Literature

GENERAL INFO USED FOR ALL Q

- ✓ Government of Romania, Ministry of Public Finance, 2007, Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2007-2013
- ✓ Government of Romania, Ministry of Public Finance, 2011, Framework-Document for Implementing the Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2007-2013
- ✓ Ex Ante Evaluation of Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2007-2013OPTA, 2007
- ✓ Annual Implementation Report 2010 for the Operational Programme Technical Assistance
- ✓ OPTA Interim Evaluation Report, 2010
- ✓ ACIS, National Strategy for IS Communication 2007 – 2013 in Romania
- ✓ OPTA Multi annual Evaluation Plan
- ✓ Organisational Chart of Ministry of European Affairs (including TAD), 2011
- ✓ Audit Authority, System and Operations Audit reports of OPTA MA on 2010
- ✓ OPTA Monitoring Committee Decisions, 2011 (Meetings on 8 June and 29 November 2011)
- ✓ EC Comments on: AIR 2010 for OPTA; Decisions of OPTA MC – Meeting of 8 June 2011

INFO USED FOR Q2

- ✓ NEI, Key indicators for candidate countries to effectively manage the Structural Funds (client DG Regio), 2002
- ✓ MAEur, ACIS, TAD, Manual of procedures to implement OPTA 2007 – 2013, version 2011
- ✓ ROF and TAD Procedures
- ✓ Job descriptions for the ICIS positions with OPTA PA3 responsibilities
- ✓ Job descriptions for the SMIS CS positions with OPTA PA2 responsibilities
- ✓ MAEur, Memorandum on extra needed staff for implementing Operational Programmes, 2012 – 2015
- ✓ MAEur, Code of conduct to avoid situations of conflicts of interests by staff involved in management of European funded Programmes
- ✓ Internal organization and functioning regulations (ROF)
- ✓ Communication Plan for Operational Programme for Technical Assistance 2007-2013
- ✓ OPTA MA Implementation procedures

INFO USED FOR Q1 and Q4 (+Q3+Q5)

- ✓ ACIS – Directorate for System Coordination, Database of OPTA projects, SMIS cut-off 31 December 2011 (contracts, payments and certification dates from SMIS)
- ✓ OPTA MC Meeting of 29 November 2011, Presentation of OPTA Status at 31 October 2011
- ✓ Follow ups on the OPTA pipeline: 31 October 2011; 10 February 2012; 24 April 2012; 09 May 2012
- ✓ OPTA projects implementation status at 31 October 2011 (excel file)
- ✓ Monthly Monitoring Tables of Operational Programmes, October 2011 – April 2012 (pdf files)
- ✓ OPTA Contribution to implement the Priority Measures Plan, November 2011
- ✓ ACIS – SMIS Coordination Service , Description of SMIS
- ✓ ACIS - Implementation Service, Description of the monitoring tool in use
- ✓ Ministry of Finance, Bulgaria, Lothar System used in Bulgaria, 2008 – 2011 presentations
- ✓ MAEur, Memorandum on needs for international expertise to absorb the Structural and Cohesion Funds, December 2011

INFO USED FOR Q3 and Q5

- ✓ OPTA Contribution to implement the Priority Measures Plan, November 2011
- ✓ ACIS, Priority Action Plan for increasing the capacity to absorb structural and cohesion funds, 30 September 2011

INFO USED FOR Q6

- ✓ MAEur, Memorandum on possible reallocation between Operational Programmes, 2011

Annexes related to content

In the annexes the following documents can be found:

1. Description of LOTHAR +
   - ✓ 1A Description of LOTHAR + calculation model
   - ✓ 1B Overview of expected availability of funds for reallocation
2. Analysis Report of the capacity of the beneficiaries of PA2 and PA3
3. List of new Projects Ideas that can be included in the OPTA pipeline by the end of the current programming period and comparison of international good practice
4. International experience and good practice

Annex 1A Description of LOTHAR + calculation model

1. Background information

This project aims at improving the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the assistance by providing a risk assessment of not fully drawing down the allocated funds of the OPTA, by assessing the danger of automatic de-commitment of OP funds over the next years and by proposing adequate options of reallocation of the possible unused funds within the programme or to other programmes. The LOTHAR+ system that is currently being developed under the project aims at supporting the assessment of automatic de-commitment and the process of proposing options for reallocation through financial forecasting.

LOTHAR+ is based on the LOTHAR system developed in partnership between the Bulgarian Authorities and the EC. The original LOTHAR is:

- Excel-based – basically an intricate Excel file with a number of links between cells and sheets, allowing visualization of different variables;

- Used for the preparation of financial forecasts for the absorption of SCF through the Bulgarian OPs;

- Used also for monitoring of main processes – contracting, payments, verification, and certification.

- LOTHAR's objective is to monitor the implementation of N+3/2 principle under the OPs, so that corrective actions could be taken, if there is a danger of de-commitment. Thus, LOTHAR's objective and elements are very similar to the objectives of this project, which is why the model was selected as a starting point for the development of a forecasting tool. Thus, LOTHAR+ integrates both the functionality of a monitoring and a forecasting tool.

2. Methodology

2.1 Description of inputs

The development of LOTHAR+ was a time-consuming process, both due to the time needed for development and for the time to ensure the right input. The first LOTHAR+ template was developed in February 2012. Since then there was one small revision in the template. In the meantime the Client and beneficiaries started providing the necessary data. The data was structured and input in the LOTHAR+ template by the project team. Afterwards, followed verification of the input data in the system, performed by the Beneficiaries and the Client by the end of April 2012. The input data is in a separate Excel file in order to allow ease of work with the model. The input data (at project level) includes:

- EU financial commitments
- RON/EUR exchange rates – used for the calculation of commitments in RON and quarter averages since Q1 2007.
- Total eligible budget of approved projects (EU and National funding)
- Total EU funding of approved projects
- Submission date
- First approval date (or rejection)
- Financial agreement date
- Project start date

- Project end (or cancellation) date
- All interim and final payment amounts, along with claim and authorisation amounts and dates and payment dates.
- Certified amounts (total and EU share), along with certification dates.

The output data from the LOTHAR+ model includes data and projections until 2015 for each KAI, PA and OPTA, under the baseline and various other scenarios for:

- Commitments
- Contracting (total)
- Contracting (EU contribution)
- Authorized payment (total)
- Authorized payment (EU contribution)
- Payment (total)
- Payment (EU contribution)
- Certified payments
- N+3/2 rule (Advance excluded) cumulative
- N+3/2 rule (Advance included) cumulative
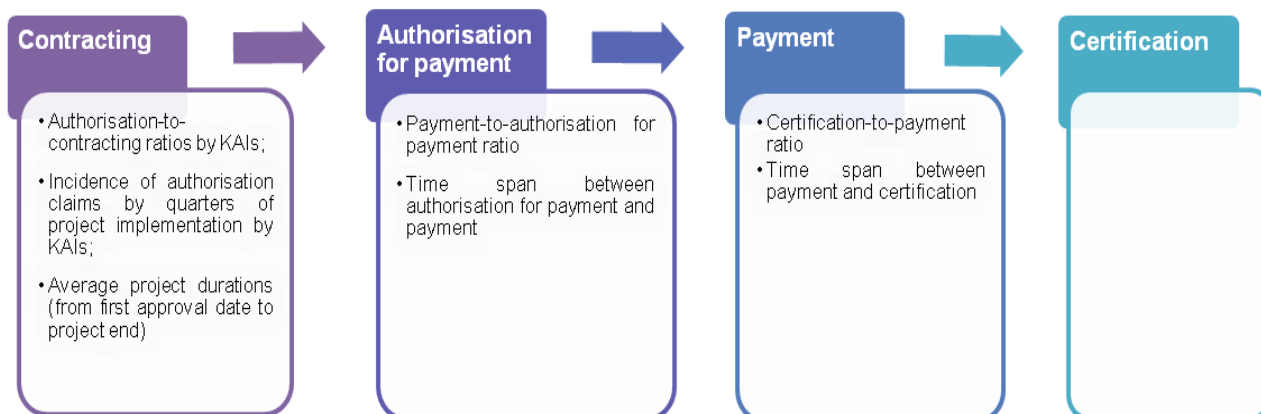- Commitments - de-commitments (cumulative)

2.2 *Methodology for baseline projection*

Baseline projections are generally made assuming a "business-as-usual" scenario, including continuation of the current trend in contracting by KAIs. This scenario assumes that contracting would be equal to its average value in 2009-2011. The period 2007-2008 is not taken into account, because the programme was just starting up in the first two years of Romania's accession to the EU and the amounts contracted back in these years is by no means representative of what might be expected over the medium term up to 2015. The baseline scenario furthermore does not include the projects in the pipeline and assumes no changes in the efficiency of absorption under OPTA and no re-allocation of commitments. All variables are forecast in terms of flows and then transformed in stock to allow for estimation of absorption and assessment of the funds in danger of de-commitment. Each of the forecast variables marks a stage in the process of absorption of EU funds and is broken down to key areas of intervention (KAI). Thus an implicit assumption of relative homogeneity of the projects, falling under the same key area of intervention is made. Both national and EU funded levels are forecast for each variable down to a level of KAI.

The current version of the model incorporates a possibility to make changes for all assumptions, underlying the baseline projections and which are detailed in the section, explaining how to use the LOTHAR+ model. As there are only a limited number of completed projects under the operational programme, both completed and some of the ongoing projects have been taken into account for the estimation of the values of the parameters that are central to the projections. With the progress of the implementation of the operational programme, more detailed and more reliable information will become available. Taking this into account we have modelled all assumptions that are relevant for the baseline projections, as parameters that can subsequently be changed under the alternative scenarios to account for subsequent modifications or specifications of these underlying hypotheses. In case that is strong and commonly accepted belief/estimation for the value of any of these parameters, they can be modified for the baseline scenarios as well.

The underlying methodology for the baseline scenario can be summarized as follows:

95

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013   ECORYS   LIDEEA

Figure 39 Methodology of LOTHAR+

1. **Contracted** funds are assumed to remain at levels, amounting to the average value for contracting over the period between Q1 2009 and Q4 2011. The time span for the estimation of mean values has been chosen in order to exclude the period of the first two years after accession, when the entire system for EU funds absorption is supposed to be setting up. Only for KAI 2.3 and KAI 3.1, Q4 2008 has also been included, as for these two KAIs there are contracting flows only in the last quarter of 2008.

2. **Authorisation for payment** is forecast, based on contracting, taking into account an estimate of the average ratio of authorization-to-contracting ratio for each KAI. The latter are based on calculations at project level of the current authorisation-to-contracted budget levels for the more advanced projects. Additionally, expected levels of authorisation are assessed, taking into account the project phase, end date, progress and making indirect conclusions about the beneficiaries absorption capacity. Aggregation at KAI level is made by averaging across projects, where the project budgets are used as weights.

   The average time period between the first approval of the project and authorisation and the average duration of the projects have also been incorporated as parameters in the projection. More specifically, the differences between the date of payment and the date of first approval of the project are calculated for each authorised payment under each project under OPTA. Additionally, the amounts authorised are also taken into account as a share of the total budget of the project. These calculations made it possible to make general inferences about the authorisation scheme both in time and amounts for most of the KAIs. The authorisation scheme is a matrix, where the rows represent the quarters since the start of the project and the columns stand for the different KAIs. The values in the matrix give information about the payments in percent of the project budget, that are authorised in a given quarter after the beginning of the project For some KAIs, like KAI 3.2, where there are currently no payments, extrapolation has been made from other KAIs, which are either in the same PA, or have a similar project duration and payment similarities. Project duration is taken into account to make sure that there will be no requests for payments after the end of the projects.

3. **Payment** estimate is derived from authorisation for payment, adjusting for the ratio between claims for authorisation and payment and for the time elapsed between authorisation and actual payment. In practice payment is broadly equal to authorisation for payment, as generally 100% of the authorised amounts are paid and they are paid within the same quarter as the authorisation.

4. **Certification** is projected following broadly the same methodology as for the rest of the variables: based on payment, taking into account the time, elapsed between payment and

certification by the CPA, as well as the part of paid amounts that is certified on average for each KAI. The time elapsed between payment and certification is estimated to amount to an average of one quarter (based on the project data) for all KAIs in the operational programme. The share of certification in paid amounts was initially established, depending on calculations at project level of the current certification-to-payments levels for the more advanced projects. However these estimates were changed in the final version of LOTHAR+, based on the expert consensus estimates, that the certification-to-payment ratio will eventually go as high as almost 100% for all KAIs. Additionally, expected levels of certification are assessed, taking into account the project phase, end date, progress and making indirect conclusions about the beneficiaries absorption capacity. Aggregation at KAI level is made by averaging across projects, where the payments, already made under each project, are used as weights.

Certification provides a basis for estimation of the **danger of de-commitment** for each KAI, priority axis (PA) and the entire operational programme "Technical assistance" (OPTA). This is done automatically in excel by comparing certification versus commitments, taking into account the so called "N+3" and "N+2" rules. The latter are computed both including and excluding the 9% advance payment under OPTA. The following scheme for absorption of the committed EU funds by years is respected:

EU funds committed for:	Need to be absorbed by the end of:
2007	Divided into six and added to the funds for each of the remaining six years.
2008	2011
2009	2012
2010	2013
2011	2013
2012	2014
2013	2015

Finally, **adjusted commitments** are calculated, scaling commitments down by the amount of possible de-commitments that might take place under the baseline scenario. As all calculations are made at KAI, PA and OPTA level, the model supports the users in judgements about the threat of de-commitment at a relatively lower breakdown and in decisions for possible re-allocation of funds from one KAI/PA/OP to another in order to achieve maximum level of absorption. The model, however, makes no inferences, as to where a possible intervention, financed out of EU funds, might have an optimal administrative or social benefit.

