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2007 - 2013

**MINISTERUL FINANTELOR PUBLICE
AUTORITATEA PENTRU COORDONAREA INSTRUMENTELOR STRUCTURALE**

Evaluation of National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) and Operational Programme – Technical Assistance (OPTA), 2009/10

ACTIVITY 2.2 SYNTHESIS REPORT

**Presentation to
Mini-conference for the Dissemination of Results**

8th April 2011

Project implemented by the consortium KPMG Romania (Leader) – GEA S&C – Pluriconsult



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Structure of Presentation

Background and Context

Objectives, Terms of Reference, Expected Results

Key Findings

Main Conclusions, Recommendations



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Background and Context

- 2009/10 Interim Evaluations (IE) of individual Operational Programmes plus NSRF as a whole.
- NSRF contract includes NSRF Interim Evaluation, OPTA Interim Evaluation, two Ad Hoc Evaluations, and **Synthesis Report**.
- “A national synthesis report based on the Interim Evaluation Reports made at Operational Programme Level”



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Terms of Reference

Overall Objective:-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To contribute to improvement of national absorption capacity and general implementations of NSRF
Specific Objective:-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft a synthesis of the outputs of the OP-level interim evaluations
Outputs:-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft, Final Synthesis Report ● Max. 50 pages (exc. Annexes) ● 8-10 page Executive Summary ● Annex Executive Summaries of individual Evaluations
Expected Results:-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Financial crisis impact ● Relevance, efficiency, effectiveness of OP strategies ● Relevance of implementation mechanisms ● Potential for upgrading investment impact.

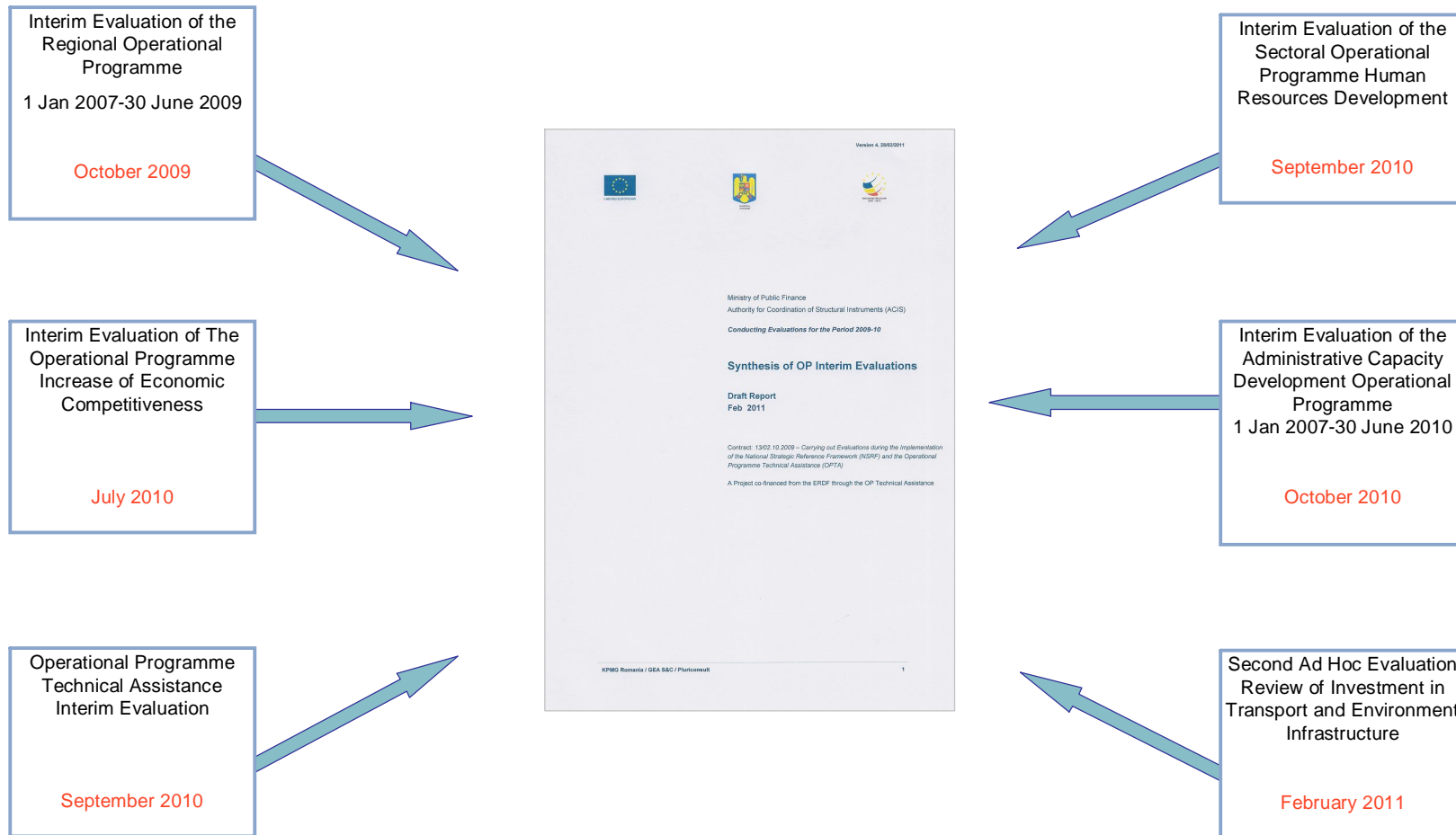


Expected Results (Strategic Issues)

