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## Ministry of European Funds

Framework agreement for the evaluation of structural instruments during  
the period 2011-2015

Lot 1 – Evaluation, Subsequent contract no. 5/23/07.03.2013

*"Ex-ante evaluation of the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020"*

# Final Report

15 April 2015

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# Ex-ante evaluation of the Partnership Agreement 2014- 2020

## Final report

Client: Ministry of European Funds, Romania

Bucharest, 15 April 2015



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## List of acronyms

Acronyms	Explanation
CF	Cohesion Fund
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
CPR	Common Provision Regulation
CSF	Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020
CSR	Country Specific Regulation
CVT	Continuous Vocational Training
DG	Direction General
EAFRD	European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
ECOFIN	Economic and Financial Affairs Council of the European Union
EIF	European Investment Fund
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESI / ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESF	European Social Fund
ESL	Early School Leaving
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EU EFC	European Union's Economic and Financial Committee
FLAG	Fisheries Local Action Groups
FP7	Seventh Framework Programme of Research and Technological Development
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
ICPA/CIAP	Inter-ministerial Committee for the Partnership Agreement
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSPIRE Directive	Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (EU directive)
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
IVT	Initial Vocational Training
JEREMIE	Joint European Resources for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
LEADER	European Union initiative for rural development ( <i>Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale</i> )
LLL	Life Long Learning
MA	Managing Authority
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MEF	Ministry of European Funds
MS	Member states
NDP	National Development Plan
NDS	National Development Strategy
NRP	National Reform Programme
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OP	Operational Programme
OPTA	Operational Programme for Technical Assistance
PA	Partnership Agreement



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<b>PES</b>	Public Employment Service
<b>RDI</b>	Research Development and Innovation
<b>RES</b>	Renewable Energy Sources
<b>ROP</b>	Regional Operational Programme
<b>Q</b>	Evaluation question
<b>SGP</b>	Stability and Growth Pact
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprise
<b>TEN-T</b>	Trans European Transport Networks
<b>TFEU</b>	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
<b>TO</b>	Thematic Objective
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>VET</b>	Vocational and Education Training





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# 1 Executive Summary

## 1.1 Strategic context

On 06.08 2014, the European Commission adopted the Romanian Partnership Agreement (PA) for 2014-2020. This agreement was the culmination of over 18 months work by the officials and stakeholders in the country. On its adoption the Commission stated that:

“The European Commission has adopted a "Partnership Agreement" with Romania setting down the strategy for the optimal use of European Structural and Investment Funds throughout the country. *This* agreement paves the way for investing €23 billion in total Cohesion Policy funding over 2014-2020. Romania also receives €8 billion for rural development and €168 million for fisheries and the maritime sector.”

Commenting on the adoption, Commissioner for Regional Policy, Johannes Hahn said: "... we have adopted a vital, strategic investment plan that sets Romania on the path to jobs and growth for the next 10 years. This Partnership Agreement reflects the European Commission and Romania's joint determination to make the most efficient use of EU funding – Our investments must be strategic, according to the new Cohesion Policy – focusing on the real economy, on sustainable growth and investing in people. But quality not speed is the paramount aim and in the coming months we are fully dedicated to negotiating the best possible outcome for investments from the European Structural and Investment Funds in 2014-2020. Commitment is needed on all sides to ensure good quality programmes are put in place.”

“The EU investments will help tackle unemployment and boost competitiveness and economic growth through support to innovation, training and education in cities, towns and rural areas. They will also promote entrepreneurship, fight social exclusion and help to develop an environmentally friendly and a resource-efficient economy.”

For the development of the Partnership Agreement, Romania took the decision to contract an ex-ante evaluation as an independent method to improve the coherence and quality of the document. The ex-ante evaluators were asked to respond to three sets of questions revolving around:

1. The internal and external coherence of the PA 2014 – 2020;
2. The administrative capacity of authorities and beneficiaries;
3. The electronic systems for the exchange of information between authorities and beneficiaries

This report covers all aspects of the Partnership Agreement development from the first consultation document dated 31.05.2013 to the final version of the Partnership Agreement for Romania 2014-2020 approved on 06.08.2014.

The first consultation document for the Partnership Agreement was structured around the Thematic Objectives (TOs) and clearly identified from the outset the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and based its strategic response on working towards attaining the national 2020 targets. The National Reform Programme was subsequently addressed in the more elaborated drafts of the Partnership Agreement that were developed based upon the Partnership Agreement templates and guidelines provided by the Commission, especially in the areas of competitiveness, poverty and social exclusion. Sectoral strategies were also integrated into later versions of the Partnership Agreement with extensive reference to specific sectoral strategies and how the approach and responses outlined in the Agreement were based upon these underlying strategies.

## 1.1 Selection of Thematic Objectives

The need for allocating funding under all 11 Thematic Objectives (TOs) and the importance of their use was supported by the views expressed by the European Commission (EC):

- According to the recommendation, set out in the European Commission position paper for the development of the Romanian PA, actions under all TOs will need to be programmed.
- The soft investments – under the social Thematic Objectives (TO 8-10), competitiveness Thematic Objectives (TO 1-3) and institutional capacity Thematic Objective (TO 11) – are highlighted in the strategic documents from the European Union (EU) (Position Paper, Country Specific Regulation (CSR)) and between Romania and the European Union (National Reform Programme –NRP-).
- The role of the hard investments – are also recognized to meet EU requirements, international commitments, and to ensure sustainable jobs and growth through adequate transport and environment infrastructure.

Bearing in mind that the Position Paper<sup>1</sup> indicated that all 11 Thematic Objectives were expected to be addressed in the Romanian Partnership Agreement, its introduction to Section 1.3 justified this selection through the evident need to utilize all 11 Thematic Objectives and their alignment with the identified challenges described in Section 1.1 as well as describing the considerations and constraints that have led to the distribution of funds under the Thematic Objectives.

It is considered that for the challenges facing Romania it is appropriate to address all the Thematic Objectives and the Romanian Government, through the Partnership Agreement, clearly demonstrate both the need and the strategic response.

## 1.2 Internal Coherence

The evolution of the Partnership Agreement showed continuous improvement from the initial consultative document to the revised Second official version that was approved by the Commission. Through the process the document became much more focused, in terms of both the internal coherence and intervention logic.

- Major challenges were broadly identified and addressed by the selected Thematic Objectives. The analysis was built on the five challenges that were introduced by the Romanian Government in the First official version (11.09.2013): (i) Competitiveness and Local Development, (ii) People and Society, (iii) Infrastructure, (iv) Resources (v) Administration and Government
- The programme structure was coherent, relevant and based upon the lessons of the previous programming period (both within Romania and in other Member States).
- More relevant statistical data was included in the analysis during the Partnership Agreement development which significantly increased the depth and quality of the analysis
- Clarity was an issue throughout the Partnership Agreement development process and although the final approved document could still benefit from simplification and shortening, this area has improved significantly throughout the process, e.g. regarding the coherence of Europe 2020 objectives, targets, current situation, and Country specific recommendations;

<sup>1</sup> Position of the Commission Services on the development of PA and programmes in ROMANIA for the period 2014-2020 (Ares(2012)1240252 - 19/10/2012) - Annex 2



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- The links of the development needs and proposed investments priorities also improved throughout the process however the strength and the level of detail of the development needs vary across the development challenges.

### 1.3 Allocation of Financial Resources

The bulk of resources was allocated for promotion of sustainable transport and will be financed mainly from the Cohesion Fund and European Regional Development Fund. The identification of important bottlenecks to growth and employment, related to inadequacies in the transport network, and the large scale of the transport projects is provided as the justification for the large share of this priority (nearly 1/4) in all European Structural & Investment Funds financing.

Resources allocated for environment protection were the second largest item in the indicative budget for financing with European Structural & Investment Funds in Romania. On top of the environmental policies that need to be strengthened in Romania, its high share in overall European Structural & Investment Funds funding was also determined by the high costs for the full compliance of the country with the EU Drinking Water Directive and Urban Waste Water Treatment Directives.

Competitiveness, agriculture and fisheries and aquaculture were next in terms of European Structural & Investment Funds financing. Its importance is related to the large potential for enhancing the business sector competitiveness and business environment and the still large importance of the agricultural sector for the Romanian economy and the persisting need for its reform.

The relative importance of TO 4, TO 9 and TO3 stems from the huge challenges the country faces in the respective areas of intervention and also complies with the requirements for thematic concentration of EU funds, formalized in the General regulation of European Structural & Investment Funds.

The HEROM model was used to forecast the expected impact of the Funds by allocation to (1) infrastructure, (2) direct support and (3) human resources in terms of which split would give the optimal return.

All regions in Romania, except for Bucharest, are less developed<sup>2</sup> and Bucharest region is more developed<sup>3</sup>. The financial allocation is in compliance with the thematic concentration requirements under the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund funds

### 1.4 External Coherence

The Partnership Agreement provides an overall macroeconomic overview and references international commitments. The link between the Partnership Agreement, the five identified development challenges, with the National Europe 2020 targets, and the Country Specific Recommendations is clearly established.

The priority reforms within the National Reform Programme are tabulated under their respective development challenges (Section 1.1).

The Country Specific Regulations (CSRs) are presented against each challenge and, where appropriate in the narrative of the analysis. The priorities are directly linked with the key challenges.

<sup>2</sup> <75% of EU average GDP per capita

<sup>3</sup> > 90% of EU average GDP per capita



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## 1.5 Administrative Capacity

Low administrative capacity was considered as one of the main factors contributing to the low rate of absorption under the 2007-2013 programming period; Romania was constantly the lowest in the European Union rankings for structural, cohesion and fishery funds.

In this context, the Ministry of European Funds commissioned an assessment of the administrative capacity of the institutions with responsibilities in the management of EU funds as part of this Ex-ante evaluation, designed in two stages: (1) A first assessment looking at the 2007-2013 period in order to identify the lessons learned that could be used for improving the administrative capacity in the process of preparation for the new programming period and (2) an update of the first assessment at the end of the programming process for 2014-2020 in order to capture the progress.

The assessment had to respond to the question: “Is the authorities’ and beneficiaries’ administrative capacity sufficient for an appropriate implementation of Common Strategic Framework funds?”

The first answers were provided in September 2013 with the first report on the administrative capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries, identifying the key issues and weaknesses that were to be addressed. Eleven recommendations were formulated in the first assessment report.

The update of the assessment conducted in December 2014 proved that all eleven recommendations had been tackled for the 2007-2013 Operational Programmes through direct actions or plans and mechanisms for future actions in the case of 2014-2020. All recommendations however remain valid, in some cases more concrete or follow up recommendations were formulated according to the steps already undertaken.

We strongly recommend the conclusions and recommendations of the report to be further discussed with the relevant authorities, decision makers and experts’ groups in order to find the ways to ensure coherence and sustainability of the measures planned or undertaken for each recommendation.

The updated assessment report offered two “tailor made” tools for the continuous development of the administrative capacity development, (1) the administrative capacity checklists and (2) the administrative capacity indicators database. These tools allow the Ministry of European Funds to project an overall picture, monitor the key dimensions and most relevant variables of the administrative capacity, to identify and highlight the strengths, the weaknesses and the developments. In order to make the best use of these tools it is essential to be established the ownership of these tools and the capacity to use the tools regularly.

## 1.6 Electronic Systems

The evaluation of electronic systems for data exchange covered the last evaluation question of the ex-ante evaluation assignment – Q.III.1 – and followed the same logic of evaluation as Question II.1, with an initial assessment and follow-up at the end of the Partnership Agreement development process.

The methodology adopted combined documentary analysis with qualitative and quantitative methods, consultations and plausibility checks with all stakeholders and sector experts.



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The evaluation started with documentary analysis based on the new regulations issued by the European Commission, the procedures and regulations that were in force and the documentation on the electronic systems for data exchange. The evaluators added to the results of the documentary analysis the information collected from interviews with administrators or coordinators of the analysed electronic systems.

At completion of the first evaluation all key pieces were found to be in place vis-a-vis the national legal framework that should support the fulfilment of the e-Cohesion requirements – they are regulated by the existing Romanian laws relating to: electronic signature, archiving of electronic documents, electronic time stamping of documents and protection of personal data.

In terms of fulfilling minimum requirements stemming from the new Regulations of the European Commission for the programming period 2014-2020, the only area of concern remains the specific e-Cohesion requirement – for “*full implementation of the electronic data exchange between beneficiaries and authorities*”. At the completion of the first evaluation as well as during the update [end December’14] the existing electronic systems have not fully covered this requirement. Therefore the issue still needs focus of the relevant Romanian authorities.

As a general image, the electronic systems are in place, and they fulfil the minimum requirements. However, all the systems could benefit from improvement of quality and functionality. From the technical point of view, all the systems prove to be satisfactory, with only two particular exceptions where improvements are required:

- All the systems need to improve their portfolio of predefined reports, in order to produce those reports as their specific users need. Especially, the requirement to improve the predefined specific reports required by its users, depending on their individual and specific needs.
- All systems would greatly benefit from a major revision in terms of features/functionality and data content as such to become more user oriented.

These two latter conclusions continued to be valid following the recent evaluation update late 2014.

## 1.7 The Evaluation Plan of the PA 2014-2020

As the final output of the ex-ante evaluation there was the requirement to assist with the development of an evaluation plan to cover the Partnership Agreement implementation period. The evaluation plan was designed by the Ministry of European Funds with inputs from the ex-ante evaluators<sup>4</sup>. Its development followed an interactive process that included:

- An online survey of all CIAP<sup>5</sup> members carried out in the end of August and beginning of September 2014. The participants were asked about their opinion on the topics included in the draft evaluation plan, willingness to participate in Evaluation Steering Committees, and training needs.
- A focus group on the Partnership Agreement Evaluation Plan was held in Bucharest on 02.09.2014. The participants included both Managing Authorities and evaluation practitioners. The focus group participants discussed the evaluation requirements, topics,

<sup>4</sup> ECORYS-LIDEA. Ex-Ante evaluation of the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020. Lot 1 – Evaluation, Subsequent contract no. 5/23/07.03.2013

<sup>5</sup> Inter-institutional Committee for the elaboration of Partnership Agreement. It includes also social partners



questions, training needs, data sources, and methods to be included in the evaluation plan.

As a result of this interactive process, all evaluation themes included in the Evaluation Plan were discussed and confirmed by a broad range of stakeholders.

The plan itself covers the requirements on the Member State to carry out evaluations during the implementation phase. It contains the rationale, themes, approach, budget, time schedule and evaluation questions.



## 1.8 Summary of responses to evaluation questions

QI.1 (a) Does an adequate analysis of the disparities and development needs exist, referring to the TOs and the key actions defined in the CSF?	The analysis is structured under five development challenges which are then clearly linked to the TOs in the strategic response so the reference to them is explicit. Although the level of analysis is of varying quality there is adequate analysis of the disparities and development needs to satisfy this criteria.
QI.1 (b) How has the Partnership Principle been taken into account in the elaboration of PA?	The partnership principle was respected in the formal development of the PA with all necessary parties represented in the Inter-ministerial Committee for the PA (ICPA) and working groups, active consultation and discussion between line ministries, programmers and other stakeholders
QI.2 Does the PA include the most adequate operational programmes and the TOs	The selection of OPs, their rationale and link to the TOs are clearly tabulated in section 1.3 of the PA. The OPs chosen are logical and encompass all TOs. Romania was expected to address all 11 TOs and this was made clear from the Position Paper. Annex 2 of the paper clearly identified the 11 TOs and possible priorities for funding under them.
QI.3 Are the results selected for each thematic objective the most appropriate for each fund of the CSF?	There was generally a link between the investment priorities and the results sought. In a number of cases the results could have been reformulated in order to better link them to the priorities for funding however the majority of these issues, if not addressed within the PA itself, are provided for in more detail on the OPs
QI.4 Are the allocations for each Operational Programme (OP) and each thematic objective adequate?	The thematic concentration requirements set in the ERDF and ESF regulations are met although the requirements for ESF allocations and sustainable urban development needed to be further detailed as did the allocation of resources to Climate Change. In comparison to identified need and distance from the E2020 targets, it was the opinion of the ex-ante evaluators that insufficient funds were allocated to TO1, TO2 and, to a lesser extent, TO10
QI.5 Is the territorial development adequately approached?	The final version of the PA was much clearer on the use of CLLD, ITIs and the integration of the Danube Strategy than its predecessors. The PA could have benefitted from Section 3 of the document being more clearly integrated and linked with sections 1.1 and 1.3. The ROP has served to clarify most of the unclear/outstanding issues
QI.6 How are the specific needs of the geographical areas most affected by poverty or of the target groups at risk of discrimination or exclusion approached,	The PA identified and analysed the vulnerable groups in the different sections of the document Although a section dedicated to the specific geographical needs is presented, the ex-ante



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considering the marginalised communities?

evaluators expected much clearer and tangible approaches to the identified problems. The priorities and measures remained quite general

QI.7 How will the new means of support (the financial instruments) be used?

The PA shows the intentions to use financial instruments in the 2014-2020 programming period for four TOs (TOs 1, 3, 4 and 8). This has developed from an initial position of the use of FIs under TO1 and TO3.

The justification for the use of the FIs is built around the key problem of the difficulty of access to finance for SMEs, entrepreneurs and difficulties of local public administrations (LPAs) to fund buildings energy efficiency interventions.

The analysis covers the main problems related to this difficult access to finance, and provides sufficient justification to support the use and potential of this form of support.

QI.8 Are the policies needed for the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities adequate? How do these policies contribute to the efficient implementation of the interventions? Is there any coherence and synergy among these policies?

In terms of policies, the process within the MEF for monitoring progress, assisting and advising line ministries on ex-ante conditionalities was in place, functioning and well supported by Government/senior decision-makers.

Although there was a difficulty for most line Ministries to clearly identify and execute their responsibilities for the fulfilment of the conditionalities, the action plans and follow-up monitoring by MEF helped to address most of the issues. There continue to be outstanding and unfulfilled conditionalities which must be met that have deadlines that extend over the upcoming years.

QII.1. Is the administrative capacity of the authorities and the beneficiaries sufficient for the adequate implementation for the CSF funds?

The administrative capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries is a serious challenge for the effective implementation of the ESI Funds. Although progress has been made, significant improvements are still needed.

The challenge for the Romanian authorities is to find the appropriate solutions to improve the administrative capacity and performance in the system responsible for ESI Funds management, in an environment where the progress in improving the entire public system is slow and uncertain. During the period 2007-2013, the measures to improve the administrative capacity of the ESI Funds management system were hindered by the systemic weaknesses of the Romanian public administration.

Romania is doing well in terms of formal compliance, such as setting up structures,



formalising cooperation, creating tools and systems, but the functioning of the system remains poor.

QIII.1 Are there in place enough regulations and procedures to ensure the exchange of data, as required by the new regulations? To what extent the electronic systems are sufficiently comprehensive? To what extent the electronic systems fulfil the key requirements (including ease of use, reduced administrative burden, aggregation of data, quality of data, search options, timely availability of data, data security, etc.?).

All key pieces of regulations and procedures are in place vis-a-vis the national legal framework that should support the fulfilment of the e-Cohesion requirements – they are regulated by the existing Romanian laws relating to: electronic signature, archiving of electronic documents, electronic time stamping of documents and protection of personal data.

In terms of fulfilling minimum requirements stemming from the new Regulations of the European Commission for the programming period 2014-2020, the only area of concern remains the specific e-Cohesion requirement – for “full implementation of the electronic data exchange between beneficiaries and authorities”. The existing electronic systems have not fully covered this requirement. Therefore the issue still needs focus of the relevant Romanian authorities.

The electronic systems are in place, and they fulfil the minimum requirements. However, all the systems require some improvement of quality and functionality.



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## Introduction

This report describes how assistance was delivered under the framework agreement no. 23/22.08.2011 for the evaluation of structural instruments during the period 2011-2015, lot 1 – evaluations for subsequent contract no. 5 “Ex-ante evaluation of the partnership agreement 2014-2020”.

The project officially started on March 7th, 2013 with the TL and evaluation team mobilised on the 11th. All evaluation team members provided pro-active support to the programmers and MEF staff throughout the development of the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 which was approved by the European Commission on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

The evaluation team set about the tasks as were detailed in both the project Terms of Reference and the Methodology paper with subsequent agreed changes due to the dynamics of the Partnership Agreement development process. The activities detailed in this report concern all the tasks undertaken necessary for the project implementation and completion, the methodology that was followed for the evaluations and the approaches to project implementation.

## 2 Objectives of the evaluation and approach

### 2.1 Description of the assignment (objectives and evaluation questions)

The objective of the ex-ante evaluation of the Partnership Agreement (PA) was defined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) as: “to bring a real added value and to improve the quality of the documents that are to be negotiated with the European Commission, according to the new draft regulations on the funds of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) 2014-2020 and to make value judgments and recommendations regarding the programming related aspects, issued by experts independent of those involved in programming”.

The ToR defines three specific objectives of the assignment:

- To ensure the internal and external coherence of the Partnership Agreement,
- To ensure the adequate administrative capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries for a good implementation of the CSF funds,
- To ensure adequate electronic systems for the exchange of information between the authorities and the beneficiaries.

The assignment was designed to provide an independent opinion on the key qualitative aspects of the programming process, particularly for the PA development, through an iterative process of guidance.

The activities of the contract were structured around the three specific objectives of the contract. The evaluation had to provide answers to ten evaluation questions:

Evaluation questions regarding the internal and external coherence of the PA:

- ✓ I.1. Does there exist an adequate analysis of the disparities and development needs, referring to the thematic objectives and the key actions defined in the CSF? How the Partnership Principle has been taken into account in the elaboration of PA?
  - ✓ I.2. Does the PA include the most adequate operational programmes and the thematic objectives?
  - ✓ I.3. Are the results selected for each thematic objective the most appropriate for each fund of the CSF?
  - ✓ I.4. Are the allocations for each Operational Programme (OP) and each thematic objective adequate?
  - ✓ I.5. Is the territorial development adequately approached?
  - ✓ I.6. How are approached the specific needs of the geographical areas, most affected by poverty, or the specific needs of the groups at risk of discrimination or exclusion, considering the marginalised communities?
  - ✓ I.7. How will be used the new means of support (the financial instruments)?
  - ✓ I.8. Are the policies needed for the ex-ante conditionalities fulfilment adequate? How do these policies contribute to the efficient implementation of the interventions? Is any coherence and synergy among these policies?
- (I) Evaluation questions regarding the administrative capacity of the beneficiaries and authorities
- ✓ II.1. Is the administrative capacity of the authorities and the beneficiaries sufficient for the adequate implementation for the CSF funds?
- (II) Evaluation questions regarding the assessment of the electronic systems ensuring the information exchange between the authorities and the beneficiaries.
- III.1 Are there in place enough regulations and procedures to ensure the exchange of data, as required by the new regulations? To what extent the electronic systems are sufficiently comprehensive? To what extent the electronic systems fulfil the key



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requirements (including ease of use, reduced administrative burden, aggregation of data, quality of data, search options, timely availability of data, data security, etc.?).

The methodology adopted combined documentary analysis with the most appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods, consultations and plausibility checks with stakeholders and sector experts. Methodology tables are presented in Annex 1.

## 2.2 Comments on the assignment (key issues)

The ex-ante evaluation of the PA provided support for the preparation of key documents in the negotiations with the European Commission. At the same time the evaluation assisted the Romanian authorities in making important strategic decisions regarding the investments priority and the creation of the most appropriate framework for the implementation of the EU financial assistance during the 2014 – 2020 programming period.

On the basis of the tasks required by the TOR and the contextual factors, the key issues addressed during the ex-ante evaluation were the following:

- the changing EU context (e.g. draft Regulations versus approved Regulations, CSF) during the evaluation process, which may require revisions of the methodology, findings or conclusions;  
*There was little change between the draft regulations available at the beginning of the process and the regulations that were adopted just prior to completion. The MEF were able to respond to the changes that were made and these did not have a disruptive effect on the process*
- the programming approach based on the PA, differing from the NSRF approach, which has to be understood and accepted by all stakeholders and correctly reflected in the priority axes and OPs;  
*The process was explained through the CIAP, it's working groups and with the programmers in the MEF and line Ministries. Although the PA approach differed from that of the NSRF, the teams involved had a clear understanding of the requirements and these have been correctly reflected in the priority axes and OPs.*
- the thematic approach and the concentration principle has to be applied, with an appropriate balance of the concentration requirements and the differing sectoral and regional needs;  
*The thematic approach and concentration principles have been applied although the early decision to address all 11 Thematic Objectives removed the requirement to make difficult priority-based judgements.*
- the ex-ante conditionalities are a new and challenging requirement, that has to be fulfilled and matched in the programming process;  
*Ex-ante conditionalities provided one of the more problematic areas for the PA development. The MEF established a good monitoring system but was reliant on line Ministries and other stakeholders to fulfil their obligations. A number of workshops and one-on-one meetings were held to ensure progress was made against this requirement.*
- the ex-ante evaluation process has to follow the PA development process in a sufficiently flexible manner that could deal with the potential delays of the PA drafts delivery, and the limited time left available for the evaluation tasks;  
*The initial deployment and reporting schedule was developed against an unrealistic schedule that was not linked to the actual production of PA documents. More flexibility was introduced into the task that enabled evaluation to take place against produced documents.*
- the significant changes in the Government structure made in the last months and additional changes that could occur at local and regional level in the future have to be considered in the administrative capacity analysis;

*The Government and MEF had a very clear vision on the structure and responsibilities to be allocated for the 2014-2020 period. The lessons learned from the 2007-2013 period were considered and the administrative capacity analysis took all these factors into account.*

- the ex-ante evaluation contract was designed to provide support not only on the PA document preparation, but include as well assessments and guidance to feed the programming process (i.e. assessment of the administrative capacity and electronic systems);

*The ex-ante evaluation provided assessments and guidance through the assessment of the administrative capacity and electronic systems as well as the PA itself*

- the conclusions drawn from the experience of 2007 – 2013 operational programmes implementation might have reduced relevance on issues depending of the implementation stage, still low with an absorption rate of 13.05%<sup>6</sup> for the structural instruments and 54 % for EARDF<sup>7</sup>;

*The underlying issues that resulted in the low absorption rates have been identified and recognised by the MEF and programmers and these were taken into account when the PA and OPs were formulated.*

## 2.3 The key principles and approach

### 2.3.1 Key Principles

The key principles for evaluations based upon international best practice and embraced by the evaluation team consisted of the following:

*Independence and impartiality:* The project team were not involved with or influenced by the contracting authority or beneficiary and based all recommendations and conclusions on objective, evidence based analysis and evaluation.

*Credibility:* The evaluation was carried out in a professional, transparent manner with all findings evidence based and all recommendations and conclusions justified.

*Usefulness:* The Terms of Reference asked specific questions and required the development of checklists, tools and methodologies for continued and future use. This assignment was carried out and the results presented in a manner that the Ministry of European Funds, through the Department for Analysis, Programming and Evaluation can have confidence in decision-making and actions based on the findings

*Participation:* The information-gathering was wide-ranging and all stakeholders were given an opportunity to contribute to the process. The activities of the evaluation team were carried out in close cooperation and liaison with the DAPE and beneficiary institutions.

### 2.3.2 Approach

The methodological approach was based on a mix of methods and tools, identified as the most appropriate for the evaluation questions, according to the principles and best practices in evaluation and the domain the question was referring to.

**The documentary analysis** was a key method used throughout the entire evaluation. The challenge in performing the documentary analysis was due to the complexity of the evaluation, the

<sup>6</sup> Source: <http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/> Stage of absorption of the ERDF and CF at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013

<sup>7</sup> Source: <http://agroromania.manager.ro/articole/diverse/situatia-fondurilor-europene-pentru-agricultura-actualizate-la-21-februarie-2013-13045.html>



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maturity of the documents, with a large number of sectors and documents and the continuous development and revision of the European and Romanian framework of the programming process.

For this reason the analysis was systematic, based on:

- Elements/abstracts from the quoted documents, quotations, tables and graphs;
- Inventories of documents with a mechanism of continuous updates;
- Previous studies and analysis from Romania and other member states;
- Benchmarking against other relevant member states with clear criteria to prove the relevance.

**“Hard” quantitative techniques** will be used and will include

- Descriptive statistics and modelling data that was used to ensure the optimum combination of different types of techniques (e.g. for questions 1.2, 1.3, 1.4).
- Data bases creation, which allowed the collection in a structured and meaningful manner, of a broad variety of information.

**Qualitative tools** were integrated throughout the process in order to verify and validate information, findings and conclusions and included:

- Interviews, panels, focus groups, and discussions with stakeholders involved with the drafting of the Partnership Agreement.
- Online questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data as well as qualitative information
- Experts’ panels were used to check plausibility of the evaluation team conclusions.
- Checklists were created and customised on the specific needs of the ex-ante evaluation.

## 3 Methodology and activities description

### 3.1 I. Evaluation of the internal and external coherence of the Partnership

#### 3.1.1 Question I.1

I.1 Is there any appropriate analysis in place related to disparities and development needs, with reference to the thematic objectives and the key actions defined within the Common Strategic Framework and the targets established in the recommendations included under article 121 (2) of the Treaty and the Council's recommendations according to Article 148 (4) of the Treaty? How was the partnership principle taken into consideration within the drafting of the PA?

This question aimed to assess the quality of the analysis of disparities and development needs, which is included in the PA. It also contains a review of the reference of the identified needs to the TOs of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) and the targets established in the recommendations included under article 121 (2) of the Treaty and the Council's recommendations according to Article 148 (4) of the Treaty. The level to which the partnership principle was taken into account in the identification of the needs and in the overall process of drafting of the PA was also assessed in with the support of a stakeholder analysis, that was completed during the ex-ante evaluation process.

The methodological tools used to answer this question are summarised in the below table.

Chapter	Tool	Contribution of the tool
3.1, 3.2	Desk research	Review of EU (draft) regulations, templates and guidelines. Review and analysis of other MS (draft) PAs. Gather data on the arrangements between different stakeholders and participation in ICPA. Review of 2007-2013 NSRF for Romania to provide a comparison of the needs identified in the two programming periods
3.2	Stakeholder Analysis	Stakeholder analysis to identify the participation, interest and activity of stakeholders in the PA development process.
3.1	Checklist	Compliance checklist used to assess the state of completion and compliance of the PA against the requirements of the CSF, PA (PA) template, Common Provision Regulation (CPR), Direction General (DG) guidance papers
3.1	Coherence tables	Identified the coherence and link between the CSR, the analysis and the strategic response. Tables were developed for all main challenges identified in the CSR document.
3.1, 3.2	Interviews	Interviews, discussions and workshops with staff members of MEF, programmers, representatives of line Ministries and other stakeholders to establish the internal coherence and external coherence and causal links.
3.1, 3.2	Expert Panels	Expert Panels are used to provide an outside opinion to the findings and conclusions of the ex-ante evaluators.

#### Appropriate analysis

The identification of main development needs was based on the analysis of:

- The relevant country-specific Council recommendations ex Art. 121(2) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and Art. 148(4) TFEU;

The Commission staff Working Document Assessment of the 2013 national reform programme and convergence programme for Romania<sup>8</sup> contained a number of specific recommendations that were clearly acknowledged and reflected in the PA. A matrix table is presented showing the links and coverage between the CSRs and the development challenges as well as specific recommendations being highlighted at appropriate sections of the document.

<i>Country Specific Recommendations</i>	<i>Extent addressed in PA</i>
Complete the EU/IMF financial assistance programme	Not specifically identified or addressed.
Ensure growth-friendly fiscal consolidation	Not specifically identified or addressed
Health sector reform. Reduce the excessive use of hospital care including by strengthening outpatient care	The PA envisages investment in hospitals. There are elements of health sector reform in the Regional and Competitiveness Operational Programmes
Improved labour market participation, fight youth unemployment and alleviate poverty	Current situation well documented and targeted responses proposed in PA
Education reform	Current situation well documented and targeted responses proposed in PA
Strengthen governance and the quality of institutions and the public administration; significantly improve the quality of regulations; step up efforts to accelerate the absorption of EU funds	Current situation well documented and targeted responses proposed in PA
Better business environment, diversified access to finance and closer link between R&D and industry	Causes of disconnection between R&D and industry elaborated in Operational Programme
Efficiency in network industries (continue the governance reform of state-owned enterprises in energy and transport, adopt a long term transport plan )	Other than implementation of performance contracts, no responses are suggested for state-owned enterprises. Transport plan identified in PA and OP

- Distance to the national Europe 2020 targets and targets linked to legislative requirements;

In the introductory section of the PA, the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the National Reform Programme are described and a table presented showing the targets, current level of achievement and under which development challenge they are to be addressed. Within the text of the analysis further tables showing the objectives and targets of the Europe 2020 strategy and the country assumed actions under the NRP are also highlighted.

<sup>8</sup> accompanying the document "Recommendation for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on Romania's 2013 national reform programme and delivering a Council Opinion on Romania's 2013 convergence programme for 2012-2016" (COM(2013) 373 final)



<i>National EU 2020 targets</i>	<i>Current situation</i>	<i>Extent addressed in PA</i>
70 % of the population aged 20-64 to be employed	63.8 % (2012)	Actions to improve education and skills (employability), and creating, improving and supporting economic activity clearly addressed in PA
2 % of GDP to be invested in R&D	0.49 % (2012)	Problems well identified, amount of resources dedicated may be insufficient to address needs and meet targets
Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions with 20% (compared to 1990 level)	49.54 % (2011)	Continued efforts to reduce GHG identified
24 % of total gross final energy consumption from renewable sources	22.9 % (2012) <sup>9</sup>	Current situation well documented and targeted responses proposed
Reduction of 10 Mtoe (19%) in the primary energy consumption	16.6 % (2012) (7.3 Mtoe) <sup>10</sup>	Current situation well documented and targeted responses proposed
Less than 11.3% of children should leave school at an early age	17.4 % (2012)	ESL problems identified and addressed
At least 26.7% of 30-34-year-olds should complete third level education	21.8 % (2012)	Underlying issues of take-up of tertiary education and lack of attraction identified and addressed
Reduce by 580,000 less people the number of people at risk of after social transfer by the year 2020 (compared to 2008 levels)	164,000 (2012)	Numbers and issues facing people at risk well identified, causes and responses less well developed

- The National Reform Programme with reference to the main development needs identified at national level;

The National Reform Programme sets the targets for Romania in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and these are covered in both the analysis section (1.1) and, where relevant, in the goals and results under the TOs (section 1.3).

