

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

The project [ref: **Table 1**] operates within the context of Romania's National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) for the period 2007-13, which provides medium-term planning for Romania's use of the resources provided under the Structural and Cohesion Funds, together referred to as SI.

Table 1 – Project Summary

Project Title	A Formative Evaluation of Structural Instruments in Romania
Project Number	13/02.10.2009
Beneficiary	Evaluation Central Unit, Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments (ACIS)
Contracting Authority	ACIS, Ministry of Public Finance, Romania
Project Starting Date / Duration	13 October 2009 / 18 months

The project's ToR identify as the general aim of the project to contribute to strengthening the overall coordination capacity of SI implementation in Romania and to the development of an appropriate administrative system aiming at providing a mutual level of knowledge and experience among different actors involved. In this context, the ToR require the project to carry out evaluations in the course of the implementation of the NSRF and the OPTA, i.e. so-called interim evaluations (IE). The project has two main components:

- Component 1 – NSRF Evaluation (the subject of the present report) concerns carrying out a formative evaluation of SI in Romania.
- Component 2 – Other Evaluations, which encompasses: (i) an interim evaluation of the OPTA; (ii) the preparation of a Synthesis Report of all interim evaluation reports on the OPs in Romania prepared in the period 2009-10; and (iii) the preparation of a number of *ad hoc* evaluations on thematic or cross-cutting issues, as required by the National Coordination Committee (NCC), the Monitoring Committee of OPTA (OPTA MC) or ACIS. **Table 2** summarises the objectives, purpose and expected results of the project at large, as well as its various components.

Table 2 – Summary of the Project's Objectives, Purpose and Expected Results

Overall Objective	The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the strengthening of the overall coordination of the SI implementation and to the development of an appropriate administrative system aiming at providing a mutual level of knowledge and experience among different actors involved.
Project Purpose	The specific objective of the project's NSRF component is to provide policy and decision makers, and programme managers with reliable information and knowledge on the performance of the SI in Romania to date. The specific objective of the project's other evaluations is to make the evaluations included in the Multi-annual Evaluation Plans of the OPTA for the period 2008-09.
Expected Results	The results expected under Component 1, concerning the formative evaluation of SI in Romania encompass answers to five specific questions [ref: Section 1.3.1]. The results expected of component 2 – other evaluations – are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an Interim Evaluation report of the OPTA;³ ▪ a synthesis report based on the IE reports at OP level;⁴ ▪ <i>ad-hoc</i> evaluation reports, as required by the NCC, the OPTA MC or ACIS.⁵

³ Work on the OPTA interim evaluation started with a Kick-off Seminar held on 27 January 2010 and is expected to be concluded end-May 2010.

⁴ Work on the Synthesis Report commenced with a Kick-off Seminar held on 29 March and is expected to be completed in October 2010.

1.2 Component ToR

The ToR identify as the specific objective for the project's NSRF Evaluation component to provide policy and decision makers, as well as programme managers with reliable information and knowledge on the performance of the SI in Romania to date. The NSRF Evaluation should be *formative* in character and as such is expected to point out the external and internal critical factors affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the SI, drawing the main lessons learned during the first year of SI implementation and outlining 'best practice' encountered among the participants in this process. In terms of results, the NSRF Evaluation should address and provide answers to five specific questions that will be covered in **Section 1.4**.

The following sections deal with the approach adopted for trying to answer these questions, the findings obtained and the conclusions arrived at.

1.3 Approach

1.3.1 Main Evaluation Questions

We have conducted our evaluation according to our understanding of the Main Evaluation Questions included in the ToR, namely:

- **Q1** What is the **real performance** of the SI under implementation in Romania related to: (**Q1a**) the expectations and the goals set; and (**Q1b**) the capacity of the entities involved in their implementation?
- **Q2** What are the **major critical factors** (**Q2a**: external and **Q2b**: internal) influencing the performance of the SI?
- **Q3** How well did the **technical assistance support** the management and implementation of the SI?
- **Q4** Have adequate **information and publicity measures** been taken for reaching the targeted audience?
- **Q5** Are the **project pipelines** and **project selection** processes appropriate for creating the conditions for achieving efficiency and effectiveness of SI implementation?

Relationship between the Main Evaluation Questions and the Chapters of the Present Report

For reporting purposes, the order of the questions has been slightly amended, for two reasons. First, the amended order simplifies the structure of the report. Second, it helps to filter out any overlapping of the answers to the Main Evaluation Questions.

The relationship between the Main Evaluation Questions and the various sections of the present report is depicted in the next table [ref: **Table 3**].

⁵ Work on the first *ad hoc* evaluation commissioned by the relevant authorities, dealing with *Challenges in the Capacity of Public and Private SI Beneficiaries*, started on 05 February 2010 and will be finalised in mid-June 2010.