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Impact Evaluation of training in the field of Structural Instruments

Lot 1 - Evaluations

Ministry of European Funds, Romania

Evaluation Report

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Data control sheet

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List of abbreviations

ACSI	Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments
CDMS	Coordination Directorate and Monitoring System (Ministry of European Funds)
CUE	Central Unit of Evaluation (Ministry of European Funds)
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
DMAETCP	Directorate Management Authority for European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration)
EC	European Commission
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
GD APE	General Directorate for Analysis, Programming and Evaluations (Ministry of European Funds)
GD HCP	General Directorate for Human Capital Programmes (Ministry of European Funds)
GD TA	General Directorate for Technical Assistance (Ministry of European Funds)
IE	Impact Evaluation
IB	Intermediary Body
KAI	Key Area of Intervention
MA	Managing Authority
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MDCIP	Management Directorate of Contracts, Investment and Protocol (Ministry of European Funds)
MEF	Ministry of European Funds
MRDPA	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration
NAPS	National Agency of Public Servants
NPRD	National Programme for Rural Development

NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OP	Operational Programme
OPTA	Operational Programme Technical Assistance
PA	Priority Axis
PCIUSI	Public Communication and Information Unit on Structural Instruments (Ministry of European Funds)
PPD	Public Procurement Directorate (Ministry of European Funds)
RDA	Regional Development Agency
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
SI	Structural Instruments
SMIS	Single Management Information System
SOP HRD	Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resource Development

Executive Summary

Context and objectives of the Impact Evaluation

The Ministry of European Funds, as Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2007-2013, has contracted EY to perform the *Impact Evaluation of training in the field of Structural Funds*.

First of all, the Impact Evaluation was designed to accumulate new knowledge regarding the impact of the interventions financed through Operational Programme Technical Assistance, Key Area of Intervention 1.3 - *Horizontal training in the field of the management of programme / projects* and to support decisions based on evidence.

In addition, it analysed the effects of interventions financed through Key Area of Intervention 1.3 (expected and non-expected, positive and negative) and estimated the achieved impact (at the level of participants to interventions and at the level of system), based on the indicators presented in the Inception report (Reaction, Learning, Behaviour and Results).

Finally, based on the achieved experience in the implementation of the current Impact Evaluation, a set of recommendations was provided for future projects, in terms of timing, methodology and collection of data.

Reconstruction of the Theory of Change

The Impact Evaluation started with the reconstruction of the Theory of Change behind the Key Area of Intervention 1.3, answering to questions such as *how* and *why* the desired change was expected to happen in the design phase.

In this regard, the Evaluation team has reviewed the programming documents of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2007-2013, as well as the specialized literature and identified: (1) the **problems** that Key Area of Intervention 1.3 was supposed to solve; (2) the **final aim** of Key Area of Intervention 1.3; (3) the **eligible activities**; (4) the expected effects in the short/medium-term; and (5) **contextual factors** that may have affected the implementation.

The objective of the Key Area of Intervention 1.3 was to *prepare highly qualified staff, capable of efficient and effective implementation of Structural Instruments*, in the context characterized by a significant number of newly employed staff within the system for managing Structural Instruments, a lack of experience and knowledge needed for carrying out their jobs and of a weak and heterogeneous capacity for the management of the Structural Instruments, especially at regional and local level.

The following activities were considered as eligible in the programming documents: support for the activities of the Working Group for the coordination of training in the field of managing programmes / projects; creation and update of the database for the planning and monitoring of the training in the management of European Unions funds; organization of training events, including training of trainers, training sessions delivery and elaboration of training materials; elaboration of training reports of activities and guidelines with best practices; and review activities regarding the impact of the trainings.

The expected effects from the training activities realized under the Key Area of Intervention 1.3 were: improved performance of trained staff, enhanced knowledge and skills and improved motivation, reduced turnover and increased organisational performance.

The preliminary reconstruction of the Theory of change, based on the desk analysis, was validated and refined in a Focus group with the representatives of the Managing Authority of the Operational

Programme Technical Assistance and of the Central Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of European Funds, during which a series of contextual factors that may have affected the implementation of the Key Area of Intervention 1.3 were identified. They were: the internal and external mobility of staff (especially between 2010 and 2013, when higher turnover rates were registered at the level of Structural Instruments system), the low effectiveness of Human Resource management (in creating the adequate framework for implementation and dissemination of the gained knowledge) and low stability of the institutional and legislative framework (considering the reorganisation of the Structural Instruments coordination system, but also the changes brought by the new programming period).

Interrogation of the Theory of Change

The Impact Evaluation continued with the interrogation of the reconstructed Theory of Change. In particular, the Evaluation Team provided answers to five Evaluation Questions related to gross effect, net effect, unexpected effects, sustainability, and implementation mechanism. For this purpose, the Evaluation team analysed nine projects focusing on horizontal training in the management of programmes / projects.

The aim of the first Evaluation Question was to assess the progress in relation to the objective of Key Area of Intervention 1.3 "preparing highly qualified staff, capable of efficient and effective implementation of Structural Instruments", in targeted areas and groups, since the adoption of the intervention (gross effect).

The results of the analysis revealed a good progress with regards to the availability of competencies at the level of institutions involved in managing Structural Instruments, the key areas of expertise being covered through basic and advanced trainings (i.e. themes specific to the management of Structural Instruments, like financial management, monitoring and the management of project requests).

However, development of existing knowledge is still needed in specific areas, partially due to the lack of clarity and changing guidelines, procedures and instructions, unfriendly support tools, and variable interpretation of the procedures at different levels of control, and also in the context of the new programming period.

The most urgent training needs are related to: (1) closure of 2007-2013 operational programmes, for which Managing Authorities, Certification and Payment Authority and Audit Authority have to take immediate actions, (2) the changes brought by the new public procurement laws and procedures; and (3) the usage of the new IT systems - SMIS 2014.

Concerning Beneficiaries, they are still confronted with staffing difficulties and shortages of skills, especially in rural or isolated areas. Therefore, the need for training remains high, especially in the field of (1) public procurement, in the context of the new legislative changes; and (2) accessing and implementing projects financed through European Union funds in the 2014-2020 programming period.

The aim of second Evaluation Question was to identify the contribution of Key Area of Intervention 1.3 in achieving the above presented progress (net effect). Furthermore, Evaluation Question 3 investigated other unexpected effects, positive or negative, attributable to the implemented projects under Key Area of Intervention 1.3.

Based on desk research, the Evaluation team appreciated that Key Area of Intervention 1.3 had a high contribution to the achieved progress in ensuring highly qualified staff at the level of institutions managing SI, being the main source of financing for training sessions and a moderate contribution at the level of Beneficiaries, which is also due to the later start of the interventions

targeted towards them.

In addition, the Evaluation team used the self-estimation approach proposed by (Mueller, 2015) who empirically demonstrated its effectiveness for the Impact Evaluation of public policy focusing on changes in self-reported personal variables (for example, knowledge, attitudes, motivation). More specifically, the perceived effects reported by participants in training activities were measured by means of an online survey, submitted to participants to training sessions financed through Key Area of Intervention 1.3.

The questionnaire was structured in relation to each of the four levels proposed by (Kirkpatrick, 1998): **Reaction** - a measure of satisfaction of trainees; **Learning** - a measure of increase in knowledge or capability; **Behaviour** - the transfer of what has been learned back to the workplace; **Results**: the impact of the training on the overall organisational results.

The target population was identified with the help of the Ministry of European Funds who provided the attendance lists of the training sessions. Out of a total number of 5,806 participants, 2,149 had a valid email address and 714 participants answered to the online survey, ensuring a 95% confidence interval, using a percentage level of 0.5.

Responses were received from all targeted groups: institutions involved in managing Structural Instruments (staff of the Managing Authorities and Intermediary Bodies, of the Certifying and Payment Authority and of other structures involved in managing and implementing Structural Instruments) and potential Beneficiaries of Structural Instruments (public administration, business environment, Non-Governmental Organisations and academia).

Best on self-assessment, participants gained new competencies and skills and feel more motivated and efficient at work, as a consequence to trainings provided through Key Area of Intervention 1.3. In addition, the information provided during trainings was assimilated and applied by participants to a large extent (for example, the internal procedures were improved based on the best practices retrieved from other countries). However, the effects could have been enhanced through a better communication and dissemination of gained knowledge among the different departments of the institutions. With regards to unexpected effects, a functional network was created among participants and facilitators, who continued to share information even after the completion of trainings.

Evaluation Question 4 was envisaged to identify whether the achieved progress is sustainable after the completion of the intervention. The analysis was mainly based on the information collected through the interviews with the Beneficiaries of the 9 projects and triangulated by means of desk research.

The analysis indicated a moderate sustainability due to contextual factors: staff turnover, changes of institutional and legislative framework in the context of the new programming period, moderate commitment of the Human Resource management to the training objectives and the limited possibility to provide continuous training and update the gained knowledge.

Nevertheless, a solid base of competencies was created, which can be further extended in the new programming period 2014-2020. At the same time, materials produced under Key Areas of Intervention 1.3 can be updated and further leveraged.

Finally, Evaluation Question 5 was designed to analyse all mechanisms that hampered or facilitated the progress. Moreover, the key contextual features which ensure the sustainability were identified.

The Training Development and Coordination Mechanism, set at the level of the Ministry of European Funds (former Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments), played an important role in ensuring an efficient and coordinated training process at the level of Structural Instruments

system. The training needs analyses were continuously updated by the Training Development and Coordination Unit and new needs were accommodated by the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance in the project selection. The project management team had clear added value as regards the smooth project implementation and quality assurance and the mix of training delivery methods (classical training sessions, organised by internal staff, private companies and national and EU institutions, as well as study visits) ensured the assimilation of different competencies and skills.

On the other hand, the concentration of activities in the last months of the programme negatively impacted the effectiveness and also sustainability. In addition, the public procurement procedures based on the lowest price were not beneficial for the quality of services.

Recommendations for future training interventions

Based on the above finding, a series of recommendations were provided in order to further continue and enhance the achieved progress of Key Area of Intervention 1.3 during the programming period 2014-2020:

Recommendation 1: An extended analysis is required for designing a long-term training plan. The need analysis should focus on possible gaps of competencies within central and local institutions involved in managing and implementing Structural Instruments, but also on the difficulties encountered by Beneficiaries in accessing European Union funds.

Recommendation 2. The Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance should continue to support similar training projects in the next programming period 2014-2020, thus contributing to the continuous development of staff. In particular, a higher focus should be placed on interventions targeting potential Beneficiaries.

Recommendation 3. In order to enhance the institutional commitment towards implementing and supporting the training plans, the Ministry of European Funds should involve a higher number of stakeholders (middle and higher level management) in the designing and implementation phase of the training plan (if the training plan will continue to be developed at a central level).

Recommendation 4. The sustainability of the unexpected effects (creation of networks) should be ensured by developing online platforms envisaged at maintaining and fostering communication among participants and facilitators.

Recommendation 5. In order to mitigate the possible uncovered needs, due to changes in context, a periodic update of the need analysis should be performed in partnership with all relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation 6. The training materials should be published on the official website of the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance.

Recommendation 7. A training coordination mechanism should be re-established during the programming period 2014-2020, in order to ensure the efficiency and coordination of training intervention at the level of Structural Instruments system.

Recommendation 8. The training projects should continue to include a mix of delivery methods: classical training sessions, organised by internal staff, private companies and national and European Union institutions, as well as study visits in other European Union countries. Some other training methods could be tested (for example, e-learning).

Recommendations for future impact evaluations

The main challenges of this Impact Evaluation were related to timeline: the starting date was settled before the completion of the intervention (minimising potential effects), the duration of the

contract was less than 4 months (affecting the data collection process) and only one moment of the programme cycle was analysed (having omitted the baseline).

As a general rule, Impact Evaluations should be scheduled as late as necessary to give time for the expected results to appear and as early as possible to allow their findings to feed into the policy process (European Commission Guidelines, 2015). Achieving this balance is a challenge - the planning has to be realistic and consider the nature of the interventions to be evaluated.

In this regard, we would recommend the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance to carry out Impact Evaluations at different points in time: beginning of the interventions (in order to establish the baseline), middle of the intervention (in order to correct potential deviations from the objective) and at the end of the intervention (in order to identify the achieved progress in relation to the objective).

Moreover, the duration of the evaluation should allow the proper implementation of all data collection tools and should be established in accordance with the envisaged methodologies.

In term of methodological approach, two broad categories of Impact Evaluations are widely recognised, respectively theory-based and counterfactual. Considering the (un)availability of data, this Impact Evaluation used the theory-based approach, following each step of the Intervention Logic, identifying causal links and mechanisms of change, and answering the questions *why* and *how* an intervention works. This approach mainly produces a qualitative estimate of the impacts. It is based on approaches such as process tracing, contribution analysis, general elimination method and includes methods such as literature review, text analysis, interviews, surveys, focus groups and case studies.

Future evaluations could also consider the counterfactual approach, which uses control or comparison groups and answers in a more accurate way the questions *how much of the change is due to the intervention* and *for who*. However, for this type of evaluation, the following prerequisites should be ensured at the beginning of the intervention: credible control or comparison group; a large enough number of participants for statistical significance; good data on supported and non-supported participants and entities to compare results. These conditions can be met with appropriate planning from the outset, hence the importance of a good evaluation plan.

Whatever the methodological approach is selected, evaluations capturing the impacts of training interventions will require micro-data at the level of participants (i.e. updated contact details of participants, date of entering the intervention and completion status). For this purpose, the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance should establish, at the beginning of the programming period, a system to record and store in computerised form data on individual participants in operations (which is also a requirement stipulated in the Common Provision Regulation Article 125(2)(d)).

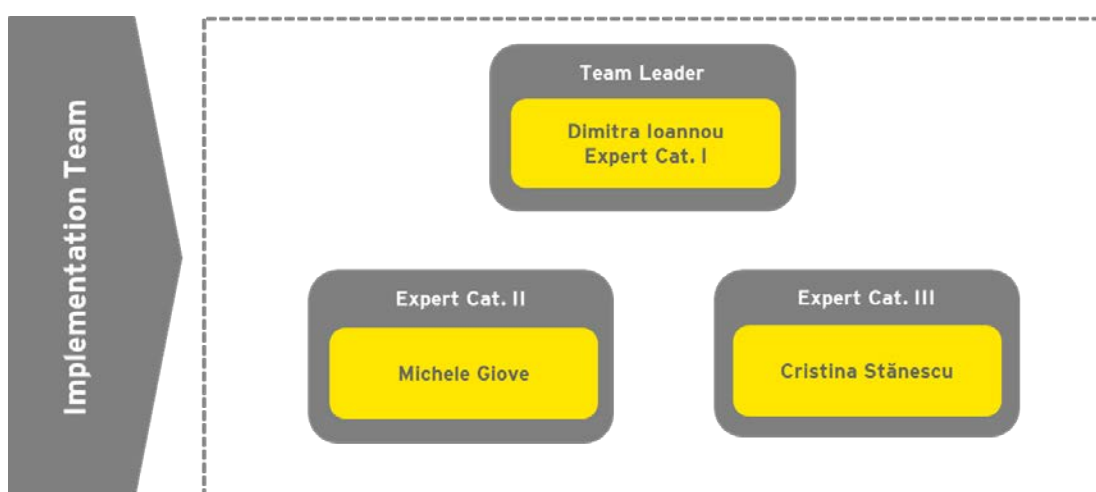
Further data on the physical progress of projects implemented activities and achieved indicators, potential problems encountered or perceived effects of the intervention can be retrieved from primary sources (interviews with Beneficiaries, focus groups with relevant stakeholders) and secondary sources (progress reports of the Operational Programme and of the project). In this regards, a close cooperation is needed between the Evaluation team, Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance and Beneficiaries of the interventions.

1 Context of the Impact Evaluation

1.1 Background information

- P1. The Ministry of European Funds is the Beneficiary of the Framework Agreement for the Evaluation of Structural Instruments in Romania 2011-2015, LOT 1 - Evaluations, financed under Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2007-2013. Within this agreement, it has contracted EY to perform the Impact Evaluation of training in the field of Structural Instruments.
- P2. The contract was signed on 12 August 2015 (which is also the cut-off date of the analysis), having a duration of 4 months and a total value of 310,938.68 RON, including the incidental expenditure. The implementation team combined experts with relevant experience in the evaluation of policies and programmes financed from EU funds:

Figure 1: Project Team



1.2 Objectives of the Impact Evaluation

Overall objectives

- P3. First of all, this Impact Evaluation served to accumulate new knowledge regarding the impact of the interventions financed through Operational Programme Technical Assistance, Key Area of Intervention 1.3 - *Horizontal training in the field of the management of programme / projects* and to support decisions based on evidence. The conclusions of the Impact Evaluation, as well as the related recommendations, are provided within Chapter 8.
- P4. In addition, the Impact Evaluation analysed the effects of interventions financed through KAI 1.3 (expected and non-expected, positive and negative) and estimated the achieved impact (at the level of participants to interventions and at the level of system), based on the indicators presented in the Inception report (Reaction, Learning, Behaviour and Results).
- P5. Finally, based on the achieved experience in the implementation of the current Impact Evaluation, a set of recommendations was provided for future projects, in terms of timing, methodology and collection of data (see Chapter 2).

Specific objective

- P6. In particular, the Impact Evaluation assessed the interventions financed through KAI 1.3,

providing answers to five evaluation questions related to gross effect, net effect, unexpected effects, sustainability, and implementation mechanism. For this purpose, the Evaluation team analysed 9 projects¹ focusing on horizontal training in the management of programmes / projects, as indicated in the ToR.

Table 1: Projects within the scope of the IE

No	Name of the project	SMIS Code	Beneficiary	Contracted value ERDF (RON)	Status as of 12.08.2015
1	Continuous training in managing and coordinating Structural and Cohesion Funds in Romania	5088	Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI)	8,917,237	Finalized financially
2	Continuous training of the CPA's personnel in order to manage efficiently the Structural and Cohesion Funds	14887	Certification and Payment Authority	2,293,416	Under implementation
3	Training of the Beneficiaries and potential Beneficiaries for implementing projects financed from SI	15273	Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI)	3,539,360	Finalized financially
4	Support for the Audit Authority to perform the training activity	25272	Audit Authority	1,925,277	Under implementation
5	Training for the coordination, management and control system of the Structural Instruments in the management of the OPs	41677	Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI)	8,762,897	Under implementation
6	Increasing the efficiency of applying EU legislation concerning state aid applied by training the experts involved in managing EU funds	48106	The National Agency of Civil Servants	2,216,793	Under implementation
7	Applied training for enhancing the institutional capacity of the public administration in Romania for an efficient management of Structural Funds	48159	The National Agency of Civil Servants	12,597,564	Under implementation
8	Improving the Beneficiaries' capacity to implement projects financed from Structural Instruments	48302	Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI)	3,818,199	Under implementation
9	Training in the area of antidiscrimination, gender equality and rights of people with disabilities	52473	National Council for Combating Discrimination	7,103,191	Under implementation

Source: Official documents provided by MEF (2015)

¹ The project implemented by the Ministry of Environment, with the SMIS code 56893, is not in the scope of the IE as it started in 2015 and the impacts are not yet measurable.

1.3 Report structure

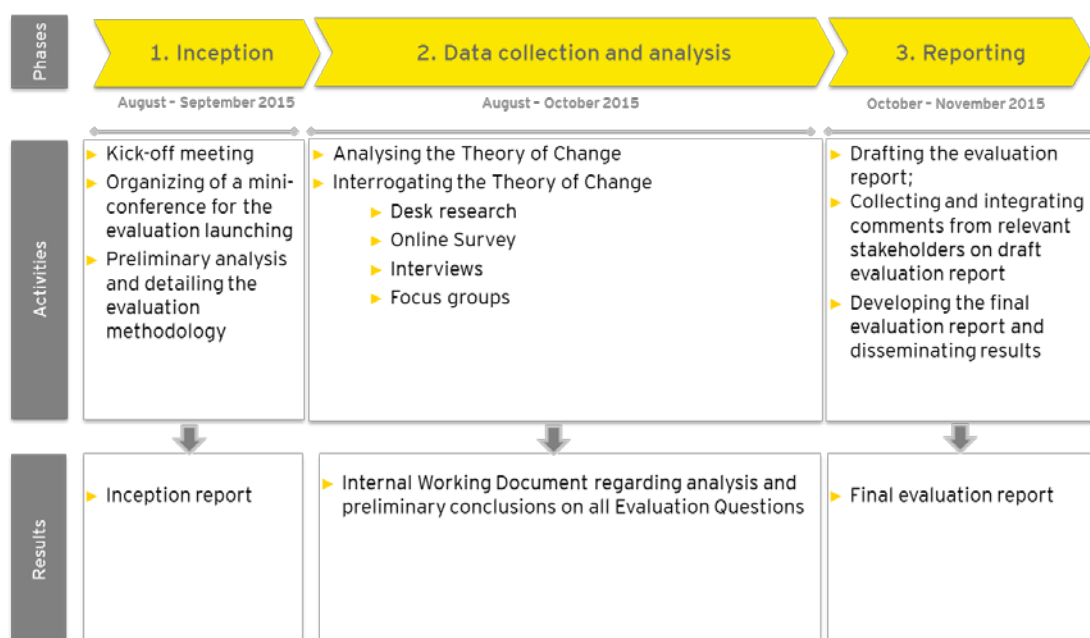
- P7. The report starts with the Executive Summary, presenting in a concise manner the evaluation scope and method, the key findings of the analysis, the conclusions and the recommendations for strengthening the administrative capacity of the authorities and the Beneficiaries.
- P8. Chapter 1 is the **Introduction**, consisting of the background and context information, the objective and scoping of the evaluation.
- P9. Chapter 2, the **Approach and Methodology**, informs in a synthetic manner about the methods applied in the evaluation; a more detailed description of the evaluation process is included at the beginning of each chapter related to the five Evaluation Questions.
- P10. Chapter 3 presents the **Theory of Change underlying the Intervention**, reconstructed by the Evaluation team in the Inception Phase of the project.
- P11. Chapter 4 comprises the **Progress in relation the objectives of KAI 1.3 (EQ 1)**, which is preparing highly qualified staff, capable of efficient and effective implementation of Structural Instruments.
- P12. Chapter 5 identifies **Expected and unexpected effects of KAI 1.3 (EQ 2 and EQ 3)**, at the level of individuals and organisations.
- P13. Chapter 6 evaluates the **Sustainability of the achieved progress (EQ 4)**, taking into consideration the new framework of the programming period 2014-2020.
- P14. Chapter 7 investigates the **Implementation mechanisms (EQ 5)**, both at the level of Managing Authority (i.e. selection of projects) and at the level of Beneficiaries (i.e. implementation of projects).
- P15. Chapter 8 reiterates the **Conclusions and Recommendations** of the Impact Evaluation, proposing at the same time a timeframe for implementation.

