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Instrumente Structurale
2007-2013

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

In compliance with Article 48 of Council Regulation (EC) no. 1083/2006 and in compliance with the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD) provisions (Sub-chapter 5.2, Monitoring and Evaluation) as well as those of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) Multi-annual National Evaluation Plan 2007-2013, the MA SOP HRD developed the Multi-annual Evaluation Plan for SOP HRD 2007-2013 (MaEP SOP HRD) under which evaluation activities of a strategic and/or operational nature are to be conducted over the life of the SOP HRD.

The First Interim Evaluation of the SOP HRD¹ has been planned through the MaEP SOP HRD 2007-2013. The Interim Evaluation was originally planned for completion during the second semester of 2009. However, the contract for this evaluation was ultimately signed on 21st December 2009 between the Contracting Authority (The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection – the Managing Authority for the SOP HRD) and a Consortium led by KPMG Romania.

Due to various unforeseen circumstances (outlined in the Inception Report) the evaluation did not gather momentum until March 2010. This is the Final Report of the ad hoc Evaluation of KAI 5.2 and takes on board comments made by the MA and members of the Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) held on March 2nd and 3rd 2011 in relation to the Third Draft Report and further comments received in writing thereafter.

1.2 Short description of PA 5, KAI 5.2

Issues and objectives for the Key Area of Intervention (KAI) 5.2 (and PA 5 in general) are outlined in the SOP Programming Document and in the complementing Framework

¹ The Interim Evaluation exercise as a whole is comprised of three components, namely: (i) the Interim Evaluation of the SOP HRD; (ii) the development of the administrative capacity within the MA in respect of programme evaluation; and (iii) two ad hoc evaluations in respect of the National Employment Service (PA4) and certain active labour market measures in rural areas (PA5, KAI 5.2). This document is the Final Report of the ad hoc evaluation of KAI 5.2.



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Document for Implementation (FDI) at different levels of detail and with partially overlapping topics.

The Key Objective for Priority Axis 5 is – according to European Employment Strategy (EES) –to reduce unemployment by promoting active and preventive employment measures that will further reduce the unemployment rate and increase the activity rate

To reach that goal Active (and preventive) Employment Measures (AEM) focussed on young unemployed and long-term unemployed will be adopted.

The Overall Objective for the interventions of Priority Axis 5 “Promoting Active Employment Measures” is increasing the employment rate to full employment, as established in EES and in the national strategic documents, and represents a key objective involving promoting active and preventive employment measures leading to diminishing the unemployment and inactivity rate.

These are the expanded upon by three specific objectives as follows:

- 1) Enhancing the participation of LTU in Active Employment Measures (AEM) integrated programmes;
- 2) Increasing the participation of individuals living in subsistence agriculture in employment integrated programmes;
- 3) Improving the job attainment for participants from rural areas in employment integrated programmes.

Ad 3)

The Priority Axis subsequently is split up into two Key Areas of Intervention. The second of these, KAI 5.2 “Promoting long-term sustainability of rural areas in terms of human resource development and employment”, provides the focus for this report.

A general rationale for KAI 5.2 is explicitly referenced in the programming documentation i.e., high level of employment in agriculture (32,2% in 2005) that predominantly consists of:

- Contributing family workers; and
- Self-employed persons.



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Due to the fragmentation of agricultural holdings after 1989 –cited in the FDI to be the core problem - and the associated loss of competitiveness (economies of scale), employment in the sector increasingly took on the form of subsistence agriculture, i.e. production for own consumption instead of market-oriented production generating (monetary) income. Subsistence agriculture by definition is considered economic inactivity under the SOP HRD.

These production structures led to high discrepancies between rural and urban areas in terms of:²

- Activity rate;
- Employment rate;
- Unemployment rate;
- Participation rate by sectors; and
- Participation rate by age groups.

To prepare for the expected loss of people working in the agriculture sector over the coming years the basic strategy chosen was to:

- a) Re-direct people in general from agriculture to the services or industrial sector; and in particular
- b) To reorient formally inactive people from subsistence agriculture and to bring them into formal activities, be that as employees or as self-employed, and
- c) To increase people's geographical and sectoral mobility regarding work.

Certain sectors are put forward as holding out potential for alternate employment as follows: Tourism; Complementary services; Social or health care services; Specific crafts; ICT; and Construction. More specifically it was proposed to redirect people into environmental

² This was underpinned by the SWOT analysis presented within the SOP HRD. The SWOT identified the following three topics as relevant regarding human resource development in rural areas:

- an increasing rate of participation in agriculture, especially in subsistence agriculture;
- an increased rate of unemployment among young people and
- long-term unemployment, especially among young people and people in rural areas.



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management & protection and to health care (in the workplace and/or in general towards a healthier life-style). The programming documentation envisages that the strategy will be implemented through the use of the following:

- Education;
- Training;
- Job placement /Employment; and
- Counselling & assistance for start-up and self-employment.

One of the most significant challenges identified is associated with the fact that people from rural areas living on subsistence agriculture typically have a very low level of education (mainly compulsory or at best secondary education) and have limited or no experience in further (professional) training after education. Moreover, their financial resources are limited and therefore the strategy also envisaged that the interventions outlined above would be complemented by the following:

- training through personalised support for activation and through development and implementation of awareness campaigns, motivation, information and advice;
- provision of financial support alleviating the inclusion into active measures (e.g. travel cost, allowances for moving to other locations, daily subsistence allowance etc.)

Finally, for the purpose of implementation in practise the FDI defined a list of activities eligible for funding and in addition a list of eligible types of expenditure. These can be grouped under headings such as:

- Research and field studies relating to KAI 5.2 topics;
- Raising Awareness /orientation to non-agricultural activities;
- Promoting campaigns;
- Counselling and guidance;



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- Training and education;
- Job placement;
- Setting up/developing networking and partnership & strategy development; and
- Accompanying support measures for participants.

This set of options and constraints was completed by defining eligible target groups and beneficiaries. The list of eligible activities and also the categories of eligible cost /expenditure evolved and changed over the life cycle of the programme.³

Most of implementation was planned to take the form of grants although a call for strategic projects was also launched in 2009. Later on State Aid schemes for employment according to the block-exemption rules were introduced. Last, but not least, a relevant aspect of the implementation strategy can be seen with the distinction of Strategic and Regular Grant projects, a general distinction made throughout the OP and its Priority Axes /Key Areas of Intervention (KAI).

1.3 Terms of Reference

The justification for the carrying out of the ad hoc Evaluation of PA5, KAI 5.2 refers to the Monitoring Committee meeting of 28th May 2008 when the committee members requested this ad hoc evaluation with a view to analysing the relevance of the eligible activities outlined in the FDI of the SOP HRD as compared with the needs of inactive persons, persons looking for employment, the unemployed, people involved in subsistence agriculture and unemployed persons in rural areas in the context of the changes taking place on the labour market, and to analyse the extent to which projects financed under KAI 5.2 contribute to meeting the objectives/indicators established under PA 5, KAI 5.2.

Regarding the overall purpose of the evaluation the ToR require the following:

- An independent and well-justified opinion regarding the relevance of PA5 “Promotion of active employment measures”, KAI 5.2 “Promoting long term

³ A synoptic view of the versions from October 2007 and the latest available English version drafted in 05/2009 is provided in the Annex 4 - Evolvement of FDI KAI 5.2 parameter from 10-2007 to 05-2009.