2. EQ 1: External Consistency

This chapter is structured in two sections:

▶ **Section 3.1** analyses the consistency between the priorities and objectives of the OPTA, and the Common Strategic Framework, the Partnership Agreement and the country specific recommendations provided by the Council, representing the main strategic documents with which consistency should be ensured.

▶ **Section 3.2** analyses the consistency between the priorities and objectives of the OPTA, and the Technical Assistance Axes of other Operational Programmes, respectively the Administrative Capacity Operational Programme and the Strategy for the Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity.

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

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

3.1.1. Description on the evaluation process

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

▶ Priorities and Flagship initiatives of the EU 2020 Strategy

▶ The Common Strategic Framework

▶ Thematic objectives and priorities identified in the Partnership Agreement

▶ National Reform Programme and country specific recommendations of the Council for Romania.

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

Table 1: Data collection tools used for EQ 1.1

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

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

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

Table 2: Feedback received for EQ 1.1

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

3.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

Table 3: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

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

Findings

Section 1 of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance makes reference to a number of key EU and National strategic documents, outlining explicitly its alignment to them. These documents include the Common Strategic Framework, ERDF Regulation (Regulation (EU) No. 1301/2013), the Partnership Agreement, the Strategy Europe 2020 and the National Reform Programme.

Consistency with Europe 2020 Strategy

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

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

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

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

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

Table 4: Consistency with Europe 2020 Strategy

EU 2020 Strategy Priorities and Flagship Initiatives	Corresponding OP TA Specific objectives	Consistency assessment
Smart growth		
► **Digital agenda for 2020**: creating a single digital market based on fast/ultrafast internet and interoperable applications	SO 2.2. Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	**YES** The action related to this **specific objective**, *Development, improvement and maintenance of SMIS 2014+, MySMIS 2014+ and other related applications, as well as of the digital network and support for the SMIS 2014+ Central Unit, of the network of coordinators and training the users of these information systems* exhibits a direct **consistency** with the **Digital Agenda flagship initiative**.

EU 2020 Strategy Priorities and Flagship Initiatives	Corresponding OP TA Specific objectives	Consistency assessment
Inclusive growth		
► **An agenda for new skills and jobs**: for individuals – helping people acquire new skills, adapt to a changing labour market and make successful career shifts, and collectively – modernising labour markets to raise employment levels, reduce unemployment, raise labour productivity and ensuring the sustainability of our social models	SO 3.1: Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF	**YES** The two actions of this **specific objective**, 3.1.1. *Implementation of a horizontal human resources policy and development of management capacity for the ESIF coordination, management and control system*, and 3.1.2. *Ensuring financial resources for the remuneration of staff in the system for ESIF coordination, management and control, and management system of OPTA, LIOP, COP and ETC OP* are **consistent with the EU 2020** Agenda for new skills and jobs flagship initiative

Consistency with the Common Strategic Framework

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

Consistency is ensured through the following OPTA Specific Objectives:

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

Table 5: Consistency with the Common Strategic Framework

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

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

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

► OPTA Specific Objective 1.1 *Strengthening the capacity of ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects* is consistent with the NRP priority **to launch and implement the JEREMIE instrument to guarantee** the interest subsidy and credit risk taking, because action 1.1.2. *Horizontal assistance for ESIF beneficiaries and specific assistance for OPTA, LIOP and COP*, is related to **promotion of financial instruments among beneficiaries**.

► OPTA Specific Objective 2.1 *Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF*, is consistent with NRP action concerning the **redefinition of the strategic, institutional and legislative framework in the area of public management**, as actions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 will finance **analyses, studies related to programming, implementation, monitoring and control**, horizontal training related to public procurement, irregularities, conflicts of interests etc.

► OPTA Specific Objective 3.1 *Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESIF*, is consistent with the NRP action to organize **specialised training programmes in the context of increasing the efficiency and transparency of the public administration**, because action 3.1.1 finances specialised training for ESIF staff, in fields such as team management, conflict management, time management, leadership and others.

