

	(EC) N° 1083/2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ implementing the priorities detailed in the Community strategic guidelines on cohesion and specified in the priorities set by the National Strategic Reference Framework ❖ achieving the objective of promoting competitiveness and job creation and working towards meeting the objectives of the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005 to 2008) 	
Q13	What are the achievements, challenges and future prospects in relation to implementation of the OPTA strategy?	Achievements & challenges
Q14	Could examples of good practice be identified? Which are they and their added value?	Good practice
Specific questions		
Q15	To what extent OPTA ensures common standards, instruments and the necessary information?	Common standards
Q16	To what extent OPTA contributes to develop a common evaluation culture within the administrative system for SI?	Evaluation culture
Q17	To what extent training supported by OPTA is contributing to ensuring highly qualified personnel in the relevant structures?	Training
Q18	How good is the functioning of the relevant structures being ensured through OPTA support?	Supporting relevant structures
Q19	Which are the long-term needs that must be addressed through OPTA in terms of SMIS development and functioning?	SMIS long term needs
Q20	To what extent training, communication and support activities provided through OPTA are contributing to a better use of the SMIS?	SMIS support
Q21	How well are the general messages regarding the Structural Instruments disseminated at national level with OPTA support? Are there alternatives for reaching the objectives of PA3?	SI Communication

1.3 Methodology and approach

7. The evaluation of OPTA is part of a series of evaluation exercises undertaken since 2009 by ECU/ACIS. It is the first assessment of the implementation of the programme since its launch.
8. The evaluation activity is closely linked to the overall management of the OP and the implementation arrangements, serving as a tool for assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the financial assistance deployed, as well as the impact and sustainability of the achieved results. The requirement to conduct systematic evaluation activities of the OPs and the general rules for those activities are provided for in the European Commission (EC) Regulations⁴.
9. According to the provisions of the Multi-annual Evaluation Plan for OPTA⁵, the evaluations pursue to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the given assistance, as well as the strategy and implementation of OPTA.
10. The first IE mainly addresses the progress of the OP, including assessment of the project proposals prepared.

⁴ Council Regulation (EC) N° 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006, laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund (articles 37, 47 – 49).

⁵ The Multi-annual Evaluation Plan for the Operational Programme Technical Assistance, pg 13.

11. Based on the requirements and evaluation questions mentioned in the ToR, the team of evaluators developed a **Working Methodology**⁶ aiming to define the tools for data collection and evaluation to be employed for the OPTA IE. In addition, details were provided on the evaluation questions, target groups and expected correlations, which eventually lead to conclusions and recommendations.
12. The main evaluation tools proposed within the Methodology to be employed are the following:
 - ❖ Document analysis;
 - ❖ Diagrams;
 - ❖ Interviews;
 - ❖ Focus groups;
 - ❖ Inquiry / In-depth analysis;
 - ❖ Indicators analysis.
13. The target groups for the interviews and focus groups includes the following:
 - ❖ OPTA beneficiaries within ACIS [e.g. ECU, Monitoring Directorate (MD), Directorate for Analysis and Programming (DAP)];
 - ❖ OPTA beneficiaries within the other Operational Programmes [e.g. Operational Programme Development of Administrative Capacity (OP DAC)];
 - ❖ services providers in OPTA-financed contracts;
 - ❖ potential beneficiaries (e.g. MAs);
 - ❖ individual beneficiaries of OPTA-financed projects (trainees).
14. Special attention was given to the coordination mechanisms, i.e. the Working Groups (WG) in different areas, set up by ACIS with OPTA support.
15. The **approach** proposed by the evaluators follows the evaluation five main pillars: **relevance, consistency, efficiency, effectiveness** and **impact** structured on two levels of analysis: in terms of the programme overall and in terms of each priority axis (PA) and key area of intervention (KAI).
16. Specific evaluation questions were treated in “**Focus**” sub-sections, within the sections presenting the evaluation findings.
17. The evaluation covers the period between the launch of OPTA and 31 December 2009. In the case of progress, data by the end of first quarter of 2010 (31 March) was also assessed.

1.4 Operational Programme Technical Assistance

18. OPTA aims to ensure that the implementation of the SI in Romania meets the principles and rules on partnership, programming, evaluation, communication, management, including financial management, monitoring and control on the basis of responsibilities shared between the Member States and the Commission, in compliance with Council Regulation (EC) N^o 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund, together referred to as the SI. Since OPTA addresses needs identified for the whole

⁶ Please refer to Annex 2 – Methodology.

system of management and implementation of SI, sometimes common for a range of entities, the programme is by its nature horizontal⁷.

19. As a general rule, OPTA aims to ensure support for the SIs' implementation activities, which are common for at least two OPs. At the same time, OPTA supports the coordination process, through support for the ACIS and the financial control and audit system, through support for the AA and the CPA.
20. To achieve its objectives, OPTA has to ensure support for the coordination and the implementation of SI in Romania, to ensure a reliable management and monitoring system for these instruments and to ensure appropriate communication to the public about the financing opportunities and interventions benefiting of EU support. To this end, the following PA were formulated:
 - ❖ PA 1 - Support to the implementation of SI and coordination of programmes;
 - ❖ PA 2 - Further development and support for the functioning of the SMIS;
 - ❖ PA 3 - Dissemination of information and promotion of SI.
21. The interventions planned under OPTA will be financed from the ERDF, with domestic co-financing. The ERDF contribution over the period 2007-13 is 170.24 MEUR, which accounts for 80% of the financing of OPTA. National co-financing for the same period amount to 42.56 MEUR or 20% of the total allocation.
22. The envisaged distribution of allocations by PA is:
 - ❖ PA 1: 49%
 - ❖ PA 2: 31%
 - ❖ PA 3: 20%
23. Table 4 summarises the financial plan of OPTA, comprising both the Community and national contributions.

Table 4: OPTA Financial Plan (EUR)

OPTA Priority Axes	EU Funding	Co-financing	Totals
PA 1	82,792,695	20,698,174	103,490,869
PA 2	53,390,279	13,347,570	66,737,849
PA 3	34,054,816	8,513,704	42,568,520
Totals	170,237,790	42,559,448	212,797,238

Source: OPTA

⁷ OPTA, pg 6.