- Strategic guiding principles provided in the Common Strategic Framework (Annex I of the CPR);

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Economy (Department for Energy) estimation

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Economy (Department for Energy) estimation

The PA is structured with an overall analysis that identifies the development challenges facing the country. Using this structure, it is under the classification of these challenges that the disparity, need or opportunity is described. These challenges are then addressed through the use of ESIF resources utilising the 11 TOs. The rationale for the selection of the TOs is presented (section 1.3 of the PA) based upon the overall assessment. Compliance with the CSF, PA template and guidelines, and the CPRs is shown in the table below (3.1.1)

- Experience from the period 2007-2013 and the state of achievement of objectives set out for programmes supported under this programming period, as appropriate;

2007-2013 Development Needs	2007-2013 Regional Disparities	2014-2020 Partnership Agreement
The need to achieve long term and sustainable economic growth. Capital investment in infrastructure is essential and the top priority, otherwise short-term job gains could be lost in the medium term;	Increasing development disparities between Bucharest-Ifov Region and the other Regions;	Investments in infrastructure continue to be a priority identified in the PA and relevant Ops. There is no clear identification of achievements made during the previous programming period
To build a hi-tech, high value added economy, the investment in infrastructure is seen as a pre-requisite. Water and waste services, roads, rail, air and water transport investments are high cost investment priorities but will be the foundations of Romania's sustainable economic growth;	Unbalanced development between the eastern and the western parts of the country, respectively between North-East, South-East, South, South West Regions on one hand and West, North-West, and Centre Regions on the other;	The territorial disparities are identified within the analysis and addressed through the strategic response and mechanisms identified in section 3 of the PA. There is no clear identification of achievements made during the previous programming period
The investment in infrastructure – road, rail and the River Danube – supports the development of the EU Trans European Transport Networks (TEN-T) priority axes;	Concentration of chronic under-development in the East, on the border with Moldova and in the South, along the River Danube;	The territorial disparities are identified within the analysis and addressed through the strategic response and mechanisms identified in section 3 of the PA. The priorities of the Danube strategy and an ITI for the Danube delta are included in this programming period. There is no clear identification of achievements made during the previous programming period
The investment in human resource development is essential to increase economic competitiveness;	Existence of important intra-regional disparities that reflect a mosaic pattern of the economic development and within some regions the coexistence of underdeveloped areas with relatively developed areas;	The territorial disparities are identified within the analysis and addressed through the strategic response and mechanisms identified in section 3 of the PA. There is no clear identification of achievements made during the previous programming period

<p>Redressing the Regional disparities and building balanced development and growth between rural and urban areas;</p>	<p>Decline of the small and medium-sized towns, especially of the mono industrial towns, generated by the industrial restructuring</p>	<p>The growth pole concept supported through the 2007-2014 programmes is identified in the PA as a successful approach that will be continued.</p>
<p>Administrative capacity development supports the effective implementation of the public policies, with a positive impact on the delivery of the Structural Instruments.</p>	<p>Socio-economic decline of many large urban centres and the diminishing of their role they have on the development of adjacent areas;</p>	<p>Weak administrative capacity continues to be highlighted with a number of measures put in place in the latter stages of the 2007-2014 programming period. Lessons learned are also said to have contributed to a realignment of the management structure</p>
<p>Insufficient local experience in the management of the regional/local development programmes.</p>		<p>Identified as a continuing problem</p>

There is reference to the programming period 2007-2013 and how the proposed PA is an evolution from that position in the areas of competitiveness, people and society, transport, energy and administrative capacity. The needs, challenges and disparities identified in the 2007-2013 National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) bear a very strong resemblance to those identified in the upcoming period yet there is little indication of what results were achieved in these areas during that period and how initiatives and approaches in this period will build upon that experience. In the areas of Arrangements for coordination of EU and National funding instruments (2.1) and Measures to reinforce administrative capacity (2.5) the lessons from the 2007-2013 programming period are well incorporated into the design for the 2014-2020 period as are the lessons concerning coordination, correlation of projects to objectives and the use of LEADER under the NRDP.

- Other national, regional, macro-regional and sea-basin strategies which are relevant to the Member State's NRP and to TOs;

National strategies are highlighted as the basis for the majority of the priorities for funding and for the identification of the underlying need or disparity. For the Competitiveness challenge the national competitiveness strategy, RDI strategy, export strategy, and digital agenda strategy are referred to, as are the rural development and regional development strategies and regional development plans. For People and Society the national strategies for social responsibility, Life Long Learning, Early School Leaving are all referenced. Similar references to relevant national sectoral strategies are given under the other challenges. The identification and integration of Macro regional strategies, such as the Danube strategy were present and identified in section 1.1 and elaborated in section 3, with a Correlation of the Priorities of EUSDR presented as Annex III. This is also the case of the "Blue Growth" strategy and the EU strategy for the Black Sea.

- Other studies and evaluations (in addition to the ex-ante evaluation) that may have been undertaken, including fund-specific studies and evaluations.

There was good use and identification of studies especially in the areas of competitiveness, education and ICT. The analysis sections for Social Inclusion and Poverty, Transport – especially in the areas of customs, inter-modal, and air; Energy Efficiency and Climate Change



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were not as well evidenced. There was little evidence of the use of fund-specific studies and evaluations.

There are tables showing the link between the E2020 Targets and the Country Specific Recommendations/NRP Priorities.

The analysis highlighted two main divides in potential and need being (i) those between the Bucharest/Ilfov region and the rest of the country, and (ii) between urban and rural areas. From this there is some geographic specificity used to identify the basis of the intended territorial approach.

- Scope and detail of the analysis

**The approved version of the PA** includes relevant statistical data which significantly increases the depth of the analysis. The analysis in Section 1.1 has been shortened somewhat over previous versions and in many areas is much more factual and targeted. Some sections however remain rather long and contain unnecessary details. At the same time, there were still needs, which were not sufficiently justified in the text. The section on Transport dealing with customs, inter-modal and air have limited justification or identification of need and the Judicial System gives limited information on current situation and causes, focusing much more on strategy and future actions.

Overall the analysis in Section 1.1 may still be considered too long and should be shortened. The “Overview” section is very useful although it might have benefitted from a more explicit link between the “challenges” and their strategic response in the areas of Smart, Sustainable, and Inclusive Growth.

- Link between main development needs and proposed priorities for funding

The main development needs are elaborated in Section 1.1 of the PA. Some main development needs are very elaborate (e.g. for “Resources” challenge) whereas some are less detailed (e.g. for the “Infrastructure” challenge).

## Evolution of fulfilment of PA requirements

Requirement (1)	Link to QI.1 (2)	Source (3)	Section (4)	Report 1 (5)	Report 2	Report 3	Report 4
PAs should be linked to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the National Reform Programmes.	x	CSF	Section 1.A, 1.1	Partially fulfilled (EU2020)  Not fulfilled (NRPs)	fulfilled (EU2020)  Not fulfilled (NRPs)	fulfilled (EU2020)  Not fulfilled (NRPs)	fulfilled
PAs should set out "an integrated approach for territorial development supported by all CSF Funds".		CSF	Section 3	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	partly fulfilled
In preparing their Partnership Contracts, the Member States and regions need to programme the CSF Funds taking into account the most recent relevant country-specific recommendations issued by the Council on the basis of Articles 121(2) <sup>11</sup> and 148(4) <sup>12</sup> TFEU and reflecting their National Reform Programmes.	x	CSF	Section 1.A, 1.1	Not fulfilled	fulfilled	fulfilled	fulfilled
Member States should also take into account Council recommendations based on the Stability and Growth Pact. Each Member State should set out in the partnership contract how different EU and national funding streams contribute to addressing the challenges identified by the country-specific recommendations concerned.	x	CSF	Section 1.A, 1.1	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled (SGP)  Fulfilled (coordination of funding)	Partially fulfilled (SGP)  Fulfilled (coordination of funding)	Fulfilled
Partnership Contracts should provide a framework for close coordination to ensure that interventions under CSF create synergies		CSF	Section 2	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled

<sup>11</sup> The Council shall, on a recommendation from the Commission, formulate a draft for the broad guidelines of the economic policies of the Member States and of the Union, and shall report its findings to the European Council.

<sup>12</sup> The Council, on the basis of the reports referred to in paragraph 3 and having received the views of the Employment Committee, shall each year carry out an examination of the implementation of the employment policies of the Member States in the light of the guidelines for employment. The Council, on a recommendation from the Commission, may, if it considers it appropriate in the light of that examination, make recommendations to Member States.

and that streamlining leads to a reduction of administrative cost and administrative burden on the ground							
The Partnership Contracts should set out the arrangements for ensuring the coordination between all relevant MAs and ministries (in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Partnership Contract) and the concrete measures that will be taken to maintain this coordination throughout the programming period.		CSF	Section 2	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
The PA should set out the structures for coordination mechanisms for the CSF Funds with other EU policies and instruments		CSF	Section 2	Not fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
When designing their Partnership Contracts and programmes MS should develop: an analysis of the Member State's development potential and capacity, particularly in relation to the key challenges identified in Europe 2020, the National Reform Programmes and the relevant country-specific recommendations. This requires the responsible authorities to undertake a detailed analysis of national, regional and local characteristics.	x	CSF	Section 1.A, 1.1	Fulfilled (EU2020)	Fulfilled (EU2020)	Fulfilled (EU2020)	Fulfilled
				Not fulfilled (NRPs, CSRs)	Not fulfilled (NRPs, CSRs)	Not fulfilled (NRPs, CSRs)	
When designing their Partnership Contracts and programmes MS should develop: an assessment of the major challenges to be addressed by the Member State. Central to this process is the identification of the bottlenecks and missing links, innovation gaps, including the lack of planning and implementation capacity that inhibit the long-term potential for growth and jobs. This will highlight the possible fields and activities for policy prioritisation, intervention and concentration	x	CSF (and PA template)	Section 1.A, 1.1	Partially fulfilled	fulfilled (EU2020)  Not fulfilled (NRPs)	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
The PA should address the specific development needs and growth potentials of urban, rural and coastal as well as maritime areas and							

include an analysis of the growth potential of the "blue economy", where relevant. <sup>13</sup>								
When designing their Partnership Contracts and programmes MS should consider the cross-sectoral, cross-jurisdictional or even cross border coordination challenges, particularly in the context of macro-regional and sea basin strategies	x	CSF	Section 1.A, 1.1	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Fulfilled	
The PA should be based on the thematic objectives set out in the proposal for the Common Provisions Regulation (the main development needs are relevant to the thematic objectives)	x	CSF	Section 1.A, 1.1	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	
There is a clear link in the PA between the identified needs and the thematic objectives	x	Good practices	Section 1.A, 1.1	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	
For the Partnership Contract the Member State should organise a partnership with the representatives of competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities, economic and social partners, and bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting equality and on discrimination. The purpose of such a partnership is to respect the principle of multi-level governance, ensure the ownership of planned interventions by stakeholders and build on the experience and know-how of relevant actors.	x	CPR	Section 1B, 1.5.1	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	
The Partnership Contract shall set out an analysis of disparities and development needs with reference to the thematic objectives, and key actions defined in, the Common Strategic Framework and the targets set in the country-specific recommendations under Article 121(2) of the Treaty and the relevant Council recommendations adopted under	x	CPR	Section 1.A, 1.1	Fulfilled (TOs) Not fulfilled (CSF/CSR)	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	

<sup>13</sup>This requirement is included in the PA template.

## Article 148(4) of the Treaty;

The Partnership Contract shall set out a summary analysis of the ex-ante evaluations of the programmes justifying the selection of the thematic objectives and the indicative allocations of the CSF Funds		CPR	Section 1.A, 1.2	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Partially fulfilled
The Partnership Contract shall set out for each thematic objective, a summary of the main results expected for each of the CSF Funds;		CPR	Section 1.A, 1.3	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
The Partnership Contract shall set out the indicative allocation of support by the Union by thematic objective at national level for each of the CSF Funds, as well as the total indicative amount of support foreseen for climate change objectives;		CPR	Section 1.A, 1.4	Fulfilled (CSF funds) Not Fulfilled (climate change)	Fulfilled (CSF funds) Not Fulfilled (climate change)	Fulfilled (CSF funds) Not Fulfilled (climate change)	Fulfilled (CSF funds) Not Fulfilled (climate change)
The Partnership Contract shall set out the main priority areas for cooperation, taking account, where appropriate, of macro-regional and sea basin strategies;	x	CPR	Section 1.A, 1.1	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Fulfilled
The Partnership Contract shall set out the horizontal principles and policy objectives for the implementation of the CSF Funds		CPR	Section 1.B, 1.5	Fulfilled	fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
The Partnership Contract shall set out the list of the programmes under the ERDF, the ESF and the CF, except those under the European territorial cooperation goal, and of the programmes of the EAFRD and the EMFF, with the respective indicative allocations by CSF Fund and by year		CPR	Section 1.B, 1.6	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
The Partnership Contract shall set out an integrated approach to territorial development supported by the CSF Funds		CPR	Section 2 and 3	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	fulfilled
The Partnership Contract shall set out an integrated approach to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty or of target groups at highest risk of discrimination or		CPR	Section 3	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	partly fulfilled



exclusion, with special regard to marginalised communities, where appropriate, including the indicative financial allocation for the relevant CSF Funds

The Partnership Contract shall set out arrangements to ensure effective implementation		CPR	Sections 2, 3 and 4	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	fulfilled
The data in the analysis of disparities and development needs should be up-to-date.	x	Good practices	Section 1.A, 1.1	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Fulfilled
All sources of data in the analysis of disparities and development needs should be cited.	x	Good practices	Section 1.A, 1.1	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Fulfilled
The needs identified in the Partnership Contract should be discussed by the CIAP <sup>14</sup>	x	Good practices (DG REGIO's Guidance Document On M&E)	Section 1.A, 1.1 and 1.B, 1.5.1	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
Horizontal principles, i.e. equality between men and women, non-discrimination and sustainable development, need to be considered in the identification of needs and challenges	x	DG REGIO EMPLOY January 2013	Section 1.A, 1.1 and 1.B, 1.5.1	Partially fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
If available, the macroeconomic indicators used for the needs analysis should be the most relevant ones – they should be linked to the EU	x	Good practices	Section 1.A, 1.1	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Fulfilled	Part Fulfilled

<sup>14</sup>DG REGIO's Guidance Document on Monitoring and Evaluation notes that "As there will be always a multitude of real or perceived needs, the decision on which unmet needs should be tackled is the result of a deliberative social process (a "political decision")".



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2020 indicators and should capture the macroeconomic situation  
without distortion

The statistics used in the analysis should support the identification of needs and disparities	x	Good practices	Section 1.A, 1.1	Partially fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
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## The partnership principle

An extensive partnership framework was designed and implemented through the Inter-institutional Committee for Partnership Agreement (CIAP) and 12 consultative committees, for each of the sectors concerned, and for the regional development and territorial dimension.

Working Groups comprising members of the CIAP were also formed to work on specific aspects of preparation. The role of the consultative committees was to prioritise investments at sector and regional level, based on the documents prepared by working groups. The proposals were discussed in the CIAP framework which was charged with agreeing the design of programmes, as well as implementation, monitoring and evaluation arrangements. Public consultations were coordinated by MEF. The publishing all the documents on [www.fonduri-ue.ro](http://www.fonduri-ue.ro) and allowing an adequate consultation period increased the transparency of programme development and future implementation.

MEF staff, together with programmers from line-Ministries and other stakeholders maintained a continuous dialogue throughout the PA development process ensuring that the document accurately reflected the needs of the sector and the ability of the system to implement.

In order to assess how the partnership principle was taken into consideration in the drafting of the PA, the evaluation team performed an in-depth stakeholder analysis. According to CPR Part II Art 5 paragraph 1, for the Partnership Contract development Member States “shall organise a partnership with the following partners”:

- Regional, local, urban, and other public authorities
- Economic and social partners
- Bodies representing the civil society, including environmental partners, non-governmental organisations and bodies responsible for promoting equality and non-discrimination.

The CIAP members are covering all above-mentioned categories with 64 members: out of which around 30% are representing economic and social partners, NGOs.

The evaluation team designed a specific online questionnaire for the identified PA stakeholders, consisting of 12 questions. This tool was uploaded on Survey Monkey platform on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013 and the invitations were sent on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2013, using the contact details of participants at CIAP meeting from March).

The system validated 85 email addresses of CIAP members and invited organizations and more than a third (32) responded.

The results from the questionnaire and the desk research were filled in the stakeholder analysis matrix. Within the matrix, the stakeholders were grouped according to their type:

- Central
- Regional/Local
- Socio-economic partners and NGOs

Following the methodology described in the Technical Offer and elaborated in the Inception Report, the next step of the stakeholder analysis was to determine the links between the stakeholders. This step was meant to support the filling in of the Stakeholders Matrix and consequently ease the elaboration of the Venn diagrams which were also a part of the methodology.

The results of the analysis showed that all thematic objectives (TO), specified by the EU, were covered by the stakeholders, which were taking part in CIAP.

The stakeholder matrix was finalized and Venn diagrams were developed the as described in the Inception report. The diagrams were used to support the analysis and illustrate the nature of relationships between key stakeholder groups.

The stakeholder matrix and consequently the Venn diagrams showed that the influence of the different stakeholders on the PA development process remains to a large extent the same for all thematic objectives<sup>15</sup>. Central public institutions, above all ministries, had the largest influence on the development of the PA although it should be noted that they themselves undertook their own consultation processes throughout the PA development. The influence of the regional / local structures is a little less than the influence of national agencies / authorities / commissions. The least influence was directly exerted by the socio-economic partners and NGOs. Having in mind that the central public institutions are the organisations that developed the PA and the OPs these results were not surprising.

From the analysis the MEF satisfied the requirements of the partnership principle according to CPR Part II Art 5 paragraph 1. All three groups (public authorities, economic and social partners and civil society) had a representation in CIAP. Moreover, the results of the analysis show that all thematic objectives (TO), specified by the EU, were covered by the stakeholders, which are taking part in CIAP.

Future recommendations on the appropriateness of the analysis

The Partnership Agreement was adopted by the European Commission on August 6<sup>th</sup> 2014. Therefore the appropriateness of the analysis and the Partnership Principle can be considered satisfied and there is no requirement for further action.

### 3.1.2 Question I.2

I.2 Does the Partnership Agreement includes proposals for the most appropriate operational programs and thematic objectives?

The methodological tools used to answer this question are summarised in the below table.

Chapter	Tool	Contribution of the tool
4.2	Desk research	Review of regulations, guidelines and templates, Previous and current versions of PA, Collection of PA data from other Member States
	Logical Framework	Review of intervention logic of PA
	Quantified SWOT Analysis	Utilised and updated throughout the process based upon changes to PA SWOT
	Member State comparisons	Analysis of PA preparation in selected Member States with finding providing basis of comparison for QI.4
	Expert Panel	Review of findings and conclusions of ex-ante evaluators

### Proposals for Operational Programmes and TOs

The TOs are presented in the PA as all being addressed in the upcoming programming period. As noted in the previous section the introduction to Section 1.3 bases the need to use ESIF resources under all 11 TOs on the continuing, and in some cases widening, disparities between Romania and the EU. The potential/possibility that Romania would be expected to address all 11 TOs is clear from the Position Paper where Annex 2 identifies the 11 TOs and possible priorities for funding under them.

<sup>15</sup>The results are calculated on the basis of the scores of those organizations that have a primary interest (PI) in the certain thematic objectives.



The link and coverage between “development challenges”, TO and proposed Operational Programmes would appear, in the main, to be logical and provide coverage for all intended areas of intervention.

### Coverage of the thematic objectives and the priorities for funding indicated in the Partnership Agreement through the Operational Programmes

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
COMPETITIVENESS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT	1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	Supporting private RDI investments and research partnerships between enterprises and research organisations in order to foster the transfer of knowledge, technology and personnel with RDI advanced skills and to enable the RDI-based development of products and services in economic sectors with growth potential.	Addressed by COP	Competitiveness OP (COP)	IP1.1 Promoting investment in innovation and research, developing links and synergies between enterprises, R&D centres and higher education, [...]	SO1.2 Increased transfer of knowledge, technology and RDI staff between the public and private research sector
			Addressed by ROP	Regional OP (ROP)	IP1.1 Promoting the business investments in innovation and research, developing the linkages and synergies between businesses, research-development centres and education, especially the development of products and services, technological transfer, social innovation, networking, clusters	SO 1.1 Increasing the use of innovation by supporting the innovation entities and technology transfer
		Promoting financial instruments aimed to support the risk of private investment in research and innovation and to stimulate innovative start-ups and spin-offs.	Addressed by COP	Competitiveness OP (COP)	IP1.1 Promoting investment in innovation and research, developing links and synergies between	SO1.1 Increased private investment in RDI



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Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
COMPETITIVENESS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT					enterprises, R&D centres and higher education, [...]	
		Developing the public and private research infrastructure, both as part of existing/emerging clusters, centres of excellence and other types of research structures (national / regional / EU), and in specific areas identified as priorities, based on existing potential and/or competitive advantage, such as health.	Addressed by COP		IP1.2 Improving the infrastructures for research and the capacities for developing excellence in R&I and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest, [...]	SO1.3 Increasing scientific excellence as a driver of innovation through the development of R&D infrastructure
		Unlocking the potential for excellence in research and innovation by creating synergies with the RDI actions of the programme Horizon 2020.	Addressed by COP			SO1.4 Increasing the involvement in the research at EU level
		Creation and developing of innovation and technology-transfer support infrastructure in the public and private sectors, particularly in Romania's less developed regions, informed by the principles of smart specialization.	Addressed by ROP	Regional OP (ROP)	IP1.1 Promoting the business investments in innovation and research, developing the linkages and synergies between businesses, research-development centres and education, especially the development of products and services, technological transfer, social innovation, networking, clusters	SO 1.1 Increasing the use of innovation by supporting the innovation entities and technology transfer

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
COMPETITIVENESS AND LOCAL		Advisory services to farmers, in order to improve the economic and environmental performance. Encouraging the cooperation between farming /agri-business, forestry and food sectors, education, advisory and research in order to use the results in relation to pilot projects, development of new products, practices, processes and technologies, as applied solutions of research and innovation.	Addressed by NPRD	National Programme for Rural Development (NPRD)	P1. Encouraging the transfer of knowledge and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas	Measure (M) 1. Transfer of knowledge and awareness M2. Advisory services M16 Cooperation
		Adapting research activities to the needs of farmers and facilitating their access to research, innovation results and quality advisory services.	Addressed by NPRD			
		Setting up operational groups (farmers, researchers, advisors), which will form part of the European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability.	Addressed by NPRD			
		The establishment and use of advisory services for the fisheries sector. Collaboration between fisherman/aquaculture farmers and scientists.	To be addressed in OP FMA	Operational Programme for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs (OP FMA)		



Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
DEVELOPMENT	2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies	Actions to promote ICT adoption by business, including e-commerce applications and innovation	Addressed by COP	Competitiveness OP (COP)	IP2.2 Development of ICT products and services, e-commerce and ICT demand	OS 2.2 Increasing vertical integration of innovative ICT solutions in economy
		Actions to develop e-government instruments for business and citizens (e-government 2.0).	Addressed by COP		IP2.1 Strengthening of ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, digital inclusion, online culture and e-health	OS 2.1 A Increasing the efficiency of public activities through the development of e-government
		Actions to develop cloud computing and social media collaboration technologies.	Addressed by COP		IP2.1 Strengthening of ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, digital inclusion, online culture and e-health	OS 2.1 A Increasing the efficiency of public activities through the development of e-government
		Actions to provide modern online public services which ensure interoperability of different non-integrated systems, across sectors, regions and at national level, (increased coordination and efficiency of public resources to be promoted) and access to open standards for increasing transparency and administrative efficiency.	Addressed by COP		IP2.1 Strengthening of ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, digital inclusion, online culture and e-health	OS 2.1 A Increasing the efficiency of public activities through the development of e-government
		Actions to ensure secure networks and systems.	Addressed by COP		IP2.1 Strengthening of ICT applications for e-government, e-learning,	OS 2.1 A Increasing the efficiency of public activities through the

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
COMPETITIVENESS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT					digital inclusion, online culture and e-health	development of e-government
		Actions to modernise the customs through improvement of IT systems and equipment.				
	3. Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector and the fisheries and aquaculture sector	Actions to improve the productivity of SMEs and to provide to growth opportunities and innovation, including supporting advanced technological investments, the application of design and other creative skills, enhancing access to business planning support, to technical consultancy, international markets. Integrated actions - sites, skills, investment support - to attract investment into Romania's less developed regions.	Addressed by ROP	Regional OP (ROP)	IP2.1 Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and by fostering the creation of new businesses, including by business incubators	SO 2.1 Strengthening the market position of start-ups
		Actions to improve access to finance, including through the provision of an appropriate range of financial instruments. Actions to network businesses, to enhance knowledge spillovers and to facilitate their participation in supply chains, including those of international scale.	Addressed by ROP		IP2.2 Supporting the creation and expansion of advanced production capacities and the development of services	SO 2.2 Increasing economic competitiveness by supporting SMEs
	Actions to improve economic performance of farms (including orchards), facilitate farm	Addressed by NPRD	National Programme for	P2 Increased farm viability and competitiveness of all	M4 Investments in physical assesses	



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Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
COMPETITIVENESS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT		<p>restructuring and modernization, increase market participation and orientation as well as diversification within agricultural sector, with particular focus on innovation and higher value-added (e.g. on farm renewable energy).            Actions to facilitate inter-generational change including encouraging the establishment of skilled young farmers.            Actions to improve and adapt the agricultural and forestry infrastructure such as access roads for agricultural and forestry holdings.            Actions to improve access of young people with the appropriate training in the agricultural sector.            Actions to increase the value added generated by the fruit-growing sector through an integrated approach across the value chain.            Actions to improve the economic performance of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain and short supply circuits.            Actions to support farm risk prevention and management, including through mutual funds.            Actions to support growth and modernization of the agri-food industry, enhancing its capacity in</p>		Rural Development (NPRD)	<p>types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative agricultural technologies and sustainable forest management            Priority 3. Promoting the organization of the food chain, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture</p>	<p>M6 Development of farms and business            M16 Cooperation            M1 Transfer of knowledge and information            M2 Advisory services            M17 Risk management.</p>



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<i>Development Challenge</i>	<i>Thematic Objective</i>	<i>Priorities for funding</i>		<i>Operational Programme</i>	<i>Investment Priorities</i>	<i>Specific Objectives</i>
		<p>adding value to agricultural products, and in meeting European standards and consumer expectations.</p> <p>Actions supporting local processing and marketing of agricultural products.</p> <p>Actions to facilitate the access to finance through an appropriate range of financial instruments.</p>				
		<p>Investments in aquaculture: new units, modernization of existing units, diversification of species with demonstrated market potential, improvement of the potential of aquaculture sites.</p> <p>Promotion of new sources of income complementary to the fisheries sector (environment, tourism, education activities).</p> <p>Investment in fishing ports, shelters, landing sites and first sale sites.</p> <p>Improvement of working conditions related to health and safety on board inland and marine fishing vessels.</p> <p>Support for the establishment, organization and functioning of producers-processing-marketing chain.</p> <p>Capacity building activities for the</p>	<p>No evidence found due to unavailability of OP FMA where expected to be found</p>			

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
		implementation of Marine Strategy Framework, Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning in the particular context of sustainable exploitation of marine waters and coastal zones in the Black Sea.				
	6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	Restoration and valorisation of cultural heritage and tourism natural resources including valorisation of the local specific tourism potential, the rehabilitation of historical (urban) areas, sustainable capitalization of the cultural patrimony, measures for urban environment (including rehabilitation of unused and/or degraded public spaces and buildings, sport infrastructure/multifunctional cultural centres). Actions to enhance local development, based upon local cultural products and services, including through e-cultural tools.	Addressed by ROP	Regional OP (ROP)	IP5.1 Preservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage	SO 5.1.1 Preservation, protection and valorisation of cultural and bathing heritage to strengthen cultural identity and its efficient use
PEOPLE AND SOCIETY	2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication	Increasing e-inclusion and use of ICT in education and health by: - improving education through IT based curricular and extra-curricular activity with the use of open access instruments such as OER and Web 2.0	Addressed by COP	Competitiveness OP (COP)	IP2.1 Strengthening of ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, digital inclusion, online culture and e-health	OS 2.1 B Developing the infrastructure and ICT systems and the digital skills to support e-learning, e-health, digital inclusion and online culture

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
	technologies	social instruments - ensuring the interoperability of medical information systems and the introduction of accessible telemedicine systems to be used in the patient-doctor relations and - developing e-social assistance (upgrading of the SAFIR system + upgrading or development of two components (public & restricted) of the register of service providers) ICT contributions (software, hardware) for enhancing data collection, monitoring and evaluation in the field of social assistance.				
	8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	<p>Actions to boost youth employment, prioritising regions with particularly high youth unemployment, including mobility bonus, financial incentives, careers guidance and enterprise counselling.</p> <p>Developing a multi-dimensional approach (e.g. designing carrier path, counselling, delivering personalized services, trainings, apprentices/ traineeships, job search mechanism, job matching profile etc.) to support re-integration of young people not in education, employment</p>	Addressed by OPHC	OP Human Capital (OPHC)	OT 8 PI (ii)/8.2-PI (ii) Sustainable integration in the labour market of young people, especially NEETS, including young people at risk of social exclusion of young people from marginalized communities, including implementing youth guarantee (PA1-PI1.1 and PA2-PI2.1)	<p>SO1.1 Increasing the number of NEETS youth from regions C, SE and S receiving an offer for job or training [..]</p> <p>SO2.1 Increasing the number of NEETS youth from regions BI, NE, NW, W, SW receiving an offer for job or training [..]</p> <p>SO2.2 Developing and</p>

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
PEOPLE AND SOCIETY		or training (NEETS) with education, training and employment opportunities.				implementing tools/mechanisms/systems dedicated to NEETS youth from all regions
		A combination of targeted and mainstreaming actions to improve access to the labour market of long term unemployed, inactive, women, older workers, Roma people, disabled people and people with low levels of education and qualification, including those from rural areas; Setting up active and preventive labour market measures by taking into account specific regional and territorial disparities. Supporting employability actions like individual counselling, work-based training, and encouraging entrepreneurship, taking into account the distinctive structure of employment in Romania; Support for active aging measures;	Addressed by OPHC		OT8 PI (i)/8.1. PI (i) Access to employment for persons seeking employment and for inactive people, including long-term unemployed and people with low chances of employment, including through local employment initiatives and support for mobility labour; (PA3-PI3.1)	SO3.1.1 Increasing the participation on the labour market of people seeking a job, inactive, long term unemployed, old workers, disabled, from rural areas and other vulnerable groups
		Supporting self-employment actions, entrepreneurship and business creation, including through financial instruments.	Addressed by OPHC	OP Human Capital (OPHC)	OT 8-PI Iiii)/8.3. PI (iii) Independent activities, entrepreneurship and business set-up, including some innovative micro and SMEs (PA3-PI3.2)	SO3.2 Increasing employability through entrepreneurship and business creation [...]