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

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

Table 6: Consistency of OPTA with the National Reform Programme 2104 and Council Recommendations

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

National Reform Programme 2014	Council country specific Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance	
the National Strategy on public procurement			

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

National Reform Programme 2014	Council country specific Recommendations	Operational Programme Technical Assistance
businesses, citizens and public institutions ► **Improve the promotion and development of exports by SMEs** ► Adoption and implementation of the National Export Strategy 2014-2020		

Consistency with Partnership Agreement

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

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

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

► Strengthening participatory dimension, development of consultation and participation mechanisms in decision-making

► Strengthen the participation mechanisms to deliver efficient public services at local level

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

► Support the development for monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implemented strategies and policies

► Developing skills in the areas of strategic planning and budgetary programming, impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation

► Developing, introducing and supporting the use of management, monitoring and evaluation systems and tools for an improved institutional and public services performance and change of organizational culture

► Support for measuring administrative burden, transfer of know-how and best practices

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

► Support the development for monitoring mechanisms for the implemented strategies and policies

► Developing and use of IT tools and applications to enhance institutional capacity

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

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

Table 7: Consistency with Partnership Agreement

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

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

Conclusions and recommendations for EQ 1.1

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

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

3.2. EQ 1.2 Strategic consistency with other relevant instruments

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

3.2.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 1.2

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

▶ Technical assistance axis of Regional Operational Programme

▶ Technical assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme

▶ Administrative Capacity Operational Programme

▶ Technical assistance axis of National Rural Development Programme

▶ Fisheries Operational Programme

▶ The Strategy for consolidation of public administration capacity

▶ EU strategy the Black Sea

▶ EU strategy for the Danube Region

▶ Horizon 2020, COSME, Creative Europe, Social Change and Innovation, Connecting Europe

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

Table 8: Data collection tools used for EQ 1.2

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

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

☒: Documents not available

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

Table 9: Feedback received for EQ 1.2

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

Feedback Report n. 3 dated 27 June 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A: no specific recommendations were made with respect to external to Technical Assistance axis of Regional Operational Programme, Technical Assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme, Administrative Capacity Operational Programme, National Rural Development Programme	N/A
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A: no specific recommendations were made with respect to external to ☐Technical assistance axis of Regional Operational Programme, Technical assistance axis of Human Capital Operational Programme, Administrative Capacity Operational Programme, National Rural Development Programme	N/A

3.2.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

Table 10: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

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

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

Findings on Consistency with the TA PA of other OPs

Regional Operational Programme

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

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

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

OPTA Specific Objective 2.1 is complementary with ROP actions related to support the MA to manage the ROP, organizational and logistic support for the Monitoring Committee, and other committees involved in implementation, because OPTA provides horizontal support for the system, including ROP, in the form of support for horizontal thematic working groups, for the activity of institutions which operate at ESIF system level such as the Audit Authority, the Certifying and Paying Authority, while ROP technical assistance provides specific support for ROP committees. OPTA is also complementary with ROP actions related to evaluation and specific studies, because OPTA finances horizontal studies and evaluation at the level of PA, while ROP finances specific studies activities for ROP.

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

Human Capital Operational Programme

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

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

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

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

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

Administrative Capacity Operational Programme

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

The action **of OPTA Specific Objective 1.2** is **complementary** with the **ACOP** operations to consolidate structures, processes and competencies at the level of institutions and authorities from central public administration, because both OPs support networking and exchange of experience with other national or European institutions, OPTA in the context of ESIF and AC OP in the context of national public administration.

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

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

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

National Rural Development Programme

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

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

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

stakeholders' involvement and exchange of information and good practice, because OPTA finances the development of partnership culture at the level of ESIF system, while NRDP finances stakeholders' involvement and exchange of information and good practice for NRDP only.