2 Approach and Methodology

2.1 Approach and Methodology of the Impact Evaluation

P16. The general approach to perform the Impact Evaluation has considered the methodological phases specified in the Technical Offer and has ensured a solid basis in order to answer the five Evaluation Questions, addressing the gross effect, the net effect, unexpected effects, sustainability of effects and mechanisms implemented. The project has consisted of 3 phases:

Figure 2: Main phases of the Impact Evaluation



Phase 1: Inception

- P17. The inception has provided the possibility to get an in depth understanding of the impact evaluation context, as well as of the key stakeholders' expectations regarding this project. The result is represented by the preparation of the Inception Report, officially approved on 16 October 2015.
- P18. The **Kick-off meeting** with the project team was organized on 20 August 2015, at the Ministry of European Funds premises, and was attended by representatives of General Directorate Analysis, Programming and Evaluation and General Directorate Technical Assistance. The list of participants to the Kick-off meeting is presented in Annex 1.
- P19. The objectives of the meeting were to discuss the general methodological approach (proposed in the technical offer), to collect relevant data (documents at project level, such as financing contracts and progress report) and to agree on the next deadlines.
- P20. Following the Kick-off meeting, the Evaluation team started the **preliminary analysis** with an overview of the strategy and of the implementation documents, at programme and project level, in order to understand the current situation, identify the relevant stakeholders of the evaluation and the necessary/available information.
- P21. Based on the results of this preliminary analysis, the **evaluation methodology**, as presented in our Technical Offer, has been refined. In particular evaluation questions and hypothesis

have been developed in order to ensure that the evaluation covers all the relevant elements. The proposed methodology was discussed with the Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC), on 17 September 2015, and the feedback recorded during this meeting, as well as the comments provided by the Beneficiary, were considered and embedded in the final version of the Inception Report. The list of participants to the ESC meeting is presented in Annex 3.

- P22. The impact evaluation was launched with the occasion of a mini-conference, organized on 10 September 2015, at the Ministry of European Funds premises, and attended by representatives of Department for System Coordination and Monitoring, Directorate for Contract Management, Investments and Protocol, General Directorate Technical Assistance, Unit for Public Information and Communication on Structural Instruments, Directorate Public Tenders, General Department Human Capital Programmes, General Department Analysis, Programming and Evaluation from the Ministry of European Funds and representatives of the National Agency for Civil Servants, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development - Managing Authority for National Rural Development Plan, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration and DG REGIO. The list of participants to the mini-conference is presented in Annex 2.

Phase 2: Data collection and analysis

- P23. The data collection and analysis phase has enabled the Evaluation team to closely interact with various stakeholders involved in the implementation process of KAI 1.3 and has laid the bases for the reporting phase.
- P24. First of all, the Evaluation Team **reconstructed the Theory of Change** behind the KAI 1.3, answering to questions such as *how* and *why* the desired change was expected to happen in the design phase. Both primary and secondary information were used.
- P25. **Desk analysis.** The Evaluation team has reviewed the programming documents of the OPTA 2007-2013, as well as the specialized literature, in order to identify: (1) problems that KAI 1.3 was supposed to solve; (2) the final aim of KAI 1.3; (3) envisaged activities; (4) short/medium-term impact; and (5) contextual factors that may have affected the implementation of KAI 1.3. The full list of documents consulted is specified Annex 4.
- P26. **Focus group.** The preliminary reconstruction of the Theory of change, based on the desk analysis, was validated and refined in a Focus group organized on 8 October 2015, with the representatives of the Managing Authority of OPTA and of the Central Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of European Funds. The list of participants to the Focus Group is presented in Annex 5 .
- P27. Then, the Evaluation team **interrogated the Theory of Change** by means of five Evaluation Questions:
- ▶ EQ1: *What is the progress with respect to the objectives of KAI 1.3?*
 - ▶ EQ2: *To what extent are the achieved progresses due to KAI 1.3?*
 - ▶ EQ3: *Are there are other (unexpected) effects, positive or negative, stemming from the implementation of KAI 1.3?*
 - ▶ EQ4: *To what extent are the achieved progresses sustainable in the long term?*
 - ▶ EQ5: *What mechanisms have been implemented or are necessary to facilitate the effectiveness and the sustainability?*
- P28. The collection tools have enabled the provision of detailed answers to the five Evaluation Questions, thus attaining the specific objective of the Impact Evaluation.

- P29. *The Desk analysis* has enabled the Evaluation team to assess the progress recorded as to the achievement of KAI 1.3 (EQ 1), to anticipate the expected and unexpected effects (EQ 2 and EQ 3), and to assess the sustainability of effects (EQ 4) and identify the mechanisms that have hampered or enhanced the achievement of effects (eg. types of interventions, institutional arrangements, selection of operations) (EQ 5).
- P30. The following documents have been subject to analysis: OPTA 2007-2013 programming documents (including the contextual analysis at the beginning of the programming period), Annual Implementation Reports and the Interim Evaluation Report (presenting the progress recorded during the implementation period), OPTA 2014-2020 programming documents (including an updated section on human resources and training needs at the level of Beneficiaries and SI implementing institutions), as well as other relevant evaluations (such as the Evaluation Report on the administrative capacity of Beneficiaries and SCF managing authorities and the Analysis of the training needs and training Plans prepared by the Ministry of European Funds). The full list of documents consulted is specified Annex 4.
- P31. *Focus group*. Preliminary results of the desk analysis were discussed upon and updated with the information collected during the focus group organized on 8 October 2015, with the representatives of OPTA Managing Authority and Central Evaluation Unit within the Ministry of European Funds (EQ 1 - EQ5). The list of participants is included in Annex 5.
- P32. Topics addressed included: *Presentation of the impact assessment* (Objective of the impact assessment, Synthetic methodology and data collection tools, implementation period), *Analysis of the theory of change underlying the intervention logic of KAI 1.3* (Expected results of KAI 1.3, Potential external and contextual factors) and *Interrogation of the theory of change* (Progresses regarding the objectives of KAI 1.3, Contribution of KAI 1.3 to the progress achieved, unexpected results, sustainability of intervention, implementation mechanisms).
- P33. *Online questionnaire*. In order to fill in the information on the expected and unexpected effects of KAI 1.3 interventions (EQ 2 and EQ 3), the Evaluation team has launched a self-assessment questionnaire, sent to the participants at training activities.
- P34. The pilot online questionnaire was organized during the period 5 - 9 October 2015, and the official online questionnaire during the period 12-30 October 2015. In order to ensure an appropriate response rate, the Evaluation team performed follow-up activities.
- P35. Contact data has been obtained with the help of the Beneficiary - the Ministry of European Funds, which has provided the Evaluation team with the attendance list related to training courses financed under KAI 1.3. Out of the total number of 5,806 participants, 2,149 had valid contact data, and 714 participants responded to the online questionnaire, ensuring a trust range of 95%, by using a percentage level of 0.5.
- P36. The questionnaire structure has been based on a four-level model proposed by (Kirkpatrick, 1998): Reaction - an indicator measuring the reaction of individuals towards the training course and other improvement interventions; Learning: an indicator measuring the learning process; Behavior: an indicator measuring changes and the transfer of knowledge acquired by their application at the workplace; Results - an indicator measuring the training impact on the overall organization results. The template of the questionnaire is included in Annex 6.
- P37. *Interviews*. In order to fill in the information on the sustainability of interventions (EQ 4) and on the mechanisms that have enhanced or hampered the achievement of results (EQ 5), the Evaluation team has conducted interviews with the Beneficiaries of the 9 projects.

P38. Thus, interviews have been organized with representatives of: Ministry of European Funds (on 26 October 2015, for SMIS 5088, SMIS 15273, SMIS 41677 and SMIS 48302), the Certifying and Paying Authority (on 28 October 2015, for SMIS 14887), Audit Authority (on 23 October 2015 for SMIS 25272), the National Agency of Civil Servants (on 23 October 2015 for SMIS 48106 and SMIS 48159) and the National Council for Combating Discrimination (on 22 October 2015 for SMIS 52473).

P39. The interview Guideline had been previously sent to the interviewees and has been structured as follows: General information on the interviewee, General information on the project, expected and unexpected effects of the project, project Sustainability, implemented mechanisms, lessons learned and other comments. The template is included in Annex 7.

Phase 3: Reporting

P40. The reporting phase has led to the preparation of conclusions and recommendations for each Evaluation Question. The result of this Phase is represented by the preparation of the Final Evaluation Report.

P41. Based on the analysis conducted during Phase 2 of the project, the Evaluation team has prepared the draft Final Evaluation Report and sent it to the Beneficiary and to other relevant stakeholders on 17 November 2015, in order to collect potential comments, to improve the structure, as well as the quality of information included. The treatment of recommendations is enclosed in Annex 17.

P42. Following the comments received, the Evaluation team has updated and supplemented the information included in the Final Evaluation Report. The final version of the report was sent on 27 November 2015. Moreover, a meeting was organized with the members of the Evaluation Steering Committee, for the dissemination of results obtained and for approval of Final Reports.

Quality assurance

P43. The deliverables' quality assurance has been carried out on three levels: the team leader has checked the compliance with the contractual provisions and with the objectives and work plan; the team leader and the quality assurance expert have reviewed the consistency and technical quality of the evaluation report and the project director has ensured the contract management at the agreed quality level.

2.2 Methodological limitations

P44. The main challenges of this Impact Evaluation were related to timeline: the starting date was settled before the completion of the intervention (minimising potential effects), the duration of the contract was less than 4 months (affecting the data collection process) and only one moment of the programme cycle was analysed (having omitted the baseline).

Low rate of completed projects

P45. At the time of this IE, most projects - 8 out of 9 - are still under implementations. Since the impact of trainings may make itself visible only after a period of time from its completion, it is expected that the final results to be an underestimation of the overall impacts of all projects under assessment. This limitation was taken into consideration and mentioned when assessing the gross and net effect of the interventions.

Reduced access to data at project level

P46. The methodology developed for interrogating the Theory of Change of the OPTA 2007-2013 relied on project-level analysis, where data was neither always available nor complete, as projects were still under implementation at the moment of the current IE. In this regard, the Evaluation team maintained a close dialogue and intensive cooperation with the Beneficiary of the IE, in order to identify the best possible solutions for gathering the necessary data.

Low availability of historical data

P47. Being an evaluation carried only at the end of the programming period, the Evaluation team had a limited possibility to gather historical data for the baseline and progress of the intervention, the analysis relying only on secondary data - previous available documents. In order to mitigate this challenge, the Evaluation team identified along with the stakeholders the most reliable and extensive sources of information.

Short implementation time

P48. As presented above, the IE was conducted within 4 months, which triggered challenges in terms of involving all stakeholders in the evaluation process (i.e. setting and organising the focus group, interviews and deploying the online survey in less than a month), but also in terms of conducting further analysis for the less conclusive information (i.e. setting additional interviews was not possible, considering the time constraints).

P49. However, as can be noticed from the participants list to the events, a high number of institutions was involved (i.e. Ministry of European Funds - authority for coordination of Structural Instruments, OPTA MA, National Agency for Civil Servants, Certification and Payment Authority, Audit Authority and National Agency for Combating Discrimination). In addition, more than 700 answers were received on the online survey, from the participants to the trainings financed through KAI 1.3.

2.3 Recommendations for future Impact Evaluations

P50. Based on the experience gathered during the implementation of the IE, some improvements were identified in order to adjust the methodological approach for future similar projects. At the same time, the necessary information / data bases are mentioned below.

Timing of impact evaluation

P51. As a general rule, Impact Evaluations should be scheduled as late as necessary to give time for the expected results to appear and as early as possible to allow their findings to feed into the policy process (EC, 2015). Achieving this balance is a challenge - the planning has to be realistic and consider the nature of the interventions to be evaluated.

P52. In this regard, we would recommend the OPTA MA to carry out impact evaluations at different points in time: beginning of the interventions (in order to establish the baseline), middle of the intervention (in order to correct potential deviations from the objective) and at the end of the intervention (in order to identify the achieved progress in relation to the objective).

P53. Moreover, the duration of the evaluation should allow the proper implementation of all data collection tools and should be established in accordance with the envisaged methodologies.

Methodological approach

P54. Two broad categories of impact evaluations are widely recognised, respectively Theory-Based and Counterfactual.

- P55. Considering the (un)availability of data, this IE used the Theory-Based approach, following each step of the intervention logic, identifying causal links and mechanisms of change, and answering the questions *why* and *how* an intervention works.
- P56. This approach mainly produces a qualitative estimate of the impacts. It is based on approaches such as process tracing, contribution analysis, general elimination method and includes methods such as literature review, text analysis, interviews, surveys, focus groups and case studies (EC, 2015)..
- P57. Future evaluations could also consider the counterfactual approach, which uses control or comparison groups and answers in a more accurate way the questions *how much of the change is due to the intervention* and *for who*.
- P58. However, it should be considered that, for Counterfactual evaluations, the following prerequisites should be ensured at the beginning of the intervention: credible control or comparison group; a large enough number of participants for statistical significance; good data on supported and non-supported participants to compare results. These conditions can be met with an appropriate planning from the outset, hence the importance of a good evaluation plan.

Necessary data

- P59. Whatever the methodological approach is selected, evaluations capturing the impacts of training interventions will require micro-data at the level of participants (i.e. updated contact details of participants, date of entering the intervention and completion status). For this purpose, the OPTA MA should establish, at the beginning of the programming period, a system to record and store in computerised form data on individual participants in operations (which is also a requirement stipulated in the CPR Art. 125(2)(d)).
- P60. Further data on the physical progress of projects (i.e. implemented activities and achieved indicators), potential problems encountered or perceived effects of the intervention can be retrieved from primary sources (e.g. interviews with Beneficiaries, focus groups with relevant stakeholders) and secondary sources (e.g. progress reports of the OP and of the project). In this regard, a close cooperation is needed between the Evaluation team, OPTA MA and Beneficiaries of the interventions.

3 Theory of Change behind the KAI 1.3

- P61. Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context (Weiss, 1995). It is focused in particular on mapping out or "filling in" what has been described as the "missing middle" between what a programme or a certain policy does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved.
- P62. Starting from this definition, the Evaluation team has reconstructed the Theory of Change behind the logic of the Intervention of the KAI 1.3 throughout the following steps:

Step 1: Identification of the problem(s) that KAI 1.3 was supposed to solve

- P63. This step has been performed by searching in the available official documents statements that indicate why it was believed necessary to provide trainings for the institutions involved in managing SI and potential Beneficiaries of SI. The focus has been the strategy as described in the fourth revised version of the OP TA. In particular a set of **weaknesses and threats** with their corresponding needs have been identified, and presented in table below.

Table 2: Identification of problems (MEF, OPTA 2007-2013, Revised Version, 2014)

Weaknesses & Threats	Needs
<p>Weakness: Significant number of newly employed within the system for managing Structural Instruments, lacking experience and knowledge necessary for carrying out their jobs</p>	<p>General Training and training on common functions across the Structural Instruments management system, share of experience, information</p>
<p>Weakness: Weak and heterogeneous capacity for the management of the EU Structural Instruments, especially at regional and local level</p>	
<p>Threat: Low absorption</p>	<p>Training of potential Beneficiaries</p>

Step 2: Identification of the final aim of KAI 1.3

- P64. The focus of the second step has been the long-term vision of the KAI 1.3, its final aim that is likely related to needs identified during the previous step and the timescale that lies beyond the timeframe of the OP TA.
- P65. Based on the official documents (MEF, OPTA 2007-2013, Revised Version, 2014) the **final aim** of KAI 1.3 is to achieve *preparation of highly qualified staff, capable of efficient and effective implementation of Structural Instruments*.

Step 3: Identification of the envisaged activities

- P66. In order to address the above needs, the following indicative operations were planned in the programming documents (MEF, OPTA 2007-2013, Revised Version, 2014): Support for the activities of the Working Group for the coordination of training in this field; Creation and update of the database for the planning and monitoring of the training in the management of EU funds; Organization of training events, including training of trainers, training sessions delivery and elaboration of training materials; Elaboration of training reports of activities and guidelines with best practices; and Review activities regarding the impact of the trainings.

Step 4: Identification of the short/medium term impacts

- P67. Having regarded the final aim (i.e. long-term impact) of the KAI 1.3, the short-term/medium

term impacts of training interventions (i.e. expected to be realized by the end of the implementation of the projects) were identified by the Evaluation team, based on literature review and taking into account the programming documents.

Table 3: Expected short-term/medium term impacts based on literature review

Training leads to higher performance of staff
<p>Training has been proved to generate performance improvement related to benefits for the employee as well as for the organization by positively influencing employee performance through the development of employee knowledge, skills, ability, competencies and behaviour (Harrison, 2000).</p> <p>According to literature in the field (Swart, Mann, & S. Brown, 2005), bridging the performance gap refers to implementing a relevant training intervention for the sake of developing particular skills and abilities of the employees and enhancing employee performance. Mann and Brown further elaborate the concept by stating that training enables the organization to identify when workers are not performing well and thus their knowledge, skills and attitudes needs to be adapted according to the firm's needs. As employees possess a certain amount of knowledge related to different jobs, it is important to note that this is not enough and they need to constantly adapt to new requirements of job performance. In other words, organizations need to have continuous policies of training and retaining of employees, and thus not to wait for occurrences of skill and performance gaps.</p>
Training enhances the knowledge and skills of staff and leads to increased organisational performance
<p>According to literature in the field (Wright & Geroy, 2001), employee competencies change through effective training programs. It not only improves the overall performance of the employees to effectively perform the current job but also enhance the knowledge, skills and attitude of the workers necessary for the future job, thus contributing to superior organizational performance. Through training, the employee competencies are developed and enable them to implement the job related work efficiently, and achieve firm objectives in a competitive manner.</p>
Training improves the motivation of staff
<p>Training and development benefits individual employees through helping them make better decisions and effective problem solving, assisting in encouraging and achieving self-development and self-confidence, helping an employee a person handle stress, tension, frustration, and conflict, increasing job satisfaction and recognition and moving the person toward personal goals while improving interaction skills (Sims, 1990).</p>
Training generates lower turnover
<p>Training is one of several human resource practices that can have a considerable impact on employee commitment. Training that seeks to improve employee investment, increase reciprocity, helps the employee identify with the organization, and serves to limit alternative employment options will enhance the employee's commitment to the company. The result of this will be an organization that is better able to retain its workforce. (Brum, 2007).</p> <p>Moreover, dissatisfaction complaints and turnover can be greatly reduced when employees are so well trained that can experience the direct satisfaction associated with the sense of achievement and knowledge that they are developing their inherent capabilities (Pigors & Myers, 1989).</p>

P68. At the same time, based on the literature review, the achievement of the above mentioned impacts is related to the following assumptions:

Table 4: Assumption behind the effectiveness of trainings

A thorough needs assessments can maximise the effects of training
<p>Conducting a thorough needs assessment before training is designed and delivered helps set appropriate goals for training and ensure that trainees are ready to participate (Blanchard &</p>

Thacker, 2007).

Training and development are often used to close the gap between current performance and expected future performance. Training and development falls under HRD function which has been argued to be an important function of HRM (Weil & Woodall, 2005).

Amongst the activities of this function is the identification of the needs for training and development and selecting methods and programmes suitable for these needs, planning how to implement them and finally evaluating their outcome results (McCourt & Derek, 2003).

(Guest, 1997) argues that policies are necessary to ensure that employee performance is evaluated, which in turn ensures that the appropriate training and development take place. With the help of the performance appraisal reports and findings, the organization can be able to identify development needs. However, individuals themselves can help to indicate the areas requiring improvement as a result of the issues raised in the performance appraisal process and their career path needs.

Effectiveness of training varies depending on the training delivery method and the skill or task being trained

The meta-analysis conducted by (Arthur, Bennett, Edens, & Bell, 2003) demonstrates that effectiveness of training varies depending on the training delivery method and the skill or task being trained. For example, the most effective training programs were those including both cognitive and interpersonal skills, followed by those including psychomotor skills or tasks. In addition, (Aragon-Sanchez, Barba-Aragon, & Sanz-Valle, 2003) investigated the relationship between training and organizational performance. Results indicated that some types of training activities, including on-the-job training and training inside the organization using in-house trainers, were positively related to most dimensions of effectiveness and profitability.

There are broadly two different methods that organizations may choose from for training and developing skills of its employees (Nassazi, 2013). These are on-the-job training given to organizational employees while conducting their regular work at the same working venues and off-the-job training involves taking employees away from their usual work environments and therefore all concentration is left out to the training. Examples of the on-the-job training include but are not limited to job rotations and transfers, coaching and/or mentoring. On the other hand, off-the-job training examples include conferences and role playing.