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<i>Partnership Agreement</i>			<i>Is the funding priority addressed by OPs</i>	<i>Evidences</i>		
<i>Development Challenge</i>	<i>Thematic Objective</i>	<i>Priorities for funding</i>		<i>Operational Programme</i>	<i>Investment Priorities</i>	<i>Specific Objectives</i>
		Support for job-search mechanism and a frame for employability of people affected by industrial restructuring and, in particular, those from agricultural and fishing communities affected by the reduction in employment that is likely to accompany increased competitiveness. Delivering employment and workforce development services based on the changing needs of the labour market, with a particular focus on growth competitive sectors and/ or the traditional sectors with potential to grow, but also on regional/local growth potentials (emphasised under the RDPs); Actions to enhance the mobility of labour;	Addressed by OPHC		OT 10 PI (iii)/10.3 PI (iii) Increasing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal settings, non-formal and informal, updating knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce and promote flexible learning paths, including through orientation and validation of competences acquired. (PA3-PI 3.3)	SO 3.3 Developing enterprises in priority sectors by increasing their staff skills



Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
PEOPLE AND SOCIETY		Strengthening the capacity of PES to deliver/personalized employment (such as career path, counselling, mentoring, training, job search, job matching etc.) and preventive employment measures, including by a partnership approach.	Addressed by OPHC		OT 8 PI (vii)/8.7 PI (vii) Modernization of labour market institutions and the public and private employment services and improving the coverage of the labour market needs through incentives for transnational labour mobility and mobility programs and through a better cooperation between institutions and relevant stakeholders; (PA3-PI 3.5)	SO 3.4 Strengthening the PES capacity to offer personalized service , adapted to the labour market needs
		Creation of new food processing units; Creation of new small enterprises through business start-up aid for non-agricultural micro and small enterprises and development of non-agricultural activities in rural areas; Diversification of the fisheries and aquaculture sector, by supporting the creation of new small enterprises and job creation in the field;	Addressed by NPRD	National Programme for Rural Development (NPRD)	P6. Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas	Investment Area (IA) 6A. Facilitating diversification, creation and development of small businesses and creating jobs IA6B. Encouraging the local development in rural areas
		Promotion of new sources of income in the fishing areas, other than core activity (environment, tourism, education activities).	Addressed by OP FMA	Operational Programme for Fisheries and		

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
				Maritime Affairs (OP FMA)		
	9. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	Integrated actions to address the needs of vulnerable persons, groups and communities, including actions to improve their educational participation, their integration in the labour market, their access to housing, social, health care and cultural services, and actions to combat discrimination;	Addressed by OPHC	OP Human Capital (OPHC)	9.2 PI (ii) Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities, including Roma (PA4-PI4.1)	SO4.1 Developing and implementing integrated measures for deprived communities SO4.2 Increasing the social inclusion of vulnerable groups
		Exploiting innovative potential of social economy models (including sheltered employment for vulnerable persons) to address societal challenges and/ or to support labour market integration and social inclusion of vulnerable groups and their transition to the business models, the development of local services where market models fail to deliver, thereby creating employment and social inclusion; Developing a pro-active, volunteer oriented and participative culture within general public and social assisted persons and encouraging partnership-based approaches in tackling poverty;	Addressed by OPHC			9.5 PI (v) Promoting social entrepreneurship and the professional integration in social enterprises and promoting the social solidary economy to facilitate the access to jobs (PA4-PI4.2)



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Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
PEOPLE AND SOCIETY		<p>Developing an equitable, sustainable, affordable and high quality social assistance system, benefits and social services for all vulnerable groups, including preventive, integrated and innovative types of services in order to address poverty and social inclusion issues, spanning technical development and improving the skills and competences of professionals and practitioners in local government, in other public agencies and NGOs;</p> <p>Strengthen the capacity of public and private service providers to deliver quality community-based care services for children, persons with disabilities, people with mental problems and elderly (especially in lagging areas);</p> <p>Enhancing access to quality health care and treatments, including emergency care, primary care, development of integrated medical and social care services, including at community level, with focus on the services provided in ambulatory settings and developing integrated primary health care specialist with telemedicine support;</p> <p>Providing screening programmes for the main</p>	Addressed by OPHC	OP Human Capital (OPHC)	9.4 PI (iv) Increasing the access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health and social services of general interest (PA4-PI4.3)	<p>SO 4.3 Enhancing the quality and access to social services and health assistance</p> <p>SO 4.4 Enhancing the quality of services available at community level</p>



Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
PEOPLE AND SOCIETY		<p>pathologies (e.g.: cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, mental illness, rare diseases, tuberculosis);</p> <p>Enhancing public awareness, information and education on health and social issues, including discrimination against Roma, prevention of domestic violence, substance abuse and human trafficking;</p> <p>Enhancing knowledge and skills within health professionals as a prerequisite to increase the quality of services;</p> <p>Promoting social responsibility by enhancing public awareness, dissemination of information and good practices;</p>				
		<p>Support for physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities in urban areas, including in the framework of Community-led Local Development, including support for social economy;</p>	<p>Addressed by OPHC and ROP</p>	<p>OP Human Capital (OPHC)</p> <p>Regional OP (ROP)</p>	<p>OT 9 PI (vi)/ 9.6 PI (vi) Local development under the community-led framework (PA5-PI 5.1)</p> <p>IP8.1 Supporting the economic and social regeneration of disadvantaged communities from urban areas</p>	<p>SO5.1 Promoting active inclusion and reduce the poverty among Roma communities [...]</p> <p>SO 8.1 Reducing spatial concentration of poverty by providing appropriate living conditions for disadvantaged communities, as well as by</p>



Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
PEOPLE AND SOCIETY						providing them with basic services – health, educational, and social – in order to increase their employment rate and social inclusion
		<p>Development of social services infrastructure, focusing on community based infrastructure;</p> <p>Supporting the transition from institutional to community-based care services (e.g.: protected homes, family-type homes, domiciliary care, day-care centres, integrated social and health community services, respite centres etc.), delivered by public and private social services providers including targeted support for infrastructure needed for integrated community care centres;</p> <p>Investments in hospitals and other public health infrastructure (e.g. ambulatory/ outpatient services, multifunctional centres )</p>	Addressed by ROP	Regional OP (ROP)	IP7.1 Investments in health and social infrastructure which contribute to national, regional and local development, by reducing the inequalities in health status and by the transition from institutional to community based services	SO 7.1.1 Increasing life expectancy by developing accessibility of health and social services provided, and improving their quality
		Fostering local development in rural areas through investments in all types of small-scale infrastructure, including (e.g. local roads, water supply and sewerage infrastructure – complementary with Large Infrastructure OP),	Addressed by NPRD	National Programme for Rural Development (NPRD)	P6. Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas	IA6B. Encouraging the local development in rural areas



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Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
PEOPLE AND		and in setting up/improving local basic services for the rural population (e.g. social and educational infrastructure including those in the agricultural field and investments associated with the cultural heritage preservation). The small scale infrastructure related to roads will be targeted on improving connectivity to main road network and linked to economic development potential in order to reduce the rural poverty. Promoting local development and improved governance in rural areas through LEADER community-led local development strategies (through LAG, FLAG).				
	10. Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	Increase participation, affordability and quality of early childhood education and care (0-6 years old), particularly in the age group 0-3 years old, especially for groups at increased risk of ESL, focusing on rural areas and Roma; Implementing preventive, intervention and compensation measures to reduce ESL, including individualised support for pupils at risk of ESL; integration of equal opportunities and inclusion measures, incorporating wrap-around	Addressed by OPHC	OP Human Capital (OPHC)	10.1 PI (i) Prevent and reduce the ESL and promote the equal access to early childhood, primary and secondary quality education, including formal learning pathways, non-formal and informal education and vocational reintegration (PA6-PI 6.1)	SO 6.1 Increasing the access and participation to early childhood, primary and secondary quality education, mainly for vulnerable groups. SO 6.2 Develop measures of stimulating the access and participation in early childhood, primary and

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
SOCIETY		<p>support (mentoring, financial, etc.) to ensure its effectiveness;</p> <p>Offering alternative education pathways, such as “second chance” education and training, focusing on rural areas and Roma; supporting intervention measures to address individual educational needs of groups at increased risk of ESL;</p>	Addressed by OPHC			<p>secondary quality education and prevent ESL</p> <p>SO6.3 Diversifying the opportunities to return to education [...]</p>
		<p>Supporting non-traditional students particularly those from rural areas, Roma and other disadvantaged groups, as well as adults presently aged between 23 and 27 to access, participate and succeed in tertiary education;</p> <p>Improve governance and management of higher education institutions to improve the quality of teaching and research;</p> <p>Modernising tertiary education through development of post-graduate studies and supporting internationalisation of higher education, including advanced research and mobility;</p> <p>Increasing relevance of higher education programmes for the LM needs and strengthening the partnerships between universities, business and research;</p>				<p>10.2 PI (ii) Improving the quality and efficiency of tertiary and equivalent and access to, in order to increase the participation and education level especially for disadvantaged groups</p>



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Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
PEOPLE AND SOCIETY		<p>Improving competences of teaching staff in relation to quality assurance, innovative and personalised teaching methods;</p> <p>Better matching initial and continuing VET with LM needs, ensuring relevance of the training offer, including through work based learning, giving priority to growth competitive sectors and/or the traditional sectors with potential to grow, but also on the regional/ local growth potentials (emphasised under the Regional Development Plans), promoting partnerships among relevant stakeholders for ensuring a better transition from school to work;</p> <p>Enhancing curricula and better integration of ICTs to make learning attractive in schools and IVET, providing opportunities for young people enrolled in compulsory education to get acquainted with the future jobs;</p> <p>Developing human resources in public and Higher Education-based R&amp;D institutions; supporting higher level skills development in SMEs;</p>				



Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
		<p>Supporting measures to promote quality and accessibility of VET, strengthening the capacity of IVT and CVT providers to deliver VET programs correlated with the LM demands; Encouraging and facilitating the participation of employers in workforce development, including by involving them in the organization, implementation and assessment of practical stages /training ships for students;</p> <p>Development of LLL services, providing training and education in basic and transversal competences including digital skills, counselling and validation of prior learning, focusing on low skills and rural areas, including through the validation of non-formal and informal learning;</p>	Addressed by OPHC	OP Human Capital (OPHC)	<p>OT10 PI (iii)/ 10.3 PI Increase equal accesses to LLL for all groups of age, in formal, non-formal and informal frameworks [...] (PA6, PI 6.3)</p> <p>OT10 PI (iv)/ 10.4 PI Increase the relevance on labour market of education, training systems and facilitate the transition from education to labour market [...] PA6, PI 6.4)</p>	<p>SO 6.7 Increasing the access and participation in LLL for all groups of age, especially from disadvantaged groups [...]</p> <p>SO 6.8 C Strengthening the capacity of education and training systems to assure the quality and relevance of LLL programs for LM</p> <p>SO 6.9 Strengthening the capacity of educational suppliers to develop and implement quality and relevant programs for LM</p>
		<p>Support for information, vocational training (short term/initial training) and skills acquisitions for farmers and for those involved in food sector;</p> <p>Support for demonstration activities to transfer knowledge about new practices in the agri-food sector;</p>	Addressed by NPRD	National Programme for Rural Development (NPRD)	Priority 1: Encourage knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas	<p>M1: Transfer of knowledge and information</p> <p>SM1.1: Support for training and skills acquisition</p> <p>SM1.2 Support for demonstration activities and information</p>

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
	11. Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration	Building up the administrative capacity of professionals working in education sector at both central and local level in relation to quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation systems Building the capacity of decision makers at national and local level in designing and implementing evidence based policies in the view of the progress of the health reform and decentralization process.	Addressed by OPAC	Operational Programme Administrative Capacity (OPAC)	IP 11.1 - Investment in institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services to achieve reforms, better regulation and good governance	SO 1.1 Strengthening structures, processes and skills in institutions and central public administration authorities
INFRASTRUCTURE	2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies	Fast and ultrafast broadband infrastructure - promoting NGN connections – for ensuring Internet access for high-tech ICT equipment, as well as the use of the most sophisticated online public services, in a uniform manner from a geographic point of view.	Addressed by COP	Competitiveness OP (COP)	IP2.3 Extend the broadband connexion and dissemination of high speed networks as well as support the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for digital economy	OS 2.3 Expansion and developing high speed broadband infrastructure
INFRASTRUCTURE	7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network	Development of road infrastructure on core and comprehensive TEN-T network; Development of rail infrastructure on core and comprehensive TEN-T network, including ERTMS equipment and rolling stock acquisition, especially through the completion on TEN-T	Addressed by OPLI and ROP	OP Large Infrastructure (OPLI)	PI 7.i Supporting a Single European Transport Area by investing in multimodal trans-European transport network (TEN-T)	SO1.1 Development & modernization of road infrastructure on the TEN-T SO1.2 Development & modernization of railway



Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
	infrastructures	<p>corridors;</p> <p>Supporting sustainable transport development through traffic safety and security improvement on TEN-T network, for all transport modes;</p> <p>Modernization and development of inter-modal transport, having in view fluidization of freight flows that transit Romania and reducing carbon emissions in urban areas;</p> <p>Modernization and development of maritime and waterway infrastructure on the Danube River and navigable canals, having in view the promotion of an environmental friendly transport system and the potential of inland waterway transport as a blue growth sector. Romania will consider measures to strengthen the role of inland water transport within the TEN-T network;</p> <p>Development of airports where this is justified, for improving connectivity and supporting regional mobility;</p>			<p>PI 7.c Developing and improving environmental-friendly (including low-noise) transport systems, [...]</p> <p>PI 7.i Supporting a Single European Transport Area by investing in multimodal trans-European transport network (TEN-T)</p>	<p>infrastructure on the TEN-T [...]</p> <p>SO3.1 Increasing the capacity of inter-modal transport to stimulate the sustainable transport</p> <p>SO3.2 Increasing the degree of safety and security for all transport modes and reduce the impact of transports on environment</p> <p>SO3.4 Enhance the efficiency of transports</p> <p>SO1.3 Development &amp; modernization of shipping transport [...]</p>

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
INFRASTRUCTURE		<p>Modernization of the customs, where justified, through improvement of customs infrastructure, in order to remove bottlenecks and transit waiting time;</p> <p>Increasing accessibility of areas located in proximity of TEN-T network, through construction, rehabilitation and modernization of secondary and tertiary connections to the network, including bypasses, having in view bottlenecks removing and traffic fluidization.</p>		<p>OP Large Infrastructure (OPLI)</p> <p>Regional OP (ROP)</p>	<p>PI 7.b Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multi-modal nodes</p> <p>PI 7.c. Developing and improving environmental-friendly (including low-noise) transport systems, [...]</p> <p>PI 7.b Enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes TEN-T infrastructure, including multi-modal nodes</p> <p>IP6.1 Enhancing regional mobility by connecting</p>	<p>SO2.4 Enhancing the mobility by airports modernization</p> <p>SO 3.3 Streamlining traffic crossing the border</p> <p>SO2.1 Enhancing the regional mobility by connecting to TEN-T road infrastructure</p> <p>SO2.2 Enhancing the regional mobility by connecting to TEN-T railway infrastructure</p> <p>SO2.3 Enhancing the regional mobility through</p>



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Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
					regional road infrastructures to TEN - T infrastructures	modernization of ports  <b>SO 6.1.1</b> Increasing accessibility of rural and urban areas located in the vicinity of the TEN-T network through rehabilitation and modernization of county roads ensuring secondary and tertiary network connections, in order to reduce travel time and traffic flow and increase traffic safety
	9. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	Supporting the educational infrastructure and resources development in ECEC, primary and secondary education, particularly those from disadvantaged areas;  Supporting the educational infrastructure and resources development of tertiary education, particularly those which will assure a better linkage with research and/or cooperation with the business sector;	Addressed by ROP	Regional OP (ROP)	IP9.1 Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure	SO 9.1 Increasing the conditions of study offered by the educational infrastructure for providing modern educational process

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
		Supporting the educational infrastructure and resources development of IVET, focusing mainly on the growth competitive sectors and/or the traditional sectors with potential to grow, but also on the regional/ local growth potentials (emphasised under the RDPs).				
RESOURCES	4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors	<p>Promoting the production and distribution of electricity and thermal energy from renewable energy resources (biomass, geothermal, micro hydro);</p> <p>Improving energy efficiency in enterprises by high efficiency low power cogeneration systems rated less than 8MW;</p> <p>Implementation of smart energy distribution low and medium voltage systems;</p> <p>Developing electricity and thermal energy monitoring systems in industrial sites, in order to increase energy efficiency ;</p>	Addressed by OPLI	OP Large Infrastructure (OPLI)	<p>PI 4.a Promoting renewable energy</p> <p>PI 4.g Promoting cogeneration</p> <p>PI 4.d Promoting smart distribution (medium and low voltage)</p>	<p>SO 7.1 Promoting renewables for electricity and heat production</p> <p>SO 7.2 Support for energy efficiency improvements in companies by high efficiency cogeneration</p> <p>SO 7.3 Implementing investments in smart distribution (low and medium voltage)</p> <p>SO 7.4 Promoting energy efficiency in by monitoring energy distribution at industrial platform level</p>

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
RESOURCES		<p>Improve the sustainability of municipal district heating systems where these are demonstrably financially sustainable correlated to the renovation thermal insulation of the corresponding buildings;</p>	Addressed by OPLI		<p>PI 4.ii. Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public facilities, including public buildings and housing</p>	<p>SO 9.1 Increasing energy efficiency through modernization of centralized heating system in Bucharest</p>
		<p>Promoting investments for public transportation systems for the main municipalities from Romania within the framework of sustainable urban mobility plans, contributing to air quality and energy efficiency;</p> <p>Improving energy efficiency of residential stock, and to public buildings (building envelope, heat supply/network, lightning, smart metering etc.) to be prioritised on the basis of systematic appraisal taking into account the cost-efficient reduction of GHG emissions and societal benefits including addressing energy poverty, financed, where appropriate, through financial instruments and/or energy performance contracting;</p> <p>Replacing/improving lighting systems in the</p>	Addressed by ROP	Regional OP (ROP)	<p><b>IP4.2</b> Promoting strategies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions for all types of territories, particularly urban areas, including by the promotion of sustainable urban mobility plans and of relevant measures for mitigating the climate adaptation</p> <p><b>IP4.1</b> Supporting energy efficiency and utilization of renewable energy in public infrastructure, including in public buildings and in housing sector</p>	<p><b>SO 4.2.1</b> Promoting strategies to reduce carbon emissions in cities - major urban agglomerations, particularly through investment in public transport based on sustainable urban mobility plans.</p> <p><b>SO 4.1.1</b> Improving energy efficiency in residential buildings and of public lighting systems</p>



Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
RESOURCES		<p>public realm, particularly in urban areas financed, where appropriate;</p> <p>Improve the sustainability of municipal district heating systems where these are demonstrably financially sustainable correlated to the renovation thermal insulation of the corresponding buildings;</p>				
		<p>Increasing energy efficiency by reduction the primary energy consumption in agriculture, forestry and food processing;</p> <p>Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy in the agricultural and forestry sectors (by products, wastes, residues and other non-food raw material);</p> <p>Reducing gas emissions in agriculture through: agri-environmental practices and organic farming (by lower use of nitrogen fertilisers, climate-friendly crop rotation, practices, etc.), improved livestock management and treatment of animal wastes;</p> <p>Enhancing carbon sequestration through:</p>	Addressed by NPRD	National Programme for Rural Development (NPRD)	<p>Priority 5, Intervention Area (IA) 5B: Efficient energy use in the agro-food</p> <p>IA 5C: Facilitate the provision and use of renewable energy, by-products, wastes, residues and other non-food materials with the scope of Bio-economy</p> <p>IA 5D: Reduction of greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture</p>	<p>Measure (M) 4: investments in physical assesses</p> <p>M4: Investments in physical assesses</p> <p>M6: Developing farms and business</p> <p>M7: Basic services and village renewal in rural areas</p> <p>M4: Investments in physical assesses</p> <p>M10: Agro-environment and climate</p> <p>M1: Knowledge transfer</p>



Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
RESOURCES		afforestation, climate-friendly forestry management, agri-environmental practices;			IA 5E: Promoting conservation and carbon sequestration in agriculture and forestry	and info  M8: Investment in forestry [...] M11: Bio-farming M10: Agro-environment and climate M1: Knowledge transfer and info
		Promoting investment in climate change mitigation/ improving energy efficiency of the fishing vessels and processing units.	Addressed by OP FMA	Operational Programme for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs (OP FMA)		
	5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	Structural and non-structural measures in order to reduce risks and damage based on the risk assessment and in particular from flooding, drought and erosion (including coastal erosion);	Addressed by OPLI	OP Large Infrastructure (OPLI)	PI 5.i Supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem based approaches PI 5.ii Promoting investment to address specific risks,	SO 6.1 Reducing the effects and damage on population caused by the main risks posed by climate change SO 6.2 Reduce response time to emergencies by

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
					ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems	strengthening disaster response of the responsible authorities
		Set-up and improve the risk monitoring and prevention systems in relation to identified risks;  Strengthen technical capacity of GIES;  Complete the national system of risk identification and management in the framework of the National Risk Assessment;	No evidence found in OPLI where is expected according to the TO			
		Transnational cooperation in the framework of the Danube macro-regional Strategy and population awareness measures	No evidence found in OPLI where is expected according to the TO			
		Agricultural practices to combat climate change through on-farm water storage zones, water-efficient cropping patterns and forest protection belts against erosion; Promoting efficiency in water use in agriculture through investment in more efficient irrigation systems; Conservation of soil and its carbon stock	Addressed by NPRD	National Programme for Rural Development (NPRD)	Priority 4, IA 4B: Improving water management, including management of fertilizer and pesticides	M10: Agro-environment and climate M11: Bio-farming M8: Investments in forestry [...] M1: Knowledge transfer and info

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
RESOURCES		through land management practices such as low tillage, winter crops and afforestation; Maintaining genetic diversity by supporting local crop varieties and livestock breeds which have potential for adaptation to climate change.			IA 4C: Prevent soil erosion and improve soil management	M10: Agro-environment and climate M11: Bio-farming M8: Investments in forestry [...] M1: Knowledge transfer and info
	6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	The extension and modernization of drinking water networks and waste water sewages and treatment systems, connection of the population to drinking water supply and waste water systems ( including in rural areas), monitoring of drinking water quality; modernization of laboratories in order to improving monitoring substances discharged into the waters, in special priority hazardous substances;	Addressed by OPLI	OP Large Infrastructure (OPLI)	PI 6.ii Investing in the water sector to meet the requirements of the Union's environmental acquis and to address needs, identified by the Member States, for investment that goes beyond those requirements	SO 4.1 Reducing the amount of untreated urban wastewater and increase the supply of drinking water to the population
The development of waste infrastructure and services based upon the waste hierarchy; new/upgraded investments to comply with the landfill directive (including treatment) increase the waste recycling ratio as well as promotion of a more efficient use of resources;		Addressed by OPLI	PI 6.i Investing in the waste sector to meet the requirements of the Union's environmental acquis and to address needs, identified by the Member States, for investment that goes		SO 4.2 Increasing the capacity of integrated waste management systems and the reduction of waste through reuse, recycling, including use as secondary / by-products	

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
RESOURCES					beyond those requirements	raw materials
		Protection of biodiversity through the development and implementation of management plans and investment in restoration and conservation actions;	Addressed by OPLI		PI 6.iii Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure;	SO 5.1 Maintain the conservation status of species and habitats of community importance, either nationally or at the site level
		Development and improvement of the National Air Quality Assessment in line with the requirements of Directive 2008/50/EC and of INSPIRE Directive;	Addressed by OPLI		PI 6.iv Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures;	SO5.2 Development and optimization of air quality assessment at national level, including air quality monitoring
		Rehabilitating of derelict and polluted sites, including decontamination preparation for their economic re-use;	Addressed by OPLI	OP Large Infrastructure (OPLI)	PI 6.iv Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites [...]	SO5.3 Decontamination of historically polluted industrial land
		Protecting and sustainable valorisation of natural sites including measures for urban	Addressed by ROP	Regional OP (ROP)	IP4.3 Actions for improving the urban environment, the	SO 4.3.1 Increasing the quality of public spaces

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
		environment through rehabilitation of unused and/or degraded public spaces and buildings ;			revitalization of the cities, the regeneration and remediation of contaminated sites and promoting measures to reduce noise	
		<p>Preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry through organic farming, environmental and climate actions on agricultural and forest land, including High Nature Value farming;</p> <p>Implementing measures to tackle the causes of abandonment of agricultural activities through payments granted to farmers in areas facing natural or other specific constraints (in order to compensate farmers for additional costs and income foregone related to the constraints for agricultural production in the area concerned), measures that will also contribute to soil preservation, carbon sequestration or other environmental benefits.;</p>	Addressed by NPRD	National Programme for Rural Development (NPRD)	Priority 4 - Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems that are related to Agriculture and Forestry, IA 4A: Restoration, conservation and development of biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas [...]	<p>M10: Agro-environment and climate</p> <p>M11: Bio farming</p> <p>M13: Payments to areas facing natural constrains...</p> <p>M8: Investments to develop forestry..</p> <p>M1: Knowledge transfer, info</p>
		Restoration and conservation of marine and inland water biodiversity within sustainable fishing and aquaculture, promote sustainable fishing activities in marine and inland waters; sustainable activities in aquaculture farms; data	Addressed by OP FMA	Operational Programme for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs (OP FMA)		

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
		collection and inspection and control activities; Developing and implementing of Common Information Sharing Environment - CISE - at Black Sea through EMFF.				
	7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	Developing smart electricity transmission systems, in order to take over the RES energy;  Developing smart gas transmission systems;	Addressed by OPLI	OP Large Infrastructure (OPLI)	PI 7.e Improving energy efficiency and security of supply by developing smart distribution, storage and transmission and by integrating renewables	SO 8.1 Expansion and consolidation of the electricity transport network to integrate the renewables in the system and ensure system stability. SO 8.2 Increasing the flexibility of gas transport in Romania to enhance the services provided
		Increasing urban mobility and services for passenger through development of urban transport in Bucuresti-Ifov Region, with an accent on the subway chain.	Addressed by OPLI		PI 7.ii Developing and improving the transportation systems that respect the environment, [...]	SO 9.2 Increasing urban mobility and improve passenger services by developing underground urban transport in Bucharest - Ifov

<i>Partnership Agreement</i>			<i>Is the funding priority addressed by OPs</i>	<i>Evidences</i>		
<i>Development Challenge</i>	<i>Thematic Objective</i>	<i>Priorities for funding</i>		<i>Operational Programme</i>	<i>Investment Priorities</i>	<i>Specific Objectives</i>
GOVERNANCE	2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies	Implementation of Open Data at the level of all public institutions in order to improving online collaborative and electronic systems;	Addressed by COP and OPAC	Competitiveness OP (COP)	PI 2.1 Strengthening of ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, digital inclusion, online culture and e-health	OS 2.1 A Increasing the efficiency of public activities through the development of e-government
		Increasing the use of e-government tools (including training for civil servants).		Addressed by COP and OPAC	Operational Programme Administrative Capacity (OPAC)	PI 11.1: Investments in the institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and services in order to achieve reforms, a better regulation and a good governance
					Competitiveness OP (COP)	PI2.1 Strengthening of ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, digital inclusion, online culture and e-health
				Operational Programme Administrative Capacity (OPAC)	PI 11.1: Investments in the institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and services	SO 2.1 Increasing the quality of and accessibility to public services SO2.3 Reducing the administrative burden for

Partnership Agreement			Is the funding priority addressed by OPs	Evidences		
Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
					in order to achieve reforms, a better regulation and a good governance	the business environment and the citizens SO2.4 Improving transparency, quality and access to services provided by the judicial system
	11. Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a national cadastral system to provide certainty of title, promotion of land reform and effective land consolidation in support of Romania's development goals.</li> </ul>	Addressed by ROP	Regional OP (ROP)	PI 10.1 Cadastral survey improvement and registration of properties in the rural areas in Romania	SO 10.1 <b>Increasing</b> the degree of geographic coverage and <b>of registration</b> of properties within the Integrated Cadastral Survey and the Real Estate Register
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the development and implementation of systems and procedures for strategic documents and policy coordination, with a particular focus on strategies and national policies;</li> <li>Increasing the capacity of local administration to formulate and support local public policies;</li> <li>Support the development for monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implemented</li> </ul>	Addressed by OPAC	Operational Programme Administrative Capacity (OPAC)	IP 11.1: Investing in the institutional capacity and efficiency of public administrations and public services in order to achieve reforms, a better regulation, and good governance	SO 1.1: Improving structures, processes and competencies at the level of institutions and authorities from the central public administration  SO 1.2: Strengthening the capacity of institutions and







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Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
		<p>regulations and to reduce the burden of bureaucracy on businesses and citizens;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase capacity of public administration to introduce performance management, monitoring and evaluation systems and mechanisms for public services delivery including for those sub-contracted;</li> <li>• Promoting good practice related to the delivery of public services and encouraging exchange of experience/networking site between public and private entities providing public services, including stakeholders</li> <li>• Strengthen the participation mechanisms to deliver efficient public services at local level (e.g. diversification of service delivery through – co-operation with non-governmental bodies, inter- community cooperation mechanisms for citizens scrutinizing public service delivery performance );</li> <li>• Developing modern management systems and tools for increasing performance 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;</li> </ul>				<p>SO2.3: Reducing administrative burden for businesses and citizens</p> <p>SO2.1: Improving quality and accessibility of public services</p> <p>SO2.2: Improving transparency, integrity and accountability of public authorities and institutions</p>



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Development Challenge	Thematic Objective	Priorities for funding		Operational Programme	Investment Priorities	Specific Objectives
		<p>Objectives and programs based management; Innovation in public administration);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for enhancing integrity and transparency within public administration through risk based analyses and tailor made preventive programs;</li> <li>• Ensuring a performing strategic management of the judicial system;</li> <li>• Further capacity building support to all key justice institutions for a proper implementation of the new Codes and the new legislation, including the European acquis, including probation services and prison administration;</li> <li>• Continuous training programmes in order to improve professional and managerial skills of judicial staff ;</li> <li>• Support innovative measures for further facilitating access to justice and improving the quality of justice, including measuring of public trust (using various tools such as opinion polls and surveys, public campaign of information, but also the publication of judicial decisions and the public access to them);</li> <li>• Investments in the physical and IT infrastructure of the justice system in order to</li> </ul>				<p>SO 1.4: Improving the efficiency of the judicial system</p> <p>SO2.4: Improving transparency, quality and accessibility of services provided by the judicial system</p>

<i>Partnership Agreement</i>			<i>Is the funding priority addressed by OPs</i>	<i>Evidences</i>		
<i>Development Challenge</i>	<i>Thematic Objective</i>	<i>Priorities for funding</i>		<i>Operational Programme</i>	<i>Investment Priorities</i>	<i>Specific Objectives</i>
		<p>comply with the main objectives of the Strategy for the development of the above mentioned needs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to improve the capacity of anti-corruption administrative national system and independent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;</li> <li>• Support for enhancing integrity within judiciary through risk based analyses and tailor made preventive programs;</li> <li>• Strengthening the overall efficiency of the national system for tracing, managing and recovering assets originating from crime;</li> <li>• Developing and use of IT tools and applications to enhance institutional capacity and efficiency at all levels of public administration.</li> </ul>				



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In assessing whether they are the most appropriate, the evaluation team facilitate a quantified SWOT analysis to determine whether the identified overall Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats were addressed within the proposed OPs and TOs. This was carried out by the team for the consultative document and all subsequent versions of the PA.

It is clear from the analysis that the SWOT contributed to the definition of main development needs for the identified 5 main challenges. A part of it was also annexed to the PA.

The SWOT analysis was however developed from a business perspective. Having in mind that the SWOT analysis was meant to support the development of the Partnership Agreement, more specifically in identifying key needs and opportunities for investment, the SWOT analysis should have had a broader perspective. The need for broader analysis was also identified in the analysis of the links between SWOTs and thematic objectives, which was also performed as part of the evaluation.

Future recommendations on the appropriateness of the selection of Operational Programmes and Thematic Objectives

The Partnership Agreement was adopted by the European Commission on August 6<sup>th</sup> 2014. Therefore the appropriateness of the Operational Programmes and Thematic Objectives can be considered satisfied. The intention of the OP coverage is identified in the PA however not all Ops were finalised and adopted so the final inclusion and coverage should be checked by MEF. Future programming exercises should ensure that the SWOT analysis is undertaken in a manner to include all areas of coverage of ESIF and not primarily from a business perspective as was the case during this programming exercise.

### 3.1.3 Question I.3

I.3 The results selected for each thematic objective are the most appropriate to each fund of the Common Strategic Framework?

#### Approach

Below is a list of the tools used for the analysis of question I.3.

Question	Tool	Contribution of the tool
I.3	Desk research	Review of the expected results and EC guidance
I.3	Checklist	The checklist was developed for the Third evaluation report and applied in order to assess the appropriateness of the results for the Fourth evaluation report
I.3	Theory-of-change database	The database was developed to gather information about the logic and results of previous interventions in the areas of the 11 EU thematic objectives.
I.3	Expert panels	These forums were used as a tool to establish the broad priorities to be financed and the expected results. They include expert panels on smart growth, sustainable growth and on inclusive growth.



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I.3	Interviews	Interviews, discussions and workshops with staff members of MEF, programmers, representatives of line Ministries and other stakeholders to establish the internal coherence and external coherence and causal links.
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The team of experts performed an in-depth analysis of the expected results, which was based on a customized checklist developed for the evaluation.

The appropriateness of the main results identified in the Partnership agreement were assessed through the following criteria, identified through a careful review of the template and guidelines on the content of the Partnership agreement<sup>16</sup>:

- **relevance** to:
  - thematic objectives
  - European Structural and Investment Funds and the YEI
  - the Europe 2020 objectives
  - the country-specific Council recommendations
  - main changes that the Member State seeks to achieve under each of the thematic objectives – the “change” should represent the expected improvement in the currently identified situation.
- **clarity** of the expected results – results should be so formulated that they should reflect the expected change
- **feasibility** of the expected results – the extent to which the expected result could be influenced by funding priorities

The PA included a summary of the main results expected for each of the ESIF in chapter 1 (1.3). As noted previously, the PA identifies expected results for all 11 thematic objectives.

### **Thematic Objective 1: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation**

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<sup>16</sup> Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/pa\\_guidelines.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/pa_guidelines.pdf)



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Instrumente Structurale  
2007 - 2013

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations <sup>17</sup>	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Higher levels of investment in RDI, both in the public and private sectors	Y	Y	Y	Y	Loose link to the following broadly defined development need: "The promotion of an enterprise and innovation culture throughout the education system and in business networked with all necessary forms of support, financial, managerial, technical, creative, in order to realise the latent potential in Romania's people and its businesses"	Y	Y
Greater translation of research findings into commercial applications	Y	Y	Y	Y	Loose link the following broadly defined development need: The creation of a more compact and modern R&D environment that is focused on business's needs, societal challenges and technologies where Romania has world class potential, informed by the principles of smart specialization and in order to increase the commercialization and internalization of research.		Y
An improved distribution of RDI activity across Romania's regions	Y	Y	Y	Y	The need to improve the distribution of RDI activity is not explicitly included in the development needs, in spite of the mentioning of smart specialization.	Y	Y

<sup>17</sup> Council of the European Union. Country-specific Recommendations - final version, approved by the Council. Brussels, 20 June 2013. Available at: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2010649%202013%20REV%20>



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Expected result	Relevance to:				Clarity	Feasibility
Increased number of cooperation actions and setting up of Operational Groups for European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
New products, practices, processes and technologies developed and applied at farm level and in food industry	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Improvement of economic and environmental performance through development of innovative products, practices, processes and technologies	Y	See comment	Y	Y		Y





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**Thematic Objective 2: Enhancing access to and use and quality of information and communication technologies**

Comments on each of the expected results under TO2 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:				Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations		
More dynamic and competitive markets across Romania, with associated gains for consumers, arising from increased use of e-commerce	Y	Y	Y	Y	The development need is very broad (“Strengthening the digital business environment”), hence it is difficult to establish the relevance between the result and the situation to be changed.	Y
Improvements to public services and reduced administrative burden, both on businesses and citizens, arising from the implementation of e-government 2.0	Y	Y	Y	Y	The development need is very broad (“Strengthening the digital business environment”), hence it is difficult to establish the relevance between the result and the situation to be changed.	Y



**Thematic Objective 3: Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector and the fisheries and aquaculture sector**

Overall, the number of expected results is high for TO3. Specific comments on the expected results are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Sustainable growth of the Romanian economy, reflected in increased formal economic activity and employment across all of Romania's less developed regions							
A higher proportion of employment in internationally competitive industrial and higher value-adding service sectors	Y	Y	Y	Y	The result is relevant to the following development need: "The continued expansion and growth, including in international market of Romania's competitive manufacturing and high value added services sectors, in particular, automotives; ICT products and services; food and drink processing."	Y	Y
An improved contribution to growth and employment from SMEs	Y	Y	Y	Y	The needs of SMEs are not explicitly defined.		Y
Improved environmental sustainability of the business sector							
Increased productivity and added value in agriculture,	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is a link to several development needs.	Y	Y



Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
forestry and food processing sectors							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of polarisation in agricultural holdings</li> <li>• Increased share of farms managed by skilled young farmers</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More economically sustainable and diversified fisheries sectors</li> <li>• Increased volume and enhanced value added in production and processing</li> <li>• Better connections with markets across Romania and beyond</li> <li>• Improved standards in aquaculture and environmental compliance</li> <li>• Increased safety on board inland and marine</li> </ul>							

Expected result	Relevance to:	Clarity	Feasibility
fishing vessels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer gains from improved variety and quality of offer</li> </ul>			

### **Thematic objective 6 - Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency**

Specific comment on the expected result is provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Increased added-value of cultural and tourism services by rehabilitation of historical (urban) areas and unused and/or degraded public spaces and buildings, sport infrastructure/multifunctional cultural centres	See comment	Y	Y	-	There is no explicit development need related to this expected result.		Y

## Development Challenge 2 “People and society”

### Thematic objective 2: Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies

Comment on the expected results under TO2 is provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Improved services in education, health							

### Thematic objective 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

Comment on the expected result under TO11 is provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Better capacity in evaluating the impact of the education and health policies	Y	Y	-	Y	No clear link between the development need and the expected result	Y	Y

### Thematic objective 8: Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility

Comments on each of the expected results under TO8 are provided below:



Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Increased economic activity and employment, particularly in Romania's less developed regions and rural areas	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is a link to several development needs.		Y
Increased labour market participation, particularly in Romania's less developed regions and rural areas	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is a link to several development needs.	Y	Y
Better terms and conditions for employees arising particularly from growth competitive sectors and/or the traditional sectors with potential to grow and/ or regional/ local growth potentials and formal labour markets across Romania							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved position of disadvantaged groups in the labour market, particularly for older workers, LTU, inactive, Roma people</li> <li>Better transition of young</li> </ul>							



Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
people between education and the world of work							
Improved quality of PES services in delivering active employment measures	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is a clear link to the following development need: "Modernizing the PES system and strengthening its administrative capacity to deliver/personalized employment (such as career path, counselling, mentoring, training, job search, job matching etc.) and preventive employment measures, including by a partnership approach."	Y	Y
Increased diversification of rural activities and employment outside agriculture, resulting in increased share of secondary and tertiary sectors in the in the economy of rural areas	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is a clear link to the following development need: "Diversification of the rural economy, by promoting the creation and development of business and jobs, outside agriculture"		Y
Increased diversification of economic activity in fisheries sectors and within Romania's fisheries areas	See comment	Y	Y	Y	There is a clear link to the following development need: "Diversifying the fisheries and aquaculture economy in order to attract employment and business creation in the field"		Y



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**Thematic objective 9: Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty**

Comments on each of the expected results under TO9 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Improved health and social services as well as accessibility of people to such services, and better health outcomes, particularly in Romania's less developed regions	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is a link to several development needs.		Y
Improved life status and living conditions (from the economic, social and health point of view) of deprived communities in urban areas	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is a link to several development needs, although housing is only briefly mentioned as a need.		Y
Substantial reduction in the incidence of poverty, particularly among children, Roma and other disadvantaged groups	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is a link to several development needs		Y



Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Better outcomes for formerly institutionalised people moving into the community							
Better job opportunities for deprived/ vulnerable persons	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is a link to several development needs		Y
Increased share of rural population benefitting from improved infrastructure and access to basic services, reduction in rural poverty and creation of conditions for economic development.							