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

Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity

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

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

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

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

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

Table 11: Consistency table between OPTA and ROP TA, HCOP TA, AC OP, NRDP and Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity

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

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

EU strategy for the Black Sea

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

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

Table 12: The consistency between OPTA and the EU strategy for the Black Sea

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

EU Strategy for the Danube Region

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

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

Table 13: The consistency between OPTA and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

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

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

Horizon 2020

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

COSME

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

Table 14: The consistency between OPTA and COSME

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

Creative Europe

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

Social Change and Innovation

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

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

Table 15: The consistency between OPTA and Social Change and Innovation

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

Connecting Europe

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

Table 16: The consistency between OPTA and Connecting Europe

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

Conclusions and recommendations for EQ 1.2

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

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

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

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

4. EQ 2: Internal Consistency

This chapter is structured in two sections:

▶ **Section 4.1** addresses the issue of internal consistency starting from the national challenges and the relevance of the proposed objectives and planned actions to solve such challenges.

▶ **Section 4.2** analyses the appropriateness of the forms of support

4.1. EQ 2.1 Internal consistency

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

4.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 2.1

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

▶ the clarity, coverage of relevant themes and use of evidence of the needs assessment

▶ consistency between the Programme strategy and the identified needs

▶ analysis of the Intervention logic in terms of consistency between needs and specific objectives, specific objectives and expected result, specific objectives and result indicator, and between actions and specific objectives

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

Table 17: Data collection tools used for EQ 2.1

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

Workshop with beneficiaries	☒	☒	☑	☑

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

Table 18: Feedback received for EQ 2.1

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

are provided to all stakeholders and (potential) beneficiaries of the programme	
Second version of the draft ex-ante evaluation report dated 21 July 2014	
Areas of improvement	Status of implementation
N/A: no specific recommendations were made with respect to needs assessments and with the overall Programme Strategy.	N/A

4.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

Table 19: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report

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

Findings

The needs assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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

► **ESIF system:** the existence of an overregulated system, complicated procedures, excessive bureaucracy and high administrative burden slowed and sometimes blocked the implementation processes at the levels of structures and authorities involved in the implementation of Structural Funds. Moreover, **SMIS functioning** was challenging, with little coordination and integration capacity with other applications. This situation led to the need to improve SMIS and related applications, to constantly maintain them and update the, to train users, to create guides and other support instruments that facilitate the use of the information system and enhance its monitoring and storage functions in ESIF implementation.

► **Human resources:** insufficient and demotivated staff contributed to a deficient management of structural funds, and Section 1 of the OPTA identifies the need to develop an integrated and long term human resources policy, the need to train staff, to provide clear lists of tasks and responsibilities for staff, and also to reimburse the salary cost for the staff of structures in the public administration that are part of the system for coordination and control of ESI.

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

► **Beneficiaries:** low capacity of beneficiaries to implement projects translates into the need for specific training at the level of **beneficiary** public institutions, on issues identified in the training needs analysis, strengthening capacity to prepare, implement and manage projects, as well as to develop major and strategic projects portfolios. Also, with respect to communication activity, the OP TA correctly identifies the need to support specific **information and publicity** needs of LIOP.

► **ESIF system**: the needs identified refer to support for **management structures** to implement the OPs, in terms of evaluation, projects contracting, monitoring, reimbursement requests approval, but also to develop a functional monitoring system at a centralised level. As far as the information system is concerned, no specific needs are defined for LI OP, COP and OPTA. However, this is not problematic, as the information system is a horizontal and overarching component of the ESIF system.

► **Human resources:** the needs identified refer to trainings that are specific to each OP, with an accent on major projects management (LIOP), state aid for research, evaluation and implementation of IT projects, of research projects etc. **Reimbursement of salary costs** will also be applicable to LIOP, COP and OPTA.

Overall Programme Strategy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

These specific actions are relevant and appropriate for the action regarding information and publicity, and are consistent with the specific objective. The **second action** refers to **support of collaboration and partnership culture** for relevant actors of the system, more specifically to *developing the partnership culture for the coordination and management of ESIF.* **Specific forms of support** refer to

seminars, round tables, workshops, training sessions to facilitate network communication, which are relevant for the action related to partnership culture and to SO 1.2.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Specific objective 2.2 **"Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users"** is consistent with the development needs included in Section 1 of the OPTA, which make reference to the limitations of the information system which hamper the good management of the ESIF. Moreover, the specific objective reflects a **desired change** in **the information system**, and the specific objective is singular, without referring to multiple components.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Specific actions, provided in the form of grants, cover innovative training sessions for staff, training activities, for staff in HR units in ESIF structures, continuous training on state aid, environment regulation, risk management, internal audit, financial management and control, European and national regulation, equality of chances, programming, monitoring, project monitoring and evaluation,

