relevant for the specific objective, and the **actions** proposed for each specific objective are appropriate. The specific actions proposed for the specific objectives, which are implemented through grants, are suitable for the action.	*No specific recommendations*

4.2. EQ 2.2 Forms of support

EQ 2.2	Are the proposed support forms the most appropriate?

4.2.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 2.2

The analyses performed under this evaluation sub-question are aimed at assessing the relevance of forms of support (Actions) considering the support forms of similar key areas of intervention adopted under the OPTA in the period 2007-2013, those adopted by Member States with a high level of absorption and those proposed by a sample of Member States for which Draft Technical Assistance Programmes were available for the period 2014-2020.

According to Art. 66 of the Common Provisions Regulation, the forms which can be used by ESIF to provide support are grants, prizes, repayable assistance and financial instruments, or a combination of these.

OPTA does not explicitly mention or differentiate between the forms of support it will use to provide assistance, and the types of actions supported indicate that grants will be used in order to implement the projects.

However, in order to assess whether the planned interventions are suitable to obtain the envisaged results, the evaluators analysed the specific actions supported, all of which will be implemented through grants. This analysis was twofold, as it took into consideration the previous exercise of OPTA in 2007-2013, and also a benchmarking analysis with other Member States.

With respect to previous experience of OPTA, the evaluators compared the proposed specific actions of OPTA 2014-2020 with similar interventions from 2007-2013, and considered their physical and financial performance, in order to understand the appropriateness of such actions in the new OPTA 2014 - 2020.

As far as international benchmarking is concerned, the proposed specific actions of OPTA 2014-2020 were compared to specific actions from various Member States, to observe whether those actions are common and used by other state as well. The programmes considered for the benchmarking are OPTA Slovakia 2007-2013, OPTA Poland 2007-2013, proposals for technical assistance intervention in 2014-2020 in Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Denmark and France.

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OP versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 25: Data collection tools used for EQ 2.2

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Forms of support table	☒	☒	☑	☑
Table on the evaluation of the appropriateness of support forms	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis (Needs analysis – section 1 of the	☒	☒	☑	☑

OPTA, Section 2 of the OPTA)				
Interviews with MEF representatives	☒	☒	☑	☑
Panel of experts	☒	☒	☑	☑
Workshop with beneficiaries	☒	☒	☑	☑
Benchmarking with other Member States	☒	☑	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 26: Feedback received for EQ 2.2

Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
In order to ensure a good performance of forms of support related to information management system, the Programmer should take into consideration measures to increase the capacity of the system (SMIS central Unit) to carry out its tasks, and therefore to contribute to a better performance of these actions	Implementation of this recommendation cannot be approached by the OPTA document
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas if improvement	Status of implementation
In order to avoid blockages in the information management system and low performance of the OPTA overall, the Ministry of European Funds should take into account measures which can increase the capacity of the SMIS Central Unit, and which cannot be approached by the OPTA (such as increasing the staff of the Unit).	N/A The remarks mentioned in R2 refers to actions that the Ministry of European Funds could take, and it is not in the scope of the OPTA to introduce such a change.

4.2.2. Answer to the evaluation question

This report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report. For each of the analysis performed, the following paragraphs include a summary of the Evaluator's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 27: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current Report
Data analysis tools	
Forms of support table	☑
Table on the evaluation of the appropriateness of support forms	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis (Needs analysis – section 1 of the OPTA, Section 2 of the OPTA)	☑
Interviews with MEF representatives	☑
Panel of experts	☑
Workshop with beneficiaries	☑
Benchmarking with other Member States	☑

In order to analyse the appropriateness of forms of support and their correspondent specific actions, the evaluation team took into consideration the performance of forms of support of OPTA 2007-2013, as reflected by the performance of indicators at the level of Priority Axis. Data was obtained from the annual Implementation Report of OPTA from 2013. In addition, the assessment considered the Benchmarking Analysis prepared by the evaluation team with respect to actions financed by other Member States

technical assistance interventions for 2014-2020. Moreover, examples of forms of support included in technical assistance operational programme were taken from the TA OPs of Slovakia and Poland for 2007-2013.

Synthesized findings are provided below, and the detailed analysis table is provided afterward, followed by conclusions and recommendations.

Findings

Overall, the **forms of support and specific actions** proposed by OPTA are **appropriate** to contribute to the realisation of the specific objective. More detailed conclusions related to the appropriateness of the forms of support and specific actions in respect to the specific objective to which they correspond have been presented in the previous section regarding the intervention logic.

In the case of PA 1, support for beneficiaries is provided in a similar manner in other member states as well, and has also been financed under OPTA 2007-2013. With respect to communication activities, the specific activities financed are also appropriate, and these types of interventions were financed in 2007-2013 and in other countries as well. However, the low absorption of funds should be noted.

For PA 2, all proposed actions are appropriate, as similar interventions were financed in countries such as Slovakia and Poland, and will be financed in 2014-2020 in Member States Lithuania, Estonia, France and Denmark. Moreover, a large part of the actions were also financed in 2007-2013 OPTA, and physical performance exceeded 100%, with the exception of training days for system staff involved in evaluation. Specific actions related to the information management system that were used in 2007-2013, and which are also envisaged in the current OP, did not have a high performance, neither physically, nor financially. However, this does not diminish their appropriateness, but draws attention on other factors that may hamper their performance, such as insufficient staff, excessive workload. Communication with relevant stakeholders revealed the fact that there was an issue of low capacity at the level of the SMIS central unit

In the case of PA 3, the specific activities are suitable for the action that they contribute to, that is to provide support for HR of management structures, in terms of human resources policy and also salary reimbursement. These types of measures were also present in OPTA 2007-2013, and financial performance of the group of indicators related to support for staff in management structures was of 57.8%, according to the OPTA Annual Implementation Report 2013.

Findings:

As presented under the previous evaluation question, the Programmer has selected a relevant and appropriate mix of actions in order to achieve the specific objectives and expected results described at the level of Priority Axis

Table 28: Specific activities for the forms of support of the OP

OPTA 2014-2020		OPTA 2007-2013					MEMBER STATES BENCHMARKING		APPROPRIATENESS
Action	**Target group**	**Priority axis**	**Indicators**	**Target Group**	**Achievement rate indicators 2013**	**Financial performance 2013**	**2007-2013**	**2014-2020**	
Studies, analyses, strategies on programming, implementation, monitoring and control and related to ex-ante conditionality (SO 2.1)	Management structures	PA 1 – Support for implementation of structural instruments and coordination of programmes	Studies, analyses, reports, strategies (no.)	Beneficiaries Structural Instruments institutional system	158,7% (149 units realised /121 units targeted)	* for indicators related to support provided to beneficiaries and to system structures, no separation can be done between the performance of the former and of the latter, because they were both included in PA 1 in OPTA 2007-2013, and financial results are provided at PA level.	Slovakia	Lithuania Estonia	YES This form of support is appropriate as it has been successfully used in OPTA 2007 – 2013. Benchmark analysis revealed that similar forms of support were used in Slovakia in 2007-2013, and will be used in Lithuania and Estonia in 2014 - 2020
Studies, analyses, strategies on programming, implementation, monitoring and control and related to ex-ante conditionality (SO 2.1)	Management structures	PA 1 – Support for implementation of structural instruments and coordination of programmes	Guides and methodological documents (no.)	Beneficiaries Structural Instruments institutional system	328,6% (46 units realised /14 units targeted)		Slovakia	Lithuania Estonia	YES This form of support is appropriate as it has been successfully used in OPTA 2007 – 2013. Benchmark analysis revealed that similar forms of support were used in Slovakia in 2007-2013, and will be used in Lithuania and Estonia in 2014 - 2020
Exchange of experience and dissemination of good practice (SO 2.1) Provision of short term expertise, remuneration, training and exchange of experience for ITI and growth poles coordinators (SO 1.1)	Management structures Project beneficiaries	PA 1 – Support for implementation of structural instruments and coordination of programmes	Events related to exchange of experience regarding funds implementation and thematic aspects (no.)	Beneficiaries Structural Instruments institutional system	263,6% (29 units realised /11 units targeted)		Slovakia	Poland France	YES These two forms of support are appropriate as they have been successfully used in OPTA 2007 – 2013. Benchmark analysis revealed that similar forms of support were used in Slovakia in 2007-2013, and will be used in Poland and France in 2014 - 2020
Logistic support for MAs and IBs, organisation of meetings for LIOP, COP and OPTA (SO 2.1)	Management structures	PA 1 – Support for implementation of structural instruments and coordination of programmes	Meetings of relevant committees and working groups (no.)	Relevant committees and working groups	109,2% (142 units realised /117 units targeted)		Slovakia	Poland Lithuania France Denmark	YES This form of support is appropriate as it has been successfully used in OPTA 2007 – 2013. Benchmark analysis revealed that similar forms of support were used in Slovakia in 2007-2013, and will be used in Poland, Lithuania, France and Denmark in 2014 - 2020
Horizontal training for potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries of ESIF (SO 1.1) Training impact analyses (SO 1.1)	Project beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries	PA 1 – Support for implementation of structural instruments and coordination of programmes	Trainings for beneficiaries (man days of training)	Beneficiaries	13,3% (5,569 units realised /42,000 units targeted)			Poland France Estonia	YES This form of support is appropriate because it responds to an identified need, and similar forms of support will be used in Poland, France and Estonia in 2014 – 2020. However, this type of form of support was not performant in 2007 - 2013 programming period.
Professional training for staff involved in evaluation (SO 2.1) Training activities, for staff in HR units in ESIF structures (SO 3.1) Horizontal training sessions (SO 3.1) Innovative training sessions for staff (SO 3.1) Continuous training on state aid, environment regulation, risk management,	Management structures HR from management structures HR from management structures HR from management structures HR from coordination,	PA 1 – Support for implementation of structural instruments and coordination of programmes	Trainings for management structures	Management structures	57,8% (16,185 units realised /10,185 units targeted)	* for indicators related to support provided to beneficiaries and to system structures, no separation can be done between the performance of the former and of the latter, because they were both included in PA 1 in OPTA 2007-2013, and financial results are provided at PA level.	Slovakia Poland	Lithuania Poland Estonia	YES These forms of support are appropriate because they have been relatively successfully used in OPTA 2007 – 2013. Moreover, similar forms of support were used in Slovakia and Poland in 2007-2013, and will be used in Lithuania, Poland and Estonia in 2014 - 2020

OPTA 2014-2020		OPTA 2007-2013					MEMBER STATES BENCHMARKING		APPROPRIATENESS
Action	**Target group**	**Priority axis**	**Indicators**	**Target Group**	**Achievement rate indicators 2013**	**Financial performance 2013**	**2007-2013**	**2014-2020**	
internal audit, financial management and control, European and national regulation, equality of chances, programming, monitoring, project monitoring and evaluation, management competencies, financial instruments (SO 3.1) Personalized training in human resources management (SO 3.1) Training on public procurement (SO 3.1) Specific training for LIOP, COP and OPTA (SO 3.1)	management and control structures								
Studies and analyses regarding SMIS 2014+ and related software (SO 2.2)		PA 2 – Continuous development and support for SMIS functioning	Studies, analyses, reports, strategies (SMIS related) (no.)	Beneficiaries Structural Instruments institutional system	40% (2 units realised /5 units targeted)	6,35% (3,987,191 lei absorbed / 62,812,092 lei allocated)	Slovakia		YES This form of support is appropriate, despite its low physical performance in 2007 – 2013, because it targets a specific need of the system, related to SMIS malfunctions and difficulties. Moreover, a similar form of support was also used in Slovakia in 2007 – 2013.
Elaboration of manuals of procedures (SO 2.2)	SMIS Users	PA 2 – Continuous development and support for SMIS functioning	Guides and methodological documents (SMIS related) (no.)	Beneficiaries Structural Instruments institutional system	41,7% (10 units realised /24 units targeted)	6,35% (3,987,191 lei absorbed / 62,812,092 lei allocated)	Slovakia		YES This form of support is appropriate, despite its low physical performance in 2007 – 2013, because it targets a specific need of the system, related to SMIS malfunctions and difficulties. Moreover, a similar form of support was also used in Slovakia in 2007 – 2013.
N/A		PA 2 – Continuous development and support for SMIS functioning	Events related to exchange of experience regarding funds implementation and thematic aspects (SMIS related) (no.)	Beneficiaries Structural Instruments institutional system	17,9% (5 units realised /28 units targeted)	6,35% (3,987,191 lei absorbed / 62,812,092 lei allocated)	N/A	N/A	N/A
SMIS central unit – maintenance costs, administrative costs (SO 2.2)	Management structures – SMIS Central Unit	PA 2 – Continuous development and support for SMIS functioning	Meetings of relevant committees and working groups (SMIS related) (no.)	Relevant committees and working groups	0 (0/28)	6,35% (3,987,191 lei absorbed / 62,812,092 lei allocated)		Poland	YES Despite the low performance of this form of support in 2007-2013, this action is adequate in order to support the development, use and maintenance of SMIS 2014+ and related applications. Moreover, a similar measure will be used in Poland.
Training for users (SO 2.2)	SMIS users	PA 2 – Continuous development and support for SMIS functioning	Trainings for management structures	Management structures	31,2% (6,237/20,000)	6,35% (3,987,191 lei absorbed / 62,812,092 lei allocated)	Slovakia		YES Despite the low performance of this form of support in 2007-2013, this action is adequate in order to support the development, use and maintenance of SMIS 2014+ and related applications. Moreover, a similar measure was used in Slovakia.
Development, testing and installation of SMIS 2014+ and related applications (SO 2.2)	Management structures and SMIS users	PA 2 – Continuous development and support for SMIS functioning	SMIS versions (no.)	Beneficiaries Structural Instruments	80% (4/5)	6,35% (3,987,191 lei absorbed / 62,812,092 lei allocated)	Slovakia	Poland Denmark	YES Despite the low performance of this form of support in 2007-2013, this action is adequate in order to support the development, use and maintenance of SMIS 2014+ and related applications. Moreover, a

OPTA 2014-2020		OPTA 2007-2013					MEMBER STATES BENCHMARKING		APPROPRIATENESS
Action	**Target group**	**Priority axis**	**Indicators**	**Target Group**	**Achievement rate indicators 2013**	**Financial performance 2013**	**2007-2013**	**2014-2020**	
				institutional system					similar measure was used in Slovakia, and will be used in Poland and Denmark.
Development, testing and installation of SMIS 2014+ and related applications (SO 2.2)		PA 2 – Continuous development and support for SMIS functioning	SMIS related applications (no.)	Beneficiaries Structural Instruments institutional system	33,3% (1/3)	6,35% (3,987,191 lei absorbed / 62,812,092 lei allocated)	Slovakia	Poland	YES Despite the low performance of this form of support in 2007-2013, this action is adequate in order to support the development, use and maintenance of SMIS 2014+ and related applications. Moreover, a similar measure was used in Slovakia, and will be used in Poland.
Help-desk for users (SO 2.2)	SMIS users	PA 2 – Continuous development and support for SMIS functioning	Help-desk (no.)	Beneficiaries Structural Instruments institutional system	0% (0 / 420 requests)	6,35% (3,987,191 lei absorbed / 62,812,092 lei allocated)	N/A	N/A	YES Despite the very low performance of this form of support in 2007-2013, this action is adequate in order to support the development, use and maintenance of SMIS 2014+ and related applications.
N/A	N/A	PA 3 – Dissemination of information and promotion of structural instruments	Studies, analyses, reports, strategies (no.)	Beneficiaries of EU funded projects	14,3% (4/28)	6,35% (3,987,191 lei absorbed / 62,812,092 lei allocated)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Conferences and information events (SO 1.2) Promotion activities related to ESIF (SO 1.2) Information campaigns on risk of irregularities and fraud (SO 1.2) Seminars and promotion activities for the mass-media (SO 1.2) Seminars, round tables, workshops, training sessions to facilitate network communication (SO 1.2)	General public General public General public Mass-media	PA 3 – Dissemination of information and promotion of structural instruments	Communication and promotion events (no.)	Beneficiaries of EU funded projects	20.8% (25/120)	8,86% (3,550,354 lei absorbed / 40,064,489 lei allocated)	Poland Slovakia	Poland Lithuania France Denmark	YES These forms of support related to information and publicity activities are appropriate because they directly target the specific objective 1.2, despite their relatively low performance in 2007-2013. Moreover, similar forms of support were used in Poland and Slovakia in 2007-2013, and will be used in Lithuania, Poland France and Denmark in 2014 - 2020
Elaboration, translation, publication and dissemination of information materials (SO 1.2)	General public	PA 3 – Dissemination of information and promotion of structural instruments	Information and publicity materials (no.)	Beneficiaries of EU funded projects	33,3% (24/72)	8,86% (3,550,354 lei absorbed / 40,064,489 lei allocated)		Lithuania	YES This form of support related to information and publicity activities is appropriate despite its relatively low performance in 2007-2013. Moreover, similar forms of support will be used in Lithuania in 2014 – 2020.
Information campaigns via media (TV, radio and others) (SO 1.2)	General public	PA 3 – Dissemination of information and promotion of structural instruments	Mass-media campaigns (no.)	Beneficiaries of EU funded projects	30% (3/10)	8,86% (3,550,354 lei absorbed / 40,064,489 lei allocated)	Poland Slovakia	Poland Lithuania	YES This form of support related to information and publicity activities is appropriate despite its relatively low performance in 2007-2013. Moreover, similar forms of support were used in Poland and Slovakia in 2007-2013, and will be used in Lithuania and Poland in 2014-2020.
Development and maintenance of portal www.fonduri-ue.ro (SO 1.2)	General public	PA 3 – Dissemination of information and promotion of structural instruments	Web page (no.)	Beneficiaries of EU funded projects	182,5% (1,824,845 / 1,000,000)	8,86% (3,550,354 lei absorbed / 40,064,489 lei allocated)	Slovakia	Poland Lithuania	YES This form of support related to information and publicity activities is appropriate, and, moreover, mandatory through EU regulation. Similar forms of support were used in Slovakia in 2007-2013, and

OPTA 2014-2020		OPTA 2007-2013					MEMBER STATES BENCHMARKING		APPROPRIATENESS
Action	**Target group**	**Priority axis**	**Indicators**	**Target Group**	**Achievement rate indicators 2013**	**Financial performance 2013**	**2007-2013**	**2014-2020**	
									will be used in Lithuania and Poland in 2014-2020.
Support for the Information Centre and the 41 regional centres – staff remuneration, purchase of books and materials, communication activities (SO 1.2)	General public	PA 3 – Dissemination of information and promotion of structural instruments	Information Centre (no.)	Beneficiaries of EU funded projects	12,6% (5,059/40,000)	8,86% (3,550,354 lei absorbed / 40,064,489 lei allocated)	Slovakia	Poland	YES This form of support related to information and publicity activities is appropriate despite its relatively low performance in 2007-2013. Moreover, similar forms of support were used in Slovakia in 2007-2013, and will be used in Poland in 2014-2020.
Population awareness campaigns (SO 1.2)	General public	PA 3 – Dissemination of information and promotion of structural instruments	Population awareness level (no.)	Beneficiaries of EU funded projects	353,3% (53/15)	8,86% (3,550,354 lei absorbed / 40,064,489 lei allocated)		Poland	YES This form of support related to information and publicity activities is appropriate. Moreover, similar forms of support were will be used in Poland in 2014-2020.
Help-desk for beneficiaries (SO 1.1)	Project beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		Denmark	YES This form of support related to support for beneficiaries is appropriate. Moreover, similar forms of support were will be used in Denmark in 2014-2020.
Development of organizational models and specific instruments for project management for key public beneficiaries, including elaboration, printing and dissemination of materials (SO 1.1)	Project beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		Poland (training on key areas)	YES This form of support related to support for beneficiaries is appropriate. Moreover, similar forms of support were will be used in Poland in 2014-2020.
Support for project management, judicial assistance, management systems analysis and evaluation, assistance for their improvement, assistance for document management systems modernization for main beneficiaries of LIOP (SO 1.1)	Project beneficiaries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		Poland (training on key areas) France	YES This form of support related to support for beneficiaries is appropriate. Moreover, similar forms of support were will be used in Poland and France in 2014-2020.
Opinion polls on the impact of information campaigns (SO 1.2)	General public	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		Poland Estonia	YES This form of support related to information and publicity activities is appropriate. Moreover, similar forms of support were will be used in Poland and Estonia in 2014-2020.
Organization and functioning of inter-institutional coordination mechanism (SO 1.2)	Relevant stakeholders	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		Poland	YES This form of support related to information and publicity activities is appropriate. Moreover, similar forms of support were will be used in Poland in 2014-2020.
Development of a communication and information network (SO 2.1)	Management structures, evaluation purposes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		Lithuania	YES This form of support related to information network for management structures is appropriate. Moreover, similar forms of support were will be used in Lithuania in 2014-2020.
Connection to European and international evaluation networks (SO 2.1)	Management structures, evaluation purposes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		Lithuania	YES This form of support related to Connection to European and international evaluation networks is appropriate. Moreover, similar forms of support were will be used in Lithuania in 2014-2020.

OPTA 2014-2020		OPTA 2007-2013					MEMBER STATES BENCHMARKING		APPROPRIATENESS
Action	**Target group**	**Priority axis**	**Indicators**	**Target Group**	**Achievement rate indicators 2013**	**Financial performance 2013**	**2007-2013**	**2014-2020**	
Development of a quality monitoring and evaluation system (SO 2.1)	Management structures, evaluation purposes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		France Poland	YES This form of support is appropriate. Moreover, similar forms of support were will be used in France and Poland in 2014-2020.
Development of a statistical system for ESIF (SO 2.1)	Management structures, evaluation purposes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			YES This form of support is appropriate. Moreover, it is also a request deriving from ex-ante conditionalities.
Expertise and consultancy for coordination and functioning of SMIS network (SO 2.2)		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Slovakia	Poland	YES This form of support is appropriate for the coordination and functioning of SMIS. Moreover, similar measures will were used by Slovakia in 2007-2013 and will be used by Poland in 2014-2020.
Promotion of less known modules and components of SMIS 2014+ and related applications (SO 2.2)		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			YES This form of support is appropriate for a more efficient functioning of SMIS 2014+ and related applications.
Analyses, strategies and evaluations that fundament the management activity of human resources (SO 3.1)	HR of management structures	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Slovakia	Poland	YES This form of support is appropriate. Similar measures will were used by Slovakia in 2007-2013 and will be used by Poland in 2014-2020.
Development of human resources policies (SO 3.1)	HR of management structures	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		Lithuania Estonia	YES This form of support is appropriate. Similar measures will be used by Lithuania and Estonia in 2014-2020.
Analyses to identify training needs for staff (SO 3.1)	HR of management structures	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		Estonia	YES This form of support is appropriate. Similar measures will be used by Estonia in 2014-2020.
Continuous training on state aid, environment regulation, risk management, internal audit, financial management and control, European and national regulation, equality of chances, programming, monitoring, project monitoring and evaluation, management competencies, financial instruments (SO 3.1)	HR of management structures	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Slovakia Poland	Poland Lithuania Estonia	YES This form of support is appropriate. Similar measures were used by Slovakia and Poland in 2007-2013 and will be used by Poland, Lithuania and Estonia in 2014-2020.
Reimbursement of salary costs for ESIF, and MAs and IBs for LIOP, COP and OPTA (SO 3.1)	Management structures	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Slovakia	Poland Lithuania	YES This form of support is appropriate. Similar measures were used by Slovakia in 2007-2013 and will be used by Poland and Lithuania in 2014-2020.
Support for 2007-2013 programme closure	Management structures	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		France Denmark Estonia	YES This form of support is appropriate. Similar measures will be used by France, Denmark and Estonia in 2014-2020.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
C1. Overall, the forms of support proposed by OPTA and their correspondent specific actions are appropriate in terms of contributing to the realisation of the specific objectives to which they correspond. C2. The analysis revealed that the forms of support and specific actions related to information management system (SMIS 2014+ and related activities) are appropriate, despite the fact that similar forms of support had a low performance in during 2007-2013. This raises attention with respect to other factors which may have contributed to the low performance of these forms of support, such as low capacity of the SMIS Central Unit, insufficient staff or excessive workload. In terms of support for the capacity of the SMIS Central Unit, the OPTA already provides the necessary support, both under SO 1.1 and SO 2.2. However, actions related to increasing the headcount of the SMIS Central Unit cannot be implemented by the OP.	R1. No specific recommendation is made with respect to the forms of support proposed by OPTA and their correspondent specific actions. R2. In order to avoid blockages in the information management system and low performance of the OP overall, the Ministry of European Funds should take into account measures which can increase the capacity of the SMIS Central Unit, and which cannot be approached by the OP (such as increasing the staff of the Unit).

5. EQ 3: Financial allocation

5.1. EQ 3. Consistency of financial allocation with the Programme objectives

EQ 3	To what extent is the allocation of financial resources consistent with the Programme objectives?

5.1.1 Description on the evaluation process for EQ 3

The analyses performed under this evaluation sub-questions, are aimed at assessing:

- The concentration of financial resources by specific objective
- The consistency of allocations with Programme objectives and planned actions
- The support for integrated actions analysis / disadvantaged areas / disadvantaged groups
- The risk involved in financial implementation

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OP versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 29: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 3

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Analysis of concentration of financial resources by specific objective	☒	☒	☑	☑
Analysis of consistency of allocations with Programme objectives and planned actions	☒	☒	☑	☑
Analysis of support for Integrated actions analysis / disadvantaged areas / disadvantaged groups	☒	☒	☑	☑
Assessment of risk involved in financial implementation	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis (Relevant EU Regulation, relevant delegated and implementing acts, protocols of consultation of the stakeholders and documents on the consulting activity)	☒	☒	☑	☑
Panel of experts	☒	☒	☑	☑
Workshop with beneficiaries	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 30: Feedback received for EQ 3

Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
The allocation of training activities could be increased by transferring funds from salaries reimbursement, as it seems that allocation for training is low.	Recommendation was clarified with the programmer, new information was provided. Therefore, the recommendation was withdrawn.
The allocation for SMIS 2014+ and related should be higher, as there is a contraction of funding of 40 million euro compared to 2007-2013, while the activities financed remain in general, the same	Recommendation was clarified with the programmer, new information was provided. Therefore, the recommendation was withdrawn.
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
It is recommended to reconsider and potentially increase the allocation to evaluation and studies.	Allocation of funds is done at priority axis level, and the allocation for priority axis 2 has remained unchanged.

5.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report. For each of the analysis performed, the following paragraphs include a summary of the Evaluator's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 31: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Analysis of concentration of financial resources by specific objective	☑
Analysis of consistency of allocations with Programme objectives and planned actions	☑
Analysis of support for Integrated actions analysis / disadvantaged areas / disadvantaged groups	☑
Assessment of risk involved in financial implementation	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis (Regulation 1303/2013, relevant delegated and implementing acts, protocols of consultation of the stakeholders and documents on the consulting activity)	☑
Panel of experts	☑
Workshop with beneficiaries	☑

Pursuant to Common Provisions Regulation no. 1303/2013 and Guidance document on ex-ante evaluation, evaluators examine whether the financial allocations are in line with identified challenges and needs as well as with concentration requirements set out in the Regulations. Evaluation is based on:

(1) Analysis of financial allocation provided in the project of OPTA and Partnership Agreement and obligatory requirements for financial allocations provided in regulations;

(2) Analysis of allocations of Technical Assistance in previous programming period;

(3) Comparison with other Member States.

Consistency with obligatory requirements

Common Provisions Regulation no. 1303/2013 (art. 119) limits the amount to be allocated to technical assistance to 4% of the total amount of the Funds allocated to operational programmes. Art. 119 also states that the allocation for technical assistance from a Fund shall not exceed 10% of the total allocation of that Fund to operational programmes.

Technical assistance allocation mentioned in the Partnership Agreement does not exceed the limit and amounts to 2.17% of the total ESI funds financial allocation for the 2014-2020 programming period. The biggest share of the funds is allocated from ERDF.

Table 32: Allocation to Technical assistance by funds

Fund	Allocation to technical assistance (EUR)	Share of technical assistance of total allocation (by Fund and category of region where applicable)
ERDF	304,000,000	3.07%
ESF	297,317,389	6.36%
CF	0	0%
EAFRD	178,367,919	2.22%
EMFF*		

*Not filled in since no specific regulation is in force and no country allocation

Technical Assistance in 2007–2013

Main programming principles of Technical assistance remain the same as in the previous programming period. Besides the support for the management and implementation of Structural Funds at the national level provided under OPTA, operational programmes benefit from technical assistance ex. ROP, HCOP, ACOP. However, unlike the OPTA, Technical Assistance Priority Axes in the OPs are designed for providing the respective MAs and IBs with the necessary means for ensuring a proper implementation of their specific programmes while the interventions of OPTA are horizontal. The comparison of financial allocation for technical assistance for 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 is provided in the table below.

Table 33: Financial allocations for technical assistance in 2007–2013 and 2014-2020

	2007–2013	2014-2020
Total structural funds (ESF, ERDF and CF) and total allocation for Technical assistance	▶ Total support from EU structural funds – 19,213,036,712 euro ▶ Total allocation for Technical assistance – 689,895,753 euro (3.6% of the total support)	▶ Total support from EU structural funds - 22,541,107.909 euro ▶ Total allocation for Technical assistance – 613,317,389 euro (2.7% of the total support)
OPs	▶ 5 Sectoral OPs (have separate priority axes for TA) ▶ 1 Regional OP ▶ 1 OPTA (covers horizontal aspects only)	▶ 4 Sectoral OPs (2 of them have separate priority axes for TA) ▶ 1 Regional OP ▶ 1 OPTA (OPTA covers SOPs)
Allocation for OPTA (ERDF only)	▶ 170,237,790 euro (25% of total for Technical assistance)	▶ 212,765,960 euro (34,56% of total for Technical Assistance)

Despite the fact that the total support from EU structural funds has increased, total allocation to technical assistance in 2014-2020 is equal to **EUR 689.9 million** and is smaller than it was in 2007-2013 programming period (EUR 485.1 million). The **decrease in the funding** for technical assistance might be explained by the fact that the main administrative capacities and mechanisms had to be created in the 2007-2013 programming period.

However, there is a 25% increase in the total allocation to OPTA in 2014-2020 programming period compared to 2007-2013. The share of OPTA funding in the total allocation to technical assistance

increased from 25% to 44%. OPTA 2014-2020 plans to support Operational Programmes (OPs) with technical assistance for horizontal issues and actions aimed at an integrated approach and provide technical assistance for OPLI and COP financed by ERDF and CF, as these programmes will not have their own technical assistance priority axes. The increase of the budget for OPTA is in line with the new areas of intervention (management of specific SOPs).

Compared to 2007-2013 programming period, there are a few changes in the priority axes of the OPTA. The main changes are as follows:

- newly identified separate specific objective aimed at strengthening the beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement mature projects (included in the Priority Axis 1)
- separately identified priority axis aimed at increasing the efficiency of human resources (Priority Axis 3)
- no separate priority axis for SMIS development foreseen (it is provided as a specific objective and integrated to the priority axis 2: Support for the coordination, management and control of ESI funds).

Table 34: Financial allocations for OPTA Priority Axes

2014 – 2020 OPTA		2007–2013 OPTA	
Priority axis	**Specific objective**	**Priority axis**	**Specific objective**
1. Strengthening capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement ESI funded projects and dissemination of information regarding these funds *EUR 66.6 million (31.3%)*	1.1 Strengthening the beneficiaries' capacity of ESIF projects to prepare and implement mature projects	-	-
	1.2 Ensuring transparency and credibility of ESIF and the role of the Cohesion Policy	3. Dissemination of information *EUR 34.05 million (20%)*	A) Dissemination of general information and publicity B) Operation of the Structural Instruments Information Centre
2. Support for the coordination, management and control of ESI funds (including SMIS and human resources excluded) *EUR 54,5 million (25,6%)*	2.1 Regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	1. Implementation and coordination of programmes (including human resources) *EUR 82.80 million (49%)*	A) Support for the management and implementation of Structural Instruments
	2.2 Development and maintenance of a functional and efficient information system for SFC as well as strengthening the capacity of its beneficiaries		B) Support for evaluation
3. Increased efficiency of human resources involved in the system of coordination, management and control of ESI funds in Romania *EUR 91.6 million (43,1%)*	3.1 Development of an improved human resource management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation of the staff working in the coordination system.	1. Implementation and coordination of programmes (including human resources)	C) financing of human resources and administrative expenditures D) Horizontal training in the field of the management of programmes / projects

Based on the lessons learned, three major areas of support needs were identified in the OPTA 2014-2020:

1. Administrative capacity of beneficiaries in the preparation and implementation of projects financed by ESI funds as well as information and communication on ESI funds and partnership culture in the management and implementation of ESI funds;

2. Administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of ESI funds, including ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS;

3. Human resources involved in the coordination, management and control for projects financed from IS/ESI funds - including training of these structures.