### **Thematic objective 10: Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning**

Comments on each of the expected results under TO10 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved educational facilities in ECEC and primary and secondary education, particularly those from disadvantaged areas;</li> <li>Improved educational facilities of tertiary</li> </ul>							



Expected result	Relevance to:				Clarity	Feasibility	
<p>education, particularly those which will assure a better linkage with research and/ or cooperation with the business sector;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved educational facilities of VET, focusing mainly on the growth potential sectors underlined within the national competitiveness strategy</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved educational and training outcomes, including better transition of young people into the world of work;</li> <li>Greater awareness and participation in education as route to social and economic well-being, particularly among Romania's disadvantaged groups and areas</li> <li>Reduced risk of digital exclusion, particularly in Romania's less developed regions and rural areas, reduced shortages of skilled researchers</li> <li>Increased skilled workforce becoming more flexible and able to meet the changing needs of a globalised economy</li> </ul>							
Improved staff retention in the research sector	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is no explicit link to a development need	Y	Y
Increased shared of skilled farmers and workers in food processing, better able to meet the sectors future development needs	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is a link to several development needs	Y	Y

### Development Challenge 3 “Infrastructure”

#### **Thematic objective 2: Enhancing access to and use and quality of information and communication technologies**

Comments on the expected results under TO2 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:				The situation to be changed as identified in the PA	Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive coverage of NGN, of at least 30 Mbps including in rural areas</li> <li>High level of take-up of NGA broadband services both by business and domestic customers</li> </ul>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Clear link to the defined development need	Y	Y

#### **Thematic objective 7: Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures**

Comments on the expected results under TO7 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:	Clarity	Feasibility
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Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Improved connectivity with international markets	Y	Y	Y	Y	Clear link with the following development need: "Improving the accessibility of Romania and its regions and their connectivity with markets thereby significantly reducing the obstacles to their development and diversification in the context of the GTMP"	Y	Y
Improved accessibility of Romania's less developed regions	Y	Y	Y	Y	Same as above	Y	Y
A more sustainable transport mix arising from improved utilisation of the rationalised rail network and a greater share of freight being moved by rail and water	Y	Y	Y	Y	Clear link with the following development need: "Improving the sustainability of Romania's transport mix and the attractiveness alternatives to road-based transport"	Y	Y
Improved traffic safety, particularly on road and rail	Y	Y	Y	Y	There is no explicit development need linked to this result.	Y	Y
Reducing travel time	Y	Y	Y	Y	Clear link with the following development need: "Improving the accessibility of Romania and its regions and their connectivity with markets thereby"	Y	Y



Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
					significantly reducing the obstacles to their development and diversification in the context of the GTMP"		
Improved governance of the transport sector							

#### Development Challenge 4 "Resources"

##### Thematic objective 4: Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors

Comments on each of the expected results under TO4 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and increased carbon sequestration	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to several development needs	Y	Y
More sustainable urban transport and consequently reduced pollution	Y		Y	-	The result is linked to the following development need: "Improving the energy efficiency of transport, including urban transport systems and the fishing vessels and processing units"		Y
Increased efficiency of energy use in the residential sector and	Y		Y	-	The result is linked to several development needs	Y	Y



Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
the public realm, industry, agriculture, fisheries							
Increased share of energy production and use from renewable sources	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to the following development need: "Promoting the production and distribution of energy from RES"	Y	Y
Maintenance of Romania's low dependency upon imported energy							
Increased efficiency of energy use in the district heating system	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to the following development need: "Assuring the sustainability of municipal district heating systems by reducing heat losses on the network"	Y	Y
Increased use of Romania's under-used potential for RES production from biomass & biogas and other renewable sources							
Increased carbon sequestration & emission reduction in the agricultural &	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to the following development need: "Enhancing carbon sequestration particularly in agriculture and forestry"	Y	Y

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
forestry sectors							

### **Thematic objective 5: Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management**

Comments on each of the expected results under TO5 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved anticipation and management of risks, including improved public awareness and capacity for self-protection</li> <li>Improved coordination and speed of response when emergencies do arise</li> </ul>	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to several development needs		Y
Reduced coastal erosion	See comment						
Reduced exposure of the Romanian population and territory to flood and drought risks	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to several development needs	Y	Y



Expected result	Relevance to:	Clarity	Feasibility
Increased measures that contribute to adaptation to climate change in agriculture and forestry and areas where adaptation to climate change actions are applied			

**Thematic objective 6: Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency**

Comments on each of the expected results under TO6 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:				Clarity	Feasibility	
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations			
Increased share of the population connected to the public drinking water supply and to sewerage systems	Y	Y	Y	-	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA The result is linked to the following development need: "Extend public access to water and wastewater services, in the context of the Water Framework Directive and its River Basin Management Plans"	Y	Y
Increased proportion of waste re-used and recycled	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to the following development need: "Implement and upgrade infrastructures required to comply with the obligations of the waste Directives".	Y	Y
Reduced loss of	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to the following development need: "Protection,		Y





Expected result	Relevance to:				Clarity	Feasibility	
biodiversity					conservation, restore and sensitively exploit Romania's natural assets, including landscape, farmland, forests, inland and coastal waters, protected areas, biodiversity"		
Increased share of agricultural land managed under environmentally sustainable farming practices to maintain and protect biodiversity (including HNV farmland areas	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is loosely linked to the following development need: "Protection, conservation, restore and sensitively exploit Romania's natural assets, including landscape, farmland, forests, inland and coastal waters, protected areas, biodiversity"	Y	Y
Increased area on which abandonment of agricultural activities is avoided	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to the following development need: "Decreasing abandonment of agricultural activities"	See comment	Y
Increased efficiency in water use by agriculture	Y	Y	Y	-	There is no explicit development need linked to this expected result. In previous versions of the PA there was a relevant need, although it was not very specific: "Increasing efficiency of water use in agriculture"	Y	See comment
Increased support for forest land holders for economical disadvantages faced by conserving biodiversity and protecting soil and water resources on							



Expected result	Relevance to:				Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations		
their land						
Reduce negative impacts upon the marine environment	Y	Y	Y	-	There is no explicit development need linked to this expected result.	Y
Fishing effort reductions, unwanted catches and discards reductions, CISE	Y	Y	Y	-	There is no explicit development need linked to this expected result.	Y
Reduction in the area of derelict and polluted former industrial sites	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to the following development need: "Addressing the legacy of derelict and polluted sites and to manage current sources of pollution"	Y
Increased capacity of air quality assessment	Y	Y	Y	-	The result is linked to the following development need: "Development and improvement of the air quality assessment and monitoring"	Y

**Thematic objective 7: Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures**

Comments on the expected result under TO7 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:				Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations		
					The situation to be changed as identified in the PA	
Improved energy transmission	Y	Y	Y	Y	The result is linked to the following development need: "Improving energy efficiency by developing smart transmission systems"	Y



Expected result	Relevance to:				Clarity	Feasibility
				The expected result, identified for this TO, does not cover the urban transport.		



### Development Challenge 5 “Administration and Government”

#### **Thematic objective 2: Enhancing access to and use and quality of information and communication technologies**

Comments on each of the expected results under TO2 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Improved efficiency of public administration arising from enhanced use of ICTs and e-government	Y	Y	-	Y	The result is linked to the identified development need	Y	Y
Improved public satisfaction with public administration and public services							

#### **Thematic objective 11: Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration**

Comments on each of the expected results under TO11 are provided below:

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility

Expected result	Relevance to:					Clarity	Feasibility
	TO	ESIF and the YEI	Europe 2020 objectives	Country-specific Council recommendations	The situation to be changed as identified in the PA		
Improved ethics, transparency and integrity of decision – making and budget expenditures	Y	Y	-	Y	The result is linked to several development needs.		Y
Increased quality and accessibility of public services	Y	Y	-	Y	The result is linked to several development needs.	Y	Y
Strengthened organizational and administrative capacity of the judiciary institutions and developed human resources, more rapid resolution of civil and criminal proceedings							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved public satisfaction regarding public</li> </ul>							



Expected result	Relevance to:	Clarity	Feasibility
administration and public services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved business satisfaction with the proportionality of administrative burden and regulation</li> </ul>			
An integrated system for human resources management in place			
Reduced obstruction to development and consolidation of agricultural holdings arising from land ownership disputes			

The main results described in the PA are outlined by thematic objective, which follows the requirements of the the template and guidelines on the content of the Partnership agreement. There is a clear link between the thematic objectives and the expected results with only a few possible clarifications.

Also in line with the requirements, the results are outlined by ESIF. The main results are expected to contribute to all three Europe 2020 objectives on “smart”, “sustainable”, and “inclusive” growth. The results related to administrative capacity (e.g. the results under Development Challenge 5 “Administration and Government”) could be considered as horizontal in terms of the Europe 2020 objectives. Furthermore, the results take into account the country-specific Council recommendations. Overall, the funding priorities are expected to contribute to the expected results.

Future recommendations on the appropriateness of the results

The Partnership Agreement was adopted by the European Commission on August 6<sup>th</sup> 2014. Therefore the appropriateness of the results can be considered satisfied. The above tables can serve as a mechanism for the MEF to check certain results that are not clearly identified/linked in the PA due to their inclusion in underlying OPs, such as those relating to fisheries under Development Challenge 1, Thematic Objective 3.

#### 3.1.4 Question I.4

I.4 The allocations proposed for each OP and thematic objective are appropriate?

Question	Tool	Contribution of the tool
I.4	Desk research	Review of EC guidance and requirements, previous studies and draft Partnership Agreements for 2014-2020 of peer countries
I.4	Descriptive statistics and modelling	Analysis of the distribution of financial allocations per thematic objective and peer countries
I.4	Benchmarking	Comparisons with peer countries
I.4	Interviews	Collect additional information and validate preliminary information

#### Proposed allocations

The Romanian Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 explicitly stated the main principles, which guide the quantification of the development needs and priorities into financial allocations. They included:

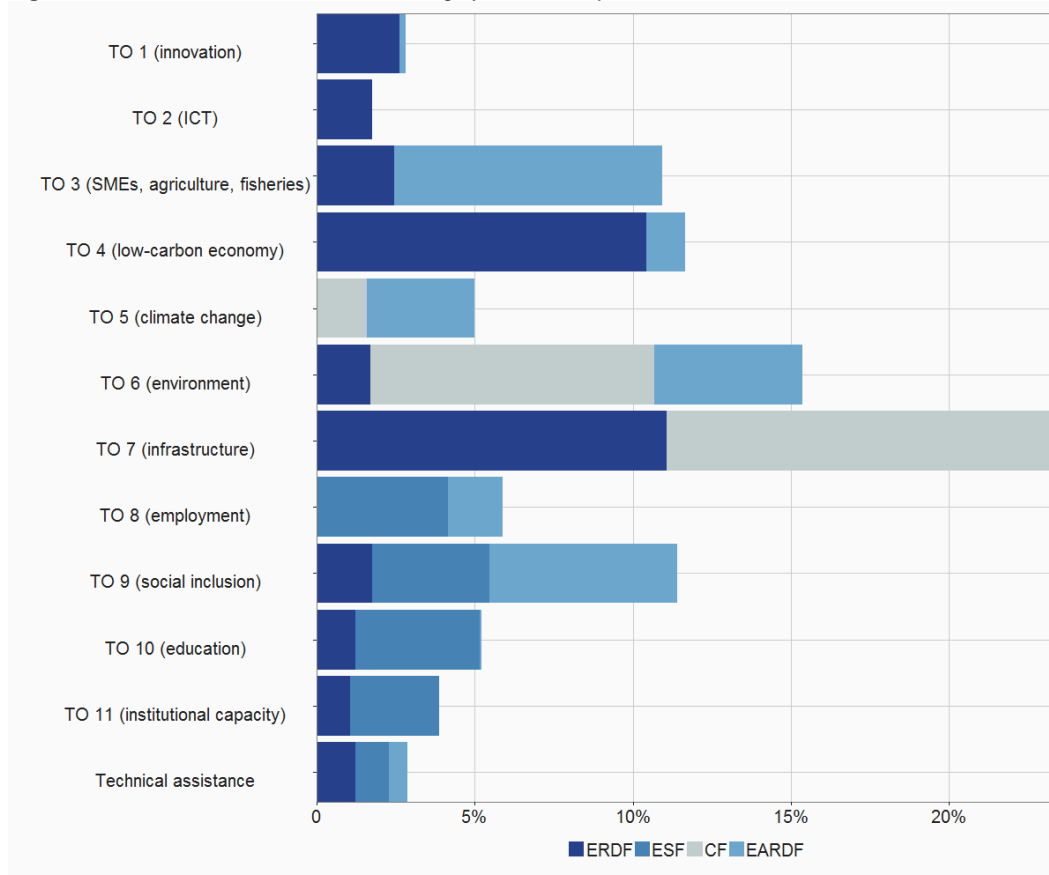
- Limited absorption capacity of businesses and innovation providers reflecting the sectoral structure and size distribution of the business base;
- The need to meet the requirements of the Acquis, as well as obligations to international funding institutions requiring a strong focus transport and water projects;

- Rules on thematic concentration;
- Pre-determined disaggregation of the ESIF into five funds (ERDF, CF, ESF, EARDF and EMFF);
- Political choice to use the ESIF to achieve a balanced economic and social development, having particular regard to the territorial challenges.

Given the restrictions that the above criteria impose, the financial allocations also aimed to maximize the overall objective, set out in the Romanian Partnership agreement, to reduce the economic and social development disparities between Romania and the EU Member States, while guaranteeing financing of the most effective projects.

The Romanian Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 included indicative financial allocations by thematic objectives and by ESIF. They are summarized in the figure below:

**Figure 1:** Financial allocation of ESIF financing by thematic objectives and funds.



**Source:** Partnership Agreement for Romania 2014-2020, own calculations

Romania will be entitled to around EUR 30.451 bn in current prices under the ESIF in the programming period 2014-2020.

The bulk of resources are allocated to TO 7 for promotion of sustainable transport and it will be financed mainly from the CF and ERDF. The identification of important bottlenecks to growth and employment, related to inadequacies in the transport network, and the large scale of the transport projects are given as a justification for the large share of this priority (nearly 1/4) in all ESIF financing.



Resources allocated for TO 6 (environment protection) are the second largest item in the indicative budget for financing with ESIF in Romania. On top of the environmental policies that need to be strengthened in Romania, its high share in overall ESIF funding is also determined by the high costs for the full compliance of the country with the EU Drinking Water Directive and Urban Waste Water Treatment Directives.

TO 3 (competitiveness agriculture and fisheries and aquaculture) comes next in terms of ESIF financing. Its importance is related to the large potential for enhancing the business sector competitiveness and business environment and the still large importance of the agricultural sector for the Romanian economy and the persisting need for its reform.

The relative importance of TO 4, TO 9 and TO3 stems from the huge challenges the country faces in the respective areas of intervention and also complies with the requirements for thematic concentration of EU funds, formalized in the draft General regulation of ESIF.

### Compliance with minimum requirements on thematic concentration from EU regulations

The requirements for minimum levels of spending per thematic objective are presented in the table below.

Thematic objectives	Spending requirements by region type		
	Less developed	Transition regions	More developed
1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	At least 50% of ERDF must be spent on these 4 objectives	At least 60% of ERDF must be spent on these 4 objectives	At least 80% of ERDF must be spent on these 4 objectives
2. Enhancing access to and use and quality of information and communication technologies			
3. Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)			
4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors			
5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	At least 12% of ERDF must be spent on this objective	At least 15% of ERDF must be spent on this objective	At least 20% of ERDF must be spent on this objective
6. Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency			
7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures			
8. Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility	At least 60% of ESF allocation per programme on up to 5 investment priorities within these 3 thematic objectives.	At least 70% of ESF allocation per programme on up to 5 investment priorities within these 3 thematic objectives.	At least 80% of ESF allocation per programme on up to 5 investment priorities within these 3 thematic objectives.
9. Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty			
10. Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning			

11. Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration.			
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**Source:** 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  
Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 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  
Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006

Additionally, there are requirements for:

- Minimum of 5 % of ERDF resources to be spent for sustainable urban development (draft ERDF regulation)
- Minimum of 20% of ESF allocations to be spent for social inclusion and poverty reduction (draft ESF regulation)

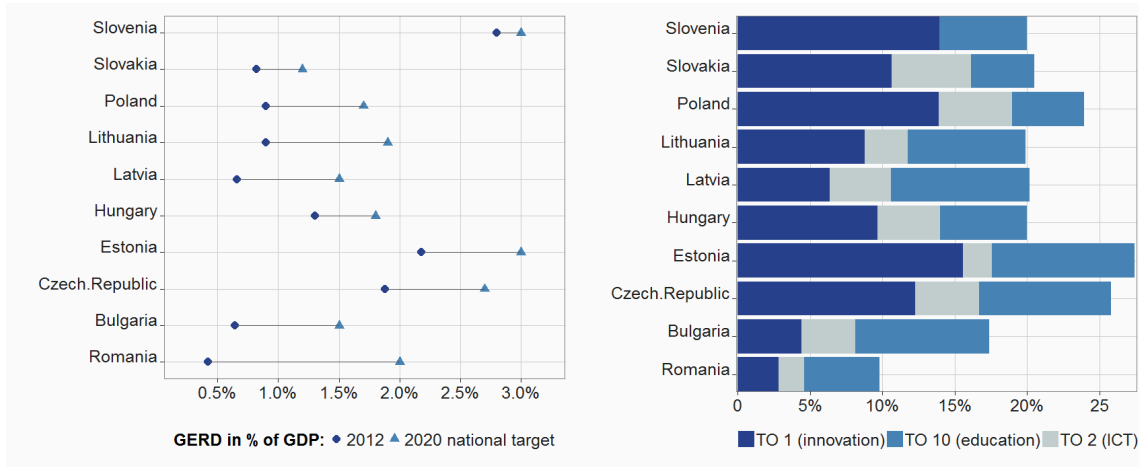
All regions in Romania, except for Bucharest, are less developed and Bucharest region is more developed. Currently, the proposed financial allocation is in compliance with the thematic concentration requirements under the ERDF and ESF funds

#### **Analysis of the appropriateness of allocations per thematic objective. Benchmarking against peer countries.**

The focus on achievement of Europe 2020 headline targets through ESIF is a major and emblematic change, which has been introduced in the 2014-2020 programming period. The achievement of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as stated in the Europe 2020 Strategy, is channelled through realization of investments under 11 EU-wide thematic objectives. Below Romania is compared against other peer catching-up EU economies, where the financial allocations by thematic objectives are analysed against the distance from the national 2020 targets.

**Error! Reference source not found.** visualises the significance of the gap between **R&D gross expenditure as % of GDP** in 2012 and the national target set for 2020. Romania has by far the most ambitious agenda with respect to R&D and, yet, the PA provides a modest allocation for TO 1, TO 2 and, to a smaller extent, for TO 10 as a share of total ESIF funds.

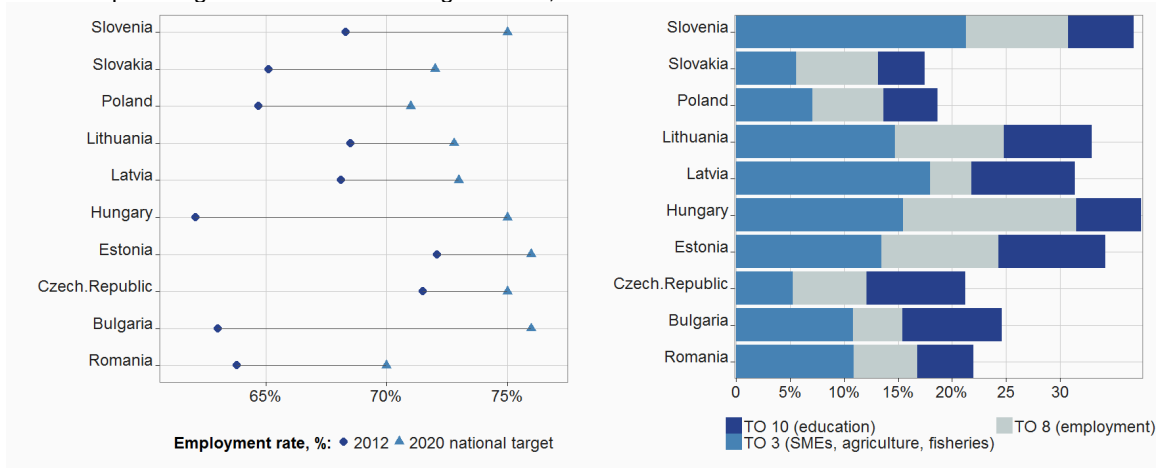
**Figure 2:** Distance from the national Europe 2020 targets on R&D for catching-up EU countries, compared against share of financing for TO 1, TO 2 and TO 10.



**Source:** Partnership Agreement for Romania 2014-2020, Eurostat, drafts of other EU member states partnership agreements own calculations.

**Employment rate** is still low in Romania, but, given the challenge the country faces in this area, the national 2020 target is set at 70%, which is the lowest value against peers. The corresponding funding is not among the lowest in the group of ten catching-up member states, but it is not too high either, taking into account that size of the challenge that the country faces. Nonetheless, it is estimated that with respect to employment, the 2020 national target has been set reasonably and the corresponding funding is adequate.

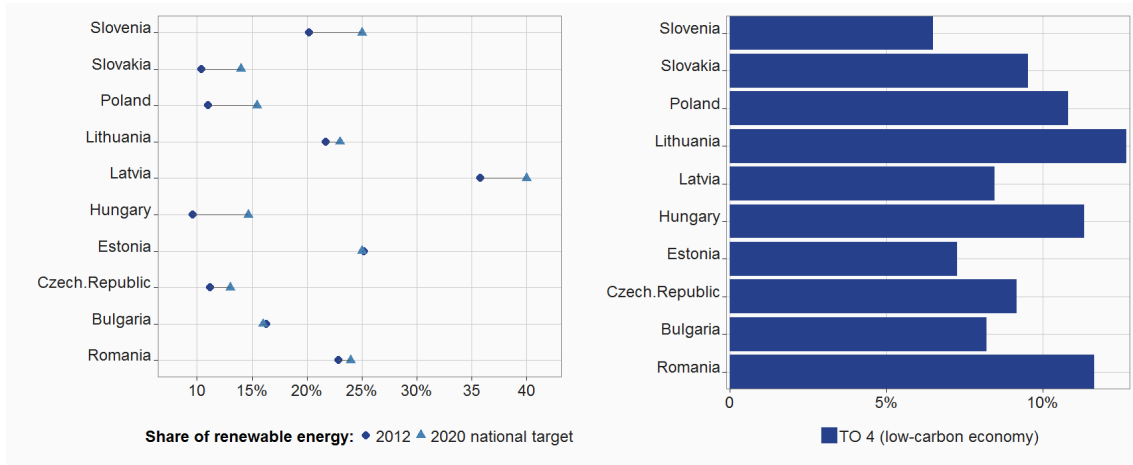
**Figure 3:** Gap from the national Europe 2020 targets on employment for catching-up EU countries, compared against share of financing for TO 3, TO 8 and TO 10.



**Source:** Partnership Agreement for Romania 2014-2020, Eurostat, drafts of other EU member states partnership agreements own calculations.

Considering the **energy efficiency and environmental 2020 target indicators**, Romania presents a good current situation, where the country has already outdone the overall EU 2020 target for a share of 20% or renewable energy in total final energy consumption, for example. The country however still faces significant challenges in this area, and, given the need to ensure thematic concentration of ERDF resources under TO 4, the allocated amounts may be justifiable.

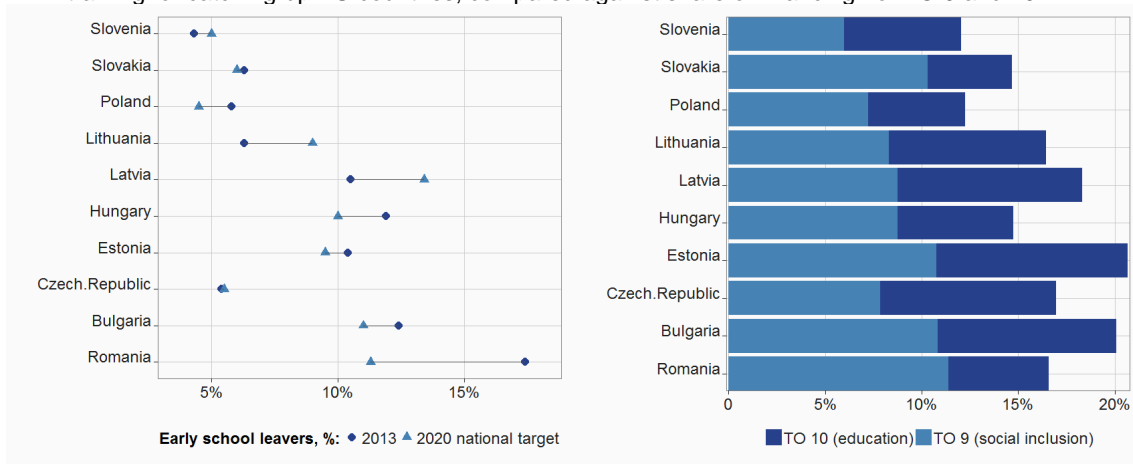
**Figure 4:** Distance from the national Europe 2020 targets on share of renewable energy for catching-up EU countries, compared against share of financing for TO 4.



**Source:** Partnership Agreement for Romania 2014-2020, Eurostat, drafts of other EU member states partnership agreements own calculations.

The achievement of the national target for lowering **early school leaving** to 11.3% would appear ambitious. To this end Romania has allocated a significant amount of funds under TO 9 (where there is also a thematic concentration requirement). However resources for education (TO 10) seem relatively low in Romania, given the high rate of early school leaving.

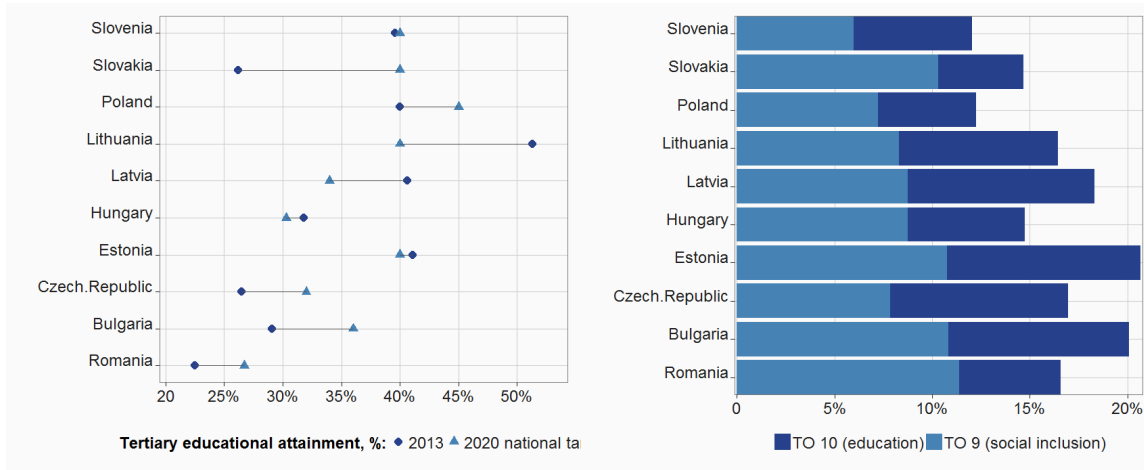
**Figure 5:** Distance from the national Europe 2020 targets on share of early school leavers, % of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training for catching-up EU countries, compared against share of financing for TO 9 and 10.



**Source:** Partnership Agreement for Romania 2014-2020, Eurostat, drafts of other EU member states partnership agreements own calculations.

Figure 6 below also supports a possible increase in investment in education, as it suggests that **tertiary educational achievement** in Romania is the lowest in its peer group. The target for 2020 is not very ambitious either, which is seen by the fact that if Romanian target for tertiary attainment is reached in 2020, its value will be marginally higher than the current values in only two if the rest of the peer countries.

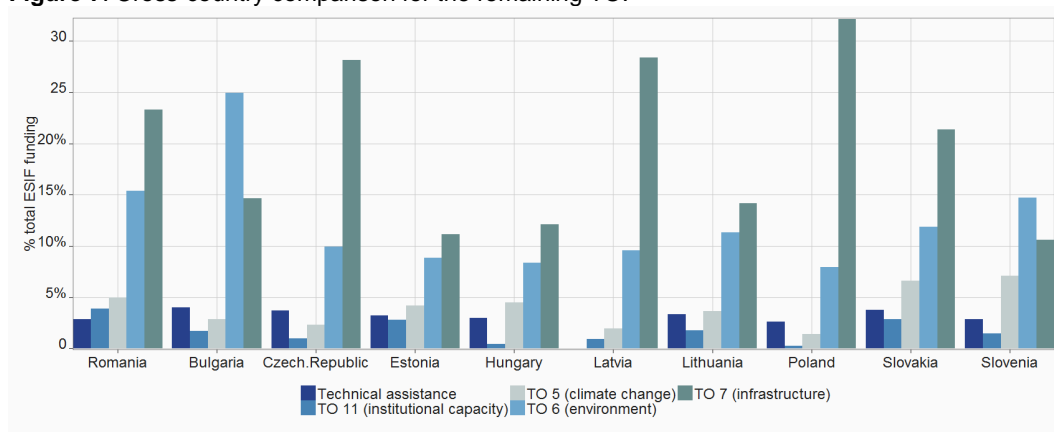
**Figure 6:** Distance from the national Europe 2020 targets on tertiary educational attainment among the population, aged 30-34 for catching-up EU countries, compared against share of financing for TO 9.



**Source:** Partnership Agreement for Romania 2014-2020, Eurostat, drafts of other EU member states partnership agreements own calculations.

Finally, Figure 7 below provides a brief summary of allocations for the remaining thematic objectives, which are not directly associated with the achievement of the national 2020 targets.

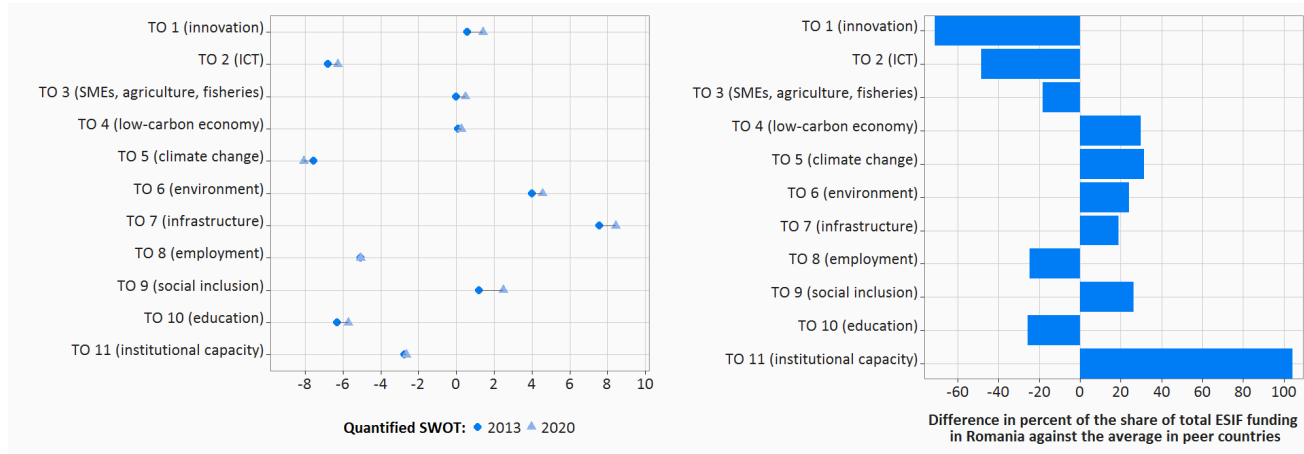
**Figure 7:** Cross-country comparison for the remaining TO.