management competencies, financial instruments, personalized training in human resources management, training on public procurement, development of human resources policies, analyses to identify training needs for staff. Moreover, exchange of experience activities, dissemination of good practices will be supported, as well as a performance audit regarding the impact of human resources policy implementation over the ESIF system. The forms of support analysis concluded that these operations are suitable for the action they are part of, because some were used in OPTA 2007-2013 as well, and they are used by other Member States.

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

Table 20: First level of intervention logic analysis

Needs identified	Specific objective	Expected results	Specific objective reflects change	Multiple objective
PA 1. Strengthen beneficiaries' capacity to prepare and implement ESIF financed projects, and dissemination of information regarding these funds				

1. Administrative capacity of beneficiaries in the preparation and implementation of projects financed from ESIF and information and communication regarding ESIF and partnership culture in the management and implementation of ESIF
    1.1. The need to strengthen the project management capacity of beneficiaries of ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP as a robust basis for further development
    1.2 The need for information and publicity regarding ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP, as well as the development of partnership culture in the implementation of ESIF
	SO 1.1. Strengthening the capacity of the ESIF funded projects beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects	Increased effectiveness in project preparation and implementation	YES
			
			"strengthening the capacity"
				NO

	SO 1.2. Ensuring communication transparency and credibility regarding ESIF and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy	Increased awareness level regarding EU co-financed projects	YES "**Increased** awareness level"	NO
PA 2. Support for the coordination, management and control of ESIF				

2. Administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of ESIF, including by ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS.
    2.1. Need to improve the legal and procedural framework for the coordination and control of ESIF, as well as management of OPTA, LIOP and COP
    2.2. The need to develop and improve SMIS, and electronic information exchange systems
	SO 2.1. Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	Improved regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of ESIF	YES
			
			"**Improved** regulatory, strategic and procedural framework"
				NO

	SO 2.2. Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system for SFC, as well as strengthening the capacity of its users	Functional and integrated information system which generates correct and timely data, for a correct and efficient management of operational programmes	YES "Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient information system"	NO
PA 3. Increasing the efficiency of the human resources involved in the coordination, management and control system of ESIF in Romania				
3. Human resources involved in the coordination, management and control for projects financed with SI / ESIF - including training of staff from these structures. 3.1.1. The need for development of an improved human resources quality and management policy for the staff involved in the coordination, management and control of ESIF	SO 3.1. Developing an improved human resources management policy that ensures adequate stability, qualification and motivation for the staff that are working in the coordination, management and control system of the ESI fund	Motivated, accountable, stable and highly qualified staff of the coordination, management and control system of the ESI funds	YES "improved human resources management policy"	NO

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion	Recommendations
Needs assessments	

C1. The needs identified in Section 1 of the OP provide a **clear and structured image of the local context** in terms of needs for technical assistance and they cover relevant themes.
 	
The **needs are structured around 3 major categories**, referring to beneficiaries and information and publicity, the ESIF system and human resources with a distinction between needs for horizontal support and specific support for LIOP, COP and OPTA.
 	
The needs are presented in a hierarchical structure, as displayed in the below:
1. Administrative capacity of beneficiaries in the preparation and implementation of projects financed from ESIF and information and communication regarding ESIF and partnership culture in the management and implementation of ESIF
   - 1.1. The need to strengthen the project management capacity of beneficiaries of ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP as a robust basis for further development
   - 1.2 The need for information and publicity regarding ESIF, OPTA, LIOP and COP, as well as the development of partnership culture in the implementation of ESIF
2. Administrative capacity and providing the necessary tools for coordination, management and control of ESIF, including by ensuring the evaluation function and operation of SMIS.
   - 2.1. Need to improve the legal and procedural framework for the coordination and control of ESIF, as well as management of OPTA, LIOP and COP
   - 2.2. The need to develop and improve SMIS, and electronic information exchange systems
3. Human resources involved in the coordination, management and control for projects financed with SI / ESIF - including training of staff from these structures.
   - 3.1. The need for development of an improved human resources quality and management policy for staff involved in the coordination, management and control of ESIF
 	