Training efforts will not yield the anticipated effects if knowledge, attitudes, and skills acquired in training are not fully and appropriately transferred to job-related activities

(Kontoghiorghes, 2004) emphasized the importance of both transfer climate and the work environment in facilitating transfer. Transfer climate includes a number of factors including supervisory and peer support, but also task cues, training accountability, opportunities to practice, opportunities to use new knowledge and skills, and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for using new knowledge. Work environment factors include sociotechnical system design variables (e.g., fostering job involvement, employee involvement, information sharing), job design variables (e.g., fostering task autonomy, job match), quality management variables (e.g., employee commitment to quality work, customer focus), and continuous learning variables (e.g., continuous learning as a priority, rewards for learning).

Step 5. Identification of contextual factors that may have affected the implementation of the KAI 1.3

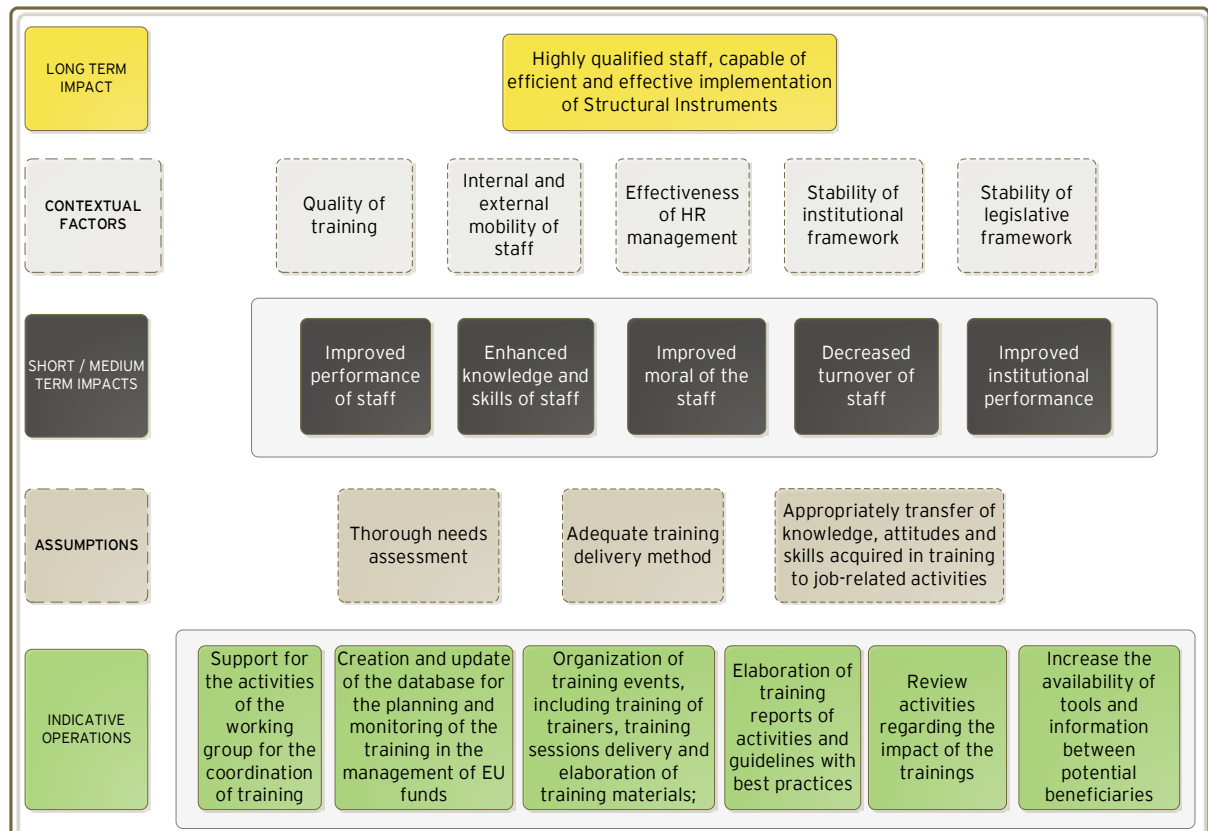
- P69. In order to test the soundness of the Theory of Change additional assumptions were made about the context within which KAI 1.3 operated. Assumptions of this type involve beliefs about conditions that exist in the context/environment which are critical to the achievement of the final aim of the KAI 1.3.
- P70. In particular, based on the focus group with the MFE representatives, the following contextual factors were identified: internal and external mobility of staff (especially between 2010 and 2013, when higher turnover rates were registered at the level of SI system), effectiveness of HR management (in creating the adequate framework for implementation and dissemination of the gained knowledge) and stability of the institutional and legislative framework (considering the reorganisation of the IS coordination system,

but also the changes brought by the new programming period).

Step 6. Reconstruction of the Theory of Change underlying the activities implemented under KAI 1.3

P71. Based on the above findings, the Evaluation team reconstructed the logical cause-and-effect relations between activities envisaged within the programming documents and the expected impacts retrieved from the literature, taking also into consideration the factors which may affect the implementation.

Figure 3: Reconstructed logic of intervention



4 Progress in relation to the objectives of KAI 1.3

EQ 1 What is the progress in relation to the objectives of KAI 1.3

4.1 Description of the evaluation process

- P72. The aim of this EQ is to assess the progress in relation to the objective of KAI 1.3 "preparing highly qualified staff, capable of efficient and effective implementation of Structural Instruments" (MEF, OPTA 2007-2013, Revised Version, 2014), in targeted areas and groups, since the adoption of the intervention (i.e. gross effect).
- P73. In order to reconstruct the progress of the problems and their corresponding needs, the Evaluation team consulted various relevant documents, which are presented Table 5 below, and performed a series of interviews.
- P74. The implementation documents defined **the groups targeted** by the KAI as being: the **institutions involved in managing SI** (i.e. staff of the Managing Authorities and Intermediary Bodies, of the Certifying and Payment Authority and of other structures involved in managing and implementing Structural Instruments) **and potential Beneficiaries of Structural Instruments** (i.e. public administration, business environment, NGOs and academia).
- P75. When referring to the **targeted areas**, the Evaluation team proposed to distinguish between **more developed regions and less developed regions**. At the same time, the potential gaps between the capacity of **central and local** authorities for the management of the EU Structural Instruments were analysed.
- P76. The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed, as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator in order to identify the gross effect of the interventions.

Table 5: Data analysis and collection tools used for EQ 1

Data analysis / collection tools	Final Report
Data analysis tools	
Reconstructing and comparing the context analysis from the beginning of the programming period with the current period based on the following documents: OPTA 2007-2013, Interim Evaluation Report of OPTA, Annual Implementation Reports, Training needs analyses performed by the Ministry of European Funds, Report on the administrative capacity of the Beneficiaries and authorities of CSF funds, OPTA 2014-2020	☑
Data collection tools	
Desk research	☑
Focus group with relevant stakeholders	☑
Online questionnaire with participants to training	☑
Interviews with Beneficiaries	☑

4.2 Findings

- P77. The analysis below presents the progress of the needs identified for KAI 1.3 and underlined in Chapter 3. Having regards that some of needs along with corresponding weaknesses and threats are interlinked, it was preferred to merge them in order to have a more comprehensive image of the context and avoid overlapping.

Weaknesses & Threats	Needs
Significant number of newly employed within the system for managing Structural Instruments, lacking experience and knowledge necessary for carrying out their jobs	General training and training on common functions across the Structural Instruments management system
Weak and heterogeneous capacity for the management of the EU Structural Instruments, especially at regional and local level	

Baseline

- P78. According to (MEF, OPTA 2007-2013, Revised Version, 2014), at the beginning of the programming period 2007-2013, the total number of staff newly employed in the structures expected to deal with the management of EU Structural Instruments was around 1,500 at the end of November 2006. This represented more than 100% increase as compared to December 2005.
- P79. The large influx of people generated relatively large imbalances in knowledge and skills (i.e. operational competences such as capacity to manage the outsourcing of technical assistance activities: terms of reference preparation, guidance to contractor, quality review) among MAs staff. The situation was less advanced at the level of National IBs and more delicate at Regional IBs where the level of knowledge about the Structural Instruments and the weak project management skills were more acute.
- P80. In the same document, it was estimated that at least 1,000 persons/year from the local level should be trained/informed in project preparation, project cycle management, financial management monitoring and reporting.

Progress

- P81. In this context, in 2008, the Training Development and Coordination Unit, established at the level of ACSI, performed an extensive training needs analysis, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, which represented the basis for a common training plan. The staff of the ACSI, MAs, CPA, AA and IBs expressed the need to participate in training programs that would enable them to develop general skills and competencies necessary to a proper implementation of specific activities and attributions (MEF, January 2009).
- P82. Therefore, in 2008 - 2009, support was ensured through OPTA for consolidating the capacity of the coordinating and control structures for SI, as well as for the MA OPTA, other MAs, IBs and AA by organizing/participating in training sessions (approximately 361 persons trained at a basic level, as well as on themes specific to the management of Structural Instruments, like financial management, monitoring, the management of project requests). Furthermore in order to evaluate the level of knowledge of staff within the MA OPTA and their compliance with prevention, detection, report, recovery, and irregularities reporting procedures an exam was performed (MEF, Annual Implementation Report for 2009, 2010).



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- P83. According to the Interim Evaluation of OPTA (MEF, 2010), further training on horizontal issues was required in order to ensure a minimum level of common skills for all personnel involved in the management of SI. However, it should be noted that the need for training decreased with 31.27% compared to 2009 (MEF, April 2011), which can be attributed to the positive results of the previous implemented projects.
- P84. During the period 2011-2015, the training activities were continued and covered all institutions responsible for coordination and management of SI. The sectors in which the newly employees were less experienced and needed support were public procurement and procedures. Furthermore, trainings were provided in the field of budgetary and accounting techniques, state aid and programming of Structural Instruments (trainings organised by the Ministry of European Funds and National Agency for Public Servant). A higher emphasis was placed also on specific training, especially in the field of financial management (organised by the Audit Authority and Certification and Payment Authority) and in the field of anti-discrimination (organised by the National Council for Combating Discrimination).

Current state

- P85. In the current period, although the level of skills and knowledge is perceived as satisfactory (MEF, Ex-ante Evaluations for Partnership Agreement, 2014), the development of existing knowledge is still needed in specific areas (e.g. public procurement, legislation) partially due to the lack of clarity and changing guidelines, procedures and instructions, unfriendly support tools, and variable interpretation of the procedures at different levels of control. Financial management and control are still among the critical areas of expertise, in which the staff need to build knowledge and competences.
- P86. Based on the online survey performed by the Evaluation team (for more details on the methodology, see Chapter 5), the need for training is still high, the most urgent subjects being related to: (1) closure of 2007-2013 operational programmes, for which MAs, CPA and AA have to take immediate actions, (2) the changes brought by the new public procurement laws and procedures; and (3) the usage of the new IT systems - SMIS 2014. At the same time, respondents manifested an interest for the following topics: ex-ante

evaluations, social inclusion, project monitoring, management of irregularities and communication techniques.

Threats	Needs
Low absorption	Training of potential Beneficiaries

Baseline

P87. The first thorough needs analysis at the level of Beneficiaries was performed in 2011 (MEF, April 2011), covering 10 Ministries and 100 other relevant institutions. The results were less positive: most Beneficiaries had a medium level of knowledge concerning SIs and the institutional framework through which SIs is implemented; and a low to medium level of knowledge regarding the national and European rules and regulations for the management of projects financed through SIs. In addition, a high number of Beneficiaries encountered difficulties with regards to the usage of specific tools for planning, management and implementation of projects financed through SI. At the same time, the needs analysis revealed high discrepancies in terms of knowledge and awareness for the 7 Operational Programmes.

Progress

P88. Therefore, in 2011, the Ministry of European Funds launched the first training sessions financed through OPTA and directed at providing adequate knowledge and skills to Beneficiaries and potential Beneficiaries in the field of project management and public procurement contracts (941 trained participants) (MEF, Annual Implementation Report for 2011, 2012).

P89. During 2012-2015, the training activities were continued by MEF, also by means of a new project, and covered the same topics, respectively project management and public procurement. In addition, a new training programme was started in 2013 by the National Authority for Public Servants, for which the effects are expected to be seen in the following years. At the same time, Beneficiaries opted also for private training services available on the market.

Current state

P90. The current level of performance of the operational programmes and individual projects indicate the need for improvements in all types of Beneficiaries. In the case of the large public Beneficiaries, strengthening of the organisational capabilities to ensure sustainable capacities for project management is a key need and includes improved competences in specific areas of expertise (MEF, Ex-ante Evaluations for Partnership Agreement, 2014).

P91. The Beneficiaries' lack of experience or information is reflected both in the rate of rejection of projects during the assessment phase, the low level of refund requests, and in the mistakes realised in implementation that lead to delays in payments and financial corrections (MEF, OPTA 2014-2020, 2014).

P92. In particular, availability of competent staff is more difficult at the local level, and in deprived, rural, or isolated areas. Smaller organisations - public administration or private companies - tend to have more difficulties to mobilise human resources for project development and implementation. In the case of large organisations issues regarding mobilisation of staff are due to increasing workloads, understaffing (in some cases), and weaknesses in organising the work (MEF, Ex-ante Evaluations for Partnership Agreement, 2014).

- P93. Based on the online survey performed by the Evaluation team (for more details on the methodology, see Chapter 5), Beneficiaries continue to express a high need for training in the field of: (1) public procurement, in the context of the new legislative changes; and (2) accessing and implementing EU projects in the 2014-2020 programming period. In addition, trainings are needed for preparing a business plan, performing a cost-benefit analysis, managing human resources and prepare trainers.

4.3 Conclusions

- P94. During the programming period 2007-2013, a good progress was registered with regards to the availability of competencies at the level of institutions involved in managing Structural Instruments, the key areas of expertise being already covered through basic and advanced trainings (i.e. themes specific to the management of Structural Instruments, like financial management, monitoring and the management of project requests).
- P95. However, development of existing knowledge is still needed in specific areas, partially due to the lack of clarity and changing guidelines, procedures and instructions, unfriendly support tools, and variable interpretation of the procedures at different levels of control, and also in the context of the new programming period.
- P96. The most urgent training needs are related to: (1) closure of 2007-2013 operational programmes, for which MAs, CPA and AA have to take immediate actions, (2) the changes brought by the new public procurement laws and procedures; and (3) the usage of the new IT systems - SMIS 2014.
- P97. With regards to Beneficiaries, they are still confronted with staffing difficulties and shortages of skills, especially in rural or isolated areas. Therefore, the need for training remains high, especially in the field of (1) public procurement, in the context of the new legislative changes; and (2) accessing and implementing EU projects in the 2014-2020 programming period.

5 Expected and unexpected effects of KAI 1.3

EQ 2	<i>To what extent is this progress due to KAI 1.3?</i>
EQ 3	<i>Are there are other (unexpected) effects, positive or negative, stemming from the implementation of the KAI 1.3?</i>

5.1 Description of the evaluation process

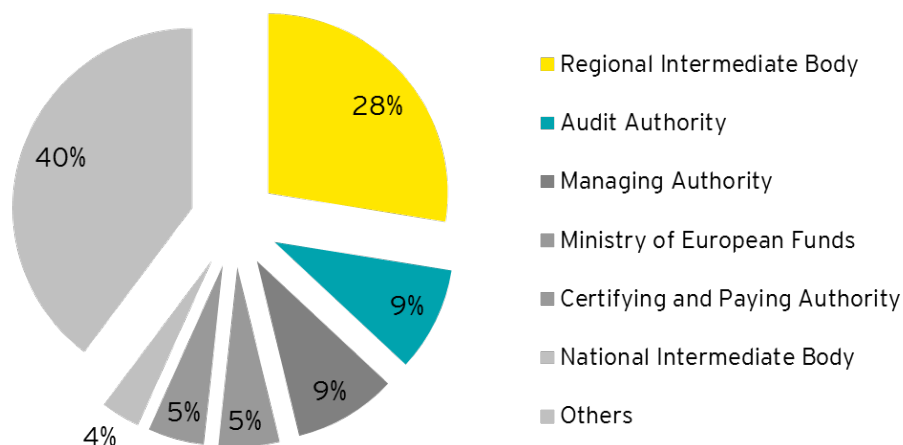
- P98. The aim of EQ 2 is to identify the contribution of KAI 1.3 in achieving the progress presented within the previous chapter (i.e. *net effect*). At the same time, EQ 3 investigates other unexpected effects, positive or negative, attributable to the implemented projects under KAI 1.3.
- P99. Thus, the Evaluation team followed the **self-estimation approach** proposed by (Mueller, 2015) who empirically demonstrated its effectiveness for the Impact Evaluation of public policy focusing on changes in self-reported personal variables (e.g. knowledge, attitudes, motivation). More specifically, the perceived effects reported by participants in training activities were measured by means of an online survey, submitted to participants to training sessions financed through KAI 1.3.
- P100. The questionnaire was structured in relation to each of the four levels proposed by Kirkpatrick (1998)²:
- ▶ **Level 1 Reaction:** a measure of satisfaction (what the trainees thought and felt about the training); evaluation here focuses on the reaction of individuals to the training or other improvement intervention;
 - ▶ **Level 2 Learning:** a measure of learning (the resulting increase in knowledge or capability); evaluation here assesses what has been learned as measured with end of course tests;
 - ▶ **Level 3 Behaviour:** a measure of behaviour change (extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application); evaluation here measures the transfer of what has been learned back to the workplace;
 - ▶ **Level 4 Results:** a measure of results (the effects on the institutional environment resulting from the trained performance); evaluation here measures the impact of the training on overall organisational results.
- P101. The target population was identified with the help of the Ministry of European Funds who provided the attendance lists of the training sessions. Out of a total number of 5,806 participants, 2,149 had a valid email address and 714 participants answered to the online

² The template of the questionnaire is presented in Annex 6.

survey, ensuring a 95% confidence interval, using a percentage level of 0.5³.

P102. As presented in the graph below, responses were received from all targeted groups: **institutions involved in managing SI** (i.e. staff of the Managing Authorities and Implementing Bodies, of the Certifying and Payment Authority and of other structures involved in managing and implementing Structural Instruments) **and potential Beneficiaries of Structural Instruments** (i.e. public administration, business environment, NGOs and academia).

Figure 4: Institutions covered by the online survey



P103. The received answers allowed the Evaluation team to: investigate the perceived change that occurred in the context of the KAI 1.3, and in particular with respect to preparing highly qualified staff in institutions responsible for managing Structural Instruments, but also at the level of Beneficiaries and potential Beneficiaries; map all relevant impacts (expected and unexpected, direct and indirect, positive and negative) produced by KAI 1.3; and measure the extent to which impacts are linked to projects funded under KAI 1.3.

P104. The overall impact of KAI 1.3 was then assembled and critically assessed in discussion with the Beneficiaries of the 9 projects. A final event was organized the 27th of November 2015 in Bucharest in order to present and share the results of the evaluation (Results dissemination).

P105. The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed, as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator.

³ Formula for computing the representative sample size = $[z^2 * p(1-p)/e^2] / [1 + (z^2 * p(1-p)/ e^2N)]$, where N= Population Size; e = Margin of Error (as a decimal); z = Z-score: constant value; e.g. 1.645 for a 90% confidence interval, 1.96 for a 95% confidence interval, 2.58 for a 99% confidence interval; and p = Percentage Value (as a decimal)

Table 6: Data analysis and collection tools used for EQ 2 and EQ 3

Data analysis / collection tools	Final Report
Data analysis tools	
The analysis was performed based on the results of the online survey and the interviews with the Beneficiaries of the 9 projects	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Data collection tools	
Desk research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Focus group with relevant stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online questionnaire with participants to training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Interviews with Beneficiaries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5.2 Findings

- P106. Until the cut-off date of the Impact Evaluation (12 August 2015), KAI 1.3 financed 9 projects aimed at providing trainings to institutions dealing with EU Funds, and thus contributing to the objective of preparing highly qualified staff, capable of efficient and effective implementation of Structural Instruments (for more detailed information on the projects' objectives, targeted groups and implemented activities, please consult Annex 8 - Annex 16.
- P107. The first project, implemented by the Ministry of European Funds, *Continuous training in managing and coordinating Structural and Cohesion Funds in Romania*, provided basic training on horizontal issues, mainly by means of classical seminars and workshops.



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- P108. Considering the persisting need for training, a second project was implemented by the Ministry of European Funds, *Training for the coordination, management and control system*

of the Structural Instruments in the management of the OPs, which provided basic and advanced training on horizontal issues, and included study visits in other EU countries.

- P109. The project implemented by the National Agency for Public Servants, *Increasing the efficiency of applying EU legislation concerning state aid by training the experts involved in managing EU funds*, responded to a more specific need of training, in the field of state aid, by means of classical seminars and workshops. The training materials were published on the official website of the Beneficiary, allowing a higher access to information.
- P110. The Audit Authority and the Certification and Payment Authority implemented two projects focusing on to their specific activities (i.e. financial management and control), respectively *Support for the Audit Authority to perform the training activity and Continuous training of the CPA's personnel in order to manage efficiently the Structural and Cohesion Funds*. The selected training methods were diversified and included classical sessions and workshop organised by internal staff, private companies, national and EU institutions and study visits.