Three priority axes of the OPTA correspond to identified development needs. The adequateness of the amounts of funds allocated to each priority axis given the development needs is assessed below.

Priority Axis 1 *Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement ESI funded projects and dissemination of information regarding these funds* reflects the **development needs** in **area 1** (Administrative capacity of beneficiaries in the preparation and implementation of projects financed by ESI funds as well as information and communication on ESI funds and partnership culture in the management and implementation of ESI funds).

66.6 million euro is allocated to Priority Axis 1, which makes 31.3% of the total OPTA funds. The corresponding Priority Axis in the 2007-2013 programming period was Priority Axis 3 *Dissemination of information and promotion of Structural Instruments*, which received EUR 34.05 million euro (20% of the total OPTA funding).

The allocation to Priority Axis 1 of OPTA 2014-2020 is larger than the allocation to strengthening of beneficiaries' capacities and information and dissemination activities in the 2007-2013 OPTA. This change reflects the **increased attention to the strengthening of beneficiaries' capacities to prepare and implement projects** in 2014-2020 programming period.

Special attention will be given to the preparation of projects. 29 million euro will be allocated to improving the preparation of projects, particularly in environment sector. These funds will be used to finance the consultancy services, technical expertise for beneficiaries and other activities. However, only 3.1 million euro is allocated to training of beneficiaries in 2014-2020 OPTA – a decrease of funding for this area of interventions compared to 2007-2013 programming period.

Nevertheless, **the size of allocation for Priority Axis No. 1 adequately expresses the development need for an increased administrative capacity of the beneficiaries** identified in the OPTA as relatively large funding is allocated to the improvement in the preparation of projects.

As suggested in the *Ad hoc* evaluation *Challenges in the Capacity of Public and Private Structural Instruments Beneficiaries*, beneficiaries' capacities influence the implementation of SI projects[1]. Therefore, investments to the strengthening of beneficiaries' capacities can be viewed as a way to improve the absorption rate of ESI funds in Romania.

However, in the 2014-2020 programming period there is a decrease in the allocation to **information and communication activities**. 19 million euro is allocated to information and communication activities in the 2014-2020 OPTA, which is around 15 million euro less than was allocated to Priority Axis 3 *Dissemination of information and promotion of Structural Instruments* of 2007-2013 OPTA. It is worth noting that in the 2007-2013 programming period the implementation of dissemination and promotion activities in Romania was slow. As a result, the decrease of funding for this group of interventions is based on the experience from 2007-2013 programming period. **Information and communication** activities of ESIF 2014-2020 and **partnership culture** can be addressed with lower funding (compared to 2007-2013) as long as there is a marked improvement in the absorption rate.

Priority Axis 2 "Support for the coordination, management and control of ESI funds" reflects the development need related to administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of ESI funds, including ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS**. 54.5 million euro** (25.6% of the total OPTA funds) is allocated to Priority Axis 2.

[1] First Ad Hoc Evaluation: Challenges in the Capacity of Public and Private Structural Instruments Beneficiaries, final report. Ministry of Public Finance, March 2011, p. 7.

Although the range of interventions covered by Priority Axis 2 is wide (improving the regulatory, strategic, procedural framework, providing expertise and adequate conditions for the proper and efficient functioning of the coordination, management and control system of ESI funds, developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system), the **size of the allocation** to this Priority Axis is **similar to what was allocated to Priority Axis 2** *Functioning of the Single Management Information System (SMIS)* of OPTA 2007-2013 (53.39 million euro, 31% of the total allocation). The latter Priority Axis was dedicated solely to the development of SMIS.

The decrease of funding for the operation of SMIS is particularly evident. In the 2014-2020 programming period 13 million euro are allocated to the functioning of SMIS, which is around 40 million euro less than the allocation to Priority Axis 2 "Functioning of the Single Management Information System (SMIS)" of OPTA 2007-2013. However, until the end of 2013, only 4,6 of the 53,3 million euro allocated to SMIS in OP TA 2007-2013 was contracted. Moreover, an additional amount of approximately 7 million euro is available for spending until 2015 from OPTA 2007-2013. Therefore, the reduction of allocation to SMIS in 2014-2020 should not impede the functioning of the information system.

The allocation to Priority Axis 2 adequately addresses the development needs in the area of administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of ESI funds, including ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS.

Priority Axis 3 *Increased efficiency of human resources involved in the system of coordination, management and control of ESI funds in Romania* reflects the development needs in the area of human resources involved in the coordination, management and control for projects financed IS/ESI funds - including training of these structures.

Priority Axis 3 receives the **largest allocation** of the three Priority Axes of OPTA 2014-2020. EUR 91.6 million euro are allocated to Priority Axis 3 (43.1% of the total OPTA funds). Compared to 2007-2013 programming period, more funds are allocated to the efficiency of human resources. The corresponding priority of OPTA 2007-2013 was Priority Axis 1 *Implementation and coordination of programmes*, receiving EUR 82.80 million (49% of the total OPTA 2007-2013 funding). Furthermore, the latter Priority Axis was not limited to the improvement of human resources efficiency. Implementation rate of this priority axis was the best among the three priority axes of Romanian OPTA in 2007-2013.

Most of the funding to Priority Axis 3 of OPTA 2014-2020 will go to the **refund of salaries of staff** working in the coordination, management and control system of ESI funds (EUR 86,1 million). In comparison, 22.6 million euro was allocated to the *Functioning of OPTA, ACIS, the Certifying and Paying Authority and the Audit Authority* in the 2007-2013 programming period (Specific Objective 4 of Priority Axis 1 of 2007-2013 OPTA)**.** Only 4.5 euro million is allocated to horizontal training of the staff in the 2014-2020 OPTA, which is less than was allocated to the training of staff in 2007-2013 OPTA under Specific Objective 3 of Priority Axis 1 *Horizontal training in the field of the management of programmes/projects*. However, there are no possibilities of transferring funds from the refund of salaries to training activities due to the high demand for the refund of salaries. **The increase in the funding dedicated to the efficiency of human resources is adequate given the identified needs.**

According to Commission implementing regulation (EU) No. 184/2014 there are three intervention categories in the intervention field of technical assistance: 121 Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection; 122 Evaluation and studies; 123 Information and communication. In Romanian OPTA 2014-2020 the total allocation for the programme is split into these three categories. The amount of funding to each of the intervention categories is provided below, together with the comparison with the planned distribution of TA funds in 2014-2020 programming period in other countries as well as Slovakia's OPTA in 2007-2013 programming period.

Table 35: The distribution of technical assistance funds according to intervention categories in Romania and other Member States[2]

[2] In the case of Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia the distribution of OPTA funds is provided, whereas in the case of Lithuania and Estonia the split of all technical assistance funds is given.

	Preparation, implementation, monitoring and control	Evaluation and studies	Information and communication
Romania OPTA 2014-2020	183,265,960 (86.1%)	8,500,000 (4%)	21,000,000 (9.9%)
Lithuania 2014-2020	187,543,198 (87.9%)	5,792,400 (2.7%)	20,019,783 (9.4%)
Czech Republic OPTA 2014-2020	106,252,225 (79.2%)	9,379,000 (7%)	18,485,023 (13.8%)
Estonia 2014-2020	88,600,815 (81.2%)	10,230,000 (9.4%)	10,230,000 (9.4%)
Slovakia OPTA 2007-2013	84,696,812 (86.8%)	8,411,433 (8.6%)	4,493,176 (4.6%)

Investments into **Preparation, implementation, monitoring and control** reflect all three development needs identified in the OPTA:

1. Administrative capacity of beneficiaries in the preparation and implementation of projects financed by ESI funds as well as information and communication on ESI funds and partnership culture in the management and implementation of ESI funds;

2. Administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of funds ESI, including ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS, and

3. The human resources involved in the coordination, management and control for projects financed IS/ESI funds - including training of these structures

183.2 million euro are allocated to this intervention category, which makes 86.1% of the total OPTA funding. Given the fact that this intervention category addresses the development needs in all three major areas identified in the OPTA, **the size of allocation for preparation, implementation, monitoring and control should be viewed as adequate**.

Other Member States allocate a similar share of funds to this intervention category (view Table 26). Although the Czech Republic and Estonia are planning to allocate a smaller share of technical assistance funds to preparation, implementation, monitoring and control than Romania (79.2% and 81.2% respectively), the shares in Lithuania and Slovakia's 2007-2013 OPTA are even larger (87.9% and 87.4% respectively).

Investments into **Evaluation and studies** reflect the needs in the area 2, *Administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of funds ESI, including ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS*. 8.5 million euro are allocated to this intervention category (4% of the total OPTA funding). It is worth stressing that three of the four benchmark Member States allocate a larger share of the technical assistance funds to evaluation and studies than Romania: Czech Republic in 2014-2020 (7%), Estonia in 2014-2020 (9.4%) and Slovakia in 2007-2013 (8%).

In 2007-2013 programming period funding for **evaluation** was equal to 4.9% of the total OPTA allocation of Romania. As indicated in the Interim Evaluation of Operational Programme Technical Assistance of Romania, launching new evaluations is key to improving evaluation culture[3]. **Despite the relatively modest allocation to evaluations in OPTA 2014-2020, these funds are projected to be sufficient for the implementation of evaluation plan of OPTA.**

Investments into **Information and communication** reflect the need in the **area 2** (*Administrative capacity of beneficiaries in the preparation and implementation of projects financed by ESI funds as well as information and communication on ESI funds and partnership culture in the management and implementation of ESI funds*). 21 million euro (9.9% of the total OPTA funding) is allocated to this intervention category. The share of information and communication funds in the total OPTA funding is similar to the corresponding shares in Lithuania and Estonia in 2014-2020 (9.4% in both cases), smaller than in Czech Republic in 2014-2020 (13.8%) and larger than in Slovakia's OPTA in the 2007-2013

[3] Operational Programme Technical Assistance Interim Evaluation, final report. Ministry of Public Finance, September 2010.

programming period. Based on the comparisons with other Member States, the size of allocation for information and communication in Romania's OPTA should be viewed as adequate.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	*Recommendations*
C1. PA 1: the size of allocation for Priority Axis No. 1 adequately expresses the development need for an increased administrative capacity of the beneficiaries in the implementation of projects financed by SI/ESI funds identified in the OPTA. C2. PA 2: The allocation to Priority Axis 2 adequately addresses the development needs in the area of administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of funds ESI, including ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS. C3. PA 3: Increase in the funding dedicated to the efficiency of human resources, compared to 2007-2013, is adequate given the identified needs.	R1. No specific recommendation.

6. EQ 4. Indicators

EQ 4	To what extent the indicators proposed in the program are relevant and clear?

6.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 4

The analyses performed under this evaluation sub-questions, are aimed at assessing:

- The coverage of specific objectives by common indicators
- The coverage of specific objectives by specific indicators
- Clarity and relevance of specific result indicators

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OPTA versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 36: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 4

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Analysis of coverage of specific objectives by common indicators	☒	☒	☑	☑
Analysis of coverage of specific objectives by specific indicators	☒	☒	☑	☑
Analysis of clarity and relevance of specific result indicators	☒	☒	☑	☑
Analysis of clarity and relevance of specific output indicators	☒	☒	☑	☑
Synthesis of clarity and relevance of specific indicators	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis (The Partnership Agreement, Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, Common Provisions Regulation no. 1303/2013, Pilot study in 12 European regions, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, other relevant EU regulation, evaluations of OPTA 2007- 2013, other consultative documents related to this operational programme, other monitoring systems/ indicators in similar programmes, relevant documents for Technical	☒	☒	☑	☑

Assistance OP)				
Panel of experts	☒	☒	☑	☑
Workshop with beneficiaries	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 37: Feedback received for EQ 4

Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
Result indicators	
SO 1.1.: Although the indicator is relevant, it should be clarified. It is important that the readiness of the beneficiaries be measured in different areas of the project preparation and implementation process	Result indicator for SO 1.1 has been changed
SO 1.2.: The baseline of the indicator should be equal to the percentage change of knowledge of ESI funds and Cohesion Policy achieved since the start of the 2007-2013 programming period until the most recent survey.	Implemented
SO 2.2. : 2 It is not recommended to use the indicator "Declarations of expenditure generated automatically from SMIS 2014 +" due to its narrow character. It is recommended to use the indicator "Satisfaction with SMIS 2014 +/2014 + MySMIS (%)" instead	Partially implemented Indicator has been replaced with The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations of the MA to the EC
SO 3.1.: It is recommended that people who moved from one institution of ESI system to another not to be included in the calculation of the staff turnover	Recommendation was clarified with the programmer, additional information was provided. Therefore, the recommendation has been cancelled.
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Status of implementation	Status of implementation
Result indicators	
SO 1.1: Some aspects of the indicator (particularly 70% boundary) should be clarified.	Implemented An annex with explanatory definitions is provided in the OPTA
SO 1.2: It is recommended to provide an explanatory definition in the programme, which would include the question to be used in the survey.	Implemented An annex with explanatory definitions is provided in the new OPTA
SO 2.2: It is recommended to provide an explanatory definition for this indicator. In particular, the monitoring process for this indicator should be clarified.	Implemented An annex with explanatory definitions is provided in the new OPTA
Output indicators	
SO 1.1: The number of training days (beneficiaries) – It is recommended to not only count the total number of training days, but also look at how they distribute among current and potential beneficiaries. This would enable to identify who are the main recipients of support under specific objective 1.1. Furthermore, differentiation of horizontal and specific training activities is also recommended. The number of projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of the beneficiaries of OP TA, COP and OP Large Infrastructure to manage portfolios of projects and The number of projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of the structures coordinating growth poles/ITI – It is recommended to consider the alternative labels for these indicators: „The number of	Implemented The list of output indicators was revised

portfolios of projects whose management was supported through OP TA" and "The number of growth poles/ITI whose management was supported through OP TA".	
SO 2.1: It is recommended to clarify the output indicator "Tools developed/ enhanced/ implemented for the management of ESI funds". Indicative list of what is understood by "tools" should be provided in the explanatory definition.	Implemented An annex with explanatory definitions is provided in the new OPTA

6.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report. For each of the analysis performed, the following paragraphs include a summary of the Evaluator's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 38: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Analysis of coverage of specific objectives by common indicators	☑
Analysis of coverage of specific objectives by specific indicators	☑
Analysis of clarity and relevance of specific result indicators	☑
Analysis of clarity and relevance of specific output indicators	☑
Synthesis of clarity and relevance of specific indicators	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis (The Partnership Agreement, Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, Common Provisions Regulation no. 1303/2013, Pilot study in 12 European regions, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, other relevant EU regulation, evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013, other consultative documents related to this operational programme, other monitoring systems/ indicators in similar programmes, relevant documents for Technical Assistance OP)	☑
Panel of experts	☑
Workshop with beneficiaries	☑

Relevance and clarity of both result and output indicators are evaluated in this section. Based on methodological documents (with special attention to Guidance on *ex ante* conditionalities) and following discussions with the Ministry of European Funds, the next criteria were chosen for the evaluation of clarity and relevance of result indicators:

- Clarity of label and explanatory definition
- Clarity of normative interpretation
- Robustness and statistical validity
- Timely collection and aggregation of data
- Responsiveness to policy
- Ability to capture the expected result.

The following criteria were used to evaluate the clarity and relevance of output indicators:

- Clarity of label and explanatory definition;
- Timely collection and aggregation of data;
- Capacity to influence the values of result indicators;
- Capacity to measure the "product" of the planned actions.

The findings are presented in the tables below, followed by conclusions and recommendations.

Table 39: The clarity and relevance of result indicators

Specific Objective	Indicator	Clarity				Relevance			General recommendations
		Clarity of label, explanatory definition and normative interpretation	Robustness and statistical validity	Timely collection and aggregation of data	Synthesis	Responsiveness to policy	Ability to capture the expected result	Synthesis	
1.1 Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects	Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent, of the total number of projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%) *Explanatory definition*: The share of projects of OP Competiveness and OP Large Infrastructure that at the closure will have a greater than 70% absorption rate in the total number of projects which received OP TA support for their development in the form of consultancy, technical expertise or other. This support means preparation of financing application, development of (pre)feasibility study, preparation of tender documentation, cost-benefit analysis, investment plans, institutional framework etc.	Label and explanatory definition are clear. Normative interpretation of the indicator is clear – high value of the indicator shows a high level of achievement of specific objective 1.1.	Indicator is robust since it is not an average quantity and therefore is not sensitive to high variation of values. However, there is a possibility that the value of the indicator will be low even if the absorption rate of most of the supported projects will be very close to 70 percent (for example, 60-70%). Interpretation of the value of this indicator should take into account this possibility. The indicator is statistically valid as it is based on information on all projects whose development was supported through OP TA.	Source of data is designated in the programme (SMIS 2014+) and the reporting period is two years. As a result, timely collection and aggregation of data are ensured.	Indicator is clear.	The value of the result indicator is duly influenced by the actions 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 of the OP TA. The indicator is particularly responsive to the support to the preparation of projects aimed at the beneficiaries of OP Competitiveness and OP Large Infrastructure. A significant share of the total allocation of SO 1.1 will go to this kind of support. Indicator is also responsive to training activities, provision of help desk support for the identification, preparation and implementation of projects and development of informational tools, although to a lesser degree.	Indicator captures the expected result of SO 1.1 “Increased effectiveness in the preparation and implementation of projects”, since absorption rate depends both on the quality of preparation and implementation of projects.	Indicator is relevant.	N/A
1.2 Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU *Explanatory definition*: The share of Romanian citizens above the age of 15 who have heard about any European Union co-financed projects which affect the area where they live.	Label and explanatory definition are clear. Normative interpretation of the indicator is clear – high value of the indicator shows a high level of achievement of specific objective 1.2.	Indicator is robust since it is not an average quantity and therefore is not sensitive to a high variation of values. Indicator is statistically valid since it is based on a representative sample of the statistical population.	Eurobarometer is designated as a data source. In the case of absence of the Eurobarometer survey, a survey conducted by MEF is indicated as an alternative source of data. Reporting period is two years. As a result, timely collection and aggregation of data are ensured.	Indicator is clear.	Indicator is responsive to action 1.2.1 of the OP TA. Information materials, media campaigns, organization of events, support for the fuctioning of information centre and the development of website will all make an impact on the value of the result indicator.	Indicator captures the expected result of SO 1.2 ”High level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU”.	Indicator is relevant.	N/A
2.1 Improving the regulatory framework, strategy and procedures for the coordination and implementation of ESI funds	The share of beneficiaries who find the procedures for ESI funds appropriate (%) *Explanatory definition*: The indicator captures the opinion of the ESIF funds beneficiaries, as in previous survey, regarding the appropriateness of the procedures they use in terms of difficulties encountered in performing the key tasks in project implementation phase (ambiguities and lack of clarity regarding reporting, payment procedures, financial management and reporting, tendering, monitoring, use of indicators, archiving, information and publicity). By beneficiary is understood the natural or legal person that concluded with the managing authorities one or more financing contracts or agreements to implement one or more projects with the support of ESI funds.	Label and explanatory definition are clear. Normative interpretation of the indicator is clear – high value of the indicator shows a high level of achievement of specific objective 2.1.	Indicator is robust since it is not an average quantity and therefore is not sensitive to a high variation of values. Indicator is statistically valid since it is based on a representative survey.	Survey carried out by MEF is designated as a data source. Reporting period is two years. As a result, timely collection and aggregation of data are ensured.	Indicator is clear.	Indicator is responsive to action 2.1.1 of the OP TA. Studies, analyses, reports, evaluations, logistical support for the institutions of the management system of ESI funds will contribute to the improvement of procedures regarding ESI funds.	Indicator captures the expected result of SO 2.1 “Improved regulatory framework, strategy and procedures for the coordination and implementation of ESI funds”.	Indicator is relevant.	N/A
2.2 Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as	The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations to the EC at the level of the OP *Explanatory definition*: The share of OP-level reporting documents (annual implementation	Label and explanatory definition are clear. Normative interpretation of the indicator is clear – high value of the	Indicator is robust since it is not an average quantity and therefore is not sensitive to a high variation of values. Label of the indicator	SMIS 2014+ is designated as a data source. Values of the indicator will be reported annually. Therefore, timely collection and aggregation of	Indicator is clear.	Indicator is responsive to action 2.2.1 of the OP TA. Development of new integrated information system SMIS 2014+, preparation of studies and analyses on the operation of the SMIS 2014 + and other	Indicator captures the expected result of SO 2.2 “Functional, integrated	Indicator is relevant.	N/A

Specific Objective	Indicator	Clarity				Relevance			General recommendations
		Clarity of label, explanatory definition and normative interpretation	Robustness and statistical validity	Timely collection and aggregation of data	Synthesis	Responsiveness to policy	Ability to capture the expected result	Synthesis	
well as strengthening the capacity of its users	reports, performance reports, cost statements etc.) which were submitted to EC through SMIS 2014	indicator shows a high level of achievement of specific objective 2.2.	suggests that all reporting obligations will be taken into account when calculating the value of the indicator. Therefore, indicator is statistically valid.	data are ensured.		related applications, help, instruction and training for system users will contribute to the wider use of SMIS 2014+ for reporting obligations.	information system that generates the correct database and in a timely manner, in order to achieve a correct and efficient management of operational programmes".		
3.1 Ensuring the stability, qualification and proper motivation of staff working in the structures responsible for the coordination, management and control of ESI funds	Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system *Explanatory definition*: The evaluation of the staff in the ESIF system will be a performance oriented evaluation. The indicator will capture the result of this evaluation as an average of the ratings each of the employees gets within the annual assessment of performance. Given the fact that the performance oriented evaluation assessment methodology will be applied starting with 2014 (meaning that the first performance assessment under the new methodology will be carried out in 2015 for the year 2014), the baseline is 0 for this indicator. The average result of the staff performance assessment carried out until now is not relevant since it didn't apply this methodology.	Label and explanatory definition are clear.	Since the indicator is an average quantity, it is sensitive to a high variation of values. However, a large number of staff working in ESIF system means that the value of indicator should not be unduly affected by standout evaluation ratings. Therefore, indicator is robust. It is also statistically valid as evaluation ratings of all all the staff of ESIF system will be taken into account.	Data source	Indicator is clear.	Indicator is responsive to actions 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 of the OP TA. Both training activities and refund of salaries are expected to be positively related to evaluation ratings of the staff.	Indicator captures the expected result of SO 3.1 "Motivated, accountable, stable and highly qualified staff in the coordination, management and control system of ESI funds".	Indicator is relevant.	N/A
	Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures *Explanatory definition*: Share of ESIF permanent staff who left their job in the reporting period in total number of employees on each structure of ESIF system structures.	Label and explanatory definition are clear. Normative interpretation of the indicator is clear – low value of the indicator shows a high level of achievement of specific objective 3.1.	Indicator is robust since high variation in turnover levels in different year is not expected. Indicator equals the percentage turnover of all staff working in ESI system. Therefore, it is statistically valid.	Human resources department is designated as a data source. Reporting period is one year. Therefore, timely collection and aggregation of data are ensured.	Indicator is clear.	Indicator is responsive to actions 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 of OP TA. Development of studies, analyses, reports, strategies regarding human resources policy, development/implementation of tools for the human resource management system of ESI funds, training activities, events for sharing good practice and refund of salaries will influence the values of the indicator.	Indicator captures the expected result of SO 3.1 "Motivated, accountable, stable and highly qualified staff in the coordination, management and control system of ESI funds".	Indicator is relevant.	N/A

The findings and recommendations of the evaluation of clarity and relevance of output indicators are provided in the table below.

Table 40: The clarity and relevance of output indicators

Specific Objective	Indicator	Clarity			Relevance			General recommendations
		Clarity of label and explanatory definition	Timely collection and aggregation of data	Synthesis	Capacity to influence the values of result indicators	Capacity to measure the "product" of the planned actions	Synthesis	
1.1 Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded	The number of training days – beneficiaries	Label and explanatory	Data source is indicated (SMIS	Indicator is clear.	Some of the trained beneficiaries will be beneficiaries of the projects whose development will be supported	The indicator measures the	Indicator is relevant.	N/A

Specific Objective	Indicator	Clarity			Relevance			General recommendations
		Clarity of label and explanatory definition	Timely collection and aggregation of data	Synthesis	Capacity to influence the values of result indicators	Capacity to measure the "product" of the planned actions	Synthesis	
projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects	*Explanatory definition*: Duration of participants' training, expressed in days. "Beneficiary" refers to staff of the authority / institution / private body who receives ESIF support, as well as "potential beneficiary".	definition are clear.	2014+).		through OP TA. Knowledge acquired in training will increase the possibility of successful preparation and implementation of these projects. Therefore, indicator will influence the value of result indicator "Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)".	"product" of the planned action 1.1.1 of OP TA.		
	Applications for funding for major/strategic/non-strategic projects whose development was supported from OPTA *Explanatory definition*: The indicator represents the number of applications for funding major / strategic / non-strategic projects whose development was supported through OPTA Support is given through OPTA in the form of consultancy, technical expertise or other for the preparation of financing application, development of (pre)feasibility study, preparation of tender documentation, cost-benefit analysis, investment plans, institutional framework etc.	Label and explanatory definition are clear.	Data source is indicated (SMIS 2014+).	Indicator is clear.	Indicator will influence the value of result indicator "Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)".	Indicator measures the "product" of the planned action 1.1.2 of OP TA.	Indicator is relevant.	N/A
	Number of employees FTEs (full-time equivalents) working in ITI coordination body whose wages are co-financed from the technical assistance *Explanatory definition*: This indicator reflects the average annual number of people in the ITI coordination body whose salaries are co-financed from technical assistance.	Label and explanatory definition are clear.	Data source is indicated (SMIS 2014+).	Indicator is clear.	Indicator will not influence the value of result indicator "Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)".	Indicator measures the "product" of the planned action 1.1.2 of OP TA.	Indicator is relevant in a sense that it measures the "product" of the planned action. However, it will not influence the value of result indicator.	It is recommended to use this indicator since it measures the "product" of the actions that claim a significant share of the total allocation to SO 1.1.
1.2 Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	Information and publicity materials prepared – editions *Explanatory definition*: Materials / products that are printed or that will be printed / produced in order to inform about and promote structural instruments and the opportunities provided by operational programs (publications, brochures, leaflets and CDs).	Labels and explanatory definitions are clear.	Data source is indicated for these indicators (SMIS 2014+). There is an additional data source for the indicator "Visits of website/portal registered" (Communication and Information Office for ESIF).	Indicators are clear.	Indicators will influence the value of result indicator "Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU".	Indicators measure the "product" of the planned action 1.2.1 of OP TA.	All five output indicators of SO 1.2 are relevant.	N/A
	Campaigns organised *Explanatory definition*: Campaign" refers to information and publicity activities defined in time and space regarding the transmission of integrated and coordinated messages with the same subject through different channels and media supports (radio, TV, press).							
	Requests resolved by the Information Centre network *Explanatory definition*: The number of requests made at the level of information structures (41 throughout the territory and in Bucharest) which receive response. A request will be considered to be the enquiry received from one person at a given time. One request received from a beneficiary may cover one or more topics and may include the exchange of information and clarifications that may follow the enquiry.							

Specific Objective	Indicator	Clarity			Relevance			General recommendations
		Clarity of label and explanatory definition	Timely collection and aggregation of data	Synthesis	Capacity to influence the values of result indicators	Capacity to measure the "product" of the planned actions	Synthesis	
	Visits of website/portal registered *Explanatory definition*: Number of visits on the website in the reporting period.							
2.1 Improving the regulatory framework, strategy and procedures for the coordination and implementation of ESI funds	Evaluations and studies carried out *Explanatory definition*: One complete evaluation or study refers to a final evaluation report or a final study together with possible supporting documents that may accompany it (ex. Guides, analyses, etc.)	Labels and explanatory definitions are clear.	Data source is indicated for these indicators (SMIS 2014+).	Indicators are clear.	Indicators will influence the values of result indicator "The share of beneficiaries that consider the procedures regarding ESIF to be adequate (%)".	Indicator measures the "product" of the planned actions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of OP TA.	Indicators are relevant.	N/A
	Coordination/ management/ control structures of ESI funds whose logistics and operation has been supported annually, including support in the form of equipment and software necessary for the functioning of SMIS 2014+ *Explanatory definition:* Structures involved in the coordination / management / control of ESIF and whose logistics and operation was supported by OPTA each year. The structures refer to any public institution (or part of a public institution) that received OPTA support and is responsible with coordination and control of ESIF and management of OPLI, OPC and OPTA. The structures in charge of ESIF coordination and control include the Ministry of European Funds, Certifying and Paying Authority, Audit Authority, DLAF, ESIF-dedicated structures of NARMPP and UCVPP/CVPP and other structures designated for ESIF coordination and control if necessary. Management structures are the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Body.					Indicators measure the "product" of the planned action 2.1.1 of OP TA.		
	Projects whose evaluation/monitoring/control/contracting was supported *Explanatory definitions*: Number of projects for which external expertise was provided in evaluation, monitoring, control or contracting							
2.2 Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	SMIS 2014 + network availability *Explanatory definition:* Availability refers to the percentage of time when the network is functional and accessible to authorizesSMIS users when and where they needed.	Labels and explanatory definitions are clear.	Special telecommunications monitoring service is designated as a data source.	Indicators are clear.	Indicators will influence the values of the result indicator "The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations at the level of the OP"	Indicators measure the "product" of the planned action 2.2.1 of OP TA.	Indicators are relevant.	N/A
	The number of training days (training related to the use of information system) *Explanatory definition*: This indicator refers to the total number of training days completed, taking into account the number of days of training received by each participant.		SMIS 2014+ is designated as a data source.					

Specific Objective	Indicator	Clarity			Relevance			General recommendations
		Clarity of label and explanatory definition	Timely collection and aggregation of data	Synthesis	Capacity to influence the values of result indicators	Capacity to measure the "product" of the planned actions	Synthesis	
3.1 Ensuring the stability, qualification and proper motivation of staff working in the structures responsible for the coordination, management and control of ESI funds	The number of training days - management structures, additional structures *Explanatory definition*: This indicator refers to the total number of days of instruction completed, taking into account the number of training days received by each participant.	Label and explanatory definition are clear.	SMIS 2014+ is designated as a data source for these indicators.	Indicators are clear.	Indicators will influence the values of the result indicators "Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures" and "Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system".	Indicator measures the "product" of the planned action 3.1.1 of OP TA.	Indicator is relevant.	N/A
	Number of employees FTEs (full-time equivalents) working in ESIF system whose wages are co-financed from the technical assistanceAverage annual number of employees working in ESIF system whose wages are co-financed from the technical assistanceThe number of training days - management structures, additional structures *Explanatory definition*: This indicator reflects the average annual number of people in the ESIF system whose salaries are co-financed from technical assistance.					Indicator measures the "product" of the planned action 3.1.2 of OP TA	Indicator is relevant	N/A

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
C1. Result indicators: ▶ **SO 1.1.** Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries of ESI funds to prepare and implement mature projects **Result indicator 1.1** *Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total number of projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)* - Result indicator is **relevant** for the specific objective. ▶ **SO 1.2.** *Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy* **Result Indicator 1.2.** *Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU* - Result indicator is **relevant** for the specific objective. ▶ **SO 2.1.** *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF* **Result indicator 2.1.** The share of beneficiaries who find the procedures for ESI funds appropriate (%) - Result indicator is **relevant** for the specific objective ▶ **SO 2.2.** *Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users* **Result indicator 2.2.** The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations at the level of the OP - Result indicator is **relevant** for the specific objective. ▶ **SO 3.1.** *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds* **Result indicators of SO 3.1.** *Average annual staff turnover of ESIF system structures* and ***Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system*** Result indicators are **relevant** for the specific objective	R1. **Result indicator 1.1**: No specific recommendation **Result indicator 1.2:** No specific recommendation **Result indicator 2.1:** No specific recommendation **Result indicator 2.2** No specific recommendation **Result indicators for SO 3.1:** No specific recommendation
C2. Output indicators: ▶ **SO 1.1.:** Indicators are clear and relevant. ▶ **SO 1.2**. Indicators are clear and relevant. ▶ **SO 2.1**. Indicators are clear and relevant. ▶ **SO 2.2**: Indicators are clear and relevant. ▶ **SO 3.1:** Indicators are clear and relevant.	R2. **SO 1.1:** No specific recommendation **SO 1.2:** No specific recommendation **SO 2.1**: No specific recommendation **SO 2.**2: No specific recommendation **SO 3.1:** No specific recommendation

7. EQ 5: Results and outputs

This chapter is structured in three sections, each divided into two sub-sections:

- **Section 7.1** analyses the contribution of estimated outputs to results
- **Section 7.2** analyses the extent to which the results are influenced by external factors, including by other instruments
- **Section 7.3** analyses if the quantified target values of the indicators are realistic, considering the available funding

7.1. EQ 5.1. Contribution of outputs to results

EQ 5.1	How will the estimated outputs contribute to results?