C2. The main points outlined by the needs assessment are supported by **evidence information**, by making reference to a variety of reports, or other relevant national and European documents
	No specific recommendations

Overall Programme Strategy	
C3. Overall, the logic of intervention of the OPTA is **coherent and follows a logical structure**, starting from identification of **needs** which are grouped into three categories. These needs are addressed through three **priority axes**. PA 1 has two specific objectives and it focuses on beneficiaries and information and communication activities. PA 2 has two specific objectives and it is centred on the ESIF system overall, and the information management system. PA 3 is concentrated around the human resources of the ESIF structures. The **specific objectives** are consistent with the needs identified, and they capture them appropriately. The **expected results** of these specific objectives correctly envisage a desired change. Moreover, the result indicators are relevant for the specific objective, and the **actions** proposed for each specific objective are appropriate. The specific actions proposed for the specific objectives, which are implemented through grants, are suitable for the action.	*No specific recommendations*

4.2. EQ 2.2 Forms of support

EQ 2.2	Are the proposed support forms the most appropriate?

4.2.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 2.2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 21: Data collection tools used for EQ 2.2

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

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

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

Table 22: Feedback received for EQ 2.2

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

4.2.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

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

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

In order to analyse the appropriateness of forms of support and their correspondent specific actions, the evaluation team took into consideration the performance of forms of support of OPTA 2007-2013, as reflected by the performance of indicators at the level of Priority Axis. Data was obtained from the annual Implementation Report of OPTA from 2013. In addition, the assessment considered the Benchmarking Analysis prepared by the evaluation team with respect to actions financed by other Member States technical assistance interventions for 2014-2020. Moreover, examples of forms of support included in

technical assistance operational programme were taken from the TA OPs of Slovakia and Poland for 2007-2013.

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

Findings

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

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

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

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

Findings:

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

Table 24: Specific activities for the forms of support of the OP

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions and recommendations

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

Conclusions	Recommendations

5. EQ 3: Financial allocation

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

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

5.1.1 Description on the evaluation process for EQ 3

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

► The concentration of financial resources by specific objective

► The consistency of allocations with Programme objectives and planned actions

► The support for integrated actions analysis / disadvantaged areas / disadvantaged groups

► The risk involved in financial implementation

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

Table 25: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 3

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

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

Table 26: Feedback received for EQ 3

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

5.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

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

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

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

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

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

(3) Comparison with other Member States.

Consistency with obligatory requirements

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

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

Table 28: Allocation to Technical assistance by funds

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

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

Technical Assistance in 2007–2013

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

Table 29: Financial allocations for technical assistance in 2007–2013 and 2014-2020

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

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

However, there is a 25% increase in the total allocation to OPTA in 2014-2020 programming period compared to 2007-2013. The share of OPTA funding in the total allocation to technical assistance increased from 25% to 44%. OPTA 2014-2020 plans to support Operational Programmes (OPs) with

technical assistance for horizontal issues and actions aimed at an integrated approach and provide technical assistance for OPLI and COP financed by ERDF and CF, as these programmes will not have their own technical assistance priority axes. The increase of the budget for OPTA is in line with the new areas of intervention (management of specific SOPs).

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

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

Table 30: Financial allocations for OPTA Priority Axes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 31: The distribution of technical assistance funds according to intervention categories in Romania and other Member States[2]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions and recommendations

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

6. EQ 4. Indicators

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

6.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 4

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

► The coverage of specific objectives by common indicators

► The coverage of specific objectives by specific indicators

► Clarity and relevance of specific result indicators

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

Table 32: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 4

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

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

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

Table 33: Feedback received for EQ 4

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

SO 2.1: It is recommended to clarify the output indicator "Tools developed/ enhanced/ implemented for the management of ESI funds". Indicative list of what is understood by "tools" should be provided in the explanatory definition.	Implemented An annex with explanatory definitions is provided in the new OPTA

6.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

Table 34: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report

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

Relevance and clarity of both result and output indicators are evaluated in this section. Based on methodological documents (with special attention to Guidance on *ex ante* conditionalities) and following discussions with the Ministry of European Funds, the next criteria were chosen for the evaluation of clarity and relevance of result indicators:
► Clarity of label and explanatory definition
► Clarity of normative interpretation
► Robustness and statistical validity
► Timely collection and aggregation of data
► Responsiveness to policy
► Ability to capture the expected result.