SMIS 14887: Continuous training of the CPA's personnel in order to manage efficiently the Structural and Cohesion Funds

- P111. The project implemented by the National Council for Combating Discrimination, *Training in the area of antidiscrimination, gender equality and rights of the disabled persons*, came as a response to an ex-ante conditionality for Romania and was aimed at acquiring the necessary knowledge in the field of national and European laws and policies related to antidiscrimination, including the enforcement of the United Nation Convention regarding the persons with disabilities, as transposed in the national and European legislation. Information was provided by means of classical seminars and workshops.
- P112. The first training sessions focused on Beneficiaries were organised by the Ministry of European Funds, within the project *Training of the Beneficiaries and potential Beneficiaries for implementing projects financed from Structural Instruments*, and dealt with project management and public procurement contracts.
- P113. Considering the persisting difficulties of Beneficiaries in accessing and implementing

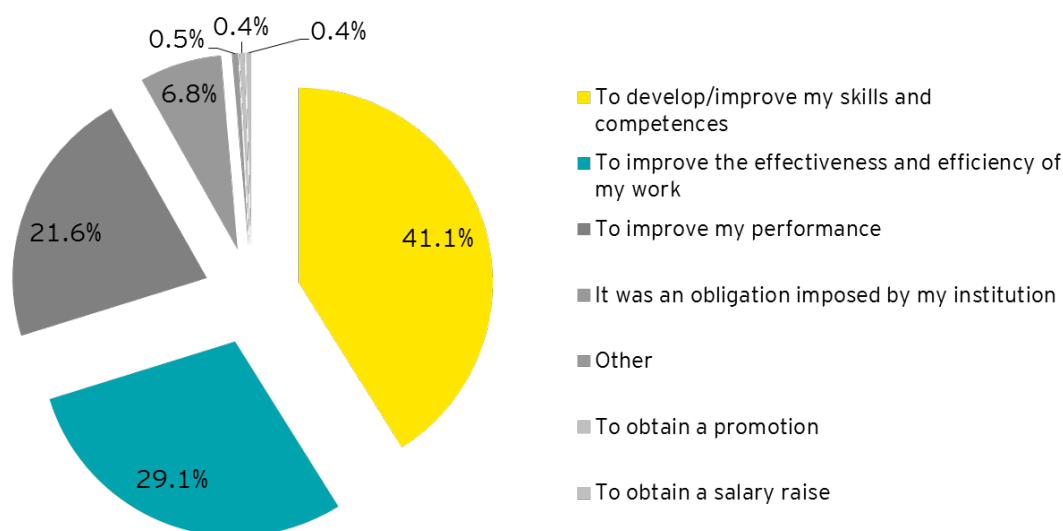
projects, the training interventions were continued by the Ministry of European Funds within a second project, *Improving the Beneficiaries' capacity to implement projects financed from Structural Instruments*. For both projects, the delivery methods consisted of classical seminars and workshops.

- P114. Finally, the National Agency for Public Servants is currently implementing the project Applied training for enhancing the institutional capacity of the public administration in Romania for an efficient management of Structural Funds, for which the results are expected to be more visible in the following years.
- P115. Based on the large number of trained staff within the 9 projects, respectively more than 5,000 persons until the cut-off date of the Impact Evaluation, but also based on the information gathered during the interviews with the Beneficiaries of KAI 1.3 (who stated that, for public administration, OPTA is the main source of financing for trainings on horizontal issues, in the context of SI), we can anticipate a high contribution of KAI 1.3 in achieving the progresses presented in the previous chapter.
- P116. This assumption was tested through the online survey with the participants to training, which gave us the possibility to further asses the perceived effects of the projects at individual level (see below "Reaction" and "Learning") and at institutional level (see below "Behaviour" and "Results").

Level 1: Reaction

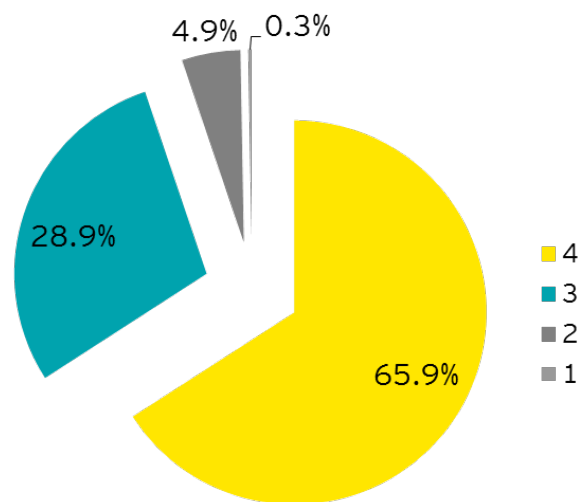
- P117. Evaluation at this level measures how participants in the training programs react to them and the degree of satisfaction. It attempts to assess the participants' perceptions - what the trainees thought and felt about the training. This type of evaluation is often called a "smile sheet": the participants' reactions have important consequences for learning (*level two*), although a positive reaction does not guarantee learning, a negative reaction reduces its possibility.
- P118. In this regard, the first question of the survey was used to identify the participants' expectations at the beginning of the training (see **Figure 5 below**): 90% intended to develop and improve their skills, competences, efficiency and effectiveness at work and the overall performance. Among other 10%, we can mention the desire to find more information on a certain topic or to share information with other people interested in the subject.

Figure 5: Initial expectation of participants to training



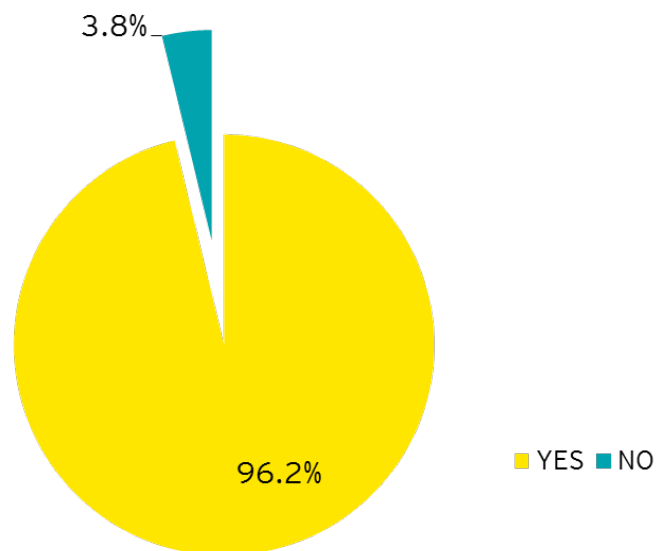
- P119. The overall perceived usefulness of the trainings (see **Figure 6 below**) and the adequacy of delivery methods were high: participants had a positive reaction towards all 9 projects, justified by the experience of trainers, applicability of information and the good timing and location of the training sessions.
- P120. At the same time, respondents suggested to use the same delivery methods in the future - classical training sessions and workshops and study visits. However, they also mentioned that a higher emphasis should be placed on presenting case studies and "practical" situations; and also on choosing the most similar and relevant countries and institutions for exchanges of experience, in order to ensure the replicability of best practices.

Figure 6: Perceived usefulness of the trainings (4=high value; 1=low value)



- P121. The positive reaction to training is also confirmed by the low number of participants who drop off the training (see **Figure 7 below**). They justified their decision by mentioning external factors (i.e. high number of tasks at work - the institution did not allow the participation at training; not informed about the timing of the following modules).

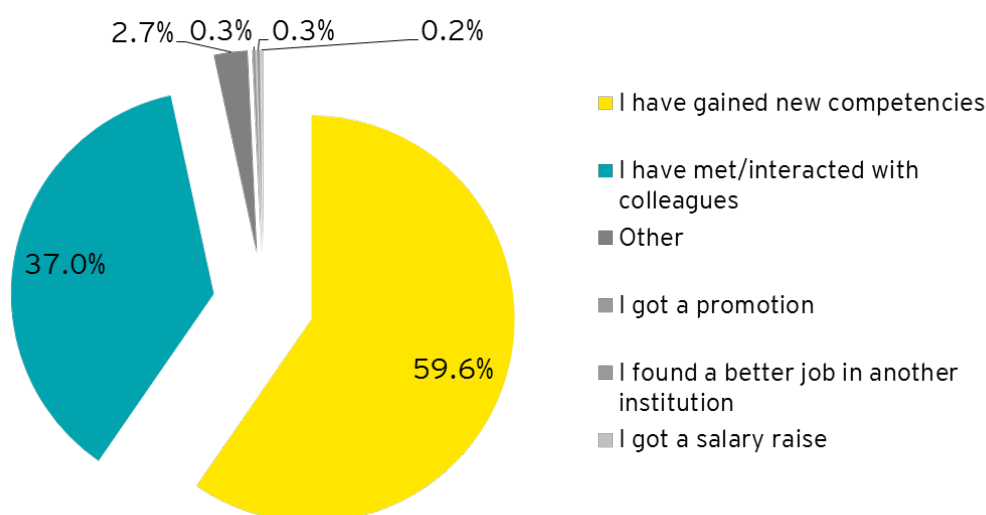
Figure 7: Percentage of participants who completed the training activities



Level 2: Learning

- P122. This level moves the evaluation beyond learner satisfaction and attempts to assess the extent to which participants have advanced in skills, knowledge and/or competencies.
- P123. The perceived benefits at individual level (see **Figure 8 below**), which resulted from the participation in the training, are related to the improvement of competencies (for the 60% of respondents), but also to an increased interaction with colleagues from other institutions (for 37% of respondents).
- P124. During the interviews with the Beneficiaries of the 9 projects, it was mentioned that participants continued to ask and share information among themselves or with the facilitators, even after the completion of the trainings⁴, which led to an **unexpected effect** of the training interventions, respectively the creation of mini-networks.

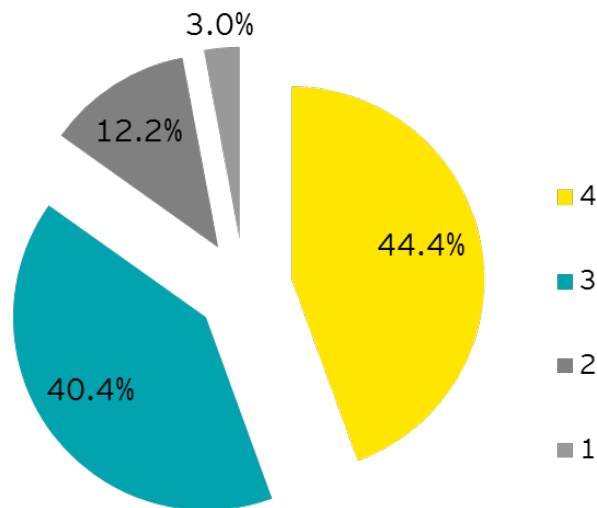
Figure 8: Perceived benefits at individual level



- P125. Additionally, (see **Figure 9 below**), 97% of participants noticed a moderate to high improvement in their ability to perform their activity at work. In particular, the open questions revealed that the staff working in institutions responsible for managing SI learned to solve current problems and interpret different cases based on the shared information with colleagues from other institutions (e.g. Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies), whereas Beneficiaries learned to use electronic means for public tendering, to develop project applications and to overcome critical situations in project implementation.

⁴ For example, they have a direct contact with representatives from Competition Council or National Agency for Public Tenders.

Figure 9: Perceived increase in knowledge or capability to perform activities at work (4=high value; 1=low value)

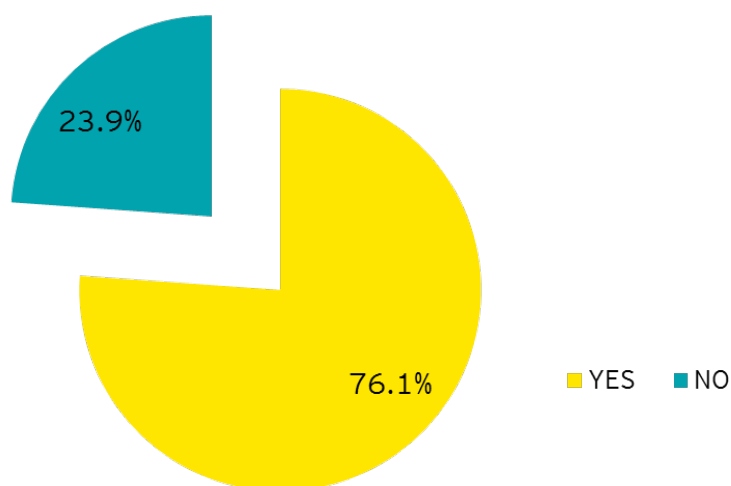


Level 3: Behaviour

P126. This level measures the change that has occurred in learners' behaviour due to the new competencies/knowledge acquired through the training program. Evaluation at this level attempts to answer the question - *Are the newly acquired skills, knowledge, or attitude being used in the everyday environment of the learner?*

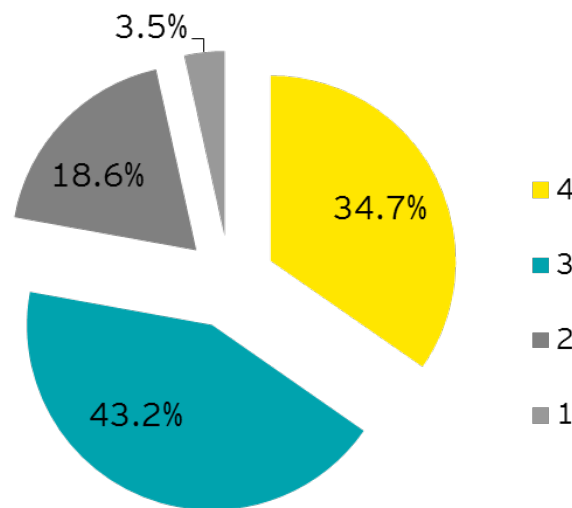
P127. Based on the answered received from the online survey, the knowledge acquired during trainings was assimilated and applied by the 76% of participants. The negative answers can be correlated with the projects implemented at the end of the programming period, for which the gained knowledge is expected to be implemented during the following years.

Figure 10: Percentage of participants who applied the knowledge gained during training



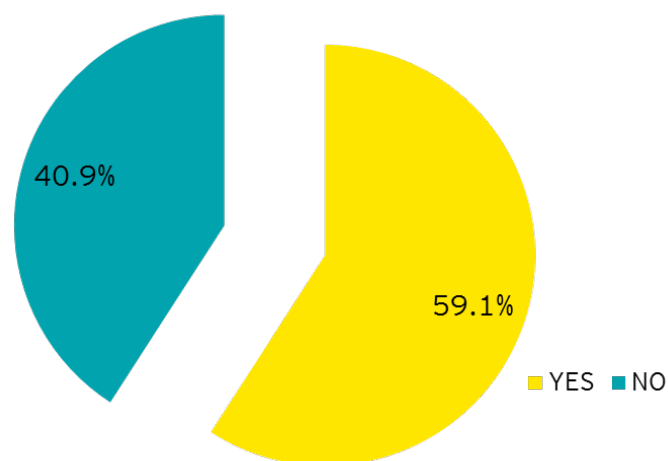
P128. Among those who answered "yes" above, a high number declared that the knowledge acquired during training was implemented to a high extent (see Figure 11 below).

Figure 11: Extent to which the acquired knowledge was applied in performing daily tasks (4=high value; 1=low value)



P129. The training had also a positive effect on participants' motivation (see Figure 12 below): almost 60% of the respondents feel more motivated to accomplish their daily task, as a result of the training received. Based on the open questions, the higher motivation is translated into changed behaviour at work: the staff working in institutions responsible for managing SI expressed a higher confidence when taking decisions or signing documents and Beneficiaries have a higher interest for topics related to EU funds.

Figure 12: Percentage of participant who increased their motivation

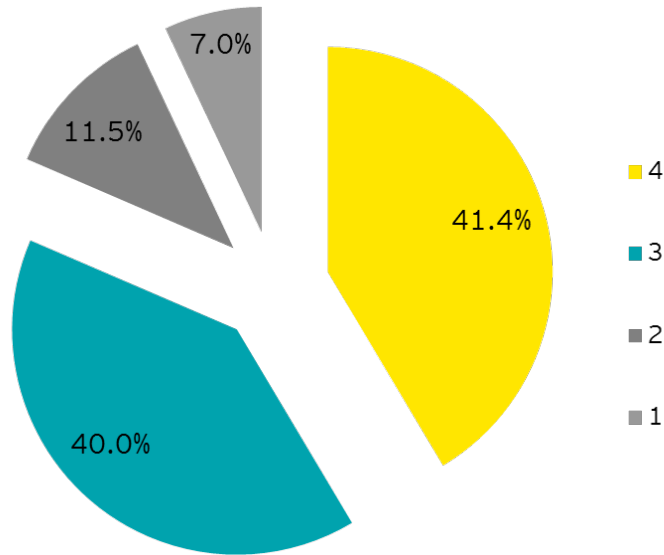


Level 4: Results

P130. Level four measures how the impact of training at individual level are transferred at organizational level. Frequently thought of as "the bottom line," this level measures the success of the program in terms of increased efficiency and efficacy of activities performed. From a business and organizational perspective, this is the overall reason for a training program.

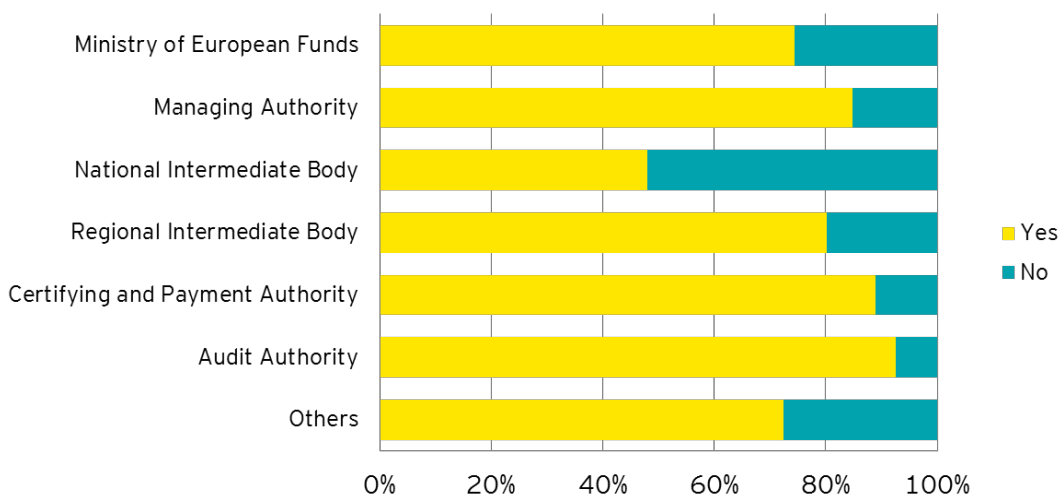
P131. The benefits of implementing the knowledge gained during the training are considered, by most respondents, as being of high value (see Figure 13). According to the open question, the staff working in institutions responsible for managing SI improved communication with Beneficiaries, revised internal procedures and improved their efficiency at work (e.g. less time needed for processing certain requests); whereas Beneficiaries implemented successful projects and finalized public procurements without appeals.

Figure 13: Perceived benefits at institutional level (4=high value; 1=low value)



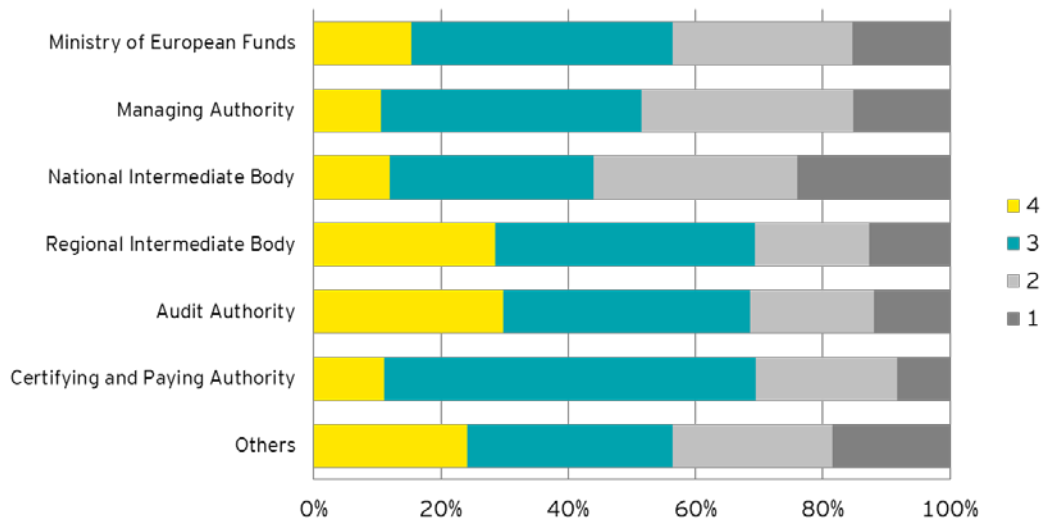
P132. The role of the institution is important in order to ensure the framework for applying the gained knowledge during training, and most respondents received the necessary support (see 14 below). However, some institutions are perceived as being less committed than others to the objectives of the training (i.e. National Intermediate Bodies). This can be justified by the results of the Ex-ante Evaluation for PA (MEF, 2014), which revealed that the legal requirement of having a training plan is fulfilled by all public institutions; however, the ownership of the training plan is sometimes diminished.

Figure 14: Support provided by institutions for leveraging the gained knowledge



P133. The possibility to share information between departments also varies among institutions (see Figure 15 below). This can be justified by the above identified differences in institution's commitment towards the objectives of the training plans (i.e. the organisational culture was transferred at the level of staff, who manifest different degrees in terms of pro-activeness to seek help and communicate with other departments); at the same time, there are cases where the utility of the gained knowledge may be of lower importance to other departments of the institutions.

Figure 15: Dissemination of acquired information among different departments (4=high value; 1=low value)



5.3 Conclusions

P134. KAI 1.3 had a high contribution to the achieved progress in ensuring highly qualified staff at the level of institutions managing SI, being the main source of financing for training sessions and a moderate contribution at the level of Beneficiaries, which is also due to the later start.

P135. In particular, participants have gained new competencies and skills and feel more motivated and efficient at work, as a consequence to trainings provided through KAI 1.3. In addition, the Information provided during trainings was assimilated and applied by participants to a large extent (e.g. improved internal procedures based on the best practices retrieved from other countries). However, the effects could have been enhanced through a better communication and dissemination of gained knowledge among the different departments of the institutions.