- Issue 1: Consequences for the strategy and its implementation of the financial and economic crisis.
- Issue 2: Relevance, efficiency* and effectiveness of the existing (OP) strategies. Best practices and failures explaining the asymmetry of implementation between OPs and within each OP should also be provided
- Issue 3: Relevance of the implementation mechanisms.
- Issue 4: Potential for upgrading the impact of investments, including increasing the synergies and complementarities between programmes and priorities, and judgement on the quality of the investment.

* Including the efficiency of the management, financial and certifying systems.

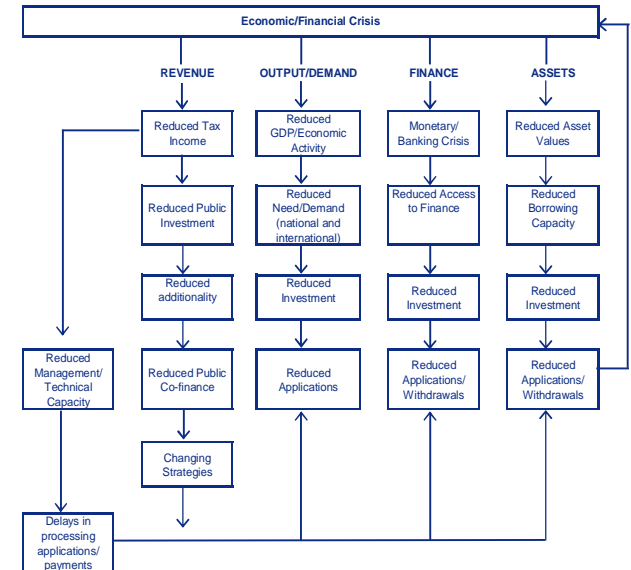
Inputs to the Synthesis Report



Supplementary Sources: Romania Strategic Report, Interim Evaluation of NSRF, Ad Hoc Evaluation No. 1

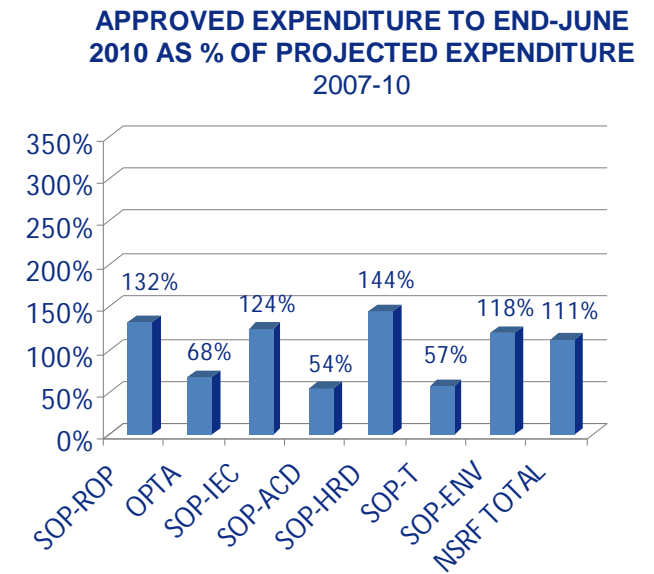
Issue (1): Implications of the Crisis for OPs

- IEs were carried out at various stages of the crisis
- All IEs saw crisis as having significant implications
- Multiple channels of causation, direct and indirect
- Effect almost universally seen as negative
- Crisis not seen as affecting fundamental OP strategies



Issue (2): Efficiency, Effectiveness of OP Strategies

- After a slow start OP implementation gained pace
- Progress is variable across OPs
- Also great variability within OPs, PAs
- Overall levels of actual expenditure very low at time of IE completion
- Factors in relative success: previous experience, absence of policy/admin/regulatory blockages, high levels of small external applicants, functioning appraisal/approval system



SOURCE: ACIS



Issue (3): Implementation Mechanisms

- At time of IEs this related mainly to Programme implementation, not project implementation in beneficiaries
- A large number of difficulties reported across all OPs
- Common problems identified (e.g. procurement rules, inexperienced subcontractors, lack of experienced staff, lack of specialist skills)
- A process of incremental improvement taking place
- IEs positive about improvements, no proposals for radical change



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Main Conclusions, Recommendations