The following criteria were used to evaluate the clarity and relevance of output indicators:
► Clarity of label and explanatory definition;
► Timely collection and aggregation of data;
► Capacity to influence the values of result indicators;
► Capacity to measure the "product" of the planned actions.

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

Table 35: The clarity and relevance of result indicators

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

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

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

Table 36: The clarity and relevance of output indicators

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

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

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

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

Conclusions and recommendations

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

7. EQ 5: Results and outputs

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

▶ **Section 7.1** analyses the contribution of estimated outputs to results

▶ □**Section 7.2** analyses the extent to which the results are influenced by external factors, including by other instruments

▶ **Section 7.3** analyses if the quantified target values of the indicators are realistic, considering the available funding

7.1. EQ 5.1. Contribution of outputs to results

EQ 5.1	How will the estimated outputs contribute to results?

7.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 5.1.

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

► The relevance of output indicators in relation to actions

► The relevance of result indicators in relation to objectives and priorities

► Statistical validation in terms of analysis of data sources, reliability and robustness of indicators

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

Table 37: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 5.1

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

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

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

Table 38: Feedback received for EQ 5.1

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

7.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

Table 39: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

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

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

Table 40: The relation between the estimated output and intended results

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

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

Conclusions and recommendations

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

7.2. EQ 5.2. Influence of external factors over results

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

7.2.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 5.2

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

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

Table 41: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 5.2

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

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

Table 42: Feedback received for EQ 5.2

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

7.2.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

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

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

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

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

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

► **Institutional changes and political instability**. Institutional changes and political instability had a negative effect on the implementation of OPTA in the 2007-2013 programming period. Interim evaluation of the 2007-2013 OPTA showed that institutional changes and political instability have prevented the Government from developing an evaluation culture outside the SI context. There is a possibility that the priorities and financial allocation of OP TA will be revised in the middle of the programming period as a result of institutional or political changes. These revisions are likely to have an effect on intended results. **Each of the six result indicators can potentially be affected by institutional changes and political instability.**

► **Capacity and workload of beneficiaries**. As evidenced by the annual implementation reports, the main problems in the 2007-2013 programming period were represented by the reduced capacity of beneficiaries, as well as their administrative burden. These factors have a negative effect on the absorption rate and, consequently, on the achievement of intended results.

Each of the six result indicators can potentially be affected by beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden. However, some of the measures included in the OPTA 2014-2020 – particularly those of SO 1.1 - should have a positive effect on beneficiaries' capacities. Therefore, there is a mutual relationship between beneficiaries' capacities and implementation of OP TA.

► **Changes in the public procurement rules and procedures**. Legal basis of the public procurement process is a key factor affecting the absorption rate of OPTA funds and one of the main problem areas identified in annual implementation reports of OP TA 2007-2013. It is likely that the simplification of public procurement procedures would have a positive effect on the achievement of intended results of OP TA 2014-2020. **Each of the six result indicators can potentially be affected by the changes in public procurement rules and procedures.** It is worth noting that actions of SO 2.1 should contribute to the improvement of public procurement rules and procedures. Therefore, there is a mutual relationship between public procurement rules/ procedures and implementation of OP TA.

► **Public perception of ESI funds in the general public.** Public perception about ESI funds as being incorrectly managed and the perception of fraud and corruption in the system prevented the smooth implementation of information and communication campaign in 2007-2013 programming period. In 2010, a survey was conducted which showed that only 26% of the respondents are interested in finding information about SI.