P136. With regards to unexpected effects, a functional network was created among participants and facilitators, who continued to share information even after the completion of trainings.

6 Sustainability of the achieved progresses

EQ 4 *To what extent the achieved progresses are sustainable in the long term?*

6.1 Description of the evaluation process

P137. The aim of this EQ is to identify whether the achieved progress is sustainable after the completion of the intervention. The analysis was mainly based on the information collected through the interviews with the Beneficiaries of the 9 projects and triangulated by means of desk research. In particular, the Evaluation team collected information concerning:

- ▶ Financial and human resources used for implementing the interventions
- ▶ Problems encountered and possible solutions to be implemented in the future
- ▶ Success factors of the implemented interventions
- ▶ Sustainability of the results after the completion of the intervention
- ▶ Replicability of the project
- ▶ Possible sources of financing during the new programming period

P138. The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed, as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator.

Table 7: Data analysis and collection tools used for EQ 4

Data analysis / collection tools	Final Report
Data analysis tools	
Assessing the sustainability of the achieved progress based on the interviews held with the Beneficiaries of the 9 project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Data collection tools	
Desk research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Focus group with relevant stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online questionnaire with participants to training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Interviews with Beneficiaries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

6.2 Findings

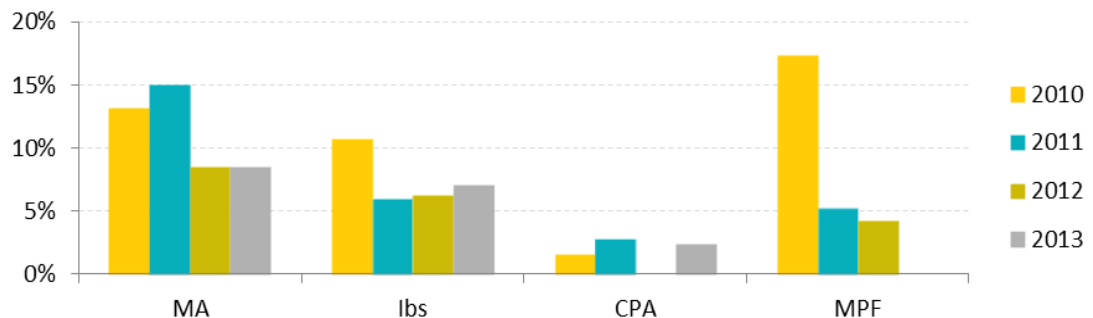
P139. Based on the interviews with the Beneficiaries, but also on the evidence produced by the previous evaluation reports performed within the framework of the OPTA, a series of factors were identified that influenced / may influence the sustainability of the KAI 1.3 interventions.

Staff turnover

P140. The austerity measures undertaken between 2010 and 2013 generated a high turnover and high vacancy rates at the level of some institutions managing SI (see Figure 16 below), which limited the sustainability of the training sessions implemented at the beginning of the programming period, and also triggered the need for further basic trainings for the new comers (based on the information gathered during the focus group with the representatives of the MEF). In particular, high fluctuation rates (>10%) were registered at the level of

SOPIEC, HRD OP, NRDP, SOP E, OP ACD, the ETC programmes and SOP T (MEF, OPTA 2014-2020, 2014).

Figure 16: Turnover rate at the level of MAs, national and regional IBs, CPA and MPF (Unit for Coordination and Verification of Public Procurement⁵)



P141. Currently, the turnover remains one of the main issues that the majority of institutions responsible for managing SI is confronting with (MEF, OPTA 2014-2020, 2014) and raises difficulties due to the lack of experience of newly comers and the relatively long periods of accommodation. The temporary leaves (maternity, studies, others) not included in the vacancies terminology are also present and increase the staffing difficulties.

Stability of the institutional framework

P142. The reorganisation of SI coordination system, in 2012, led to the internal mobility of staff within the system. Although the sustainability of previous implemented training sessions was not altered, considering that the Ministry of European Funds was built on the previous structures for coordination (former ACSI) and implementation (former MA EX-ISPA), benefiting from the experience and expertise of the already trained personnel (MEF, OPTA 2007-2013, Revised Version, 2014), the institutional changes have triggered additional specific needs for training, to respond to the new responsibilities of staff (based on discussion with MFE representatives).

P143. In 2014, the SI coordination system was once again reorganised, in order to better respond to the particularities of the new programming period. The Ministry of European Funds will accommodate the MAs for a number of OPs for which management and coordination strengthening has proved to be needed - competitiveness, human capital and infrastructure (MEF, OPTA 2014-2020, 2014). In addition, the Audit Authority and the Certification and Payment Authority are also expected to take over new responsibilities and change internal procedures. In this context, new specific training needs were already identified in the online survey (for further information, see Chapter 4)

Stability of legislative framework

P144. The new programming period 2014-2020 brought a number of changes in the EU and

⁵ Based on data provided by the Ministry of European Funds

national regulatory framework (e.g. public procurement law), but also in relation to institutional procedures (e.g. new IT system - SMIS 2014). In addition, a new legal framework will be put in place, which will set up the functions and responsibilities of all actors involved in the management and control system, aiming to clearly address the accountability of each institution and the way they interact with each other (MEF, Partnership Agreement, 2014). In this sense, we can reiterate the need for continuous update of the already gained competencies and skills.

Commitment of the HR management to the training objectives

- P145. As presented in the previous chapters, some institutions are perceived as being less committed than others to the objectives of the training plans (e.g. ensuring the adequate framework for applying the gained knowledge and disseminating the gained knowledge across departments). Based on the Ex-ante Evaluation for PA (MEF, 2014), the coordinating bodies (e.g. MFE) and a number of the MAs did not have sufficient authority to ensure the effective implementation of the action plans across institutions (as envisaged by the Training Development and Coordination Unit).
- P146. Nevertheless, there is a common perception that, due to the trainings provided in the programming period 2007-2013, a solid base of competencies was created, which can be further extended in the new programming period 2014-2020.
- P147. In this regard, four Beneficiaries of the previous training projects stated that are already planning the new projects for the following years, under the framework of OPTA and OPAC: the National Agency for Civil Servants submitted a project fiche containing the project idea of *state aid training for local staff*, which was approved by the OPTA Monitoring Committee in June 2015; the National Council for Combating Discrimination continued to provide training regarding the right to non-discrimination, in accordance with its delegated functions, and plans to implement an OPAC funded project whose activities will also include *training on non-discrimination and equal opportunities for the staff in central and local public administration*; and the Audit Authority and the Certification and Payment Authority stated that training will remain a central part of the personnel development and the main source of financing is OPTA.
- P148. In addition, the training materials and manuals developed within the 9 projects financed by KAI 1.3 can be updated and reused for other trainings (based on the interviews with the Beneficiaries) or disseminated to the wide public, by publishing them on official websites.

6.3 Conclusions

- P149. The achieved progresses have a moderate sustainability due to contextual factors: staff turnover, changes of institutional and legislative framework, moderate commitment of the HR management to the training objectives and the limited possibility to provide continuous training and update the gained knowledge.
- P150. Nevertheless, a solid base of competencies was created, which can be further extended in the new programming period 2014-2014. At the same time, materials produced under KAI 1.3 can be updated and further leveraged.

7 Implementation mechanisms

EQ 5

What mechanisms have been implemented or are necessary to facilitate the effectiveness and the sustainability?

7.1 Description of the evaluation process

- P151. The aim of this EQ is to identify and analyse all mechanisms (e.g. types of interventions, institutional arrangements, selection of operations) that hampered or facilitated the progress. At the same time, the key contextual features which ensure the sustainability were identified.
- P152. The Evaluation team analysed relevant documents at programme level (i.e. Operational Programme Technical Assistance, Annual Implementation Reports, Framework Implementation Document) and project level (i.e. Financing Contract, Progress Reports) in order to understand the design of the intervention. At the same time, the information retrieved from the interviews with the Beneficiaries was used.
- P153. The table below summarizes the evaluation activities performed, as well as the data analysis and data collection tools applied by the Evaluator.

Table 8: Data analysis and collection tools used for EQ 4

Data analysis / collection tools	Final Report
Data analysis tools	
Identifying and analysing the mechanisms that hampered or facilitated the progress based on documents at programme and project level, as well as on the interviews held with the Beneficiaries of the 9 project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Data collection tools	
Desk research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Focus group with relevant stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online survey with participants to training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Interviews with Beneficiaries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

7.2 Findings

TDCM played an important role in ensuring an efficient and coordinated training process at the level of SI system

- P154. As part of the Training Development and Coordination Mechanism (TDCM), the Training Development and Coordination Unit (TDCU) was established in 2004 in order to provide the necessary support for the employees of the Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI) and other partner institutions in developing of an efficient and coordinated training plan in the field of European funds.
- P155. At the beginning of the programming period 2007-2013, the TDCU was designed to organize the delivery of a training package that sought to be developed and implemented on a permanent basis for the new comers in the system. This training package was envisioned to provide basic training and information about the Structural Instruments, the NSRF, the OPs, the institutional system for the Structural Instruments and the implementation mechanisms.

- P156. The trainings were also planned to cover functions that are similarly carried out regardless of the OP, such as financial management and control, audit, programming etc., as well as horizontal issues, such as public procurement and state aid.
- P157. In September 2008, TDCU began the identification of training needs for the 2009 - 2011 timeframe. The training needs were closely analysed and adjusted to take into account the previously accumulated experience gained by employees. Subsequent updates were made for the years 2010-2011 and 2011-2013.
- P158. However, in the last years, the mechanism was less used mainly due to the weakened training function in a number of MAs, the difficulties to access the TA resources, and the limited availability of staff to attend training courses under the pressure of increased workloads (MEF, Ex-ante Evaluations for Partnership Agreement, 2014).
- P159. Based on the interviews with the Beneficiaries of the 9 projects, the accuracy and the coordination of training needs analyses and training plans performed by the Ministry of European Funds, through the TDCU, was one of the success factors in achieving positive results.

Training needs analysis were continuously updated and new needs were accommodated in the project selection

- P160. MA OPTA displayed a high degree of flexibility in terms of accommodating newly identified needs (e.g. support to institutions in charge with fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities for the 2014-2020 programming period), which certainly has had a positive effect in terms of effectiveness, particularly from a programming perspective. At the same time, this contributed to the final goal of the KAI 1.3, which is preparing qualified staff, able to respond to the new requirements of the system.

Project team had clear added value as regards the smooth project implementation and quality assurance

- P161. The stability of the project team, as well as its adequate composition in terms of number and qualifications, constituted a success factor for project quality. Considering that most training services were externalised, the selection of highly prepared trainers was crucial in delivering the appropriate information, as revealed both in the interviews with the Beneficiaries, and testified by the participants to training in the online survey.

The mix of training delivery methods ensured the assimilation of different competencies and skills

- P162. With regards to training delivery methods, participants and Beneficiaries consider that the mix of classical courses, online courses (i.e. materials published on the website of the NACS) and exchanges of experience ensured the availability of different competencies and skills. The online courses reached a higher number of trainees and were used for basic information, the classical courses sediment more advanced knowledge, and exchanges of experience contributed to importing best practices at work.



SMIS 25272: Support for the Audit Authority to perform the training activity

- P163. In addition, based on the gained experienced, the Evaluation team concluded that e-learning was also proved to be efficient in other European Union countries and could be tested in Romania.
- P164. For example, the Management Organisation Unit of Development Programmes (MOU) in Greece, in charge of assisting public authorities in the effective management of EU co-financed programmes, established an e-learning system that ensures faster delivery of technical knowledge to institutions managing SI at significantly lower costs to a large number of users. In the period 2007 - 2015 the MOU e-learning system offered: 150 asynchronous courses, with more than 6,000 course registrations among 1,400 users, and 70 virtual classes, with more than 1,500 participants from the MAs and IBs (for further information, please visit the website <http://www.mou.gr/en/pages/Default.aspx>).
- P165. Moreover, the management and information system SYNERGIE, developed by the Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires in France has put in place a variety of training systems and tools, including self-learning, tutorials and e-learning to support the staff of the MAs, IBs and Beneficiaries (for further information, please visit the website <http://www.synergie.fr/group-uk-intro.php>)

Public procurement procedures based on the lowest price are not beneficial for the quality of services

- P166. Although Beneficiaries declared that the relevant expertise was available on the local market, coming from public institutions (e.g. Competition Council, National Agency for Public Procurement) or private companies, the procurement of quality services was hampered and limited by the awarding criteria based on the lowest price. This problem is expected to be tackled during the new programming period 2014-2020 (in the context of the new laws and procedures for public procurement).

Concentration of implementation in the last months of the programme negatively impacted effectiveness and also sustainability

- P167. A high number of projects still implement activities close to the dead-line for programme

closure; in this situation the pressure for wrapping up contracts may work against quality, and, thus, effectiveness and sustainability. More adequate planning and maximum front-loading is needed under the 2014-2020 programming period in order for the MA to avoid a similar situation.

7.3 Conclusions

- P168. During the interviews with the Beneficiaries of the 9 projects, a number of mechanisms were identified that facilitated the achieved progress. The Training Development and Coordination Mechanism (TDCM), set at the level of the Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI), played an important role in ensuring an efficient and coordinated training process at the level of SI system. The training needs analyses were continuously updated, by the Training Development and Coordination Unit (TDCU), and new needs were accommodated by the OPTA MA in the project selection. The project management team had clear added value as regards the smooth project implementation and quality assurance.
- P169. The mix of training delivery methods (i.e. classical training sessions, organised by internal staff, private companies and national and EU institutions, as well as study visits) ensured the assimilation of different competencies and skills. In addition, based on the experience of other EU countries, the e-learning proved to ensure fast delivery of technical knowledge to institutions managing SI at significantly lower costs to a large number of users and, therefore, could be considered as a potential "facilitation" mechanism during the programming period 2014-2020
- P170. On the other hand, the concentration of activities in the last months of the programme negatively impacted the effectiveness and also sustainability. At the same time, the public procurement procedures based on the lowest price are not beneficial for the quality of services.

8 Conclusions and recommendations

- P171. The aim of the first EQ was to assess the progress in relation to the objective of KAI 1.3 "preparing highly qualified staff, capable of efficient and effective implementation of SI", in targeted areas and groups, since the adoption of the intervention (i.e. gross effect).
- P172. The results of the analysis revealed a good progress with regards to the availability of competencies at the level of institutions involved in managing SI, the key areas of expertise being covered through basic and advanced trainings (i.e. themes specific to the management of Structural Instruments, like financial management, monitoring and the management of project requests).
- P173. However, development of existing knowledge is still needed in specific areas, partially due to the lack of clarity and changing guidelines, procedures and instructions, unfriendly support tools, and variable interpretation of the procedures at different levels of control, and also in the context of the new programming period.
- P174. The most urgent training needs are related to: (1) closure of 2007-2013 operational programmes, for which MAs, CPA and AA have to take immediate actions, (2) the changes brought by the new public procurement laws and procedures; and (3) the usage of the new IT systems - SMIS 2014.
- P175. With regards to Beneficiaries, they are still confronted with staffing difficulties and shortages of skills, especially in rural or isolated areas. Therefore, the need for training remains high, especially in the field of (1) public procurement, in the context of the new legislative changes; and (2) accessing and implementing EU projects in the 2014-2020 programming period.

Recommendation 1: An extended needs analysis is required for designing a long-term training plan. The need analysis should focus on possible gaps of competencies within central and local institutions involved in managing and implementing SI, but also on the difficulties encountered by Beneficiaries in accessing EU funds.

- P176. The aim of the EQ 2 was to identify the contribution of KAI 1.3 in achieving the above presented progress (i.e. net effect). Furthermore, EQ 3 investigated other unexpected effects, positive or negative, attributable to the implemented projects under KAI 1.3.
- P177. The Evaluation team appreciated that KAI 1.3 had a high contribution to the achieved progress in ensuring highly qualified staff at the level of institutions managing SI, being the main source of financing for training sessions and a moderate contribution at the level of Beneficiaries, which is also due to the later start of the interventions targeted towards them.
- P178. Best on self-assessment, participants gained new competencies and skills and feel more motivated and efficient at work, as a consequence to trainings provided through KAI 1.3. In addition, the Information provided during trainings was assimilated and applied by participants to a large extent (e.g. improved internal procedures based on the best practices retrieved from other countries).
- P179. However, the effects could have been enhanced through a better communication and dissemination of gained knowledge among the different departments of the institutions.
- P180. With regards to unexpected effects, a functional network was created among participants and facilitators, who continued to share information even after the completion of trainings.

Recommendation 2. The OPTA MA should continue to support similar projects in the next programming period 2014-2020, thus contributing to the continuous development of staff. In particular, a higher focus should be placed on interventions targeting potential Beneficiaries.

Recommendation 3. In order to enhance the institutional commitment towards implementing and supporting the training plans, the Ministry of European Funds should involve a higher number of stakeholders (i.e. middle and higher level management) in the designing and implementation phase of the training plan (if the training plan will continue to be developed at a central level).

Recommendation 4. The sustainability of the unexpected effects (i.e. creation of networks) should be ensured by developing online platforms envisaged at maintaining and fostering communication among participants and facilitators.

- P181. EQ 4 was envisaged to identify whether the achieved progress is sustainable after the completion of the intervention. The analysis was mainly based on the information collected through the interviews with the Beneficiaries of the 9 projects and triangulated by means of desk research.
- P182. The results of the analysis indicate a moderate sustainability due to contextual factors: staff turnover, changes of institutional and legislative framework, moderate commitment of the HR management to the training objectives and the limited possibility to provide continuous training and update the gained knowledge.
- P183. Nevertheless, a solid base of competencies was created, which can be further extended in the new programming period 2014-2014. At the same time, materials produced under KAI 1.3 can be updated and further leveraged.

Recommendation 5. In order to mitigate the possible uncovered needs, due to changes in context, a periodic update of the need analysis should be performed in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation 6. The training materials should be published on the official website of the OPTA MA.

- P184. Finally, EQ 5 was designed to analyse all mechanisms that hampered or facilitated the progress. Moreover, the key contextual features which ensure the sustainability were identified.
- P185. The Training Development and Coordination Mechanism (TDCM), set at the level of the Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI), played an important role in ensuring an efficient and coordinated training process at the level of SI system. The training needs analyses were continuously updated, by the Training Development and Coordination Unit (TDCU), and new needs were accommodated by the OPTA MA in the project selection. The project management team had clear added value as regards the smooth project implementation and quality assurance.
- P186. The mix of training delivery methods (i.e. classical training sessions, organised by internal staff, private companies and national and EU institutions, as well as study visits) ensured the assimilation of different competencies and skills. In addition, based on the experience of other EU countries, the e-learning proved to ensure fast delivery of technical knowledge to institutions managing SI at significantly lower costs to a large number of users and, therefore, could be considered as a potential "facilitation" mechanism during the programming period 2014-2020

P187. On the other hand, the concentration of activities in the last months of the programme negatively impacted the effectiveness and also sustainability. In addition, the public procurement procedures based on the lowest price were not beneficial for the quality of services.

Recommendation 7. A training coordination mechanism should be re-established during the programming period 2014-2020, in order to ensure the efficiency and coordination of training intervention at the level of SI.

Recommendation 8. The training projects should continue to include a mix of delivery methods: classical training sessions, organised by internal staff, private companies and national and EU institutions, as well as study visits in other EU countries. Some other training methods could be tested (for example, e-learning).

P188. The table below reiterates the recommendations of the report, suggesting as well the timeline for implementation and the responsible body.