**Source:** Partnership Agreement for Romania 2014-2020, drafts of other EU member states partnership agreements own calculations.

The proposed financial allocations by thematic objectives were evaluated against the results of the quantified SWOT analysis. It can be inferred from the figure below that the biggest changes are due to happen with respect to TO 9 (poverty reduction), TO 7 (infrastructure) and TO 1 (R&D investment).

**Figure 8:** Comparison of needed change by TOs according to the quantified SWOT against share of funding compared to the average share for all peer countries.



It can be concluded that with the conditions and needs as outlined by the PA, and the directions required to satisfy internal and external requirements,

Future recommendations on the Allocations of resources to the OPS

The Partnership Agreement was adopted by the European Commission on August 6<sup>th</sup> 2014. Therefore the allocations to OP and thematic objectives can be considered appropriate to needs given the justifications and prioritisation in the document and there is no requirement for further action.

### 3.1.5 Question I.5

I.5 Is territorial development approached in an appropriate manner?

Chapter	Tool	Contribution of the tool
7.1-7.3	Desk research	Review of EU regulations, guidelines and studies. Review and analysis of existing and draft plans strategies and studies on regional and territorial development in Romania
7.1-7.3	Interviews	Verification, explanation and enhancement of research and analysis
	Expert Panels	Verification of findings of ex-ante team, commentary of PA

The final version of the PA provided a much clearer presentation of how territorial development priorities will be implemented and achieved through the activities foreseen in the PA within the programming period 2014-2020. The document was able to show how the territorial development measures will be supported by different OPs and how are they consistent with a wider long term territorial development of Romania, beyond the EU funding 2014-2020.

It is primarily within the ROP, but also a feature in other relevant programmes that the five territorial development priorities are highlighted to demonstrate the focus on the territorial development aspect of Romania including being specific in terms of future actions/ types of investments and how they will influence achievement of the five priorities;



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The coherence with Danube Region Strategy and other European Territorial Cooperation programmes is presented along with a revision of the ITI selection criteria which aims to avoid too wide criteria which does not differentiate cities, consistency with the growth poles criteria, and non-discrimination on the basis of previous experience.

The territorial approach of the PA has been based on strategic and planning documents specified by the European Commission as well Romanian strategic documents.

The territorial development priorities are defined and referred to throughout the PA, starting from the analysis of the situation in the country to Thematic Objectives.

Following these strategic elements, the potential identified, and the territorial disparities, the following territorial development priorities were set out for 2014 – 2020 period:

- Improving the quality of life for local and regional communities in order for Romanian regions to become more attractive places to live in, leisure, invest and work.
- Promoting rural-urban partnerships.
- Consolidating the urban network by polycentric development and territorial specialization.
- Increasing accessibility and connectivity Increasing the accessibility to the large urban agglomeration and improving accessibility between major urban agglomerations and smaller towns in the proximity or in the area of influence.
- Equitable access to services of general interest.

The territorial development aspect or ‘territoriality’ features throughout the PA. From this the following aspects are highlighted:

Only one of Romania's eight regions is highly developed and dynamic. With some variation, the remaining seven regions have larger rural populations and economy, lack modernisation and fully functioning markets. Social and economic inclusion varies across space, with rural areas significantly disadvantaged in their access to opportunities and to public services.

Synergies between the EUSDR and the Integrated Maritime Policy for the Black Sea (Blue Growth Strategy) are identified; the large variety of economic and environment activities taking place in the Danube Delta and the adjacent coastal areas of the Romanian Black Sea have potential for complementarities and cooperation mechanisms between both strategies.

Within the integrated approach to territorial development:

- Use of CLLD and ITI tools is foreseen
- Local scale of CLLDs is visible
- There is the intention to continue urban support through the growth pole approach

The territorial development aspect has been incorporated in the Romanian Partnership Agreement and is very visible form through its own chapter (3) within the document; as well as within the description of the current situation and needs.

In the majority of cases, the Partnership Agreement contains information and the approach specified in various documents:

- The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.
- The Strategy for the Danube Region
- Other EU documents, policies and approaches are also mentioned (e.g. smart growth, CLLD, ITIs, etc.)



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The PA clearly identified territorial disparity and diversity. It demonstrates coherence with the Danube Region Strategy and other European Territorial Cooperation programmes. Technical details regarding instruments are presented including the ITI selection criteria and growth poles criteria.

The experiences and methodologies developed and used during the current programming period have to be used as concerns the experience of the LEADER programme as well as Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs).

### 3.1.6 Question I.6

I.6 How are the specific needs of the geographical areas most affected by poverty or of the target groups at risk of discrimination or exclusion approached, considering the marginalized communities?

Chapter	Tool	Contribution of the tool
8.1-8.3	Desk research	Review of EU regulations, guidelines and studies. Review and analysis of existing policies and strategies on poverty and social exclusion in Romania
8.2	Benchmarking	Analysis of 14 overarching indicators based upon EUROSTAT over a 5 year period (where available)
8.1-8.3	Interviews	Verification, explanation and enhancement of research and analysis
	Expert Panels	Verification of findings of ex-ante team, commentary of PA

The evaluation team undertook the assessment with the analysis of the EU regulations and the EC guidelines regarding the interventions addressed to poverty, groups at risk of discrimination or exclusion and marginalised community.

The desk research included a review of relevant studies, evaluations, and national strategies. For a better understanding of the problems and the extension of the poverty and risks of discrimination and exclusion, the evaluation team performed a benchmarking against other member states, looking at 14 overarching indicators over a 5 year period. The conclusions of the desk research were discussed in interviews with key institutions involved in policies addressing poverty, discrimination and exclusion (Ministry of Labour Family Social Protection and Elder People, Directorate for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women, Labour Inspectorate, National Agency for Employment, Child Protection Directorate, Agency for Roma, National Vocational Qualifications Agency)

These methods allowed the evaluation team to create a framework for the assessment of the PA regarding the poverty, discrimination and social exclusion and marginalised communities.

Within the PA the territorial aspect of poverty and social exclusion is fairly well defined in terms of the split between Bucharest/Ifov and the rest of the country, rural/urban, mono-industrial towns and poverty pockets in urban centres. Section 3.1.5 provides some statistics on poverty and deprivation on a regional (NUTS II) level.



The benchmarking analysis<sup>18</sup> presents data about the Romania situation on social exclusion and poverty that provides an indication of some of the issues, such as:

- Romania has the highest poverty rate in all the age ranges, except for the 50 -60 range.
- Romania has the highest “owners poverty rate”, but the “tenants poverty rate” is among the lowest.
- Only Bulgaria has a higher at “*risk of poverty rate*” (cut-off point: 70% of median equivalent income) than Romania,
- Spain and Portugal have a higher “*Early school leavers not in education or training male /females rate*” than Romania.
- Romania has the lowest male long-term rate (except Poland), and the lowest female long-term unemployment rate.
- Romania has the highest “relative median poverty risk gap” among the less than 18 years people and the 64 years or over people.

There is an extensive description of the current situation, the scale of the issue, the sizes and demographics of vulnerable groups. The size and scope of the problems are well understood.

The PA and all strategic documents refer to the problems with the issues highlighted in the CSR and the NRP.

The responses to the specific needs tend to be holistically presented with very little identification, prioritisation, and targeting of geographical areas and marginalised communities. The PA is dependent upon the OPs to more specifically identify the actions and mechanisms to address the needs of the geographical areas most affected by poverty, marginalised communities and groups at risk of discrimination or exclusion.

### 3.1.7 Question I.7

#### I.7 How will the new support forms (financial instruments) be used?

Chapter	Tool	Contribution of the tool
9.2-3	Desk research	<p>An inventory of the FIs used in the MS in 2007-2013 and the lessons learnt</p> <p>Lessons learnt from the FIs funded from Cohesion policy (including pre-accession) , EARDF and EFFMA</p> <p>Assessment of the availability of information regarding market failure situations to support decisions</p> <p>The desk research has been updated for the 3rd and the 4th Evaluation Reports.</p>
9.2-3	Case studies	<p>Examples of FI used in EU and non EU countries highlighting specific features advantages and disadvantages with a focus on new instruments; benchmarking the potential FIs in Romania against other countries practices</p>
9-2-4	Interviews	<p>Confirmation of preliminary findings, understanding of the lessons learnt and needs for 2014 2020, stage of analysis for identification of market failure situations, coordination with the</p>

<sup>18</sup> Benchmarking analysis of 14 overarching indicators based upon EUROSTAT over a 5 year period (where available)

		national policies
		Additional interviews have been conducted for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> evaluation reports in order to detail the use of FIs in rural development and agriculture.
9.2.-5	Benchmarking analysis	A selection of examples of FIs funded from public funds from EU MS and non EU states highlighting the potential benefits for the types of FIs identified as potential options based on the existing information regarding market failure situation and favourable environment. Detailed analysis was presented in first coherence evaluation report.
9.2-6	Expert Panels	Verification of findings of ex-ante team, commentary of PA in-depth insights in the particular areas of FIs: capital markets, venture capital, interest and capacity of key players from the banking system, other financial institutions, private funds, understanding the demand and the latent demand, other factors influencing FIs in Romania

The scope of the task, was to assist the Romania authorities in making decisions regarding the way the new support forms, financial instruments (FIs) would be used.

The use of new types of financial support in the forthcoming programming period brings along a major challenge, and not only to Romania. From less than 2% of the overall 2007 – 2013 structural funds, the FIs could go up to 15–20% over the upcoming period.

The answer to the question “How will the new support forms (financial instruments) be used?” was intended to support the programmers in the preparation of the PA document - looking at the way the financial instruments (FIs), planned to be used in the programming period 2014-2020, are properly justified by needs and other factors influencing the successful implementation and also to advise regarding further developments at the operational programme level where more detailed arrangements for the FIs setup are needed.

The first interim evaluation report covered extensively the answer to the EQ I7. A large range of methods for analysis have been applied as listed in the box above. Desk research was an extensive activity covering the Romanian and international experience (in EU and non EU member states), Regulations requirements, market assessments for the whole range of potential FIs. Interviews have completed the information detailing the experience with EAFRD (interview with MA for NRDP), coordination with other FIs funded from national budget (interview with Ministry of Public Finance). The Evaluation Reports no 2, 3 and 4 have updated the findings and the conclusions of the first one: reviewing the PA justification and proposal for the use of FIs, reviewing progress regarding market assessments, adding relevant information from more recent evaluations, or very specific areas or types of FIs as requested by programmers (e.g. the experience of using FIs in rural development).

The conclusions of Evaluation Reports 1 and 3 have been validated by experts in the field, who met and discussed in two meetings of an expert panel created for this scope. The expert panel brought together experts covering the key areas relevant for such a broad assessment regarding the FIs: SMEs, banking sector, capital markets and venture capital experts, public administration FIs, experts with experience Cohesion fund FIs and experts with experience in EIB FIs projects.

### The PA approach regarding the use of FI in the 2014-2020 programming period



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Romania will seek to find most suitable FIs to support implementation of the investments priorities within the TO1, TO3, TO4 and TO8.

- For TO 1: “Promoting financial instruments aimed to support the risk of private investments in research and innovation and to stimulate innovative start-ups and spin-offs”
- For TO 3: “Actions to improve access to finance, including through the provision of an appropriate range of financial instruments<sup>19</sup>”
- For TO 8: Supporting self-employment actions, entrepreneurship and business creation, including through financial instruments
- For TO 4: Improving energy efficiency of residential stock and to public buildings [...]

The justification for the use of the FIs is built around the key problem of difficult access to finance<sup>20</sup> of SMEs, entrepreneurs and difficulties of local public administrations (LPAs) to fund buildings energy efficiency interventions.

The SMEs<sup>21</sup> difficult access to finance was presented as a key problem affecting the entire business environment. The analysis covers the main problems, although the justification to extend the FIs funded from ESIF would benefit from more clarity.

While the PA gives the general framework for the use of the Financial Instrument identifying the needs and formulating the proposal in which area to be used, it is at the level of OPs that the FIs products have to be identified/ designed and implemented.

The evaluation reports highlighted the need for clarity of the justification of the potential use of financial instruments, the key issues to be considered for further exploration of the options and decisions, providing arguments from Romanian and EU past experience.

The justification for the use of the FIs is built around the key problem of difficult access to finance of SMEs, entrepreneurs and difficulties of local public administrations (LPAs) to fund buildings energy efficiency interventions. The SMEs difficult access to finance is presented as a key problem affecting the entire business environment. The analysis covers the main problems, although the justification to extend the FIs funded from ESIF needs more clarity. It should more clearly argued that despite the recent surveys give mixed messages whether the situation has improved, there are evidences that access to finance is a problem with a deterioration trend. In addition to the sources cited, more recent sources could support the options, e.g. SME Access to Finance Preliminary Study. The market gaps and constraints indicated in the EIF Evaluation Study on SME finance, prepared in 2009 for the setup of financial instruments funded from ERDF 2007-2013 could be still valid, although updated confirmations would be needed.

In order to better justify the financial instruments proposed, the analysis should have articulate better the particular constraints of innovative SMEs, start-ups and spin-offs in accessing finance, the particular needs of high potential firms which in early stages are constrained to grow due to under-capitalisation. While for equity instruments the need for intervention for public funds is suggested “Relatively few propositions are of a scale to where private equity becomes economic”, the use of the “appropriate range of financial instruments” for SMEs under TO3 and entrepreneurs under TO8, in addition to grants, is not explained. The justification could include: risk aversion of the banks/ financial intermediaries, high level of the interest rate, unaffordable guarantees requirements.

<sup>19</sup> There is a second similar priority for funding formulated for TO2 which might refer to access to finance particularly in agriculture and rural business environment; as it is now formulated it sounds like a repetition of the first one. We also suggest instead of “promoting” FI to reformulate “implementing”.

<sup>20</sup> Page 18, 20, 22,24,37,60

<sup>21</sup> Page 18



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We also suggest to be considered the benefits sought or what gap is addressed by funding financial instruments from ESIF. In the case of guarantee instruments how do they complement the existing instruments funded from the state budget.

The analysis highlights as well the main experiences of FI in Romania in the past years. The text needs more clarity and focus on **most relevant** lessons learned from JEREMIE experience. We suggest to be highlighted/reformulated – in a concise manner - the following lessons learned:

- JEREMIE had a late start due to difficulties generated by regulatory issues which have been solved and offer a good environment for future FIs.
- JEREMIE programme is implementing three financial instruments First loss Portfolio Guarantee, Risk Capital and the last one recently introduced Portfolio Risk Sharing Loan. The flexibility of the arrangements and design of the products has been an advantage allowing the fund to tailor instruments according to the market evolving needs.

The evaluators found the justification for FIs in energy efficiency of the public buildings is very general deriving mainly from lessons learned “need to create facilities in order to counterbalance the lack of financial resources of LPAs; need for creating bridge financing system”. At the same time the analysis suggests a significant constraint, the reluctance of the beneficiaries to take-up grants with co-funding due to previous experiences when the schemes provided 100% support. There is no mention regarding potential gaps to be addressed in other urban development types of interventions than public buildings energy efficiency. Despite the proposal is subject of further analysis and only “appropriate” measures will be adopted, in the analysis should be clear why FIs would be adopted instead/ in addition to grants, what is the need justifying the decision. The recommendations regarding the clarity of the justification should be considered at the OP level when decisions for the type of FIs should be made. They are anyway linked to the requirements of the Regulations regarding the content of the ex-ante market assessments compulsory for the approval of funding FIs from ESF Funds.

#### **Key issues to be considered for FIs set up at the level of the OPs**

##### ***Regulations requirements. Ex-ante market assessments.***

While the PA gives the general framework for the use of the Financial Instrument identifying the needs and formulating the proposal in which area to be used, further on at the level of OPs preparation the FIs products have to be identified/ designed and implemented.

According to the Regulations the FIs proposed have to be financially viable and address a market failure situation. This has to be proved with ex-ante market assessments which will include:

- Market failure/suboptimal investments situations;
- Assessment of the added value of the FIs;
- Estimate of the additional public and private resources that could be mobilized, (expected leverage effect);
- Lessons learnt from past experiences;
- An investment strategy including the examination of options for implementation arrangements, the types of financial products, final recipients, targeted and envisaged grant support combinations;
- The expected results and how the financial instrument concerned is expected to contribute to the achievement of the specific objectives and results of the relevant priority or measure including indicators for this contribution



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- A mechanism to ensure continuous/upon needs update of the financial instrument, whenever the MA considers the ex-ante may no longer accurately represent the market conditions.

The ex-ante market assessments at the level of the Regional Operational Programmes and Competitiveness Operational Programme are planned or already launched covering SMEs and urban development market. A similar study is in progress for selecting and defining the FIs funded from EAFRD.

**The 2007-2013 experience of Cohesion policy**<sup>22</sup> FIs in EU Member States reveals a large use of the FIs for enterprises (92% of the total FIs) and only 6% FIs for urban development and 2% for Energy efficiency<sup>23</sup>. Having in view the EU experience and also the specific references in the EC position paper to SMEs difficulties in access to finance and the need to leverage public support for the energy efficiency measures, all three types of FIs should be explored in terms of market failure situations and potential benefits.

Because the new programming period could raise a serious challenge for all member states due to the intended extension of FIs use, and especially for countries like Romania with limited experience, analysis of the capacity issues worths particular attention. The EIB study mentioned above refers to the experience of the member states in implementing IFs through Holding Funds<sup>24</sup> (HF) and HF managers.

- Of the total 505 FIs established at the end of 2011, 34% were established via a Holding Fund Manager, whereas 66% of them had been established directly by MAs.
- MAs set up HFs to delegate implementation tasks such as designing the financial products, and the procurement process in the selection of Fund Managers, particularly when there was limited relevant technical expertise within the MA to establish, manage, or monitor FEIs.
- The possibility of transferring knowledge from the HF Manager to the MA is another reason to set up a HF, particularly for MAs who are considering the possibility of establishing FIs themselves in the future.
- The view held by a large part of the MAs was that another reason to set up a HF is the flexibility gained by moving blocks of funding into a HF, and subsequently having the time to decide which FIs could be established in order to maximise impact and create efficiencies

A key aspect in the decision to use FIs is the added value they could provide in the interventions implementation for the achievement of the ESIF objectives. The EIB study highlighted the perceived added value of the stakeholders of FIs implemented in the 2007-2013 programming period:

- Efficient utilisation of resources due to the leverage effect
- Revolving character of funds and support to sustainable investments
- Channel funds towards very specific market gaps (e.g. urban development)
- Motivates private sector to invest more actively in urban development
- Flexibility and risk diversification in the case of use of funds of funds
- Utilisation of local knowledge combined with international Financial Institutions capacities (e.g. EIF when play the role of Holding Fund manager)

<sup>22</sup> ERDF funded FIs

<sup>23</sup> EIB study : Financial Instruments, A Stock-taking Exercise in Preparation for the 2014-2020 Programming Period, 2012

<sup>24</sup> In 2014-2020 will be used the terminology Fund of Funds instead of Holding Fund, meaning " a fund setup to contribute to the funding of several FIs" according CPR. The holding fund manager will be referred to in the new programming period as "body implementing the the fund of fund". Particular functional differences are detailed in the relevant legal texts and guidance but they are not relevant for the scope of the current analysis.



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- Strengthen the capacity of the MAs in using EU funding in cooperation with other financial institution
- Improves cooperation between private sector and public bodies (city officials) and makes PPPs more popular
- Potential for Grants and FIs to be combined with other forms of support
- Integrated projects aiming to improve economic development, urban and local development and social cohesion.
- Application process easier for Final Recipients; easier and quicker access to finance than in the case of grants.
- Decision to cooperate with EIB and EIF gives valuable expertise and capacity, helps to structure process and ensures proper communication with EC

The entities involved in 2007-2013 perceive as most suitable FIs the equity instruments, the loans and the loan guarantees.

The main difficulties encountered highlighted by the member states based on their past experience are the following:

- High complexity, significant time and resources needed to establish the schemes,
- Lack of expertise in the country/ regions
- Difficulties linked to early stages of the FIs pilot schemes, involving need of learning for all actors, revision of the regulatory framework, and competition with grants.
- Reach the optimal sizes of the funds, which varies largely from one country to another or . The threshold of €120 million<sup>25</sup> "is not confirmed for Romania and even the 2012 Pan European Private Equity Performance Benchmarks Study<sup>26</sup> indicates best performances for VC funds up to EUR 50 million. In the case of smaller funds it is questionable if it is worth the effort for setting up the instrument. The small sizes prevent risk distribution which is one of the potential benefits of a VC instrument.
- The spill-over effects and the difficulties of incorporating wider objectives, such as the development of the regional economy in particular, into financial instruments schemes
- As an effect of the crisis the demand changed, decreasing for specific instruments; a tendency of a shift from VC to loans and loan guarantees was noted.
- The case for support of VC funds is weaker and there are only a limited number of areas across the EU which has a sufficient concentration of small high-growth firms to justify public support of them.
- There are few schemes including policy relevant indicators justifying the public support to the FIs; the reduced number of evaluations performed limits the knowledge of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Financial Instruments in the context of Cohesion Policy Implementation.
- State aid rules are challenging in the design of the financial instruments due to their complexity,
- There is not enough evidence to determine how far the sums allocated have reduced these gaps in the current programming period. Evaluations and studies are needed in order to support decisions makers.
- It is questionable whether the size of many of the VC funds set up with ERDF support is large enough for them to be viable given the high fixed costs and the high degree of uncertainty attached to investments which makes it important to spread the risk.

<sup>25</sup> DG Regio EVALNET, Financial Instruments Synthesis report, 2012

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.evca.eu/uploadedfiles/performance\\_study\\_2012.pdf](http://www.evca.eu/uploadedfiles/performance_study_2012.pdf)



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- The complexity of FIs and the time and resources needed to set up the financial instruments have reduced their use, along with the limited extent of demand for them perceived by Managing Authorities and the preference for grants for many investments where the policy objectives extend beyond making a financial return.
- Very little data exists on the cost of setting up and operating FIs relative to non-repayable grants but there is a widespread perception that they are higher and the period needed to set them up longer.

Benchmarking analysis performed for the first coherence evaluation report analysed and highlighted the relevant strengths of FIs instruments implemented in EU member states with more concrete examples from Poland, Wales and also from non EU states like Montenegro, Lebanon Syria and Jordan. The selection of FIs examples covered the types of FIs identified in Romania as potential options to be further confirmed by ex-ante market assessments not finalised at the reporting date.

The examples provided examples of FIs including: packages of loans, subsidised interest rates and guarantee instruments, venture capital, seed capital instruments business angels schemes, urban development FIs. The benchmarking analysis have been completed with more recent evaluation of FIs from Germany included in the third coherence report. The key conclusions from the international experience include the following:

- The adequate response to the needs of the target beneficiaries is most likely formulated like a package of instruments
- A key success factor is the well-defined target group and rigorous needs analysis (good ex-ante market assessment)
- A clear vision regarding the use of grants and FIs based on market assessments
- The combination of FIs subsidised loans, business angels networks, VC FIs and guarantee schemes proved to work well in many EU countries.
- Simplification of the procedures is requested by beneficiaries who perceive FIs complicated and with a high administrative burden.
- A favourable environment is needed, so that financial intermediaries are encouraged to participate and also effects on the target groups to be sustainable.
- In Wales and Poland seed capital instruments worked well linked with networks of co-investors, business angels, university centers.
- Poland is a good example of building an extensive capacity for FIs implementation involving a state owned bank as holding fund manager for JEREMIE, the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development a government agency set up in 2000, but also EIB for JESSICA. The FIs targeting the technology transfer schemes are also a relevant example of extensive use of the FIs involving 472 technology investments through 20 commercial banks.

### **Romanian experience in using FIs**

Grants are very popular in Romania and replacement with FIs could have a negative reaction from the potential recipients. For this reason introduction of FIs should consider an effective promotion of the benefits to the beneficiaries. The main benefits perceived by recipients of FIs Despite Romania has little experience with FIs funded from EU funds, JEREMIE<sup>27</sup> programme generated significant progress in terms of improving legislation and creation of a regulatory

<sup>27</sup> JEREMIE is a joint initiative developed by the European Commission (Directorate General for Regional Policy) in co-operation with the European Investment Bank Group and other financial institutions in the during the 2007-2013 programming period to enhance cohesion across the EU.



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framework. There are still gaps in the area of venture capital, relevant regulations for VC are missing.

EAFRD experience as well as JEREMIE proved the need for a good design of the FIs according to the real needs of the beneficiaries and recipients, flexibility in order to adapt to changes. The FIs design should consider and overcome the barriers of low attractiveness to beneficiaries or to private investors, increased administrative burden due to implementation rules (eligibility, reporting and verification).

FIs have a high complexity and requires time to be set up mainly if there is no prior experience in the country. The implementation capacity of the body implementing the FI or the Fund of funds (set up for funding several FIs) is essential and should be carefully considered in the choice of the best option for the management of the FIs. At the same time building capacities in the country should be considered if international experience and capacity is used.

- The benefits<sup>28</sup> perceived by the stakeholders in extending the use of the FIs are the following:
  - o Compared with grant schemes, FIs ensure the recycling of funds and a mechanism capable to deliver results over a longer period of time.
  - o The FIs are capable to mobilise private funds for specific areas of development.
  - o By involving the financial institutions in the support delivery mechanisms, FIs could apply more effective business oriented filters in the selection of the beneficiaries.
  - o Compared to other guarantee schemes available in Romania JEREMIE is free pf charge for the recipients, perceived as an advantage
- Constraints in implementation of the JEREMIE.
  - Difficult, long and slow process to set up the schemes.
  - Inadequate legislation and regulatory framework; in general for financial instruments including (setting a financing vehicle, in the specific case of the loan guarantees the problems were related to the regulations regarding the provisioning and the capital relief.
  - According to the recent assessments, the application of the EU eligibility rules is a difficult task for the financial intermediaries, not familiar with them. The opinion was not entirely shared by the experts panel consulted, who consider the issue is manageable as long as there is clarity in the European Commission instructions.
  - Reduced attractiveness of the products for the beneficiaries due to; ineligibility of the VAT, the limitation of land acquisition to 10%, administrative burden generated by the paper work and verifications; the economic crisis reduced the market demand –for investment loans in favour of working capital loans – not eligible initially.
  - The schemes have to be sufficiently flexible to address the target segment needs
  - The negotiations with the private investors proved to be difficult in the context of reduced attractiveness of the Romanian market, in the case of the risk capital instrument. One of the capital risk instruments failed because not being able to attract private funds.
  - The eligibility verification, the reporting and the verifications during implementation, specific to EU rules are perceived by recipients as an administrative burden and has to be simplified.

<sup>28</sup> Financial Engineering Instruments Policy Paper, EVALNET, DG Regio, 2012





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- The financial institutions are less flexible in integrating in their practice the Cohesion policy concepts and rules, the wider objectives, beyond the financial performance of the specific operation, if this incur additional risks
- Grants are very popular in Romania. A large amount of knowledge has been acquired in many institutions and organisations. Some beneficiaries and institutions involved in the implementation of Cohesion policy may be reluctant to accept a massive replacement of grants with FIs, unless they perceive the relevant benefits and accept the cost of the change.

Urban development FIs have not been supported in Romania from Cohesion Policy funds. JESSICA<sup>29</sup> programme has not been set up in the 2007-2013 programming period. The opportunity and feasibility for a new FI for urban development have analysed in 2010 in the context of supporting the investments in the Growth Pole Brasov in Region Centre. The analysis concluded the initiative has been launched too late to ensure a proper implementation for 2007-2013. Further analysis is necessary for the 2014+ options in implementing urban development FIs.

### **The challenges for using FIs in Romania; existence of evidences of market failure or investments suboptimal situations**

At the time of the four interim evaluation reports none of the ex-ante assessments were finalised. Our research has identified one market assessment<sup>30</sup> providing information regarding **the market failure situations**, where the FI funded from ESIF could have an intervention. The study is limited to SMEs finance.

The evaluation team has not identified market assessments in the field of urban development and energy efficiency, and social economy, despite there being experience in their implementation in other countries, and in the case for energy efficiency in Romania as well.

Social economy is a young sector in early stages of development in Romania and the unclear regulatory framework which has been expected to be clarified for a long time should be considered in the options of setting up such an instrument.

There is limited information available regarding the market failure situations to be addressed. The current assessment<sup>31</sup> available does not provide the proper justification for FIs use as requested by CPR. Based on the existing information available the FIs types addressing potential market failure situations (which has to be properly justified with ex-ante market assessments) are the following:

**Microfinance** has a high potential for market failure.

The demand is based on microenterprises . The supply is present but at high costs making accessibility very low.

The high costs are due to the raise of capital by the financial institutions from outside Romania and also the risk coverage, The market demand is confirmed by the financial institutions strategies oriented towards this market<sup>32</sup>, but also from real life when microenterprises complain about unaffordable conditions.

#### **Medium-to long-term loans,**

The financial context with decreasing capital availability to the Romanian banks amid the on-going process of disintermediation that is taking place in Europe.

<sup>29</sup> JESSICA - Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas, is an initiative of the European Commission developed in co-operation with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). It supports sustainable urban development and regeneration through financial engineering mechanisms.

<sup>30</sup> SMEs Access to Finance preliminary study Romania, GEA Consulting 2013.

<sup>31</sup> The Study SMEs Access to Finance

<sup>32</sup> Experts panel meeting source



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The demand had a contraction since 2009 but it is expected to increase with the economic recovery.

Pronounced vulnerability of current long-term portfolios and risk aversion of the banks reduce accessibility,

The risk that future demand for long-term loans in the domestic currency might outpace supply. Note: there is an increasing demand of funding for working capital; despite this is not an usual eligible cost JEREMIE succeeded to ensure the flexibility to respond to this need. For the future should be considered as an area of market failure to be addressed within the eligibility limits together with the medium to long term loans.

#### **Loan guarantees –**

There is a high potential of market failure; the FIs should be coherent with other guarantees FIs funded from the state budget

#### **Equity instruments**

**Venture capital (VC)** addressing the early stage development of the SMEs have particular situation. It is a small market, almost no market for venture capital affected by the absence of a critical mass of promising companies that could attract the attention of funds in this area, low levels of R&D expenditure, However low attractiveness of the company with low prices could be create interest for private funds.

Additional constraints are linked with a shallow capital market, a rigid labour market, an absent culture of serial entrepreneurship,

The fiscal conditions are not encouraging and supporting investors and the legal framework is incomplete

A public intervention for VC instruments is needed to unblock the environment. A package of instruments could address each area of the market failure in order to achieve results.

Key issues identified in the SMEs Access to Finance study to be considered for future VC instruments (and development of a VC market) are listed below. Part of them have been confirmed and stressed in the experts panel meeting as essential to be addressed with FIs

- Ensure the coexistence of several funds, as having only one will not have the desirable impact.
- Raise awareness about this type of financing,
- Educate not only the entrepreneurs, but also the service providers needed for the deals (lawyers, accountants) and why not, to co-invest if needed".
- A key issue is the learning about business investments to understand VC instrument
- The local culture does not favour serial entrepreneurs.
- Reluctance to entrepreneurship risks
- Stimulate demand by awareness learning
- Create enough angel investors to mentor and support entrepreneurs in order to reach the level where they can become interesting to VC investors.
- Need for a protective legislation for investors in early stage companies
- Ensure protection of property rights
- VC market depends on the level of R&D expenditure; research in eco system needs support. Need of public funding in eco system research
- The labour market that should normally stimulate entrepreneurial initiative is too rigid, making it harder for companies to fire people.

- The Romanian capital market lacks depth; the development of the IPO market is necessary as it is one of the most attractive exit routes for VC investors.

### **Business angels networks – is an area of high market failure**

There is a lack of important business angels networks (due to the young market economy) however there are a number of private networks already running

There are not enough entrepreneurs exiting their investments, there is a need of support of entrepreneurs to prepare them to progress through the development stages and qualify for other VC instruments according to the stage of development.

The demand is challenging but essential for the successful implementation of other forms of support.

Business angels network are a the factor for wealth creation, particularly important for the Romanian market because they could identify the “brains” before they leave for financing on other markets.

### **Mezzanine funds**

Despite the SMEs Access to Finance does not indicate a clear market failure situation mainly because there is not a real market in Romania with only or two providers and the lack of trust and attractiveness of the Romanian mature companies, the experts panel indicated a latent demand for which the supply is not sufficient. As in the case of VC it is an issue of unblocking the demand and help it to be formulated.

Further analysis is needed to collect evidences of market failure for SMEs.

### **Urban development market failure situations**

The decision to introduce other FIs in urban development and energy efficiency needs an in-depth analysis covering the market gaps and also the options for the implementation mechanisms. Capacity of the final recipients (local public authorities) should be considered due to the fact a large part of them are close to the legal ceiling of debts level.