Lack of interest from the general public can also be a factor in the 2014-2020 programming period. This factor will affect the value of result indicator "**Level of awareness with respect to projects co-financed by the EU"**.

► **The development level of the local training market**. In order for training activities to be effective, a sufficient supply of relevant training services must be ensured. Insufficient development of the local training market for management of Structural Instruments was one of the threats identified in the OPTA 2007-2013.

In the 2014-2020 programming period, **the development level of the local training market will affect result indicators "Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)", "Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures" and "Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system".**

► **The quality of consultancy services provided for beneficiaries.** In AIRs of OP TA 2007-2013, the poor quality of consultancy services for beneficiaries was marked as one of the key problems. Since a significant amount of funds of OP TA 2014-2020 is allocated to consultancy for beneficiaries (particularly in the preparation of projects), the quality of consultancy services will affect the achievement of intended results. **This factor will be very important for result**

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

► **The capacity for conducting evaluation**. Insufficient capacity for conducting evaluations was one of the threats identified in the 2007-2013 OPTA. The capacity for conducting evaluation will also affect the achievement of intended results of the OPTA 2014-2020. Since results of evaluations can be used for improving procedures regarding ESI funds, the capacity for conducting evaluation will affect result indicator "**The share of beneficiaries who find the procedures for ESI funds appropriate (%)"**.

► **The motivation level of beneficiaries.** The key factor to the success of the efforts to strengthen the beneficiaries' capacities will be the motivation of beneficiaries to learn and improve their knowledge and skills. Therefore, the motivation level of beneficiaries will affect result indicator **"Projects that have an absorption rate of more than 70 percent of the total projects whose development was supported through OP TA (%)".**

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

Table 44: The relation of each result indicator with relevant external factors*

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

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

Conclusions and recommendations

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

Conclusions	Recommendations
C4. Among the factors which may influence result indicator 2.2. The degree of use of SMIS 2014 + for reporting obligations at the level of the OP are: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures. **C5. Among the factors which may influence result indicator 3.1.** *Average annual staff turnover of ESI system structures* are: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, the development level of the local training market. **C6. Among the factors which may influence result indicator 3.1**. *Average evaluation rating of the staff in the ESIF system* are: economic situation in the country, institutional changes and political instability, beneficiaries' capacity and heavy administrative burden, changes in the public procurement rules and procedures, the development level of the local training market	

7.3. EQ 5.3. Target values of indicators

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

7.3.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 5.3.

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

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

Table 45: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 5.3

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06.2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07.2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Assessment of the quantified target values for indicators	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis (The Partnership Agreement, Common Strategic Framework, Guidelines for the ex-ante evaluation 2014-2020, DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, Result indicators 2014+, Pilot study in 12 European regions - DG Regional Development and Urban Policy, prior analyses performed to improve the system of indicators related to the socio-economic development in Romania, evaluations of OPTA 2007-2013, draft Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020)	☒	☒	☑	☑
Panel of experts	☒	☒	☑	☑
Workshop	☒	☒	☑	☑
Benchmarking with other Member States	☒	☒	☑	☑

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

Table 46: Feedback received for EQ 5.3

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

7.3.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

Table 47: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Draft OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report V2

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

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

Table 48: Analysis of the target values of indicators

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions and recommendations

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

8. EQ 6: Performance framework

8.1. EQ 6. Performance framework

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

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

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

The benchmarking analysis took into consideration aspects such as:

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

Conclusions and recommendations

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

9. EQ 7: Human resources and administrative capacity

9.1. EQ 7. Human resources and administrative capacity

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

9.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 7.

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

► The programme functions, structure, human resources, systems and tools

► The administrative organization and approach to implementation

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

Table 49: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 7

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

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

Table 50: Feedback received for EQ 7

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

	recommendation shall be reflected by the description of the management and control systems and applicable legislation.
The structures of the OPTA that may benefit of its assistance as main beneficiaries should be ensured adequate support for project preparation (also through OPTA itself),	N/A Implementation of this recommendation shall be reflected by the description of the management and control systems and applicable legislation.
In order to avoid potential conflict of interest within the MA OPTA, the Implementation Compartment should not be integrated in the MA OPTA, and the help desk services should be provided by the Strategies Service of the Financial Management Service	N/A Implementation of this recommendation shall be reflected by the description of the management and control systems and applicable legislation.