Table 9: Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations	Expected result	Responsible body	Timeline
<p>The results of the analysis revealed a good progress with regards to the availability of competencies at the level of institutions involved in managing SI, the key areas of expertise being covered through basic and advanced trainings (i.e. themes specific to the management of Structural Instruments, like financial management, monitoring and the management of project requests).</p> <p>However, development of existing knowledge is still needed in specific areas, partially due to the lack of clarity and changing guidelines, procedures and instructions, unfriendly support tools, and variable interpretation of the procedures at different levels of control, and also in the context of the new programming period.</p> <p>The most urgent training needs are related to: (1) closure of 2007-2013 operational programmes, for which MAs, CPA and AA have to take immediate actions, (2) the changes brought by the new public procurement laws and procedures; and (3) the usage of the new IT systems – SMIS 2014.</p> <p>On the other hand, Beneficiaries are still confronted with staffing difficulties and shortages of skills, especially in rural or isolated areas. Therefore, the need for training remains high, especially in the field of (1) public procurement, in the context of the new legislative changes; and (2) accessing and implementing EU projects in the 2014-2020 programming period.</p>	<p>An extended needs analysis is required for designing a long-term training plan. The need analysis should focus on possible gaps of competencies within central and local institutions involved in managing and implementing SI, but also on the difficulties encountered by Beneficiaries in accessing EU funds..</p>	<p>Long-term training needs identified</p>	<p>Ministry of European Funds</p>	<p>Beginning of 2016</p>
<p>The Evaluation team appreciated that KAI 1.3 had a high contribution to the achieved progress in ensuring highly qualified staff at the level of institutions managing SI, being the main source of financing for training sessions and a moderate contribution at the level of Beneficiaries, which is also due to the later start of the interventions targeted towards them.</p> <p>Best on self-assessment, participants gained new competencies and skills and feel more motivated and efficient at work, as a consequence to trainings provided through KAI 1.3. In addition,</p>				
	<p>The OPTA MA should continue to support similar projects in the next programming period 2014-2020, thus contributing to the continuous development of staff. In particular, a higher focus should be placed on interventions targeting potential Beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Continuous development of staff ensured</p>	<p>OPTA MA</p>	<p>Continuous process: 2016-2020</p>

Conclusions	Recommendations	Expected result	Responsible body	Timeline
the Information provided during trainings was assimilated and applied by participants to a large extent (e.g. improved internal procedures based on the best practices retrieved from other countries).				
The effects could have been enhanced through a better communication and dissemination of gained knowledge among the different departments of the institutions dealing with EU funds (see also Conclusion 6).	The Ministry of European Funds should involve of a higher number of stakeholders (i.e. middle and higher level management) in the designing and implementation phase of the training plan (if the training plan will continue to be developed at a central level).	Increased commitment of middle and higher level management for implementing training plans, including dissemination of knowledge	Ministry of European Funds	Continuous process: 2016-2020
With regards to unexpected effects, a functional network was created among participants and facilitators, who continued to share information even after the completion of trainings.	The sustainability of the unexpected effects (i.e. creation of networks) should be ensured by developing online platforms envisaged at maintaining and fostering communication among participants and facilitators.	Continued exchange of information between the members of the created networks	OPTA MA	Continuous process: 2016-2020
The results of the analysis indicate a moderate sustainability due to contextual factors: staff turnover, changes of institutional and legislative framework, moderate commitment of the HR management to the training objectives and the limited possibility to provide continuous training and update the gained knowledge.	A periodic update of the need analysis should be performed in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.	Possible uncovered needs due to change context mitigated	Ministry of European Funds	Continuous process: 2016-2020
Nevertheless, a solid base of competencies was created, which can be further extended in the new programming period 2014-2014. At the same time, materials produced under KAI 1.3 can be updated and further leveraged.	Training materials and manuals should be published on the official website of the OPTA MA.	Increased coverage of target population	OPTA MA	Continuous process: 2016-2020
The Training Development and Coordination Mechanism (TDCM), set at the level of the Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI), played an important role in ensuring an efficient and coordinated training process at the level of SI system. The training needs	A training coordination mechanism should be re-established during the programming period 2014-2020.	Efficient coordination of training interventions	Ministry of European Funds	Beginning of 2016

Conclusions	Recommendations	Expected result	Responsible body	Timeline
<p>analyses were continuously updated, by the Training Development and Coordination Unit (TDCU), and new needs were accommodated by the OPTA MA in the project selection. The project management team had clear added value as regards the smooth project implementation and quality assurance.</p>				
<p>On the other hand, the concentration of activities in the last months of the programme negatively impacted the effectiveness and also sustainability. In addition, the public procurement procedures based on the lowest price were not beneficial for the quality of services.</p>				
<p>The mix of training delivery methods (i.e. classical training sessions, organised by internal staff, private companies and national and EU institutions, as well as study visits) ensured the assimilation of different competencies and skills. In addition, based on the experience of other EU countries, the e-learning proved to ensure fast delivery of technical knowledge to institutions managing SI at significantly lower costs to a large number of users and, therefore, could be considered as a potential "facilitation" mechanism during the programming period 2014-2020</p>	<p>The training projects should continue to include a mix of delivery methods: classical training sessions, organised by internal staff, private companies and national and EU institutions, as well as study visits in other EU countries. Some other training methods could be tested (for example, e-learning).</p>	<p>Knowledge and skills assimilated by the trained staff</p>	<p>OPTA MA</p>	<p>Continuous process: 2016-2020</p>

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10 Annexes

Annex 1. List of participants to the Kick-off meeting

The Kick-off meeting with the project team was organised on 20th of August 2015, at the Ministry of European Funds premises.

The objectives of the meeting were to discuss the general methodological approach (proposed in the technical offer), to collect relevant data (documents at project level, such as financing contracts and progress report) and to agree on the next deadlines.

Table 10: List of participants to the Kick-off meeting

No.	Name of the participant	Institution
1.	Claudia Măgdălina	MEF CUE
2.	Claudia Muja	MEF GD APE
3.	Marie-Jeanne Nica	MEF GD TA
4.	Teodora Mărgărit	MEF MDCIP
5	Michele Giove	EY
6	Cristina Stănescu	EY

Annex 2. List of participants to the Mini-conference

The **Mini-conference** was organised on 10th of September 2015, at the Ministry of European Funds premises.

With this occasion, the Evaluation team presented the proposed methodology for the Impact Evaluation to all relevant stakeholders. The Inception Report was further refined based on the received feedback.

Table 11: List of participants to the Mini-conference

No	Name of the participant	Institution
1.	Anca Daniela Simion	MRDPA DMAETCP
2.	Arturo Polese	DG REGIO
3.	Carmen Adriana Cocian	MEF CDMS
4.	Claudia Măgdălina	MEF GD APE/CUE
5.	Constantin Saragea	MEF PPD
6.	Cornelia Băiculescu	MEF GD HCP
7.	Daniela Bălan	GD TA
8.	Daria-Aniela Pvedoana	MEF MDCIP
9.	Diana Iacob	MEF GD APE
10.	Gabriela Dobre	MEF GD HCP
11.	Ioana Pâslaru	MEF PCIUSI
12.	Ion Dinescu	MEF PPD
13.	Luciana Cotuțiu	GD TA
14.	Mădălina Enache	MEF PCIUSI
15.	Mălina Frățeanu	MEF PCIUSI
16.	Marie-Jeanne Nica	MEF GD TA
17.	Mioara Moț	MARD MA NPRD
18.	Mirela Cosovan	MEF
19.	Raluca Stoian	MEF DITCS

No	Name of the participant	Institution
20.	Ramona Panea	MEF CDMS
21.	Ramona Silvestru	NAPS
22.	Serena Rizi-Ivan	MEF MDCPI
23.	Simona Vasile	MRDPA DMAETCP
24.	Dimitra Ioannou	EY
25.	Michele Giove	EY
26	Cristina Stănescu	EY

Annex 3. List of participants to the Evaluation Steering Committee

The Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) was organised on 17th of September 2015, at the Ministry of European Funds premises.

With this occasion, the Evaluation team presented and discussed the proposed methodology with the members of the ESC. The final version of the Inception Report was approved on 16th of October 2015.

Table 12: List of participants to the Evaluation Steering Committee

No.	Name of the participant	Institution
1.	Alin Mihai	MEF GD APE
2.	Claudia Măgdălina	MEF CUE
3.	Claudia Muja	MEF GD APE
4.	Ioana Pâslaru	MEF PCIUSI
5.	Luciana Cotuțiu	MEF MA OPTA
6.	Marie-Jeanne Nica	MEF GD TA
7.	Serena Rizi-Ivan	MEF MDCIP
8.	Dimitra Ioannou	EY
9.	Michele Giove	EY
10.	Cristina Stănescu	EY

Annex 4. Data collection tool: Desk Analysis

The table below presents the main documents analysed and the relevant evaluation questions they address:

EQ	Documents at Programme Level
1-5	Operational Programme Technical Assistance, version 2007
1-5	Operational Programme Technical Assistance, version June 2012
1-5	Operational Programme Technical Assistance, version June 2014
1-5	Operational Programme Technical Assistance, version October 2014
1-5	Annual Implementation Reports for 2007, version 2008
1-5	Annual Implementation Reports for 2008, version 2009
1-5	Annual Implementation Reports for 2009, version 2010
1-5	Annual Implementation Reports for 2010, version 2011
1-5	Annual Implementation Reports for 2011, version 2012
1-5	Annual Implementation Reports for 2012, version 2013
1-5	Annual Implementation Reports for 2013, version 2014
1-5	Annual Implementation Reports for 2014, version 2015
1-5	Framework Implementation Document, version July 2015
EQ	Documents at Project Level
2-5	Financing Requests
2-5	Financing Contracts and Addendums
2-5	Financing Decisions
2-5	Progress Implementation Reports
2-5	Deliverables produced under selected projects
2-5	Centralizing document provided by the Ministry of European Funds, with the updated progress of the selected projects
EQ	Studies and evaluation reports
1	Interim Evaluation Report of OP TA

1	Evaluation Report on the administrative capacity of the Beneficiaries and authorities of CSF funds
1	Lessons learned regarding the use of technical assistance funds during 2007-2013 programming period
EQ	Specialised literature
4-5	Aragon-Sanchez, A., Barba-Aragon, I., & Sanz-Valle, R. (2003). Effects of training on business results. Human Resource Management.
4-5	Arthur, W., Bennett, W., Edens, P., & Bell, S. (2003). Effectiveness of training in organizations: a metaanalysis. Appl. Psychol.
4-5	Blanchard, & Thacker, J. (2007). Effective Training: Systems, Strategies, and Practices. Pearson Prentice Hall.
2-3	Brum, S. (2007). What impact does training have on employee commitment and employee turnover.
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4-5	Weil, A., & Woodall, J. (2005). HRD in France: the corporate perspective. Journal of European Industrial Training.

1-5	Weiss, C. H. (1995). Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-based Evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families. In J. C. al., In New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts. Aspen Institute.
2-3	Wright, P., & Geroy, D. G. (2001). Changing the mindset: the training myth and the need for word-class performance. International Journal of Human Resource Management.

Annex 5. Data collection tool: Focus Group

The **Focus Group** with the stakeholders from the OPTA Managing Authority was organised on 20th of August 2015, at the Ministry of European Funds premises.

The aim was to validate the reconstructed Theory of Change and to gather valuable information for the 5 Evaluation Questions set in the Terms of Reference.

Table 13: List of participants to Focus Group

No.	Name of the participant	Institution
1.	Claudia Măgdălina	MEF GD APE/CUE
2.	Cristina Hodină	MEF / MA OPTA
3.	Oana Lefter	MEF MDCIP
4.	Marie-Jeanne Nica	MEF GD TA
5	Serena Rizi-Ivan	MEF MDCPI
6	Michele Giove	EY
7	Cristina Stănescu	EY

Annex 6. Data collection tool: Electronic Questionnaire

The main objective of the online survey was to gather information related to expected and unexpected effects of the interventions financed through KAI 1.3 (EQ 2 and EQ 3)..

The target population was identified with the help of the Beneficiary (Ministry of European Funds) who provided the attendance lists of the training sessions. Out of a total number of 5,806 participants, 2,149 had a valid email address and 714 participants answered to the online survey, ensuring a 95% confidence interval, using a percentage level of 0.5.

The structure of the questionnaire was based on the identified impacts, assumptions and contextual factors identified during the reconstruction of the theory of change.

Table 14: Template of the questionnaire

Identification of respondent	
1) Do you recall your participation in the project?	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
2) In what type of activity/ies did you participate in?	
3) What is the county of your residence?	
4) Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
5) Age	
6) Education <i>highest level completed</i>	
a. No formal education	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Elementary education	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. High school education	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Tertiary education (BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Tertiary education (MA, PhD or higher)	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Other <i>Please specify</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Current employment <i>Institution</i>	
a. National Coordination Authority for Structural Instruments	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Managing Authority <i>Please specify</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. National Intermediate Body <i>Please specify</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

d. Regional Intermediate Body <i>Please specify</i>	
e. Audit Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Certifying and Paying Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Other <i>Please specify</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) Employment at the moment of training (<i>Institution</i>)	
Perception of respondent	
9) Why did you decide to participate in the project?	
a. It was an obligation imposed by my institution	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. To develop/improve my skills and competences	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. To improve my performance	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of my work	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. To obtain a promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. To obtain a salary raise	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Other <i>Please specify:</i>	
10) Did you complete the activities of the training?	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
11) If NO, why?	
a. The project was interrupted	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Lack of time	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Lost interest	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Started participating in another project	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Family/personal reasons/illness	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Other <i>Please specify:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) How valuable have you found the training to be?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>

What rationale is behind your mark?	
13) What was the main benefit from your participation in the training? <i>Possibility for several answers</i>	
a. I have gained new competencies	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I have met/interacted with colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I got a promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I got a salary raise	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I found a better job in another institution	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Other <i>Please specify:</i>	
14) Did you start to apply the knowledge gained during the training?	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
15) If yes, to what extent was the knowledge applied?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>
16) Please evaluate the benefits of implementing the knowledge gained during the training	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>
What rationale is behind your mark?	
17) Did you receive the support of your institution in order to apply the knowledge gained during the training?	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
18) Did the training increase your motivation to perform your tasks at work?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>
19) If yes, what changes were generated in your behaviour?	
20) To what extent the training increased your ability to perform your activities at work?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>
21) Describe your most successful experience, as result of the training received.	
22) Have you noticed any changes in the behaviour of those around you, as a result of the knowledge gained during training?	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

23) Indicate your effort to share with other departments the information gained during training.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>
24) Indicate the effort of your department to share the information gained during training with other departments.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>
25) Have you been approached by other departments/areas asking for help, as a result of your participation to training?	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
26) If yes, use the scale to indicate the level of help given.	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>
27) How would you rate the level of support received from your Direct Manager in implementing the knowledge gained during training?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>
28) How strongly do you believe that your institution is committed to the objectives of the training programme?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>
29) Are there any areas (e.g. topics) you feel that no progress is being made?	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please explain.	
30) How effective did you find the timings of the training?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>1=low value; 4=high value</i>
31) Please add your final comments regarding the overall implementation of the training.	
32) Did you participate in other similar trainings before or after this one?	
33) If YES, do you recall in how many trainings you have participated in total? <i>Please indicate the number of projects</i>	
34) Would you like to participate in future trainings?	No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, what are your current training needs and what type of training method would be the most suitable?	
If not, what is the rationale behind your answer?	

Annex 7. Data collection tool: Interviews

The Evaluation team performed in-depth interviews with representatives of the 5 Beneficiaries.

Table 15: Performed Interviews

No	Name of the project	SMIS Code	Beneficiary	Interviewee	Date of the Interview
1	Continuous training in managing and coordinating Structural and Cohesion Funds in Romania	5088	Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI)	Oana Lefter	26.10.2015
2	Continuous training of the CPA's personnel in order to manage efficiently the Structural and Cohesion Funds	14887	Certification and Payment Authority	Ioana Predulea Roxana Gherman Lucian Vereschiagin	28.10.2015
3	Training of the Beneficiaries and potential Beneficiaries for implementing projects financed from Structural Instruments	15273	Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI)	Oana Lefter	26.10.2015
4	Support for the Audit Authority to perform the training activity	25272	Audit Authority	Răzvan Ifrim	23.10.2015
5	Training for the coordination, management and control system of the Structural Instruments in the management of the OPs	41677	Ministry of European Funds (former ACSI)	Oana Lefter	26.10.2015
6	Increasing the efficiency of applying EU legislation concerning state aid applied by training the experts involved in managing EU funds	48106	The National Agency of Civil Servants	Ramona Silvestru Monica Marin	23.10.2015

No	Name of the project	SMIS Code	Beneficiary	Interviewee	Date of the Interview
7	Applied training for enhancing the institutional capacity of the public administration in Romania for an efficient management of Structural Funds	48159	The National Agency of Civil Servants	Monica Marin Ramona Silvestru	23.10.2015
8	Improving the Beneficiaries' capacity to implement projects financed from Structural Instruments	48302	Ministry of European Funds (former ACS)	Oana Lefter	26.10.2015
9	Training in the area of antidiscrimination, gender equality and rights of people with disabilities	52473	National Council for Combating Discrimination	Aszaltos Csaba	22.10.2015

The interview guideline is presented below.

Introduction

During this period, the Ministry of European Funds is conducting the "Impact Evaluation of the Technical Assistance dedicated to the management and implementation of structural instruments 2007-2013", in cooperation with SC Ernst & Young SRL.

Within the impact analysis, one will subject to review the following 9 projects financed during the 2007-2013 programming period, under the Technical Assistance Operational Programme:

- ▶ The Audit Authority: Support for the Audit Authority to perform the training activities
- ▶ The Certifying and Paying Authority: Continuous training of the CPA's personnel in order to manage efficiently the Structural and Cohesion Funds
- ▶ The National Agency of Civil Servants: Applied training for further enhancing the institutional capacity of the public administration in Romania for an efficient management of Structural Funds
- ▶ The National Agency of Civil Servants: Increasing the efficiency of applying EU legislation concerning state aids by applied training of the experts involved in managing EU funds
- ▶ The National Council for Combatting Discrimination: Training in the area of antidiscrimination, gender equality and rights of the people with disabilities

- ▶ The Ministry of European Funds: Continuous training in managing and coordinating Structural and Cohesion Funds in Romania
- ▶ The Ministry of European Funds: Training of the Beneficiaries and potential Beneficiaries for implementing projects financed from Structural Instruments
- ▶ The Ministry of European Funds: Training for the coordination, management and control system of the Structural Instruments in the management of the OPs
- ▶ The Ministry of European Funds: Improving the Beneficiaries' capacity to implement projects financed from Structural Instruments

In order to collect information on the need for/relevance of projects, expected and unexpected results, their sustainability, implemented mechanisms and lessons learned following project implementation, we will use, together with other tools, **interviews with the Beneficiaries**.

General information on the interviewee

- ▶ First of all, please provide a short description of your role in the project.

General information on the project

- ▶ Please provide a short description of the activities implemented.
- ▶ What is the reason why you have chosen these types of activities?
- ▶ Which have been the financial and human resources used for the project implementation?

Expected and unexpected effects of the project

- ▶ What are the most significant (other) changes the project implementation has contributed to?
- ▶ Who has benefitted most from these (other) changes?
- ▶ Are there other (unexpected) effects, positive or negative, stemming from the project implementation?
- ▶ Who has benefitted most from the project positive effects?
- ▶ Who has been most affected by the project negative effects?

Project sustainability

- ▶ To what extent are the achieved progresses/ changes/ effects sustainable on long term?
- ▶ Would you like to implement a similar project during the new programming period?
- ▶ In your opinion, do you consider that there is still the need for such projects?
- ▶ IF YES, which would be your arguments and in which areas?
- ▶ In your opinion which are the possible sources of financing during the new programming period?

Implemented mechanisms

- ▶ What mechanisms have been implemented or are necessary to facilitate the effectiveness and sustainability?

- ▶ Which have been in your opinion the success factors that have contributed to/influenced the achievement of expected results?
- ▶ Which have been the problems encountered during the project implementation?
- ▶ In your opinion, what would be the solutions likely to be implemented in the future in order to prevent such types of issues and to improve existing mechanisms?

Lessons learned

- ▶ Which were the lessons learned after the implementation of this project?
- ▶ What recommendations would you provide for the successful implementation of similar projects?

Other comments

- ▶ Please state other aspects that you consider relevant.

Annex 8. Project fiche - SMIS 5088

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
CONTINUOUS TRAINING IN MANAGING AND COORDINATING STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS IN ROMANIA		5088
1. General information about the project		Source of information
a. Beneficiary		
Ministry of European Funds (former Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments)		Financing Decision no 13013 / 13.05.2009, page 1
b. Duration of the contract (Months)		
50 months from 01.01.2008 to 31.03.2012		Financing Decision no 13013 / 13.05.2009, Addendum no 5 / 09.01.2012, page 1
c. Value of the project (RON)		
Total value of the project:	8,245,445.54	OPTA Website, http://www.poaat.ro date accessed: 26.11.2015
Eligible value of the project:	6,723,965.83	
ERDF contribution:	5,379,172.7	
d. Objective		

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING IN MANAGING AND COORDINATING STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS IN ROMANIA</i>	5088
Providing training in the field of Structural Instruments to staff involved in the management and coordination of Structural Instruments and the ensuring of the management and coordination of training activities in the field of Structural Instruments.	<i>Financing Request no. 13013 / 27.02.2009, page 4</i>
e. Targeted groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Management Authorities ▶ Intermediate Bodies ▶ Certification and Payment Authority Audit Authority ▶ Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments ▶ Other institutions involved in the management of Structural Instruments 	<i>Financing Request no. 13013 / 27.02.2009, page 6</i>
f. Planned activities	

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING IN MANAGING AND COORDINATING STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS IN ROMANIA</i>	5088
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Basic training sessions for staff working in institutions with responsibilities in the field of Structural Instruments ▶ Activity 2: Advanced training sessions for the staff working in Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies ▶ Activity 3: Training sessions for the staff of the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments in the field of managing Structural and Cohesion Funds, as well as the participation of ACSI staff to training sessions organized with European Institutions that are well known in this field ▶ Activity 4: Support for the activities of the Working Group for the Coordination of Training in the field of SI ▶ Activity 5: Needs analysis for developing a data base / IT module for programming and monitoring the training in the field of SI ▶ Activity 6: Training related to communication of Structural Instruments 	<p><i>Financing Request no. 13013 / 27.02.2009, page 5</i></p>
g. Implemented activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Basic training sessions for staff working in institutions with responsibilities in the field of Structural Instruments ▶ Activity 2: Advanced training sessions for the staff working in Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies ▶ Activity 3: Training sessions for the staff of the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments in the field of managing Structural and Cohesion Funds, as well as the participation of ACSI staff to training sessions organized with European Institutions that are well known in this field ▶ Activity 4: Support for the activities of the Working Group for the Coordination of Training in the field of SI ▶ Activity 6: Training related to communication of Structural Instruments 	<p><i>Progress Reports no 12 submitted on 31.03.2012</i></p>
h. Financial progress (RON)	

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
CONTINUOUS TRAINING IN MANAGING AND COORDINATING STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS IN ROMANIA				5088
<i>Eligible expenses requested</i>		6,731,740.55		<i>Information provided by the OPTA Managing Authority</i>
<i>Eligible expenses approved</i>		6,731,740.55		
<i>Pre-financing paid</i>		0		
<i>Reimbursed EU contribution (ERDF payments)</i>		5,379,172.7		
<i>Reimbursed or approved national contribution</i>		1,344,793.13		
i. Physical progress				
Indicator	Target value	Achieved	Progress %	<i>Progress Reports no 12 submitted on 31.03.2012, page 10</i>
Participant training days	7,750	8,139	105.01%	
2. Expected and unexpected effects of the project				
Expected Effects The annual evaluation of staff reveals that participants increased their performance at work.				<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
Unexpected Effects				