7.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 5.1.

The analyses performed under this evaluation sub-questions, are aimed at assessing:

- The relevance of output indicators in relation to actions
- The relevance of result indicators in relation to objectives and priorities
- Statistical validation in terms of analysis of data sources, reliability and robustness of indicators

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OPTA versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 41: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 5.1

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Assessment of assumptions underlying the results chain	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis (The Partnership Agreement, Common Strategic Framework, Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions - DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to	☒	☒	☑	☑

the socio-economic development in Romania, evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013, draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020)				
Panel of experts	☒	☒	☑	☑
Workshop	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 42: Feedback received for EQ 5.1

Draft OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
SO 1.1: the output indicator "Structures supported for the integrated approach to territorial development" should not be used at the level of Specific Objective 1.1, since it does not clearly contribute to the readiness of the beneficiaries to develop and implement mature projects	Implemented
SO 2.2: It is not recommended to use the output indicator "ESI structures which functioning is supported" at the level of Specific Objective, as there is no direct causal link between this indicator and the intended result. Instead, this indicator should be used in assessing the output of one of the actions of SO 2.2.	Implemented
Second version of the draft OPTA ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made.	N/A

7.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report. For each of the analysis performed, the following paragraphs include a summary of the Evaluator's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 43: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Assessment of assumptions underlying the results chain	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis (The Partnership Agreement, Common Strategic Framework, Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions - DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania, evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013, draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020)	☑
Panel of experts	☑
Workshop with beneficiaries	☑

The relation between the estimated output and intended results is analysed in the following table. Output indicators are attributed to specific objectives and their potential input on intended results is evaluated. Intended results are defined by the planned result indicators.

Table 44: The relation between the estimated output and intended results

Specific objective	Estimated output	Causal links between estimated output and intended results	Judgement and recommendations
1.1 Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries of ESI funds to prepare and implement mature projects	The number of training days – beneficiaries: (target value - 15.000) Applications for funding for major/strategic/non-strategic projects whose development was supported from OPTA (target value – 8) Number of employees FTEs (full-time equivalents) working in ITI coordination body whose wages are co-financed from the technical assistance (target value – N/A)	Estimated output – training and support for the preparation of projects– will strengthen beneficiaries' capacities and contribute to the achievement of expected result "Increased effectiveness in the preparation and implementation of projects". Estimated output will affect the result indicator "Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)".	There is a causal link between the estimated output and result indicator. Assumptions underlying results chains are plausible.
1.2 Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	Information and publicity materials – editions: (target value – 30) Campaigns organised: (target value -3) Requests resolved by the Information Centre network: (target value - 25.000) Visits of website/portal registered: (target value – 2.000.000)	All communication measures – information and publicity materials, media campaigns, activities of the Information Centre, the development of website,– will increase the knowledge of ESI funds and Cohesion Policy in the general public. Estimated outputs will affect the result indicator "Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU".	There is a causal link between the estimated output and result indicator. Assumptions underlying results chains are plausible.
2.1 Improving the regulatory framework, strategy and procedures for the coordination and implementation of ESI funds	Evaluations and studies carried out: (target value – N/A) Coordination/ management/ control structures of ESI funds whose logistics and operation has been supported annually, including support in the form of equipment and software necessary for the functioning of SMIS 2014 +: (target value – 14) Projects whose evaluation/ monitoring/control/contracting was supported: (target value – 10.000)	Studies and evaluations will serve for the improvement of the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework. Estimated output will affect the result indicator "The share of beneficiaries who find the procedures for ESI funds appropriate (%)".	There is a causal link between the estimated output and result indicator. Assumptions underlying results chains are plausible.
2.2 Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the	Network availability SMIS 2014 +: (target value - 99,5%) The number of training days (training related to the use of information system): (target value - 6.000)	Improving network availability and training for system users will improve the integration of the system. The latter actions will influence the values of result indicator "The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations at the level of the OP". All estimated output will contribute to the achievement of the expected result of SO 2.2	There is a causal link between the estimated output and result indicator. Assumptions underlying results chains are plausible.

Specific objective	Estimated output	Causal links between estimated output and intended results	Judgement and recommendations
capacity of its users		"Functional, integrated information system that generates the correct database and in a timely manner, in order to achieve a correct and efficient management of operational programmes".	
3.1 Ensuring the stability, qualification and proper motivation of staff working in the structures responsible for the coordination, management and control of ESI funds	The number of training days - management structures, additional structures (20.000) Number of employees FTEs (full-time equivalents) working in ESIF system whose wages are co-financed from the technical assistance: (target value - 1.680)	Training activities and refund of salaries will contribute to the achievement of expected result "Motivated, accountable, stable and highly qualified staff in the coordination, management and control system of ESI funds". Estimated output will affect the values of result indicator "Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures".	There is a causal link between the estimated output and result indicators. Assumptions underlying results chains are plausible.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
C1. There is a causal link between the estimated outputs and intended results for each Specific Objective. Assumptions underlying the results chains are plausible.	No specific recommendations

7.2. EQ 5.2. Influence of external factors over results

EQ 5.2	To what extent are the results influenced by external factors, including by other instruments?

7.2.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 5.2

The analysis performed under this evaluation sub-questions, are aimed at assessing the probable influence of external factors on intended results

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OPTA versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 45: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 5.2

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Assessment of probable influence of external factors on intended results	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis (The Partnership Agreement, Common Strategic Framework, Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions - DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania, evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013, draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020)	☒	☒	☑	☑
Panel of experts	☒	☒	☑	☑
Workshop	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 46: Feedback received for EQ 5.2

Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made	N/A
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made	N/A

7.2.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report. For each of the analysis performed, the following paragraphs include a summary of the Evaluator's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 47: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Assessment of probable influence of external factors on intended results	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis (The Partnership Agreement, Common Strategic Framework, Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions - DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania, evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013, draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020)	☑
Panel of experts	☑
Workshop	☑

A range of external factors will affect the achievement of intended results of OPTA 2014-2020. While a large variety of external factors may have an influence over results, a list of the most relevant external factors is provided below:

- **Economic situation in the country**. In the 2007-2013 programming period the economic crisis was a very important factor in the implementation of OPTA. As suggested in the interim evaluation of the 2007-2013 Operational Programme Technical Assistance, the strain on the national budget determined the Government to use OPTA support for paying the 75% wage bonus for staff involved in the management and implementation of SI (previously aimed to be covered through national resources).

  As indicated in annual implementation reports of OP TA 2007-2013, economic austerity measures taken by the Government discouraged the incurring of specific TA expenditures. Reduction of expenditure for specific TA interventions would have a negative effect on intended results. **Each of the six result indicators can potentially be affected by the change in economic situation**.

- **Institutional changes and political instability**. Institutional changes and political instability had a negative effect on the implementation of OPTA in the 2007-2013 programming period. Interim evaluation of the 2007-2013 OPTA showed that institutional changes and political instability have prevented the Government from developing an evaluation culture outside the SI context. There is a possibility that the priorities and financial allocation of OP TA will be revised in the middle of the programming period as a result of institutional or political changes. These revisions are likely to have an effect on intended results. **Each of the six result indicators can potentially be affected by institutional changes and political instability.**
- **Capacity and workload of beneficiaries**. As evidenced by the annual implementation reports, the main problems in the 2007-2013 programming period were represented by the reduced capacity of beneficiaries, as well as their administrative burden. These factors have a negative effect on the absorption rate and, consequently, on the achievement of intended results.

  Each of the six result indicators can potentially be affected by beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden. However, some of the measures included in the OPTA 2014-2020 – particularly those of SO 1.1 - should have a positive effect on beneficiaries' capacities. Therefore, there is a mutual relationship between beneficiaries' capacities and implementation of OP TA.
- **Changes in the public procurement rules and procedures**. Legal basis of the public procurement process is a key factor affecting the absorption rate of OPTA funds and one of the main problem areas identified in annual implementation reports of OP TA 2007-2013. It is likely that the simplification of public procurement procedures would have a positive effect on the achievement of intended results of OP TA 2014-2020. **Each of the six result indicators can potentially be affected by the changes in public procurement rules and procedures.** It is worth noting that actions of SO 2.1 should contribute to the improvement of public procurement rules and procedures. Therefore, there is a mutual relationship between public procurement rules/ procedures and implementation of OP TA.
- **Public perception of ESI funds in the general public.** Public perception about ESI funds as being incorrectly managed and the perception of fraud and corruption in the system prevented the smooth implementation of information and communication campaign in 2007-2013 programming period. In 2010, a survey was conducted which showed that only 26% of the respondents are interested in finding information about SI.

  Lack of interest from the general public can also be a factor in the 2014-2020 programming period. This factor will affect the value of result indicator "**Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU"**.
- **The development level of the local training market**. In order for training activities to be effective, a sufficient supply of relevant training services must be ensured. Insufficient development of the local training market for management of Structural Instruments was one of the threats identified in the OPTA 2007-2013.

  In the 2014-2020 programming period, **the development level of the local training market will affect result indicators "Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)", "Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures" and "Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system".**
- **The quality of consultancy services provided for beneficiaries.** In AIRs of OP TA 2007-2013, the poor quality of consultancy services for beneficiaries was marked as one of the key problems. Since a significant amount of funds of OP TA 2014-2020 is allocated to consultancy for beneficiaries (particularly in the preparation of projects), the quality of consultancy services will affect the achievement of intended results. **This factor will be very important for result**

indicator "Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)".

- **The capacity for conducting evaluation**. Insufficient capacity for conducting evaluations was one of the threats identified in the 2007-2013 OPTA. The capacity for conducting evaluation will also affect the achievement of intended results of the OPTA 2014-2020. Since results of evaluations can be used for improving procedures regarding ESI funds, the capacity for conducting evaluation will affect result indicator "**The share of beneficiaries who find the procedures for ESI funds appropriate (%)"**.
- **The motivation level of beneficiaries.** The key factor to the success of the efforts to strengthen the beneficiaries' capacities will be the motivation of beneficiaries to learn and improve their knowledge and skills. Therefore, the motivation level of beneficiaries will affect result indicator **"Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)".**

The relation of each result indicator with relevant external factors is provided in the table below.

*Table 48: The relation of each result indicator with relevant external factors**

Result indicator / External factor	Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total number of projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)	Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU	The share of beneficiaries that consider the procedures regarding ESIF to be adequate (%)	The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations at the level of the OP	Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures	Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system
Economic situation in the country	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Institutional changes and political instability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Beneficiaries' capacities and heavy workload	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Changes in the public procurement rules and procedures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public perception of ESI funds in the general public		✓				
The development level of the local training market	✓				✓	✓
The quality of consultancy services provided for beneficiaries	✓					

Result indicator / External factor	Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total number of projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)	Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU	The share of beneficiaries that consider the procedures regarding ESIF to be adequate (%)	The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations at the level of the OP	Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures	Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system
The capacity for conducting evaluation			✓			
The motivation level of beneficiaries	✓					

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
C1. **Among the factors which may influence result indicator 1.1** Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total number of projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%) are: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, the quality of consultancy services provided for beneficiaries, the development level of the local training market, the motivation level of beneficiaries. C2. **Among the factors which may influence result indicator 1.2.** Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU are: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, public perception of ESI funds. **C3. Among the factors which may influence result indicator 2.1.** The share of beneficiaries who find the procedures for ESI funds appropriate (%) are: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, the capacity for conducting evaluation. **C4. Among the factors which may influence result indicator 2.2.** The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations at the level of the OP are: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures. **C5. Among the factors which may influence result**	No specific recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
indicator 3.1. *Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures* are: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, the development level of the local training market. **C6. Among the factors which may influence result indicator 3.1**. *Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system* are: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, the development level of the local training market	

7.3. EQ 5.3. Target values of indicators

EQ 5.3	Are quantified target values of the indicators realistic, having in mind the CSC funding?

7.3.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 5.3.

The analysis performed under this evaluation sub-questions, are aimed at assessing the quantified target values for indicators

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OP versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 49: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 5.3

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Assessment of the quantified target values for indicators	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis (The Partnership Agreement, Common Strategic Framework, Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions - DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania, evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013, draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020)	☒	☒	☑	☑
Panel of experts	☒	☒	☑	☑
Workshop	☒	☒	☑	☑
Benchmarking with other Member States	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 50: Feedback received for EQ 5.3

Draft OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
For those indicators where no baseline exists, measures should be taken to compute a baseline	Implemented
Second version of the draft OPTA ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
In those cases when the plausibility of the target value is medium, it is recommended to revise the target value in the middle of the programming period.	N/A, recommendation would not be implemented through the OP

7.3.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools tools planned in the Inception Report. For each of the analysis performed, the following paragraphs include a summary of the Evaluator's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 51: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Draft OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report V2

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Assessment of the quantified target values for indicators	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis (The Partnership Agreement, Common Strategic Framework, Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions - DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania, evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013, draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020)	☑
Panel of experts	☑
Workshop	☑
Benchmarking with other member states	☑

The analysis of the target values of the indicators is provided in the table below.

Table 52: Analysis of the target values of indicators

Priority Axis	Indicator type	Indicator	Target value for indicator	Experience 2007-2013	Plausibility of the target values (high / medium / low)	Recommendations
1. Strengthen beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement ESIF financed projects, and dissemination of information regarding these funds	Output	The number of training days – beneficiaries	15.000	Until the end of 2012, 5.569 training days for beneficiaries were organised. All training sessions for beneficiaries took place in 2011 and 2012. It is likely that at the end of 2015 the total number of training days for beneficiaries will be considerably higher. It is worth noting that there will be a decrease in allocation to the training of beneficiaries in 2014-2020 OP TA compared to the previous programming period. 3.1 million euro is allocated to the training of beneficiaries in 2014–2020 OP TA, while 4.6 million euro were contracted in 2007-2013 programming period.	Medium	Since the plausibility of the target value is medium, it is recommended to revise the target value in the middle of the 2014-2020 programming period. Revision should be based on the achievement rate of the indicator as well as the final data from the 2007-2013 programming period.
	Output	Applications for funding for major/strategic/non-strategic projects whose development was supported	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Output	Number of employees FTEs (full-time equivalents) working in ITI coordination body whose wages are co-financed from the technical assistance	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Output	Information and publicity materials prepared – editions	30	Until the end of 2013, 21 information and publicity materials were prepared. Until the end of 2013, for Priority Axis 3 "Dissemination of information and promotion of structural instruments" of OP TA 2007-	High	N/A

Priority Axis	Indicator type	Indicator	Target value for indicator	Experience 2007-2013	Plausibility of the target values (high / medium / low)	Recommendations
				2013 4.8 million euro were contracted, which is about four times less than the total allocation to information and dissemination activities of OP TA 2014-2020.		
	Output	Campaigns organised	3	Until the end of 2013, 3 media campaigns were organised. Until the end of 2013, 4.8 million euro were contracted for Priority Axis 3 "Dissemination of information and promotion of structural instruments" of OP TA 2007-2013, which is about four times less than the total allocation to information and dissemination activities of OP TA 2014-2020.	High	N/A
	Output	Requests resolved by the Information Centre network	25.000	The experience of 2007-2013 shows that the average number of requests for information from the Information Centre is 2.529 requests per year.	High	N/A
	Output	Visits of website/portal registered	2.000.000	Until the end of 2013, 1.824.845 site/portal visits were registered. Based on the annual data, it is very likely that this number will exceed 2.000.000 at the end of 2015. Similar number of visits is to be expected in the 2014-2020 programming period.	High	N/A
	Result	Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)	75%	N/A	N/A	Target value should be based on the absorption data from similar projects in the 2007–2013 programming period.
	Result	Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU	60%	According to Eurobarometer surveys, level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU decreased from 64% in 2010 to 46% in 2013 in Romania. It is likely that this decrease is related to low absorption level of ESI funds for information	High	N/A

Priority Axis	Indicator type	Indicator	Target value for indicator	Experience 2007-2013	Plausibility of the target values (high / medium / low)	Recommendations
				and dissemination activities in the 2007–2013 programming period. In contrast, some other new Member States achieved an improvement in the awareness levels in 2010-2013 (Bulgaria +18%, 62% in 2013; the Czech Republic +9%, 67% in 2013; Poland +12%, 80% in 2013).		
2. Support for the coordination, management and control of ESI funds	Output	Evaluations and studies carried out	N/A	N/A	N/A	The target value should be based on the achievements in the 2007-2013 programming period and the size of allocation for interventions of this kind in 2014-2020 OP TA.
	Output	Coordination/ management/ control structures of ESI funds whose logistics and operation has been supported annually, including support in the form of equipment and software necessary for the functioning of SMIS 2014 +	14	N/A	N/A	The target value should be based on the achievements in the 2007-2013 programming period and the size of allocation for interventions of this kind in 2014-2020 OP TA.
	Output	Projects whose evaluation/ monitoring/control/contracting was supported	10.000	N/A	N/A	The target value should be based on the achievements in the 2007-2013 programming period and the size of allocation for interventions of this kind in 2014-2020 OP TA.
	Output	SMIS 2014 + network availability	99,5%	N/A	N/A	The target value for this indicator should be based on the current situation.
	Output	The number of training days (training related to	6.000	Until the end of 2013, 6.237 training days were organised under Priority Axis 2 of OP	High	N/A

Priority Axis	Indicator type	Indicator	Target value for indicator	Experience 2007-2013	Plausibility of the target values (high / medium / low)	Recommendations
		the use of information system)		TA 2007-2013. These training activities were related to the use of information system.		
	Result	The share of beneficiaries who find the procedures for ESI funds appropriate (%)	50%	According to the first interim evaluation report on the administrative capacity of authorities and beneficiaries of ESI funds, the baseline for this indicator is 23.5%.	Medium	Based on the current situation, the plausibility of the target value of this indicator is medium. It is recommended to revise the target value in the middle of 2014-2020 programming period.
	Result	The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations to the EC at the level of the OP	70%	Indicator was not used in the 2007-2013 programming period in Romania. The baseline is not indicated in the OP TA 2014-2020.	N/A	The baseline value should be estimated for this indicator. It should be used as a benchmark for setting the target value.
3. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources involved in the system of coordination, management and control of ESI funds in Romania	Output	The number of training days - management structures, additional structures	20.000	Until the end of 2013, under Priority Axis 1 of 2007-2013 OPTA , 16,185 training days for the staff of ESI management structures were organised. However, in the 2014-2020 OPTA, only 4,5 million euro is allocated to horizontal training of the staff, whereas in 2007-2013 OP TA (Specific Objective 3 of Priority Axis 1), 6.2 million euro for the training activities of staff were contracted	Medium	Based on the experience from 2007-2013, the plausibility of the target value is medium. It is recommended to revise the target value in the middle of 2014-2020 programming period.
	Output	Number of employees FTEs (full-time equivalents) working in ESIF system whose wages are co-financed from the technical assistance	1.400	N/A	N/A	The baseline of the annual average number of people in ESI system whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance in the 2007-2013 programming period should be estimated. The target value for this indicator should be based on the baseline value. The increase of funding for refund of salaries in 2014-2020 OP TA compared to 2007-2013 should also be taken into account.

Priority Axis	Indicator type	Indicator	Target value for indicator	Experience 2007-2013	Plausibility of the target values (high / medium / low)	Recommendations
	Result	Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures	≤10%	The turnover of staff in 2010-2013 is reported to have been 6-12%.	High	N/A
	Result	Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system	3.5	N/A	N/A	N/A

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
C1. Plausibility of most of the target values could not be assessed due to lack of data. In those cases when the assessments could be made, plausibility level of target values proved to be high or medium.	R1. In those cases when the plausibility of the target value is medium, it is recommended to revise the target value in the middle of the programming period.

8. EQ 6: Performance framework

8.1. EQ 6. Performance framework

EQ 6	To what extent are the selected indicators and intermediate and final targets (milestones) for the performance framework adequate?

The performance framework is not required for the Technical Assistance Operational Programmes. As agreed with the Beneficiary, the analysis regarding the performance framework of this evaluation question will not be made.

As the analysis of the performance framework was not realised, a benchmarking analysis was elaborated for the technical assistance interventions in other Member States. This benchmarking analysis supported the evaluaton of the internal coherence of the Operational Programme, including needs assessment. The comparative analysis was realised at the request of the programmer, at the moment of elaboration of the internal logic of OPTA. The Member States considered for the analysis were Poland, Lithuania, France, Denmark, Estonia and United Kingdom.

The benchmarking analysis took into consideration aspects such as:

- Type of actions financed through technical assistance
- Indicators used for measuring performance
- Parallels between assessed interventions and their correspondent or similar Romanian intervention in OPTA 2014 - 2020
- Presentation of the management and control system (Section 7 of the OP) for the technical assistance programme of analysed states.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
C1. Since the performance framework is not required for the Technical Assistance Operational Programmes, the analysis regarding the performance framework of this evaluation question will not be made.	No specific recommendations

9. EQ 7: Human resources and administrative capacity

9.1. EQ 7. Human resources and administrative capacity

EQ 7	To what extent are the human resources and administrative capacity adequate to manage the Programme?

9.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 7.

The analyses performed under this evaluation sub-questions are aimed at assessing:

- The programme functions, structure, human resources, systems and tools
- The administrative organization and approach to implementation

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data collection and analysis tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OP versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 53: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 7

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Analysis of Programme functions, structure, human resources, systems and tools	☒	☒	☑	☑
Analysis of administrative organization and approach to implementation	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis	☒	☒	☑	☑
Interviews	☒	☒	☑	☑
Focus group	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 54: Feedback received for EQ 7

Draft OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
The new organizational arrangements for MFE should provide for a clear definition of the structures and staff in charge of management and implementation of the OPTA	N/A Implementation of this

	recommendation shall be reflected by the description of the management and control systems and applicable legislation.
The structures of the OPTA that may benefit of its assistance as main beneficiaries should be ensured adequate support for project preparation (also through OPTA itself),	N/A Implementation of this recommendation shall be reflected by the description of the management and control systems and applicable legislation.
In order to avoid potential conflict of interest within the MA OPTA, the Implementation Compartment should not be integrated in the MA OPTA, and the help desk services should be provided by the Strategies Service of the Financial Management Service	N/A Implementation of this recommendation shall be reflected by the description of the management and control systems and applicable legislation.
Second version of the draft OPTA ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
The new organizational arrangements for MFE should provide for a clear definition of the structures and staff in charge of management and implementation of the OPTA and headcount should be increased through recruitment of staff with relevant experience.	N/A Implementation of this recommendation shall be reflected by the description of the management and control systems and applicable legislation.
In order to ensure absorption, the structures of the OPTA that may benefit of its assistance as main beneficiaries should be ensured adequate support for project preparation (also through OPTA itself), application of public procurement also through recourse to framework contracts and the administrative burden related to project implementation should be reduced.	N/A Implementation of this recommendation shall be reflected by the description of the management and control systems and applicable legislation.
In order to avoid potential conflict of interest within the MA OPTA, the Implementation Compartment should not be integrated in the MA OPTA, and the help desk services should be provided by the Strategies Service or the Financial Management Service.	N/A Implementation of this recommendation shall be reflected by the description of the management and control systems and applicable legislation.
In order to reduce the administrative work on projects at the level of contract implementation in the MA, it is recommended to simplify the procedures.	N/A Implementation of this recommendation shall be reflected by the description of the management and control systems and applicable legislation.

9.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report.

Table 55: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Analysis of Programme functions, structure, human resources, systems and tools	☑
Analysis of administrative organization and approach to implementation	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis	☑
Interviews	☑
Focus group	☑

Findings

According to Section 7 of the Operational Programme the Ministry of European Funds will assume the role of Managing Authority of OPTA 2014-2020 while the role of Certifying and Paying Authority and Audit Authority will be assigned respectively to the Ministry of Public Finance – Certification Service and Romanian Court of Accounts.

The planned assignment of responsibilities represents an element of continuity with the current programming period.

Based on the workshop with Programme stakeholders, it is expected that the future MA will be a separate Unit which will undertake the characteristic roles and functions. To avoid potential overlaps, the functions which correspond to the MEF as a beneficiary are moved to a structure.

In terms of staff allocation to different functions, the staff that will work in MA OPTA will be 100% dedicated to MA activities, and will not perform other functions as well. However, the number of staff in the current Managing Authority (27 pers.) is perceived as low and is considered as one of the main difficulties that the MA encounters. In this sense, for the 2014-2020 programming period, a proposal has been initiated to increase the number of staff to 40 employees. This aspect requires consideration also given that additional workload will be generated by the overlaps between functions related to the implementation of the OPTA 2007-2013 as well as its closure and OPTA 2014-2020.

With respect to strengthening the human resources competences of the Managing Authority, the OPTA MA staff will be included in a large scale horizontal project for MAs and IBs that will cover all operational programmes. However, before designing this large scale project, the OPTA MA intends to analyse and identify the training needs based on which the training programme shall be designed. Furthermore, the Human Resources Directorate of MEF will be responsible for the human resources policy, training plans and staff performance framework.

In relation to staff performance evaluation at ESIF system level, discussions with the MA OPTA revealed that there is an undergoing project carried out with the World Bank, which aims at improving staff performance.

These organizational elements will need to be taken into account in finalizing the legal framework setting up roles and responsibilities of the actors involved in the management and control system of the OPTA and clear distinction with the general coordination functions of MFE and of the other Managing Authorities located within the Ministry.

From the point of view of implementation, the lessons learned in the 2007-2013 programming period have evidenced a number of horizontal issues affecting the implementation of the Programme, which may continue to be relevant also in the Programming period 2014-20202.

The low capacity of the beneficiaries, including the former structures in charge of the coordination of Structural Instruments now incorporated in the Ministry of European Funds, due both to lack of knowledge and low number of staff (work overloads) has determined delays in the preparation of projects eligible under OPTA.

While contracting of assistance did not encounter any major bottlenecks, complicated public procurement procedures at national level (including a complicated and time consuming complaint mechanism) have determined delays in project implementation, with the exception of those implemented under Framework Agreements, these represent an example to be capitalized.

On the other hand, according to Programme stakeholders, the administrative requirements related to contract implementation have determined additional workload at contract beneficiary level and require further simplification.

Reduction of the administrative burden for beneficiaries is a matter of interest for the OPTA Managing Authority and, in this respect, simplification cost options are being considered to support the MA in training activities. The potential interventions financed through SCOs will not be defined in the first version of the OP, but further research will be done at MA level to assess the feasibility of implementing SCOs and to introduce such an option during 2014-2020 programming period.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
C1. The choice of continuity in the structure in charge of Management of OPTA 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 sets the premises for a sound implementation of the future OP. Nevertheless organizational and human resource aspects required specific attention. C2. The new organizational asset of the Ministry of European Funds should ensure a clear distinction between the tasks of MA OPTA 2014-2020, other MAs and the horizontal coordination role of MEF. C3. Based on the discussions with Programme stakeholders, the staff of MA OPTA 2014-2020 will be carrying out in parallel activities related to the implementation and closure of OPTA 2007-2013 which will generate additional workloads if the headcount remains unchanged. C4. The implementation of the OPTA has been negatively affected by the low capacity of beneficiaries, including those structures currently integrated in MFE, to prepare and implement projects in particular in what pertains public procurement issues, while the burden related to administrative project implementation has created additional workload and delays. C5. At this moment, the Implementation Compartment, a part of the MA at the moment, will carry out activities correspondent to the MEF as EU funds beneficiary, for the projects implemented by MEF. This can potentially increase the conflict of interest within the MA OPTA. C6. On the other hand according to Programme stakeholders Administrative requirements related to contract implementation have determined additional workload at contract beneficiary level C7. Reduction of the administrative burden for beneficiaries is a matter of interest for the OPTA Managing Authority and, in this respect, simplification cost options are being considered to support the MA in	R1. The new organizational structure for MFE should ensure a clear definition of functions and roles and staff allocation for the management and implementation of the OPTA. Allocated headcount should be increased and staff with relevant experience should be recruited. R2. In order to avoid potential conflict of interest within the MA OPTA, the implementation function should not be integrated in the MA OPTA. R3. In order to reduce the administrative work on projects at the level of contract implementation in the MA, it is recommended to simplify the procedures and to give particular attention to the potential use of Simplification Cost Options, and investigate the potential interventions for which SCOs could be used.

evaluation and training activities.	

10. EQ 8: Monitoring and data collection

This chapter is structured in one section divided into two sub-sections:

- **Section 10.1** analyses the adequacy of monitoring and data collection procedures to perform evaluations

10.1. EQ 8. Monitoring and data collection procedures

EQ 8	To what extent are the monitoring and data collection procedures adequate to perform evaluations?

10.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 8

The analysis performed under this evaluation questions are aimed at assessing aspects related to monitoring and data collection as well as:

- programme functions, structure, human resources, systems and tools
- the administrative organization and approach to implementation

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OPTA versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 56: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 8

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Analysis of monitoring and data collection procedures	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis (Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, information and publications regarding the practices of other Member States, statistical data, evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013, relevant documents of Technical Assistance OP, Relevant annual reports of implementation of the current programming period)	☒	☒	☑	☑
Interviews	☒	☒	☑	☑
Focus group	☒	☒	☐☒	☒
Benchmarking with other Member States	☒	☑	☒	☒

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 57: Feedback received for EQ 8

Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made	N/A
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made	N/A

10.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current report is based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report.

Table 58: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Analysis of monitoring and data collection procedures	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis (Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, information and publications regarding the practices of other Member States, statistical data, evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013, relevant documents of Technical Assistance OP, Relevant annual reports of implementation of the current programming period)	☑
Interviews	☑
Focus group	☑
Benchmarking with other Member States	☑

The ultimate goal of monitoring is to continuously provide the Managing Authority and main stakeholders of the OPTA with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds, based on systematic collection of data on specified indicators.

This requirement is captured in Part II of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 provides for an ex-ante conditonality on Statistical Systems and result indicators that need to be put in place by Member States. This general ex-ante conditionality requires the **existence of a statistical basis** necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Programme and the **set-up of a system of result indicators** necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.

While the analysis of the system of indicators has been presented in the previous sections of this Ex-ante Report based on the information included in the Operational Programme, the programming document does not contain a detailed description of the planned arrangements **for the timely collection and aggregation of statistical data and their publication.**

Under these assumptions, the ex-ante evaluator is providing indications concerning the main requirements provided by the ESIF Legal framework concerning Programme monitoring in terms of structures.

In accordance to Article 47 of Regulation (EU) no. 1303/2013, within three months of the date of notification to the Member State of the Commission decision adopting a programme, the Member State shall set up a ***Monitoring Committee*** to monitor implementation of the programme.

The Monitoring Committee (article 49) shall meet at least once a year to review the progress in the implementation of the programme and progress made towards achieving its objectives, having regard to financial data, progress in the achievement of indicators, provide an opinion on proposed amendments to the Programme, observations regarding implementation and evaluation of the programme including actions related to the reduction of the administrative burden on beneficiaries.

In terms of composition (article 48), the Monitoring Committee shall comprise a representative partnership composed of competent and other public authorities; economic and social partners; and relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality, non-discrimination etc.

The arrangements for collection and aggregation of monitoring data shall be such as too allow the meeting of the reporting obligations of article 50 in relation to **Annual Implementation Reports**. AIRs shall set out key information on implementation of the programme and its priorities by reference to the financial data, indicators and target values, findings of evaluations, issues affecting performance of the programme and the measures taken.

Table 59: Specific contents requirements for AIRs in the period 2015 - 2022

AIR	Date	Specific Contents requirements
AIR 2015	31.05.2016	Years 2014, 2015, period eligibility of expenditure - 31.12.2013. Ex-ante conditionalities
AIR 2016	30.06.2017	Progress in capacity building actions for management of EU Funds, promotion of horizontal issues
AIR 2017	30.05.2018	
AIR 2018	31.06.2019	Progress in capacity building actions for management of EU Funds, promotion of horizontal issues
AIR 2019	31.05.2010	
AIR 2020	31.05.2021	
AIR 2021	31.05.2022	
AIR 2022	31.05.2023	
Final Report		

Based on the discussion with the Programmer, there will be an overall continuity in the allocation of responsibilities related to monitoring, for which no major areas of improvement were identified in the recent evaluation reports.

In particular the Strategies Service will continue to be responsible for the set-up of the Monitoring Committee, monitoring the implementation of the OPTA and organize presentations for the Monitoring Committee and elaboration of the Annual Implementation Report.

The Strategies Service and the Financial Management Service will ensure the record and update of information in SMIS, being responsible for the accuracy, integrity and completeness of data. Complete and accurate introduction of data in SMIS is essential for the performance and monitoring of the OPTA, especially in the context of a relatively low performance of the system in 2007 2013. Evaluation reports from the 2007-2013 programming period have underlined the deficiencies of data stored in SMIS and its reporting reliability.