In order to take into account the effect of floating **exchange rate** of the RON against the EUR, quarterly average exchange rates have been calculated, based on data, available at the InforEuro - Financial Programming and Budget website[28]. For the baseline the RON is assumed to remain at its average level for Q4 2011 by the end of 2015.

In a nutshell the functioning of the model is given in the box below.

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013

$$C_t = a.P_{t\ i}$$
$$P_t = b.AP_{t\ j}$$
$$AP_t = c.CT_{t\ k}$$
$$CT_t = const$$

Where:

C_t is certification in quarter t

P_t is payment in quarter t

AP_t is authorised payment in quarter t

CT_t is contracting in quarter t

a is an average estimated certification-to-payment ratio

b is an average estimated payment-to-authorisation ratio

c is an average estimated authorisation-to-contracting ratio

i is the time delay between certification and payment

j is the time delay between payment and authorisation

k is the time delay between authorisation and contracting

$const$ is a constant

Contracting is assumed to remain at levels, equal to their average level for the period Q1 2009-Q4 2011. However, depending on the modeller's view or political engagements undertaken, they might follow a trend or take values that the analysts consider appropriate.

2.3 Methodology for alternative scenarios

While baseline provides the most probable realisation of the projected variables, LOTHAR+ also incorporates possibilities for performance of alternative scenarios, based on different assumptions, policies or external shocks. The baseline forecast provides users with the general direction, where the absorption of EU funds under OPTA is heading, broken down by PAs and KAIs and quarters. Such a projection is available for all major stages of EU funds absorption, namely, contracting, authorisation for payments, payments and certification. However, the central, or baseline, projection is rarely realised in practice: as it is presents a series of point estimates, which probability of occurrence is close to zero. This scenario provides policy-makers with a forecast, given the information, available at the time, when the projection is made. However it does not take into account all the policy changes and other exogenous shocks that might take place and that might be very diverse in their nature. That is why we have integrated a tool for performance of alternative scenarios into the LOTHAR+ model.

The LOTHAR+ model allows users to make alternative scenarios, based on different values for:

- EU contribution share;
- Exchange rate of RON against the EUR;
- Different authorisation schemes for each KAI, both in terms of period and amount of authorisation;
- Duration between first approval of the project and its completion;
- Different payment schemes for each KAI, both in terms of period and amount of payments;
- Different certification schemes for each KAI, both in terms of period and amount of certification;

- Transfer of commitments for a particular year from one KAI to another;
- Inclusion of additional projects in the pipeline.

3.   How does LOTHAR+ work

Just as LOTHAR, LOTHAR+ is Excel-based. However, the original LOTHAR does not include VBA elements. Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) is an implementation of Microsoft's programming language Visual Basic 6 within Excel, which enables building user defined functions and automating processes. In this way LOTHAR+ aims at overcoming LOTHAR's problem of non-automated forecasts. Forecasting output is also automated using VBA.

Moreover, LOTHAR+ is much more interactive. It allows users to see the current state of play and to perform different scenarios, through changing parameters in the model. The tool also allows for visualization of different variables at all levels of intervention, chosen by the user.

LOTHAR+ consists of two excel files. Due to the VBA code in both files, the user should enable Macro and ActiveX content in order to be able to use the built-in functionality of the model. In all files we have used the following convention for the background colours of the cells in the spreadsheets or for the spreadsheets themselves, which is meant to facilitate users.

do not change	Cells, which are used as references in the VBA code.
fill in data - Paste as values	Cells, where raw project-level data needs to be filled in manually.
drag formula	Cells with formulas.
	Sheets, where model output is visualized.

The algorithm for updating and running LOTHAR+ is as follows:

Step 1: Open file LOTHAR+.xlsm. Update manually information for new and/or existing projects under all KAIs if new data is available: fill in data in columns from "O" to "AI" according to the above colour code.

Step 2: Press the button [Aggregate information] to aggregate information at project level up to KAI level. Such a button is available in cell "H2" in each of the KAI sheets.

Step 3: Update information in Sheet "Flash_sheet". This sheet gives information about the current progress in the implementation for each of the projects. This sheet is inherited from the original LOTHAR+ file and it alone provides a good basis for monitoring. Aggregated data from the flash sheet is also used for the projections, which are made in sheet "InputForBaseline".

Step 4: Go to sheet "InputForBaseline". Update the first quarter of the forecasting period in the dropdown menu.

The baseline projection is in practice made in sheet "InputForbaseline". It contains links to all variables for all KAIs. Additionally, Some aggregate parameters are linked to the flash sheet. In case the underlying assumptions need to be changed already for the baseline projection (and not in the scenario analysis), they available as follows:

Cell range "P2:P40"	Exchange rates
Cell range "R1:R2"	EU contribution
Cell range "BB50:BK77"	Scheme for distribution of authorization of

	payments by quarters of the project implementation and as a share of total budget of the project. This table of assumptions also determines the share of the project budget that is actually authorized for payment.
Cell range "BB79:BK79"	Project implementation duration
Cell range "CH50:CQ51"	Ratios and delays of transformation of authorizations for payment into actual payments.
Cell range "DN50:DW51"	Ratios and delays of transformation of payments made into certified payments.

Step 5: Open file "LOTHAR+_simulations.xlsm" and enable macros and ActiveX contents. Press the button to update baseline projection from the LOTHAR+.xlsm file. To do this, however, the [Update InputForBaseline] latter file needs to be open. Otherwise a message, suggesting opening the file, pumps-up.

Step 6: Update information about new pipeline by filling in manually or pasting as values data for new projects and dragging formulas in sheet "Pipeline", in columns from "A" to "K".
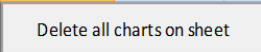
Step 7: To obtain results for the baseline scenario go to sheet "Input_scenario" and press button [Baseline] in cell "A1". Then a dialogue menu appears as follows:

Figure 40 Baseline scenario pop-up window
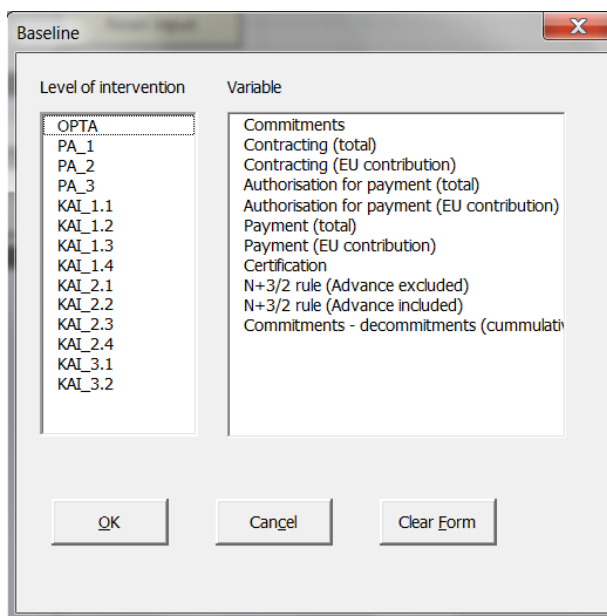
The user can then change which levels of intervention and which variables to display both in the output sheet and the chart. Users may choose visualizations of just one level of intervention or variable, or their combination. Out of practical reasons, the number of lines, than can be drawn on the chart is restricted to 10.

Step 8: The graphical results of the baseline scenario can be visualized in sheet "Charts". All charts are saved as pictures. However a button [Delete all charts on sheet] is available to allow users to clear all existing charts.

A spreadsheet with the results is available in sheet "Output_baseline". The system also automatically displays the contribution to the danger of de-commitment remaining funds at the three main levels: OP, PA, and KAI (again in sheet 'Output_baseline', starting at row "42"). The danger is displayed both in RON and in EUR.

Two tables show the following percentages at different periods that the user may select:
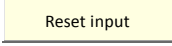
- % of contracted funds
- % of paid funds
- % of certified funds

The tables also show the funds, which are not absorbed yet (not certified).

Through the baseline scenario the user will be able to:

- Easily identify de-commitment danger at OPTA, PA, and KAI level for different periods
- Easily calculate the percentage of the contracted, paid, and certified values at periods that the user chooses
- Compare different KAIs, PA

As a result, users of the LOTHAR+ baseline scenario will have at their disposal all important values of the programme implementation and forecasts based on the implementation so far.

Step 9: The alternative scenarios show the expected developments, if some changes are made to the operational program and its implementation. This scenario can be accessed again from Excel sheet 'Input_scenario'. There is a spreadsheet, providing the user with an opportunity to change all major underlying assumptions of the baseline scenario. If any value is changed, it will appear in red. If the users need to return to baseline value, they only need to press on [Reset input]. Possibilities for changes for the alternative scenarios from the spreadsheet include different values for:

- EU contribution share;
- Exchange rate of RON against the EUR;
- Different authorisation schemes for each KAI, both in terms of period and amount of authorisation;
- Duration between first approval of the project and its completion;
- Different payment schemes for each KAI, both in terms of period and amount of payments;
- Different certification schemes for each KAI, both in terms of period and amount of certification.
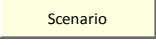
After deciding whether making changes in the underlying assumptions, the user needs to click on [Scenario] and a pop-up window (Figure below) will show, allowing users an option to choose what variables and levels of intervention to display.

Figure 41 Alternative scenarios pop-up window

There are two important additional possibilities for simulation of alternative scenarios:

- Transfer of commitments for a particular year from one KAI to another. The user needs to insert the amount that is to be re-allocated, the year of reference and source and destination KAI.
- Inclusion of additional projects in the pipeline. If this box is ticked, then all projects in sheet "Pipeline" will be included in the simulation.

Step 10: The output of the simulation of alternative scenarios can be accessed from the sheets. Sheet "Charts" contains a chart, comparing baseline and alternative scenario for the chosen variables. Again a maximum of 10 lines is allowed for this chart. Sheet "Output_baseline" contains the baseline values for the chosen variables and levels of intervention, while sheet "Output_scenario" provides a spreadsheet with the respective values for the alternative scenario.

Again, as in the case of the baseline, it is possible to monitor and to obtain an estimate some of the fundamental ratios of EU absorption, like contracting, payment and certification rate and to assess easily what amounts of funds remain unabsorbed as of end-period for each year of the current programming period.

Again, below the scenario data, there are 4 tables that show the following:

- Contribution to the danger of de-commitment: Difference between certification and N+3/2 (advance excluded) in RON. The dangers of de-commitment are in red.
- Contribution to the danger of de-commitment: Difference between certification and N+3/2 (advance excluded) in EUR.
- Data for contracted, paid, and certified funds and for the funds left to be certified at dates chosen by the user – in RON. The choice of quarters is made through a drop-down menu and the data is automatically calculated.
- Data for contracted, paid, and certified funds and for the funds left to be certified at quarters chosen by the user – in EUR.

In RON

Risk of decommitment: Difference b/n certification and N+3/2 (advance excluded)

	OPTA	PA_1	PA_2	PA_3	KAI_1.1	KAI_1.2	KAI_1.3	KAI_1.4	KAI_2.1	KAI_2.2	KAI_2.3	KAI_2.4	KAI_3.1	KAI_3.2
Dec-11	32 535 510	39 679 928	-2 527 387	-4 617 030	40 199 626	-266 572	447 790	-700 916	-2 663 650	-2 378 850	2 785 344	-270 231	-3 357 985	-1 259 046
Dec-12	-33 568 390	21 840 351	-28 337 712	-27 071 029	41 484 254	-5 235 616	-6 387 979	-8 020 308	-9 992 141	-7 849 678	-1 375 495	-9 120 398	-17 976 424	-9 094 605
Dec-13	-223 824 117	-41 274 545	-106 468 046	-76 081 525	36 096 725	-15 252 688	-30 676 522	-31 442 060	-31 386 459	-19 014 931	-14 304 029	-41 762 627	-51 598 068	-24 483 457
Dec-14	-312 263 134	-65 202 352	-145 998 546	-101 062 236	38 821 734	-19 005 138	-41 844 812	-43 174 136	-41 336 290	-24 467 056	-18 262 918	-61 932 282	-69 819 365	-31 242 871
Dec-15	-432 842 947	-88 848 805	-203 507 238	-140 486 903	56 834 357	-27 340 995	-57 166 996	-61 175 172	-56 923 903	-33 025 434	-19 591 294	-93 966 608	-97 298 771	-43 188 132

As of: **12/31/2012**

	OPTA	PA_1	PA_2	PA_3	KAI_1.1	KAI_1.2	KAI_1.3	KAI_1.4	KAI_2.1	KAI_2.2	KAI_2.3	KAI_2.4	KAI_3.1	KAI_3.2
% contracted	107.6%	184.5%	37.4%	30.6%	307.1%	147.3%	58.0%	61.4%	45.9%	40.3%	63.8%	22.2%	33.6%	24.1%
% paid	24.3%	44.7%	5.5%	4.4%	80.4%	13.6%	12.8%	13.1%	3.2%	0.3%	14.4%	5.6%	5.7%	1.7%
% absorbed	12.9%	23.8%	3.6%	1.0%	41.8%	2.7%	9.5%	8.8%	1.6%	0.2%	10.8%	3.4%	1.3%	0.2%
Funds left	642 162 819	273 100 236	222 982 030	146 080 553	97 901 679	34 885 126	68 853 099	71 460 331	60 311 165	34 091 687	30 917 410	97 661 768	99 572 749	46 507 804

