



ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC FINANCE

**MANAGING AUTHORITY FOR THE COMMUNITY
SUPPORT FRAMEWORK**



Project financed by
the European Union

Draft Mandate for Evaluation Working Group

Rationale

As per:

- Objectives 6.1 and 6.3 of the Romanian Government's 2005 Single Action Plan Aimed at Improving the EU Funds Management System in Romania (pre-accession funds and Structural Instruments);
- Article 5 (Responsibilities) of the draft Terms of Reference of the *National Committee for the Structural Instruments* (established in August 2004 under GD 1,200/2004);
- Articles 45-47 of the Austrian Presidency's March 2006 Compromise to the European Commission's July 2004 "Proposal for a Council Regulation Laying Down General Provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund," (COM(2004)492 final, 14 July, 2005);

An inter-institutional Working Group dealing with establishing structures, systems and procedures related to the evaluation of programmes funded by the Structural Instruments should be convened in 2006. The EWG shall be responsible for making recommendations aimed at improving the coordinated evaluation of the NSRF and of all Operational Programmes.

Considering the benefits and utility of evaluation for the conduct of public interventions, the Working Group should also address the issue of evaluation of programmes funded by the Romanian national budget and other sources, with a view of proposing a model for evaluating all publicly-funded socio-economic development programmes in Romania.

This paper sets out a draft Mandate for this Working Group, to be entitled simply the Evaluation Working Group (EWG).

Working Group Membership

1. Membership of the EWG shall include relevant senior officials from:
 - All 2007-2013 NSRF Operational Programmes Managing Authorities;

- The MACSF Evaluation Central Unit.
2. The EWG may invite experts or representatives of other institutions, as it deems appropriate, to consider in more detail specific areas of its responsibility. Experts shall operate under the direction and authority of the EWG.
 3. Each Member of the EWG may designate one alternate member. Issues of frequent non-attendance of meetings, or of attendance by persons other than the designated Member or alternate member, shall be reviewed by the EWG on a regular basis.
 4. Membership of the EWG may be extended, depending on the concrete situations that occur during the course of its activities.

Chairperson

5. The Chair of the EWG is the General Director of the MACSF. The alternate Chair is the head of the MACSF Evaluation Central Unit. The Chair of the EWG is responsible for the following actions:
 - Calling meetings of the EWG;
 - Managing the business of the EWG and outline the provisional agendas for its meetings;
 - Deciding upon the use of alternate members, as necessary (after dialogue with EWG members);
 - Inviting additional persons to participate in the work of the EWG;
 - Convening extraordinary meetings and considering requests from members for calling extraordinary meetings, if necessary;
 - Representing the EWG to the press and the public or delegating this function as appropriate.
 - Attending biannual meetings of the DG REGIO Evaluation Network in Brussels as the Romanian representative

Secretariat

6. The Secretariat to the EWG is the Evaluation Central Unit within the MACSF. All communications relating to the business of the EWG shall be addressed to the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall:
 - arrange the meetings of the EWG;

- prepare the agenda and documents for discussion at the meetings after dialogue with EWG members ;
- ensure the dissemination of documents to be discussed, within a reasonable period of time prior to the EWG meetings
- prepare the minutes of the meetings;
- provide the EWG members with information needed to assist them in their work (i.e. organisation of training sessions).