Overall the main innovative element and challenge, common on the other hand to all Operational Programmes, will consist of the introduction of a monitoring system allowing exchanges of information between beneficiaries, and authorities responsible for management and control of programmes carried out by electronic data exchange. MySMIS information system will be available to all beneficiaries, who will upload the documents of their projects in the data base. The recording will be done based on filling in forms, and not by uploading copies of paper based documents. As explained by the Programmes, this process will facilitate the transfer of data into SMIS without blockages.

Another aspect of interest is represented by the help desk services that will be offered to beneficiaries. At present, help desk is provided to all beneficiaries by first level controllers/monitoring officers on

specific aspects or functions, for all beneficiaries. During discussions with the Programmer, the evaluation team discussed the possibility that monitoring officers provide help desk services to specific beneficiaries, covering information and support on all phases of project preparation and implementation, not only on specific phases. Like this, each beneficiary will have appointed persons whom to ask support from.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
C1. The programming document does not contain a detailed description of the planned arrangements for the timely collection and aggregation of statistical data and their publication. In order to fulfil the conditionality on Statistical data and indicators, the Programmer is elaborating "Fiches of Indicator" for each of the indicators. C2. In terms on project monitoring and help desk services for beneficiaries, at the moment monitors provide support on specific aspects of project implementation for any beneficiary who needs support in that particular aspect.	R1. No specific recommendations are made. R2. It is recommended that the monitoring function be separated from the verification function. Moreover, it is recommended that monitors are assigned to particular operational programmes, and that they provide help-desk support for beneficiaries of that operational programme for any phase of project implementation, from definition of project idea to project closure.

11. EQ 9: Contribution to EU 2020 Strategy

EQ 9	To what extent the programme contributes to the European Union strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, considering the selected thematic objectives and priorities, taking into account the national and regional needs?

11.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 9

As mentioned in the Inception Report, given the nature of the OPTA, its contribution to the EU 2020 Strategy is in nature indirect, therefore a qualitative analysis of the contribution to the European Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is more appropriate than a quantitative one. This question was addressed only in part in the previous evaluation reports through the analysis of External Consistency presented under EQ1.

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 60: Feedback received for EQ 9

Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made	N/A
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made	N/A

11.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report.

Table 61: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Analysis of contribution to national targets	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis	☑
Interviews	☑
Logical framework	☑

A qualitative judgement was provided in relation to the contribution to the achievement of the quantified targets as presented in the National Reform Programme, taking into account its horizontal contributions, as well as the contributions to specific OPs.

Considering that OPTA will provide specific Technical Assistance support to Competitiveness and Large Infrastructure OPs, it will have a stronger indirect contribution of the achievement of the EU Headline Targets on R&D, CO2 emission reduction, renewable energies and energy efficiency.

Contribution to employment rate, early school leaving and tertiary education is indirect, through the horizontal support provided to the implementation of the Human Capital OP.

Table 62: Contribution of OPTA to NRP

National Reform Programme		OP TA contribution	
EU Headline target	Quantified target	OPs supported	Qualitative judgement
Employment rate in %	70%	HC OP Horizontal Support	Indirect
R&D in % of GDP	2%	COP	Indirect
CO2 emission reduction targets	19%	COP, LI OP	Indirect
Renewable energy	24%	LI OP	Indirect
Energy efficiency – reduction of energy consumption in Mtoe	10.00	LI OP	Indirect
Early School leaving in %	11.3%	HC OP Horizontal Support	Indirect
Tertiary education in %	26.7%	HC OP Horizontal Support	Indirect
Reduction of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion in number of persons	580,000	HC OP Horizontal Support	Indirect

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
C1. Considering that OPTA will provide specific Technical Assistance support to Competitiveness and Large Infrastructure OPs, it will have a stronger indirect contribution of the achievement of the EU Headline Targets on R&D, CO2 emission reduction, renewable energies and energy efficiency	No specific recommendations are made

12. EQ 10: Relation with other instruments

This chapter is structured in one section, divided into two sub-sections:

- **Section 12.1** analyses the relation of the Programme with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies) such as the Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 , other OPs,

12.1. EQ 10. Relation of the Programme with other relevant instruments

EQ 10	Which is the relation of the Programme with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies)?

12.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 10

The analysis performed under this evaluation sub-questions is aimed at providing a qualitative analysis to the contribution of the Programme to the quantified objectives expressed in the strategies identified under EQ 1.2

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OP versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 63: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 10

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Analysis of strategies and instruments identified in Q1.2	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis	☒	☒	☑	☑
Interviews	☒	☒	☑	☑
Logical framework	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 64: Feedback received for EQ 10

Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made	N/A

Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made	N/A

12.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report. For each of the analysis performed, the following paragraphs include a summary of the Evaluator's findings, conclusions and recommendations:

Table 65: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Analysis of strategies and instruments identified in Q1.2	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis	☑
Interviews	☑

With respect to the relation of OPTA and the other ESIF financed operational programmes, given its nature, OPTA has a horizontal contribution to all OPs and also to ETC programmes. Moreover, given the particularities of the institutional arrangements for 2014 – 2020, OPTA has specific impacts over LIOP and COP. The table below displays the areas in which OPTA is related to the other strategies, both in terms of horizontal and specific aspects.

Table 66: Relation of OPTA to other strategies

Strategy	Level of contribution	OPTA PA 1 - Strengthen beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement ESIF financed projects, and dissemination of information regarding these funds	OPTA PA 2 - Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF	OPTA PA 3 - Increasing the efficiency of human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania
Regional OP Human Capital OP Administrative Capacity OP Large Infrastructure OP Competitiveness OP	Horizontal	Beneficiaries' capacity to manage projects, more specifically to identify projects, prepare qualitative project applications, to carry out public procurement, to prepare the technical and economic documentation required project activities. Provision of transparent and efficient communication related to ESIF and EU Cohesion Policy, and development of partnership culture.	Improvement of the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF, support for evaluation and evaluation culture. Support for developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system to improve the correct management of information needed for the coordination and control of ESIF.	Development of an integrated and long term human resources policy, train staff, provide clear lists of tasks and responsibilities for staff, and reimbursement of the salary cost for the staff of structures in the public administration that are part of the system for coordination and control of ESI
Large Infrastructure OP	Specific	Specific training at the level of beneficiaries public institutions, on issues	Support for management structures to implement the OPs, in terms of evaluation,	Training that is specific to the OP specificity, with an accent on major

Competitiveness OP		identified in the training needs analysis, strengthening capacity to prepare, implement and manage projects, as well as to develop major and strategic projects portfolios. Specific information and publicity needs.	projects contracting, monitoring, reimbursement requests approval, but also to develop a functional monitoring system at a centralised level.	projects management (LIOP), state aid for research, evaluation and implementation of IT projects, of research projects.

The relation of OPTA with the Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 is based on a judgement of qualitative contribution, and it is illustrated in the table below.

Table 67: Relation of OPTA to the Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020

Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 (Draft April 2014)		***OP Technical Assistance expected contribution***	
Target description	**Quantified target**	**Quantitative Contribution**	**Qualitative judgement**
I. Adapting the structure and mandate of the administration to the needs of the citizens and the real financing possibilities	No quantified target provided	N/A	N/A
II. Implementing a performing management in public administration	No quantified target provided	N/A	Actions related to evaluation, antifraud measures, management of human resources from public administration, IT solutions for the efficiency of public administration
III. Reducing bureaucracy and simplification for citizens, business environment and administration	No quantified target provided	N/A	N/A
IV. Increasing the local autonomy and consolidating the capacity of the local public administration authorities for the promotion and support of local development	No quantified target provided	N/A	Activities related to the development and strengthening of partnership culture
V. Increasing the quality and access to public services	No quantified target provided	N/A	Elaboration of methodologies, analyses that serve to the development of mechanisms for public services evaluation and monitoring

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	**Recommendations**
C1. Lack of quantified targets only allowed a qualitative assessment of contribution to Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity. Overall the OPTA contributes to the achievement of the SCPAC in the improving framework conditions, evaluation, human resources policy and staff training, development of IT systems, partnership culture. C2. Given its nature, OPTA will have a horizontal influence over all OPs financed from ESIF, and will also provide support for ETC programmes beneficiaries, while it will	No specific recommendations are made

Conclusions	Recommendations
have a specific contribution to LIOP, COP, and OPTA itself.	

13. EQ 11: Horizontal principles

This chapter is structured in two sections, each divided into two sub-sections:

- **Section 13.1** analyses whether the planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent discrimination are adequate
- **Section 13.2** analyses if the planned measures to promote sustainable development are adequate

13.1. Equal opportunities between men and women

EQ 11.1	Are the planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent discrimination adequate?

13.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 11.1

The analysis performed under this evaluation sub-questions is aimed at assessing the approach of OPTA in relation to the application of principles of gender equality and non-discrimination throughout the 7 key phases of Programme implementation based on the information included in the OPTA.

Table 68: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 11.1

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Analysis of OP elements related to the application of the sustainable development principle in the 7 key phases of Programme implementation	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 69: Feedback received for EQ 11.1

Draft OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
The OP should address the need to implement the equal opportunities principle in its financed operations, to enhance interventions that target this topic. OPTA could support specific interventions at OP level, or at a higher level (e.g. Equal Opportunities committee at ESIF level) that promote the EO principle	Implemented

Second version of the draft OPTA ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made	N/A

13.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report. For each of the analysis performed, the following paragraphs include a summary of the Evaluator's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 70: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Analysis of OP elements related to the application of the sustainable development principle in the 7 key phases of Programme implementation	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis	☑

Article 96, par.7 of the CPR no. 1303/2013 specifies that the request to include a description of *"the specific **actions to promote equal opportunities** and prevent **discrimination** based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the operational programme and in particular in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination and in particular the requirements to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities"* is **applicable** to all operational programmes, **except those undertaking technical assistance.**

The programme also mentions that the **equal opportunities** principle will be applied to **ethnic minorities,** by requesting beneficiaries/contractors to apply the regulation in the field and to ensure equal access to work places.

With respect to specific actions related to equal opportunities, the programme specifies that support will be provided to the functioning and capacity strengthening of the Working Group related to horizontal principle that is mentioned in the Partnership Agreement. Moreover, information and publicity activities supported by the OP will include initiatives aimed at promoting equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

Conclusions	**Recommendations**
C1. Minimum legal requirements regarding equal opportunities are respected by the OPTA. Moreover, OPTA will provide support to the functioning and capacity strengthening of the Working Group related to horizontal principle that is mentioned in the Partnership Agreement. Furthermore, information and publicity activities supported by the OPTA will include initiatives aimed at promoting equal opportunities and non-discrimination.	No specific recommendation

13.2. EQ 11.2: Sustainable development

EQ 11.2	Are the planned measures to promote sustainable development adequate?

13.2.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 11.2

The analysis performed under this evaluation sub-questions is aimed at assessing the approach of OPTA in relation to the application of principles of sustainable development throughout the 7 key phases of Programme implementation based on the information included in the OPTA.

The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed prior to this evaluation report as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator to each of the OPTA versions analysed and included in the feedback reports provided:

Table 71: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 11.2

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06. 2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07. 2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Analysis of OP elements related to the application of the sustainable development principle in the 7 key phases of Programme implementation	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis	☒	☒	☑	☑

The main recommendations provided by the evaluator in occasion of each of the feedback reports as well as their status of implementation are presented in the boxes below:

Table 72: Feedback received for 11.2

Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
With respect to the procedures that OPTA will use to ensure that the project portfolio respects the sustainability principle, it is recommended to briefly describe or give examples of types of procedures that will or can be used.	Implemented, this mentioning was removed
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A, no specific recommendations were made	N/A

13.2.2. Answer to the evaluation question

The current evaluation report is provided based on the application of all the data collection and analysis tools planned in the Inception Report. For each of the analysis performed, the following paragraphs include a summary of the Evaluator's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 73: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report

Data analysis / collection tools	Current report
Data analysis tools	
Analysis of OP elements related to the application of the sustainable development principle in the 7 key phases of Programme implementation	☑
Data collection tools	
Documentary analysis	☑

With respect to **sustainable development**, art. 8 of the CPR no. 1303/2013 mentions that the "objectives of the ESI Funds shall be pursued in line with the principle of sustainable development and with the Union's promotion of the **aim of preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment".** The Member States and the Commission shall ensure that **environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, disaster resilience, and risk prevention and management** are promoted in the preparation and implementation of Partnership Agreements and operational programmes.

The Partnership Agreement underlines that all Operational Programmes, excepting the Technical Assistance OP, shall describe specific actions envisaged to comply with requirements related to environment, energy efficiency, climate change, disaster resilience as well as risk management and prevention.

The draft OPTA mentions the following set of operations related to sustainable development that will be financed:

- **Trainings** on horizontal aspects of sustainable development for OPTA 2014 – 2020 beneficiaries, especially **for people involved in project monitoring and evaluation**
- **Training** on horizontal aspects of sustainable development for **project promoters**
- Creating opportunities for **conferences, discussion platforms, working groups, thematic networks in the field of sustainable development**
- Elaboration of **studies or evaluations** in the field of sustainable development.

In terms of methodological approach, this ex-ante evaluation assesses the manner in which actions regarding compliance with environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency have been integrated in the OPTA, with respect to **all key phases of Programme implementation** – programming of structural instruments, calls for proposals, project selection, financial management and control, monitoring, evaluation and partnership.

A mapping of the **measures related to sustainable development** and each of the key phases of the OPTA Implementation is provided below:

Table 74: Measures related to sustainable development

Programming phase	OPTA measure to promote sustainable development	Existence of a measure to promote sustainable development
Phase 1: Programming of structural instruments	Section 11 of the Operational Programme	YES Apart from Section 11 of the OPTA, no reference is made to sustainable development. However, as mentioned in the Partnership Agreement, Technical Assistance OP does not have to describe specific actions that relate to

		sustainable development.
Phase 2: Calls for proposals	- "the sustainability principle will be a project selection criterion" - "a series of procedures will be used to ensure that the project portfolio respects the sustainability principle"	YES In this phase, sustainable development will be used as a project selection criterion and a series of procedures will be used to ensure that the project portfolio respects the sustainability principle
Phase 3: Project Selection	- "the sustainability principle will be a **project selection criterion**" Operation - trainings on horizontal aspects of sustainable development for OPTA 2014 – 2020 beneficiaries, especially for people involved in project monitoring and **evaluation**"	YES In this phase, **sustainable development** will be used as a **project selection criterion** and people involved in project evaluation will benefit from trainings on sustainable development
Phase 4: Financial management and control	N/A	NO / Not applicable
Phase 5: Monitoring	Operation - trainings on sustainable development for OPTA 2014 – 2020 beneficiaries, especially for people involved in **project monitoring** and evaluation	YES In this phase, people involved in project monitoring will benefit from trainings on sustainable development
Phase 6: Evaluation	Operation - elaboration of **studies or evaluations** in the field of sustainable development	YES In this phase studies or evaluations in the field of sustainable development will be elaborated
Phase 7: Partnership	Operation - creating opportunities for **conferences, discussion platforms, working groups, thematic networks** in the field of sustainable development	YES In this phase will be created opportunities for conferences, discussion platforms, working groups, thematic networks in the field of sustainable development

Conclusions	Recommendations
C1. The OPTA mentions a set **horizontal interventions** that will be financed, with respect to sustainable development, such as: - Trainings on sustainable development especially for people involved in project monitoring and evaluation - Training on sustainable development for project promoters - Creating opportunities for conferences, discussion platforms, working groups, thematic networks in the field of sustainable development - Elaboration of studies or evaluation in the field C2. With respect to the measures used to promote sustainable development at the level of each of the programming phases, for 6 of the 7 phases there are measures included in the OPTA that refer to technical assistance. For Financial Management and Control Phase no such measure is provided. However, the application of such measures in the area of Financial Management and Control is hardly possible.	No specific recommendation

14. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
EQ 1.1: External consistency with EU documents and strategies	
Consistency with Europe 2020 Strategy	
C1. While the OPTA has **an overall indirect consistency** with the EU2020 Strategy, **a direct consisten**cy is observed for the following flagship initiatives of the EU 2020 strategy: **An agenda for new skills and jobs** and **Digital agenda for 2020.** C2. Direct consistency has been identified at the level of: ► ***SO 2.2.*** *Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system to improve the correct management of information needed for the coordination and control of ESIF, as* OPTA will finance the d**evelopment and maintenance of SMIS 2014+**, MySMIS+ and other related applications, and it will contribute to the creation of **interoperable applications** within the information management system of ESIF ► ***SO 3.1*** *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds,* because actions of this SO will facilitate people from EFIS system to **acquire new skills and adapt to a changing labour market**	No specific recommendations
Consistency with the Common Strategic Framework	
C3. Overall, consistency of the draft OPTA with the Common Strategic Framework is observed with respect to Thematic Objective 11, through Specific Objectives 2.1 *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF* and 3.1 *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds.*	No specific recommendations
Council country specific recommendations (National Reform Programme 2014)	
C4. Consistency of OPTA with is identified with the Council country specific recommendations (the National Reform Programme 2014 for 3 Specific Objectives of the OPTA):	No specific recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
► SO 1.1. on beneficiaries capacity, for actions related to promotion of financial instruments, is consistent with the NRP priority to launch and implementation of the JEREMIE instrument to guarantee the interest subsidy and credit risk taking ► SO 2.1. related to the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework is **consistent** with NRP key action concerning the redefinition of the strategic, institutional and legislative framework in the area of public management as actions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 finance **analyses, studies** related to programming, implementation, monitoring and control, horizontal training related to public procurement, irregularities, conflicts of interests etc. ► SO 3.1. related to human resources is c**onsistent** with the action to organize specialised training programmes in the context of increasing the efficiency and transparency of the public administration of NRP, because action 3.1.1 finances **specialised training for FESI staff**, in fields such as team management, conflict management, time management, leadership and others C5. OPTA is also **consistent** with the Council Recommendation to improve the quality of regulations through the use of impact assessments, and systematic evaluations, through Action 2.1.2 Evaluation at the level of PA and OPTA, LIOP and COP level and increasing the evaluation culture for ESIF.	
Consistency with Partnership Agreement	
C6. Technical Assistance is a horizontal and transversal component of ESIF and it is not directly linked to thematic objectives. However, given the nature of OPTA to ensure the capacity and instruments necessary for an efficient coordination, management and control of ESIF, and an efficient, well oriented and correct implementation of OPTA, LIOP and COP, it is appropriate to assess the consistency of the OPTA with the Thematic Objective 11 of the PA. C7. Overall, consistency of the draft OPTA with Thematic Objective 11, *Enhancing institutional capacity and an effective public administration* of the Partnership Agreement has been identified for: ► SO 1.2, related to *communication transparency and effectiveness*, for PA priorities for funding which refer to strengthening participatory dimension consultation and participation mechanisms in decision-making, and to strengthening the participation mechanisms to deliver efficient public services at local level ► SO 2.1, related to the *regulatory, strategic and procedural framework* of ESIF, for PA priorities for funding which refer to development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, development of skills in the areas of strategic planning, use of management, monitoring and evaluation systems and tools for an improved institutional and public services performance. ► SO 2.2, related to the *development and maintenance of a functional and efficient information system* to improve the correct management of information needed for the coordination and control of ESIF, is consistent with PA priorities for funding which refer to development of monitoring mechanisms for the implemented strategies and policies, and development and use of IT tools and applications to enhance institutional	No specific recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
capacity. ► SO 3.1. on *human resources management policy* is consistent with PA priorities for funding which refer to *creation and implementation of an integrated strategic framework* for human resources management in public sector.	
EQ 1.2: To what extent is there consistency with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies)?	
Consistency with the Technical Assistance priority axis of Regional Operational Programme	
C8. No risk of potential overlap has been identified C9. **The following complementarities were identified** **- OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is **complementary** with the ROP, action Support ROP's specific communication and promotion activities (production and distribution of information and promotion materials because OPTA finances horizontal communication and promotion activities, while ROP finances specific communication activities for ROP **- OPTA Specific Objective 2.1** is **complementary** with ROP on actions related to support for the MA to manage the ROP, to organizational and logistic support for committees involved in program implementation, because OPTA provides horizontal support for the system, including ROP, while ROP Technical Assistance provides specific support for ROP.	No specific recommendation
Consistency with the Technical Assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme	
C10. No risk of potential overlap has been identified C11. **The following complementarities were identified** ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.1** is **complementary** with HC OP interventions of Technical Assistance that support OP HC beneficiaries to develop and implement OPHC projects because OPTA provides horizontal support and training for ESIF beneficiaries, and specific for LIOP, OPTA and COP, while HC OP technical assistance provides specific support and training for HC OP beneficiaries ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is complementary with HC OP interventions of technical assistance that aim at creating and operating an efficient help-desk mechanism for beneficiaries, at the elaboration and implementation of the communication strategy and plan for OP HC, and of communication campaigns, because OPTA finances these types of activities for the system overall, while HC OP finances these only for specific issues of the HC OP. ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.1.** is **complementary** with the HC OP intervention of Technical Assistance to support the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies (including staff costs) on	No specific recommendation

Conclusions	Recommendations
various stages of POCU implementation, because OPTA provides support for the MAs and IBs of OPTA, LIOP, **COP, while HC OP provides support for the HC OP MA and IBs. Also, the two OPs are complementary on evaluation activities.** **OPTA Specific Objective 2.2 is complementary with the HC OP intervention of technical assistance to procure and install IT and office equipment necessary for implementation of the programme, because OPTA finances the overarching IT system (SMIS and related applications), while HC OP finances IT and office equipment that allow the effective use of SMIS and other applications.**	
Consistency with Administrative Capacity Operational Programme	
C12. No risk of potential overlap has been identified C13. **The following complementarities were identified** ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is **complementary** with the ACOP operations to consolidate structures, processes and competencies at the level of institutions and authorities from central public administration, because both OPs support networking and exchange of experience with other national or European institutions ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.1**. is **complementary** with the ACOP operation to increase transparency, integrity and responsibility at the level of public authorities institutions, because they both finance actions related conflict of interest, incompatibilities, antifraud ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.2** is **complementary** with AC OP, because AC OP finances the creation of mechanisms for coordination and collaboration between relevant stakeholders, including IT solutions, while OPTA finances IT systems and applications that allow the collaboration and coordination of relevant stakeholders in managing the monitoring of the OPs *C14.* **OPTA Specific Objective 3.1** is **complementary** with AC OP operations to strengthen the capacity of institutions and authorities from public administration because they both finance actions related to networking and exchange of experience with other national or European institutions. Moreover, the two are complementary on human resources policy related measures, because they both finance actions related to performance management, motivational policies, and human resources policy in general. OPTA finances this type of activity for ESIF system and project initiatives will be launched by the MEF, while AC OP finances this activity for the national public administration.	No specific recommendation
Consistency with the National Rural Development Programme	
C15. No risk of potential overlap has been identified C16. **The following complementarities were identified**	No specific recommendation

Conclusions	Recommendations
► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.1** is complementary with the NRDP technical assistance measure to increase administrative and management competencies of beneficiaries' staff, because OPTA finances horizontal trainings for ESIF (potential) beneficiaries and specific for LIOP, COP and OPTA, while NRDP finances the increase of management competencies for NRDP beneficiaries' staff ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is complementary with the NRDP technical assistance measure to implementing a NRDP information and promotion campaign through information, communication and promotion activities, because OPTA finances horizontal and LIOP, COP and OPTA specific information and publicity activities, while NRDP finances NRDP related information, communication and promotion activities. Moreover, the OPTA is complementary on actions related to partnership culture development, more specifically with NRDP measure to enhance network collaboration through stakeholders' involvement and exchange of information and good practice. ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.1** is complementary with the NRDP technical assistance measure regarding the fight against corruption with impact on financial management, expenditure transparency and control efficiency., because OPTA finances activities related to antifraud, conflicts of interest, transparency, on a horizontal level and specific for LIOP, COP and OPTA, and NRDP finances this type of activities for NRDP only. Moreover, the two programmes are complementary on evaluation activities.	
Consistency with the Fisheries Operational Programme	
N/A	No specific recommendation
Consistency with the Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity	
C17. No risk of potential overlap has been identified C18. **The following complementarities were identified** ► **OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is consistent with SCPAC action to finance information and promotion campaigns because they both finance information and promotion campaigns. Also, there is complementarity with respect to OPTA action to support the partnership culture, as SCPAC supports the consolidation of associative structure capacity of the local public administration authorities. ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.1** is consistent with SCPAC of interventions related to fraud prevention, identification of conflict of interest, the realisation of guides and methodologies that facilitate internal processes, realisation of guides of good practice and promotion of best practices, support for the elaboration of methodologies and methodology frameworks for monitoring. Also, OPTA and SCPAC are complementary on activities related increasing the "evaluation culture". ► **OPTA Specific Objective 2.2** is consistent with SCPAC and its intervention related to IT solutions for the efficiency of the public administration, because they both finance the provision of IT solutions for the efficiency of the public administration.	No specific recommendation

Conclusions	Recommendations
► **OPTA Specific Objective 3.1** is consistent with SCPAC action to adapt the policies and the human resources system to the objectives and demands of a modern administration, in respect to training and counselling activities for staff	
Consistency for the EU strategy for the Black Sea	
C19. Consistency is identified between the OPTA and the EU strategy for the Black Sea in terms of support provided for development of projects in areas such as environment, energy and transport because OPTA provides technical assistance to Large Infrastructure OP beneficiaries who may develop and implement energy, environment or transport projects, but also to the managing structures of LIOP to implement the programme	No specific recommendations
Consistency for the EU Strategy for the Danube Region	
C20. Consistency is identified between the OPTA and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in terms of support provided for development of projects in areas such as environment, energy and transport and also for the managing structures of LIOP to implement the programme.	No specific recommendations
Consistency for Horizon 2020	
C21. The two programmes – Horizon 2020 and OPTA - target different types of interventions, and they are neutral in all aspects	No specific recommendations
Consistency for COSME Programme	
C22. Consistency is identified between OPTA and COSME programme in terms of initiatives taken to diminish the administrative burden for its users / target public.	No specific recommendations
Consistency for Creative Europe	
C23. The two programmes – Creative Europe and OPTA - target different types of interventions, and they are neutral in all aspects.	No specific recommendations
Consistency for Social Change and Innovation	
C24. Consistency is identified between OPTA and the PROGRESS programme of Social Change and Innovation because OPTA supports communication activities on horizontal principles such as gender equality or anti-discrimination, and the functioning of working groups focused on these principles	No specific recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
Consistency for Connecting Europe Programme	
C25. Consistency is identified between OPTA and Digital Service Infrastructures of Connecting Europe on actions related to infrastructures of digital services, because OPTA finances SMIS 2014+, My SMIS which centralize the information on projects implemented in the ESIF system	No specific recommendations
EQ 2.1: How is the internal consistency of the programme ensured?	
Needs assessment	
C26. The needs identified in Section 1 of the OPTA provide a **clear and structured image of the local context** in terms of needs for technical assistance and they cover relevant themes. C27. The **needs are structured around 3 major categories**, with referring to beneficiaries and information and publicity, the ESIF system and human resources with a distinction between needs for horizontal support and specific support for LIOP, COP and OPTA. The needs are presented in a hierarchical structure, as displayed in the below: **1. Administrative capacity of beneficiaries** in the preparation and implementation of projects financed from ESIF and information and communication regarding ESIF and partnership culture in the management and implementation of ESIF - 1.1. The need to strengthen the project management capacity of beneficiaries of ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP as a robust basis for further development - 1.2 The need for information and publicity regarding ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP, as well as the development of partnership culture in the implementation of ESIF **2. Administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of ESIF,** including by ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS. - 2.1. Need to improve the legal and procedural framework for the coordination and control of ESIF, as well as management of OPTA, LIOP and COP - 2.2. The need to develop and improve SMIS, and electronic information exchange systems **3. Human resources** involved in the coordination, management and control for projects financed with SI / ESIF - including training of staff from these structures. - 3.1. The need for development of an improved human resources quality and management policy for the staff involved in the coordination, management and control of ESIF C28. The main points outlined by the needs assessment are supported by **evidence information**, by making reference to a variety of reports, or other relevant national and European documents	No specific recommendations
Overall Programme Strategy	
C29. Overall, the logic of intervention of the OPTA is **coherent and follows a logical structure**, starting from	**No specific recommendation**

Conclusions	Recommendations
identification of **needs** which are grouped into three categories. These needs are addressed through three **priority axes**, PA 1 and PA having two specific objectives each, and PA having 1 specific objective. PA 1 focuses on beneficiaries and information and communication activities, PA 2 is centred on the ESIF system overall, and PA 3 is concentrated around the human resources of the ESIF structures. The **specific objectives** are consistent with the needs identified, and they capture them appropriately. The **expected results** of these specific objectives correctly envisage a desired change. Moreover, the result indicators are relevant for the specific objective, and the **actions** proposed for each specific objective are appropriate. The specific actions proposed for the specific objectives, which are implemented through grants, are suitable for the action.	
EQ 2.2: Are the proposed support forms the most appropriate?	
C30. Overall, the forms of support proposed by OPTA are appropriate in terms of contributing to the realisation of the specific objective to which they correspond. *C31.* The analysis revealed that the forms of support and specific actions related to information management system (SMIS 2014+ and related activities) are appropriate, despite the fact that similar forms of support had a low performance in during 2007-2013. This raises attention with respect to other factors which may have contributed to the low performance of these forms of support, such as low capacity of the SMIS Central Unit, insufficient staff or excessive workload. In terms of support for the capacity of the SMIS Central Unit, the OPTA already provides the necessary support, both under SO 1.1 and SO 2.2. However, actions related to increasing the headcount of the Unit cannot be implemented by the OPTa.	No specific recommendation is made with respect to the forms of support proposed by OPTA and their correspondent specific actions. R1. In order to avoid blockages in the information management system and low performance of the OP overall, the Ministry of European Funds should take into account measures which can increase the capacity of the SMIS Central Unit, and which cannot be approached by the OP (such as increasing the staff of the Unit).
EQ 3: To what extent is the allocation of financial resources consistent with the Programme objectives?	
C32. PA 1: the size of allocation for Priority Axis No. 1 adequately expresses the development need for an increased administrative capacity of the beneficiaries in the implementation of projects financed by SI/ESI funds identified in the OPTA. C33. PA 2: The allocation to Priority Axis 2 adequately addresses the development needs in the area of administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of funds ESI, including ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS. C34. PA 3: Increase in the funding dedicated to the efficiency of human resources, compared to 2007-2013, is adequate given the identified development needs.	R2. No specific recommendations.
EQ 4: To what extent the indicators proposed in the program are relevant and clear?	