Strategic Issue No. 1: Consequences of the Crisis for OP Strategy and Implementation

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Crisis generally hinders progress, particularly project implementation and absorption.● TA has a particular potential in this regard, so it is disappointing to note that OPTA, ACD and TA Priority Axes are making slow progress.● it would not appear necessary to review the Strategy of the NSRF or most OPs fundamentally. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ all options to speed up absorption need to be considered within the existing objectives and operating rules of the NSRF and OPs➤ use TA to more proactively support actual and potential beneficiaries➤ use TA to outsource OP management and technical functions in cases of scarce internal capacity and bottlenecks. |
|---|---|



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Issue (4): Potential for Upgrading the Impact of Investment

- IEs did not directly address, and there was very little actual investment when IEs carried out
- The IEs generally examined this in terms of project appraisal and selection procedures. While many criticisms, mostly not related to the quality of approved projects emerging from the system
- Considerable effort at co-ordination and improving synergies was identified, but related to processes rather than on-the-ground implementation
- There is an absence of systematic feedback from beneficiary level regarding the quality of approved projects and of their implementation¹

¹Ad Hoc Evaluation No. 1 has done very useful work on this



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Main Conclusions, Recommendations

Strategic Issue No. 2: Relevance, Efficiency and Effectiveness of OP Strategies

- the view reflected in most Interim Evaluations is a relatively optimistic one, i.e. that the current pace of absorption will now gradually increase and its current low level is partially a reflection of the timing of the Interim Evaluations.
 - alongside a continued process of procedural improvement, the time has arrived when consideration of significant reallocations within the NSRF should also be considered.
- develop a pro-active “demand-led” framework for reallocations now, rather than reactively seeking destinations for unspent monies on a reactive basis later.
 - identify a number of PAs and operations, preferably large ones, which have the potential to absorb significant amounts of additional funding, **and which also meet all other criteria.**
 - consider inclusion in OPs some potential eligible expenditure areas that are not already part of the NSRF.
 - remove money from operations which are currently not launched or not performing because of fundamental obstacles to their implementation which have not yet been addressed (by a certain deadline).
 - appoint “OP-level monitors” to advise/support MC/MAs at NSRF and OP level.
 - Review operation of the existing project-level monitoring and audit activity to ensure a beneficiary-oriented and support dimension.



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Main Conclusions, Recommendations

Strategic Issue No. 3: Relevance of the Implementation Mechanisms

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Major changes in implementation architecture at this stage in the NSRF would probably be counter-productive and disruptive. There is therefore little alternative but to maintain a process of continuous improvement. ● however, there is no reason why alternative structures cannot be considered in a post-2013 context. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ retain focus on making the existing implementation structures more effective and efficient in 2007-13 period ➤ if alternative mechanisms are to be considered for the next period, commence examination of these now, including looking in detail at approaches of other relevant Member States. |
|---|---|

Strategic Issue No. 4: Potential for Upgrading the Impact of Investment

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interim Evaluations as such are not explicitly informative on this topic. ● a number of Interim Evaluations identify potential to provide more technical assistance to beneficiaries, particularly at the implementation phase and this should be done. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ initiate independent quality examination of a sample of ongoing contracted projects using experienced development project assessors ➤ create more temporary Ad Hoc Working Groups to deal with specific co-ordination issues and blockages. |
|--|--|



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Avoiding Distortion of NSRF/OP Strategies?

Two-Period Strategies for Long-term Investment		
Sectoral Strategies	2007-13	2014-20
Transport/environment infrastructure	✓	✓
Competitiveness infrastructure	✓	✓
Human Resources	?	?
Regional Development infrastructure	✓	✓
Administrative Capacity	?	?
Innovation	?	?
Other (Europe 2020)	?	?

Suggested Reallocation Principles/Criteria

Overall Principles

- (1) Each decision should be subject to formal analysis by the MA and recommendation to the Monitoring Committee.
- (2) A re-allocation should be seen as two decisions: into what operation the money should be allocated? From what KAI/operation the money is to be released?
- (3) In relation to principle no. 2, it should not be automatically assumed that the two operations involved are necessarily within the same KAI, or even Priority Axis or OP.
- (4) Desirable that it be driven as much by “demand” as “supply” issues.

“Supplier” PA/KAI

- Current level of absorption (low)
- Current level of approvals (low)
- Current level of applications (low)
- Objectively assessed pipeline (low)
- Adverse affect of crisis on relevance (high)



“Recipient” PAs/KAIs

Existing PAs

- Current level of absorption (high)
- Current level of applications/approvals (high)
- Objectively assessed pipeline (high)
- Positive affect of economic crisis on relevance (high)

Potential New PAs

- Objectively assessed likelihood of absorption (high)
- Compliance with all EU/NSRF/OP/other criteria (high)
- Positive affect of economic crisis on relevance (high)
- Administrative ease of implementation (high)



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Thank you!