In EUR

Risk of decommitment: Difference b/n certification and N+3/2 (advance excluded)

	OPTA	PA_1	PA_2	PA_3	KAI_1.1	KAI_1.2	KAI_1.3	KAI_1.4	KAI_2.1	KAI_2.2	KAI_2.3	KAI_2.4	KAI_3.1	KAI_3.2
Dec-11	7 858 998	9 481 462	-558 098	-1 064 366	9 546 246	-53 915	132 148	-143 017	-615 020	-549 261	667 876	-61 693	-773 660	-290 706
Dec-12	-7 404 822	5 361 686	-6 517 636	-6 248 872	9 842 317	-1 201 244	-1 446 281	-1 833 105	-2 307 144	-1 812 442	-292 835	-2 105 215	-4 148 984	-2 099 888
Dec-13	-51 335 052	-9 212 439	-24 557 495	-17 565 118	8 597 305	-3 514 190	-7 054 419	-7 241 135	-7 246 968	-4 390 432	-3 277 951	-9 642 144	-11 912 022	-5 653 096
Dec-14	-71 756 339	-14 738 313	-33 684 969	-23 333 056	9 225 585	-4 380 674	-9 633 171	-9 950 053	-9 544 351	-5 649 301	-4 192 096	-14 299 221	-16 119 218	-7 213 839
Dec-15	-99 599 580	-20 199 983	-46 963 601	-32 435 996	13 382 982	-6 305 408	-13 171 099	-14 106 458	-13 143 464	-7 625 386	-4 499 007	-21 695 744	-22 464 056	-9 971 940

As of: **12/31/2011**

	OPTA	PA_1	PA_2	PA_3	KAI_1.1	KAI_1.2	KAI_1.3	KAI_1.4	KAI_2.1	KAI_2.2	KAI_2.3	KAI_2.4	KAI_3.1	KAI_3.2
% contracted	37.4%	63.9%	9.0%	17.2%	93.4%	51.5%	24.3%	44.8%	4.8%	1.0%	16.7%	11.6%	16.9%	18.1%
% paid	13.0%	24.6%	2.5%	1.0%	45.1%	7.0%	7.0%	5.7%	0.6%	0.1%	14.6%	0.4%	1.5%	0.0%
% absorbed	8.1%	15.4%	1.7%	0.3%	28.5%	1.8%	4.3%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%
Funds left	156 468 958	70 058 525	52 457 002	33 953 432	27 760 863	8 136 527	16 808 327	17 352 808	14 154 781	7 889 321	7 113 873	23 299 027	23 191 271	10 762 161

Annex 1B Overview of expected availability of funds for reallocation (taking into account the latest available information up to May 2012)

	OPTA	PA_1	PA_2	PA_3
Baseline scenario				
Funds, not contracted (end-2014)	243 507 887	-77 042 989	200 207 844	120 343 031
Funds, not certified (end-2015)	425 482 863	80 120 215	210 434 653	134 927 995
Pipeline scenario				
Funds, not contracted (end-2014)	-48 497 837	-265 791 683	133 316 594	83 977 251
Funds, not certified (end-2015)	264 766 994	-22 942 034	172 827 977	114 881 051
Pipeline+ scenario				
Funds, not contracted (end-2014)	-126 623 462	-315 935 058	122 082 844	67 228 751
Funds, not certified (end-2015)	225 499 396	-46 372 662	166 581 727	105 290 331

	KAI_1.1	KAI_1.2	KAI_1.3	KAI_1.4	KAI_2.1	KAI_2.2	KAI_2.3	KAI_2.4	KAI_3.1	KAI_3.2
Baseline scenario										
Funds, not contracted (end-2014)	-160 295 936	8 676 144	33 880 452	40 696 351	57 151 805	29 169 644	29 678 833	84 207 563	86 208 221	34 134 810
Funds, not certified (end-2015)	-49 104 716	14 882 904	53 067 443	61 274 585	59 633 003	32 067 801	28 539 919	90 193 929	98 909 188	36 018 807
Pipeline scenario										
Funds, not contracted (end-2014)	-296 298 075	-5 578 683	10 653 726	25 431 351	25 497 735	15 256 354	14 073 943	78 488 563	57 152 441	26 824 810
Funds, not certified (end-2015)	-117 801 449	-4 577 893	44 149 861	55 287 448	39 957 260	27 494 330	15 973 876	89 402 511	83 599 124	31 281 927
Pipeline+ scenario										
Funds, not contracted (end-2014)	-330 918 450	-20 897 433	10 653 726	25 227 101	14 263 985	15 256 354	14 073 943	78 488 563	40 403 941	26 824 810
Funds, not certified (end-2015)	-132 426 178	-13 308 221	44 149 861	55 211 875	33 711 010	27 494 330	15 973 876	89 402 511	74 008 404	31 281 927

Remark: Funds, not contracted are estimated at the end of 2014. We consider this date to be a feasible end date for contracting, if the contracted amounts are to be certified by end-2015.

ECORYS

LIDEEA

Annex 2: Analysis Report of the capacity of the beneficiaries of PA2 and PA3

Introduction

In this report we present the findings of the capacity analysis of the beneficiaries Operational Programme Technical assistance (OPTA) Priority Axis 2 and Priority Axis 3 (PA2 and PA3). This report will be part of the full final report of the evaluation of the absorption capacity of the Operational Programme and will form one of its Chapters.

For the analysis we have followed the main elements that are important for absorption capacity: Structures, Human Resources and Tools

The document is structures as following:

✓ Objective and methodology in Chapter 1 (will be included later in the Chapter 1 of the main report)
✓ Findings Structures
✓ Findings Human Resources
✓ Findings Systems & Tools
✓ Conclusions and recommendations

1. Objective and methodology

The objective of this stage is to answer Question 2 of the ToR:

To what extent and how the reduced capacity of the beneficiary affects planning and management of the projects funded by PA2 and PA3.

The ToR suggested process reengineering and workload analysis as methodologies in analyzing the beneficiaries' capacity to plan, design and manage projects funded by Priority Axis 2 and Priority Axis 3 (PA2 and PA3).

The analysis was structured on two integrated components:

✓ A workload analysis focused on the PA2 and PA3 beneficiaries' staff capacity to perform the tasks and undertake the responsibilities given to them through the job description of the positions occupied in the institutional structure of ACIS, relevant for the implementation of OPTA.

✓ Process re-engineering: an analysis of the work flows and functions to identify potential needs for process reengineering related to the role of ACIS relevant structures (Communication Compartment within TAD and SCD) as beneficiaries for OPTA PA2 and PA3.

2. Methodology

Workload analysis

In our approach we focused on the specific ToR requirements and on the needs identified during the inception interviews, with the view to answering Q2 *"to what extent and how the reduced capacity of the beneficiary affects planning and management of the projects funded by PA2 and PA3" and to identify which are the tasks/responsibilities of the beneficiary that can be outsourced.*

105

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013   ECORYS   LIDEEA

We therefore undertook a workload analysis for the PA2 and PA3 staff in the Communication Compartment in TAD and the SMIS Central Unit in the System Coordination Directorate with the view to identify potential work overloads which could contribute to the reduced capacity claimed by the beneficiary - and make recommendations to address them.

Process re-engineering

Our project team undertook an analysis of the as-is situation for the two units beneficiaries, starting from the existing work flows for the PA2 and PA3 projects preparation and implementation and the relevant responsibilities and attributions provided by ROF and OPTA Implementation procedures. The information extracted from the desk research of these regulatory documents was then completed by the job descriptions content and data collected from the staff occupying the relevant positions in the beneficiaries' structures during joint group interviews.

Integrated approach

It is important to point out that the two analyses were not made in isolation but in close correlation with each other. The integrated approach was used for all the activities undertaken during all the stages of the analysis. This enabled us to look at the same time at both the responsibilities and attributions for the ACIS relevant structures as PA2 and PA3 OPTA beneficiaries and at the current workload of the existing staff, analyse the correlations between them and identify potential gaps, dysfunctions, tasks overlaps and/or work overloads. Therefore the stages of the two analyses overlapped and the tools and information collected were combined in a synergic way.

Steps

The following steps have been undertaken:

- Comprehensive desk research for the identification of the work flows and functions as established through the regulatory documents: procedures, job descriptions, Functional Regulations (ROF) of the Ministry of European Affairs.

- Design and use of the tool "Workflows and functions" (Annex 7A).

- Workload questionnaires among PA2 and PA3 staff (see Annex 7B). The questionnaire was send to 8 staff in SMIS CS and ICIS having OPTA beneficiary responsibilities. Each questionnaire was accompanied by an explanatory letter presenting the context and the content so that relevance was better understood. Support was given to staff on a daily basis by phone and emails, answering questions and giving additional information and clarifications. Out of the total, 6 questionnaires were returned filled in by staff (5 from SMIS CS and 1 from ICIS).

- joint interviews with staff of the two ACIS structures beneficiaries (Seen Annex 7C). The meetings were organised as open discussions with the main goal to share the results of the findings from the desk research and questionnaires and obtain further clarifications if and when needed. These interviews were complimented with some clarifications after the analysis was made.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations formulated in this report are a result of the integrated analysis based on the information collected and processed during all the steps presented above and using the specific tools developed for this purpose.

Limitations to take into account when interpreting the results

The estimation made by the staff, in the filled in questionnaires, of time needed for the tasks performance allowed identification of potential work overload for the staff undertaking both OPTA beneficiary responsibilities and other ACIS related tasks.

The time estimation by responders represent monthly average estimates for both total working time and tasks structures, and were made taking into account the following limitations:

- retroactive estimation based on staff memories in the absence of working time records. Very accurate estimation could have been done on the basis of time records made by the staff for all the activities undertaken during a certain period of time, which has been out of this project lifetime;
- OPTA related tasks and other ACIS tasks allocated to staff, in various percentages[29] both between staff and between beneficiaries. While for SMIS CS the OPTA related tasks, eligible activities established in OPTA which have not been outsourced yet, represent most part of their working time (an average of about 86%)[30], for ICIS staff, according to ROF, job descriptions and questionnaires, the PA3 beneficiary responsibilities cover less than 35% of their tasks and average working time;
- variation of workloads along time according to project cycle and length and/or periodicity of certain tasks, overlaps between OPTA tasks and other ACIS tasks, pick periods generated by deadlines for both tasks categories, all leading to uneven workloads and percentages of time dedicated to OPTA beneficiary role,
- some information provided by SMIS CS staff not confirmed by management whose opinions could not be collected in due time for the analysis.

The detailed methodology is presented in Annex 6.

3. Structures

According to OPTA, the main beneficiaries for PA2 and PA3 are part of the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments (ACIS) structures: for PA2 the main beneficiary is the System Coordination Directorate (SCD) while for PA3 the sole beneficiary is the Technical Assistance Directorate Within the SCD and the TAD, two units undertake responsibilities for the beneficiary role of the two priority axes according to OPTA FDI, Internal Regulations (ROF) and OPTA Implementation procedures:

- SMIS Coordination Service (SMIS CS) for PA2
- Information Compartment for Structural Instruments (ICIS) for PA3

The two ACIS structures beneficiaries have a different status in ACIS General Directorate organizational chart:

- the SMIS Coordination Unit, managed by a Chief of Unit is part of the System Coordination Directorate, managed by a director, which is under the coordination of the general director of ACIS,

---

[29] Calculated on the basis of the information provided by staff in the questionnaires on time estimates for categories of projects tasks and other ACIS tasks

[30]. It also covers the eligible activities established in OPTA which have not been outsourced yet, such as helpdesk

ECORYS   LIDEEA

- the ICIS is part of the TAD which also includes the Implementation Service (IS) and the OPTA MA

Initially the Information Compartment was part of SCD and therefore this directorate was also beneficiary to PA3. Further to the organizational change that took place in 2011, the Information Compartment was moved to the Technical Assistance directorate and TAD has become the new beneficiary of PA3.

Each of the two beneficiary units has responsibilities allocated to their positions for projects preparation and implementation.

Responsibilities are allocated to staff through job descriptions (see also the section on tools), decisions by superiors and instructions from OPTA MA and the Implementation Service within TAD.

The organisation structure of TAD and the Implementation Service

The organizational structure of TAD includes OPTA Management Authority (MA), the Implementation Service (IS) and the ICIS, coordinated by the director of TAD in the absence of a head of unit in the organizational chart.

The directorate was developed on the structure of an initial PIU which was later developed and included additional units to accommodate the OPTA MA. The ICIS was transferred from SCD with the view to compensate for the lack of capacity and give support for the PA3 absorption. According to the interviewees, this development of TAD organizational structure has been based on staff capability (relevant experience and expertise) to manage programs and projects, rather than on the organizational needs derived from its purpose/role.

The interviewees of ICIS and SMIS CS indicate that in terms of financing contracts execution the relations with the OPTA MA are clear, including the flows of documents that are officially exchanged between the two structures (the financing decisions, progress reports and reimbursement requests).

In terms of implementation through procurement contracts the situation is more complicated. The demarcation between the ACIS structures as beneficiaries and the IS for the responsibilities in managing the public procurement procedures and contracts for the implementation of the OPTA funded projects is not completely clear and no implementation agreement is in place for a formal delegation of responsibilities.