Evaluation Working Group Responsibilities and Tasks

7. The EWG shall perform the following tasks:

- Liaise with the National Coordinating Committee for Structural Instruments (NCC), and, under their instruction, coordinate evaluations of the NSRF and Operational Programmes, including evaluations of the functioning of institutional, legal and procedural mechanisms set up for managing Structural Instruments and deciding on measures to address evaluation findings;
- Constantly report on the work of the EWG to the Management Group for the Structural Instruments, and through it to the NCC;
- Propose to the Management Group for the Structural Instruments the model for organization of the evaluation function at NSRF level and within the seven 2007-2013 NSRF Operational Programmes.
- Once established, provide advice and propose improvements required to OP evaluation systems;
- Ensure good collaboration between all MA evaluation units in sharing experience and developing good practice in evaluation implementation;
- Provide broad strategic guidance to all MA evaluation units in performance of their duties;
- Working out common standards and approaches to evaluation, and propose their endorsement to the NCC
- Providing input in the drafting of the National Evaluation Strategy (NES), document that sets the priorities, objectives and measures as well as institutional and procedural arrangements for establishing the national evaluation system of Structural Instruments interventions. The NES should also outline the steps to be taken in imagining and drafting a future system for evaluating programmes and projects financed by Romanian national funds, and other donors, where relevant.

This task of the EWG will be achieved by:

- Providing feedback on the preliminary draft of the NES document prepared by the ECU;
- Proposing revisions to the draft as it is presented by the ECU to the EWG;
- Establishing a follow-up mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations enclosed in the evaluation reports issued as a result of all ongoing evaluations of Operational Programmes
- Acting as a follow-up body at a coordination level, for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations enclosed in the evaluation reports

Decision-making process

8. The Chair of the EWG will prepare and circulate an agenda, along with drafts of the documents to be considered at the EWG meeting (by email), to EWG members 10 days prior to the meeting of the EWG. The written materials should be concise and should clearly specify the action required by the EWG. *Any MA has the possibility to ask for a specific issue to be dealt with, either during the meeting when this proposal was raised, or at the following EWG meeting.*
9. At the meeting, the Chair of the EWG will present to the Group's membership the documents under consideration. Following debate on the subject matter under discussion, the proposals will either be approved on the spot, with or without amendments,, or will be postponed to the next EWG in order for the members to examine the alternative proposals
10. The EWG shall operate on the basis of consensus. The members of the EWG, however, have the right to make known a minority opinion. In such cases, the minority opinion of the members should be attached to the decision in question and it should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
11. The Chair of the EWG can initiate a procedure of written decision. Under the written procedure, the Chair of the EWG sends the draft decision to the members by email requesting them to express an opinion on the proposal. The members send their opinions to the Chair within the deadline determined by the Chair. This deadline should always be at least 5 working days. In case the members of the EWG do not react to the proposal within the deadline determined by the Chair, the proposal is considered accepted. The decision in question (together with an explanation of the written procedure) will be placed as a point of information on the agenda of the following meeting.
13. The Chair will produce minutes, a draft note of decisions taken and key action points, and will circulate them to the EWG members within 10 days of the EWG meetings. The minutes of the previous meeting will be approved at the next meeting of the EWG.

14. Members are able to propose a specific issue to be dealt with at a meeting of the EWG, as well as submit written comments on any of the items of business to be considered at the meeting. This should normally be done at least 10 calendar days before the meeting, in order for the ECU to include their proposals and comments on the draft agenda.

Meeting schedule

15. The EWG will meet monthly on the basis of a constant schedule (e.g. 3rd Tuesday of every month) throughout 2006. From January 2007 the EWG should meet on a bi-monthly basis.
16. Any member may request the Chair to convene an extraordinary meeting. The Chair's decision on convening an extraordinary meeting is final but he/she must inform all Members of his/her decision.
17. The EWG determines the date and the planned agenda for at least one meeting in advance. In case of urgent business (for example around the launch time of the National Evaluation Strategy) the Chair of the EWG may convene an extraordinary meeting at short notice through a written announcement.

Reporting

18. The EWG will report to the Management Group for the Structural Instruments, and through it, to the National Coordination Committee for the Structural Instruments. Minutes of EWG meetings will be sent to the NCC for information/endorsement.

End of the Evaluation Working Group mandate

19. The EWG shall keep working at least until the end of implementation of the NSRF 2007-2013. After the implementation of the NSRF 2007-2013, the mandate of the EWG group will be amended, according to the new objectives established for the Evaluation Working Group by its members.