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

9.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

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

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

Findings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions and recommendations

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

10. EQ 8: Monitoring and data collection

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

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

10.1. EQ 8. Monitoring and data collection procedures

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

10.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 8

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

► programme functions, structure, human resources, systems and tools

► the administrative organization and approach to implementation

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

Table 52: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 8

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

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

Table 53: Feedback received for EQ 8

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

10.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

Table 54: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Monitoring Committee (article 49) shall meet at least once a year to review the progress in the implementation of the programme and progress made towards achieving its objectives, having regard to

financial data, progress in the achievement of indicators, provide an opinion on proposed amendments to the Programme, observations regarding implementation and evaluation of the programme including actions related to the reduction of the administrative burden on beneficiaries.

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

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

Table 55: Specific contents requirements for AIRs in the period 2015 - 2022

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

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

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

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

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

Another aspect of interest is represented by the help desk services that will be offered to beneficiaries. At present, help desk is provided to all beneficiaries by first level controllers/monitoring officers on specific aspects or functions, for all beneficiaries. During discussions with the Programmer, the evaluation team discussed the possibility that monitoring officers provide help desk services to specific beneficiaries, covering information and support on all phases of project preparation and implementation,

not only on specific phases. Like this, each beneficiary will have appointed persons whom to ask support from.

Conclusions and recommendations

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

11. EQ 9: Contribution to EU 2020 Strategy

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

11.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 9

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

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

Table 56: Feedback received for EQ 9

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

11.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

Table 57: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final Ex-ante Evaluation Report

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

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

Considering that OPTA will provide specific Technical Assistance support to Competitiveness and Large Infrastructure OPs, it will have a stronger indirect contribution of the achievement of the EU Headline Targets on R&D, CO_2 emission reduction, renewable energies and energy efficiency.

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

Table 58: Contribution of OPTA to NRP

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

Conclusions and recommendations

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

12. EQ 10: Relation with other instruments

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

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

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

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

12.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 10

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

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

Table 59: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 10

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

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

Table 60: Feedback received for EQ 10

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

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

12.1.2.   Answer to the evaluation question

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

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

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

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

Table 62: Relation of OPTA to other strategies

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

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

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

Table 63: Relation of OPTA to the Strategy for Consolidation of Public Administration Capacity 2014 – 2020

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

Conclusions and recommendations

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

Conclusions	Recommendations
itself.	

Conclusions	Recommendations
itself.	

13. EQ 11: Horizontal principles

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

▶ **Section 13.1** analyses whether the planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent discrimination are adequate

▶ **Section 13.2** analyses if the planned measures to promote sustainable development are adequate

13.1. Equal opportunities between men and women

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

13.1.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 11.1

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

Table 64: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 11.1

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

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

Table 65: Feedback received for EQ 11.1

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

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

13.1.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

Table 66: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report

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

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

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

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

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

13.2. EQ 11.2: Sustainable development

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

13.2.1. Description on the evaluation process for EQ 11.2

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

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

Table 67: Data analysis and data collection tools used for EQ 11.2

Data analysis / collection tools	OPTA V1 of 19.03.2014 Feedback Rep.1 of 7.04.2014	OPTA V2 of 30.04.2014 Feedback Rep. 2 of 19.05.2014	OPTA V3 of 15.06.2014 Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report of 27.06.2014	OPTA v4 of 10.07.2014 Second version of Draft Ex-ante Evaluation Report, 21.07.2014
Data analysis tools				
Analysis of OP elements related to the application of the sustainable development principle in the 7 key phases of Programme implementation	☒	☒	☑	☑
Data collection tools				
Documentary analysis	☒	☒	☑	☑

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

Table 68: Feedback received for 11.2

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

13.2.2. Answer to the evaluation question

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

Table 69: Data analysis and data collection tools used in the Final OPTA Ex-ante Evaluation Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 70: Measures related to sustainable development

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

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

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