Although the IS is not formally involved in the project management as part of the financing contract, the projects are fully implemented through procurement contracts which are managed by IS.

According to OPTA MA implementation procedures, the administrative part of the procurement contract is managed by the IS while the technical part is the beneficiary's responsibility. The IS prepares all the contractual documents and monitors the execution of the contracts and at the same time forms the interface with the contractors. However, in practice there is no such clear delineation between all beneficiary responsibilities and the IS' during procurement contracts implementation. E.g. beneficiaries signatures requested on contractors financial reports, activities for the evaluation committees, the reception of goods and services delivered by the contractors, and so on. This is further elaborated in the section tools.

It can be concluded that although the structures needed for the implementation, are in place, the following elements are points for attention (see also section tools):

- the existence of a beneficiary structure (ICIS) under the same coordination with the OPTA MA,
- implementation responsibilities undertaken by a different structure than the beneficiary (IS) without a formal implementation agreement
- unclear delineation of implementation tasks between beneficiary and the IS

4. Human Resources

The human resource, the most sensitive of the three capacity builders was analysed on three directions:

- number, resulting in volume of available working time for the amount of tasks to be performed (more projects),
- work efficiency resulting in better results for the same/less amount of work,
- areas for increasing capability and motivation for effectiveness and sustainability.

Staffing

The number of staff within the two units, as identified during desk research and interviews is presented in the table below:

Table 16 PA2/PA3 OPTA beneficiaries staff in ACIS structures

Unit	POSITIONS/JOBS				
	Number of jobs			Job names according to job descriptions	Vacant/ suspended
	Total	Occupied	With PA2/ PA3 responsibilities	with PA2/PA3 responsibilities	
CCIS	4	3	3		1
			2	Superior expert	
			1	Assistent expert	
SMIS CD	9	8	6		1
			1	Head of department	
			1	Superior counselor	
			1	Counselor examination- evaluation	
			1	Expert examination-evaluation	
			2	Expert	

Source: interviews and documents on the organisation

The staff of the ICIS and SMIS units are not only responsible for the implementation of OPTA projects; this is a task which is additional to other ACIS tasks they have in the unit. In the case of SMIS unit, most of the tasks have to do with the main activity of this unit, which refers to ensuring the continuous and correct functioning of SMIS, as key requirement in the compliance of management and control systems for all OPs financed through structural instruments. As such, this is the only activity within ACIS coordinating role that is subject to audits from the Audit Authority and the EC.

ICIS

Of the total number of staff in ICIS, one was hired during the analysis and was not included in data collection process and one position has been suspended due to maternity leave of the occupier.

When looking at the total workload within the unit, it is found that the existing ICIS staff is considered to be insufficient for undertaking all current tasks assigned to the unit. As an interviewee mentions, the work overload is so high that no action plan with deadlines would be achievable unless it is accompanied by other actions to reduce the overload, such as hiring more staff, better tasks allocations (e.g. by types of activities) addressing the factors influencing the workloads identified and more outsourcing. This opinion is shared by the evaluator, seen the workload and tasks within the unit identified during the desk research, analysis of the filled questionnaire and the joint interview.

SMIS CS

Of the total number of 9 positions allocated to this unit, only 8 are occupied while 1 is still vacant. Only 6 of the 8 occupied positions undertake OPTA beneficiary tasks according to both job descriptions responsibilities and to those received from superiors (head of unit and director).

Although part of the staff considers the number of staff insufficient seen the total workload they have, the situation is more complicated, as the workload is heavily influenced by other factors, such as the division and management of tasks.

A more detailed explanation on the workloads and factors influencing them is presented in the next sections.

Projects implemented and pipeline

At present the units have under implementation up to 6 projects, of which 4 projects financed through PA2 and 2 projects from PA3. This is a considerably lower number of projects than originally foreseen in the indicative plan for projects proposed to be funded from OPTA for the period 2011-2015, which includes a number of 34 projects and contracts[31] for the two priorities and the two beneficiaries. This is about seven times more projects than the current number.

As can be seen in the table below, there are 21 projects and contracts planned for the SMIS unit and 13 for ICIS. This would represent an average of 3.8 projects/contracts per person in addition to the other ACIS tasks:

For each of the two units, the situation is as presented in the table below.

Table 17 Projects envisaged for funding from OPTA in the period 2011-2015

SMIS CD			CCIS		
PA2	Projects 2011-2015	Current staff	PA3	Projects 2011-2015	Current staff
KAI 2.1	9		KAI 3.1	12	
KAI 2.2	4		KAI 3.2	1	
KAI 2.3	3				
KAI 2.4	5				
Total	21	6	Total	13	3

Source: updated indicative plan for project proposed for funding from OPTA 2011-2015

---

[31] This number includes the projects and contracts in the pipeline updated as per May 14th. 3012 and does not include the projects finalized before this date

The allocation of the projects in the pipeline show an average of 3.5 projects/contracts per person for the SMIS CS and of 4,3 projects/contracts per person for ICIS. However the impact of these averages on the staff workloads should be seen in correlation with the information regarding the total working time and the proportions of OPTA related tasks in the total.

Time dedicated to OPTA and other tasks

The findings regarding time estimates are mainly based on the information collected from staff through the questionnaires and joint interviews as presented in section 2 Methodology and subject to limitations specified in section 2.3.

The average estimated monthly working time[32] of the staff in the two ACIS structures is about 188.4 hours/month, (representing 11,30% overtime)[33] of which 77.5% for OPTA funded projects related tasks. However, although the average monthly working time is pretty similar for both units, the time dedicated to OPTA projects activities is very different. Thus, while ICIS staff only works in average 34% of the time for OPTA projects, SMIS CS fulfils OPTA tasks for about 86%[34] of the total working time which also includes other tasks related to SMIS. These latter tasks have to do with the main activity of this unit, which refers to ensuring the continuous and correct functioning of SMIS, as key requirement in the compliance of management and control systems for all OPs financed through structural instruments. As such, this is the only activity within ACIS coordinating role that is subject to audits from the Audit Authority and the EC.

Figure 42 PA2/PA3 beneficiaries staff working time
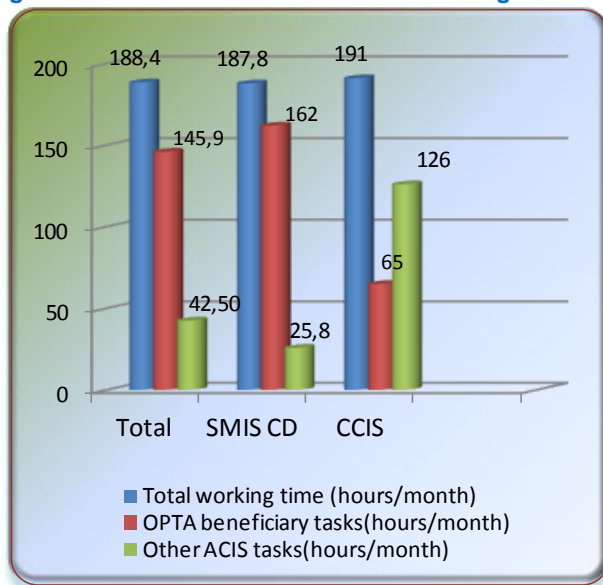
Source: Ecorys questionnaire staff

---

[32] Averages and percentages calculated on the basis of the information provided by staff in the questionnaires filled in
[33] An average of 19.1 hours/month/person
[34] It also covers the eligible activities established in OPTA which have not been outsourced yet, such as helpdesk

OPTA project preparations and management tasks and time spent on them

Currently, the SMIS unit is implementing 4 projects, with one procurement contract per project (one of these procurement contracts is a framework contract, which involves frequent retendering for new services).

The ICIS is also implementing 2 projects, 1 project with one subsequent contract and one with 12 contracts under it.

The actual time spent on different tasks is as following, estimated by the staff involved:

Table 18 Estimation of PA2/PA3 project tasks durations

Task category	Frequency	Estimated average time spent	
		SMIS CD	**CCIS**
Project preparation	1 per project	60 hours	60 hours for KAI 3.1[1]
Preparation of tender dossier	1 per contract	20 hours/dossier	Between 16 (KAI 3.1.) and 30 hours/dossier (KAI 3.2).[2]
Evaluation of tenders	1 per contract	20 hours/evaluation	16 hours/evaluation (KAI 3.1.)
Contracting	1 per contract	-	8 hours (KAI 3.1.)[3]
Meetings with contractors	Weekly	4-5 hours/meeting	5 hours/ meeting (between 2 and 8 hours)
Checking of contractors' reports	Progress reports Quarterly	24 hours/report	Very large variation: between 9 hours/report for KAI 3.1 and 80 hours/report for KAI 3.2
	Technical reports	Very large variation: in general monthly with 4 hours/ report or 1-2 reports with 40 hours/report	

[1] For KAI 3.1 there is only one more project in the pipeline to be prepared until 2014 and no more projects for KAI 3.

[2] For KAI.3.2 there are no more procurement contracts to be concluded until 2014.

[3] Verification of contracts prepared by the Implementation Department

Source: phone interviews with SMIS CS and ICIS staff

Based on these figures, it is estimated that running a project with one subsequent contract would cost around 0,25 – 0,5 FTE[35]. Projects having more contracts would take more time. This is, of course, only as the time spent is dependent on the size of a project and the number of subsequent contracts and their size.

In our case, looking at the projects planning it can be seen that while for SMIS CS most of the projects and contracts are longer term and more complex,, which imply more time needed for project management and contracts monitoring (with important technical input), in the ICIS there are several short time projects/contracts which need more time for preparation of tender dossiers but much less time for project management.

Therefore the number of staff working exclusively for the preparation and management of projects and contracts provided in the pipeline for the period 2011-2014 for the two units would indicate a minimum of:

- SMIS CS: 10.5 FTE (calculated with an average of 0.5fte/project/contract)
- ICIS: 3.25 FTE (calculated with an average of 0.25 fte/project/contract)

---

[35] FTE: full time equivalent

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013   ECORYS   LIDEEA

112

Looking at the existing staff, percentage of OPTA tasks in their total working time and the overtime spent at work, the following calculations could be made:

Beneficiary	Estimated number of FTE needed for OPTA pipeline implementation	No. of existing staff with combined tasks	Weight by current work overtime (11.30%)	OPTA tasks average working time %	No. of existing FTE working exclusively for OPTA (3x4)	No. of additional FTE needed (1-5)
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
SMIS CD	10,5	6,00	5,31	86,00	4,6	5,9
CCIS	3,25	3,00	2,65	34,00	0,90	2,35

However it is important to keep in mind that projects preparation and implementation is an uneven activity. Implementation of OPTA through projects generates a variation of workload in time according to the number of projects and project cycle stages. Therefore, the total amount of working time and percentages allocated to OPTA beneficiary tasks may vary according to:

- the size and duration of the project and the number of subsequent contracts under the project
- stage in the project cycle: preparation of project proposals, financing applications, procurement dossier preparation, evaluation, implementation and monitoring of procurement contracts. As shown above, especially the meetings with contractors and checking of the reports takes a lot of time
- number of projects and contracts being implemented during the same period of time (overlapping)
- type and complexity of the project, that is not always measured by the budget and number of contracts, but by the objective of the project and type of activities and deliverables
- tasks allocation- in the unit: project managers undertake projects preparation and implementation tasks differently and there are cases when management tasks for the same project are split among several members of staff. This is done in the SMIS unit: in order to ease the tasks of the project manager or based on staff capabilities, some activities are allocated to another person, such as e.g. the procurement dossier.
- percentage of total OPTA related tasks in the overall unit responsibilities (e.g.: ICIS has a much higher percentage of other ACIS tasks- 66%),

At the same time, it is important to take into consideration potential savings of working time through work efficiency increase by actions taken on those factors which have a direct impact on the staff workload.

Factors influencing the working time needed

In addition to the human factors generating the staff capability to undertake the allocated tasks, the amount of working time also is very much influenced by several categories of factors generated by the work process management. These factors were identified during the inception stage and included in the questionnaire filled in by the beneficiaries' staff with the view to estimate their influence on the staff workload. At the same time the information collected gave an indication on inefficiencies in the work process management and potential areas for improvements in the two units.

SMIS CS

The table below shows a summary of these factors and the percentages of the working time influenced by them, as estimated by the respondents in the SMIS CS.

Table 19 Workload influencing factors (number of people out of 5 identifying the factor mentioned as influencing the working time negatively)

Percentage of working time	Other priorities (urgent tasks on tight deadlines)	Tasks overlaps	Interruptions by colleagues/ superiors/other categories	Insufficient knowledge for performing the tasks	Too much time spent in meetings
0-10%	0	2	1	2	2
10-25%	3	1	3	2	1
25-50%	1	0	3	0	0
Over 50%	1	0	0	0	0

Source: Ecorys questionnaire staff

Among these factors, two of them are almost general for all the staff; e.g.: other priorities (urgent tasks on tight deadlines on all tasks to be performed) are present for most of the staff, while interruptions by superiors and colleagues are general. There are also two members of the staff for which all the factors apply in various proportions.

The percentages of influence in the working time of each type of factor vary among respondents according to the tasks and positions. Most of the factors influence up to 25% of the working time of the staff, however in some cases this influence exceeds 25% and even 50% (other priorities).

ICIS

For the ICIS staff only one factor was identified as having impact on the working time (urgent tasks on tight deadlines), but this one has an over 50% influence.

Another relevant element to consider is the staff capacity to make decisions on their tasks which directly relates to the delegation of responsibilities by their superiors and hence to the number and amount of time needed for approvals.