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING IN MANAGING AND COORDINATING STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS IN ROMANIA</i>	5088
Participants to trainings are overloaded, in comparison to their peers, due to their increased knowledge in the field.	
3. Sustainability of the project	
a. Sustainability of the results	
<p>Moderate</p> <p>After 2012, only short trainings and study visits were organized for the staff of the Ministry of European Funds. Further advanced training would have been necessary to consolidate the gained knowledge.</p>	<p><i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i></p>
b. Replicability of the project	
<p>High</p> <p>Based on the needs analyses, similar projects would be useful in the context of the new programming period.</p>	<p><i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i></p>
c. Current needs	
<p>Advanced trainings</p> <p>Participants expressed a need for specific trainings related to Structural Funds (e.g. EU legislation, irregularities).</p>	<p><i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i></p>
d. Possible sources of financing during the new programming period	
<p>Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020</p>	<p><i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i></p>
4. Implementation mechanisms	

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING IN MANAGING AND COORDINATING STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS IN ROMANIA</i>	5088
a. Success factors of the implemented interventions	
Among the factors that contribute to the achievement of the results, we can mention the existence of a rigorous needs analysis and the experience of the contracting team and of the supplier.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
b. Problems encountered and possible solutions to be implemented in the future	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The quality of services decreased when the awarding criteria for public tenders was based on the lowest price. However, the legislation will be changed in the new programming period. ▶ Activity 5 of the project, aiming to develop a data base for designing and monitoring the training in the field of SI, was not implemented. 	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
5. Recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020	
A coordination mechanism for trainings, established within the Ministry of European Funds, would facilitate the sustainability of the effects.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>

Annex 9. Project fiche - SMIS 14887

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
<i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF THE CPA'S PERSONNEL IN ORDER TO MANAGE EFFICIENTLY THE STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS</i>		14887
1. General information about the project		Source of information
a. Beneficiary		
Certification and Payment Authority		<i>Financing Decision no 13013 / 13.05.2009, page 1</i>
b. Duration of the contract (Months)		
79 months from 01.06.2009 to 31.12.2015		<i>Financing Decision no 13013 / 13.05.2009, Addendum no 5 / 27.11.2014, page 2</i>
c. Value of the project (RON)		
<i>Total value of the project:</i>	3,467,839.77	<i>OPTA Website, http://www.poa.ro date accessed: 26.11.2015</i>
<i>Eligible value of the project:</i>	2,866,770.36	
<i>ERDF contribution:</i>	2,293,416.29	

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF THE CPA'S PERSONNEL IN ORDER TO MANAGE EFFICIENTLY THE STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS</i>	14887
d. Objective	
Training the employees of the Certification and Payment Authority, of the Internal Public Audit Directorate, and of the General Inspection within the Ministry of Public Finances, involved in the financial management of Structural Instruments, in order to acquire advanced knowledge for the implementation of the rules concerning the European and national legislation.	<i>Financing Request no CF 11028 / 20.11.2009, page 4</i>
e. Targeted groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ministry of Public Finances, respectively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Certification and Payment Authority ○ General Inspection ○ Public Internal Audit Directorate 	<i>Financing Request no CF 11028 / 20.11.2009, page 6</i>
f. Planned activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Contract opening and closing sessions ▶ Activity 2: Training sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training sessions: financial management and control, eligibility of expenses, risk management, financial corrections, compliance with the rules regarding public procurements, certifying expenses at the programme level - the flow between MAs and CPA, payments to Beneficiaries / MAs, on the spot verification, project management, including implementing and monitoring technical assistance projects for which CPA is ○ Beneficiary, recovering payments, managing irregularities, fraud, audit monitoring, etc. ○ Training sessions: developing the skills and capacities of the management and execution personnel that manages 	<i>Financing Decision no 13013 / 13.05.2009, Addendum no 1 / 02.03.2011, page 5</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF THE CPA'S PERSONNEL IN ORDER TO MANAGE EFFICIENTLY THE STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS</i>	14887
Structural Instruments ▶ Activity 3: Training sessions in the field of Structural Instruments organised by European institutions	
g. Implemented activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Contract opening and closing sessions ▶ Activity 2: Training sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training sessions: developing technical competencies ○ Training sessions: developing the skills and capacities of the management and execution personnel that manages SI ○ Study visits in other Member States ▶ Activity 3: Training sessions in the field of SI organised by European institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial Management of OPs financed through SI (Dublin - Ireland) ○ Intensive summer course on structural funds (Brussels - Belgium) ○ Double - financing: Making better prevention, detection, and correction (Brussels - Belgium) ○ Cost simplification measures in the EU Funds management process (Riga - Latvia) ○ Payment claim verification: Simplifying the process and the checklists (Paris - France) ○ Making a better Project and Program Manager (Paris - France) ○ Improving prevention, detection and correction of errors (Paris - France) ○ Budget Programming (Ljubljana - Slovenia) 	<p><i>Progress Report no 21 submitted on 18.05.2015</i></p>

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
<i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF THE CPA'S PERSONNEL IN ORDER TO MANAGE EFFICIENTLY THE STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS</i>		14887
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tools for making verification simple and secure (Paris - France) ○ Risk management to get reasonable assurance (Paris - France) ○ Better implementation and easier access to the ESF (Brussels - Belgium) ○ Risk Management in the Public Sector (Berlin - Germany) ○ Intensive summer course on financial instruments (Brussels - Belgium) ○ Best practice & problem solving in state aid - Master Class (Brussels - Belgium) ○ Seminar: Fraud & Corruption in Public Procurement (Berlin - Germany) 		
h. Financial progress (RON)		
<i>Eligible expenses requested</i>	2,605,033.13	<i>Information provided by the OPTA Managing Authority</i>
<i>Eligible expenses approved</i>	2,605,033.13	
<i>Pre-financing paid</i>	0	
<i>Reimbursed EU contribution (ERDF payments)</i>	1,977,536.33	
<i>Reimbursed or approved national contribution</i>	494,384.08	

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF THE CPA'S PERSONNEL IN ORDER TO MANAGE EFFICIENTLY THE STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS				14887
i. Physical progress				
Indicator	Target value	Achieved	Progress %	<i>Progress Reports no 21 submitted on 18.05.2015</i>
Participant training days	1,377	1,396	101.38%	
Participants to training sessions	319	317	99.38%	
2. Expected and unexpected effects of the project				
<p>Expected Effects Participants increased their competencies and motivation.</p> <p>Unexpected Effects During the study visits, participants noticed that other countries encounter difficult situations as well, which resulted in an increased self-esteem.</p>				<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 28.10.2015</i>
3. Sustainability of the project				
a. Sustainability of the results				
Moderate				<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 28.10.2015</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF THE CPA'S PERSONNEL IN ORDER TO MANAGE EFFICIENTLY THE STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS</i>	14887
Although legislative changes may occur, the knowledge bases were created.	
b. Replicability of the project	
High CPA intends to implement similar projects in the new programming period.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 28.10.2015</i>
c. Current needs	
Advanced trainings Training sessions should be correlated with the changes at the CPA level - for example, the new responsibilities in the context of the new programming period.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 28.10.2015</i>
d. Possible sources of financing during the new programming period	
Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 28.10.2015</i>
4. Implementation mechanisms	
a. Success factors of the implemented interventions	
N/A	
b. Problems encountered and possible solutions to be implemented in the future	

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF THE CPA'S PERSONNEL IN ORDER TO MANAGE EFFICIENTLY THE STRUCTURAL AND COHESION FUNDS</i>	14887
The awarding criteria for public tenders based on the lowest price hampers the selection of quality services.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 28.10.2015</i>
5. Recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020	
The next procedures for public tendering should be simplified.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 28.10.2015</i>

Annex 10. Project fiche - SMIS 15273

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
TRAINING OF THE BENEFICIARIES AND POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES FOR IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS FINANCED FROM STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS		15273
1. General information about the project		Source of information
a. Beneficiary		
Ministry of European Funds (former Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments)		Financing Contract no 13029 / 11.02.2010, page 1
b. Duration of the contract (Months)		
27 months from 01.04.2010 to 31.06.2012		Financing Contract no 13029 / 11.02.2010, Addendum no 1 / 18.07.2011, page 2
c. Value of the project (RON)		
Total value of the project:	3,645,244.47	OPTA Website, http://www.poa.ro date accessed: 26.11.2015
Eligible value of the project:	2,940,013.51	
ERDF contribution:	2,352,010.8	
d. Objective		

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>TRAINING OF THE BENEFICIARIES AND POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES FOR IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS FINANCED FROM STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS</i>	15273
Providing the adequate knowledge and skills to Beneficiaries and potential Beneficiaries in the field of project management and public procurement contracts, in the context of Structural Instruments	<i>Financing Request no 13029 / 03.12.2009, page 2</i>
e. Targeted groups	
Beneficiaries and potential Beneficiaries of Structural Instruments	<i>Financing Request no 13029 / 03.12.2009, page 6</i>
f. Planned activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Detailed analysis report on the training needs of potential beneficiaries in the field of SI project management ▶ Activity 2: Training sessions for potential beneficiaries in the field of project identification, elaboration and implementation ▶ Activity 3: Training sessions for local and central public authorities in the field of public procurement of goods and services and the management of the afferent public procurement contracts ▶ Activity 4: Training sessions for beneficiaries in the field of public procurement of works and the management of afferent public procurement contracts 	<i>Financing Request no 13029 / 03.12.2009, page 5</i>
g. Implemented activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity1: Detailed analysis of the training needs of potential beneficiaries in the field of SI project management ▶ Activity 2: Training sessions for potential beneficiaries in the field of project management 	<i>Progress Reports no 9 submitted on 30.04.2012</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
TRAINING OF THE BENEFICIARIES AND POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES FOR IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS FINANCED FROM STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS				15273
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 3: Training sessions for local and central public authorities in the field of public procurement of goods and services ▶ Activity 4: Training sessions for beneficiaries in the field of public procurement of works 				
h. Financial progress (RON)				
<i>Eligible expenses requested</i>		2,940,013.51		<i>Information provided by the OPTA Managing Authority</i>
<i>Eligible expenses approved</i>		2,940,013.51		
<i>Pre-financing paid</i>		0		
<i>Reimbursed EU contribution (ERDF payments)</i>		2,352,010.8		
<i>Reimbursed or approved national contribution</i>		588,002.71		
i. Physical progress				
Indicator	Target value	Achieved	Progress %	<i>Progress Report no 9 submitted on 30.04.2012, page 4</i>
Studies, analyses, reports, strategies	1	1	100%	
Participant training days	4750	4725	99,47%	
2. Expected and unexpected effects of the project				

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>TRAINING OF THE BENEFICIARIES AND POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES FOR IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS FINANCED FROM STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS</i>	15273
<p>Expected Effects Participants improved their knowledge in the field of public procurement.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
3. Sustainability of the project	
a. Sustainability of the results	
<p>Moderate The effects are sustainable only to the extent to which the trained staff remains in the system.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
b. Replicability of the project	
<p>High Based on the needs analyses, similar projects would be useful in the context of the new programming period.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
c. Current needs	
<p>Basic and advanced trainings Participants expressed an interest for specific trainings in the field of: Irregularities, Financial management, Project cycle, Preparing reimbursement requests and Preparing the documentation for public tendering.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
d. Possible sources of financing during the new programming period	

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>TRAINING OF THE BENEFICIARIES AND POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES FOR IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS FINANCED FROM STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS</i>	15273
Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
4. Implementation mechanisms	
a. Success factors of the implemented interventions	
Among the factors that contributed to the achievement of the results, we can mention the existence of a rigorous needs analysis and the experience of the contracting team and of the supplier.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
b. Problems encountered and possible solutions to be implemented in the future	
The quality of services decreased when the awarding criteria for public tenders was based on the price. However, the legislation will be changed in the new programming period.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
5. Recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020	
A coordination mechanism for trainings, established within the Ministry of European Funds, would facilitate the sustainability of the effects	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>

Annex 11. Project fiche - SMIS 25272

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
SUPPORT FOR THE AUDIT AUTHORITY TO PERFORM THE TRAINING ACTIVITY		25272
1. General information about the project		Source of information
a. Beneficiary		
Court of Auditors, Audit Authority		Financing Contract no 13067 / 09.11.2010, page 1
b. Duration of the contract (Months)		
63 months from 01.09.2010 to 30.11.2015		Financing Contract no 13067 / 09.11.2010, Addendum no 4 / 14.04.2015, page 1
c. Value of the project (RON)		
Total value of the project:	1,603,710.54	OPTA Website, http://www.poaat.ro date accessed: 26.11.2015
Eligible value of the project:	1,361,999.43	
ERDF contribution:	1,089,599.54	
d. Objective		

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>SUPPORT FOR THE AUDIT AUTHORITY TO PERFORM THE TRAINING ACTIVITY</i>	25272
Continuous training of the staff of the Audit Authority involved in the audit of structural instruments, in the view of acquiring some profound knowledge to fulfil the attributions that derive from the application of community regulatory provisions and of related national legislation.	<i>Financing Request no 13067 / 13.08.2010, page 2</i>
e. Targeted groups	
Employees of the Audit Authority, at the central level as well as local level, with duties in the auditing of ERDF, ESF and CF.	<i>Financing Request no 13067 / 13.08.2010, page 7</i>
f. Planned activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Trainings organised by EU institutions / institutes / commercial societies / foundations in the field of Structural Instruments ▶ Activity 2: Trainings organised by national institutions / institutes / commercial societies / foundations ▶ Activity 3: Trainings organised by national experts ▶ Activity 4: Trainings performed by the Audit Authority staff ▶ Activity 5: Study visits ▶ Activity 6: Providing salaries for the project team 	<i>Financing Contract no 13067 / 09.11.2010, Addendum no 4 / 14.04.2015, page 2</i>
g. Implemented activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Trainings organised by EU institutions / institutes / commercial societies / foundations in the field of Structural Instruments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal and external audit of EU funded programmes and projects (Spain) 	<i>Progress Report 18 / 31.03.2015</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>SUPPORT FOR THE AUDIT AUTHORITY TO PERFORM THE TRAINING ACTIVITY</i>	25272
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public procurement (Hungary) ○ Lessons learned at the end of 2000-2006 programming period (Hungary) ○ Common Management of the IT system for 2014-2020 (Belgium) ○ Financial Instruments (Belgium) ▶ Activity 2: Trainings organised by national institutions / institutes / commercial societies / foundations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic and decisional management for institutions auditing EU funds (Romania) ○ Sustainability of EU funded projects (Romania) ○ Improving techniques and practices related to communication and negotiation (Romania) ○ Improving techniques and practices related to communication and negotiation with audited institutions and General Directorates of the European Commission (Romania) ○ External audit at the end of programming period 2007-2013 (Romania) ○ Specific issues related to projects generating profits and major investment projects (Romania) ▶ Activity 3: Trainings organised by national experts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public procurement (Romania) ○ National accounting regulations for public institutions managing EU funds (Romania) ▶ Activity 4: Trainings performed by the Audit Authority staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial instruments in the context of structural funds. Audit common framework of financial instruments (Romania) ○ Addressing fraud and corruption in public sector based on the experience of Member States (Romania) ○ The accounting of non-reimbursable external funds (Romania) 	

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
SUPPORT FOR THE AUDIT AUTHORITY TO PERFORM THE TRAINING ACTIVITY				25272
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training of new employees within the Audit Authority (Romania) ▶ Activity 5: Study visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Study visit in Poland ○ Study visit in France ○ Study visit in England ▶ Activity 6: Providing salaries for the project team 				
h. Financial progress (RON)				
		<i>Eligible expenses requested</i>	859,200.73	<i>Information provided by the OPTA Managing Authority</i>
		<i>Eligible expenses approved</i>	852,040.39	
		<i>Pre-financing paid</i>	0	
		<i>Reimbursed EU contribution (ERDF payments)</i>	587,404.72	
		<i>Reimbursed or approved national contribution</i>	14,6851.19	
i. Physical progress				
Indicator	Target value	Achieved	Progress %	<i>Progress Report 18 / 31.03.2015, pages 30 - 32</i>
Participant training days	1,119	216	19,3%	
Experience exchange events	4	0	0%	

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
SUPPORT FOR THE AUDIT AUTHORITY TO PERFORM THE TRAINING ACTIVITY				25272
related to the auditing of funds and other thematic aspects				
Training sessions in the field of structural instruments organised by European institutions/institutes/businesses/foundations	10	6	60%	
Study visits	5	3	60%	
Training sessions in the field of structural instruments organised by national institutions/institutes/businesses/foundations	10	10	100%	
2. Expected and unexpected effects of the project				
<p>Expected effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Trained employees are able to better manage certain situations. ▶ Some internal procedures were changed as a result of best practices observed during the study visits. ▶ Participants also noticed that other countries encounter difficulties in implementing Structural Instruments and their self-esteem increased. 				<p><i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i></p>
3. Sustainability of the project				

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>SUPPORT FOR THE AUDIT AUTHORITY TO PERFORM THE TRAINING ACTIVITY</i>	25272
a. Sustainability of the results	
<p>Moderate</p> <p>Even if some legislative changes may come into force, the basic competencies and skills were created.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
b. Replicability of the project	
<p>High</p> <p>The Audit Authority intends to apply for other similar projects in the new programming period.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
c. Current needs	
<p>Advanced training</p> <p>There is a need for training both for the newly employed personnel in the context of new duties undertaken by the Audit Authority, as well as for the current personnel that previously took part in training projects - advanced training.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
d. Possible sources of financing during the new programming period	
Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
4. Implementation mechanisms	
a. Success factors of the implemented interventions	
The flexibility of the OPTA Managing Authority to answer to the new changes or needs arisen ensured the success of the	<i>Interview with Beneficiary,</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>SUPPORT FOR THE AUDIT AUTHORITY TO PERFORM THE TRAINING ACTIVITY</i>	25272
project.	<i>held on 23.10.2015</i>
b. Problems encountered and possible solutions to be implemented in the future	
In busy periods, it was hard to obtain the approval for the participation of employees to training activities. In some cases, the courses were rescheduled.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
5. Recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The project team should include experienced people to manage the high workload. ▶ Public institutions should adapt to changes in the market. 	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>

Annex 12. Project fiche - SMIS 41677

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
<i>TRAINING FOR THE COORDINATION, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEM OF THE STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE Ops</i>		41677
1. General information about the project		Source of information
a. Beneficiary		
Ministry of European Funds (former Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments)		<i>Financing Decision no 13110 / 22.05.2012, page 1</i>
b. Duration of the contract (Months)		
44 months from 01.03.2012 to 31.10.2015		<i>Financing Decision no 13110 / 22.05.2012, page 2</i>
c. Value of the project (RON)		
<i>Total value of the project:</i>	10,309,291.50	<i>OPTA Website, http://www.poa.ro date accessed: 26.11.2015</i>
<i>Eligible value of the project:</i>	10,309,291.50	
<i>ERDF contribution:</i>	8,762,897.78	
d. Objective		
Providing trainings in the field of structural instruments and other related topics to the staff involved in managing and		<i>Financing Request no</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>TRAINING FOR THE COORDINATION, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEM OF THE STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE Ops</i>	41677
coordinating Structural Instruments.	<i>13110 / 20.04.2012, page 5</i>
e. Targeted groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Managing Authorities ▶ Intermediate Bodies ▶ Certification and Payment Authority ▶ Audit Authority ▶ Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments ▶ Other institutions responsible for managing Structural Instruments 	<i>Financing Request no 13110 / 20.04.2012, page 7</i>
f. Planned activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Trainings organised by European institutions ▶ Activity 2: Trainings in the country and study visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Programming and the new Regulations for 2014-2020 ○ Management of Operational Programmes, including the risk management, project monitoring, stated aid and income generating projects, horizontal policies, management of partnership, technical assistance and closing the programmes ○ Financial management and audit, including eligible expenses, processing reimbursement claims and payments, N+2 rules, management verifications, reporting, system and operations audit, preventing and correcting irregularities, including the conflict of interest 	<i>Financing Decision no 13110 / 22.05.2012, Addendum no 3 / 08.04.2015, page 4</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
<i>TRAINING FOR THE COORDINATION, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEM OF THE STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE Ops</i>				41677
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Management of projects financed through Structural Instruments ○ Management of public tendering ○ Other relevant topics for developing the abilities and competencies of staff managing the Structural Instruments 				
g. Implemented activities				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 2: Trainings in the country and study visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Procurement 				<i>Progress Reports no 8 submitted on 30.06.2014, page 4</i>
h. Financial progress (RON)				
<i>Eligible expenses requested</i>		569,952.76	<i>Information provided by the OPTA Managing Authority</i>	
<i>Eligible expenses approved</i>		549,480.84		
<i>Pre-financing paid</i>		0		
<i>Reimbursed EU contribution (ERDF payments)</i>		467,058.72		
<i>Reimbursed or approved national contribution</i>		82,422.12		
i. Physical progress				
Indicator	Target value	Achieved	Progress %	<i>Progress Reports no 8</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
TRAINING FOR THE COORDINATION, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEM OF THE STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE Ops				41677
Participant training days	8,300	4,728	36.79%	submitted on 30.06.2014, page 5
2. Expected and unexpected effects of the project				
<p>Expected effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The annual evaluation of staff reveals that participants increased their performance at work. <p>Unexpected effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Participants to trainings are overloaded, in comparison to their peers, due to their increased knowledge in the field. 				Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015
3. Sustainability of the project				
a. Sustainability of the results				
<p>Moderate</p> <p>After 2012, only short trainings and study visits were organized for the staff of the Ministry of European Funds.</p>				Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015
b. Replicability of the project				
<p>High</p> <p>Similar projects would be useful in the context of the new programming period</p>				Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015
c. Current needs				