Conclusions	Recommendations
C35. Result indicators: ▶ **SO 1.1.** Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries of ESI funds to prepare and implement mature projects **Result indicator 1.1** *Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total number projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)* - Result indicator is **relevant** for the specific objective. ▶ **SO 1.2.** *Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy* **Result indicator 1.2.** *Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU* - Result indicator is **relevant** for the specific objective. ▶ **SO 2.1.** *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF* **Result indicator 2.1.** The share of beneficiaries that consider the procedures regarding ESIF to be adequate (%) - Result indicator is **relevant** for the specific objective ▶ **SO 2.2.** *Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users* **Result indicator 2.2.** The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations to the EC at the level of the OP - Result indicator is **relevant** for the specific objective. ▶ **SO 3.1.** *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds* **Result indicator of SO 3.1.** *Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures lower than 10%* - Result indicator is **relevant** for the specific objective **Result indicator of SO 3.1.** *Average of grades obtained at evaluation of staff from the coordination, management and control system of ESIF* Result indicator is **relevant** for the specific objective	R3. **Result indicator** 1.1: No specific recommendation **Result indicator 1.2:** No specific recommendation **Result indicator 2.1:** No specific recommendation **Result indicator: 2.2** No specific recommendation. **Result indicators for 3.1:** No specific recommendation
C36. Output indicators: ▶ **SO 1.1.** Indicators are clear and relevant. ▶ **SO 1.2**. Indicators are clear and relevant. ▶ **SO 2.1**. Indicators are clear and relevant. ▶ **SO 2.2**: Indicators are clear and relevant. ▶ **SO 3.1:** Indicators are clear and relevant.	R4. **SO 1.1:** No specific recommendation **SO 1.2:** No specific recommendation **SO 2.1**: No specific recommendation **SO 2.**2: No specific recommendation **SO 3.1:** No specific recommendation

Conclusions	Recommendations
EQ 5.1: How will the estimated outputs contribute to results?	
C37. There is a causal link between the estimated output and intended results for each Specific Objective. Assumptions underlying the results chains are plausible.	No specific recommendations
EQ 5.2: To what extent are the results influenced by external factors, including by other instruments?	
C38. **Among the factors which may influence result indicator 1.1** *Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)* the following are included: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacities and heavy workload, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, the quality of consultancy services provided for beneficiaries, the development level of the local training market, the motivation level of beneficiaries. **Among the factors which may influence result indicator 1.2.** *Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU* the following are included: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacities and heavy workload, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, public perception of ESI funds in the general public. **Among the factors which may influence result indicator 2.1.** *The share of beneficiaries who find the procedures for ESI funds appropriate (%)*the following are included*:* economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacities and heavy workload, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, the capacity for conducting evaluation. **Among the factors which may influence result indicator 2.2.** *The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations at the level of the OP* the following are included: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacities and heavy workload, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures. **Among the factors which may influence result indicator 3.1.** *Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures* the following are included: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacities and heavy workload, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, the development level of the local training market. **Among the factors which may influence result indicator 3.1.** Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system the following are included: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political	No specific recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
instability, beneficiaries' capacities and heavy workload, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, the development level of the local training market	
EQ 5.3: Are quantified target values of the indicators realistic, having in mind the funding available?	
C39. Plausibility of most of the target values could not be assessed due to lack of data. In those cases when the assessments could be made, plausibility level of target values proved to be high or medium.	R5. In those cases when the plausibility of the target value is medium, it is recommended to revise the target value in the middle of the programming period.
EQ 6: To what extent are the selected indicators and intermediate and final targets (milestones) for the performance framework adequate?	
C40. Since the performance framework is not required for the Technical Assistance Operational Programmes, the analysis regarding the performance framework of this evaluation question will not be made.	No specific recommendations
EQ 7: To what extent are the human resources and administrative capacity adequate to manage the Programme?	
C41. The choice of continuity in the structure in charge with the management of OPTA 2007-2013 and for 2014-2020 sets the premises for a sound implementation of the future OP. Nevertheless organizational and human resource aspects required specific attention. C42. The new organizational asset of the Ministry of European Funds should ensure a clear distinction between the tasks of MA OPTA 2014-2020, other MAs and the horizontal coordination role of MEF. C43. Based on the discussions with Programme stakeholders, the staff of MA OPTA 2014-2020 will be carrying out in parallel activities related to the implementation and closure of OPTA 2007-2013 which will generate additional workloads if the headcount remains unchanged. C44. The implementation of the OPTA has been negatively affected by the low capacity of beneficiaries, including those structures currently integrated in MFE, to prepare and implement projects in particular in what pertains public procurement issues, while the burden related to administrative project implementation has created additional workload and delays. C45. The implementation function, a part of the MA at the moment, will carry out activities correspondent to the MEF as EU funds beneficiary, for the projects implemented by MEF. This can potentially increase the conflict of interest within the MA OPTA. C46. Administrative requirements related to contract implementation have on the other hand according to Programme stakeholders determined additional workload at contract beneficiary level C47. Reduction of the administrative burden for beneficiaries is a matter of interest for the OPTA Managing	R6. The new organizational structure for MFE should ensure a clear definition of functions and roles and staff allocation for the management and implementation of the OPTA. Allocated headcount should be increased and staff with relevant experience should be recruited. R7. In order to avoid potential conflict of interest within the MA OPTA, the implementation function should not be integrated in the MA. R8. In order to reduce the administrative work on projects at the level of contract implementation in the MA, it is recommended to simplify the procedures and to give particular attention to Simplification Cost Options, and investigate the potential interventions for which SCOs could be used

Conclusions	Recommendations
Authority and, in this respect, simplification cost options are being considered to support the MA in evaluation and training activities.	
EQ 8: To what extent are the monitoring and data collection procedures adequate to perform evaluations?	
C48. The programming document does not contain a detailed description of the planned arrangements for the timely collection and aggregation of statistical data and their publication. In order to fulfil the ex-ante conditionality on Statistical data and indicators, the Programmer is elaborating "Fiches of Indicator" for each of the indicators. C49. In terms on project monitoring and help desk services for beneficiaries, at the moment monitors provide support on specific aspects of project implementation for any beneficiary who needs support in that particular aspect.	R9. It is recommended that the monitoring function be separated from the verification function. Moreover, it is recommended that monitors are assigned to particular operational programmes, and that they provide help-desk support for beneficiaries of that operational programme for any phase of project implementation, from definition of project idea to project closure.
EQ 9: To what extent the programme contributes to the European Union strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, considering the selected thematic objectives and priorities, taking into account the national and regional needs?	
C50. Considering that OPTA will provide specific Technical Assistance support to Competitiveness and Large Infrastructure OPs, it will have a stronger indirect contribution of the achievement of the EU Headline Targets on R&D, CO2 emission reduction, renewable energies and energy efficiency	No specific recommendations are made
EQ 10: Which is the relation of the Programme with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies)?	
C51. Lack of quantified targets only allowed a qualitative assessment of contribution to Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity. Overall the OPTA contributes to the achievement of the SCPAC in the improving framework conditions, evaluation, human resources policy and staff training, development of IT systems, partnership culture. C52. Given its nature, OPTA will have a horizontal influence over all OPs financed from ESIF, and will also provide support for ETC programmes beneficiaries, while it will have a specific contribution to LIOP, COP, and OPTA itself.	No specific recommendations are made
EQ 11: Equal opportunities	
EQ 11.1: Are the planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent discrimination adequate?	
C53. Minimum legal requirements regarding equal opportunities are respected by the OPTA. Moreover, OPTA will provide support to the functioning and capacity strengthening of the Working Group related to horizontal principle that is mentioned in the Partnership Agreement. Furthermore, information and publicity activities	No specific recommendation

Conclusions	Recommendations
supported by the OPTA will include initiatives aimed at promoting equal opportunities and non-discrimination.	
EQ 11.2: Are the planned measures to promote sustainable development adequate?	
C54. The OPTA mentions a set **horizontal interventions** that will be financed, with respect to sustainable development, such as: - Trainings on sustainable development especially for people involved in project monitoring and evaluation - Training on sustainable development for project promoters - Creating opportunities for conferences, discussion platforms, working groups, thematic networks in the field of sustainable development - Elaboration of studies or evaluation in the field C55. With respect to the measures used to promote sustainable development at the level of each of the programming phases, for 6 of the 7 phases there are measures included in the OPTA that refer to technical assistance. For Financial Management and Control Phase no such measure is provided. However, the application of such measures in the area of Financial Management and Control is hardly possible.	No specific recommendation

15. Annexes

Annex 1 - Consistency with Europe 2020 Strategy

EU 2020 Strategy ***Priorities and Flagship Initiatives***	**Corresponding *OP TA Specific objectives***	**Consistency assessment**
Smart growth		
► **Digital agenda for 2020**: creating a single digital market based on fast/ultrafast internet and interoperable applications	SO 2.2. Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	**YES** The action related to this **specific objective**, *Development, improvement and maintenance of SMIS 2014+, MySMIS 2014+ and other related applications, as well as of the digital network and support for the SMIS 2014+ Central Unit, of the network of coordinators and training the users of these information systems* exhibits a direct **consistency** to the **Digital Agenda flagship initiative**.
► **Innovation Union:** refocusing R&D and innovation policy on major challenges for our society like climate change, energy and resource efficiency, health and demographic change; strengthening every link in the innovation chain, from 'blue sky' research to commercialisation	Not applicable	Not applicable
► **Youth on the move**: helping students and trainees study abroad; equipping young people better for the job market; enhancing the performance/international attractiveness of Europe's universities; improving all levels of education and training (academic excellence, equal opportunities)	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sustainable growth		
► **Resource efficient Europe**: to support the shift towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon economy, our economic growth must be decoupled from resource and energy use by reducing CO2 emissions, promoting greater energy security, reducing the resource intensity of what we use and consume	Not applicable	Not applicable
► **An industrial policy for the globalization era**: the EU needs an industrial policy that will support businesses – especially small businesses – as they respond to globalisation, the economic crisis and the shift to a low-carbon economy, by supporting entrepreneurship – to make European business fitter and more competitive and covering every part of the increasingly international value chain – from access to raw materials to after-sales service	Not applicable	Not applicable

EU 2020 Strategy ***Priorities and Flagship Initiatives***	**Corresponding *OP TA Specific objectives***	**Consistency assessment**
Inclusive growth		
► **An agenda for new skills and jobs**: for individuals – helping people acquire new skills, adapt to a changing labour market and make successful career shifts, and collectively – modernising labour markets to raise employment levels, reduce unemployment, raise labour productivity and ensuring the sustainability of our social models	SO 3.1: Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF	**YES** The two actions of this **specific objective**, *3.1.1. Implementation of a horizontal human resources policy and development of management capacity for the ESIF coordination, management and control system* and *3.1.2. Ensuring financial resources for the remuneration of staff in the system for ESIF coordination, management and control, and management system of OPTA, LIOP and COP* are **consistent with the EU 2020** Agenda for new skills and jobs flagship initiative
► **European Platform against poverty:** ensuring economic, social and territorial cohesion, guaranteeing respect for the fundamental rights of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and enabling them to live in dignity and take an active part in society and mobilising support to help people integrate in the communities where they live, get training and help to find a job and have access to social benefits	Not applicable	Not applicable

Annex 2 - Consistency with Council recommendations for the National Reform Programme 2014

National Reform Programme 2014	Council Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
Employment		**Specific objectives**	**Consistency**
► **Improving the participation to the labour market:** ► subsidising employers ► providing mobility grants, including too long term unemployed ► evaluation and certification of competences acquired in informal, non-formal education and training for early school leavers	► Improve labour market participation, as well as employability and productivity of the labour force, by reviewing and strengthening active labour market policies, to provide training and individualised services and promoting lifelong learning.	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
► **Reforming EURES network:** ► Coordinating the national employment network			
► **Increasing the adaptability and permanent development of the labour force correlated with the structural changes of the labour market:** ► Creating analysis/studies/ regular forecasts regarding LM's evolutions			
► **Enhance the capacity of the National Employment Agency to increase the efficiency and effectiveness, including the outreach services provided to beneficiaries:** ► adapting the ANOFM's IT system to include a database of registered NEETs ► outsourcing employment services provided by ANOFM to private suppliers	► Enhance the capacity of the National Employment Agency to increase the quality and coverage of its services.	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
► **Reducing regional economic disparities and creating new jobs:** ► Creating state aid schemes to support investments promoting regional development and new jobs	► To fight youth unemployment, implement rapidly the National Plan for Youth Employment, including for example through a Youth Guarantee	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
Research, development, innovation			
► **Promoting RDI activities from economic sectors with growth potential and public relevance:** ► Developing RDI activities in the private sector through stimulating innovative start-ups and spin-offs ► Developing human resources from potential growth sectors by attracting highly skilled foreign researchers and creating the *Romanian Researchers Register* ► Training of researchers and engineers in the area of industrial and intellectual property rights to improve the technological transfer	► Ease and diversify access to finance for SMEs. Ensure closer links between research, innovation and industry, in particular by prioritising research and development activities that have the potential to attract private investment. Strengthen the intellectual property rights framework with a view to increasing the commercialisation of research results.	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
► **Increasing the efficiency of RDI investments** ► Transferring the research institutes from ministries and NGOs to Ministry of Education ► Creating a national road map regarding RDI infrastructures			

National Reform Programme 2014	Council Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
► Creating the guideline for establishing a standardize structure of research units' annual reports ► Promoting access to scientific literature for all research organizations			
Climate change and energy			
► **Improving the protection system against the risk of flooding** ► Improving hydrological forecasts ► Increasing the awareness and information level of population ► Expanding and modernising the specific infrastructure works	► Continue to remove regulated gas and electricity prices and improve energy efficiency. Improve the cross-border integration of energy networks and speed up implementation of the gas interconnection projects.	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
► **Starting operationalization of the National Strategy on Climate Change 2013-2020** ► Develop National Action Plan on Climate Change ► Conduct a study to create the institutional framework on the application of the provisions of Decision NO. 406/2009/EC (Effort Sharing decision – reducing GES emissions)			
► **Reduction of GHG emissions in aviation** ► Accreditation of Henri Coanda International Airport according to CO2 emissions management certification standards set out in the Accreditation Programme of CO2 levels for Airports			
► **Improving the efficiency of support systems for renewable energy** ► Develop methodology for the annual mandatory quota of green certificates ► Periodic assessment (annual) of specific indicators for the analysis of the over-compensation system to promote green certificates			
► **Renewable energy sources' capitalization** ► Implement a funding mechanism on realising initial investments and upgrading hydropower plants ► Implement a funding mechanism on realising initial investments and upgrading thermal energy plants that use geothermal energy			
► **Improving energy efficiency** ► Improving energy efficiency in transport ► Develop sale pricing methodology and takeover conditions for electricity produced in high efficiency cogeneration and delivered from low power CHP plants and microcogeneration plants ► Completing the National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency III ► Developing the Annual Progress Report on the national energy efficiency goals	► The energy efficiency in buildings, district heating, industry and transport should be increased		

National Reform Programme 2014	Council Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
Education			
► **Continuing reforms in education and training to ensure an education adapted to the labour market needs and cantered on personal and social development** ► Developing ECEC by clarifying from a legal perspective the structure and responsibilities of ECEC integrated services to gradually become universal services ► Modernising school curriculum and improving pupils' evaluation system, as well as TVET competences ► Strengthening access to digital resources and instruments in compulsory education ► Strengthening TVET ► Creating an impact assessment mechanism of reforms, including by increasing the capacity of Ministry of Education to collect and process data from systems.	► Speed up the education reform including the building up of administrative capacity at both central and local level and evaluate the impact of the reforms.	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
► **Ensuring openness of education and training system to all youngsters and equal access to education, especially for groups with particular risks** ► Finalising, approving and implementing the national Strategy to reduce ESL ► Implementing ESL prevention and intervention measures (SAS programmes) ► Implementing compensation measures for disadvantaged groups (SC programmes) ► Consolidating social package for education targeting pupils belonging to groups high particular risks	► Speed up the transition from institutional to alternative care for children deprived of parental care. ► Improve data collection mechanism regarding early school leavers ► Implement a national strategy on early school leaving focusing on better access to quality early childhood education, including for Roma children.	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
► **Ensuring an open, qualitative, competitive higher education adapted to the labour market** ► Finalising, approving and implementing the national Strategy for Tertiary Education ► Supporting students from rural areas, disadvantaged groups and non-traditional students to participate in higher education through grants, scholarships, gratns to Erasmus students from rural areas etc ► Consolidating monitoring instruments of inserting graduates on the labour market in order to create forecasting studies and to disseminate them ► Consolidating an IT strategic system for higher education to fundament educational policies	► Further align tertiary education with the needs of the labour market and improve access for disadvantaged people.	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
► **Creating and developing an open and accessible LLL framework** ► Finalising the LLL National Strategy ► Developing the qualification system in Romania ► Enhancing students' mobility education and training systems ► Creating the institutional framework for LLL	► Step up reforms in vocational education and training.	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***

National Reform Programme 2014	Council Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
Social inclusion/ poverty reduction			
	► To alleviate poverty, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of social transfers with a particular focus on children. Complete the social assistance reform by adopting the relevant legislation and strengthening its link with activation measures.	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
	► Ensure concrete delivery of the National Roma integration strategy.	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
► **Modernising the social care system** ► Managing financial management processes, funding and monitoring using only the SAFIR programme ► Implementing the National electronic register for people with disabilities (RENPH) ► Modernising the assessment system of persons with disabilities	► Pursue health sector reforms to increase its efficiency, quality and accessibility, in particular for disadvantaged people and remote and isolated communities. Reduce the excessive use of hospital care including by strengthening outpatient care (medical care or treatment that does not require an overnight stay in a hospital or medical facility) as well as primary care and referral systems (ensure that people receive the best possible care closest to home).	***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
► **Improving efficiency and financial sustainability of the health system** ► Completion of centralized public procurement system for ten main groups of drugs ► Develop costs' benchmark for providing services in hospitals ► Develop the assessment capacity of health technology			
► **Managing health and medical infrastructure at regional level** ► Modernisation of health services' infrastructure		***Not applicable***	***Not applicable***
Priority reforms			
► **Increasing the efficiency and transparency of the public administration**: ► Continuing decentralization ► Redefinition of the strategic, institutional and legislative framework in the area of public management, according to the national programmatic and strategic approved	► Strengthen governance and the quality of institutions and the public administration, in particular by improving the capacity for strategic and budgetary	SO 1.1. Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects	**YES** Consistency is identified with **Increasing the efficiency and transparency of the**

National Reform Programme 2014	Council Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
documents ► Organizing specialized training programs ► Defining regulations for quality control mechanisms ► **Improving national housing conditions:** ► Develop National Strategy Habitation. ► Develop the legal framework for the establishment, organization and functioning of homeowners associations and condominiums' management ► Develop a housing law	planning, by increasing the professionalism of the public service through improved human resource management and by strengthening the mechanisms for coordination between the different levels of government. ► Significantly improve the quality of regulations through the use of impact assessments, and systematic evaluations.	beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects SO 2.1. Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	**public administration,** particularly with the key actions: - **organizing specialized training programs** by: PA 3. Increasing the efficiency of the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania: 3.1.1. Implementation of a horizontal human resources policy and development of management capacity for the ESIF coordination, management and control system Consistency is identified with the key action concerning the **redefinition of the strategic, institutional and legislative framework in the area of public management** by**:** PA 2. Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF: 2.1.1. Improving the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP OPTA is also consistent with the Council Recommendation to
► **Improving the management of EU funds:** ► Review and implementation of The priority measures' plan to strengthen the absorption capacity of structural and cohesion funds ► **Continue the reform of the public procurement system** ► Adopting the national strategy on public procurement for the period 2014-2020 ► Implementing measures of the 2014 Action Plan of the National Strategy on public procurement	► Step up efforts to accelerate the absorption of EU funds in particular by strengthening management and control systems and improving public procurement.		

National Reform Programme 2014	Council Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
			improve the quality of regulations through the use of impact assessments, and systematic evaluations, through SO 2.1 Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF, action: 2.1.2. Evaluation and the level of Partnership Agreement and of OPTA, LIOP, and COP, and activities to increase the evaluation culture for ESIF
Improving the business environment ► **Diversification of financial instruments to support SMEs capable of rapid development** ► Creating a network of business angels ► Implementation of Program for Romanian –Swiss SMEs ► **Strengthening the guarantee and counter-guarantee instruments to stimulate investments in strategic sectors** ► The launch and implementation of the JEREMIE instrument to guarantee the interest subsidy and credit risk taking ► **Developing mentoring to support SMEs in accessing financial instruments** ► Launching and implementing the SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT ► Establishing the "credit" mediator institution ► **Increase the technological capacity of firms** ► Tax exemption on reinvested profits to purchase high-tech equipment ► **Simplifying administrative procedure and cutting red tape for entrepreneurs** ► Restructuring stop shop and PCU ► Simplification of formalities for setting up businesses / operating licenses ► The development of online services offered by NTC businesses, citizens and public	► Improve and simplify the business environment in particular through reducing administrative burdens on SMEs and implementing a consistent e-government strategy. ► Step up efforts to improve the quality, independence and efficiency of the judicial system in resolving cases and fight corruption more effectively. ► Promote competition and efficiency in network industries, by ensuring the independence and capacity of national regulatory authorities, and by continuing the corporate governance reform of state-owned enterprises in the energy and transport sectors. ► Adopt a comprehensive long-term transport plan and improve broadband infrastructure	***Not applicable***	***YES*** **Consistency is identified with the NRP action related to financial instruments, through OPTA Priority Axis 1, Specific Objective 1.1** ***Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects*** **action*:*** ***1.1.2 Horizontal assistance for ESIF beneficiaries and specific assistance for OPTA, LIOP and COP beneficiaries,*** **for actions related to promotion of financial**

National Reform Programme 2014	Council Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
institutions ► **Improve the promotion and development of exports by SMEs (as contained in the RST 7 and the MoU signed with COM)** ► Adoption and implementation of the National Export Strategy 2014-2020			**instruments among beneficiaries.**

Annex 3 - Consistency with the Technical Assistance axis of Regional Operational Programme

LEGEND : C Complementarity | N Neutrality | R Risk of redundancy

Operational Programme Technical Assistance Priority Axis / Specific objectives		Technical Assistance axis of Regional Operational Programme *Indicative operations*									
		Supporting the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies (including personnel costs for IBs) to implement various stages of ROP, including project identification and development , preparation, selection, monitoring, evaluation , control and audit	Purchase and installation of IT equipment and office automation, acquisition and development of software necessary for the management and implementation	Procurement of goods and services for specific activities within the MA Regional OP / IB Regional OP	Organizational and logistical support to the Regional OP Monitoring Committee and other committees involved in program implementation	Specific activities related to Regional OP assessment, including programming documents (technical assistance strategy, communication strategy, etc.)	Drafting specific Regional OP studies	Supporting the activities of the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies (including IB's personnel costs) required in order to close the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013	Supporting the preparation of the Regional OP for the next programming period (studies, analyzes, preparation of projects, etc.)	Supporting information and communication activities specific to Regional OP (production and distribution of information and publicity materials, events information and promotion, media campaigns, etc.)	Support for the launching activities of the Regional OP for the next programming period.
PA 1 - Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects funded by ESIF and dissemination of information regarding these funds	SO 1.1. Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	SO 1.2. Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	C 1.2.1. Dissemination of information and carrying out of informing and publicity activities regarding ESIF as well as for OPTA, LIOP and COP	N
PA2 Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF	SO 2.1. Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	C Action 2.1.1 regarding the improvement of the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP	N	N	C Action 2.1.1 Improving the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP	C Action 2.1.2, regarding evaluation at the level of PA and OPTA, LIOP and COP level and increasing the evaluation culture for ESIF	C Action 2.1.2, regarding evaluation at the level of PA and OPTA, LIOP and COP level and increasing the evaluation culture for ESIF	N	N	N	N
	SO 2.2. Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	N	C Action 2.2.1 The TA provided by POAT 2014-2020 will be used to develop	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

			and ensure the operation of the unified computing system, SMIS 2014+, and its applications, including MySMIS, that will allow the electronic communication between beneficiaries and the management structure, as well as strenghtening the user capacity to use these systems and applications.								
PA3 - Increasing the efficiency and effectivenessof the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania	SO 3.1. Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds	N	N	**N**	**N**	N	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**

Annex 4 - Consistency with the Technical Assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme

LEGEND : C Complementarity | N Neutrality | R Risk of redundancy

Technical Assistance Operational Programme Priority Axis / Specific objectives		Technical Assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme *Indicative operations* SO 7.1 Improving the capacity of HCOP MA and IBs to efficiently and effectively manage and implement the operational program	SO 7.2 Ensuring the capacity of ACOP MA to efficiently and effectively manage and implement the operational program	SO 7.3 Improving the capacity of HCOP beneficiaries to effectively and efficiently implement ESF projects	SO 7.4 Raising awareness of beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of HCOP on ESF activities, valuing and implementing best practices and initiatives in ESF field
PA1 - Strengthen beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement ESIF financed projects, and dissemination of information regarding these funds	SO 1.1 - Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects	N	N	**C** **1.1.1** **Horizontal training for ESFI beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, and specific training for OPTA, LIOP and COP beneficiaries**	N
	SO 1.2 - Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	N	N	N	**C** **OPTA action 1.2.1.Information dissemination activities and information and publicity activities regarding ESIF and OPTA, LIOP and COP**
PA2 Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF	SO 2.1 - Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	**C** **Action 2.1.1 regarding the framework conditions is complementary with actions aimed at improving the capacity of HCOP MA and IBs**	N	N	N
	SO 2.2 - Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	N	**C** 2.2.1 Action regarding Development, improvement and maintenance of SMIS 2014+ and other related applications	N	N
PA3 - Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania	SO 3.1 - Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds	N	N	N	N

Annex 5 - Consistency with the Administrative Capacity Operational Programme

LEGEND : C **Complementarity** | N **Neutrality** | R **Risk of redundancy**

Operational Programme Technical Assistance Priority Axis / Specific objectives		Operational Programme Administrative Capacity						
		PA 1 – Efficient judicial system and administration			PA 2 - Effective and transparent public administration and judicial system			PA 3 – Technical assistance
		SO 1.1 Adapting systems, structures and optimizing processes to increase efficiency in central public authorities and institutions	SO 1.2 Development and implementation of policies and modern tools of human resource management	SO 1.3 Improving the efficiency of the judiciary syster	SO 2.1 Upgrading the structures and the processes of local public authorities and institutions providing public services	SO 2.2 Increasing transparency, ethics and integrity in the public authorities and institutions	SO 2.3 Improving the access to and the quality of services provided by the judiciary, including by ensuring greater transparency and integrity	SO 3.1 Support for efficient and transparent implementation of AC OP 2014 - 2020
PA 1 - Strengthen beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement ESIF financed projects, and dissemination of information regarding these funds	SO 1.1 - Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	SO 1.2 - Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	C Action 1.2.1 regarding development of partnership culture is complementary with ACOP action to increase social partners' capacity to cooperate	N	N	C Action 1.2.1 regarding development of partnership culture is complementary with ACOP action to consolidate and implement mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and consultation between relevant stakeholders	N	N	N
PA2 Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF	SO 2.1 - Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	C Action 2.1.2 regarding evaluations, and their use for improving the regulatory process, elaboration of guides and methodologies to decrease administrative burden	N	N	C Action 2.1.1 regarding the framework conditions is complementary with the action to revise internal processes and working procedures	C Action 2.1.1. Improving the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP, on actions related conflict of interest, incompatibilities, antifraud.	N	N
	SO 2.2 - Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	N	N	N	C Action 2.2.1 of OPTA regarding IT tools is complementary with AC OP action to support the development, introduction and use of ITC tools	N	N	N
PA3 - Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania	SO 3.1 - Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI fund	C Action 3.1.1 regarding human resources management is complementary with AC OP actions related to development of system staff abilities, networking and exchange of experience and good practice.	C Action 3.1.1 regarding human resources management is complementary with AC OP actions related to networking and exchange of experience with other national or European institutions, to development of competencies for staff in public administration, to monitoring and coordinating human resources policies.	**N**	Action 3.1.1 regarding human resources management is complementary with AC OP actions related to development of system staff abilities	**N**	**N**	**N**

Annex 6 - Consistency with the National Rural Development Programme

LEGEND : C **Complementarity** N **Neutrality** R **Risk of redundancy**

Operational Programme Technical Assistance Priority Axis / Specific objectives		National Rural Development programme *Technical Assistance Measure*							
		a) Programme preparation, including future programme preparation, through studies, research activities.	b) Programme management through increased administrative and management competencies of beneficiaries' staff	c) Programme monitoring and evaluation, including ex-post and ex-ante evaluations	d) Implementing a NRDP information and promotion campaign through information communication and promotion activities	e) Network collaboration through stakeholders' involvement and exchange of information and good practice	f) Contestations and complaints resolution	g) Control and audit activities fo specialised bodies of beneficiary institutions or other national or European bodies with control and audit attributions	h) Actions against corruption with impact on financial management, expenditure transparency and control efficiency
PA 1 - Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects funded by ESIF and dissemination of information regarding these funds	SO 1.1 - Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects	N	C 1.1.1. Horizontal trainings for ESIF potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries and specific training for the beneficiaries of the OPTA, LIOP and COP	N	N	N	N	N	N
	SO 1.2 - Ensuring communication transparency and effectiveness and developing a partnership culture regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	N	N	N	C 1.2.1. Dissemination of information and carrying out of informing and publicity activities regarding ESIF as well as for OPTA, LIOP and COP	C 1.2.2. Developing the partnership culture for the coordination and management of ESIF	N	N	N
PA2 Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF	SO 2.1 - Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	N	N	C Action 2.1.2. Evaluation at the level of PA and OPTA, LIOP and COP level and increasing the evaluation culture for ESIF	N	N	N	N	C Action 2.1.1. Improving the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP, especially interventions related to antifraud
	SO 2.2 - Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system to improve the correct management of information needed for the coordination and control of ESIF	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
PA3 - Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romani	SO 3.1 - Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI fund	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**

Annex 7 - Consistency with the Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 (Draft April 2014)

Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 (Draft April 2014)		Operational Programme Technical Assistance
General Objectives	Specific objectives	Consistency
► **I. Adapting the structure and mandate of the administration to the needs of the citizens and the real financing possibilities**	**I.1 Increasing the predictability degree of the organization and functioning of the institutions at the central public administration level and of the policies managed by them** ► Clear defining of mandates at the central level of public administration institutions ► Measures for ensuring long-term stability in the public institutions structures	N/A
► **II. Implementing a performing management in public administration**	**II.1 Increasing the coherence, efficiency, predictability and transparency of the decision process in public administration** II.1.1. Delivery Unit Operationalizing ► Facilitating high-level dialogue ► Establishing the institutional framework for the improvement of policy implementation ► Establishing a monitoring system and indicators ► Developing the monitoring institutional capacity II.1.2. Consolidating strategic planning and introducing program budgeting at central level ► Updating and unification of the two strategic planning methodologies and budget programming ► Defining the role of Strategic Planning Council ► Coordination and annual monitoring of the updating process of the strategic institutional plans ► Monitoring the implementation of the Institutional Strategic Plans and the Annual Government Work Plan ► Two pilot ministries (education and health) ► Expanding the budget by programs for all ministries II.1.3. Improving the evaluation process of the regulatory impact, public consultation and simplifying legislation II.1.X. Promoting ethics and integrity in public administration	**YES** II.1.1. N/A II.1.2. N/A II.1.3. consistency with OPTA Specific Objective 2.1. *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF,* action: ► 2.1.2 Evaluation at the level of PA and OPTA, LIOP and COP level and increasing the evaluation culture for ESIF II.1.X. Specific Objective OPTA Specific Objective 2.1. *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF,* action: ► 2.1.1 Improving the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP, especially for measures related to conflicts of interest, incompatibilities, antifraud

Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 (Draft April 2014)		Operational Programme Technical Assistance
	► Supporting authorities in the implementation of prevention measures and fighting corruption ► Developing mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the measures for prevention and fighting corruption ► Measures for early identification of possible conflicts of interest ► Mechanisms/procedures that contribute to the increase in transparency of public information ► Strengthening the operational capacity of institutions for applying laws and preventing and combating corruption	
	II.2 Adapting the policies and the human resources system to the objectives and demands of a modern administration II.2.1. Clarifying the roles and institutional mandates in the HR management and consolidation the administrative capacity for a strategic, unitary and integrated approach of personnel policies ► Creating HR specialists structures ► Clarifying roles and responsibilities for personnel ► Initiating a program for regulatory adequateness for HR ► Facilitating the implementation of different organization types and a flexible management II.2.2. Increasing the degree of professionalization and stability ► Creating competence frameworks ► Evaluating the current recruiting systems ► Implementing a personnel evaluation system ► Increasing recruitment and promotion transparency II.2.3. Revision of the motivational policies ► Facilitating the implementation of Law no 284/2010 regarding unitary salaries ► Evaluating the implementation of programs such as Young Professional Scheme and Special Grant of the Romanian Government II.2.4. Integrated approach of the development of competencies for public administration ► Redefining the professional training system ► Professionalizing counselling activities II.2.5. Developing ethics standards in the public administration system	**YES** Specific Objective II.2 is consistent with OPTA Specific Objective 3.1. *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds*, which includes the following actions aimed at HR policies: ► 3.1.1 Implementation of a horizontal human resources policy and development of management capacity for the ESIF coordination, management and control system

Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 (Draft April 2014)		Operational Programme Technical Assistance
	and strengthening the ethics counsellor role ► Updating the general framework of monitoring of the rules of conduct ► Developing new mechanisms for efficient implementation of legal provisions regarding the conduct of personnel ► Training and informing for ethics counsellors	
	II.3 IT solutions for the efficiency of the public administration	**YES** Specific Objective 2.2. *Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users,* action : ► 2.2.1. Development, improvement and maintenance of SMIS 2014+, MySMIS 2014+ and other related applications, as well as of the digital network and support for the SMIS 2014+ Central Unit, of the network of coordinators and training the users of these information systems
	II.4 Improving internal processes at the public institutions level II.4.1. Increasing the use of the internal control system ► Analyses of the implementation status of the internal control system ► Re-evaluating and re-grouping management standards ► A more dynamic process of implementation of SCI/M II.4.2. Strengthening the capacity of internal audit ► Elaborating methodologies for quality improvement ► Developing modern systems and instruments ► Developing guides and methodologies ► Developing risk management ► Harmonizing the laws regarding the European funds management ► Creating and implementing a database	**YES** II.4. Specific Objective 2.1. *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF* includes the following actions which are consistent with the PACS objective: ► 2.1.1 Improving the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP
	II.5 Quality, research and innovation in administration II.5.1. Promoting best practices and innovation and encouraging experience exchange and networking ► Implementing benchmarking mechanisms ► Collaboration with the academic and research environment ► Elaborating guides for best practices ► Actions for promoting best practices	**YES** II.5.1. Specific Objective 2.1 *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF:* ► 2.1.1. Improving the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP, especially measures related to exchange of experience and

Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 (Draft April 2014)		Operational Programme Technical Assistance
		dissemination of best practices
	II.5.2. Increasing the use of quality management systems and instruments ► Analysis of the current status of evaluation of needs and system use ► Identifying priorities ► Implementing and monitoring the Action Plan ► Unwinding information campaigns ► Implementing a monitoring mechanism for the use of the systems ► Evaluating the impact of system implementation	II.5.2. Specific Objective 2.1. *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF* includes the following actions which are consistent with the SCPAC objective: ► 2.1.1. Improving the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP ► 2.1.2. Evaluation and the level of Partnership Agreement and of OPTA, LIOP, and COP, and activities to increase the evaluation culture for ESIF Specific Objective 1.2. *Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy* includes the following actions which are consistent with the SCPAC: ► 1.2. Information dissemination activities and information and publicity activities regarding ESIF and OPTA, LIOP and COP
► III. Reducing bureaucracy and simplification for citizens, business environment and administration	III.1 Reducing bureaucracy for citizens ► III.1.1. Analysing needs and objectives for the simplification of administrative procedures ► III.1.2. Elaborating an integrated plan for the simplification of procedures ► III.1.3. Implementing and monitoring the Integrated Plan for simplification of procedures ► III.1.4. Periodical evaluation of the impact of simplification measures	N/A
	III.2 Reducing bureaucracy for the business environment ► III.2.1. Finalizing the administrative cots measuring process ► III.2.2. developing a burdens' hunting type of project ► III.2.3. Measuring and reducing costs ► III.2.4. Implementing IT solutions ► III.2.5. Fixing targets for the next period	N/A N/A
	III.3 Reducing bureaucracy inter- and intra-institutions ► Elaborating analyses for procedures ► Elaborating and implementing a simplification proposal ► Expanding the use of IT&C in communication ► Identifying the possibilities of reducing the complexity of	N/A

Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 (Draft April 2014)		Operational Programme Technical Assistance
	procedures	
► **IV. Increasing the local autonomy and consolidating the capacity of the local public administration authorities for the promotion and support of local development**	IV.1 Ensuring the optimum framework for competency distribution between the central public administration and the local public administration ► IV.1.1. Ensuring the necessary institutional framework for debating and analysing decisions regarding competency transfer ► IV.1.2. Developing and using a set of indicators for the evaluation of local public authorities' capacity ► IV.1.3. Developing mechanisms for monitoring the competencies ► IV.1.4. Elaborating analyses ► IV.1.5. Identifying financial resources necessary for the functioning of de-centralized services ► IV.1.6. Developing a mechanism for monitoring the de-centralized competencies ► IV.1.7. De-centralizing identified competencies	N/A
	IV.2 Consolidating the financial autonomy of the local public administration authorities ► IV.2.1. Creating the framework and mechanisms for ensuring the stability of income ► IV.2.2. Elaborating analyses regarding prioritization of local investments ► IV.2.3. Elaborating mechanisms for the predictability of the allocated money ► IV.2.4. Promoting measures for stimulating the exploitation of alternative income sources ► IV.2.5. Ensuring technical assistance for the elaboration of the financial recovery plans ► IV.2.6. Promoting measures for own income increase ► IV.2.7. Promoting measures for the increase in the collection degree of local taxes ► IV.2.8. Developing efficient mechanisms for the budget execution management ► IV.2.9. Elaborating and implementing an action plan for the inter-operability of the databases	**N/A**

Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 (Draft April 2014)		Operational Programme Technical Assistance
	IV.3 Reducing development disparities by administrative-territorial re-organization ► IV.3.1. Elaborating analyses for options regarding the administrative-territorial organization ► IV.3.2. Creating the legal and institutional framework ► IV.3.3. Revising the normative framework ► IV.3.4. Strengthening the administrative capacity of authorities	N/A
	IV.4 Consolidating the associative structure capacity of the local public administration authorities ► IV.4.1. Stimulating the creation of a technic device at the level of every structure ► IV.4.2. Developing an information exchange mechanism ► IV.4.3. Strengthening the role of the Local Public Finance Committee ► IV.4.4. Stimulating the development of a mechanism regarding the exchange of information between associative structures and its members ► IV.4.5. Consultancy for the members of the associative structures	**YES** IV.4. Specific Objective 1.2. *Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy* includes the following actions which are consistent with the SCPAC objective: ► 1.2.2. Developing the partnership culture for the coordination and management of ESIF
► **V. Increasing the quality and access to public services**	**V.1 Cost efficiency and reducing public services supply time** ► V.1.1. Ensuring cost and quality standards ► V.1.2. Encouraging the association of the units for better public services ► V.1.3. Developing a management culture ► V.1.4. Improving access of beneficiaries to public services	N/A
	V.2 Developing monitoring and public services evaluation mechanisms V.2.1. Elaborating a methodology-framework for the performance monitoring and integrated evaluation in public services V.2.2. Elaborating sectoral methodologies V.2.3. Elaborating integrated performance analyses regarding the public services	**YES** V.2. Specific Objective 2.1. *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF* includes the following actions which are consistent with the SCPAC objective: ► 2.1.1. Improving the framework and conditions for the coordination and control of ESIF and for the management of OPTA, LIOP and COP ► 2.1.2. . Evaluation and the level of Partnership Agreement and of OPTA, LIOP, and COP, and activities to increase the evaluation

Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020 (Draft April 2014)		Operational Programme Technical Assistance
		culture for ESIF

Annex 8 – Consistency with the EU Strategy for the Black Sea

Black Sea Strategy	OP Technical Assistance	
Priority Actions	**Relevant Specific objectives**	**Consistency**
1. Good governance	N/A	N/A
2. Rule of law	N/A	N/A
3. Promotion of respect of human rights	N/A	N/A
4. Migration management	N/A	N/A
5. Energy	SO 1.1 "Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects" SO 2.1 "Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF"	YES Consistency is identified with the Black Sea strategy because OPTA addresses the need for improvement of beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement projects in areas such as environment, transport or energy. The second action of the specific objective refers to assistance provided to beneficiaries, also in the form of specific assistance for Large Infrastructure OP beneficiaries, which cover the areas of energy, transport and environment.
6. Transport		
7. Environment		
8. Economic and social development	**NA**	**NA**

Annex 9 – Consistency with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

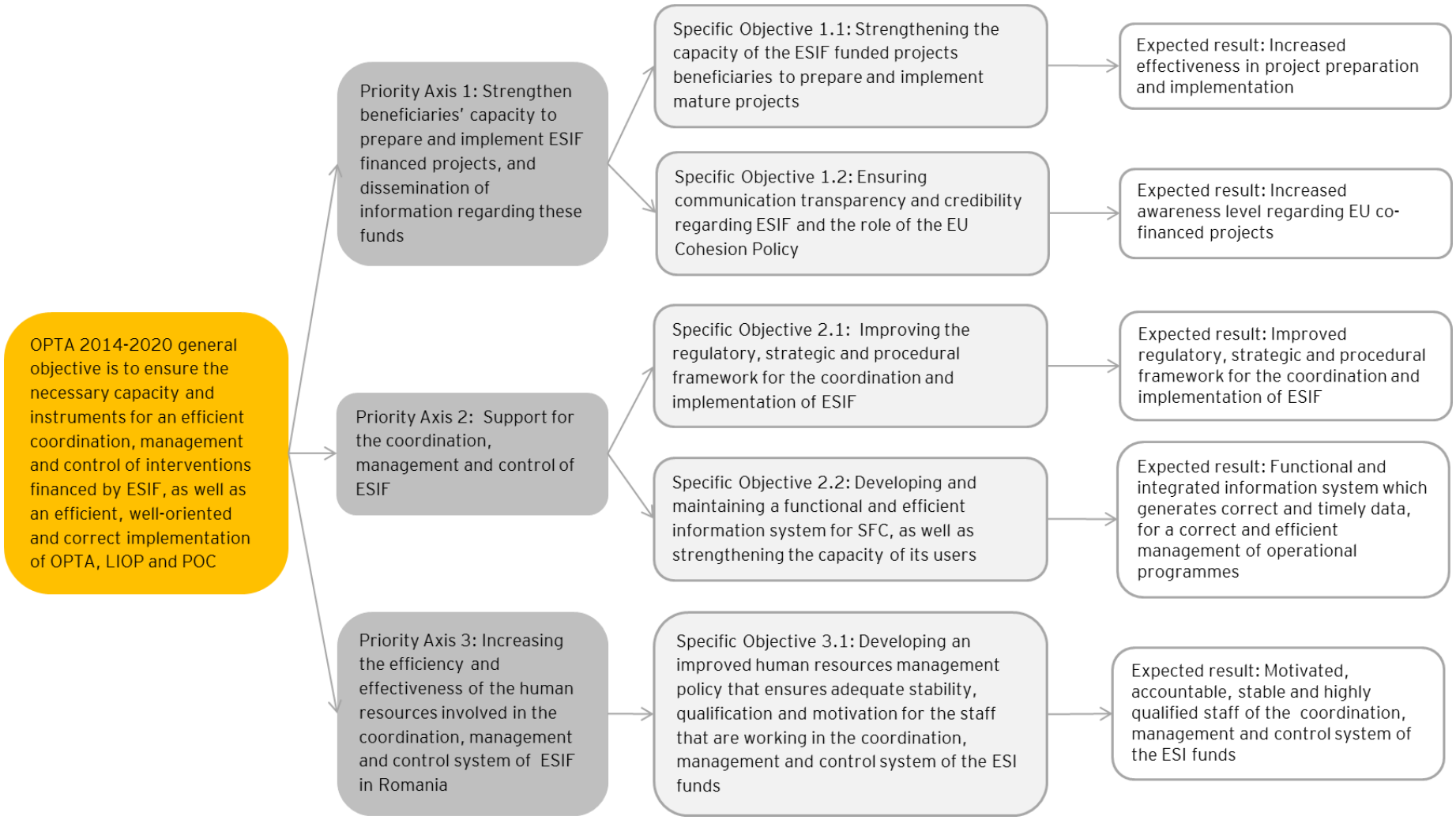
National Strategy for Regional Development		Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
Pillars	**Priority Areas**	Relevant Specific objectives	Consistency
Connecting the Danube Region	Improve mobility and multimodality: (a) Inland Waterways (b) Road, rail and air links	SO 1.1 "Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects" SO 2.1 "Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF"	YES Consistency is identified with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region because OPTA addresses the need for improvement of beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement projects in areas such as transport or energy. The second action of the specific objective refers to assistance provided to beneficiaries, also in the form of specific assistance for Large Infrastructure OP beneficiaries, which cover the areas of energy and. OPTA also provides support for the management of LIOP, the programme through which projects related to infrastructure and energy will be financed.
	Encourage more sustainable energy		
	Promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts	N/A	N/A
Protecting the Environment in the Danube Region	Restore and maintain the quality of waters	SO 1.1 "Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects" SO 2.1 "Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF"	YES Consistency is identified with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region because OPTA addresses the need for improvement of beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement projects in areas such as environment. The second action of the specific objective refers to assistance provided to beneficiaries, also in the form of specific assistance for Large Infrastructure OP beneficiaries, which cover the areas of environment. OPTA also provides support for the management of LIOP, the programme through which projects related to environment will be financed.
	Manage environmental risks		
	Preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils	N/A	N/A
Building Prosperity in the Danube Region	Develop the knowledge society through research, education and information technologies	N/A	N/A
	Support the competitiveness of enterprises, including cluster development	N/A	N/A
	Invest in people and skills	N/A	N/A

National Strategy for Regional Development		Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
Pillars	**Priority Areas**	Relevant Specific objectives	Consistency
Strengthening the Danube Region	Step up institutional capacity and cooperation	N/A	N/A
	Work together to promote security and tackle organised and serious crime	N/A	N/A

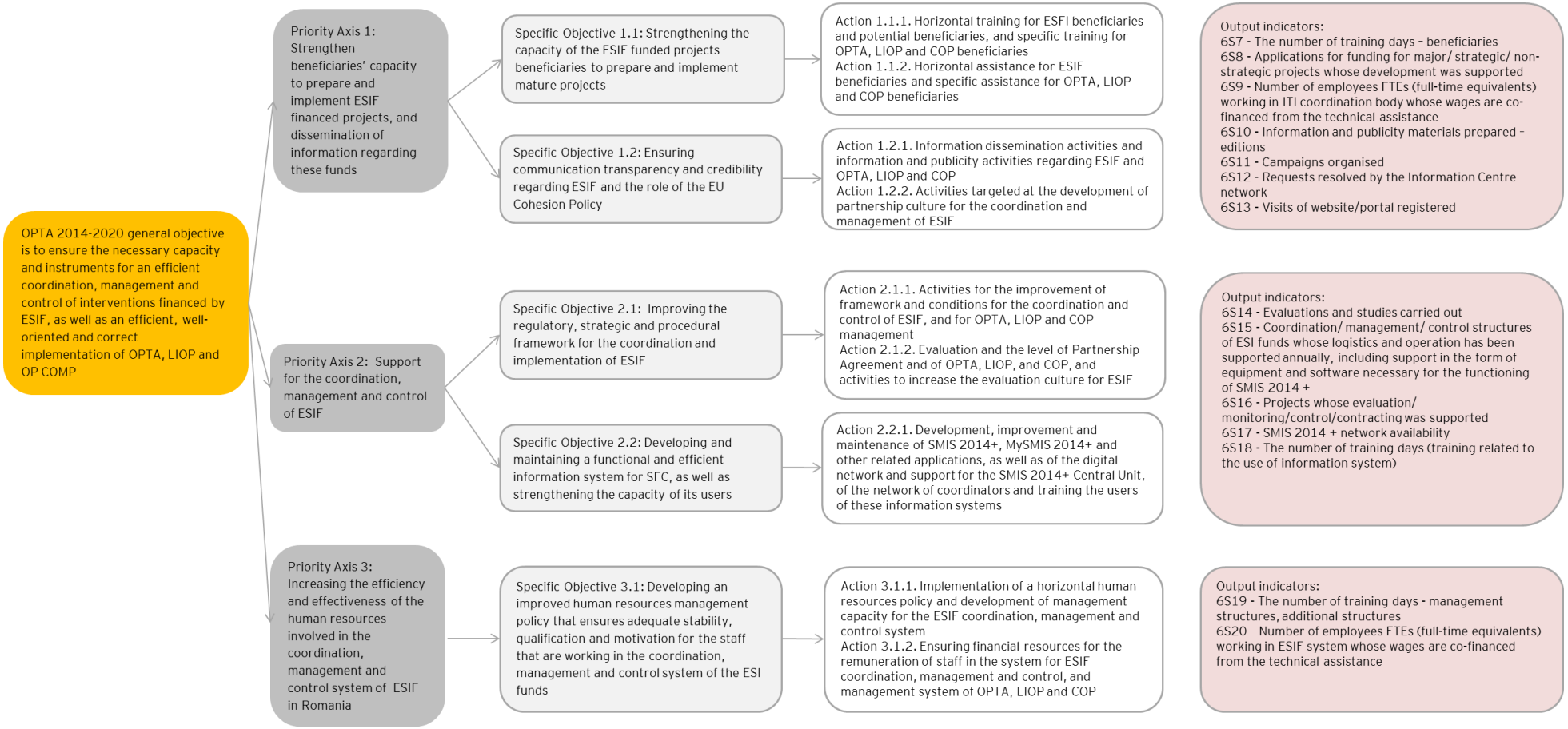
Annex 10 – Needs assessment analysis

Aspect analysed	Judgement criteria	Findings
Clarity	Well-written, with all of the main points drawn out in the main text, but also introductory and concluding sections	► The socio-economic analysis provides a **clear and structured image of the local context** in terms of needs for technical assistance. The needs are split **into 3 major categories**, referring to **beneficiaries and information and publicity**, the **ESIF system** and **human resources**. For each of the categories the needs are detailed, and a distinction between needs for **horizontal support** and **specific support** for LIOP, COP and OPTA is made. ► The analysis includes an introductory section, which frames the OP in the EU and Romanian legal frameworks. It also includes a concluding section which summarises the needs and outlines the strategy that is constructed based on the identified needs.
Use of evidence and updated statistical data	All main points backed up by primary or secondary sources	► The main points outlined by the socio-economic analysis are **supported by evidence information**, by making reference to evaluation reports, Annual Implementation Reports of OPTA, the Position Paper of the EC regarding the preparation of the Partnership Agreement and operational programmes in Romania for 2014-2020, and other documents. A detailed list of support documents used for the analysis is included in Annex 1 of the OP.
Coverage of relevant themes	The main ERDF themes related to technical assistance are covered	► According to the CPR (Regulation No 1303/2013) "at the initiative of a Member State, the ESI Funds may support actions for **preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and communication, networking, complaint resolution, and control and audit**", but also "to support **actions for the reduction of the administrative burden on beneficiaries**, including **electronic data exchange systems**, and actions to reinforce the **capacity of Member State authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use those Funds**". Aspects related to preparation, management, evaluation, information and communication, as well as networking and control are presented and, compared to previous versions of the OP, details regarding the challenges in respect to the administrative burden on beneficiaries or electronic data exchange systems have been added. ► Moreover, the needs are structured around three major themes, accordingly: **1. Administrative capacity of beneficiaries** in the preparation and implementation of projects financed from ESIF and information and communication regarding ESIF and partnership culture in the management and implementation of ESIF - 1.1. The need to strengthen the project management capacity of beneficiaries of ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP as a robust basis for further development - 1.2 The need for information and publicity regarding ESIS, OPTA, LIOP and COP, as well as the development of partnership culture in the implementation of ESIF **2. Administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of ESIF,** including by ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS. - 2.1. Need to improve the legal and procedural framework for the coordination and control of ESIF, as well as management of OPTA, LIO and COP - 2.2. The need to develop and improve SMIS, and electronic information exchange systems **3. Human resources** involved in the coordination, management and control for projects financed with SI / ESIF - including training of staff from these structures. - 3.1. The need for development of an improved human resources quality and management policy for the staff involved in the coordination, management and control of ESIF
Coverage of specific challenges	Aspects related to Issues specific to urban areas, rural areas, coastal areas and fisheries as well as mountain areas are treated	► The draft strategy **does not include references to issues specific to urban areas**, rural areas, coastal areas and fisheries as well as mountain areas. However, this is **not a problematic aspect**, as there are there are specific actions in the OP that target such specific challenges. ► The new instruments of Integrated Territorial Investments or Community Lead Local Development are presented as **challenges** posed to the implementation of funds, in terms of the partnership culture that is needed in order to implement such instruments successfully. ► The needs to support **growth poles** and the **ITI on the Danube Delta** region are also included in the analysis
Coverage of regional and sub-regional areas	Aspects related to the special conditions of the region are analysed	► The draft analysis does not make reference to target groups or special conditions of the region, such as areas most affected by poverty or target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, with special regard to marginalised communities, and persons with disabilities, or specific needs of geographical areas which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps ► The analysis **does not mention any challenges** depicted form the current programing period related to the **implementation of horizontal principles**, such as equality between man and women, non-discrimination and accessibility, as well as sustainable development and partnership principle ► The need to **mainstream the principle of equal opportunities in the OPTA** is not outlined in the OP. However, a need of the OP in this area was previously identified, as OPTA 2007-2013 was presented as a faulty practice in relation to the lack of focus on equal opportunities issue during the project selection phase, in the evaluation report "Evaluation of the way in which provisions regarding equal opportunities have been mainstreamed in the Romanian Framework of Structural Instruments" published by MEF in 2013
Unique aspects of the area reflected	The particular development opportunities and challenges reflected	► Particular development opportunities and challenges are not presented
Conclusions	Clear conclusions as a basis for strategy development	► The analysis **provides a clear and structured conclusion** which serves as a basis for strategy development, by outlining the two main directions on which OPTA is built, and the correspondent priority axes through which these strategic directions will be pursued.

Annex 11.1 – Intervention logic – General and specific objectives and expected results (Operational Programmme level)



Annex 11.2 – Intervention logic - Objectives, actions and output indicators (Priority Axis level)



Annex 12.1 – Evaluation framework (evaluation methodology)

Evaluation questions	Evaluation assumptions	Methods and tools	Achieved analyses	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources
Foreign coherence					
Q1: In what extent is there coherence between the selected thematic objectives, the appropriate priorities and objectives of the programme, on one hand, and on the other, the Common Strategic Framework, the Partnership Agreement and the specific recommendations addressed to each country on the grounds of Art. 121 par. (2) of the treaty and the relevant recommendations of the Council, adopted on the grounds of Art. 148 par. (4) of the treaty?	1) The objectives and priorities of the programme are consistent with the thematic objectives corresponding to the Partnership Agreement, Common Strategic Framework and with the recommendations of the Council and of the National Reform Programme.	► Documentary analysis ► Interviews ► Matrix of foreign coherence of the programme	► Based on the secondary sources, the way the programme objectives and priorities are aligned with: o The objectives of the Common Strategic Framework o Council recommendations, o The 3 priorities, the 5 major objectives and the 7 major initiatives identified in the Strategy Europe 2020, o The national targets included in the National Reform Programme, o The objectives of the Partnership Agreement. ► By means of the interviews, the information procured from the documentary analysis will be triangulated, and the potential differences identified will be investigated. ► Based on the documentary analyses, a matrix of foreign coherence of the programme will be made with the objectives of the Common Strategic Framework, as also with the National Reform Programme 2011 - 2013.	► Interviews with MFE (the Ministry for European Funds) representatives	► The Partnership Agreement ► Common Strategic Framework ► Strategy Europe 2020 ► National Reform Programme

Evaluation questions	Evaluation assumptions	Methods and tools	Achieved analyses	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources
To what extent is there coherence with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies)?	1) The programme objectives are consistent with the objectives of the national, macro regional and European strategic documents, other than the above, but relevant for this operational programme.	► Documentary analysis ► Interviews ► Matrix of foreign coherence of the programme	► Based on the secondary sources, the relation between the programme and the other programs of the Partnership Agreement will be examined by checking the existing complementarities and synergies ► By means of the interviews, the information procured from the documentary analysis will be triangulated, and the potential differences identified will be investigated. ► Based on the documentary analysis, a matrix of foreign coherence of the programme will be made with other national and/ or European instruments.	► Interviews with MFE (the Ministry for European Funds) representatives	► The Smart Specialization Strategy ► The Strategy of the Romanian Government to include the Romanian citizens belonging to Roma minorities for the period 2014-2020 ► The strategy regarding the consolidation of the public administration capacity ► Horizon 2020 ► The strategy regarding the marine basin of the Black Sea ► The documents related to the other Operational Programmes
The internal logic of the programme					
Q2: How the internal coherence of the programme is ensured? Are the proposed support forms the most appropriate?	1) The identified needs and challenges are appropriately reflected in the objectives (thematic objectives, investment priorities and related specific objectives) and in actions and these have received the necessary weight within the investment priorities. 2) The proposed support forms are among the most	► Documentary analysis ► Interviews ► Workshops ► Expert panel	► The documentary analysis for the examination of SWOT analysis in order to determine the way it identifies the weaknesses, the strengths, the opportunities and threats and it results from the information presented in the socio-economic analysis. ► The examination of the included socio-economic analysis, in order to determine if it contains a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the existing conditions, i.e. to include information with regard to the current situation (baseline). ► Documentary analysis for the examination of the way the following have been considered and analyzed: ○ the key-territorial challenges regarding the urban, rural, coast and fishing areas, as also the specific territorial features ○ the specific challenges and needs of the sub-regional or functional areas or of the specific target groups ○ the specific needs of the geographic areas most affected by poverty or the needs of the	► Interviews with MFE (the Ministry for European Funds) representatives ► Workshop with the beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries who have been considered in the Programme, and social partners, including ONGs (non-governmental organizations) etc. ► Sectoral expert panel from the field of information management systems for structural	► Socio-economic analyses ► SWOT analysis ► Socio-economic analysis ► Deliverables of the relevant Technical Assistance projects ► Results of the macro-economic modeling ► Statistic data ► Protocols of consultation of the stakeholders and documents on the consulting activity ► Other consultative documents related to this operational programme

Evaluation questions	Evaluation assumptions	Methods and tools	Achieved analyses	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources
	appropriate to ensure the internal coherence of the programme.		target groups with high risk of discrimination or exclusion ○ various forms of assistance (grants, prizes, reimbursable assistance or financial vehicles) depending on the types of beneficiaries, the specific objectives of the programme and market failure. ► The organization of an workshop with relevant players in order to: ○ evaluate the extent the relevant parties have been consulted to identify the needs, i.e. the involvement in the process, the efficacy and appropriate character of the applied methods ○ examine the extent that the strengths, opportunities, challenges and identified needs are relevant for them. ○ identify additional issues and potential inconsistencies/ lacks. ► Documentary analysis to examine the extent that the strategic vision targets the settlement of challenges. ► Documentary analysis to examine the intervention logic of the programme, i.e. the direct and indirect connections existing between the strategic vision, the thematic objectives, the investment priorities, the related specific objectives and actions. ► Checking the relation between the specific objectives of every axis and between the specific objectives of the various axes. ► Interviews to identify the reasons that influenced the logic of intervention. ► The organization of an expert panel of which objective is to validate the logic of intervention and to identify additional matters and potential inconsistencies/ lacks.	instruments, continuous professional training, IS communication, and from fields that cover horizontal matters (equality of chances, durable development)	
Q3: To what extent the allotment of budgetary	1) The allotment of budgetary resources	► Documentary analysis ► Matrix of	► There will be analyzed the extent that the allotment of budgetary resources is in accordance with the programme objectives and with the actions planned	► Sectoral expert panel from the field of information	► Relevant evaluation reports ► Consultative documents of this operational programme

Evaluation questions	Evaluation assumptions	Methods and tools	Achieved analyses	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources
resources corresponds to the programme objectives?	corresponds to the programme objectives	coherence ► Panel of experts (correlation Q2) ► Workshops (correlation Q2)	by the documentary analysis and the achievement of an internal coherence matrix of the objectives and main priorities. ► Based on the expert panel and on the workshop, it will be verified if the financial allotments focus on the actions and objectives having the highest potential to meet the challenges and needs identified in the socio-economic analysis and SWOT and are consistent with the requirements regarding the concentration, provided in the regulations (Article 16, Proposal of Regulation of the European Parliament and Council regarding the Cohesion Fund and the abolition of the Council (EC) Regulation no. 1084/2006) ► Analysis on the extent that the financial allotment from various funds addresses appropriately the identified problems and if these are sufficient in order to contribute to the integrated approaches and if they meet the needs of the geographical areas most affected by poverty or of the target groups with a high risk of discrimination or exclusion, particularly the needs of marginalized groups.	management systems for structural instruments, continuous professional training, IS communication, and from fields that cover horizontal matters (equality of chances, durable development) ► Workshop with the beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries who have not been considered in the Programme, and social partners, including ONGs (non-governmental organizations) etc.	► Socio-economic analyses ► SWOT analysis ► The Partnership Agreement
Q4: To what extent the indicators proposed in the program are relevant and clear?	1) The proposed indicators reflect the main measures and objectives of the priority axes of the programme	► Documentary analysis ► Panel of experts (correlation Q2, Q3) ► Workshop	► There will be analyzed the extent the common indicators chosen in the programme correspond to the indicators presented in the Proposal (for environment, energy and climate changes, transport, acc. to Proposal for Regulation of the European Parliament and Council regarding the Cohesion Fund and the abolition of Council (EC) Regulation no. 1084/2006 ► There will be verified if the immediate achievement indicators are relevant for the provided actions and they reflect the programme intervention logic ► There will be analyzed the extent that the result indicators reflect the most significant intended effects of the programme priorities and their values	► Sectoral expert panel from the field of information management systems for structural instruments, continuous professional training, IS communication, and from fields that cover horizontal matters (equality of	► Guidelines for the ex ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional development ► Proposal for Regulation of the European Parliament and Council regarding the Cohesion Fund and the abolition of Council (EC) Regulation no. 1084/2006 ► Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions, DG Regional Development ► Partnership Agreement (2014-2020) ► Prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania ► Studies regarding the construction of a

Evaluation questions	Evaluation assumptions	Methods and tools	Achieved analyses	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources
			are influenced as directly as possible by the interventions funded by the programme priority axes. ► There will be verified if the indicators have a clear title, a clear definition easy to understand among the main stakeholders, including in normative terms (acc. to *Common Provision Regulations,* Appendix IV with regard to indicators) ► The organization of a panel of experts and key players of the Programme to identify the extent that the proposed indicators reflect the most significant intended effects of the programme priorities and the logic of intervention of the programme ► The organization of an workshop with the personnel involved in drafting the indicators by the Operational Programme and its monitoring, from the current and future period, both to improve and refine the proposed indicators and to integrate the lessons learned from the current programming period ► By this approach, we will offer support to the team in charge with programme elaboration	chances, durable development) ► Workshop to involve the team in charge with the elaboration of the Operational Programme (indicators component) as also with its monitoring, from the current and future period	system of monitoring and evaluation of the World Bank ► Other monitoring systems/ indicators in similar programmes
Q5: How the estimated achievements will contribute to the results? To what extent are the results influenced by foreign factors, including by other existing instruments? Are the quantified target values of the indicators realistic, having in consideration the	1) The programme identifies correctly the contribution of the estimated achievements to the results 2) There is a clear description about how other factors (contextual factors, other policies) contribute to the programme and how these influence the results of the	► Documentary analysis ► Panel of experts (correlation Q2, Q3, Q4) ► Workshops (correlation Q4)	► The analysis of the extent to which the indicators of immediate achievement contribute in reaching the result indicators considering the main actions of the programme, the financial allotment related to each axis and the forecasted support from the funds of Common Strategic Framework ► Checking the lustiness of the indicators by identifying the extreme values that may influence their value ► Identification of the sources and mechanisms to ensure the statistic validity ► Checking the extent to which for the selected indicators the data sources are reliable ► The analysis of the existence of the programme foreign factors susceptible of influencing the result indicators and analysis upon the extent to which the	► Sectoral expert panel from the field of information management systems for structural instruments, continuous professional training, IS communication, and from fields that cover horizontal matters (equality of chances, durable development)	► Guidelines for the ex ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional development ► Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions, DG Regional Development ► Partnership Agreement (2014-2020) ► Documents related to the operational programmes ► Prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania ► Studies regarding the construction of a system of monitoring and evaluation of the World Bank ► Other monitoring systems/ indicators in similar programmes

Evaluation questions	Evaluation assumptions	Methods and tools	Achieved analyses	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources
support forecasted from the CSF funds?	programme 3) The description of the actions and of the main target groups, of the target special territories, of the type of beneficiaries and of the financial vehicles is chosen correctly, so as to have an impact 4) The quantified target values of the indicators are realistic and to the same extent ambitious, have a solid basis, are grounded on a correct analysis		programme justifies its role in the context of other public interventions ► Checking the extent to which the target and baseline values of the immediate achievement indicators exist, are realistic and plausible and where the values of the indicators are missing or not reliable, recommendations will be made for the achievement or re-performance of some investigations/ surveys/ researches based on which the *baseline indicators have been calculated.* ► The analysis on the contribution of the major projects (where applicable) to the target values of the results indicators ► Checking if the mechanisms of coordination between funds and the proposed support forms are the most effective in obtaining the results. ► Based on the panel of experts and workshop, the above analyses will be validated	► Workshop to involve the team in charge with the elaboration of the Operational Programme (indicators component) as also with its monitoring, from the current and future period	► Common Strategic Framework ► Evaluations on the relevance related to the previous programming period ► Relevant academic articles
Evaluation of the programme performance					
Q6: To what extent the selected indicators and the interim and final targets (milestones) for the performance framework are appropriate?	1) The selected indicators and the interim and final targets are relevant	► Documentary analysis ► Panel of experts (correlation Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5) ► Workshops (correlation Q3, Q4, Q5)	► Based on the secondary analysis, there will be analyzed the extent to which the subset of selected indicators for the performance framework for each priority axis are relevant and if they offer the essential information regarding the progress of the priority ► The interim and final targets (including for financial indicators) will be established based on the following methodology: o Step 1: It is to be checked if there are interim an final targets quantifies for all the programme priorities. If there are targets and indicators not reflecting the	► Sectoral expert panel from the field of information management systems for structural instruments, continuous professional training, IS communication, and from fields that cover horizontal	► Guidelines for the ex ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional development ► Common Strategic Framework ► Prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic regional development in Romania ► Relevant evaluations related to the current programming period ► Socio-economic analyses ► Deliverables of the relevant Technical Assistance projects ► Results of the macro-economic modeling