The tables below, show the source and level of decisions regarding the tasks undertaken by staff in the two units. The external decisions refer to those decisions made by higher levels in ACIS and/or higher level institutions.

SMIS CS

Table 20 SMIS CS staff perceptions regarding decisions on their tasks (number of people answering per category, N=5)

Percentage of working time/ no. of answers	Who decides on the tasks?		
	Yourself	Superior	External*
0-10%	3	0	5
10-25%	1	0	0
25-50-%	0	2	0
Over 50%	1	3	0

Source: Ecorys questionnaire staff

* Decisions made from outside beneficiary structure

It is interesting to notice that 3 of the 5 respondents in this unit consider that only up to 10 % of the decisions regarding their tasks [36]are made by themselves while the difference is shared between their superiors (50% and more and other decision makers from outside their structure (up to 10%). The forth respondents shares the same opinion with a slight differences in the percentages while the fifth one (the head of unit) declares that makes half of the own decision while the difference of 50% is equally shared between the superior (director) and external decision makers.

ICIS

Table 21 ICIS staff perception perceptions regarding decisions on their tasks (number of people answering per category, N=1)

Percentage of working time/ no.of answers	Who decides on the tasks?		
	Yourself	Superior	External
0-10%			
10-25%			
25-50-%		1	1
Over 50%	1		

Source: Ecorys questionnaire staff

The information in the table above shows a different situation for the ICIS where the staff estimated as making more than 50% of own decision while the difference is shared equally between superiors and outside decision makers.

This information given in the questionnaire was not confirmed however during the joint interviews when the staff expressed dissatisfaction for not having sufficient freedom in making decisions, especially in their specific areas of expertise. It is considered that the level of control in the current activity is high and the level of responsibilities for which there is delegation is lower and lower, especially in the context of outside requests on various communication activities.

It is also important to notice that the percentage of the external decision for this unit is higher than for SMIS CS which can be related to the 66% of general ACIS communication responsibilities in the total tasks of staff in this unit.

Work efficiency

Work efficiency (results versus working time) is directly influenced by the actions taken to reduce the amount of working time through process management, and to increase the staff capability and motivation.

At the same time, a higher number of projects would need an improved administrative capacity and therefore all three capacity builders (structure, human resources and tools) need to be considered so that they allow for a better capability for projects planning and management.

The staff perception on a number issues negatively influencing the administrative capacity, is presented in the table below.

---

[36] For which the approval of a superior is not needed

Table 22 Staff perceptions on the factors influencing administrative capacity (Number of people answered per category out of 5 for SMIS CS (N=5) and 1 for ICIS (N=1))

Administrative capacity builders/ no.of answers		Issues	SMIS CD		CCIS	
			Difficulties in		Difficulties in	
			planning* projects	managing projects	planning** projects	managing projects
Structures	Organisation structures and management	Unclear tasks allocation	2	4	-	-
		Unclear responsibilities	2	4	-	-
		Lack of prioritization	4	3	-	-
Human resources	Staff sufficiency and qualification	Insufficient staff	2	4	-	1
		Insufficiently qualified	3	3	-	1
		Insufficient vision	3	3	-	-
Systems& tools	Procedures	No procedures	2	2	-	1
		Too many	0	0	-	-
		Too complicated	1	1	-	-
		I don't use procedures	1	1	-	
	Manuals	No manuals	2	2	-	1
		Unclear or too	1	0	-	-
		I don't need manuals	1	2	-	-
	MIS functionning	Explain if the case	0	Simplified procedures needed	-	-
* one interviewee declares is not involved in planning						
** interviewee declares has no difficulties in planning projects						

Source: Ecorys questionnaire staff

These perceptions, <u>collected through questionnaires and validated through the joint interviews</u>, allow for two interesting comments for both beneficiaries:

- staff in both units perceive <u>more issues in projects management</u> than in projects planning: all staff faces problems in implementation and to lesser extent in planning, which could be considered normal since only a limited number of staff was involved in planning (2 people in SMIS CS and none in ICIS).

- <u>human resources</u> and <u>systems and tools</u> are the capacity builders for which both units identified issues, namely: insufficient and insufficiently used staff on the one hand and lack of procedures and manuals on the other hand. During the joint interviews the absence of a beneficiary manual was specifically mentioned as an important issue in the projects management.

At the same time there are specific issues identified for each of the two units:

SMIS CS

The staff perception on organization structures and management indicate reduced work efficiency due to improper work process management related to project planning and project management. Thus:

- for projects management the most frequent answers refer to issues related to <u>unclear responsibilities and tasks allocations</u> while

- for projects planning the <u>lack of prioritization</u> and <u>insufficient vision selected</u>

116

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013   ECORYS   LIDEEA

The following issues identified during the joint interviews complete the list of causes for the reduced efficiency of the work:

- insufficient delegation due to lack of relevant knowledge (e.g. technical) and trust, both at unit level and at the directorate level, staff needing to wait for approvals. Two people of the 6 who returned filled in questionnaires declared delegation as an area of improvement in addition to the ones specified in the questionnaire format. This was confirmed during the joint interviews by other 3.

- a vicious circle in terms of outsourcing: although there is a need for outsourcing to reduce workload (e.g. for, helpdesk, equipment maintenance or monitoring of procurement contracts) there is insufficient outsourcing due to lack of time to prepare the procurement dossiers and then due to delays in procurement launching once the dossiers are prepared,

- performing most of the external requests (other ACIS tasks in addition to SMIS mandatory activities) as urgent tasks, including administrative tasks such as ACIS equipment inventory and requests for equipment supplies,

These elements correlated with the factors influencing the working time presented in the section above point out that the focus is placed on daily tasks rather than on larger and longer term. Most of the daily tasks have to do with the main activity of this unit, which refers to ensuring the continuous and correct functioning of SMIS, as key requirement in the compliance of management and control systems for all OPs financed through structural instruments. As such, this is the only activity within ACIS coordinating role that is subject to audits from the Audit Authority and the EC.

In the area of systems & tools, in addition to the absence of a beneficiary manual for projects implementation, another issue is the lack of procedures for managing outside non-SMIS related complaints and requests (e.g. regarding equipment setting up for new users, equipment users' responsibilities, equipment and/or software functioning complaints, helpdesk) leads to frequent external interruptions.

The above outcomes show that there are several issues that can be improved in order to increase the capacity, especially in relation of outsourcing of time-consuming SMIS-related tasks, better definition of tasks and responsibilities for project management,, number of staff and better defined procedures.

ICIS

The most important issues for this unit are related to the number and qualification of the staff which are seen as insufficient, and at the same time, to the absence of important working tools such as procedures and manuals. The information was confirmed during the joint interview when the need for the beneficiary's manual for implementation was reinforced.

Capability and motivation

Looking at the human factors generating the staff capability and motivation to undertake the allocated tasks for projects planning and management, attention has been given to staff capability increase through addressing development needs in the related areas.

Table 23 Staff perceptions on capability and potential areas for improvement (Number of people answered per category out of 5 for SMIS CS (N=5) and 1 for ICIS (N=1))

CAPABILITY			
Question	**Answer**	**SMIS CD** (no. of answers)	**CCIS** (no. of answers)
In what way is capability hindering you in your work?	Reduce quality	1	-
	Increase working time allocated to tasks	4	-
	Not achieving objectives	1	-
	Decrease motivation	4	-
What is required by the job (job description) regarding the project management capability?	Project management	3	1
	Project preparation	3	1
	Time management	3	1
	Strategic planning	3	1
	Public procurement	2	1
	Other (specify)*	2	
	* technical training; post accesssion funds, communication skills		
Is this capability / skills / knowledge available?	No knowledge		
	Minimum	2	
	Satisfactory	4	1
	Excelent	1	
Room for improvement* *comment: not useful as they are not applied	Project management	3	1
	Project preparation	2	1
	Time management	2	1
	Strategic planning	2	1
	Public procurement	3	1
	Other (specify)	-	

Source: Ecorys questionnaire staff

For **SMIS CS** insufficient capability would affect the work. Most part of staff agree that insufficient capability would increase the working time allocated to tasks and reduce motivation while one person also identified reduced quality and not reaching objectives as direct effects as well. This is an indication that the improvement of capabilities would increase the work efficiency.

The **ICIS** would not be affected as insufficient capability is not considered an issue for this unit.

However, **for both beneficiaries**, in terms of development needs in the areas required by the job, most of the respondents perceive their level of skills and knowledge as satisfactory compared to the requirements of the job and acknowledge development needs mainly in project management and public procurement areas which are directly related to their project manager's role. Interviewees from the SMIS unit indicate that during contracts implementation there are specific technical activities which cannot be standardized through procedures but for which there is a need for staff training. From the interviews it becomes clear that capacity problems and lack of expertise leads to certain tensions between the beneficiaries and the ID with regard to the preparation of the procurement dossiers (see also the section on procedures).

Furthermore, the beneficiary staff does not always have the necessary knowledge for monitoring and for performing certain tasks or making decisions for specific projects. Next to this, it is indicated during the interviews that the staff development programmes are very useful in building capacities and that the knowledge acquired through these programmes is being used in the daily activities, mainly by the ICIS staff.

Following the feed-back received from staff both through the questionnaires and the interviews, the staff development programs for both beneficiaries would need to be based on:

- management awareness and commitment for staff development,
- development programs tailored to specific needs of the positions and staff
- staff and management motivation in using the acquired knowledge and skills

Motivation

The opinions about the motivation as a stimulating factor for the absorption capacity vary among staff. While half of them consider that motivation is contributing to a large extent to the absorption capacity increase, the other half believes that this influence is average (1) or even low (2).

However, the evaluator considers motivation as an important factor, as high motivation contributes to a low staff turnover and thus to the prevention of a loss of skills, experience and capacities.

Table 24 Staff perception on motivation and potential areas for improvement (Number of people answered per category out of 5 for SMIS CS (N=5) and 1 for ICIS (N=1))

MOTIVATION			
Question	Answer	SMIS CD (no. of answers)	CCIS (no. of answers)
Would you consider the motivation within the unit to increase the absorption capacity	High	2	1
	Average	1	-
	Low	2	-
	Why (staff comments)	- it is important to be respected; - staff commitment would be increase; - staff motivation does not influence the decision makers	- work efficiency would be increased;
What kind of motivations are needed for the job?	Financial	4	1
	Working atmosphere	5	1
	Commitment	5	1
	Is this motivation available?	3 Y+ 1N+ 1 partial	partial (commitment)
What improvements are needed to stimulate motivation?	Financial	salary increase according to performance	salary increase according to performance
	Working atmosphere	a clearer allocation of tasks, prioritization and follow-up,	more relaxed working atmospheres without overloads and tight deadlines
	Commitment	committed management, management by objectives	
What other area of improvement would be needed		prioritizing, follow-up of activities, delegation of responsibilities/tasks to the employees, more freedom in performing the tasks which can't be achieved without trust in employees	

Source: Ecorys questionnaire staff

SMIS CS

Although not all staff considers motivation to contribute to absorption capacity increase, for all of them motivation is important for the job and all three motivation factors have been identified as being needed.

ECORYS LIDEEA

The arguments brought to the proposed improvements point out very clearly the changes which would increase staff motivation for better results:

- salary increase according to performance, however, it is indicated that this might be a difficult issue seen the limitation in the salary system for civil servants staff ,
- better working process management, including delegation,
- management by objectives

ICIS

The staff in ICIS shared the opinion about the importance of motivation as a factor for increasing for absorption, both through the answers in the questionnaire and also during the joint interviews.

Additionally, during the interviews was indicated that there is a permanent lack of satisfaction within the ICIS related to the incapacity to achieve all the results within the deadlines due to lack of time, as a result of a severe shortage of staff compared to the amount of responsibilities both for projects and other ACIS tasks.

A performance based salary system along with a more relaxed working atmosphere without work overloads and tight deadlines are also considered as important factors leading to an increase of motivation.

In addition, two more improvement factors specified during the interviews referred to delegations of responsibilities based on trust and an improved working environment in terms of human relations as well as in physical conditions.

Consequences in relation to the absorption capacity

Despite the possible time savings that can be made by improvement of the above mentioned issues, the capacity to absorb the remaining pipeline is not enough. Hence, for the remaining of the programming period, additional workload would need to be considered as a result of implementation of the new projects which are in the pipeline planned for the 2011-2015 and which would need about 8 times more working time on projects at the current work efficiency. The evaluator concludes, based on the outcomes of the capacity of the beneficiaries as it is now, that it will be very difficult to absorb the projects present in the pipeline, without extra resources. The evaluators consider that in sourcing of project managers would be an option to ensure that projects in the pipeline can be absorbed on relatively short notice.

The figures presented in section 4.1. show an estimation[37] of FTE working time needed for the implementation of the projects and contracts in the pipeline which would require additional staff:

- **SMIS CS:** 5.90 FTE
- **ICIS:** 2.35 FTE.

However, before hiring new staff, this estimation should be considered together with specific time needs of the projects to be implemented, as presented in section 4.1 and with potential time savings achieved through better work process management; e.g.

- filling in suspended/vacant position
- actions to reduce the negative influencing factors on workload,

---

[37] The numbers refer to full time equivalent additional staff working exclusively for PA2/PA3 projects.

- better tasks reallocations between existing staff along with job descriptions reviews (see also section job descriptions).

Possibilities for outsourcing

For both units the project management tasks outsourced through TA projects would free up time resources, especially for activities such as preparation of terms of reference and procurement dossier, support in the evaluation of tenders and monitoring of contracts implementation.