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>TRAINING FOR THE COORDINATION, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEM OF THE STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE Ops</i>	41677
<p>Advanced trainings Participants expressed a need for specific trainings related to Structural Funds (e.g. EU legislation, irregularities).</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
<p>d. Possible sources of financing during the new programming period</p>	
Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
<p>4. Implementation mechanisms</p>	
<p>a. Success factors of the implemented interventions</p>	
Among the factors that contribute to the achievement of the results, we can mention the existence of a rigorous needs analysis and the experience of the contracting team and of the supplier.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
<p>b. Problems encountered and possible solutions to be implemented in the future</p>	
The quality of services decreased when the awarding criteria for public tenders was based on the price. However, the legislation will be changed in the new programming period.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
<p>5. Recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020</p>	
A coordination mechanism for trainings, created within the Ministry of European Funds, would facilitate the sustainability of the effects.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>

Annex 13. Project fiche - SMIS 48106

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF APPLYING EU LEGISLATION CONCERNING STATE AID BY TRAINING THE EXPERTS INVOLVED IN MANAGING EU FUNDS		48106
1. General information about the project		Source of information
a. Beneficiary		
The National Agency of Civil Servants (NACS)		Financing Contract no 13137 / 15.07.2013, page 1
b. Duration of the contract (Months)		
25 months from 01.07.2013 to 31.07.2015		Financing Contract no 13137 / 15.07.2013, Addendum no 2 / 28.05.2015, page 1
c. Value of the project (RON)		
Total value of the project:	2,607,992.88	OPTA Website, http://www.poaat.ro date accessed: 26.11.2015
Eligible value of the project:	2,607,992.88	
ERDF:	2,216,793.95	
d. Objective		

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF APPLYING EU LEGISLATION CONCERNING STATE AID BY TRAINING THE EXPERTS INVOLVED IN MANAGING EU FUNDS</i>	48106
Providing continuous vocational trainings in the field of state aid to experts from public administration, with responsibilities in implementing EU projects.	<i>Financing Request no 13137 / 24.05.2013, page 5</i>
e. Targeted groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Managing Authorities ▶ Intermediary Bodies ▶ Certification and Payment Authority ▶ Audit Authority ▶ Ministry of European Funds 	<i>Financing Request no 13137 / 24.05.2013, page 10</i>
f. Planned activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Ensuring the management and monitoring the implementation of the project ▶ Activity 2: Designing and implementing the training programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General principles and defining the state aid ○ Concepts used in the field of state aid, types of state aid measures and national and EU procedures ○ Monitoring, controlling and reporting the state aids ○ Efficient implementation of the new regulations in the field of state aid ▶ Activity 3: Drafting, printing and distributing a manual comprising the synthesis of the 4 training sessions 	<i>Financing Contract no 13137 / 15.07.2013, Addendum no 2 / 28.05.2015, page 3-8</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF APPLYING EU LEGISLATION CONCERNING STATE AID BY TRAINING THE EXPERTS INVOLVED IN MANAGING EU FUNDS				48106
g. Implemented activities				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Ensuring the management and monitoring the implementation of the project ▶ Activity 2: Designing and implementing the training programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General principles and defining the state aid ○ Concepts used in the field of state aid, types of state aid measures and national and EU procedures ○ Monitoring, controlling and reporting the state aids ○ Efficient implementation of the new regulations in the field of state aid 				Progress Reports no 7 submitted on 29.04.2015, page 6
h. Financial progress (RON)				
<i>Eligible expenses requested</i>		1,632,418.89	Information provided by the OPTA Managing Authority	
<i>Eligible expenses approved</i>		1,609,244.13		
<i>Pre-financing paid</i>		0		
<i>Reimbursed EU contribution (ERDF payments)</i>		1,367,857.51		
<i>Reimbursed or approved national contribution</i>		241,386.62		
i. Physical progress				
Indicator	Target value	Achieved	Progress %	Progress Reports no 7

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF APPLYING EU LEGISLATION CONCERNING STATE AID BY TRAINING THE EXPERTS INVOLVED IN MANAGING EU FUNDS				48106
Days of participant to training	3,600	3,510	97.50%	submitted on 29.04.2015, page 6
Guides and other methodological documents	1	0	0,00%	
2. Expected and unexpected effects of the project				
<p>Expected effects</p> <p>Participants improved their knowledge in the field of state aid, as shown by the high rates obtained in the evaluations taken at the end of courses.</p> <p>Unexpected effects</p> <p>A mini-network was created between participants and the Competition Council, resulting in a better communication and a higher number of requests sent</p>				Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015
3. Sustainability of the project				
a. Sustainability of the results				

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF APPLYING EU LEGISLATION CONCERNING STATE AID BY TRAINING THE EXPERTS INVOLVED IN MANAGING EU FUNDS</i>	48106
<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A solid background has been created, even if further legislative changes will be made. ▶ A database was created with the individuals trained in the field of state aid, which can be subsequently used by the Ministry of European Funds. ▶ If courses are resumed, the support from the same trainers will be requested. ▶ Materials can be adapted and reused for organization of new courses. 	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
b. Replicability of the project	
<p>High</p> <p>NACS intends to deploy similar projects in the next programming period.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
c. Current needs	
<p>Basic and advanced trainings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is an ongoing need for training courses, inclusively in the context of the new programming period. ▶ Participants have also requested in-depth courses, in specific fields - for example, state aids in agriculture. 	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
d. Possible sources of financing during the new programming period	
Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF APPLYING EU LEGISLATION CONCERNING STATE AID BY TRAINING THE EXPERTS INVOLVED IN MANAGING EU FUNDS</i>	48106
4. Implementation mechanisms	
a. Success factors of the implemented interventions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A thorough analysis of the needs was conducted at the beginning of the project. ▶ NACS's reputation and the professionalism of the individuals involved in the project have ensured a smooth implementation. 	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
b. Problems encountered and possible solutions to be implemented in the future	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The main problems encountered have concerned the number of participants: their last-minute withdrawal, because of holiday periods of very busy periods at work. ▶ Within future projects, NACS will ensure that training sessions do not overlap, in order to provide the participants with several options on the participation periods. 	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>

5. Recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020

Training analyses and the cooperation with the Ministry of European Funds are essential in order to ensure successful projects.

Interview with Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015

Annex 14. Project fiche - SMIS 48159

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
APPLIED TRAINING FOR ENHANCING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA FOR AN EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF STRUCTURAL FUNDS		48159
1. General information about the project		Source of information
a. Beneficiary		
The National Agency of Civil Servants (NACS)		Financing Contract no 13140 / 14.08.2013, page 1
b. Duration of the contract (Months)		
29 months from 01.08.2013 to 31.12.2015		Financing Contract no 13140 / 14.08.2013, Addendum no 2 / 24.09.2014, page 1
c. Value of the project (RON)		
Total value of the project:	14,820,664.14	OPTA Website, http://www.poa.ro date accessed: 26.11.2015
Eligible value of the project:	14,820,664.14	
ERDF contribution:	12,595,764.52	
d. Objective		

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>APPLIED TRAINING FOR ENHANCING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA FOR AN EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF STRUCTURAL FUNDS</i>	48159
The objective of the project is to train the staff from public administration with responsibilities in implementing EU projects, in the process of public tendering financed from these funds, in order to ensure an efficient management of the project financed from structural funds	<i>Financing Request no 13140 / 05.06.2013, page 5</i>
e. Targeted groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Beneficiaries of Cohesion and Structural Funds 2007-2013 ▶ Potential Beneficiaries of Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 ▶ Other structures: governmental inspectors 	<i>Financing Request no 13140 / 05.06.2013, page 10</i>
f. Planned activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Ensuring the management and the monitoring of the implementation of the project ▶ Activity 2: Designing and implementing the training programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training sessions in the field of managing structural instruments ○ Module 1: Expert accessing structural and cohesion funds 2014-2020 ○ Module 2: Expert implementing structural and cohesion funds ○ Module 3: Expert monitoring, evaluation, impact and sustainability of projects ○ Training sessions in the field of public tendering ○ Training sessions for obtaining the "Trainer" certification 	<i>Financing Contract no 13140 / 14.08.2013, Addendum no 3 / 17.07.2015, pages 3 - 4</i>
g. Implemented activities	

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
APPLIED TRAINING FOR ENHANCING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA FOR AN EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF STRUCTURAL FUNDS				48159
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Ensuring the management and the monitoring of the implementation of the project ▶ Activity 2: Designing and implementing the training programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training sessions in the field of managing structural instruments ○ Module 1: Expert accessing structural and cohesion funds 2014-2020 ○ Module 2: Expert implementing structural and cohesion funds ○ Training sessions in the field of public tendering 				Progress Reports no 7 submitted on 25.05.2015, page 14
h. Financial progress (RON)				
<i>Eligible expenses requested</i>		5,745,546.06		<i>Information provided by the OPTA Managing Authority</i>
<i>Eligible expenses approved</i>		3,678,534.37		
<i>Pre-financing paid</i>		0		
<i>Reimbursed EU contribution (ERDF payments)</i>		3,126,754.21		
<i>Reimbursed or approved national contribution</i>		551,780.16		
i. Physical progress				
Indicator	Target value	Achieved	Progress %	<i>Progress Report no 4 / 29.05.2015, page 16</i>
Days of participant to training	23,600	12,170	51,57%	

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
APPLIED TRAINING FOR ENHANCING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA FOR AN EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF STRUCTURAL FUNDS	48159
2. Expected and unexpected effects of the project	
Considering the topics, as well as the fact that project activities have not been completed, effects will be noticed in the new programming period.	<i>Interview with the Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
3. Sustainability of the project	
a. Sustainability of the results	
<p>Moderate</p> <p>A strong knowledge base has been created, even though legislative changes may take place.</p>	<i>Interview with the Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
b. Replicability of the project	
<p>High</p> <p>NACS intends to deploy similar projects in the new programming period.</p>	<i>Interview with the Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
c. Current needs	
A new needs analysis should be conducted after 3 years, when the effects of the project will be visible.	<i>Interview with the Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>APPLIED TRAINING FOR ENHANCING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA FOR AN EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF STRUCTURAL FUNDS</i>	48159
d. Possible sources of financing during the new programming period	
Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020	<i>Interview with the Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
4. Implementation mechanisms	
c. Success factors of the implemented interventions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A thorough needs analysis was performed at the beginning of the project. ▶ The good cooperation with public institutions, which have expressed their availability in enrolling their employees to the courses, ensured the success of the project. 	<i>Interview with the Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
d. Problems encountered and possible solutions to be implemented in the future	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The main problems encountered concerned the number of participants: their last-minute withdrawal, because of holiday periods or very busy periods at work. ▶ Within future projects, NACS will ensure that training sessions do not overlap, in order to provide the participants with several options on the participation periods. Besides, there will be smaller target groups per topics 	<i>Interview with the Beneficiary, held on 23.10.2015</i>
5. Recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020	
Training needs analyses and the cooperation with the Ministry of European Funds are essential in order to ensure successful projects.	<i>Interview with the Beneficiary, held on</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>APPLIED TRAINING FOR ENHANCING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA FOR AN EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF STRUCTURAL FUNDS</i>	48159
	23.10.2015

Annex 15. Project fiche - SMIS 48302

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
IMPROVING THE BENEFICIARIES' CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS FINANCED FROM STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS		48302
1. General information about the project		Source of information
a. Beneficiary		
Ministry of European Funds		Financing Decision no 13141 / 24.10.2013, page 1
b. Duration of the contract (Months)		
27 months 01.05.2013 to 31.07.2015		Financing Decision no 13141 / 24.10.2013, Addendum no 1 / 08.06.2015, page 2
c. Value of the project (RON)		
Total value of the project:	4,491,999.20	OPTA Website, http://www.poa.ro date accessed: 26.11.2015
Eligible value of the project:	4,491,999.20	
ERDF contribution:	3,818,199.32	
d. Objective		

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
<i>IMPROVING THE BENEFICIARIES' CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS FINANCED FROM STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS</i>		48302
The objective of the project is to provide the necessary knowledge and competencies to beneficiaries in the field of project management and public procurement in the context of Structural Instruments.		<i>Financing Request no 13141 / 23.07.2013, page 5</i>
e. Targeted groups		
Beneficiaries and potential Beneficiaries of Structural Instruments		<i>Financing Request no 13141 / 23.07.2013, page 7</i>
f. Planned activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Training sessions in the field of project management ▶ Activity 2: Training sessions in the field of public procurement and the management of the related public procurement contracts. 		<i>Financing Request no 13141 / 23.07.2013, page 6</i>
g. Implemented activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Training sessions in the field of project management ▶ Activity 2: Training sessions in the field of public procurement 		<i>Progress Reports no 6 submitted on 30.07.2015, page 2</i>
h. Financial progress (RON)		
<i>Eligible expenses requested</i>	3,006,126.38	<i>Information provided by the OPTA Managing</i>
<i>Eligible expenses approved</i>	2,984,564.81	

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
IMPROVING THE BENEFICIARIES' CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS FINANCED FROM STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS				48302
<i>Pre-financing paid</i>		0		<i>Authority</i>
<i>Reimbursed EU contribution (ERDF payments)</i>		817,001.91		
<i>Reimbursed or approved national contribution</i>		144,176.81		
i. Physical progress				
Indicator	Target value	Achieved	Progress %	<i>Progress Report no 4 / 29.05.2015, page 11</i>
Participant training days	5,272	5,800	110%	
2. Expected and unexpected effects of the project				
Expected effects Participants improved their knowledge in the field of project management and public procurement.				<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
3. Sustainability of the project				
a. Sustainability of the results				
Moderate The effects are sustainable only to the extent to which the trained staff remains in the system.				<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
b. Replicability of the project				

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>IMPROVING THE BENEFICIARIES' CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS FINANCED FROM STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS</i>	48302
<p>High Based on the needs analyses, similar projects would be useful in the context of the new programming period.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
c. Current needs	
<p>Basic and advanced trainings Participants expressed an interest for specific trainings in the field of: Irregularities, Financial management, Project cycle, Preparing reimbursement requests and Preparing the documentation for public tendering.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
d. Possible sources of financing during the new programming period	
Operational Programme Technical Assistance	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
4. Implementation mechanisms	
a. Success factors of the implemented interventions	
Among the factors that contributed to the achievement of the results, we can mention the existence of a rigorous needs analysis and the experience of the contracting team and of the supplier.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>
b. Problems encountered and possible solutions to be implemented in the future	
The quality of services decreased when the awarding criteria for public tenders was based on the price. However, the legislation will be changed in the new programming period.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>IMPROVING THE BENEFICIARIES' CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS FINANCED FROM STRUCTURAL INSTRUMENTS</i>	48302
5. Recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020	
A coordination mechanism for trainings, established within the Ministry of European Funds, would facilitate the sustainability of the effects.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 26.10.2015</i>

Annex 16. Project fiche - SMIS 52473

NAME OF THE PROJECT		SMIS CODE
<i>TRAINING IN THE FIELD OF NON-DISCRIMINATION, GENDER EQUALITY AND RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES</i>		52473
1. General information about the project		Source of information
a. Beneficiary		
National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD)		<i>Financing Contract no 13174 / 14.05.2014, page 1</i>
b. Duration of the contract (Months)		
18 months from 01.05.2014 to 31.10.2015		<i>Financing Contract no 13174 / 14.05.2014, page 2</i>
c. Value of the project (RON)		
<i>Total value of the project:</i>	8,086,709.18	<i>OPTA Website, http://www.poa.ro date accessed: 26.11.2015</i>
<i>Eligible value of the project:</i>	8,003,951.98	
<i>ERDF contribution:</i>	6,002,963.98	
d. Objective		

NAME OF THE PROJECT	SMIS CODE
<i>TRAINING IN THE FIELD OF NON-DISCRIMINATION, GENDER EQUALITY AND RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES</i>	52473
Acquiring the necessary knowledge in the field of national and European laws and policies related to antidiscrimination, equality of gender and rights of people with disabilities, including the accessibility and enforcement of the United Nation Convention regarding the persons with disabilities, as transposed in the national and European legislation.	<i>Financing Request no 11174 / 23.04.2014, page 5</i>
e. Targeted groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Managing Authorities ▶ Intermediary Bodies ▶ Authority for Certification and Payment ▶ Audit Authority ▶ Ministry of European Funds 	<i>Financing Request no 11174 / 23.04.2014, page 10</i>
f. Planned activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Ensuring the management and the monitoring of the implementation of the project ▶ Activity 2: Elaboration of the training plan ▶ Activity 3: Implementation of the training programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training sessions: Non-discrimination ○ Training sessions: Equality of gender ○ Training sessions: Rights of people with disabilities 	<i>Financing Request no 11174 / 23.04.2014, pages 6-10</i>
g. Implemented activities	

NAME OF THE PROJECT				SMIS CODE
TRAINING IN THE FIELD OF NON-DISCRIMINATION, GENDER EQUALITY AND RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES				52473
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity 1: Ensuring the management and the monitoring of the implementation of the project ▶ Activity 2: Elaboration of the training plan ▶ Activity 3: Implementation of the training programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training sessions: Non-discrimination ○ Training sessions: Equality of gender 				Progress Report no 4 / 29.05.2015, pages 6-7
h. Financial progress (RON)				
		<i>Eligible expenses requested</i>	5,416,846.74	<i>Information provided by the OPTA Managing Authority</i>
		<i>Eligible expenses approved</i>	3,422,857.48	
		<i>Pre-financing paid</i>	0	
		<i>Reimbursed EU contribution (ERDF payments)</i>	2,567,143.11	
		<i>Reimbursed or approved national contribution</i>	855,714.37	
i. Physical progress				
Indicator	Target value	Achieved	Progress %	<i>Progress Report no 4 / 29.05.2015, page 11</i>
Participant training days	9,030	4,590	50,83%	
2. Expected and unexpected effects of the project				

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<i>TRAINING IN THE FIELD OF NON-DISCRIMINATION, GENDER EQUALITY AND RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES</i>	52473
<p>Expected effects</p> <p>Participants learned to apply the principles of non-discrimination, equality of gender and rights of people with disabilities both when performing the work related task and in daily activities.</p> <p>Unexpected effects</p> <p>A network was created between participants and facilitators.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 22.10.2015</i>
3. Sustainability of the project	
a. Sustainability of the results	
<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Trainees gained in-depth knowledge by participating to all three modules and are able to share the information with work colleagues. ▶ The network created between participants and facilitators was very useful in ensuring the sustainability of the project. 	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 22.10.2015</i>
b. Replicability of the project	
<p>High</p> <p>In the new programming period, NCCD is planning to apply for similar projects.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 22.10.2015</i>
c. Current needs	
<p>Basic and advanced trainings for Beneficiaries</p> <p>Trainings could also target Beneficiaries and potential Beneficiaries.</p>	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 22.10.2015</i>

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d. Possible sources of financing during the new programming period	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020 ▶ Operational Programme Administrative Capacity 2014-2020 	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 22.10.2015</i>
4. Implementation mechanisms	
a. Success factors of the implemented interventions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The public procurement documentation was well prepared and no appeals were made in the awarding process. ▶ The selection of trainers was important in ensuring the quality of information provided to participants (based on the submitted CVs). ▶ The length of the trainings was adequate to offer to participants an in-depth knowledge (i.e. all trainees participated to 3 different modules, of 4-5 days each). 	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 22.10.2015</i>
b. Problems encountered and possible solutions to be implemented in the future	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ At the beginning of the courses, the expertise in the field of non-discrimination was not regulated; the profession of "Expert in gender equality" was introduced in the COR only later. Therefore, the NCCD encountered difficulties in getting the course accredited. ▶ The instructions for writing the reimbursement claims were not complete at the beginning of the projects: NCCD received additional requests after the submission (i.e. photos with some specific visual elements). 	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 22.10.2015</i>
5. Recommendations for the programming period 2014-2020	

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<i>TRAINING IN THE FIELD OF NON-DISCRIMINATION, GENDER EQUALITY AND RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES</i>	52473
A strategy for training would be necessary in order to plan the future projects.	<i>Interview with Beneficiary, held on 22.10.2015</i>

Annex 17. Treatment table for the comments received on the draft versions of the Evaluation Report

No	Comment received from the Beneficiary	Status of implementation	Other comments
1.	Executive summary has to be extended and presented in a more fluent format.	Implemented	NA
2.	The chapters related to findings should be reordered after the chapter on analysis.	Partially implemented	The new order is the following: methodology, findings and conclusions.
3.	Some further analyses are needed (2014 -2015) to identify the current situation.	Implemented	The <i>Chapter 4. Progress in relation to the objective of KAI 1.3</i> was updated.
4.	The effects assigned to the four levels (reaction, learning, behaviour, institutional) should be revised.	Implemented	NA
5.	Each graph included in the body text should be explained.	Implemented	NA
6.	The hierarchy of topics of interest for the new programming period should be mentioned.	Implemented	The topics of interest were identified based on the online survey,
7.	The massive co-optation of new staff, when Ministry of European Funds was created, should be analysed.	Implemented	The institutional changes were analysed within <i>Chapter 6. Sustainability of the achieved progresses.</i>
8.	Chapter on conclusions and recommendations should be revised.	Implemented	NA
9.	The projects which were perceived as being most useful by participants should be identified.	Partially implemented	Considering that all 9 projects were considered highly useful by 95% of participants, we could not create a hierarchy. At the same time, respondents suggested using in the future both classical training session and study visits. New paragraphs were inserted in order to

No	Comment received from the Beneficiary	Status of implementation	Other comments
			stress these results (see P119 and P120).
10.	The competencies created should be identified.	Implemented	The Chapter 4. <i>Progress in relation to the objective of KAI 1.3</i> was updated.
11.	Bullets should be replaced with a more fluent form of the body text.	Implemented	NA
12.	Pictures at project level should be inserted, in order to in order to increase the attractiveness of the report. .	Implemented	NA