Evaluation questions	Evaluation assumptions	Methods and tools	Achieved analyses	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources
			programme priorities, their removal shall be recommended; ○ Step 2: There will be evaluated a) the extent to which the values proposed as interim or final targets offer essential information regarding the priority progress, b) are realistic but also ambitious considering the established time constraints (e.g. the year 2018), c) the dynamics of implementing the operational programmes from the current programming period 2007-2013, d) the availability of data related to such indicators. ○ Step 3: Recommendations will be made to achieve a public system of monthly reporting at the level of the Management Authority, based on which their monitoring will be made ► The analysis of foreign or domestic factors that may affect the achievement of the final and interim targets based on the secondary sources of information ► Organization of an workshop, of an expert panel and of interviews to validate the above matters	matters (equality of chances, durable development) ► Workshop to involve the team in charge with the elaboration of the Operational Programme (indicators component) as also with its monitoring, from the current and future period	► Statistic data ► Protocols of consultation of the stakeholders and documents on the consulting activity
Q7: To which extent are the human resources and administrative capacity appropriate to manage the programme?	1) Human resources and appropriate administrative capacity to manage the programme	► Documentary analysis ► Interviews ► Focus group	► By referring to the relevant documents and by interviews, there will be analyzed the institutional arrangements proposed in the future programming period for the management and control of implementation (including the implementation of the integrated territorial approaches), considering the experience of the current programming period in the purpose of identifying the possible blockages that may prevent the management, monitoring and evaluation of the operational programme, and the adoption of some preventive measures will be recommended; therefore, we will check: ○ the number of persons involved in the	► Interviews with a sample of beneficiaries from the current programming period ► Focus group with the representatives of the Management Authority as also with the personnel involved in monitoring the Programme for the	► Legislative framework ► Available procedural framework ► Evaluation reports and deliverables of the relevant TA projects ► Relevant documents regarding the measures of cost simplification ► Consultative documents related to this operational programme

Evaluation questions	Evaluation assumptions	Methods and tools	Achieved analyses	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources
			monitoring and evaluation of the programme, ○ the capacity of such persons to solve the assigned tasks (e.g. information related to the project, advice for beneficiaries etc.) ○ the administrative capacity of the management authority, including their capacity to implement integrated territorial investments, ► The analysis of instrument applicability and of the simplified options regarding costs (e.g. unit costs, lump sums and flat charges) and potential positive effects over the administrative capacity ► Analysis on the planned measures to reduce the administrative burden and on the potential positive effects over the beneficiaries, considering the experience of the current programming period ► Interviews and focus groups will be performed in order to complete the above analysis	current and future period	
Q8: To what extent the monitoring procedures for the programme and procedures of data collection required to make the evaluations are appropriate?	1) The programme monitoring and data collection procedures are appropriate 2) There is the capacity to collect, store, manage and report the necessary data regarding the programme monitoring	► Documentary analysis ► Focus group (correlation Q7) ► Interviews (Q7)	► Analysis upon the fact if the monitoring procedures on project and programme level will allow the collection of data in useful time to support the process of decision making, of reporting and evaluation and if the monitoring procedures ensure public access to the information on indicators ► Also, there will be verified if the information sources, databases and the method of data collection, including the data quality assurance procedures (including from the perspective of using administrative databases as possible data sources in light of reducing the administrative burden over the beneficiaries) can deliver the achievement of future evaluations (from the perspective of efficiency, efficacy and impact of the programme). ► By analyzing the relevant documents, the monitoring and evaluation systems of the integrated territorial approaches will be verified	► Interviews with a sample of beneficiaries from the current programming period ► Focus group with the representatives of the Management Authority as also with the personnel involved in monitoring the Programme for the current and future period	► The programme monitoring and data collection procedures ► Relevant evaluations related to the current programming period ► Relevant documents of technical assistance ► Statistic and administrative data ► Relevant annual reports of implementation of the current programming period ► Guidelines for the ex ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional development ► *European Evaluation Helpdesk: Draft ideas on minimum requirements for the Evaluation Plan. Working Paper for the Good Practice Workshop: From Ongoing Evaluation towards the Evaluation Plan. Vienna, 14 May 2012.*

Evaluation questions	Evaluation assumptions	Methods and tools	Achieved analyses	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources
			► As a result of the above analyses: ○ A guide on indicators will be elaborated ○ Technical assistance will be granted for the elaboration of the programme evaluation plan and an evaluation plan of the operational programme will be proposed ○ The needs of data required to perform impact assessments will be identified		
Evaluation of the strategic contribution					
Q9: To what extent the programme contributes to the European Union strategy for an intelligent, durable and inclusion - favorable growth, considering the selected thematic objectives and priorities, taking into account the national and regional needs?	1) The programme contributes to the Europe 2020 strategy	► Documentary analysis (correlation Q1) ► Logical matrix ► Interviews (correlation Q1)	► Based on the secondary sources and considering both the national and regional needs as also the thematic priorities, there will be analyzed the extent to which: ○ the specific objectives are sufficiently precise to demonstrate the contribution of the programme to Europe 2020 strategy ○ the programme will contribute in quantitative and qualitative terms to the objectives and targets of this strategy ► Based on the documentary analyses, there will be performed a logical matrix indicating the connection between the specific objectives of the programme with each of the three priorities: intelligent growth, durable growth, inclusion-favorable growth	► Interviews with MFE (the Ministry for European Funds) representatives	► The Strategy 2020 ► The socio-economic analysis of the programme ► The recommendations of the Council for the National Reform Programme 2013
Q10: Which is the relation of the programme with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies)?	1) The programme contributes to the major initiatives Europe 2020	► Documentary analysis (correlation Q1) ► Logical matrix ► Interviews (correlation Q1, Q9)	► Based on the analysis of the secondary sources, there will be identified to which extent the programme will quantitatively and qualitatively contribute to the objectives and targets of other relevant strategies and policies identified in Q1 as also to the major initiatives of Europe 2020: intelligent growth, durable growth, inclusion-favorable growth ► Based on the documentary analyses, there will be performed a logical matrix indicating the connection between the specific objectives of the programme with the relevant major initiatives of Europe 2020	► Interviews with MFE (the Ministry for European Funds) representatives	► Digital Agenda ► Union of Innovation ► The youth in movement ► An efficient Europe in terms of resource use ► The industrial policy for the globalization age ► Agenda for new competences and new jobs ► The European platform to fight against poverty ► Other relevant documents
Q11: Are the	1) The programme	► Documentary	► Analysis on the way the programme measures	► NA	► SWOT analysis of the programme

Evaluation questions	Evaluation assumptions	Methods and tools	Achieved analyses	Primary information sources	Secondary information sources
measures planned to promote the equality of chances between men and women and to prevent discrimination appropriate??	includes steps to promote horizontal themes such as: equality of chances between men and women and non-discrimination.	analysis	promote the provisions of equality of chances and the principle of non-discrimination, in the 7 stages of the programme cycle (programming, project proposal calls, selection of projects, preparation of projects, monitoring, the financial management, control, evaluation, the principle of partnership).		▶ The socio-economic analysis of the programme ▶ Relevant regulations in the field of equality of chances and non-discrimination ▶ Evaluation of the way the provisions from the field of equal opportunities have been transposed in the framework related to Structural Instruments in Romania ▶ Documents related to the operational programme
Are there appropriate the measures planned to promote durable development?	1) The program includes measures to promote durable development	▶ Documentary analysis	▶ Analysis on the way the programme measures promote the provisions of durable development, in the 7 stages of the programme cycle (programming, project proposal calls, selection of projects, preparation of projects, monitoring, the financial management, control, evaluation, the principle of partnership).	▶ NA	▶ SWOT analysis of the programme ▶ The socio-economic analysis of the programme ▶ Relevant principles in the field of durable development, on national and EU level ▶ Documents related to the operational programme

Annex 12.1 – Evaluation methodology

For each evaluation question, the following data collection and analysis tools were used:

Q.1.1 External consistency with main strategies

Evaluation question	Q1.1: To what extent is there consistency between the selected thematic objectives, priorities and objectives of the Programme, on one hand, and on the other, the Common Strategic Framework, the Partnership Agreement and the specific recommendations addressed to each country on the grounds of Art. 121 par. (2) of the treaty and the relevant recommendations of the Council, adopted on the grounds of Art. 148 par. (4) of the treaty?
OP Chapters analysed	▶ Chapter 1, 9
Feedback Priority	First Priority
Methodology	Technical Assistance focuses on ESI Funds delivery and is therefore limited to the programming period, nevertheless proposed interventions should be coherent with the broader and wider long term goal of Institutional Capacity Building (TO11) which focuses on genuine reform and systemic change to improve intrinsic public administration performance, independent from EU funds management: The analysis tools structured in table format will be used to assess the consistency between OPTA objectives and priorities and EU 2020 Strategy, the Common Strategic Framework, the Council Recommendations for Romania and the Partnership Agreement with a focus on Institutional Capacity Building. The evaluators will provide a yes/no assessment and justifications after using interviews and desk research. The analysis tool will be fed through the following judgements: ▶ **Yes, consistency is identified**: there is correspondence (existence of a direct link or absence of contradiction) between the objectives and priorities of the OPTA and the objectives of the Common Strategic Framework, the Recommendations of the Council for Romania with respect to the National Reform Programme and the Partnership Agreement. ▶ **No consistency identified**: there is no correspondence (it does not exist a direct link or there is presence contradiction) between the objectives and priorities of the OPTA and the objectives of the Common Strategic Framework, the Recommendations of the Council for Romania with respect to the National Reform Programme and the Partnership Agreement The evaluators will provide recommendations for improvement or request clarifications on possible inconsistencies detected
Source of information	Primary sources: ▶ Interviews minutes Secondary sources: ▶ EU 2020 Strategy ▶ Common Strategic Framework ▶ Council Recommendations ▶ The Partnership Agreement ▶ National Reform Programme

Consistency table - the Common Strategic Framework:

Common Strategic Framework	*OP Technical Assistance*	*Consistency*
Thematic Objectives and Key Actions for ERDF	**Specific objectives**	
TO. 11: Enhancing institutional capacity and an effective public administration		

Common Strategic Framework	*OP Technical Assistance*	*Consistency*
Thematic Objectives and Key Actions for ERDF	**Specific objectives**	
► Strengthening institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of ERDF and in support of actions in institutional capacity and in the efficient public administration supported by the ESF, including where necessary the provision of equipment and infrastructure to support the modernisation of public services in areas such as employment, education, health, social policies and customs	Objective n°1 Objective n°x	**Yes/NO** Justification

Consistency table - the Council Recommendations for the NRP 2011-2013:

NRP 2011-2013	*Council Recommendations*	*OP Technical Assistance*	
Priority reforms		**Specific objectives**	**Consistency**
► **Increasing the efficiency and transparency of the public administration** : Implementing the strategic reform for improving the public administration effectiveness, according to the World Bank's Functional Review; Continuing better regulation-oriented measures at central public administration level; Professionalizing civil servants; Standardizing administrative procedures; Increasing the absorption rate of structural and cohesion funds; Using ICT to modernize public administration; Territorial development	► Strengthen governance and the quality of institutions and the public administration, in particular by improving the capacity for strategic and budgetary planning, by increasing the professionalism of the public service through improved human resource management and by strengthening the mechanisms for coordination between the different levels of government.	Objective n°1 Objective n°x	**Yes/NO** Justification
	► Significantly improve the quality of regulations through the use of impact assessments, and systematic evaluations.		
	► Step up efforts to accelerate the absorption of EU funds in particular by strengthening management and control systems and improving public procurement.		
	► Step up efforts to improve the quality, independence and efficiency of the judicial system in resolving cases and fight corruption more effectively.		
	► Promote competition and efficiency in network industries, by ensuring the independence and capacity of national regulatory authorities, and by continuing the corporate governance reform of state-owned enterprises in the energy and transport sectors.		
	► Adopt a comprehensive long-term transport plan and improve broadband infrastructure		

Consistency table - the Partnership Agreement:

Partnership Agreement		**OP Technical Assistance**	**Consistency**
Thematic Objective	**Proposed priorities for funding**	**Specific objectives**	**Consistency**
TO. 11: Enhancing institutional capacity and an effective public administration	► Support the development for monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for t he implemented strategies and policies ► Developing skills in the areas of strategic planning and budgetary progra mming, impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation (e.g. Training and methodologies, data-bases for indicators); ► Strengthening participatory dimension, development of consultation and participation mechanisms in decision- making;	Objective n°1 Objective n°x	**Yes/NO** Justification

Partnership Agreement		OP Technical Assistance	Consistency
Thematic Objective	**Proposed priorities for funding**	**Specific objectives**	**Consistency**
	► Developing, introducing and supporting the use of management, monitori ngand evaluation systems and tools for an improved institutional ► and public services performance and change of organizational culture; ► Create and implement an integrated strategic framework for human resou rces management in public sector and raise the professionalism and attra ctiveness of the public administration; ► Support for measuring administrative burden, transfer of know-how and best practices; ► Increase capacity of public administration to introduce performance man agement, monitoring and evaluation systems and mechanisms for public services delivery including for those sub-contracted; ► Promoting good practice related to the delivery of public services and enc ouraging exchange of experience/networking site between public and private entities providing p ublic services, including stakeholders ► Strengthen the participation mechanisms to deliver efficient public service s at local level (e.g. diversification of service delivery through co-operation with non-governmental bodies, intercommunitary cooperation mechanisms for citiz ens scrutinizing public service delivery performance); ► Developing modern management systems and tools for increasing pe rformance in public institutions at all levels (e.g. Develop and implement quality management in public institutions; Fiscal and financial management in view to increase public expenditure efficiency; Objectives and programs based management; Innovation in public administration); ► Developing and use of IT tools and applications to enhance institutional c apacity and efficiency at all levels of public administration.		

Q1.2: External consistency with other strategies

Evaluation question	Q1.2: To what extent is there consistency with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies)?
OP Chapters analysed	► Chapter 1
Feedback priority	First priority
Methodology	Given the nature of the OPTA the most relevant analyses concern the relation between the OPTA and the TA Strategies of Romanian Operational Programmes and Administrative Capacity Development Programme, secondly with National and European Strategies: ► **TA Priority Axes of Romanian Operational Programmes 2014-2020 and the whole** Administrative Capacity OP. ► **National strategies**: **Strategy for the Consolidation of the Public Administration Capacity,** ► **European Union Strategies and Policies:** Procurement of Innovation Platform and secondly based also on confirmation of Programme stakeholders European Union Strategy for the Danube Region, Strategy Regarding the Marine Basin of the Black Sea; Horizon 2020; Horizon 2020, COSME, Creative Europe, Social Change and Innovation, Connecting Europe. The evaluators s will check what objectives and priorities from the relevant documents are included in the OPTA and perform an assessment based on the following criteria : ► **TA Priority Axes of Romanian Operational Programmes 2014-2020: a**nalysis of relation between TA OP specific objectives and the TA strategies of other Operational Programmes in terms of: ► *Neutrality (N)*, lack of relationships between the specific objectives and expected results of TA OP

	and TA actions under other OPs; ► *Risk of redundancy (R)*, potential overlapping between the specific objectives and expected results of TA OP and TA actions under other OPs; ► *Complementarity (C)*, specific objectives and expected results of the TA OP and TA actions under other OPs have a complementary effect (objectives that complement each other) on the same target group or territory or influence to achieve common goals; ► *Synergy (S)*, the specific objectives and the expected results of the TA OP and TA actions under other OPs could have a synergic effect (objectives that could bring an additional value if coupled) on the same target group or territory or influence to achieve common goals. ► **Administrative Capacity Development OP 2014-2020:** analysis of the relation between specific objectives of the two programmes in terms of neutrality, redundancy, complementarity and synergies. ► **For all other strategies and instruments** a consistency table will be filled in, highlighting: ► **Yes, consistency is identified**: there is correspondence (existence of a direct link or absence of contradiction) between the objectives and priorities of the OPTA and the objectives of the relevant strategies ► **No consistency is identified**: there is no correspondence (there is not a direct link or it is present contradiction) between the objectives and priorities of the OPTA and the objectives of the relevant strategies The evaluators will provide recommendations for improvement or request clarifications on possible inconsistencies detected
Source of information	Primary sources: ► Minutes of interviews Secondary sources: ► The draft documents related to the other Programmes ► The Strategy for consolidating public administration capacity 2013-2020 ► Procurement of Innovation Platform ► European Union Strategy for the Danube Region, Strategy Regarding the Marine Basin of the Black Sea; Horizon 2020; Horizon 2020, COSME, Creative Europe, Social Change and Innovation, Connecting Europe.

TA and Administrative Capacity Development OP analysis:

Objectives		Technical Assistance axis of Operational Programme X										
		Obj 1	Obj 2	…								
Technical Assistance OP	Objective 1		C	C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Objective 2	C		C	R	N	N	N	R	N	N	N
	…	C	C		C	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
		N	R	C		N	N	N	N	N	N	N
		N	N	N	N		N	C	C	R	N	N

LEGEND : S Synergy C Complementarity N Neutrality R Risk of redundancy

Other Strategies (example):

The Strategy for consolidating public administration capacity 2013-2020		*OPTA Specific objectives*	*Consistency*
Priorities	**Objectives**		
		Objective n°x	**Yes/No** Justification

Q2.1 Evaluation of the internal consistency

Evaluation question	Q2.1: How is the internal consistency of the programme ensured?
OP Chapters analysed	► Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Feedback priority	First priority with the exception of the analysis of the intervention logic at the level of actions
Methodology	The evaluation of the internal consistency will be performed through the following tools: ► **Identification of national and regional needs** in terms of clarity, use of evidence and updated statistical data, coverage of relevant themes, coverage of specific challenges, coverage of regional and sub-regional areas, coverage of poverty and vulnerable groups, unique aspects of the area reflected, conclusions. ► **Consistency of the specific objectives** with the identified national and regional needs and identified needs not addressed in terms of Programme specific objectives ► **Reconstruction of the intervention logic of the programme**
Source of information	Primary sources: ► Minutes of the interviews ► Minute of the workshop. ► Minute of the expert panel Secondary sources: ► Needs analysis (Section 1 of the OP) ► Statistical data ► Evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013 ► Other consultative documents related to this operational programme

Socio-economic analysis:

Aspect analysed	*Judgement criteria*
► Clarity	► Well-written, with all of the main points drawn out in the main text, but also introductory and concluding sections
► Use of evidence and updated statistical data	► All main points backed up by primary or secondary sources
► Coverage of relevant themes	► The main ERDF themes related to technical assistance are covered
► Coverage of specific challenges	► Aspects related to Issues specific to urban areas, rural areas, coastal areas and fisheries as well as mountain areas are treated
► Coverage of regional and sub-regional areas	► Aspects related to the special conditions of the region are analysed
► Unique aspects of the area reflected	► The particular development opportunities and challenges reflected
► Conclusions	► Clear conclusions as a basis for strategy development

Consistency between the Programme strategy and the identified needs

OP Priority Axis	OP Specific objective	National and Regional needs addressed
		►
		►
		►

Programme Intervention logic

The information included in the Operational Programme will be included in the following table representing the logic of intervention:

Development needs	Priority Axis	Specific Objective	Expected Results	Result indicator	Actions	Output indicators

The analysis will then be performed according to the following steps:

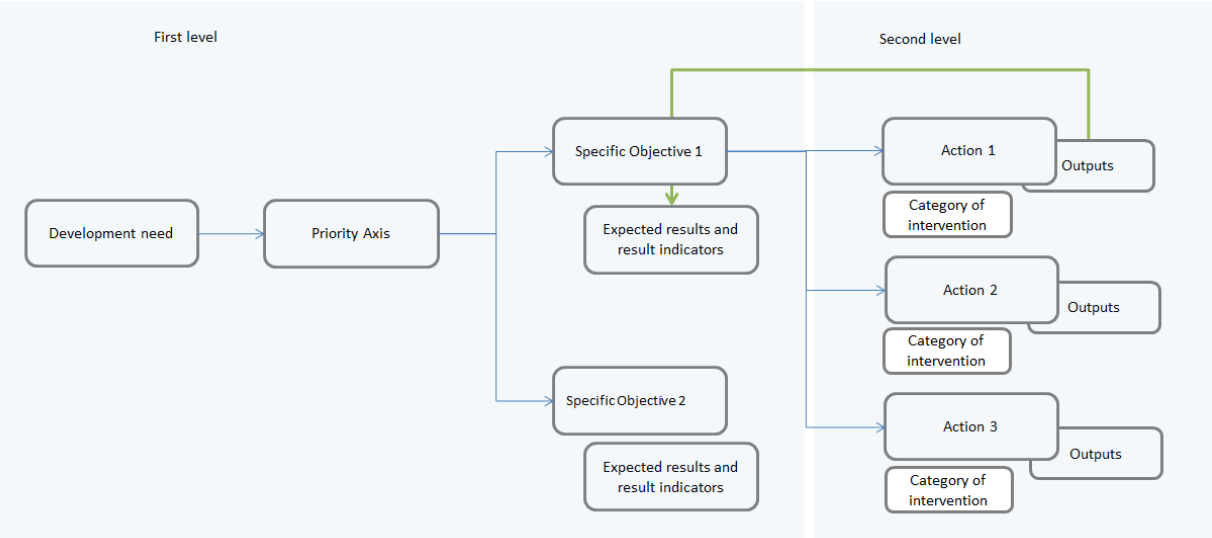
First priority analysis

- **Consistency between specific objectives and development needs:** at this stage we shall verify if the specific objectives (and expected results) are adequate in terms of:
  - Capturing how the actions or measures undertaken within a priority capture the intended change, addressing the identified needs and challenges, where the change should be as specific as possible.
  - Adequateness of the number of specific objectives (and associated expected results) selected in terms of coverage of the expected changes and respective development needs.
- **Consistency between specific objectives (and expected results) and result indicators:** at this stage we shall verify if the result indicators proposed are consisted with the specific objectives and expected results, quantifying the expected change.

Second priority analysis

- ***Consistency between proposed actions and expected results:*** based on the findings of EQ 2.2. we shall confirm if the proposed actions and associated output indicators contribute and are the more adequate to achieve the specific objectives, expected results and result indicators.

The sequence of the steps performed is represented graphically below and similar representation will be used in order to present the logic of intervention as annex to the ex-ante evaluation report:



Q2.2 Evaluation of the proposed support forms

Evaluation question	Q2.2: Are the proposed forms of support the most appropriate?
OP Chapters analysed	▶ Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Feedback priority	Second priority
Methodology	▶ Based primarily on the descriptions of the future areas of intervention of the Programme a database of the forms of support planned will be created; ▶ Each form of support will be associated to an equivalent one, if any, existing within the Operational Programme 2007-2013 and the performance of such support form assessed in terms of financial and physical progress; ▶ Benchmarking - relevant experiences from other Member States will be identified to point out alternative forms of support that have worked in the past; ▶ Recommendations concerning the appropriateness of each form of support will be provided taking into account the past performance of equivalent forms from the previous programming period in Romania and experience from Member States.
Source of information	Primary sources: ▶ Minutes of the interviews ▶ Minute of the workshop ▶ Minute of the expert panel Secondary sources: ▶ Needs analyses (section 1 of the OP) ▶ Forms of assistance from the 2007-2013 programing period ▶ Statistical data ▶ Protocols of consultation of the stakeholders and documents on the consulting activity ▶ Other consultative documents related to the OPTA ▶ Information and publications regarding the practices of other member states with regards to forms of support

Forms of support:

2014-2020	*2007-2013*							
Action	*KAI general Objective*	*KAI Operational objectives*	*Operations*	*Form of support*	*Target Group*	*Relevance (low/medium/high)*	*Performance 2007-2013*	*Alternative forms*
Action Title							*Progress (financial physical) Issues*	*Experiences from Member States*

Evaluation of the appropriateness of support forms:

Aspect analysed	*Judgement criteria*
External environment	Relevant external factors are taken into account (for example, the availability of the credit from mainstream sources, the viability of the various sectors involved)
Challenges addressed	The proposed forms of support are the proper ones (best response to the needs of the region and beneficiaries)
Capacities of beneficiaries	The targeted beneficiaries are capable to absorb the offered forms of support
Capacities of Managing Authority	The MA is capable to manage the proposed forms of support (sufficient expertise and human resources)
Pilot projects	Programming authorities have drawn on or initiated pilot projects in order to test the effectiveness of proposed forms of support

Q3. Financial allocation

Evaluation question	Q3: To what extent the allocation of financial resources is consistent with the Programme objectives?
OP Chapters analysed	▶ Chapter 2, Subchapters 2.A.0, 2.A.1 (Table 4, 4a,), 2.A.2
Feedback Priority	Second Priority
Methodology	The analysis will be performed at different levels: ▶ The first level will cover the respect of the concentration principle at the level of specific objectives. The objectives will be considered in relation to the budgetary weight allocated to each of them. ▶ The second level will look at the allocation of financial resources and will assess the correspondence of financial allocations. The financial allocations will be compared with the challenges to be addressed. The experience from the period 2007-2013 also will be taken into account. ▶ The third level will concern an assessment of the financial resources allocated from different sources in order to contribute to integrated approaches and to address the specific needs of particular geographical areas. ▶ Besides, the risk involved in the financial implementation will be assessed and those actions / measures that are associated with the more complex development process will be identified.

Source of information	Primary sources: ▸ Minute of the expert panel ▸ Minute of the workshop Secondary sources: ▸ General Regulations 2014-2020 ▸ Relevant delegated and implementing acts ▸ Protocols of consultation of the stakeholders and documents on the consulting activity Ex-ante evaluation of OPTA 2007-2013 ▸ Other evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013 ▸ Documents on the EU policies ▸ Needs analysis – Section 1 of the OP ▸ Other supporting documents of the operational programme project

Concentration of financial resources by specific objective:

Specific objectives	*Budgetary weight allocated to each objective*	*Objective type (strategic and influential, sensitive and independent)*
1		
2		
3		
4		

Consistency of allocations with Programme objectives and planned actions:

PA	*Action*	*Category of intervention*	*Financial Allocation*	*%*	*Challenges addressed*	*Experience 2007-2013*	*Judgement*
1							
2							
Total							

Support for Integrated actions analysis / disadvantaged areas / disadvantaged groups

PA	*Allocation to ITI*	*Allocation to Target Groups most affected by poverty*	*Allocation to Geographic areas most affected by poverty*	*Challenges addressed*	*Experience 2007-2013*	*Judgement*
1						
2						
Total						

Assessment of risk involved in financial implementation:

OPTA specific objectives	*Actions / measures*	*Level of risk (high / medium / low)*	*Judgement*
			The actions with higher potential of risk are (a) the novel ones, (b) those that in the last programming period have faced the higher risk of de-commitment, (c) those that entail more complex delivery mechanisms and (d) those which could attract more

			demand than expected.

Q4. Indicators

Evaluation question	Q4: To what extent are the indicators proposed in the Programme relevant and clear?
OP Chapters analysed	▶ Chapter 2, 3
Feedback Priority	Second Priority
Methodology	▶ *Common indicators:* ▶ Adequateness of the selection of the common output and results indicators, in terms of coverage of the Priority Axis of the Programme ▶ *Specific indicators:* ▶ Result indicators: relevance in terms of capacity to capture the most significant expected effects on participants or entities brought about by the programme at the level of Priority Axis as described in the related specific objectives of the Programme (e.g. the employment status of participants) ▶ Output indicators: relevance in relation to the envisaged actions included under each Priority Axis ▶ Clarity of the definition of each specific output and result indicators ▶ *Activities in support of Programming:* ▶ The programming will be supported through a helpdesk system. Any person interested can send an email describing their issue and they will receive an answer. The questions and answers will be grouped by categories / fields of interests and they will be available for any interested actors. ▶ Workshop on indicators: see section 2.4.3
Source of information	Primary sources: ▶ Minute of the expert panel ▶ Minute of the workshop Secondary sources: ▶ Regulation (EU) no 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 ▶ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 ▶ Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions, DG Regional Development ▶ Partnership Agreement (2014-2020) ▶ Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional development ▶ Proposal for Regulation of the European Parliament and Council regarding the Cohesion Fund and the abolition of Council (EC) Regulation no. 1084/2006 ▶ Result indicators 2014+

	▶ Evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013 ▶ Other monitoring systems/ indicators in similar programmes ▶ Documents related to the operational programme project ▶ Statistical sources

Coverage of specific objectives by common indicators

Priority Axis	Specific Objective addressed	Common Result indicator	Actions under the Priority Axis	Common Output indicator
1		1	A	1
			B	2
			C	3
2		2	A	1
			B	2
			C	3

Coverage of specific objectives by specific indicators

Priority Axis	Specific Objective addressed	Specific Result indicator	Actions under the Priority Axis	Specific Output indicator
1		1	A	1
			B	2
			C	3
2		2	A	1
			B	2
			C	3

Clarity and relevance of specific result indicators

PA	Indicator	Clarity						Relevance					General recommendations
		Clarity of formulation and lack of ambiguity	*Existence of Measurement Unit*	*Target values can be added up*	*Consensus among Stakeholders about the meaning*	*Synthesis*	*Comments*	*Relevance in relation to the specific objective*	*Ability to express the expected result given the means*	*Representativeness of the indicators in respect of the PA*	*Synthesis*	*Comments*	

Clarity and relevance of specific output indicators

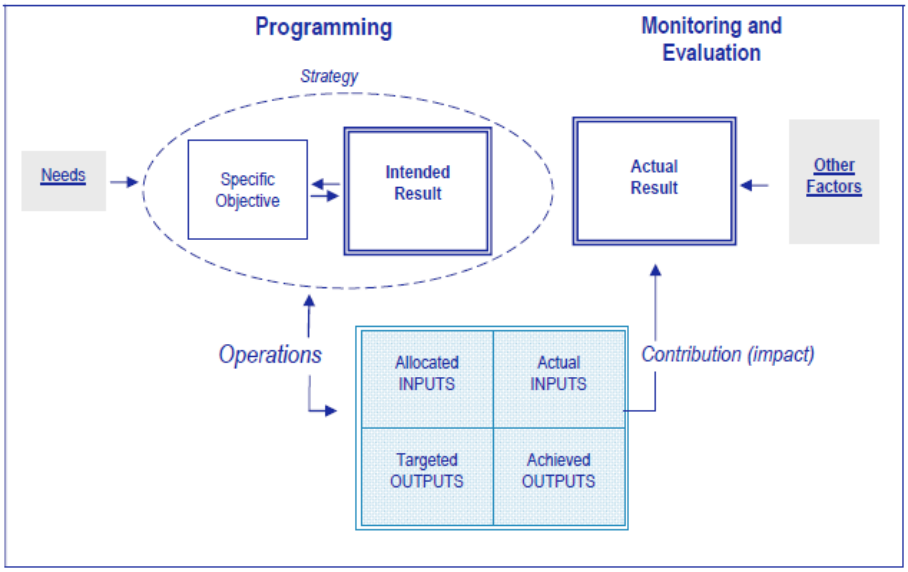
PA	Indicator	Clarity						Relevance					General recommendations
		Clarity of formulation and lack of ambiguity	*Existence of Measurement Unit*	*Target values can be added up*	*Consensus among Stakeholders about the meaning*	*Synthesis*	*Comments*	*Capacity to measure the "product" of the planned actions*	*Capacity to influence the values of result indicators*	*Representativeness of the indicators in respect of the action*	*Synthesis*	*Comments*	

Q5.1. Estimated outputs

Evaluation question	Q5.1: How will the estimated outputs contribute to results?