**Other key issues in the process of preparation for FIs establishment**, mentioned in the previous evaluation reports, but essential for the successful design and implementation of the FIs:

- The quality of the market assessments is crucial for the design of the FIs, will allow not only a good launch of the FIs but also a good framework for monitoring the progress and achievements and adapt to changes.
- There is a strong need to build from early stages the capacities for FIs implementation in the MAs, with a focus on promoting the policy objectives in balance to the financial performance focused by the financial intermediaries of the FIs;
- Ensure the integration of the policy objectives into the FIs, with clear answers to the question how the FIs will contribute to a policy objective. Setting FIs is not an objective itself, but is a support measure to the investments priorities and wider policy objectives;
- Design and integrate into the FIs support measures for beneficiaries in order to increase the level of education in VC, entrepreneurship, financial management;
- Develop the level of awareness and competence to all segments involved in FIs implementation;
- Create the adequate legislation needed especially for VC and private capital, including fiscal incentives for investors;
- Examination of the compliance with the state aid rules – needed along the whole process of the design of the schemes (including the OP design and later during implementation);

- Further analysis of the options to establish the most appropriate implementation mechanisms using either an international financial institution (EIF, other IFI) or an existing or a new financial institution or public /private body. Existing capacity, mobilization and transfer of expertise towards the assigned structures, a long term vision regarding the development of the capacity should be considered, for a coherent approach with the existing FIs funded from the state budget and implementation bodies;

## Recommendations

### Recommendations regarding the PA (cumulating recommendations from all interim reports)

	Recommendations	Comments – to what extent the recommendation has been addressed or it is still valid
1	Revision of the PA proposed FIs and their justification; ensure analysis cover all potential types of FIs (e.g.. energy efficiency, urban development) and improve arguments for the proposed ones.	Not Fully addressed; still valid
2	Revision of the PA sections referring to FIs justification and proposal to ensure more clarity and coherence. The revision should focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more clear conclusions formulated from the evidences specified;</li> <li>• use of evidences from more recent studies to confirm or add to the evidences sourced from studies prepared for the previous programming period;</li> <li>• review of the constraints in accessing finance for all areas where FIs are proposed, so that the justification offer a complete image of the needs to be addressed;</li> <li>• the justification for FIs support in energy efficiency and urban development, highlighting if a potential gap is to be addressed;</li> <li>• more clear and relevant conclusions from JEREMIE programme;</li> <li>• specify the reasons for introducing FIs complementary or instead of grants;</li> </ul>	Not fully addressed ;  to be considered in the design of the FIs at the OP level

### Other recommendations regarding further developments at the level of OP

	Recommendations (from all Evaluation reports)	Comment
1	Ensure ex ante market assessments are performed, they comply with the regulations requirements to support FIs proposal and design, and capture correctly the real needs over the whole implementation period.	To be addressed at the level of OP preparation. Three market assessment studies are in implementation
2	Design and integrate into the FIs support measures for beneficiaries and recipients in order to increase the level of education in VC, entrepreneurship, financial management	To be addressed at the level of OP preparation
3	Create the adequate legislation needed especially for VC and private capital, including	To be addressed at the level of OP preparation

	fiscal incentives for investors.	
4	Examination of the compliance with the state aid rules – needed along the whole process of the design of the schemes ( including the OP design and later during implementation).	To be addressed at the level of OP preparation
5	Further analysis of the options to establish the most appropriate implementation mechanisms using either an international financial institution (EIF, other IFI) or an existing or a new financial institution or public /private body. Existing capacity, mobilization and transfer of expertise towards the assigned structures, a long term vision regarding the development of the capacity should be considered, for a coherent approach with the existing FIs funded from the state budget and implementation bodies;	To be addressed at the level of OP preparation

### 3.1.8 Question I.8

I.8 Are the policies necessary to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities appropriate? How do these policies contribute to the efficient implementation of interventions? Is there any coherence and synergy among these policies?

Chapter	Tool	Contribution of the tool
10.2-3	Desk research	Review of EU (draft) regulations, templates and guidelines. Review and analysis of other MS (draft) PAs. Review existing and draft Romanian strategies, policies and regulations
10.2-3	Checklist	Compliance checklist used to assess the state of completion and compliance of the ex-ante conditionalities against the requirements of the CSF, PA template, CPR, DG guidance papers
10.2-3	Assessment Grid	EC requirements for fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities
10.4-5	Expert Panels	Verification of findings of ex-ante team, commentary of PA
10.2-3	Workshops	Understanding of programmers and line ministry approach to ex-ante conditionalities and their understanding of the process for fulfilment and assessment criteria

The scope of the task, as part of the ex-ante evaluation, was to assist the Romania authorities in fulfilling the Ex-ante conditionalities, providing an opinion and recommendations regarding:

- Appropriateness of the policies proposed to fulfilment criteria of the Ex-ante conditionalities
- To what extent the policies contribute to the efficient implementation of the conditionalities
- The coherence and synergy amongst the policies

The assessment was based on a range of methods, as detailed in the box above. The methods included desk research, checklist compliance, and verification of the conclusions through experts panel method and workshops with the institutions responsible for the policies subject of conditionality.



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The desk research included the inventory of the requirements regarding the ex-ante conditionalities and later the monitoring of the Ex-ante conditionalities guidance which has been updated several times during the evaluation period, collection and assessment of the action plans prepared and implemented by the responsible institutions for the fulfilment of the Ex-ante conditionalities.

The evaluators prepared a checklist (Presented in the inception report) for assessing the ex-ante conditionalities fulfilment which included in addition to the criteria formulated in the EC guidance a number of criteria regarding the process set up and managed by the Romanian authorities to ensure ex-ante conditionalities are fulfilled in time and at the required quality standards imposed through the guidance.

The evaluation team has assessed for each evaluation report the progress as stated in the PA subject of assessment, as well as the process by collecting the reports on actions plans implementation, and interviews with MEF staff responsible for coordination.

The workshops scope was to ensure the assessment results are understood and transferred into the process of policies development. Two rounds of workshops covering all thematic and horizontal ex-ante conditionalities were organised. During the workshops the evaluators provided guidance and advice on understanding the fulfilment criteria of the grid.

The process of ensuring fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionalities was well established and functioned throughout the PA development period.

Having decided to address all 11 Thematic Objectives through the use of ESIF, the ex-ante conditionalities for all specific TOs, plus the general conditionalities must be met.<sup>33</sup> The whole process of preparation of the policies subject of ex-ante conditionalities is based on the Romanian Government decision regarding the indicative list of strategies and the necessity for to be elaborated in the context of the new cohesion policy. As such, all necessary conditionalities were selected and included in the Action Plans which were approved by the Government through Memoranda at the beginning of 2013.

Instructions and guidelines for the fulfilment of the conditionalities, the stages to ensure fulfilment by the December 2016 (at latest) and deadlines were included in the Government Memoranda. The Action Plans also contained intermediary terms in order to fulfil the ex-ante conditionalities. The instructions and guidance were based primarily on the requirements for completion of the tables within the PA rather than fulfilment and non-fulfilment criteria (Assessment grid) found in the guidance on ex-ante conditionalities, parts I & II.

The individual Action Plans were developed, negotiated and agreed with relevant line ministries and were formalised in the Government Memoranda to the relevant Ministries.

These Memoranda established roles and responsibilities, the relevant procedures and coordination mechanisms.

Within the MEF nine members of staff were given sectoral responsibilities for monitoring progress and maintaining on-going dialogue with the Line Ministries to ensure the progress of the Action Plans. Regular reviews are held and a clear system for addressing issued is in place.

In June 2013 a complete review of progress was undertaken (stage evaluation) by the MEF staff and delays to the process identified. This review resulted in a second set of Government Memoranda from the Prime Minister to the Line Ministries requiring an acceleration of the process. This Memoranda, issued on 10th July 2013 included deadlines and milestones that the Ministries were to adhere to.

In September and October 2013 a second review of progress was undertaken. On the 25th September 2013 the MEF sent letters to all Line Ministries in order for them to use the new assessment grids and to evaluate the actual stage of the Action Plans. On 30th October 2013 a Note was approved by the Prime Minister requiring all institutions to accelerate the process of fulfil the ex-Ante conditionalities. Based on this note, on the 4th November 2013 the MEF sent further

<sup>33</sup> According to Art 17.3 of the draft CPR, Member States are required to ensure the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionalities at the time of agreement of the PA and OPs and, on agreement for ex-ante conditionalities not fulfilled, no later than two years after the adoption of the Partnership Agreement or by 31 December 2016, whichever is earlier



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letters to the Line Ministries in order to make supplementary efforts to fulfil the ex-ante conditionalities taking into account the new assessment grids. The second review is currently being finalised and will result in an assessment of the current state of fulfilment against the agreed Action Plans and a revaluation of the Action Plans, where it is necessary.

Following submission of the first draft of the PA, the received EC comments and bilateral discussions further guidance was provided by MEF staff to line Ministries and their progress for fulfilment of the EACs subject to continuous monitoring and review.

The Partnership Agreement is required to contain a summary of the assessment of fulfilment of applicable ex ante conditionalities where national level authorities are responsible for their fulfilment (Art. 14(1)(b)(iii) CPR). Section 2, of the Guidance on Ex Ante Conditionalities for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI) PART I<sup>34</sup> and states that the process of assessment of applicability of ex-ante conditionalities needs to be undertaken before the formal submission of the Partnership Agreement and programmes.

Starting in August 2013 Romania used the assessment grid presented by the Commission in the revised draft of Guidance for ex-ante conditionalities (as in the annex of the draft PA). With the publication of the second version of the Guidance, MEF intensified the dialogue with the line ministries in order to use the new assessment grids within the Guidance document.

Several workshops were organized by the ex-ante evaluation team in the last part of 2013. After the workshops, the self-assessment grids filled in by the responsible bodies for each EAC were assessed and specific comments and recommendations were sent to MEF to be submitted to each responsible entity.

The self-assessment process was conducted by each responsible body under the MEF coordination to ensure a common and correct approach and same understanding of the COM guidance on EACs at each Line Ministry level. The Assessment Grids started to be completed by Line Ministries (or other applicable bodies) after the PA draft was published and the process of self-assessment was monitored and validated constantly by MEF.

Important changes occurred in the COM Guidance for ex-ante conditionalities, such as: newly-added ex-ante conditionalities through the second version (August 2013) and the third version (December 2013) or the new/revised criteria included in the third version (December 2013) and fourth version (February 2014).

Joint actions and share experiences (MEF, MRDA and other line ministries) were needed to fulfil the revised ex-ante conditionalities specific for rural development as no COM guidance was available for this sector. Many sector strategies were “under preparation” and clear and coherent implementation mechanisms were absent.

The Action Plans were developed in a manner that progress could and can be monitoring and corrective measures put in place to reduce the risk of un-fulfilment.

Within the PA the reporting of the ex-ante conditionality revealed the following:

- i. The PA used the COM definitions for conditionalities and criteria;
- ii. In most cases it is obvious that the responsible bodies assessed the criteria based on the assessment grids included into the COM guidelines;
- iii. In most cases good references were included for fulfilled criteria;
- iv. In most cases clear explanations were given for the unfulfilled criteria.

In terms of the policies, processes and procedures for ensuring fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionalities it can be judged that all criteria on the checklist<sup>35</sup> has been achieved and that the MEF have taken a serious approach to the role of coordinating and monitoring the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionalities. There are some weaknesses in the system however with no formalised

<sup>34</sup> EUROPEAN COMMISSION Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy 2014-2020 Policy and Legislation Inter-institutional relations DRAFT 24<sup>th</sup> July 2013

<sup>35</sup> Checklist for policies for ex-ante conditionalities (Question I.8) Ex-ante evaluation of the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020



structure for the monitoring in terms of the requesting and compiling of monitoring reports and the assessment and verification of the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionalities.



## 3.2 II. Evaluation of the authorities' and beneficiaries' administrative capacity to ensure the efficient implementation of CSF funds

II.1 Is the authorities' and beneficiaries' administrative capacity sufficient for an appropriate implementation of CSF funds?

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	Review of previous studies and evaluations, the existing strategies that deal with the administrative capacity and the annual reports on the 2007-2013 OPs implementation
Checklist	Compliance checklist used to assess the full range of administrative factors that are relevant to the successful implementation of CSF, separately for authorities and beneficiaries. The first is based on Structures, People and Systems while the latter is based on capabilities on phases of the project cycle.
Questionnaires	Designed for beneficiaries and authorities, which are a part of the EU fund management system
Interviews	Confirmation of preliminary findings from desk research and questionnaires with beneficiaries and authorities of CSF funds.
Focus Group	Focus groups, one with beneficiaries and one with representatives of the authorities, to conduct an in-depth analysis and validation of the desk research, interviews and questionnaires
Database regarding administrative capacity of Authorities and beneficiaries	Using information collected through desk research, interviews, questionnaires and focus groups, the database contains the most important parameters of the checklist

### 3.2.1 Introduction

One of the three objectives of the Ex-ante Evaluation of the PA is

- To ensure the adequate administrative capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries for a good implementation of the CSF funds.

According to the ToR, the evaluators are asked to respond to the question: "Is the authorities' and beneficiaries' administrative capacity sufficient for an appropriate implementation of CSF<sup>36</sup> funds?"

A first assessment of the administrative capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries was prepared and finalised in September 2013. The report aimed to inform the Ministry of European Funds on what is the current level of the administrative capacity, assessed on a selection of the most relevant dimensions and criteria, highlighting what worked and what did not work in the system, which weaknesses have to be addressed, and which strengths could be used in building the administrative capacity for the 2014-2020 period.

The second report is an update of the first assessment, aiming at reflecting the progress in strengthening the administrative capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries and the measures undertaken since 2013, when the first assessment was made.

<sup>36</sup> We will use in this report the term European Structural and Investment Funds for all European funds providing financial resources for National Strategic Reference Framework, National Rural Development Programme, Operational Programme for Fishery 2007-2013 and the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020.



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Both reports presents comparatively the level of the administrative capacity in 2013 and 2014 using a selection of key dimensions, qualitative and quantitative indicators as well as a graphic representation.

The last report includes the checklist of the administrative capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries as well as a database with the key indicators for the most relevant dimensions and variables of the administrative capacity, with the two measurements made in 2013 (for the first assessment) and in 2014 for the update of the assessment.

### Approach and methodology

The methodology described in detail in the first report is summarized below

**Administrative capacity was defined** as the ability and skill of central and local authorities to prepare suitable plans, programmes and projects in due time, to decide on programmes and projects, to arrange the co-ordination among principal partners, to cope with the administrative and reporting requirements, and to finance and supervise the implementation correctly, avoiding irregularities as far as possible. The definition is in line with the international experience (ECORYS/NEI, 2002).

For the first assessment the evaluators identified from the international literature and practice the **elements (also referred to as dimensions) of the administrative capacity** that were further detailed in criteria for assessment as follows.

For the authorities three areas or dimensions of the administrative capacity have been identified:

- **structures** – having in view the structural development of the institutions framework and organisations
- **people** – focused on the human resources management including recruitment, equipping individuals with information, knowledge, and training in order to enable them to effectively carry out their tasks
- **systems and tools** - refer to the development of instruments, methods, guidelines, manuals, systems, procedures, forms, etc., which enable organisations to achieve their objectives.

Contextual factors of the administrative capacity development measures have been considered as an additional dimension of the assessment.

For the beneficiaries' assessment three key dimensions of the administrative capacity of the beneficiaries have been used, coherent with previous studies (i.e. "Challenges associated to the capacity of SI Beneficiaries" (NSRF 2011) ensuring thus consistency of the methodology and comparability. The three key dimensions are capacity of the beneficiaries to manage projects, capacity to mobilise human resources, capacity to mobilise financial resources. The methodology is extensively presented in the first assessment report.

The approach adopted for the update of the assessment included the following methods for data and information collection

- *Literature and documentary research.* The evaluation team has performed an inventory of the relevant studies and evaluations elaborated since the first assessment.
- *Online survey.* For the first assessment two online surveys – one for authorities and one for beneficiaries were designed in order to collect information and data from a large number of representatives of the authorities and beneficiaries; for the update the survey was applied only

to authorities, in order to avoid the burden on beneficiaries as long as there were not expected significant changes since the previous assessment.

- *Checklist. Two checklists were prepared for the first assessment – one for the authorities' capacity and one for the beneficiaries' capacity - aimed at structuring the analysis on dimensions and elements (variables that influence the administrative capacity); two different checklists were prepared, one for the administrative capacity of the authorities and one for the beneficiaries. The checklist for the administrative capacity of the authorities was applied during the update exercise, assessing for each criteria the progress/ change since the previous assessment, as reflected by the documents analysed or the online survey. Due to the limited information collected regarding the changes in the capacity of the beneficiaries, the checklist regarding the capacity of the beneficiaries was not updated in the update exercise.*
- *The administrative capacity data base. This tool was created in order to structure the complex information regarding the administrative capacity of the authorities in a meaningful manner, coherently with the assessment criteria. The information and data included in the database are linked to the checklist' items.*

The data base was updated with the data collected highlighting specific aspects for the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming period. The database includes also quantitative indicators that have to be collected from administrative data produced by the authorities. The quantitative indicators complete the assessment and contribute mainly to the assessment of the effectiveness of the authorities and achievement of their objectives.

Based on these measurements it was applied a simple scoring system for the accomplishment of the expected level for each indicator (in total This represents a basis for further work in creating a composite indicator for the administrative capacity of authorities and beneficiaries which needs further refinements. e.g. normalization, weighting and aggregation, based on consultation with relevant stakeholders and testing – according to relevant methodologies - which were not possible in the update of the assessment

*Due to the limited scope of the assessment update there were conducted a limited number of interviews with DGAPÉ staff focused on identification of reports and studies that could provide relevant information and consultants involved in the ex-ante evaluations of the PA and the OPs.*

The update of the assessment followed the structure of the three dimensions of the administrative capacity. For each dimension there have been identified the most relevant variables that influence the administrative capacity at present, at the time of the assessment.

The assessment establishes to what extent it is accomplished/achieved the desired level of each variable, which corresponds to an adequate level of the administrative capacity.

For each variable there have been identified one or several criteria that could cover the key aspects or multiple sources.

The accomplishment was established on four levels and summarized in checks list (Annex 3), as follows:

- The criteria fully accomplished was assessed with "Yes"
- The criteria accomplished partially , not fully, but some improvements being necessary was assessed as "Yes\*"



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- The criteria accomplished partially, to a small extent and significant improvements being necessary, was assessed as (No\*)
- The criteria is not accomplished, at all, there is no evidence of accomplishment, was assessed as “No”.

In order to provide a synthetic view of the current situation and progress for each dimension and variable, a scoring system was used which allowed presentation of the administrative capacity in graphical format, a radar format, showing how far is each variable from the desired level (fully accomplished).

Using a scoring system for each level of accomplishment and compounding the scores of the criteria for each variable and dimension, resulted in an index of the authorities' administrative capacity. The scoring system is explained in the database “qualitative indicators” spreadsheet.

The scoring system and the index require further developments, because it is based on simple averages of the criteria composing a variable and dimensions. The development should consider relevant methodologies for composite indicators<sup>37</sup>, applying different weighting of the criteria, aggregation and normalization, which requires more extensive cooperation, consultation and validations with the relevant stakeholders, which were not feasible in the frame of the current assignment.

### 3.2.2 Summary of conclusions regarding the administrative capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries

The administrative capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries is a serious challenge for the effective implementation of the ESI Funds. Although progresses have been made during the last year, **significant improvements are still needed.**

The challenge for the Romanian authorities is to find the appropriate solutions to improve the administrative capacity and performance in the system responsible for ESI Funds management, in an environment where the progress in improving the entire public system is slow and uncertain. During the period 2007-2013, the measures to improve the administrative capacity of the ESI Funds management system were hindered by the systemic weaknesses of the Romanian public administration.

Romania is doing well in terms of **formal compliance**, such as setting up structures, formalising cooperation, creating tools and systems, but the **functioning of the system remains poor.**

The experience of the 2007-2013 programming period indicates the fact that increased authority of the management and coordinating bodies, **stability of the organisations' structures and the whole overall framework have to be ensured**, in order to improve the institutional performance and the inter-institutional cooperation. Romanian authorities started in 2013 a process of revision of the institutional framework adopting a centralised approach with a strengthened management role of the Ministry of European Funds. This approach ensures a greater administrative coherence of the authorities responsible for the management of ESI Funds, and raises at the same time the challenge to have a good cooperation with policy makers and other development actors at central and regional level.

The 2007-2013 experience proved that although the partnership structures are created, **limited capacity in policy management, ineffective communication and cooperation tools** are among

<sup>37</sup> OECD, European Commission - Handbook on constructing composite indicators – methodology and user guide  
<http://www.oecd.org/std/42495745.pdf>



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the factors influencing the effective participation of the partners in the programmes management cycle. The programming process for 2014-2020 experienced difficulties in ensuring the required strategic framework for the PA and OPs, with delays in the development of the required sectoral strategies and compliance with the ex-ante conditionalities.

Ensuring adequate human resources quantitatively and qualitatively is a key problem of the system. Largely **the HR function is limited to compliance with the requirements** to set up specific HR processes but their effectiveness is limited. The organisations **do not have a sufficient capacity to effectively use HR policies and practices**, to ensure adequate resourcing and to respond to the performance requirements and changes in the environment.

There is a need to align people performance with the organisation's performance, a shift from competences based to "results based" performance management, in order to better **orient efforts of the individuals towards the OPs performance targets**. The **reward system** has to be able to attract and retain good professionals and stimulate performance. The improvements of the reward system undertaken in 2014 resulted in a higher attractiveness of the jobs in the system and an improved retention.

There is a need to create and offer training opportunities in order to ensure the competences in critical areas and a continuous professional development of the staff. The **training system has to be strengthened** using the past good practice such as the training mechanism managed by ACIS and the training practice from ROP MA, reinforcing the coordination and renewing the approaches and methods according to the best practices in the training world.

It is evident from the 2007-2013 period that, in the case of organisations where the capacities were built on the previous experience and with stable human resources at management level and critical positions, these organisations dealt better with the demanding performance requirements and the constraints of the economic and social environment. **More stability of the structures, of the managers** and people in key positions has to be ensured.

As a general feature, the **implementation system looks overregulated with complicated** and in many cases unclear procedures associated with excessive bureaucracy and high administrative burden have slowed down and even blocked the processes, mainly at the expense of the beneficiaries. The allocation of responsibilities at all levels has to be reviewed and **procedures simplified** reducing the administrative burden. The tools used in programme implementation in all phases have to be clear, useful and friendly to beneficiaries. MEF has already started the simplification of the procedures resulting in faster and easier procurement for private beneficiaries, contracting, reporting and payment claims requirements. As a good basis for further simplifications a study on administrative burden has been finalised o 2014, providing practical recommendations to continue the administrative burden reduction.

**A more effective indicators system**, with an improved design, methodologies and capacity at all levels to use, calculate and report indicators. Production of data needed for the indicators selected has to be ensured. At the reporting date the managing authorities were developing the Indicators guides for 2014 -2020. The consistent approach and methodology, the assistance of the ex-ante evaluators as well as the coordination of MEF are premises for producing more effective indicators' systems.

The potential of the electronic systems is not fully used, and improvements are needed in terms of reliability and user friendliness. For 2014-2020 more useful features for the users are required than the present ES have. **Implementation of the e-cohesion concept** is expected to enhance the simplification, administrative burden reduction and transparency.



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A key problem encountered in the 2007-2013 exercise in using the systems and tools, is **the limited reliability of the management and control systems**. The irregularities identified in the management and control of public procurement and other system irregularities in the activities of project appraisal and selection, such as fraud, suspicion of conflicts of interest and connivances led to suspension of payments led to interruptions and suspension of payments. Although the main systemic problems have been resolved, removing the interruptions and suspensions and ensuring a smooth implementation of the programmes, a number of weaknesses remain as priorities to be addressed and monitored, such as: management of procurement, first level control effectiveness, audit trail, risk management, irregularities detection and management.

The procedures for payment flows, expenditure forecasts and certification of expenditure need significant improvements being **excessively bureaucratic with prolonged processes**, and **low predictability** of the forecasts.

The **internal audit** does not appear to contribute to early detection of system irregularities. **Risk management is not properly used** as a management tool in all organisations and the management of irregularities has significant gaps in terms of prevention and correct recording of the current and future management.

The programming period **2007-2013 was a challenge for the beneficiaries**, due the new rules that were significantly different from those applied in the pre-accession programmes, the larger sizes of the projects, and, in some cases, involvement of the same entity in a large number of projects.

The **project management capacities built in the public institutions** responsible for a large amount of the funds to be absorbed, such as local and central public institutions, who are the key operators of public infrastructure, are a major area for further development.

**Strengthening of the organisational capabilities** to ensure sustainable capacities for project management is a key need and includes improved management and control systems, better integration with other functions of the institution, and improved competences in particular areas of expertise. **Public procurement and project management skills** continue to be training priorities.

**Improved capacity for preparation of the technical documentation** in the case of infrastructure remains an issue to be addressed. There is limited capacity of the key development actors at regional, local, and sectoral level to manage project pipelines and ensure mature projects ready for implementation. For a number of sectors at regional level, there is no organisation empowered to implement sectoral policies, e.g. RDI, tourism, SMEs etc. The intentions to use more strategic integrated projects in 2014-2020 period will impose strengthening of these development actors mentioned above, able to facilitate or directly develop and implement such projects.

In the case of private and small beneficiaries, there needs to be ensured **simple procedures, clear guidelines** and **easy access to consultancy services** in terms of availability and affordability. **Consultancy services have to evolve** to respond to the market needs, through smooth and transparent procurement processes and predictable opportunities created in the programmes' implementation.

**The beneficiaries have a limited capacity to mobilise financial resources, which remains a key issue and risk factor for programmes performance.**

### 3.2.3 Recommendations of the assessment

R1. Ensure increased authority<sup>38</sup> of the management and coordinating bodies, stability of the organisations' structures and the overall framework, in order to improve the institutional

<sup>38</sup> Power made legitimate by laws, written rules, and regulations.



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performance and the inter-institutional cooperation. The recommendation made in 2013 is to a large extent implemented leading to the following recommendation. The updated recommendation is: Following the setup of the new institutional framework it is recommended to ensure (1) the selected IBs have the adequate capacity corresponding to the number of beneficiaries and complexity of the projects mainly at regional and local level (2) stability of the structures

R2. Improve effective participation of the social partners in the programming process and the monitoring committees; improved coordination of the processes, provision of information and improvement capacity of the social partners has to be considered. The update of the assessment indicated that the recommendation remains valid. Positive premise for achieving it is the fact that it was already assumed through the PA the support provided to the members of the monitoring committees for a more effective involvement and OPTA 2014 2020 foresees funding for this support. Continuous provision of the support is required.

R3. *Develop the HR function in the system of the CSF funds.* Capacity for the management of the HR function has to be created with a central body at the level of MEF, strong coordination and adequate use of TA resources. Cooperation with the HR departments of the ministries and integration with their processes as many as possible is needed. Use of models from the business sector, analysis of the HR processes should be regularly performed in order to monitor effectiveness of the function and progress in development of the administrative capacity. The recommendation remains valid on long term. Creation of a new tool for performance management increase the challenge and responsibility for the HR department and managers to ensure sustainable implementation. For this an additional recommendation is to ensure continuous highly qualified assistance to the HR department for:

- Ensure the system is understood and accepted by the staff
- Managers are able to link and support it through the day by day management of people practice.
- The HR department is able to monitor implementation, evaluate as necessary and ensure the fine tuning of the overall performance management system.

R4. Revision of the whole management system in order to simplify procedures, should focus on the optimal use of call for proposals, reasonable/minimum documents requirements for all phases, clarity and agreement on the interpretation of the procedures by all control bodies, the use of standard costs and lump sums where appropriate, etc. In the light of recent developments we recommend persistence in Implementation of the recommendations of the study on administrative burden.

R5. Develop user friendly guidelines, manuals, helpdesks, tutorials, with an extended use of ICT, in order to ensure easy access for all beneficiaries. The recommendation remains valid. The first steps for implementation have been made by MEF which commissioned a study on administrative burden; further on OPs assumed alignment of their procedures with the recommendations for reduction of the administrative burden. Progresses already made with revision of the guidelines, but the recommendation remains valid.

R6. Ensure development of an effective indicators system in line with the EC methodology, with adequate capacity at project and programme level to use the indicators and to produce data for the calculation and monitoring of the indicators. This should be implemented through coordination at MEF level, including a provision of guidance and training to all users of the system. MEF have to ensure the data providers have the capacity and ability to assume production of data. The



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recommendation is addressed through assistance to OPs 2014-2020 in preparation of the indicators guide and has to be followed up with guidance, tailored on the audience and coordination from MEF level across all OPs.

R7. Extend implementation of the e-cohesion concept in all processes of data exchange with the beneficiaries. This recommendation is already addressed, being object of the dedicated Priority Axis 2 in OPTA 2014-2020. Recommendation remains valid.

R8. Strengthen the management and control systems of the authorities. This needs to be implemented through improved competences in internal control, risk management, and the prevention, detection and management of irregularities. The recommendation was confirmed and accepted through the action plan for strengthening the administrative capacity attached to the PA 2014-2020. The recommendation remains valid.

R9. More effective technical assistance support measures for the beneficiaries are needed to address the key weaknesses: project management skills, management of project pipelines, public procurement, technical skills, access to guidance and assistance, etc.

R10 Identify, strengthen or create, capacities for policy implementation for the key sectors funded from CSF, at the national and regional level, e.g. regional bodies for RDI policy implementation, SMEs, Human Capital, etc.

R11. Improved access of the beneficiaries to finance to be ensured through accessible pre-financing mechanisms, an improved bankability<sup>39</sup> of the projects, simplified and quick reimbursements during the projects implementation,

#### **Other factors enhancing the capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries**

Implementation and progress of the public administration reform in Romania is a key external factor necessary to create a favourable environment for the implementation of administrative capacity measures addressed to the public institutions authorities and beneficiaries.

For the private beneficiaries, an essential external factor is the improvement of the business environment with a reduced administrative burden that will stimulate entrepreneurship and investments.

#### **General conclusions of the update of the assessment**

The update of the assessment proved that all eleven recommendations have been addressed for the 2007-2013 OPs through direct actions or plans and mechanisms for future actions in the case of 2014-2020. All recommendations remains valid, in some cases there were formulated more concrete or follow up recommendations according to the steps already undertaken.

We strongly recommend the conclusions and recommendations of the report to be further discussed with the relevant authorities, decision makers and experts' groups in order to find the ways to ensure coherence and sustainability of the measures planned or undertaken for each recommendation.

The current report offers two "tailor made" tools for the continuous development of the administrative capacity development, (1) the administrative capacity checklists and (2) the administrative capacity indicators data base. These tools allow to project an overall picture, monitor the key dimensions and most relevant variables of the administrative capacity, to identify and highlight the strengths, the weaknesses and the developments.. In order to make the best use of

<sup>39</sup> The adequacy of a project to qualify for a bank loan in order to cover cofinancing and implementation cash-flow needs





these tools it is essential to be established the ownership of these tools and the capacity to use the tools regularly.

### 3.3 III. Evaluation of Electronic systems for data exchange (Question III.1)

III.1 Are there enough regulations and procedures in force for the data exchange required by the new regulations? To what extent are electronic systems comprehensive enough? To what extent do electronic systems meet the elements in the checklist to be drafted by evaluators (ease of use, reduced administrative burden, data aggregation, data quality, research options, data availability in due time, data security, etc.?)

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	Review new regulations, the procedures and regulations that are in force and the documentation on the electronic systems for data exchange
Checklist	Compliance checklist used to assess the full range of administrative factors that are relevant to the successful implementation of CSF, which covered ease of use, reduced administrative burden, data aggregation, data quality, research options, data availability in due time, data security etc
Questionnaires	Designed for MIS coordinators and users (both Contracting Authorities and beneficiaries of CSF funds)
Interviews	Confirmation of preliminary findings from desk research and questionnaires with administrators of the electronic systems/SMIS coordinators will be added.  Also interviews to verify the updated status of the analysis for the second iteration of the Analysis
Focus Group	Focus groups with representatives of all institutions managing various electronic systems and also with representatives of CSF funds' beneficiaries, to conduct an in-depth analysis and validation of the desk research, interviews and questionnaires

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

The evaluation of electronic systems for data exchange covered the last evaluation question – QIII.1. Following the same logic as QII.1 it started at the launch of the project. It has also followed the same 'methodological logic' as the one described for QII.1. - starting with a documentary analysis based on the new regulations, the procedures and regulations that are in force and the documentation on the electronic systems for data exchange. Information collected from interviews with administrators of the electronic systems/SMIS coordinators was added to the documentary analysis where needed.

It was equally important to prepare an efficient checklist covering the full range of administrative factors that are relevant to the successful implementation of CSF. The checklist referred to the issues like: interface user-friendliness, ease of use, administrative burden (time, expertise, and staff needed to fill in the data), data aggregation, data quality, search options, data availability in due time, data security, data reports, system reliability and the overall application and usefulness of the systems.



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After the checklist was developed it was followed by an online questionnaire and a focus group similarly organized as the one described above (QII.1).

All these activities were finished in August 2013. Concise update of the situation was completed, in December 2014, which comprised a general though limited review of changes and amendments introduced to those electronic systems since the first evaluation.

The evaluation aimed at providing information on the following three issues:

1. Are there enough regulations and procedures in force for the data exchange required by the new regulations?
2. To what extent are electronic systems comprehensive enough?
3. To what extent do electronic systems meet the elements in the checklist to be drafted by evaluators (ease of use, reduced administrative burden, data aggregation, data quality, search options, data availability in due time, data security, etc.)?

Our methodology included use of documentary analysis with the most appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods, consultations and plausibility checks completed with all relevant stakeholders and sector experts:

- Documentary analysis: EU Regulations; Romanian regulations; previous evaluations; documentation of electronic systems => in total 29 documents have been reviewed;
- Check-lists containing 9 areas of analysis have been developed for 7 electronic systems that were analysed;
- 3 online questionnaires have been disseminated and completed. The one for beneficiaries was sent by email to over 9440 respondents, out of which 661 replied. The questionnaires for authorities, both for regular users and for coordinators and/or administrators of electronic systems, were sent to all MAs and IBs (67 institutions). The links to the questionnaires were further distributed inside the relevant organisations to relevant users and coordinators/administrators of electronic systems for data exchange. As a result of this process, the evaluators received 175 answers from users of the electronic systems and 69 from coordinators/administrators;
- In the first half of 2013, interviews with 17 administrators or coordinators of the electronic systems from 8 institutions were held;
- 2 focus groups were organised – with 17 representatives of all institutions managing various electronic systems and also with 17 representatives of CSF funds' beneficiaries.
- Within update of the evaluation in December 2014 interviews and questionnaires were filled by representatives of operators of the systems – providing a general though limited information on:
  - Development of the systems which might eventually happened in 2014 as well as
  - Efficiency and
  - User-friendliness.

### *3.3.2 Summary of conclusions regarding the electronic systems for data exchange for the CSF funds*

The following were the main conclusions of the evaluation responding to the three questions above:

#### 1. Conclusions related to the requirements of the new EU Regulations and the existing national legal and procedural framework

At completion of the first evaluation all key pieces were in place vis-a-vis the national legal framework that should support the fulfilment of the e-Cohesion requirements – they are regulated by the existing Romanian laws relating to: electronic signature, archiving of electronic documents, electronic time stamping of documents and protection of personal data. The situation remained the same – positive - in December 2014.

## 2. Conclusions related to comprehensiveness of existing electronic systems

In terms of fulfilling minimum requirements stemming from the new Regulations of the European Commission for the programming period 2014-2020, the only area of concern remains the specific e-Cohesion requirement – for “*full implementation of the electronic data exchange between beneficiaries and authorities*”. At the completion of the first evaluation as well as during the recent update [end December’14] the existing electronic systems have practically not covered this requirement. Therefore the issue still needs focus of the relevant Romanian authorities. The exceptions are still few and limited.