For the ICIS, there is a need for outsourcing the activities of the Communication Plan, but not for the implementation of the plan as a whole.

For the SMIS unit it would be essential to outsource time-consuming activities, also with the view on reducing the workload. Activities that could be outsourced are SMIS related activities such as helpdesk to SMIS users, application maintenance, training and error correction, [38] maintenance of equipment[39]. For the helpdesk a call centre or a hotline could be a suitable solution which could be organized through outsourcing. For managing projects preparation of terms of reference and procurement dossiers, support in evaluation of tenders as well as the monitoring of procurement contracts would release important amount of time. For some activities, outsourcing is a bit more complicated, as for instance the monitoring of the SMIS functioning is very specialist work and the contractor should be familiar with the system and its applications.

5. Systems and tools

5.1. Procedures and responsibilities

According to OPTA and to the Financing Decision[40], the beneficiaries have full <u>accountability for the implementation of OPTA funded projects</u> but, at the same time, according to OPTA Implementation procedures, the administrative management of the project is undertaken by the Implementation Service, part of the TAD, while the beneficiaries undertake the technical implementation. This situation leads to unclear responsibilities for projects preparation and implementation and at the same time to dissipation of the legal accountability for the financing contract execution.

In this section a list of findings on the regulatory documents is presented, which indicate a certain lack of consistency and/or correlations both between documents and/or between provisions of different sections of the same document.

MEUR Internal Regulations (ROF)

The ROF provisions about the OPTA beneficiaries roles and responsibilities are very general and sometimes without clear correlations between them, e.g.:

- the System Coordination Directorate undertakes the OPTA Beneficiary responsibilities „according to the attributions of the Directorate and to the implementation internal regulations", while the SMIS Coordination Service has only technical responsibilities, that relate to the key SMIS-related responsibilities of this unit, without any reference to OPTA Beneficiary role. At the same time the jobs descriptions of SMIS Coordination Service

---

[38] Procurement dossier prepared already for outsourcing

[39] Partly already done, as a new contract was signed for new equipment which includes 5 years of maintenance,

[40] Financing contract for ACIS structures

121

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013   ECORYS   LIDEEA

- the Communication Compartment in the Technical Assistance Directorate is only responsible for the preparation of project proposals and technical implementation of procurement contracts.

OPTA Implementation Procedures

This is a comprehensive OPTA MA procedures manual covering 2007-2013 OPTA implementation. The evaluators consider the manual, updated in October 2011, a detailed and useful tool at hand for the MA staff but also for ACIS structures beneficiaries involved in the implementation of OPTA as it includes tasks and responsibilities for the beneficiaries as well.

However the document contains some inconsistencies and lack of clarity regarding PA2/PA3 OPTA Beneficiary's roles and responsibilities in the projects preparation and implementation, which can be structured in <u>two main categories</u>:

1. regarding the Beneficiary's accountability for the project implementation - the provisions of OPTA and the Financing Decision on the one hand and the provisions of the implementation procedures on the other hand;

2. regarding projects implementation responsibilities - different provisions in different parts of the documents.

<u>Beneficiary's accountability for the project implementation</u>

✓ According to OPTA, the <u>Beneficiaries (B) play the leading role</u> in the management and implementation of the interventions approved within OPTA. Also the Financing Decision (Annex B 2.1. to the OPTA Implementation Procedures) states that:
  - The Beneficiary <u>must ensure</u> the implementation of the Project according to the approved Financing Application – art.6 paragraph a) item 1) .
  - The Beneficiary will be the <u>sole responsible</u> in front of the OPTA MA for the Project implementation – art.6 paragraph a) item 1).

However according to OPTA implementation procedures main text, the <u>implementation responsibilities</u> are also undertaken by <u>different structures than the one which holds the accountability.</u> Thus, while the Director of the Beneficiary structures signs all the implementation documents as the sole responsible for the project implementation, the responsibilities for the procurement procedures and contracts needed for the project implementation are undertaken by the Implementation Service and the financial tasks by FMD within TAD. At the same time no provisions could be found in the procedures regarding an <u>implementation agreement</u> or a similar document delegating responsibilities to these structures involved in the project implementation.

At the same time, the project implementation (through procurement contracts) is divided between two project managers, representatives of the structures involved and references are made in the implementation procedures to two "project responsibles". The project responsible in charge with the administrative management of the contracts is part of a different structure and reporting to a different Director than the Beneficiary's

<u>The projects implementation responsibilities</u>

122
Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013
ECORYS LIDEEA

The OPTA implementation procedures manual sets implementation responsibilities both for the Beneficiary and for other ACIS structures such and the Implementation Service and the Financial Management Service within TAD.

Some of the responsibilities, presented in several sections in the procedures, are not very clear or contradictory, leaving room for interpretation and/or overlaps; e.g.:

- Responsibilities regarding preparation of financing applications, progress reports and payment claims:
- art. 6) a) 15) of the Financing Decision and section II.4 of OPTA procedures main text (Cooperation with structures of MFP/MAEur and other ACIS structures) state the Beneficiary's responsibility to submit the financing applications, progress reports and payment claims to the MA which processes them according to procedures. Also according to section I.I (Organisation structures and attributions), the public procurement unit in the ID prepares the financing applications and the payment claims only for ACIS, OPTA MA and ICIS.
- section E of the procedures (Projects preparation, public procurement and contract implementation): „For projects whose beneficiary is ACIS, or ACIS structures, the financing application, payment claim and progress report will be prepared by responsible staff nominated by the head of the Implementation Service according to the approved job description.
- This inconsistency can be also found in other sections of the document.

Unclear role of the Beneficiary. In the absence of a Beneficiary's procedures manual, a manual provided by the OPTA management to the Beneficiaries to instruct them on the obligations and requirements, the responsibilities of the project managers specified in various sections of the procedures are not very clear.

Although, according to OPTA implementation procedures, the beneficiary is responsible for the "technical management" of the project, at the same time it has to prepare administrative implementation documents such as the procurement dossier, progress reports and payment requests. The confusion is generated mainly due to using the "project manager" term for both managers, in the beneficiary and in the ID (Section E2.2. -Project implementation activities within ID), and also in both contract situations: financing decision and procurement contracts.

There are no clear provisions regarding the beneficiary's manager responsibilities for the technical implementation of the procurement contracts and therefore the risk of overlaps with the ID on the one hand and with the procurement contractors on the other hand.

Responsibilities regarding the record of accounts:

- According to art.6 a) 14) of the Financing Decision, the Beneficiary must keep records of accounts using separate project analytical accounts;
- According to Rof and Section I.I of OPTA implementation procedures (Organisation structures and attributions), the Financial Management Service ensures that the beneficiaries and other structures which take part in the implementation of the operations, use either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting coding and also makes payments to contractors for the OPTA funded projects whose beneficiaries are ACIS and ACIS structures and performs the corresponding record of accounts of all the operations.

The procedures in practice

The interviews show that the main problems in practice are found in relation to the procurement contracts, as there is some confusion about the division of tasks. This due to the fact that the procedures are not very clear in making a clear distinction between contract managers for the procurement, referred to as project managers, and the project managers from the beneficiaries.

In practice, the relations between the project managers (from the beneficiary) and the contract managers, regarding the administrative management and technical management of the procurement contract are based on informal agreement. This means that the responsibilities are shared according to the IS contract manager requests. This is also done, as there is no clear instruction or manual for the beneficiary on these issues. The result is that the beneficiary has to learn by doing under the directions given by the IS and their superiors.

Another issue is that there are no provisions in the procedures regarding all documents flows. Thus, the beneficiary is preparing project progress reports and reimbursement requests based on the contractors supporting documents which are received by the IS. However, the beneficiary project manager does not automatically receive the copies of those documents on which the report has to be based and has to ask for them from the IS or from the Financial Management Service, which is sometimes causing difficulties. Also, the beneficiaries do not keep records of accounts for the projects, although they have this responsibility according to the financing decisions.

This is not a satisfactory situation for the beneficiaries, especially since, according to the financing decision, the beneficiary holds full responsibility for the project implementation. The evaluators conclude that these issues influence the efficiency of working, but more important, can contain risks for accountability and liability. Hence, from this point of view it is important to improve the procedures and division of tasks regarding the procurement and also to formally regulate the relations between the beneficiary and the IS regarding the implementation responsibilities delegated to the IS (procurement procedures and contracts)

Relating to the SMIS unit specifically, the lack of procedures for managing complaints and requests from outside, leads to frequent interruptions having a high negative influence on the efficiency of the unit.

5.2. Job descriptions
The content of the job descriptions of the positions in the two PA2/PA3 beneficiary units was looked at as a part of the integrated analysis with the view to identify the correlations between:
- ✓ responsibilities at different functions levels and how they are broken down at positions level,
- ✓ the positions goals and the allocated tasks set for achieving these goals,

The content of all the job descriptions was introduced in an Excel document for a comparative analysis and the OPTA beneficiary related tasks were highlighted to identify these correlations. As there are no separate functions relating to OPTA project preparation and management, the full job descriptions are assessed.
The comparative analysis shows a number of areas of improvement, identified by the evaluator:
- ➢ While ICIS positions could be identified in a TAD detailed organizational chart, no SCD chart could be found for the identification of SMIS CS jobs;

- the names of the positions in the job descriptions do not reflect the jobs' roles in the organization but the civil service functions, although in the TAD organizational chart for instance the positions in the ICIS are referred to as "Communication managers";
- even if there is a standard format, the content is differently understood among the units and positions. While the job descriptions of the ICIS positions are more detailed and with a similar content, having tasks allocation by KAI in PA3, in the SMIS CS they are more synthetic and the tasks allocations less clear in relation to the job goals;
- the roles and goals of the positions in the organization seem to be insufficiently understood and most of the job descriptions describe activities for the position goals;
- in several cases the specific requirements for the job seem to reflect the qualifications of the occupiers rather than the position needs for undertaking the allocated tasks;
- all the jobs include OPTA beneficiary responsibilities and other ACIS tasks in various proportions. In most cases the project manager roles are not specifically included and many of the projects preparation and implementation responsibilities are missing and/or different from one position to another. None of the job descriptions in SMIS CS includes tasks related to preparation of project proposals/financing applications and to projects administrative implementation (progress reports and payment claims) although staff is required to perform them. Most tasks refer to the technical activities and one common provision present in all job descriptions refers to the preparation of procurement dossiers.

Especially the last point is relevant to the OPTA absorption capacity. A better description of the roles, tasks and responsibilities in project preparation and – management would be beneficed for the efficiency of working. The description needs alignment with the (improved) procedures and can be either introduced in the job description or in a separate instruction to the project managers.

5.3. The use of the tools in practice

The above shows that there is not a full correlation between the projects preparation and implementation related tasks provided by ROF, OPTA implementation procedures and the job descriptions. The job descriptions do not cover all project related tasks.

The questionnaire shows that OPTA implementation procedures are not familiar to beneficiaries' staff or are considered to be exclusively TAD procedures and not relevant for them while a need for a beneficiary's procedures manual is generally acknowledged. The evaluators consider that the use of procedures should be promoted.

Despite of this and the fact that not all project management issues are covered in the job descriptions, the staff does undertake the necessary project management activities. They undertake the implementation tasks at the request and/or instructions of superiors and other relevant units (e.g. Implementation unit, Financial Management Service). Thus, in practice, project proposals and financing application preparation as well as administrative implementation tasks (progress reports and payment claims) are undertaken by staff as part of their project manager role.

A number of improvement actions related to issues that need to be improved relating to structures, human resources and systems and tools were presented to staff for opinions and the answers bellow reflect their perceptions on potential solutions.

Table 25 Staff perceptions on potential improvement actions (Number of people answered per category out of 5 for SMIS CS (N=5) and 1 for ICIS (N=1))

Administrative capacity builders		Improvement actions	No.of answers	
			SMIS CD	CCIS
Structures	Organisation structures and management	Create project multifunctional teams	4	1
		Clarify allocation of tasks - review job descriptions	3	1
		Improve management	4	
		Increase outsourcing	3	
Human resources	Staff sufficiency and qualification	Hire more staff	4	1
		Staff development	4	1
		Personal development	4	1
Systems& tools	Procedures	Review procedures	2	1
		Train staff in the use of procedures	3	
		Verify use of procedures	1	
	Manuals	Develop working guides	3	
		Train staff in the use of guides	2	
		Verify use of the guides	1	
	MIS functionning	Explain what improvement you need	_	

Source: Ecorys questionnaire staff

Similarly, most of the answers refer to structures and human resources and most part of respondents would agree on project multifunctional teams with clear tasks allocations and improved management. Only half of them would see outsourcing as a potential solution but at the same time almost everybody sees human resources development in terms of number and skills as a general improvement need. In terms of systems &tools reviewing procedures and developing working guides should be accompanied by staff training in their use.

In terms of organising the work, the interviewees of the ICIS unit indicate that it would be beneficial to create multifunctional project teams and to include financial and procurement experts. Currently, there is a PM in the beneficiary structure working with experts in other units without being part of a structured formal project team with clear responsibilities.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

In this section we present our conclusions on how the Structures, Human Resources and Tools are affecting the absorption capacity of the beneficiaries of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance, Priority Axis 2 and 3. This section is followed by recommendations.

6.1 Conclusions

Structures

The structures for the implementation of the OPTA PA2 and PA3 are in place. The division of tasks between the structures is, however, not always clearly set. This is especially the case in relation to the public procurement tasks, leading to unclear responsibilities and inefficiencies, but more important to dissipation of the legal accountability for the financing contract execution.