OP Chapters analysed	▶ Chapter 2, 3
Feedback Priority	Second Priority
Methodology	▶ Firstly, the relevance of output indicators will be assessed in relation to measures / operations / actions, and the relevance of result indicators will be assessed in relation to objectives and priorities. The assumptions underlying the results chains (linking the expected outputs to results) will be examined and the plausibility of assumptions will be checked. If necessary, adjustments will be proposed. ▶ Secondly, statistical validation will be done, in terms of analysis of data sources, reliability and robustness of indicators through the identification of extreme values with potential to affect their value
	▶
Source of information	Primary sources: ▶ Minute of the expert panel ▶ Minute of the workshop Secondary sources ▶ Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional development ▶ Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions, DG Regional Development ▶ Partnership Agreement (2014-2020) ▶ Prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania ▶ Other monitoring systems/ indicators in similar programmes ▶ Common Strategic Framework ▶ Evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013 ▶ Draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020

Results chain used to assess the intervention logic (example):



Source: Guidance document on Monitoring and Evaluation - European Regional Development and Cohesion Fund, December 2012

Assessment of assumptions underlying the results chain:

Specific Objectives	*Actions*	*Causal links between proposed actions, their outputs and intended results*	*Judgement and recommendations*
		YES / NO	
		YES / NO	

Synthesis of clarity and relevance of specific indicators

PA	Indicator	Type	*Clarity*	*Relevance*

Significant changes expected or indicator to be replaced
Minor changes expected
No changes

Q5.2. Influence of the external factors

Evaluation question	Q5.2: To what extent are the results influenced by external factors, including by other instruments?
OP Chapters analysed	▶ Chapter 2, 3
Feedback priority	Second priority
Methodology	▶ The list of external factors that could be related to the achievement of intended results will be prepared. Each factor will be associated with relevant result indicators. ▶ The likely influence of external factors on intended results will be evaluated. In the process of assessment the closer look at these aspects will be taken: (a) the factors which in the past have produced a higher degree of divergence from desired results; (b) specific areas such as policy shifts at national level, new economic trends, changes in competitiveness at national and regional level etc. ▶ The lessons learned from the previous programming period will be assessed and the comparison to other Member States will be provided in order to identify the external factors which have had the highest influence on the achievement of results. ▶ If necessary, the recommendations will be provided.
Source of information	Primary sources: ▶ Sectoral expert panel from the field of information management systems for structural instruments, continuous professional training, IS communication, and from fields that cover horizontal matters (equality of chances, durable development) ▶ Workshop to involve the team in charge with the elaboration of the Operational Programme (indicators component) as also with its monitoring, from the current and future period Secondary sources: ▶ Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional development ▶ Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions, DG Regional Development ▶ Partnership Agreement (2014-2020)

	▶ Draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020Prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania ▶ Other monitoring systems/ indicators in similar programmes ▶ Common Strategic Framework ▶ Evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013

Assessment of probable influence of external factors on intended results:

Actions	*Result indicators*	*Relevant external factors that could influence the intended results*	*Degree of influence (high/medium / low)*	*Experience 2007-2013*	*Benchmarking*	*Judgement and recommendations*
1		1) political stability 2) demographic changes 3) public procurement procedures 4) changes of relevant legal requirements 5) changes in the field of regional competitiveness 6) economic changes etc.				
2						
3						
4						

Q5.3. Target values of the indicators

Evaluation question	Q5.3: Are quantified target values of the indicators realistic, having in mind the funding available?
OP Chapters analysed	▶ Chapter 2, 3
Feedback priority	Second priority
Methodology	▶ The first step of the assessment will be to verify if the target values of indicators are associated with concrete actions / measures supported in line with the OPTA. ▶ The next step encompasses the evaluation of similar experience in other Member States in order to identify what target values for indicators of the OPTA were established, which problems were the most important ones seeking to achieve the planned results. ▶ The last step will be the assessment of the plausibility of the targets indicators when compared to corresponding baselines, past experience and relevant trends. If necessary, the recommendations on modifying the target values will be provided.
Source of information	Primary sources: ▶ Sectoral expert panel in fields relevant to selected actions (e.g. professional training, communication, equal opportunities, information management systems) ▶ Workshop to involve the team in charge with the elaboration of the Operational Programme (indicators component) as also with its monitoring, from the current and future period Secondary sources:

	► Guidelines for the ex ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional development ► Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions, DG Regional Development ► Partnership Agreement (2014-2020) ► Draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020Prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania ► Studies regarding the construction of a system of monitoring and evaluation of the World Bank ► Other monitoring systems/ indicators in similar programmes ► Evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013 ► Studies on standard unit costs ► Benchmarking with similar Programmes from Member States ► Relevant academic articles

Assessment of the quantified target values for indicators:

Actions / measures	*Budgetary resources allocated*	*Target values for indicators*	*Experience 2007-2013*	*Benchmarking*	*Plausibility of the targets indicators (high / medium / low)*	*Recommendations*
1			Unit costs from previous similar interventions; Achieved values of indicators in relation to committed resources Problems related to the achievement of target values	Experiences of similar interventions in other Member States		
2						
3						

Q6. Performance

Evaluation question	Q6: To what extent the selected indicators and intermediate and final targets (milestones) for the performance framework are adequate?
► **Performance framework is not applicable to the Operational Programme Technical Assistance**	

Q7: Human resources and administrative capacity

Evaluation question	Q7: To what extent are the human resources and administrative capacity adequate to manage the Programme?
OP Chapters analysed	► Chapter 7
Feedback priority	Second priority
Methodology	► The human resources and administrative capacity will be analysed based on a multi-dimensional framework which will cover the structures, human resources and tools designed for 2014-2020 and those in place for 2007-2013 in relation of the different phases of the Programme lifecycle:

	Management, Programming, Implementation, Evaluation and Monitoring, Financial Management and Control ► There will be analysed the institutional arrangements proposed in the future programming period for the management and control of implementation (including the implementation of the integrated territorial approaches), considering the experience of the current programming period in the purpose of identifying the possible blockages that may prevent the management, monitoring and evaluation of the operational programme, and the adoption of some preventive measures will be recommended; therefore, where information is available, checks will be done on: ► the number of persons involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, ► the capacity of such persons to solve the assigned tasks (e.g. information related to the project, advice for beneficiaries etc.) ► the administrative capacity of the management authority, including their capacity to implement integrated territorial investments,
Source of information	Primary sources: ► Interviews with a sample of beneficiaries from the current programming period ► Focus group with the representatives of the Management Authority as also with the personnel involved in monitoring the Programme for the current and future period Secondary sources: ► Legislative framework ► Available procedural framework ► Evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013 ► Relevant documents regarding the measures of cost simplification ► Consultative documents related to this operational programme

Aspects checked:

Design 2014-2020 and Functioning 2014-2020			
Programme Functions	***Structure***	***Human Resources***	***Systems and Tools***
Programme management Project selection Evaluation and Monitoring Financial Management and Control	► Architecture of the administrative organisation ► Clarity of assignment of responsibilities and tasks between MA, CA, AA, and IB ► Supervisory bodies, such as Monitoring Committees, auditing tasks, partnership with stakeholders/NGO's, etc.	► Ability to detail tasks and responsibilities at the level of job descriptions, to estimate the number and qualifications of staff, and to fulfil the recruitment needs. ► Availability of experienced, skilled and motivated staff to carry out the programme functions ► Favourable towards recruiting and retaining such professionals.	► Availability of instruments, methods, guidelines, manuals, systems, procedures, forms, etcetera: all job-aids that can enhance the effectiveness of the functioning of the system and simplify the day to day interaction amongst different actors ► Systems and tools enabling organisations to transform tacit and implicit knowledge (within the heads of individual people) into explicit knowledge that can be shared across organisations. ► Systems and tools making make organisations less vulnerable (e.g. when key staff is leaving), reduce the risk of malfunctioning and enhance overall effectiveness.

Administrative organization and approach to implementation

Administrative organization (resources and capacity)		
Aspect checked	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
► Is there a **clear allocation of functions** within each body (and application principle of separation of		

functions between MA, CA, and AA)?		
► Are there **sufficient human resources** available for implementing each function?		
► Are there **Instruments available** to simplify, facilitate and qualify the interaction among the different actors?		
Approach to OP implementation		
Aspect checked	**Findings**	**Recommendations**
► Coordination and alignment between **OPTA and other EU funds** to ensure complementarities and synergies and avoid duplication of actions;		
► Simplification of **projects application procedures** in order to avoid the situation where potential beneficiaries hesitate to apply for OPTA funding because of the administrative requirements, thus having a negative effect on absorption;		
► **Capacity building programme** for beneficiaries in order to ensure understanding of how to access and use of Technical Assitance (i.e. adequate information provision prior to tendering rounds, potentially including pro-active engagement of providers on the part of CFOs through, for example, information sharing or pre-tendering events);		
► Use of **evaluation and monitoring** as part of decision making		
► Developing a dedicated infrastructure specifically to support and oversee OPTA implementation for a interventions which are at risk of poor implementation;		
► **Involvement of partners** in an effective and efficient manner in order to ensure real needs is addressed.		
► Approach to **Integrated Territorial Development**		
► Integration of **Simplified Costs Options** (e.g. unit costs, lump sums and flat charges)		
► Measures that are aimed at **reducing** the **administrative burdens**		

Q8: Procedures

Evaluation question	Q8: To what extent are the monitoring and data collection procedures adequate to perform evaluations?
OP Chapters analysed	► Chapter 7
Feedback priority	Second priority
Methodology	► **Monitoring** The ultimate goal of monitoring is to continuously provide management and main stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds, based on systematic collection of data on specified indicators. A monitoring system is composed of: ► human resources within the involved institutions; ► indicators; ► comprehensive data collection and processing procedures including intra and inter-institutional cooperation procedures; ► data reporting and dissemination procedures. ► a monitoring system is supported by a data storage and processing electronic system (SMIS in Romania the 2007-2013 programming period). The monitoring procedures developed by the MA will be analysed using the following criteria: ► the provisions regarding monitoring and reporting are implemented; ► management and maintenance of the system are sound ► data is timely collected ► quality of data ► administrative Burden ► previous experience ► procedures ensure the public access on information on the performance of the programme ► (if the case) procedures provide for specific arrangements for integrated territorial approaches

- **Guide on indicators**
  Based on findings from the analysis of the system the indicators guide will be drafted. This guide will constitute the main working instrument for the unit managing the monitoring system and becomes an integral part of the monitoring procedures. The applicants and beneficiaries will be adequately informed on the monitoring procedures, including the relevant provisions of the guide. The guide will be based on indicator fiches drafted for each indicator, to contain the following information:
  - Label of the indicator
  - Definition of indicator
  - Link to objective/measure/operation
  - Type of indicator
  - Unit of measurement
  - Baseline
  - Target
  - Source
  - Frequency (when and how often)
  - Collection method
  - Responsible actor for collection
  - Comments on availability/cost (especially if it is a qualitative indicator)
  - Responsible actor for analysis and data quality check
  - Use for reporting (in which types of reports the indicator will feed in e.g. for MC, AIR, more often for decision making) – to be taken into account at point 9.
  - Use for evaluation: yes/no, further data needed in this context
  - Use for programming: how is the indicator and its values used to improve programming
- **Evaluation Plan**
  The key issue in producing effective evaluations (in other words evaluations whose results are used by the programme decision-makers) is that these evaluations answer a real "information need". The "information needs", stemming both from the EU level (e.g. Art. 50 (5) of CPR, in accordance to which the 2018 and final implementation reports should contain information on programme effectiveness) but also from the programme level (e.g. identifying with a view to adopting adequate solutions the "why?"s and "how come?"s behind a bottleneck) will be one of the key starting points for drafting the evaluation plan. In this context, the main aspects to be developed in the plans are:
  - Potential information needs, based on EU requirements and experience in the implementation of the 2007-2013 operational programmes;
  - Consequently, a series of evaluation themes will be identified, on which additional information is needed in order to feed into the policy-making/programme making/improving process;
  - At the same time, their schedule will be set, in such a manner that evaluation reports are available when information is needed. Considering the experience in the 2007-2013 programming period, proposals will be made as regards the type and starting point of the public procurement process, for avoiding situations when information needed is not available on time.
  - Considering the above, the evaluations will be classified in "types": e.g. strategic/operational/horizontal (at program level) or at priority level/ad-hoc/impact (theory-based and counterfactual) etc.
  - Depending on the type of evaluation, specific methodologies to be used upon plan's implementation will be indicated (particularly for impact evaluations - theory-based and counterfactual);
  - Based on the methodologies recommended and type of evaluation, data needs will be estimated. A comparison on existing data in the monitoring system will be carried out and conclusions on data needed to be collected drawn; this will be particularly important when counterfactual impact evaluations will be recommended;
  - Based on the above, the financial resources needed for each evaluation will be estimated;
  - A separate chapter in the plan will tackle the issue of the "evaluation function", its position in the Managing Authority (especially the link to the decision makers) and its capacity to implement the plan. Based on types of evaluations to be carried out and methods to be applied, recommendations will be made for ensuring adequate evaluation capacity within the MA.
- Drafting the evaluation plan will be an iterative process, its final version being agreed after rounds of discussions with the stakeholders. These rounds of consultations are the most important in the light of the necessity for "more effective evaluations" in Romania (whose results correspond to an information need): wide consultations will ensure the collection of these needs and increase awareness of the benefits of evaluation for the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme.
-

Source of information	Primary sources of information: ▶ Minutes of interviews ▶ Minute of the focus group Secondary sources: ▶ The programme monitoring and data collection procedures ▶ Evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013 ▶ Relevant documents of technical assistance ▶ Information and publications regarding the practices of other Member States ▶ alRelevant annual reports of implementation of the current programming period ▶ Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional development ▶ European Evaluation Helpdesk: Draft ideas on minimum requirements for the Evaluation Plan. Working Paper for the Good Practice Workshop: From Ongoing Evaluation towards the Evaluation Plan. Vienna, 14 May 2012. ▶ Statistical data

Monitoring and data collection procedures

Aspects	Details	Findings and recommendations
The provisions of the CPR and EU Social Fund regarding monitoring and reporting are implemented		
	▶ Monitoring Committee is set in accordance with the provisions of the CPR; ▶ Milestones for data reporting are considered (annual/final implementation reports, especially for 2016 and 2018, progress report on the implementation of Partnership Agreement); ▶ Requirements for electronic transmission of data are taken into consideration.	
Management and maintenance of the system are sound		
Sound management and maintenance	▶ It is clear who will manage the system and the tasks of the unit/person in charge are clearly set and coherent; ▶ It is clear who will maintain the system and the tasks of the unit/persons in charge are clearly set and coherent; ▶ Procedures provide for steps for assessing and adjusting the system, including piloting of data collection methodologies, where the case (especially as regards adjusting targets, when/if needed) (based also on Data quality assurance processes – see "quality of data") ▶ Procedures provides for capacity building measures of personnel involved, as well as of stakeholders of the monitoring process (e.g. project owners, other departments of the MA involved and external institutions such as INS)	
Data is timely collected		

Timely collection: Procedures are capable of ensuring timely data collection so that data can be taken into account in the decision-making, reporting and evaluation system (both output and result indicators)	► For each indicator the source of data is identified (i.e. Sources are who or what provide data—not the method of collecting data) ► For each indicator the data collection method is clear (e.g. primary collection through surveys, secondary collection through project progress report or from other institutions possessing the data) ► In the latter case, data collection inter-institutional protocols are in place to ensure that needed data is transmitted on time; ► Time and frequency of data collection are available	
Quality of data		
Qualitative data	► Procedures in place ensure the quality of data, more precisely that: ► Data is reliable: the data collection system is stable and consistent across time and space (measurement of the indicators is conducted the same way every time) ► Data is valid: indicators are measuring, as directly and succinctly as possible, actual and intended performance levels ► Procedures in place contain clear and consistent methodology for data processing and, where the case, aggregation; ► Consistency checks are provided for (linking administrative sources) ► Data quality assurance processes such as supportive supervision and data auditing are provided for.	
Administrative Burden		
Collection of data related to beneficiaries	► Use of public sources of information in order to reduce the administrative burden of beneficiaries in respect of provision of monitoring data	
Previous experience		
Lessons learned 2007-2013	► Planned procedures take into consideration the blockages identified during the current programming period.	
Procedures ensure the public access on information on the performance of the programme		
Monitoring for communication and accountability	► Mechanism are provided for effective publication and dissemination of monitoring results (e.g. active dissemination against passive dissemination – e.g. publication on programme webpage of annual implementation reports)	
(if the case) Procedures provide for specific arrangements for integrated territorial approaches		
Specific monitoring and evaluation systems for IT approaches	► If it is the case, the procedures contain specific arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of integrated approaches, based on criteria presented above (except 6).	

Q9: European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

Evaluation question	Q9: To what extent does the Programme contribute to the European Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, considering the selected thematic objectives and priorities, taking into account the national and regional needs?
OP Chapters analyzed	► Chapter 1
Feedback priority	Second priority
Methodology	► Given the nature of the OPTA, its contribution to the EU 2020 Strategy is in nature indirect, therefore a qualitative analysis of the contribution to the European Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is more appropriate than a quantitative one. ► A qualitative judgement will be provided in relation to the contribution to the achievement of the quantified targets as presented in the National Reform Programme, taking into account is horizontal contributions as well as the contribution to specific OPs.
Source of information	Primary sources: ► Minutes of the interviews Secondary sources: ► The Strategy 2020 ► The Partnership Agreement ► The recommendations of the Council for the National Reform Programme 2013The strategy regarding the consolidation of the public administration capacity -

Analysis of contribution to national targets:

National Reform Programme		**OP TA contribution**		
EU Headline target	Quantified target	Horizontal	OPs supported	Qualitative judgement
Employment rate in %	70%			High / Medium / Low
R&D in % of GDP	2%			
CO2 emission reduction targets	19%			
Renewable energy	24%			
Energy efficiency – reduction of energy consumption in Mtoe	10.00			
Early School leaving in %	11.3%			
Tertiary education in %	26.7%			
Reduction of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion in number of persons	580,000			

Q10: Other relevant instruments

Evaluation question	Q10: Which is the relation of the Programme with other relevant instruments (policies, strategies)?
OP Chapters analyzed	► Chapter 8, 9
Feedback priority	Second priority
Methodology	► A qualitative analysis of the contribution of the Programme to the quantified objectives expressed

	in the strategies identified under Q.1.2.
Source of information	Primary sources: ► Minute of the interviews Secondary sources: ► The Procurement of Innovation Platform ► The Strategy for consolidating public administration capacity 2013-2020 ► The strategy regarding the marine basin of the Black Sea ► European Union Strategy for the Danube Region ► Other relevant documents

For strategies and instruments identified in Q1 (sample):

Strategy For Consolidating Public Administration Capacity 2013-2020		***OP Technical Assistance expected contribution***	
Target description	**Quantified target**	**Quantitative Contribution**	**Qualitative judgement**
			High / Medium / Low

Q11.1: Equal opportunities

Evaluation question	Q11.1: Are the planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent discrimination adequate?
OP Chapters analysed	► Chapter 11
Feedback priority	Second priority
Methodology	► Analysis of OP elements related to the application of the Equal opportunities and non-discrimination principle in the 7 key phases of Programme implementation.
Source of information	Secondary sources: ► Needs analysis – Section 1 of the OP ► Relevant regulations in the field of equality of chances and non-discrimination ► Evaluation of the way the provisions from the field of equal opportunities have been transposed in the framework related to Structural Instruments in Romania ► Documents related to the operational programme

Aspects checked:

STAGE	**ASPECTS TO BE CHECKED IN THE OP**	**OP**
PHASE 1: PROGRAMMING OF STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS		
1. Inception of	At an early stage of programming, review of data availability on EO, identification of	

STAGE	ASPECTS TO BE CHECKED IN THE OP	OP
programming	missing data; warning to responsible authorities for improving the data availability.	
2. Operational Programme - Context analysis	The „Context analysis" of the OP includes a dedicated section containing an analysis of the specific context of the programme in terms of EO, including 1) Relevant equal opportunities issues; 2) Gender differences and other relevant issues concerning discrimination	
3. Operational Programme - Strategy development	The „Socio-economic analysis" of OP includes a dedicated section on equal opportunities issues relevant for the programme and how the programme can tackle /solve them.	
	Prioritization of aspects and, consequently, the identification of priority axes /key areas of intervention/measures to be taken in order to apply the equal opportunities have been made based on the socio-economic analysis.	
4. Operational Programme- Indicators	Objectives aimed at by the OP in terms of application of equal opportunities principle are properly mirrored by the output, result and impact indicators, as well as by their targets.	
5. Operational Programme– Design of interventions	Existence of targeted interventions or positive actions	
	Mainstreaming actions having an indirect positive impact on equal opportunities.	
PHASE 2: CALLS FOR PROPOSALS		
1. Call for proposals – Preparation	It has involved the specific expertise for preparation of Applicants' Guidelines, so as to get a positive impact (direct or indirect) in terms of equal opportunities and/or prevention of any forms of discrimination	
2. Applicants' Guidelines – explanations of EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES principle	The Guidelines contain clear wording on the concept and terminology of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, related to the OP approach in this respect	
3. Financing application form – contents	In the financing application there is a requirement for the applicant to show that it understands the equal opportunities topic and considers it	
4. Financing application form – Monitoring requirements	FA clearly specifies that successful applicants will become part of the monitoring system related to the equal opportunities and in this case they should provide a series of qualitative/quantitative information	
5. Launch of call for proposals – information and publicity	Information and publicity activities related to the calls for proposals cover equal opportunities and non-discrimination issues in order to raise the awareness level in terms of EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES among potential beneficiaries.	
	The use during the information and publicity activities of good practice examples (web pages, flyers, etc.)	
6. Submission mechanism	One considers the barriers for the process of submitting financing applications by the representatives of certain vulnerable groups.	
7. Launch of calls – project generation	Make available for the beneficiaries the specific expertise required for preparation/ improvement of the project proposals in terms of EO.	
PHASE 3: PROJECT SELECTION		
1. Eligibility criteria	Compliance with the legal requirements is considered an eligibility criterion	
2. Evaluation and selection criteria	Evaluation and selection/prioritization criteria intended to encourage the participation of women and /or of other vulnerable groups in the project: additional significant scoring of projects which clearly embed the equal opportunities principle.	

STAGE	ASPECTS TO BE CHECKED IN THE OP	OP
3. Tools / training sessions for project evaluators	Availability of clear guidelines for evaluators of financing applications to assess the treatment regarding application of the equal opportunities principle in the proposed project;	
	Training sessions provided to evaluators of specific financing applications for assessing the treatment regarding the application of the equal opportunities principle in the proposed project;	
	Existence and implementation of the calibration of the financing applications evaluation process, namely to ensure a common approach to assigning the equal opportunities related score among evaluators.	
4. Contracting project evaluators	Selection of evaluators of financing applications with particular experience in equal opportunities	
	Insertion of provisions related to equal opportunities in the assistance services contract for evaluation of financing applications, as a result of specifications in the related tender book	
PHASE 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL		
1. Financial allocation	Explicit indication of the funding share allocated to actions with positive impact in terms of equal opportunities, separating gender and other discrimination issues, specified in terms of targeted/ positive actions	
2. Structures	Existence of dedicated structure or mechanisms at Programme level in relation to the equal opportunities principle	
	- Equal Opportunities councillor	
	- Participation to Monitoring Committees	
PHASE 5: MONITORING		
1. System of indicators	Existence within the programme system of indicators of context indicators necessary for its analysis and monitoring	
	Existence of programme indicators necessary for monitoring the programme performance in terms of implementation of equal opportunities principle	
	Existence of project indicators necessary for monitoring the project performance in terms of implementation of equal opportunities principle	
	Consistency between equality indicators at project level and those at programme level, so as data necessary for monitoring at programme level is collected.	
2. Reporting requirements	Quality of information on the application of the „equal opportunities" principle presented in AIRs	
	Existence of additional reporting requirements concerning equal opportunities (EO) at Programme level, other than those in the Annual Implementation Reports.	
3. Implementation manuals	Existence, within the tools used to support the beneficiaries in the implementation of their projects of a set of complete information in terms of fostering/embedding the equal opportunities principle at project level.	
PHASE 6: EVALUATION		
1. Planning of evaluations	Multi-annual/Annual Evaluation Plans provide for, are dedicated or include equal opportunities issues.	

STAGE	ASPECTS TO BE CHECKED IN THE OP	OP
2. Evaluations performed	Thematic evaluations on equal opportunities or general evaluations covering the equal opportunities topics are performed.	
PHASE 7: PARTNERSHIP		
1. Partnership with the stakeholders relevant for EO	Involvement of representatives of vulnerable groups in all stages of the programme management and implementation cycle.	

Q11.2: Sustainable development

For the scope of this evaluation question, the team will use the definition provided for sustainable development in Fiche 26 of the European Commission, published on 29 November 2013. Accordingly, by sustainable development it is understood "a description of specific actions that take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, in the selection of operations".

Relevant evaluation question	Q11.2: Are the planned measures to promote sustainable development[4] adequate?
OP Chapters analysed	► Chapter 11
Methodology	► Analysis of OP elements related to the application of the sustainable development principle in the 7 key phases of Programme implementation.
Source of information	Secondary sources ► Needs analysis – Section 1 of the OP Relevant principles in the field of durable development, on national and EU level ► Documents related to the operational programme

[4] According to the Structure of the OP, from 29.11.2013, the sustainable development refers at: "Specific actions to take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management"

Aspects checked

STAGE	ASPECTS TO BE CHECKED IN THE OP	OP
PHASE 1: PROGRAMMING OF STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS		
1. Inception of programming	At an early stage of programming, review of data availability on sustainable development, identification of missing data; warning to responsible authorities for improving the data availability.	
2. Operational Programme - Context analysis	The „Context analysis" of the OP includes a dedicated section containing an analysis of the specific context of the programme in terms of sustainable development	
	The „Socio-economic analysis" of OP includes a dedicated section on sustainable development issues relevant for the programme and how the programme can tackle /solve them.	
3. Operational Programme - Strategy development	Prioritization of aspects and, consequently, the identification of priority axes /key areas of intervention/measures to be taken in order to apply the sustainable development principle have been made based on the socio-economic analysis.	
4. Operational Programme- Indicators	Objectives aimed at by the OP in terms of application of sustainable development principle are properly mirrored by the output, result and impact indicators, as well as by their targets.	
5. Operational Programme– Design of interventions	Existence of targeted interventions or positive actions	
	Mainstreaming actions having an indirect positive impact on sustainable development.	
PHASE 2: CALLS FOR PROPOSALS		
1. Call for proposals – Preparation	It has involved the specific expertise for preparation of Applicants' Guidelines, so as to get a positive impact (direct or indirect) in terms of sustainable development	
2. Applicants' Guidelines – explanations of sustainable development	The Guidelines contain clear wording on the concept and terminology of sustainable development, related to the OP approach in this respect	
3. Financing application form – contents	In the financing application there is a requirement for the applicant to show that it understands the sustainable development topic and considers it	
4. Financing application form – Monitoring requirements	FA clearly specifies that successful applicants will become part of the monitoring system related to the sustainable development and in this case they should provide a series of qualitative/quantitative information	
5. Launch of call for proposals – information and publicity	Information and publicity activities related to the calls for proposals cover sustainable development	
	The use during the information and publicity activities of good practice examples (web pages, flyers, etc.)	
6. Launch of calls – project generation	Make available for the beneficiaries the specific expertise required for preparation/ improvement of the project proposals in terms of sustainable development.	
PHASE 3: PROJECT SELECTION		
1. Eligibility criteria	Compliance with the legal requirements is considered an eligibility criterion	
2. Evaluation and selection criteria	Evaluation and selection/prioritization criteria intended to encourage sustainable development: additional scoring of projects which clearly embed the principle.	
3. Tools / training sessions for project evaluators	Availability of clear guidelines for evaluators of financing applications to assess the treatment regarding application of the sustainable development principle in the proposed project;	
	Training sessions provided to evaluators of specific financing applications for assessing the treatment regarding the application of sustainable development principle in the proposed project;	
	Existence and implementation of the calibration of the financing applications evaluation process, namely to ensure a common approach to assigning the sustainable development related score among evaluators.	

STAGE	ASPECTS TO BE CHECKED IN THE OP	OP
4. Contracting project evaluators	Selection of evaluators of financing applications with particular experience in sustainable development	
	Insertion of provisions related to sustainable development in the assistance services contract for evaluation of financing applications, as a result of specifications in the related tender book	
PHASE 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL		
1. Financial allocation	Explicit indication of the funding share allocated to actions with positive impact in terms of sustainable development	
2. Structures	Existence of dedicated structure or mechanisms at Programme level in relation to sustainable development	
	- Environmental Authority	
	- Participation to Monitoring Committees	
PHASE 5: MONITORING		
1. System of indicators	Existence within the programme system of indicators of context indicators necessary for its analysis and monitoring	
	Existence of programme indicators necessary for monitoring the programme performance in terms of implementation of sustainable development principle	
	Existence of project indicators necessary for monitoring the project performance in terms of implementation of sustainable development principle	
	Consistency between equality indicators at project level and those at programme level, so as data necessary for monitoring at programme level is collected.	
2. Reporting requirements	Quality of information on the application of the „ sustainable development" principle presented in AIRs	
	Existence of additional reporting requirements concerning sustainable development at Programme level, other than those in the Annual Implementation Reports.	
3. Implementation manuals	Existence, within the tools used to support the beneficiaries in the implementation of their projects of a set of complete information in terms of fostering/embedding the sustainable development principle at project level.	
PHASE 6: EVALUATION		
1. Planning of evaluations	Multi-annual/Annual Evaluation Plans provide for, are dedicated or include sustainable development issues.	
2. Evaluations performed	Thematic evaluations on sustainable development or general evaluations covering the sustainable development topics are performed.	
PHASE 7: PARTNERSHIP		
1. Partnership with the stakeholders relevant for sustainable development	Involvement of representatives of vulnerable groups in all stages of the programme management and implementation cycle.	

Annex 13 – Guideline on indicators

Annex 14 – Evaluation Plan (version @ 20 Mar 2015)

Annex 15 – Quality Control Grid

Criterion	Interpretation	The evaluation report should prove that the following sub-criteria are met
Evaluation needs are adequately addressed	Evaluation report adequately addresses information needs of the Beneficiary and corresponds to the Terms of Reference.	✓ Evaluation objectives are specified in the report ✓ Evaluation report explains if and how the evaluation objectives have been met ✓ Evaluation report provides a complete and clear answer to each evaluation question ✓ The deliverables linked to the evaluation report have been delivered at the deadline foreseen in the ToRs and/or in the Inception Report ✓ The deliverables linked to the evaluation report have been delivered at an appropriate quality □ The evaluators involved in drafting the evaluation report are specified ✓ The duration of evaluation exercise is specified □ The evaluation budget is specified □ The progress reports and their link with evaluation deliverables are specified
Relevant scope	Coverage of the evaluation report is adequate	✓ The evaluand was correctly identified ✓ Evaluation cut-off date is specified, is relevant and is in line with what has been agreed in Inception Report/Technical Offer/ToR
Open process	Stakeholders have been involved in evaluation design and results so that various standpoints have been considered	□ Evaluation steering committee has been involved in evaluation design (e.g. in discussing the inception report and the evaluation methodology). The list of members of the Steering Committee is attached to the evaluation report. ✓ The evaluator has requested and adequately treated the opinions of relevant stakeholders on the draft evaluation report. A treatment table is attached to the evaluation report.
Quality of the methodology	The evaluation methodology was adequate to answer the evaluation questions.	□ The evaluation tools and techniques foreseen in the Technical Offer and Inception Report are adequate and sufficient to answer each evaluation question ✓ Evaluation tools and techniques used are mentioned in evaluation report for each evaluation question and their utility/purpose is revealed ✓All evaluation tools and techniques foreseen in the Technical Offer and Inception Report have been applied ✓ The design of the evaluation tools are attached to the evaluation report
Reliable data	Primary and secondary data collected or selected, are appropriate and credible in conjunction with the expected use	✓ The "populations" used for data collection have been correctly defined for each evaluation question ✓ The sources of primary and secondary data needed for applying the evaluation tools and techniques are specified and reliable for each evaluation question ✓ The mixture of qualitative and quantitative data is appropriate for valid analysis in order to answer each evaluation question ✓ The evaluation report proves that the most recent information/data available at the source was used in order to answer each evaluation question ✓ Specific methods for data validation have been applied, whenever necessary
Quality of analyses	Quantitative and qualitative data has been analysed according to established conventions and in an adequate manner in order to answer the evaluation questions	✓ Qualitative and quantitative data is analysed in a systematic manner ✓ Analyses of quantitative data are carried out using appropriate statistic and other quantitative techniques ✓ There is an appropriate interpretation of qualitative data
Credible findings	The results are logic and justified	✓ Findings derive logically from the analyses

	by data analyses and appropriate assumptions	✓ Findings on which the conclusions are based are clear ✓ Assumptions/hypotheses and extrapolations are justified ✓ Limits of findings' validity have been defined
Impartial conclusions	Conclusions are justified and impartial	✓ Conclusions derive logically from findings ✓ Conclusions are operational and sufficiently explicit to be understood ✓ Controversial conclusions are presented in a fair and balanced way
Clarity of the report	The report describes the context and objectives, as well as the organisation and results of the programme so that the information provided is easily understood.	✓ The report was written clearly and is set out logically ✓ All acronyms are clarified ✓ Standard terms existing in relevant legislative framework are used. No other proxies are allowed ✓ Specialised concepts are used only when necessary and they are clearly defined ✓ Presentation, tables and graphs enhance the legibility and intelligibility of the report ✓ Each finding is numbered ✓ The report includes an annex where the link between conclusions, findings and recommendations is clearly presented ✓ Executive summary is ✓ clear and concise ✓ present the main conclusions and recommendations in a balanced and impartial manner ✓ easy to read without the need to refer to the rest of the report ✓ not including acronyms.
Recommendations usefulness	Report provides useful recommendations for stakeholders and are detailed enough in order to be quickly implemented	✓ Recommendations are ✓ clear ✓ operational ✓ linked to a responsible body for their implementation

Legend: □✓ Aspect was fulfilled
□ Aspect was not fulfilled

Quality reviewer: Klaudijus Maniokas
Role: Team Leader

Date: 04.05.2014