The MySMIS system that has been developed recently, promised to solve most issues of that problem. For all the current Operational Programmes the system was designed with and for, MySMIS would fulfil entirely the e-Cohesion requirements.

## 3. Conclusions related to compliance of the electronic systems with the checklist

As a general image, the electronic systems are in place, they fulfil the minimum requirements. However, all the systems do require improvement of quality and functionality. From the technical point of view, all the systems prove to be satisfactory, with only few particular exceptions where improvements are required. These two latter conclusions are yet valid following the recent evaluation update late 2014.

Satisfying the users’ needs constitutes the area where most of the systems disappoint, especially:

- All the systems need to improve their portfolio of predefined reports, in order to produce those reports as their specific users need. Especially, the SMIS lacks mostly the predefined specific reports required by its users, depending on their individual and specific needs.
- All systems would greatly benefit from a major revision in terms of features/functionality and data content as such to become more user oriented.

### 3.3.3 Summary of recommendations regarding the electronic systems for data exchange for the CSF funds

Recommendations are also split along those three main evaluation questions specified earlier:

#### Recommendations for ensuring the coverage of the e-Cohesion minimal requirements

1. Finalising the implementation of MySMIS for the current OPs it was designed for:
  - a. The highest levels of management in each relevant Ministry have to be aware of the MySMIS implementation requirements and support the implementation

process of the necessary changes in order to fulfil the requirements and get fully functioning system.

- b. All IT services functioning inside each of the various involved bodies (Ministries, MAs, IBs, etc.) should coordinate and cooperate at all times. That requires, for example, establishment of a working IT group, which would meet regularly to discuss, exchange information on joint implementation of the systems in their respective institutions and lead implementation of joint system in relevant institutions. That group, as one of the solutions, should possess a mandate to lead the coordination process and its conclusions should be implemented by each of the involved institutions.
- c. Each institution involved in the process should make an effort to implement appropriate and necessary changes stemming from the new system in their internal working procedures in order to ensure effective implementation of that new system.
- d. Training of users – there is still a need for assuring constant long-term schedule of training of users for any new IT system, including series of trainings for beneficiaries (it can be financed, for example, from OPTA).
- e. Last but not least, ensuring the full package of IT services and resources for the new system (including: system administration, help-desk, data operators and technical maintenance) requires focus on preparing and assuring proper financing of those services, with necessary manpower and budgets.

## 2. Extending MySMIS in the area of ETC

This idea of the past to extend MySMIS to ETC will not be implemented.

## 3. Covering the minimal requirements for SOP HRD

Extending MySMIS to cover also the specific needs of SOP HRD and replacing ActionWeb with MySMIS.

### Recommendations for improving the existing electronic systems used by the authorities

December'14 update evaluation confirmed that all systems should still undergo a major revision, which may be required anyway in order to update the electronic systems to the specific elements of the programming period 2014-2020:

1. Improvement of the portfolio of predefined reports, in order to produce those reports that the users need. The SMIS constitutes the system that needs mostly that improvement.
2. Improvement of features/functionality and data structures, in order to become more user-oriented. All systems should try providing more useful features for their users, allowing them to save working time while using the systems and to reduce the risk of human errors.
3. SMIS should be improved in its user interface (at least for the most important or complex forms currently used) in order to provide: easier understanding, better overview of data in the system, easier retrieving of needed data, etc.
4. SMIS and ActionWeb should ensure enough control mechanisms to allow timely identification of errors existing in the system.

5. SPCDR should revise its mechanisms of validation in order to cover all relevant input data in a reliable manner.
6. Improvement of mechanisms for help-desk and technical assistance for SMIS and ActionWeb is necessary, in order to reduce the rate of minor incidents and to improve the response time in case of incident (at all levels where the system is used).

#### General recommendations for all evaluated electronic systems

1. Ensuring continuous software development support, especially for MySMIS and SMIS:
  - a. Quick repair of software deficiencies claimed by the users.
  - b. Improvement of support provided to the various programmes, especially for their specific needs.
  - c. Quick update to the changes in the real world environment.

Although limited in scope, the update of the evaluation completed in December confirmed the above needs for continuous support made available.

2. Ensuring continuous training of all users:
  - a. Introductory training for new users (to be repeated constantly every a priori defined certain periods of time).
  - b. Second training for existing users, for refreshing knowledge on less obvious features (needed for more complex systems).
  - c. Advanced training for specific categories of users (advanced features of the system and methods of solving certain complex tasks).
  - d. Promoting important tools, modules, features, etc., that are less known and that might improve the users' experience. For example, Art4SMIS - the reporting tool for SMIS, deserves to be better promoted among the users, as it can allow them to build their own reports, accordingly to their needs. This tool is not so well known by the current regular users because it was added to SMIS at a later stage and only the supervisors benefited of training.

## 4 The Evaluation Plan of the PA 2014-2020

### 4.1 Introduction

The evaluation plan was designed by the Ministry of European funds with inputs from the ex-ante evaluators of the Partnership agreement 2014-2020<sup>40</sup>. Its development followed an interactive process that included:

- An online survey of all CIAP<sup>41</sup> members carried out in the end of August and beginning of September 2014. The participants were asked about their opinion on the topics included in the draft evaluation plan, willingness to participate in Evaluation Steering Committees, and training needs.
- A focus group on the PA Evaluation plan, which was held in Bucharest on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014. The participants included both Managing Authorities and evaluation practitioners. The focus group participants discussed the evaluation requirements, topics, questions, training needs, data sources, and methods to be included in the evaluation plan.

As a result of this interactive process, it can be concluded that all evaluation themes that are included in this evaluation plan, were discussed and confirmed by a broad range of stakeholders.

### 4.2 Background

#### 4.2.1 Legislative framework

Article 54 of the Common Provision Regulation No 1303/2013 (CPR)<sup>42</sup> offers a general framework within which evaluations must be carried out for the programming period 2014-2020. Based on this article, the mission of evaluation is twofold:

- To improve the quality of the design and implementation of programmes, as well as
- To assess their effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

While the ex-ante evaluation is primarily linked to the first objective (article 55(1) of the Common Provision Regulation no 1303/2013), evaluations during the programming period and ex-post evaluations are mostly concerning the second one (article 56(3) and 57(1)). Member States are responsible for ex-ante evaluations and evaluations during programming period, while ex-post evaluations shall be carried out by the Commission, or by the Member States in close cooperation with the Commission. According to Article 56 of the CPR, evaluations during programming period should be carried out on the basis of an evaluation plan covering one or more programmes.

In addition to the requirements of the CPR, the European Commission (DG REGIO and DG EMPL) has developed a Guidance document on evaluation plans<sup>43</sup>, which provides further directions on the role of this document and its main elements. It specifically clarifies that:

<sup>40</sup> ECORYS-LIDEEA. Ex-Ante evaluation of the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020. Lot 1 – Evaluation, Subsequent contract no. 5/23/07.03.2013

<sup>41</sup> Inter-institutional Committee for the elaboration of Partnership Agreement. It includes also social partners

<sup>42</sup> 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

<sup>43</sup> DG REGIO, DG EMPL, Guidance Document on Evaluation Plans, April 2014



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*In previous programming periods, evaluations have tended to focus more on implementation issues than **capturing the impacts**. For 2014-2020, the CPR requires Managing Authorities to carry out evaluations which **assess the effects** of the ESIF programmes. This is an essential element of the strengthened results-focus of the policy and is reflected in Article 56(3) of the CPR. The evaluation plans are therefore strategic documents setting out how these evaluations will be organised in order **to provide evidence on effects for policy making**.*

Article 54 and article 56(3) and article 57(1) of CPR bring additional information on how the impact of programmes must be evaluated. They state as follows:

*The impact of programmes shall be evaluated in relation to:*

- *the targets under the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, paying attention to the Funds mission*
- *GDP and unemployment in the programme area concerned, taking into account the size of the programme*
- *the objectives for each priority.*

#### 4.2.2 Evaluation experience

Even if not imposed by the European regulation framework on structural instruments, 2007-2013 evaluation plans were developed both for NSRF<sup>44</sup> and operational programmes in order to guide the evaluations of structural instruments during programming period. The plans were in fact indicative evaluation strategies by 2015, the final year of implementation of 2017-2013 financial framework. Difficulties for establishing an exact strategy were met, the identification of all evaluation priorities with so much time in advance being considered problematic. For this reason, the evaluation plans allowed for carrying out ad-hoc evaluations in cases when:

- Monitoring data reveal problems in implementation, such as low performance for achieving the targets;
- A proposal is made to revise the operational programme;
- The Monitoring Committee requests an evaluation.

The years 2009 and 2012 have been generally identified in evaluation plans as important in terms of the availability of evaluation results. In this sense, evaluations were commissioned to provide information to genuinely feed strategic reporting in compliance with the article 29(2) of General Regulation 1083/2006. In addition, the year 2012 had been considered appropriate for evaluations to enhance the preparation of the programming documents for the next financial framework (2014-2020).

Presently, 29 evaluations have been completed and 12 are on-going.

At the level of the operational programmes under Convergence objective, the evaluation plans or subsequent documents (terms of reference/evaluation reports) contain 189 evaluative questions/themes, out of which 76 (40,2%) are related to effectiveness or impact of programmes, the rest questioning their relevance, coherence and efficiency. Impact and effectiveness evaluation has been often limited to the examination of projects' selection criteria, selected project pipeline as well as aggregated values of output and result indicators. However, this aggregation proved to be difficult in what concerns the result indicators, because some of them were not suitable for aggregation or the monitoring systems turned out to be deficient in certain parts. Part of impact and effectiveness evaluations has been postponed in order to be correlated with implementation pace and give priority to absorption related questions since this issue appeared a major risk of not

<sup>44</sup> National Strategic Reference Framework





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achieving the desired objectives. Based on evaluation plans under implementation, more comprehensive evidence on effectiveness and impact of interventions is expected during the year 2015 for a number of operational programmes (Regional, Transport, Technical Assistance, Human Resources Development and Administrative Capacity Operational Programmes). In the case of Regional and Technical Assistance Operational Programme, a specific impact evaluation exercise is designed for almost all key areas of interventions. Counterfactual methods, in combination with other evaluation methods, are required where possible for the Regional Operational Programme. At the level of the NSRF, a number of 8 evaluations have been completed and two are ongoing. Most evaluations have been related to implementation issues and mechanisms. Evaluation of potential effects of the funds was examined in 2010 from the perspective of project selection mechanisms and coverage of NSRF priorities with selected projects. A synthesis of the first round of interim evaluations of the operational programmes tried in 2011 to point out the potential for upgrading the impact of investments, but found that the interim evaluations were in many ways akin to ex ante evaluations because there was very limited experience of actual project implementation, given the relatively small level of approvals. In 2012, a forecast of five NSRF impact indicators using modelling techniques has been carried out. However, the number of underlying assumptions applicable suggested that the evaluation results should be considered with caution and that the exercise should be reiterated when an advanced physical progress of projects is achieved. A synthesis of the second round of interim evaluations is on-going.

#### 4.2.3 General approach for planning evaluations during 2014-2020 programming period in Romania

Across successive financial frameworks, including the 2014-2020 programming period, the Funds have been allocated and implemented in Member States according to three layer policy frame, consisting in:

- A macro layer, corresponding to whole territory of the Country, based on a Country strategy, i.e. the Partnership Agreement;
- The meso layer, which is operationalising the priorities in the country strategic framework, i.e. Operational Programmes setting specific objectives and related actions;
- The micro layer, which represents the projects contributing to the programmes objectives.

Consequently, evaluations should cover all these layers, each superior level benefiting by knowledge resulted from the evaluation of lower layer.

Two types of evaluation plans are being designed to conduct evaluations during 2014-2020 programming period: one at the level of the Partnership Agreement and the other related to each OP, thus continuing the evaluation approach of the previous financial framework. While the PA evaluation plan includes topics related to macro level effects and horizontal cross-cutting issues, plans referring to OP evaluation focus specifically on meso and micro layer of policy analysis frame. Since for most of the programmes, micro level evaluation of all projects selected appears unfeasible, a sampling strategy will be applied to sift a representative bulk of projects to be subject of scrutiny. Counterfactual impact evaluations at meso level will be planned when feasible and in combination with theory based evaluation. In other cases theory based evaluation will be used.

<b><u>Partnership Agreement evaluations</u></b>	<b><u>Operational Programmes evaluations</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects at macro level (Europe 2020, GDP, employment, thematic objectives)</li> <li>• Cross-cutting issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme and project effects in relation to programme specific objectives</li> </ul>



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According to EC Guidance document on evaluation plans, *when results materialise in a longer time scale (e.g. infrastructure projects), impact may only be assessed after the end of the programming period: a possibility to cope with this difficulty is to carry out evaluations of the impacts of similar interventions supported in the 2007-2013 programming period.* Taking into account the evaluation experience described in section 2.2., the evaluation plans will take advantage of this flexibility as much as possible.

## 4.3 Evaluation Strategy

### 4.3.1 Main objectives

This evaluation plan is a strategic document that determines the organisation of evaluations during 2014-2020 programming period in the framework of the Partnership Agreement. Its objectives are the following:

- *To enable informed management and policy decisions on the basis of evaluation findings;*

As a result of delivery of this evaluation plan, decision and policy makers are informed on cross-cutting issues and macro-level effects of ESIF in terms of contribution to 2020 Europe Strategy targets, GDP, employment and to the 11 thematic objectives supported under the Partnership Agreement. Optimisation of the current and future country strategies and institutional policy framework will come out from the exercise. In this respect, a communication strategy and mechanisms for findings follow up are included in the Evaluation Plan.

- *To enhance progress reports to be submitted to the EC through inclusion of evaluation results;*

Evaluations will provide useful information to enhance the informative value of the progress reports to be elaborated in 2017 and 2019, in compliance with art.52 of CPR on:

- changes in the development needs since the adoption of the Partnership Agreement;
- progress made towards achievement of the Europe 2020 targets, contribution of the ESI Funds to the thematic objectives, milestones set out in the performance framework of each programme, and the support used for climate change objectives;
- ex ante conditionalities;
- coordination between the ESI Funds and other Union and national funding instruments and with the EIB;
- implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development;
- capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use the ESI Funds;
- reducing the administrative burden on beneficiaries;
- the role of the partners implementation of the Partnership Agreement;
- application of the horizontal principles and policy objectives for the implementation of the ESI Funds.

- *To improve the quality of evaluations through proper planning, including through identification of necessary data and facilitating planning of data collection;*

The evaluation quality is essential for the use and credibility of evaluation findings. In this respect, the Evaluation Plan includes mechanisms for quality assurance both for evaluation reports and evaluation process. It also broadly identifies the data needs and provides a good understanding of the challenges of data collection for the required analyses and evaluation techniques envisaged to be applied.

- *to ensure that resources for funding and managing the evaluations are appropriate.*

Evaluation plan provides a clear picture on the funding needs and sources to carry out the proposed evaluation activities. It also includes a training plan for those responsible with the delivery of the plan. It outlines the structures in charge and the staff responsible to manage the evaluation foreseen.

#### 4.3.2 Evaluation themes

The evaluation themes and related evaluation budgets are presented in the table below. Annexes 2 and 3 provide further details in relation to:

- Main evaluation questions
- Stakeholders to be invited in the Evaluation Steering Committees
- Possible data sources
- Possible evaluation methods
- Description of additional data needed

All evaluations will be carried out by external evaluators, which will ensure their functional independence.

Theme	Name	Value (EUR)
Theme A	Evaluation of the contribution of the Partnership agreement towards Europe 2020 and in achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion	<b>1.200.000</b>
1	Evaluation of the contribution of the Partnership agreement towards Europe 2020	400.000
2	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs <sup>45</sup> - health sector	80.000
3	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - inclusive labour market	80.000
4	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - education sector	80.000
5	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - transport industries	80.000
6	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - energy	80.000
7	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - public administration	80.000
8	Evaluation of the contribution to economic, social and territorial cohesion	320.000
Theme B	Evaluation of the relevance of the development needs since the adoption of the Partnership Agreement	200.000
Theme C	Evaluation of the ESIF support used for climate change objectives	160.000
Theme D	Evaluation of the application of the partnership principle in the implementation of the PA	160.000
Theme E	Evaluation of the actions taken in relation to the application of the sustainable development horizontal principle and the climate change policy objective for the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds	200.000
Theme F	Evaluation of the actions taken in relation to the application of the gender equality and non-discrimination horizontal principle for the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds	120.000

<sup>45</sup> Country Specific Recommendations

Theme G	Evaluation of the actions taken in relation to the application of the demographic change policy objective for the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds	80.000
Theme H	Evaluation of the arrangements that ensure coordination between the ESI Funds and other Union and national funding instruments and with the EIB	200.000
Theme I	Assessment of the fulfilment of applicable ex-ante conditionalities	200.000
Theme J	Evaluation on the progress on the Performance framework	480.000
Theme K	Evaluation of the actions taken to reinforce the capacity of the Member State authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use the ESI Funds	400.000
Theme L	Evaluation of the actions taken, and progress made, with regard to reducing the administrative burden on beneficiaries	320.000
Theme M	Evaluation of the implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development	280.000
<b>Budget for evaluations</b>		<b>4.000.000</b>

### 4.3.3 Time table

Topic	Timetable																																								
	III 2014	IV 2014	I 2015	II 2015	III 2015	IV 2015	I 2016	II 2016	III 2016	IV 2016	I 2017	II 2017	III 2017	IV 2017	I 2018	II 2018	III 2018	IV 2018	I 2019	II 2019	III 2019	IV 2019	I 2020	II 2020	III 2020	IV 2020	I 2021	II 2021	III 2021	IV 2021	I 2022	II 2022	III 2022	IV 2022	I 2023	II 2023	III 2023	IV 2023			
Theme A							P C1			I			X					I			X																I				X
Theme B							P C1			I			X					I			X																				
Theme C							PC2			I			X					I			X																				
Theme D							P C3			I			X					I			X																				
Theme E							P C4			I			X					I			X																				
Theme F							P C2			I			X					I			X																				
Theme G							P C3			I			X					I			X																				
Theme H							P C3			I			X					I			X																				
Theme I			P C6					X				X																													
Theme J			P C7					X				X																													
Theme K							P C8			I			X					I			X																				
Theme L							P C9			I			X					I			X																				
Theme M							P C10			I			X					I			X																				
TA																																									

Legend: P-procurement, C-contracting, I-start of implementation, X-deliverable



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#### 4.3.4 Funding sources

The funding source for this Evaluation Plan is the 2014-2020 Technical Assistance Operational Programme.

### 4.4 Institutional arrangements and capacity building

#### 4.4.1 Evaluation function

The evaluation function includes the responsibilities for delivering the Partnership Agreement Evaluation Plan, and coordinating, monitoring and promoting the quality of evaluation activities throughout the whole evaluation cycle. The evaluation function of the Partnership Agreement is based on three pillars: the Evaluation Central Unit, Evaluation Steering Committee and Evaluation Scientific Committee, which together should enforce the evaluation use and utility.

The Evaluation Central Unit (ECU) is set up in the Ministry of European Funds as part of the General Directorate for Analysis, Programming and Evaluation. The ECU mission is twofold:

- To ensure a coordinated evaluation system and to develop the overall evaluation capacity across programmes;
- To plan and manage evaluations of Partnership Agreement and of programmes for which the Ministry of European Funds acts as Managing Authority.

Concerning the second objective, during the 2014-2020 programming period, the ECU will be responsible with delivery of the evaluation plans designed for Partnership Agreement and Competitiveness, Human Capital, Technical Assistance, Large Infrastructure and Assistance for the Most Deprived programmes. In this sense, the unit designs evaluation terms of reference, participates in the selection of external evaluators, monitors the evaluation activities, controls the quality of evaluation reports and processes and coordinates the dissemination of evaluation results. The Evaluation Steering Committee represents evaluation stakeholders, either public institutions or economic and social partners, which are interested in evaluation results or are essential to conduct the evaluation planned, e.g. data providers. The members of this committee should:

- Verify if evaluation addresses their information needs (by reviewing the ToR proposed by the ECU and inception, progress and evaluation reports elaborated by evaluators)
- Provide information needed to conduct the evaluation;
- Participate in discussions of the results;
- Present opinion on the clarity of the reports;
- Present opinion on the usefulness of the recommendations.

A specific Evaluation Steering Committee will be set up for each evaluation in the PA Evaluation Plan, according to the evaluation topics. A general composition of the ESCs membership per each evaluation theme is shown in Annexes 2 and 3.

Scientific Committees should support the Evaluation Central Unit and Evaluation Steering Committees to ensure the quality of the evaluation at key points: finalisation of the ToR, acceptance of the methodology proposed by the evaluator and approval of various versions of the evaluation reports. In this respect, the Scientific Committee has tasks related to:

- The evaluability of the topic proposed in the TORs and proposed approach;
- Adequacy of the methodology;
- Data accuracy used in evaluation;
- Quality of the analysis;
- Impartiality of the conclusions.



It is envisaged to set up Scientific Committees for the following evaluations:

- Evaluation of the contribution of the Partnership agreement towards Europe 2020 and in achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion - *macroeconomists, specialists in the fields of the EU2020 targets, experts in the various topics under Theme A, and experts in impact assessment*
- Evaluation of the ESIF support used for climate change objectives and Evaluation of the actions taken in relation to the application of the sustainable development horizontal principle and the climate change policy objective for the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds - *experts in the climate change objectives*
- Evaluation on the progress on the Performance framework – experts in statistical analysis

#### 4.4.2 Evaluation coordination mechanism

Chapter 2.1 of the Partnership Agreement sets an institutional coordination mechanism during the 2014-2020 programming period, where the evaluation is an integral part.

- The **Partnership Agreement Steering Committee** has a strategic coordination role and is composed of high level representatives of line ministries and social partners.
- Five **thematic steering sub-committees** have roles connected to complementarity and integrated approach between ESI funds and between them and other funding sources and continuous relevance of the Partnership Agreement.
- Four **functional working groups (FWG)** composed of experts in MEF and MAs and other experts, if the case may be, including socio-economic partners, will ensure harmonisation of approaches, guidance and capacity building in each identified field, including coordination of networks wherever appropriate. Among these four groups, a **Performance Assessment FWG** covers topics related to performance framework, evaluation, reporting, statistics and indicators and financial management and forecasting.

Each layer presented above plays a specific role in evaluation of the Partnership Agreement, as illustrated in the table below:

Coordination structure	Role in PA evaluation process
Partnership Agreement Steering Committee	Approval of the PA evaluation plan
Thematic sub-committees	Examination of evaluation results and follow-up of findings
Performance Assessment FWG	Harmonisation of approaches, guidance and capacity building in the field of Performance framework, Evaluation, Reporting, Statistics and indicators, Financial Management and Forecasting

The Performance Assessment FWG will coordinate an Evaluation Network of evaluation managers and practitioners aiming at promoting quality in evaluation and evaluation culture.

#### 4.4.3 Technical assistance and training

A technical assistance project will be launched to accompany the implementation of the Evaluation Plan during the programming period. The main tasks are related to:

- Checking annually the completeness and accuracy of administrative data sets and preparing them for each evaluation to be carried out under PA, COP, HCOP, TAOP and LIOP evaluation plans;

- Annual syntheses based on evaluation reports at OP level, answering the questions:
  - a. Which is the progress in relation to the thematic objectives since the adoption of the PA?
  - b. Which is the actual and expected contribution of the ESI funds to that progress?
  - c. Which is the institutional policy frameworks facilitating that contribution?
- TA for supporting ECU with ToR preparation, tendering process, quality control of deliverables and composition of the scientific committees for (PA, COP, HCOP, TAOP and LIOP evaluations)
- Providing additional data for evaluations. Data to be provided:
  - Timeseries from the applied macroeconomic model/s on the influence of EU funds on the economy, including the climate change objectives
  - Data on the regional disparities in Romania (timeseries on the socio-economic development, e.g. along the EU2020 indicators)
  - Data on the macroeconomic indicators used in the socio-economic analysis
  - Data on context indicators (including on regional level) related to the climate change objectives: the shift towards the low-carbon economy (TO 4), promotion of climate change adaptation (TO 5), environment protection (TO6) and promotion of sustainable transport (TO 7)
  - Datasets with the indicators related to the 2007-2013 programming period (if feasible not only annual, but also quarterly information on the progress of indicators)
  - Historical HR data - e.g. turnover, trainings
  - Data needed for the international benchmarking on administrative capacity
  - Data on context indicators for the Danube Delta region, e.g. on economic development, fishery, agriculture, environment
- Training plan and its implementation

The training plan will cover both the members of the ECU and Evaluation Steering Committee members. Based on the evaluation themes and the survey of CIAP members, the following training needs will be addressed:

For the Evaluation Central Unit staff:

- methods for impact assessment,
- intervention logic analysis,
- application of macroeconomic models,
- integrated approaches,
- administrative burden assessment,
- using the forecasting tool for the Performance framework,
- climate change objectives.

For the members of the Evaluation Steering Committees:

- EU evaluation guidance and requirements
- Responsibilities as a part of an evaluation steering committee
- EU regulations, including fund-specific regulations and scope of the Thematic objectives
- Performance framework requirements
- Administrative burden on beneficiaries
- Integrated approach to territorial development
- Coordination mechanisms between the ESI Funds and other Union and national funding instruments and with the EIB

The estimated budget for this technical assistance project is around 1,44 million EUR.





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Apart of this project, a smaller TA project is envisaged to animate the evaluation network mentioned in chapter 4.2 Coordination mechanisms. The annual estimated budget is around 50.000 EUR. All these TA activities will be funded under 2014-2020 Technical Assistance Operational Programme.

#### 4.5 Communication and follow-up strategy

Once a final evaluation report is issued, a debriefing meeting will be organised with the members of the Evaluation Steering Committee in order to discuss the evaluation main findings and recommendations. During the meeting, a follow-up action plan with institutional responsibilities and deadlines will be elaborated and agreed. The plan will be taken over by the monitoring function of the Partnership Agreement in order to monitor the achievements of the action plan during its implementation.

The evaluation report will be disseminated to the members of the thematic sub-committees and their findings discussed during regular meetings organised throughout the programming period.

The evaluation report will be uploaded in SFC2014 and in the online evaluation library containing all evaluation reports elaborated since 2007, [www.evaluare-structurale.ro](http://www.evaluare-structurale.ro).



## Annexes

### Annex 1 - The methodology used in answering the evaluation questions

The methodology followed for the ex-ante evaluation was fully detailed in the technical proposal and inception report for the assignment and included all necessary methods to ensure a consistent and objective approach to the individual evaluation questions.

The following is details of the evaluation tools used throughout the process

The methodology followed for the ex-ante evaluation was fully detailed in the technical proposal and inception report for the assignment and included all necessary methods to ensure a consistent and objective approach to the individual evaluation questions.

The following is details of the evaluation tools used throughout the process

I.1 Is there any appropriate analysis in place related to disparities and development needs, with reference to the thematic objectives and the key actions defined within the Common Strategic Framework and the targets established in the recommendations included under article 121 (2) of the Treaty and the Council's recommendations according to Article 148 (4) of the Treaty? How was the partnership principle taken into consideration within the drafting of the PA?

The methodological tools used to answer this question are summarised in the below table.

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	Review of EU (draft) regulations, templates and guidelines. Review and analysis of other MS (draft) PAs. Gather data on the arrangements between different stakeholders and participation in ICPA. Review of 2007-2013 NSRF for Romania to provide a comparison of the needs identified in the two programming periods
Stakeholder Analysis through the Stakeholder Matrix	Stakeholder analysis to identify the participation, interest and activity of stakeholders in the PA development process. Structure the data on the perceptions on the application of the Partnership principle
Checklist	Compliance checklist used to assess the state of completion and compliance of the PA against the requirements of the CSF, PA (PA) template, Common Provision Regulation (CPR), Direction General (DG) guidance papers
Coherence tables	Identified the coherence and link between the CSR, the analysis and the strategic response. Tables were developed for all main challenges identified in the CSR document.
Interviews	Interviews, discussions and workshops with staff members of MEF, programmers, representatives of line Ministries and other stakeholders to establish the internal coherence and external coherence and causal links.
Interviews with stakeholders of finalised TA projects	Collect and confirm data and findings
Online questionnaire	Collect data on the perceptions of the respondents on the process and

	preliminary results of the PA development (Partnership principle)
Venn Diagrams	Visualize the data on the perceptions on the application of the Partnership principle  Contained in first interim report on internal and external coherence.
Theory of change	Analysis of the needs
Expert Panels	Expert Panels are used to provide an outside opinion to the findings and conclusions of the ex-ante evaluators.

I.2 Does the Partnership Agreement includes proposals for the most appropriate operational programs and thematic objectives?

The methodological tools used to answer this question are summarised in the below table.

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	Review of regulations, guidelines and templates, Previous and current versions of PA, Collection of PA data from other Member States
Logical Framework	Review of intervention logic of PA
Quantified SWOT Analysis	In-depth review and recommendations for the SWOT analysis Utilised and updated throughout the process based upon changes to PA SWOT
Focus group	Collect opinions of key stakeholders on the SWOT analysis. Establish link between needs and objectives
Member State comparisons	Analysis of PA preparation in selected Member States with finding providing basis of comparison for QI.4.
Expert Panel	Review of findings and conclusions of ex-ante evaluators

I.3 The results selected for each thematic objective are the most appropriate to each fund of the Common Strategic Framework?

Below is a list of the tools used for the analysis of question I.3.

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	Review of the expected results and EC guidance  Elements/abstracts from quoted documents – quotations, tables, graphs, Document inventory updates (introduction of new studies etc.), Previous studies and analyses
Quantitative Analysis	Descriptive statistics and modelling, Theory of change database, Administrative capacity database, Quantitative SWOT analysis  Collection of information and opinions through interviews, focus groups, CIAP minutes, checklists and benchmarking, stakeholder analysis and observers in meetings and forums

Online questionnaire

Collect data on the perceptions of the respondents on the process and preliminary results of the PA development (priority and objective identification/selection, allocations)

Checklist

The checklist was developed for the Third evaluation report and applied in order to assess the appropriateness of the results for the Fourth evaluation report

Theory-of-change database

The database was developed to gather information about the logic and results of previous interventions in the areas of the 11 EU thematic objectives.

Interviews

Interviews, discussions and workshops with staff members of MEF, programmers, representatives of line Ministries and other stakeholders to establish the internal coherence and external coherence and causal links.

Expert panels

Verification of findings of ex-ante team, commentary of PA. These forums were used as a tool to establish the broad priorities to be financed and the expected results. They include expert panels on smart growth, sustainable growth and on inclusive growth.

I.4 The allocations proposed for each OP and thematic objective are appropriate?

Below is a list of the tools used for the analysis of question I.4.

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	<p>Review of EC guidance and requirements, previous studies and draft Partnership Agreements for 2014-2020 of peer countries</p> <p>Elements/abstracts from quoted documents – quotations, tables, graphs, Document inventory updates (introduction of new studies etc.), Previous studies and analyses</p>
Descriptive statistics and modelling	<p>Analysis of the distribution of financial allocations per thematic objective and peer countries</p> <p>Descriptive statistics and modelling, Theory of change database, Administrative capacity database, Quantitative SWOT analysis</p> <p>Collection of information and opinions through interviews, focus groups, CIAP minutes, checklists and benchmarking, stakeholder analysis and observers in meetings and forums</p>
Online questionnaire	<p>Collect data on the perceptions of the respondents on the process and preliminary results of the PA development (priority and objective identification/selection, allocations)</p>
Benchmarking	<p>Comparisons with peer countries</p>

Interviews	Collect additional information and validate preliminary information
Expert Panels	Verification of findings of ex-ante team, commentary of PA

I.5 Is territorial development approached in an appropriate manner?

Below is a list of the tools used for the analysis of question I.5.

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	Review of EU regulations, guidelines and studies. Review and analysis of existing and draft plans strategies and studies on regional and territorial development in Romania
Interviews	Verification, explanation and enhancement of research and analysis
Expert Panels	Verification of findings of ex-ante team, commentary of PA

I.6 How are the specific needs of the geographical areas most affected by poverty or of the target groups at risk of discrimination or exclusion approached, considering the marginalized communities?

Below is a list of the tools used for the analysis of question I.6.

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	Review of EU regulations, guidelines and studies. Review and analysis of existing policies and strategies on poverty and social exclusion in Romania
Benchmarking	Analysis of 14 overarching indicators based upon EUROSTAT over a 5 year period (where available)
Interviews	Verification, explanation and enhancement of research and analysis
Expert Panels	Verification of findings of ex-ante team, commentary of PA

I.7 How will the new support forms (financial instruments) be used?

Below is a list of the tools used for the analysis of question I.7.

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	An inventory of the FIs used in the MS in 2007-2013 and the lessons learnt  Lessons learnt from the FIs funded from Cohesion policy (including pre-accession) , EARDF and EFFMA  Assessment of the availability of information regarding market failure situations to support decisions  The desk research has been updated for the 3rd and the 4th

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Evaluation Reports.

Case studies	Examples of FI used in EU and non EU countries highlighting specific features advantages and disadvantages with a focus on new instruments; benchmarking the potential FIs in Romania against other countries practices
Interviews	Confirmation of preliminary findings, understanding of the lessons learnt and needs for 2014 2020, stage of analysis for identification of market failure situations, coordination with the national policies  Additional interviews have been conducted for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> evaluation reports in order to detail the use of FIs in rural development and agriculture.
Benchmarking analysis	A selection of examples of FIs funded from public funds from EU MS and non EU states highlighting the potential benefits for the types of FIs identified as potential options based on the existing information regarding market failure situation and favourable environment. Detailed analysis was presented in first coherence evaluation report.
Expert Panels	Verification of findings of ex-ante team, commentary of PA in-depth insights in the particular areas of FIs: capital markets, venture capital, interest and capacity of key players from the banking system, other financial institutions, private funds, understanding the demand and the latent demand, other factors influencing FIs in Romania

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I.8 Are the policies necessary to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities appropriate? How do these policies contribute to the efficient implementation of interventions? Is there any coherence and synergy among these policies?

Below is a list of the tools used for the analysis of question I.8.