According to the Financing Decision[41], the beneficiaries have full accountability for the implementation of OPTA funded projects but, at the same time, the administrative management of the procurement contracts as part of projects implementation is undertaken by the Implementation

---

[41] Financing contract for ACIS structures

126

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013   ECORYS   LIDEEA

Service. The involvement of the ID in the implementation of the beneficiaries' projects is done in the absence of an implementation agreement or a similar document establishing responsibilities among the structures involved in the project implementation.

The development of TAD organizational structure has been based mainly on staff capability (relevant experience and expertise) to manage programs and projects, rather than on the organizational needs derived from its purpose/role. Technically this could lead to a number of dysfunctions, delays and/or difficulties in managing projects:

- additional flows introduced in the projects implementation processes
- potential conflicts of interests in managing MA and beneficiary roles within the same structure
- beneficiaries' accountability for projects implementation

While the separation of functions within TAD has been established by ROF, at the level of the beneficiaries there is a need for a written agreement with all structures involved.

Human resources

There are permanent staff shortages in ICIS and SMIS CS through temporary suspension of a position in ICIS and 1 vacant position and less efficient working process as related to the complexity of tasks in SMIS CS, along with temporary shortages generated by projects implementation needs.

When looking at the capacity of the beneficiaries to absorb the projects in the project pipeline, it is clear that with the current available staff and the current workload, there is not enough capacity to prepare and implement those projects. The people involved in both the beneficiary units are currently overloaded and are already working more hours than contracted for. This included regular tasks for the unit and OPTA project implementation tasks.

For each of the two beneficiary units the administrative capacity for planning and implementing projects is limited by different factors due to specific staffing, organization and management. While in ICIS the highest limitation is staff insufficiency, the SMIS CS capacity is limited by several factors, such as:

- ad hoc tasks which are essential to ACIS obligations and which usually cannot be bypassed: helpdesk to SMIS users all over the country
- external non-SMIS related tasks and requests regarding equipment setting up for new users, equipment users' responsibilities, equipment and/or software functioning complaints, which lead to frequent external interruptions
- prioritization of current SMIS-related tasks at the expense of project management tasks
- job descriptions insufficiently focused on project management tasks and unclear tasks allocation

Work efficiency will be directly influenced by actions taken to:

- reduce the amount of working time through process management,
- increase the staff capability and motivation

In terms of capability, the current level of skills and knowledge is perceived by staff as satisfactory. However important development needs are acknowledged mainly in project management, time management and public procurement, areas directly related to their project manager's role.

Motivation of staff is very important in order to prevent a high staff turnover, and thus, a loss of knowledge, skills and experience. A performance based salary system would contribute to the motivation, but might be difficult to consider due to the civil servants status of staff for which the payment system is regulated by law according to categories, functions and grades. However a financial incentive scheme would be a good motivating factor and it could be considered for funding from OPTA PA1.

Although there are considerable improvements in work efficiency possible, especially in the SMIS unit, it is clear that on the short run, there is need to increase capacity in terms of number of people to ensure the implementation of the projects in the pipeline and to ensure the absorption of the funds as planned. For the long run, time could be made available for the regular staff to manage projects as a result of the introduction of measures improving the efficiency of the work, such as better work process organization, reallocation of tasks, review of job description and personal development.

In order to ensure the increased capacity in sourcing of temporary contractual staff such as consultants for specific projects[42] and outsourcing of time consuming activities such as project preparation, preparation of procurement documents and monitoring of procurement contracts could be taken. The estimated time per project needed differs based on the size and duration of the project, the nature and complexity of the project and the number and size of subsequent contracts needed for the implementation of the project. A first rough estimate is that for a project with one subsequent project around 0.25-0.5 FTE is needed and therefore, for the implementation of the projects in the 2011-2014 pipeline, the calculation shows a need of additional staff of 5.9 FTE for SMIS CS and 2.35 FTE for ICIS.

Systems and tools

There is a comprehensive OPTA MA procedures manual covering 2007-2013 OPTA implementation, as a detailed and useful tool at hand for the ACIS structures involved in the implementation of OPTA. The evaluators consider that although the document is dedicated to MA staff is also useful for OPTA beneficiaries as part of it includes tasks and responsibilities related to the MA staff. Although it was posted on the intranet is not familiar to beneficiaries' staff as it is not considered relevant for them.

On the other hand, the beneficiaries generally acknowledge the need for a detailed dedicated procedures manual for OPTA beneficiaries with clear roles, responsibilities and deadlines for project managers/teams along the whole project cycle.

There are some inconsistencies between different sections and/or between its provisions and what is actually done in relation to the PA2/PA3 OPTA Beneficiary's roles and responsibilities. There are also no clear delineations between ID and beneficiary's tasks in contracts implementation and the flow of tasks and documents is not complete for all stages of procurement contracts implementation.

Currently, in the absence of a beneficiary's manual (who is doing what?) and of working guides (how to do?) the project managers' responsibilities for implementation are undertaken according to instructions received from ID and from the superior in a "learning by doing process". This sometimes leads to delays and/or tensions among staff from ID and beneficiaries on "who is doing what" or "who is accountable". This is requiring improvements urgently, in order to work more

---

[42] In the Netherlands freelancers/consultants are hired on a temporarily basis for specific needs

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013   ECORYS   LIDEEA

efficiently, and, more importantly, to ensure the legal accountability for the financing contracts execution.

For SMIS CS there is also a lack of ACIS-level procedures to manage outside non-SMIS related complaints and requests which currently are creating an important amount of interruptions and stress; e.g.: helpdesk, equipment setting up for new users, equipment and/or software functioning complaints, equipment users' responsibilities, requests for equipment supplies, ACIS equipment inventory.

6.2   Recommendations

This section presents actions recommended to be taken to address the issues identified through this analysis as the main causes for the reduced capacity of the PA2 and PA3 beneficiaries to plan and implement projects funded by OPTA. The recommendations are structured in 3 main subsections corresponding to the three capacity builders analysed during the process.

Capacity improvement through better structures.

The inconveniences created by the actual structures and their impact on the absorption capacity could be addressed either through structures redesign and/or through improving the work processes.

Our recommendations for the structure redesign would consider:

- the Implementation Service organized as a separate unit/directorate, under direct coordination of the General Director of ACIS, and including the financial management tasks related to procurement contracts implementation
- reorganizing the Financial Management Service remaining under TAD coordination to accommodate the MA needs,
- organize the ICIS as a separate unit outside TAD, under direct coordination of the General Director of ACIS in order to avoid the conflict of interest situation by having the beneficiary in the same structure of the Managing Authority.

In order to clarify the legal accountability of the beneficiaries for the financing contracts execution and the ID responsibilities for the procurement contracts, it is recommended to:
- designate the Contracting Authority role for public procurement contracts to the beneficiary
- delegate implementation responsibilities to the Implementation Service and the Financial Management Service through implementation agreements to clearly define the division of tasks and responsibilities relating to public procurement and contract management between the beneficiary and the Implementation Service.

To better accommodate all OPTA beneficiaries' responsibilities, including the relations between involved structures in the process,   it is important that the Organising and Functioning Regulation ROF provisions regarding ACIS structures' roles and attributions are further defined and elaborated

In order to support the work division between the different structures, the following recommendations are made:

- review the job descriptions in both **SMIS CS and ICIS** in order to match the structures' roles, for a more efficient and cleared allocation of project management tasks.

ECORYS   LIDEEA

Capacity improvement through better human resources management

Seen the limited capacity of the current PA2/PA3 beneficiaries' staff to manage more OPTA projects, it is recommended to increase the capacity on short notice for both SMIS CS and ICIS. This can be realised through hiring additional staff in these ACIS structures positions and through increasing outsourcing for the time consuming activities.

Staffing (in sourcing):

- for **SMIS CS**, the estimation indicate a number of 5.9 FTE additional staff needed for the implementation of projects in the 2011-2014 pipeline.
- for **ICIS** the estimation indicate 2.35 FTE.

These numbers cover the vacant/suspended positions and therefore before hiring new staff, priority should be given to filling in suspended and vacant positions in both units and to reallocation of tasks between existing staff.

Considering the large variation of projects in terms of size, duration, complexity and the timing of their phases, it is recommended that in sourcing of temporary contractual staff is considered, according to the remaining needs after outsourcing of the major tasks.

Increased outsourcing for time consuming activities:

- ✓ **for both units** – project management activities through TA projects such as:
  - tender dossier preparation,
  - support in the evaluation of tenders
  - monitoring of procurement contracts implementation:
    - verification of contractors progress reports,
    - monitoring of technical activities and verification of deliverables
- ✓ for **ICIS** - implementation activities for the Communication Plan

- for **SMIS CS**: : SMIS related activities such as helpdesk to SMIS users all over the country, application maintenance, training and error correction, [43] maintenance of equipment[44]. For the helpdesk to SMIS a call centre or a hotline could be considered.

Better work process management

The capacity to absorb OPTA projects on the longer term can be improved through work efficiency increase as a result of:

- ✓ for **both units**: prioritization of project management related tasks and time allocation through task classification by importance and urgency
- ✓ for **SMIS CS:**
  - a more efficient division of tasks and responsibilities among positions and staff
  - internal specific procedures for non-SMIS related tasks

Capability and motivation

Increased staff and management capability through:

- ✓ staff development programmes (training and coaching) tailored to the specific needs of the actual tasks performed:

---

[43] Procurement dossier prepared already for outsourcing

[44] Partly already done, as a new contract was signed for new equipment which includes 5 years of maintenance,

- training needs assessment (specifically on project preparation and management, procurement and time management),
- training in the areas identified through the needs assessment
- staff coaching in the practical use of the knowledge acquired.

✓ management development programmes could be organised, to support managers in developing the necessary skills to better organize work processes and staff e.g. project management, time management, strategic planning, human resources management, motivation and communication. It is recommended that such programs are organized in agreement with the target participants and accommodate their working program.

Increased staff motivation through:
✓ financial motivation: design of a financial incentive system to reward people who get good results in implementing projects as a way to boost absorption.
✓ delegation of some management responsibilities to staff; this is also a way to increase the work efficiency. The delegation may consider specific tasks for which corresponding authority for decision making is given to staff. The selection of such tasks should made by the manager together with the staff based on common understanding and trust regarding staff capability to undertake the responsibilities.

Capacity improvement through better working systems & tools

OPTA MA implementation procedures
As certain inconsistencies are found in the OPTA MA implementation procedures, it is recommended to:
✓ correct inconsistencies between different sections and/or between its provisions and what is actually done in relation to the PA2/PA3 OPTA Beneficiary's roles and responsibilities in the projects preparation and implementation;
✓ develop and complete insufficient or missing responsibilities and document flows for all stages of procurement contracts implementation;
✓ adjust the content of the financing contract/decision to comply with the actual rights and liabilities of both parties.

Beneficiary's procedures manual
In order to facilitate the division of tasks and proper project management, it is recommended to
✓ prepare a detailed Beneficiary's manual answering the questions "who is doing what, when and how" covering all project cycle stages and correlated with the OPTA MA implementation procedures and its dissemination to all beneficiary structures.
✓ train the beneficiary staff in the use of the manual including through concrete examples and exercises in the use of documents and formats.

SMIS CS internal procedures
✓ Outside non-SMIS related complaints and requests[45] addressed to the SMIS unit lead to ad hoc work, having a very negative effect on the work efficiency due to work interruptions and stress. In order to reduce the outside complaints and the ad hoc way of working and

---

[45] E.g.: equipment setting up for new users, equipment and/or software functioning claims, equipment users' responsibilities, requests for equipment supplies, ACIS equipment inventory.

131

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013   ECORYS   LIDEEA

increase work efficiency, it is recommended that ACIS level procedures are prepared to set clear rules for managing them. These procedures should set rules, responsibilities and deadlines for collecting and registering the requests, prioritization according to importance, urgencies and frequencies, allocation of clear tasks and deadlines for their solving (who is doing what and when) according to types of issues, from the moment they reach the unit

A proposed action plan for implementation of the above recommendations is presented in Annex 5.