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	Review of EU (draft) regulations, templates and guidelines. Review and analysis of other MS (draft) PAs. Review existing and draft Romanian strategies, policies and regulations
Checklist	Compliance checklist used to assess the state of completion and compliance of the ex-ante conditionalities against the requirements of the CSF, PA template, CPR, DG guidance papers
Assessment Grid	EC requirements for fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities
Expert Panels	Verification of findings of ex-ante team, commentary of PA
Workshops	Understanding of programmers and line ministry approach to ex-ante conditionalities and their understanding of the process for fulfilment and assessment criteria

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**II.1 Is the authorities' and beneficiaries' administrative capacity sufficient for an appropriate implementation of CSF funds?**

Below is a list of the tools used for the analysis of question II.1.

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	Review of previous studies and evaluations, the existing strategies that deal with the administrative capacity and the annual reports on the 2007-2013 OPs implementation
Checklist	Compliance checklist used to assess the full range of administrative factors that are relevant to the successful implementation of CSF, separately for authorities and beneficiaries. The first is based on Structures, People and Systems while the latter is based on capabilities on phases of the project cycle.
Questionnaires	Designed for beneficiaries and authorities, which are a part of the EU fund management system
Interviews	Confirmation of preliminary findings from desk research and questionnaires with beneficiaries and authorities of CSF funds.
Focus Group	Focus groups, one with beneficiaries and one with representatives of the authorities, to conduct an in-depth analysis and validation of the desk research, interviews and questionnaires
Database regarding administrative capacity of Authorities and beneficiaries	Using information collected through desk research, interviews, questionnaires and focus groups, the database contains the most important parameters of the checklist

**III.1 Are there enough regulations and procedures in force for the data exchange required by the new regulations? To what extent are electronic systems comprehensive enough? To what extent do electronic systems meet the elements in the checklist to be drafted by evaluators (ease of use, reduced administrative burden, data aggregation, data quality, research options, data availability in due time, data security, etc.?)**

Below is a list of the tools used for the analysis of question II.1.

Tool	Contribution of the tool
Desk research	Review new regulations, the procedures and regulations that are in force and the documentation on the electronic systems for data exchange
Checklist	Compliance checklist used to assess the full range of administrative factors that are relevant to the successful implementation of CSF, which covered ease of use, reduced administrative burden, data aggregation, data quality, research options, data availability in due time, data security etc
Questionnaires	Designed for MIS coordinators and users (both Contracting Authorities and beneficiaries of CSF funds)





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#### Interviews

Confirmation of preliminary findings from desk research and questionnaires with administrators of the electronic systems/SMIS coordinators will be added.

Also interviews to verify the updated status of the analysis for the second iteration of the Analysis

#### Focus Group

Focus groups with representatives of all institutions managing various electronic systems and also with representatives of CSF funds' beneficiaries, to conduct an in-depth analysis and validation of the desk research, interviews and questionnaires

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## Annex 2 - Details on evaluation topics for the Evaluation Plan

Theme	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in ESC	Possible data sources	Possible evaluation methods	Description of additional data needed
Theme A	Evaluation of the contribution of the Partnership agreement towards Europe 2020 and in achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion	See Annex 3	See Annex 3	See Annex 3	See Annex 3	See Annex 3
Theme B	Evaluation of the relevance of the development needs since the adoption of the Partnership Agreement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What changes can be observed in relation to the European and national socio-economic development and priorities since the adoption of the Partnership Agreement? (point 1 in the draft IA)</li> <li>2. Are the main development needs as identified in the adopted Partnership Agreement still relevant? (point 1 in the draft IA)</li> <li>3. Are the main development needs in line with main European, national and regional strategies and policies and Country Specific Recommendations? (point 1 in the draft IA)</li> <li>4. How the (potential) changes in the development needs have been addressed by the ESI Funds? (point 2d in the draft IA)</li> </ol>	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU and national strategic documents</li> <li>- Regulations</li> <li>- Country-specific recommendations</li> <li>- Reports on the implementation of Country-specific recommendations</li> <li>- National Reform Programme and connected reports</li> <li>- OPs and PA (possibly different versions)</li> <li>- Analysis of the socio-economic development and SWOT used in the PA programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk research</li> <li>- Review of statistical data on the socio-economic development</li> <li>- Update of the figures for the macroeconomic indicators used in the socio-economic analysis</li> <li>- Focus groups</li> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Review of the SWOT analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data on the macroeconomic indicators used in the socio-economic analysis</li> <li>- Data on the regional disparities in Romania (timeseries on the socio-economic development, e.g. along the EU2020 indicators)</li> </ul>
Theme C	Evaluation of the ESIF support used for climate change objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the support used for climate change objectives - funds, programmes, interventions, and financial resources (envisaged and absorbed)?</li> <li>2. What are the achieved outputs/results that support the climate change objectives? To what extent outputs had influence on the results?</li> <li>3. What are the expected outputs/results (based on the relevant OP pipelines) that will support the climate change objectives?</li> </ol>	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU2020 strategy</li> <li>- Regulations</li> <li>- OPs</li> <li>- Guidelines for applicants</li> <li>- OP progress reports</li> <li>- Data on the climate related Romanian EU2020 indicators from the NIS and Eurostat (available timeseries)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Literature review</li> <li>- Review of statistical data and analysis of trends related to the climate change objectives</li> <li>- Focus groups</li> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Intervention logic analysis (theory-based evaluation)</li> <li>- Macro-economic modelling</li> <li>- Contribution analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Up-to-date information on the results of completed interventions and planned interventions (gathered from the MAs)</li> <li>- Data from the applied macroeconomic model/s on the influence of EU funds on the climate change objectives (timeseries)</li> <li>- Impact assessments of 2007-2013 OPs</li> </ul>

Theme	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in ESC	Possible data sources	Possible evaluation methods	Description of additional data needed
		<p>4. Which mechanisms brought the biggest outputs/results and what are their features?</p> <p>5. What is the overall and expected contribution of the ESIF in Romania to the climate change objectives?</p>			- Expert panels with climate change experts	- Data on context indicators (including on regional level) related to: the shift towards the low-carbon economy (TO 4), promotion of climate change adaptation (TO 5), environment protection (TO6) and promotion of sustainable transport (TO 7)
Theme D	Evaluation of the application of the partnership principle in the implementation of the PA	<p>1. What is the role of the partners referred to in Article 5 of the CPR in the implementation of the Partnership Agreement? (point 8 in the draft IA)</p> <p>2. What is the involvement of the selected partners in the implementation of programmes, including participation in the monitoring committees of the programmes? (point 8 in the draft IA)</p>	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OP progress reports</li> <li>- OP manuals</li> <li>- Monitoring committee composition and procedures</li> <li>- Monitoring committee minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk research</li> <li>- Stakeholder analysis</li> <li>- Focus groups</li> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Online questionnaire</li> </ul>	
Theme E	Evaluation of the actions taken in relation to the application of the sustainable development horizontal principle and the climate change policy objective for the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds	<p>1. What are the actions taken in relation to the application of the sustainable development horizontal principle? (point 9a in the draft IA)</p> <p>2. What are the actions taken to ensure the promotion and monitoring of this principle in the different types of programmes? (point 9a in the draft IA)</p> <p>3. What are the arrangements implemented to ensure mainstreaming of the climate change mitigation and adaptation horizontal policy objective? (point 9b in the draft IA)</p>	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OP progress reports</li> <li>- OP manuals</li> <li>- OPs</li> <li>- Guidelines for applicants</li> <li>- Project reports (templates)</li> <li>- Monitoring committee composition and procedures</li> <li>- Monitoring committee minutes</li> <li>- EU and national legislation on sustainable development and climate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk research</li> <li>- Stakeholder analysis</li> <li>- Focus groups</li> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Online questionnaire</li> </ul>	
Theme F	Evaluation of the actions taken in relation to the application of the gender equality and non-discrimination horizontal principle for the implementation of the European Structural	<p>1. What are the actions taken in relation to the application of the promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination horizontal principle? (point 9a in the draft IA)</p> <p>2. What are the actions taken to ensure the promotion and monitoring of this principle in the different types of programmes? (point 9a</p>	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OP progress reports</li> <li>- OP manuals</li> <li>- OPs</li> <li>- Guidelines for applicants</li> <li>- Project reports (templates)</li> <li>- Monitoring committee composition and procedures</li> <li>- Monitoring committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk research</li> <li>- Stakeholder analysis</li> <li>- Focus groups</li> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Online questionnaire</li> </ul>	

Theme	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in ESC	Possible data sources	Possible evaluation methods	Description of additional data needed
	and Investment Funds	in the draft IA)		minutes - EU and national legislation on gender equality and non-discrimination		
Theme G	Evaluation of the actions taken in relation to the application of the demographic change policy objective for the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds	1. What are the arrangements to ensure mainstreaming of the demographic change horizontal policy objective? (point 9b in the draft IA) 2. What are the implemented actions, supported by the EU funds, in relation to the demographic change policy objective?	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	- OP progress reports - OP manuals - OPs - Guidelines for applicants - Project reports (templates) - Monitoring committee minutes - Data on demographic change	- Desk research - Stakeholder analysis - Focus groups - Interviews - Online questionnaire	
Theme H	Evaluation of the arrangements that ensure coordination between the ESI Funds and other Union and national funding instruments and with the EIB	1. To what extent the coordination mechanism underlined in the Partnership Agreement is operational and able to: (point 4a in the draft IA) - ensure the complementarity between ESI Funds and other donors, including the EIB - ensure coherence between interventions and complementarity - avoid overlaps between actions - ensure strategic coordination of the implementation of the PA/ ESI Programs (MPASC) - identify developments/changes within various policy areas and their impact on the strategy of the Partnership Agreement and Operational Programmes - ensure continuous relevance of the Partnership Agreement - oversee meeting the ex-ante conditionalities - identify the main bottlenecks in implementation - ensure coherence with other EU and national instruments - harmonise the approaches, provide	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	- Procedures and composition for the: Management of Partnership Agreement Steering Committee procedures; Thematic steering sub-committees; Functional working groups - Minutes of the above committees / working groups - OP progress reports - Progress reports of programmes funded by other donors	- Desk research - Stakeholder analysis - Focus groups - Interviews - Online questionnaire	

Theme	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in ESC	Possible data sources	Possible evaluation methods	Description of additional data needed
		guidance and capacity building, correlation of investments taking into consideration different territorial approaches wherever appropriate 2. In what fields the ensuring of complementarity (demarcation and synergy) is most effective? 3. (If the case) what are the adjustments in the coordination mechanism and what is their justification? (point 4b in the draft IA)				
Theme I	Assessment of the fulfilment of applicable ex-ante conditionalities	1. What are the actions taken to fulfil the ex-ante conditionalities? 2. To what extent the applicable ex-ante conditionalities could be timely fulfilled? 3. What are the main causes of their nonachievement risks? How to treat these causes?	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	- Required laws, strategies, reports, standards, plans, systems, arrangements in order for the ex-ante conditionalities to be fulfilled - Reports of the mechanism for monitoring of the ex-ante conditionalities	- Desk research - Stakeholder analysis - Focus groups - Interviews - Online questionnaire	
Theme J	Evaluation on the progress on the Performance framework	1. What is the potential level of achievement of milestones and targets set in the performance frameworks of the OPs (except NARDP)? 2. What are the main causes of their nonachievement risks? How to treat these causes? 3. For the 2019 report only: An assessment of the reasons for the failure to achieve the milestones and of the measures that will be taken to address them (point 2e in the draft IA)	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partner (TBD)	- Up-to-date information on the PF indicators - OP progress reports - Annual programmes with planned interventions and reports of their implementation (if available) - Guidelines for applicants	- A forecasting tool for the indicators included in the performance framework, based on experience gained - Desk research - Focus groups - Interviews	- Datasets with the indicators related to the 2007-2013 programming period (if feasible not only annual, but also quarterly information on the progress of indicators)
Theme K	Evaluation of the actions taken to reinforce the capacity of the Member State authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use the ESI Funds	1. Which is the actual level of the capacity of the authorities and beneficiaries implementing the ESI Funds? 2. What are the actions taken to reinforce the capacity of the Member State authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use the ESI Funds? (point 6 in the draft IA)	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	- OPs and OP progress reports - Final progress reports of relevant OPTA projects and projects for administrative capacity, financed by the TA axes of all other programmes	- Desk research - Focus groups - Interviews - Online questionnaire - Annually updated capacity index allowing: Internal benchmarking - comparisons	- Historical HR data - e.g. turnover, trainings (to be further specified) - Data needed for the international benchmarking on administrative capacity

Theme	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in ESC	Possible data sources	Possible evaluation methods	Description of additional data needed
		<p>3. Are these actions achieving the intended results?</p> <p>4. Which actions produced the best/lowest results and in which project/programme stage (e.g. project preparation, monitoring, etc.)? What are the reasons?</p> <p>5. What further actions are needed?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historical HR data - e.g. turnover, no of personnel (to be further specified)</li> <li>- Information on national actions to improve administrative capacity of the institutions, e.g. strategies, action plans, structural changes, etc.</li> </ul>	between institutions and international benchmarking (if available)	
Theme L	Evaluation of the actions taken, and progress made, with regard to reducing the administrative burden on beneficiaries	<p>1. What are the actions with regard to reducing the administrative burden on beneficiaries? (point 7 in the draft IA)</p> <p>2. What are the achieved results? (point 7 in the draft IA)</p> <p>3. What further actions are needed</p>	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPs and OP progress reports</li> <li>- Final implementation reports of relevant OPTA projects and projects for reducing administrative burden, financed by the TA axes of all other programmes</li> <li>- Information on national actions to reduce the administrative burden, e.g. strategies, action plans, structural changes, etc.</li> <li>- Study on administrative burden in Romania (2014)</li> <li>- Reports on reducing the administrative burden from the EC Secretariat-General</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk research</li> <li>- Focus groups</li> <li>- Interviews (face to face)</li> <li>- Online questionnaire</li> <li>- Standard methodology of the EC Secretariat-General</li> </ul>	
Theme M	Evaluation of the implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development	<p>1. What are the main actions in the implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development across programmes? (point 5a in the draft IA)</p> <p>2. What is the progress in the implementation of Community led local development (urban, rural and fisheries areas)? (point 5b in the draft IA)</p> <p>3. What is the progress in Romania in the implementation of integrated territorial investments (the Danube Delta region)?</p>	European Commission Ministries Economic and social partners (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OPs and OP progress reports</li> <li>- Guidelines for applicants</li> <li>- Implementation reports of projects following the integrated approach</li> <li>- Integrated territorial development strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk research</li> <li>- Focus groups</li> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Online questionnaire</li> <li>- Expert panels</li> <li>- impact evaluation of CLLD using counterfactual methods</li> </ul>	Data on context indicators for the Danube Delta region, e.g. on economic development, fishery, agriculture, environment

Theme	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in ESC	Possible data sources	Possible evaluation methods	Description of additional data needed
		(point 5c in the draft IA) 4. What is the progress in Romania in the implementation of macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies (EU Strategy for Danube Region, Black Sea Synergy, Blue Growth Strategy, European territorial cooperation)? (point 5d in the draft IA) 5. What is the progress in the implementation of the integrated approach to address needs of geographical area most affected by poverty or of target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion? (point 5e in the draft IA) 6. What are the potential bottlenecks and opportunities for improvement of the implementation of the integrated approach?				

### Annex 3: Details on evaluations under Theme A for the Evaluation Plan

No	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in Evaluation Steering Committee	Evaluations and studies available or planned	Possible evaluation methods	Description of data needed	Expertise
1	Evaluation of the contribution of the Partnership agreement towards Europe 2020	1. Which is the progress made in achieving the national Europe 2020 targets is in terms of - employment rate, - expenditures on R&D, - GHG emissions, - renewable energy, - primary energy consumption, - early leavers from education and training, - tertiary education attainment - people at risk of poverty and social exclusion?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment, Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programme	- Desk research - Review of historical statistical data and analysis of trends - Benchmarking	Statistical data time series	Macroeconomists, specialists in the fields of the EU2020 targets, statisticians



No	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in Evaluation Steering Committee	Evaluations and studies available or planned	Possible evaluation methods	Description of data needed	Expertise
		2. What is the contribution of the ESI Funds to that progress (based on completed interventions)? What is the expected contribution (based on contracted/expected interventions)?	Ministry of European Funds MAs	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at OP level at the time of evaluation	-Literature review - macroeconomic modelling (e.g. RHOMOLO?) - Theory based evaluation methods (e.g. contribution analysis?)	Types of data for RHOMOLO: see <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/work/2010_02_modeling.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/work/2010_02_modeling.pdf</a> , pag.13 Secondary data: allocations per categories of interventions, administrative data on submitted, contracted and completed projects. Primary data: according to the methodology proposed by evaluators	Macroeconomic modelling experts Experts in impact assessment
2	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - health sector	1. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to increasing the efficiency, quality and accessibility in health sector?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Health Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Conceptualising an index for measurement of accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness of health sector using literature review, and its calculation using benchmarking, statistics available, surveys etc.	Statistical data time series	Experts in health systems and policies Experts in statistics
		2. Which is the actual and expected contribution of the ESI funds to that progress?	Ministry of European Funds MA COP, MA ROP, MA ACOP, MA NPRD	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of evaluation	- Theory based evaluations (e.g. contribution analysis)	Data on approved, ongoing and completed projects	Experts in impact assessment Experts in statistics
		3. Which are the institutional policy frameworks facilitating that	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Health	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of	- Desk research, interviews, focus groups		

No	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in Evaluation Steering Committee	Evaluations and studies available or planned	Possible evaluation methods	Description of data needed	Expertise
		contribution?	Ministry of European Funds MA COP, MA ROP, MA ACOP Economic and social partners (TBD)	evaluation			
3	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - inclusive labour market	1. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to strengthening active labour market measures?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Labour Public Employment Service Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Desk research of administrative data, focus groups, interviews	Statistical data time series	Experts in active labour measures and policies Experts in statistics
		2. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to capacity of National Employment Agency?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Labour Public Employment Service Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Conceptualising and index for measurement of Capacity of NAE using literature review and calculating the index using benchmarking, statistics available, surveys etc.	Statistical data time series	Experts in employment systems and policies Experts in statistics
		3. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to activation of unregistered young people?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Labour Public Employment Service Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Desk research of administrative data, focus groups, interviews	Statistical data time series	Experts in youth policies Experts in statistics
		4. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to employability of older workers?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Labour Public Employment Service Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Desk research of administrative data, focus groups, interviews	Statistical data time series	Experts in elderly policies Experts in statistics
		5. Which is the progress in meeting	European Commission	Reports on National	-Desk research of	Statistical data	Experts in social assistance and

No	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in Evaluation Steering Committee	Evaluations and studies available or planned	Possible evaluation methods	Description of data needed	Expertise
		of the Country-specific recommendation related to strengthening the link between social assistance and active labour measures?	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Labour Public Employment Service Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	administrative data, surveys, focus groups, interviews	time series	labour policies Experts in statistics
		6. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to integration of Roma in the labour market?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Labour Public Employment Service National Agency for Roma Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Desk research of administrative data, focus groups, interviews	Statistical data time series	Experts on disadvantaged groups, particularly Roma Experts in statistics
		7. Which is the actual and expected contribution of the ESI funds to that progress?	Ministry of European Funds MA HCOP	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of evaluation	- Theory based evaluations (e.g. contribution analysis)	Data on approved, ongoing and completed projects	Experts in impact assessment Experts in statistics
		3. Which are the institutional policy frameworks facilitating that contribution?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Labour Public Employment Service National Agency for Roma Ministry of European Funds MA HCOP Economic and social partners (TBD)	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of evaluation	- Desk research, interviews, focus groups		
4	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - education sector	1. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to increasing school attendance and	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Education Economic and social	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Desk research of administrative data, focus groups, interviews	Statistical data time series	Experts on disadvantaged groups and education Experts in statistics

No	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in Evaluation Steering Committee	Evaluations and studies available or planned	Possible evaluation methods	Description of data needed	Expertise
		reducing early school leaving?	partners (TBD)				
		2. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to increasing the quality and access to vocational education and training, apprenticeships, tertiary education and of lifelong learning and adapting them to labour market needs?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Education CNDIPT Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Desk research of administrative data, focus groups, interviews	Statistical data time series	Experts on disadvantaged groups and education Experts in statistics
		3. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to access to early childhood education and care?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Education Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Desk research of administrative data, focus groups, interviews	Statistical data time series	Experts on disadvantaged groups and education Experts in statistics
		4. Which is the actual and expected contribution of the ESI funds to that progress?	Ministry of European Funds MA HCOP, MA ROP, MA NPRD	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of evaluation	- Theory based evaluations (e.g. contribution analysis)	Data on approved, ongoing and completed projects	Experts in impact assessment Experts in statistics
		5. Which are the institutional policy frameworks facilitating that contribution?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Education CNDIPT Ministry of European Funds MA HCOP, MA ROP, MA NPRD Economic and social partners (TBD)	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of evaluation	- Desk research, interviews, focus groups		
5	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - transport industries	1. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to promoting competition and efficiency in transport industries?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Transport Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Desk research of administrative data, focus groups, interviews	Statistical data time series	Experts in transport systems and services Experts in statistics
		2. Which is the actual and expected contribution of the ESI funds to that	Ministry of European Funds	Available evaluation reports and/or studies	- Theory based evaluations (e.g.	Data on approved, ongoing and	Experts in impact assessment

No	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in Evaluation Steering Committee	Evaluations and studies available or planned	Possible evaluation methods	Description of data needed	Expertise
		progress?	MA LIOP	at the time of evaluation	contribution analysis)	completed projects	Experts in statistics
		3. Which are the institutional policy frameworks facilitating that contribution?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Transport Ministry of European Funds MA LIOP Economic and social partners (TBD)	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of evaluation	- Desk research, interviews, focus groups		
6	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - energy	1. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to improving the cross-border integration of energy networks and enabling physical reverse flows in gas interconnections?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Economy Economic and social partners (TBD)	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Desk research of administrative data, focus groups, interviews	Statistical data time series	Experts in energy systems and policy Experts in statistics
		2. Which is the actual and expected contribution of the ESI funds to that progress?	Ministry of European Funds MA LIOP	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of evaluation	- Theory based evaluations (e.g. contribution analysis)	Data on approved, ongoing and completed projects	Experts in impact assessment Experts in statistics
		3. Which are the institutional policy frameworks facilitating that contribution?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Economy Ministry of European Funds MA LIOP Economic and social partners (TBD)	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of evaluation	- Desk research, interviews, focus groups		
7	Evaluation of the contribution to CSRs - public administration	1. Which is the progress in meeting of the Country-specific recommendation related to capacity of public administration, in particular by improving efficiency, human resource management, the	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration Economic and social	Reports on National Reform Programmes Country Specific Recommendations	-Conceptualising an index for measurement of administrative capacity development using literature review, and its calculation using	Statistical data time series	Experts in public administration systems and policies Experts in statistics

No	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in Evaluation Steering Committee	Evaluations and studies available or planned	Possible evaluation methods	Description of data needed	Expertise
		decision-making tools and coordination within and between different levels of government; and by improving transparency, integrity and accountability?	partners (TBD)		benchmarking, statistics available, surveys etc.		
		2. Which is the actual and expected contribution of the ESI funds to that progress?	Ministry of European Funds MA ACOP	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of evaluation	- Theory based evaluations (e.g. contribution analysis)	Data on approved, ongoing and completed projects	Experts in impact assessment Experts in statistics
		3. Which is the institutional policy frameworks facilitating that contribution?	European Commission Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration Ministry of European Funds MA ACOP Economic and social partners (TBD)	Available evaluation reports and/or studies at the time of evaluation	- Desk research, interviews, focus groups		
8	Evaluation of the contribution to economic, social and territorial cohesion	1. What type of convergence exists between Romania's territories and between Romania and other Member States?	European Commission Ministry of Regional Development Economic and Social Partners	Available relevant past studies	Econometric testing of sigma and beta convergence (NUTS 3, 2, 1 and if possible LAU 2) based on GDP and/or gross added value	Statistical data time series at LAU 2 and up	Econometrics, statistics
		2. What are the problems and potentials of the territories relevant for Cohesion, Rural Development and Fisheries Policies?	Ministry of European Funds Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development		Comparison of the situation before and after at LAU 2 and up	Statistical data time series at LAU 2 and up	Statisticians
		3. To what extent the territorial distribution of financial assistance is correlated to problems and potentials revealed at previous question?	Ministry of European Funds MAS		Comparing territorial distribution of financial assistance with problems and potential, correlation analysis	Administrative data	Econometricians

No	Topic	Main evaluation questions	Stakeholders to be invited in Evaluation Steering Committee	Evaluations and studies available or planned	Possible evaluation methods	Description of data needed	Expertise
		4. How this territorial distribution may be explained?	Ministry of European Funds MAs		Survey, interviews		





## Annex 4 - Members of the Evaluation Coordination Committee

The following institutions have been represented in the last Evaluation Coordination Committee for approval of project deliverables and progress reports, held 03.04.2015, at MEF headquarters.

<b>Third Evaluation Coordination Committee for discussing and approving the final deliverables of the Ex-ante Evaluation of the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020, and of the Third and the Final Progress Report</b>	
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Ministry of European Funds – General Directorate for Analysis, Programming and evaluation	7
Ministry of European Funds – Managing Authority for Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development	2
Ministry of European Funds Managing Authority for Sectoral Operational Programme Environment	1
Ministry of European Funds Managing Authority for Sectoral Operational Programme Increase of Economic Competitiveness	1
Ministry of European Funds Managing Authority for Operational Programme Technical Assistance	1
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration - Managing Authority for Regional Operational Programme	3
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration - Managing Authority for Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development	1
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration - Managing Authority for the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes	2
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration Managing – Payments Unit	1
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development – Managing Authority for National Rural Development Programme	1
Ministry of European Funds – General Directorate for System Coordination and Technical Assistance, Contracts Management Unit	3
Ministry of European Funds General Directorate for System Coordination and Technical Assistance, SMIS Coordination Unit	1
<b>Total participants</b>	<b>24</b>

During the session, the ECC approved the report, with the condition to address the conformity and quality comments of Beneficiary included in the Quality control grid.

The comments on the report were received and they were addressed in the current version of the report. A treatment table of the stakeholder's comments is presented in the next annex.





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## Annex 5 Summary of Stakeholders comments addressed

No	Stakeholder	Section of the report commented	Stakeholder comment	Addressed? (Y/N)	Explanation
1	MFE DGAPE	Allocation of Financial Resources	Bullet points to be corrected	Y	Points corrected
2	MFE DGAPE	Summary of responses to evaluation questions	Chapter to be extended. It should include main findings, conclusions and recommendations.	Y	Chapter extended and included main findings, conclusions and recommendations
3	MFE DGAPE	QI. 1 (and throughout the report)	Indicate the methods that have been used, also for previous reports and those related to the current and future ones. Also mention the results of the application of these methods	Y	Methods indicated for previous reports and those related to current and future ones. Results of the application mentioned.
4	MFE DGAPE	Appropriate analysis	Questions with respect to coherence of the text, results of analyses made, and other missing elements	Y	Text adapted, results added, and missing elements added or put in annex
5	MFE DGAPE	Partnership Principle	To be extended	Y	Section extended
6	MFE DGAPE	QI.2	Findings of the analysis missing	Y	Findings added
7	MFE DGAPE	QI.3	Elements to be added to Annex (Templates, Literature Reviewed, Database, etc...)	Y	Elements added to Annex
8	MFE DGAPE	Analysis of the results selected per Thematic Objective in the Partnership Agreement (PA) 2014-2020	Redraft taking into account the checklist and address inconsistencies in General Comments section	Y	Section redrafted
9	MFE DGAPE	Compliance with minimum requirements on	Bullet points to be corrected	Y	Points corrected

		thematic concentration from EU regulations			
10	MFE DGAPE	QI.5	Minor restructuring of chapter needed	Y	Chapter restructured
11	MFE DGAPE	Recommendations	Request to be more specific with recommendations	Y	Recommendations made more specific
12	MFE DGAPE	QI.6	Summary of literature review is needed and address minor inconsistencies in text	Y	Literature review provided and minor inconsistencies addressed
13	MFE DGAPE	Conclusions	What findings lead to the conclusion	Y	Findings fine-tuned
14	MFE DGAPE	The process of ensuring fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionalities (QI. 7)	Section to fragmented	Y	Fragmentation addressed
15	MFE DGAPE	List of abbreviations, context of the assessment, strategic context, summary of evaluation questions, evaluation questions	Minor inconsistencies in the text	Y	Changes made
16	MFE DGAPE	Appropriate Analysis	Proposed analysis in some places: had a different focus; was missing logic and/or clarity of analysis; needed to be rephrased; lacked validity; lacked an output	Y	Clarifications made and text re-written or rephrased where necessary
17	MFE DGAPE	The Views and Opinions of the Expert Panels	Questions and comments regarding the topics of the expert panels and validity and correctness of a number of statements and conclusions	Y	Questions and comments addressed and expert panel contributions and conclusions reformulated
18	MFE DGAPE	Compliance of the (draft) Partnership Agreement with CSF, PA, CPR requirements and guidance, 26	This table should be updated based on the 1303/2013 Regulation (Annex 1)	Y	Approved in December, whereas the report was based on the PA from October
19	MFE DGAPE	The partnership principle	Questions and comments regarding changes compared to previous report, the PA template and inconsistencies in the text	Y	Questions and comments addressed and inconsistencies removed.
20	MFE DGAPE	Proposals for Operational Programmes and	The Analysis was too general	Y	Concerns addressed



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		Thematic Objectives			
21	MFE DGAPE	Views Smart Growth Expert	Some statements were incorrect, inconsistent, or not relevant	Y	Statements reformulated
22	MFE DGAPE	PA Development in other Countries	The Annex is missing and not all benchmarking countries were included	Y	The Annex was included and inclusion of benchmarking countries explained
23	MFE DGAPE	General recommendations on the approach to the choice and presentation of the results in the Partnership Agreement (PA) 2014-2020	Textual questions and PA template link missing	Y	Textual questions and PA template link addressed
24	MFE DGAPE	Analysis of the identified results under different TOs in the Partnership Agreement	Questions and comments regarding the results	Y	Analysis of the results clarified
25	MFE DGAPE	Compliance with minimum requirements on thematic concentration from EU regulations	Request for crosscheck/verification tool; question regarding trustworthiness of a source; and comment on compliance with regulation	Y	Crosscheck/verification tool; issue with source changed; and compliance with regulation clarified
26	MFE DGAPE	Analysis, based on the distance from the national 2020 targets, EU and national strategic documents and recommendations	Further clarification needed	Y	Clarification given
27	MFE DGAPE	General conclusions and recommendations	Further input required from macroeconomic expert and argument to be clarified	Y	Requirement acknowledge and asked what modelling is needed; and argument given
28	MFE DGAPE	The views and opinions of the Expert Panels	Questions and comments with respect to: relevancy of some assertions, further clarification on statements, relevancy of some statements	Y	Clarifications given, reformulations of statements and contributions
29	MFE DGAPE	The identification of Territorial needs and disparities in the analysis and Analysis of	Asked to look again at the logic, relevancy and clarity of phrases and statements	Y	Further explanation given to illogical, unclear, and irrelevant phrases and

		Section 3			statements
30	MFE DGAPE	The views and opinions of the Expert Panel	Further explanation given to specific elements statements	Y	Explanation given
31	MFE DGAPE	Question I.6, Vulnerable groups affected by poverty, Responses/solutions for poverty, Specific interventions for vulnerable groups, Complementary geographical disparities related to vulnerable groups or vulnerability	Questions of clarification with respect to the language, logic, concepts, added value in these specific sections of the report	Y	Question for clarification addressed
32	MFE DGAPE	Annex 1 QI.3 Results tables	Clarification on Results required	Y	Clarification given

## Annex 6 Correspondence between conclusions findings and recommendations

Conclusions	Findings which the conclusion was based on	Recommendations
I- Internal external coherence of the PA		
QI.1		
QI.2		
QI.3		
QI.4		
QI.5		
QI.6		
QI.7		
QI.8		
II administrative capacity		
QII.1		
III Electronic Systems		
QIII.1		

## Annex 7 Suggested follow-up on recommendations

Recommendations	Responsible structures	Deadline	Priority (1 – high; 3 – low)
<b>Ex-ante conditionalities</b>			
Strengthen the monitoring and quality control of MEF in order to meet deadlines and ensure the quality of the self-assessments and reporting in the PA	MEF	-	1
Special attention should be paid to the conditionalities under a major risk of not being fulfilled in time, the OPs being strategically and operationally based upon them (A.5-1, A.6-2, A.7-1, A.7-2, A.7-3, A.8-1, A.8-3, A.8-6, A.9-1, A.10-1, A.10-2, A.10-3, A.10-4 and A.11)	All relevant structures	Depending on the ex-ante conditionality deadline	1
The assessment of the fulfilment of applicable ex-ante conditionalities should be among the first evaluations to be launched under the Evaluation plan in order to advise on (possible) weaknesses in the ex-ante conditionalities system.	MEF	Mid 2015	2
<b>Evaluation plan</b>			
Implementation of all themes in the Evaluation plan by external evaluators and in the envisaged time table.	MEF	The deadlines for the assignments should follow the time table in the PA43y Evaluation plan	1
Set up of an Evaluation Steering Committee for each evaluation in the PA Evaluation Plan, following the composition of the ESCs membership per each evaluation theme (which is shown in Annexes 2 and 3 of the final ex-ante evaluation report)	MEF	During the preparation phase of each evaluation in the PA Evaluation plan	2
Set up Scientific Committees that should support the Evaluation Central Unit and Evaluation Steering Committees for the following evaluations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation of the contribution of the Partnership agreement towards Europe 2020 and in achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion - <i>macroeconomists, specialists in the fields of the EU2020 targets, experts in the various topics under Theme A, and experts in impact assessment</i></li> <li>Evaluation of the ESIF support used for climate change objectives and Evaluation of the actions taken in relation</li> </ul>	MEF	During the preparation phase of each of the three evaluations	3



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to the application of the sustainable development horizontal principle and the climate change policy objective for the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds - <i>experts in the climate change objectives</i>			
• Evaluation on the progress on the Performance framework – experts in statistical analysis			
Launch as early as possible an evaluation technical assistance and trainings project, which will accompany the implementation of the Evaluation Plan during the programming period	MA of OP "Technical Assistance" 2014-2020	End of 2015	<b>1</b>
Launch a TA project aimed at animating an Evaluation Network of evaluation managers and practitioners aiming at promoting quality in evaluation and evaluation culture	MA of OP "Technical Assistance" 2014-2020	End of 2015	<b>2</b>







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