Project no	Project title	Budget estimates [in euro]	Main features and characteristics	Eligible costs change needed?	Target Groups	Suitable for other OPs than OPTA?	Still suitable for OPTA 2007-2013?	Suitable for OPTA in 2014-2020?	Proposed Beneficiary
In Priority Axis 1									
KA1.1									
1	Establishment of a co-ordination network between those responsible at national, regional and local level of integrating sustainable development aspects in the Structural Funds.	200 000 euro (estimation per year; ongoing network; the amount varies depending on the scope and intensity of the activities).	Useful tool to integrated environmental and sustainable horizontal aspects in the OP implementation. Also, powerful instrument to generate project ideas and to inform all sectoral policies with the horizontal principle of sustainable development. Possibility to set up different working groups regarding climate change or the Environmental Strategic Evaluation. Finally, the network acts as a platform that brings together the most relevant actors and stakeholders in this field and can eventually be used to represent the country in the European sphere on cohesion policy and sustainable development	No	Regional and local authorities; Environmental organisation; Sustainable development main stakeholders.	No	Yes	Yes	Ministry of Environment and Forests
2	Urban Development thematic network.	200 000 euro (estimation per year; ongoing network; the	This thematic network focuses on the urban dimension of the European Regional Development Fund co-financed Ops. It has proved very useful to design and promote urban development projects in different territories and to keep this fundamental	Yes	Romanian Federation of Municipalities; Romanian Association of	No	Yes	Yes	Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism

Project no	Project title	Budget estimates [in euro]	Main features and characteristics	Eligible costs change needed?	Target Groups	Suitable for other OPs than OPTA?	Still suitable for OPTA 2007-2013?	Suitable for OPTA in 2014-2020?	Proposed Beneficiary
		amount varies depending on the scope and intensity of the activities).	feature of cohesion policy in the project portfolio. This becomes even more important with the fact that URBAN does not exist anymore. The network also brings together the relevant national government Ministries and agencies with the local government to discuss about urban development policies and also acts as the country representative for URBACT II.		Communes; relevant Ministries at national level. Towns and cities should also be involved.				
3	Network on equal opportunities between women and men and disadvantaged groups.	200 000 euro (estimation per year; ongoing network; the amount varies depending on the scope and intensity of the activities).	The network coordinates efforts for the accomplishment of a horizontal principle of paramount importance in Structural Funds implementation. It also goes in line with policy trends in the country and guarantees equal treatment in the EU funded activities. The ultimate objective is to promote an effective equal treatment and access to opportunities between men and women and disadvantaged groups. It acts as a platform that brings together all relevant actors and stakeholders on equal treatment and gender mainstreaming in the country. Finally, powerful instrument to generate project ideas and to inform all sectoral policies with the horizontal principle of equal treatment.	No	Organisations representing women's interests; institutes or associations; National School of Political and Administrative Studies (SNSPA).	No	Yes	Yes	Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection
4	Thematic Network for	750 000 euro (estimation	Useful tool to promote the concept of innovation as a key feature for achieving growth and jobs.	No	Universities; Technological	No	Yes	Yes	Ministry of Communicatio

ECORYS

LIDEEA

Project no	Project title	Budget estimates [in euro]	Main features and characteristics	Eligible costs change needed?	Target Groups	Suitable for other OPs than OPTA?	Still suitable for OPTA 2007-2013?	Suitable for OPTA in 2014-2020?	Proposed Beneficiary
	promoting innovation and RTD.	per year; ongoing network; the amount varies depending on the scope and intensity of the activities).	This is a network that would bring together all relevant actors on RTD and innovation. The network may implement various types of activities, e.g. regional network of agencies for Innovation - a study + pilot project of 1 year to run 1/several agencies within a RDA or an association of RDAs leading to a study proposing to propose the best type of organization for OPTA 2014-2020; or study to apply the smart specialization - to allow integration of this new concept integrated into a practical approach for Romania at 2014-2020 horizon.		Centres; Research Institutes; National Authority for Scientific Research (ANCS); RDAs; Local Authorities; ACIS_TAD.				ns and Information Society
5	Co-ordination of the Business Innovation Centres Network operating in Romania.	200 000 euro	This DG Regio's network BICs across Europe usually have a Co-ordination Unit or Secretariat to guarantee coherence and maximise results of this supporting Centres. It has proved to be useful and a success history. With a limited budget, tangible results and concrete coordination and dissemination activities can be carried out on this important field.	No	Chamber of Commerce; a Regional Development Agency, Federation of Entrepreneurs or a national body for innovation and/or support to the private sector development.	No	Yes	Yes	Foundation of Romanian Business and Innovation Centres
6	Study needs for upgrade of the	100 000 euro	Study for upgrading the procurement system - on needs, institutions to be connected, institutional	Yes	National School of Political and	No	Yes	Yes	SNSPA + Universities

ECORYS ▲   LIDEEA

Project no	Project title	Budget estimates [in euro]	Main features and characteristics	Eligible costs change needed?	Target Groups	Suitable for other OPs than OPTA?	Still suitable for OPTA 2007-2013?	Suitable for OPTA in 2014-2020?	Proposed Beneficiary
	procurement system.		structures, changes and costs. The functional study should result in providing details on the details to be corrected and improved in the whole procurement system.		Administrative Studies (SNSPA); Universities				
7	Upgrade of system for procurement [SEAP].	3 000 000 euro	The system should be upgraded significantly. The budget proposed for that improvement would cover all preparatory and implementation costs: from the functional analysis, through implementation to the tests of the new system, and further training of the Train-Of-Trainers.	Yes	n/a	No	Yes	Yes	ANRMAP
8	A database on public procurement.	1 000 000 euro	Connected to SEAP - a database needs to be established that will interlink, use and be accessible? to all involved in public procurement to exchange information and to tackle overlaps and conflicts of interest. The project would cover both, very important analysis and consultation? process of many involved institutions as well as the costs of updating the structure and contents of the database.	Yes	n/a	No	Yes	Yes	ANRMAP
9	Training for staff of the procurement agency.	100 000 euro	Especially on the specialist topics such as ex-post verification. The training could be organised as an ongoing cycle of trainings which, in time, should cover checking of practical implementation of the first series through 2nd round of trainings [higher level] for trainees=participants in the 1st edition.	No	ANRMAP	No	Yes	Yes	ANRMAP

ECORYS

LIDEEA

Project no	Project title	Budget estimates [in euro]	Main features and characteristics	Eligible costs change needed?	Target Groups	Suitable for other OPs than OPTA?	Still suitable for OPTA 2007-2013?	Suitable for OPTA in 2014-2020?	Proposed Beneficiary
10	Developing a better selection process and system / Setting up a pool of staff that can support in a flexible way different Managing Authorities and Intermediary Bodies.	200 000 euro	The public institutions [e.g. DLAF]??? could make benefit of an external assistance in development of improved system and methodologies for attracting and selecting optimum candidates for work in the MAs. The system should be based on the best adapted Romanian and international experiences. As a result, the system should lead to creation of the pool of staff who would/could be implemented in flexible manner by MAs and IBs.	Yes	Managing Authorities and Intermediary Bodies	No	Yes	Yes	ACIS
11	Support for the timely delivery of indicators and covering the expenses of data collection for OP monitoring plus exchange of information and learning process from Italy.	500 000 euro	Improve the current systems for data collection and information flows to monitor OP's implementation. The first part of the analysis should cover analysis of the Italian experiences and practices in that respect. The analysis to be followed by the changes stemming from the results - to be implemented by the future Beneficiary.	No	ACIS and MAs	No	Yes	Yes	National Institute of Statistics (INS)

ECORYS   LIDEEA

Project no	Project title	Budget estimates [in euro]	Main features and characteristics	Eligible costs change needed?	Target Groups	Suitable for other OPs than OPTA?	Still suitable for OPTA 2007-2013?	Suitable for OPTA in 2014-2020?	Proposed Beneficiary
KA1.2									
12	Evaluation Network	1 500 000 euro (estimation per year; ongoing network; the amount varies depending on the scope and intensity of the activities).	Useful tool for responding to the European Commission's high expectations on Programmes' evaluation. Also good tool to promote the culture of evaluation in the country and, finally, effective instrument to be used for programming for the next period. The Evaluation Network will count with an Annual Work Plan and a wide array of activities will be carried out such as: needs assessment and a pilot project to develop training programmes addressed to the Evaluators of High Education, together with universities/ associations/ organizations of evaluators from EU with good practices in this field; grant scheme for evaluation activities improving/widening evaluation methodologies and practices.	No	Universities; Research Centres; National School of Political and Administrative Studies (SNSPA); various institutions in public administration; well known organizations of evaluators	No	Yes	Yes	ACIS
KA1.4									
13	Inventory of tasks to be outsourced regarding Outsourcing of maintenance of IT systems inside the MA?.	50 000 euro	Outsourcing the informal 'technical help-desk' and other administrative services would allow the team concentrating on developing concrete tasks. That outsourcing would cover the technical services to be provided throughout the ACIS; thus freeing resources of the SMIS Unit to develop that System further, according to the original pipeline.	No	ACIS	No	Yes	Yes	ACIS

ECORYS   LIDEEA

Project no	Project title	Budget estimates [in euro]	Main features and characteristics	Eligible costs change needed?	Target Groups	Suitable for other OPs than OPTA?	Still suitable for OPTA 2007-2013?	Suitable for OPTA in 2014-2020?	Proposed Beneficiary
In Priority Axis 2									
KA2.1									
14	Creation of a tool for the managing of cash flows between Managing Authorities and the connection in between them.	250 000 euro	Analysis and eventual implementation of unified system for managing cash flows. That analysis should be concentrated on adding/correcting/ upgrading functionality of the SMIS. The analytical work to be led by/under leadership of the SMIS Unit, as the System should incorporate that functionality, at the end.	No	ACIS, CPA and MAs	No	Yes	Yes	ACIS (SMIS Unit)
15	Introduction of the electronic signature.	2 500 000 euro	Analysis and implementation of the electronic signature technology (obligatory linked with the SMIS) among the MAs, including continuous training on using that technology.	No	ACIS, CPA, MAs, IBs, Beneficiaries	No	Yes	Yes	ACIS(SMIS Unit)
In Priority Axis 3									
KA3.1									
16	Tailored communication campaign in a selected territory.	100 000 euro per year?	Communication campaigns to be designed according to the specificities of a given territory in the country (for instance, in a heavy industries region, focus on how Structural Funds are supporting economic development). The more tailored and targeted the communication campaign is, the more successful and effective will be. This "micro" communication activity is	No	Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism; RDAs; City Councils; Association of Communes of Romania (ACoR).	No	Yes	Yes	ACIS

ECORYS

LIDEEA

Project no	Project title	Budget estimates [in euro]	Main features and characteristics	Eligible costs change needed?	Target Groups	Suitable for other OPs than OPTA?	Still suitable for OPTA 2007-2013?	Suitable for OPTA in 2014-2020?	Proposed Beneficiary
			complementary to the one indicated below on mass media						
17	A competition to support the best ideas of promoting the EU Structural Instruments' results.	4 000 000 euro	This is a project on dissemination that is considered a success history in Poland. OPTA gets to involve the media (and thus attracting future interest), NGOs, self-governments, universities, etc. in promoting real-life results of Structural Funds implementation among the public. The individual projects would be defined by the public - thus responding to the information needs of the society = bottom-up approach.	Possibly	Awarded media/NGOs/companies/self-governments/universities, etc. (it should be run like a grant scheme)	No	Yes	Yes	Structural Instruments Information Centre

ECORYS

LIDEEA

Annex 4 International experience and good practice

Experiences and ideas from other countries

We can find Technical Assistance Operational Programmes in a large number of the Member States, including both old and new countries in the EU. In this chapter we present ideas and experiences found in Spain, Poland and Bulgaria.

Spain

Spain has been historically the largest recipient of funds in the EU's history. It thus has a long and solid experience in the Structural Funds Instruments implementation and the country has achieved an impressive development in all types of operations, both on infrastructure projects and the so-called ´soft´ projects. In this way, and as a result of the long history and the large amount of funds implemented in the last 25 years, managing authorities, intermediary bodies have developed a wide range of activities to be implemented by a large number of different types of beneficiaries.

It is for example interesting to see that the coordination efforts to ensure a sound implementation of structural funds are channelled through three fundamental instruments:

1. The **Fund Coordination Committee, which** is the agency that coordinates the policies implemented with the Cohesion Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Rural Development Fund and the European Fisheries Fund.

2. The **Thematic and Industry-wide networks, which** are the mechanisms of coordination that serve as an exchange of experiences and the dissemination of best practice funded by Community funds in their fields of activity; and for the presentation and analysis of developments in Community and national policies with repercussions in the management of activities funded by Community funds; and the dissemination and analysis of technical problems caused by the application of Community and national legislation in the activities funded by Community funds, including that stemming from systems of management, control and auditing as main goals.

3. The **National Wide Technical Assistance Operational Programme and Priority Axis 5 and Priority Axis 7 of regional Operational Programmes:**

- ✓ The Technical Assistance Operational Programme mainly covers TA support for bodies, actors and entities of the central government and national government agencies.
- ✓ Priority Axis 5 of the Competitiveness Regions Operational Programmes (+ phasing in).
- ✓ Priority Axis 7of the Convergence Regions Operational Programmes (+ phasing out).

The specific EU funding allocated to technical assistance in Spain is 216.167.060 Euro. Out of this EU funding, the Technical Assistance Operational Programme has a budget allocated of over 63 million euro. With this, more than 100 OPTA funded projects can be found in the 2010 Annual Implementation Report, which places Spain as a reasonably useful source of information to look at in order to identify potential activities and beneficiaries to be implemented in Romania.

ECORYS   LIDEEA

Poland

Poland is the biggest recipient of the structural funding among the 10 New EU Member States. Within the current programming period 2007-2013 Poland has foreseen commitment of the EU Structural Instruments at the level of 67 billion Euro.

The Technical Assistance Operational Programme in Poland has access to the EU funding at the level of 517 million Euro.

Poland has also very good experiences and, most of all, good absorption results: currently (January 2012) there is 72,3 % commitment and 32.61% disbursement (of the whole national allocation for 2007-2013). Because of those good results the country often has been used, especially by the European Commission, as an example for the other New Member States.

It is for example interesting that Poland is reallocating budget within the OPTA. This is the second time in the current programming period (following the first reallocation effective on 25 February 2009). The Polish OPTA is split into 4 Priority Axis:

✓ Priority Axis 1: Support to human resources - [approximately 69.1% of total funding].
✓ Priority Axis 2: IT support in the NSRF implementation [3.6%].
✓ Priority Axis 3: Support of the structural funds operations implementation [14.5%].
✓ Priority Axis 4: Communication and promotion [12.8%].
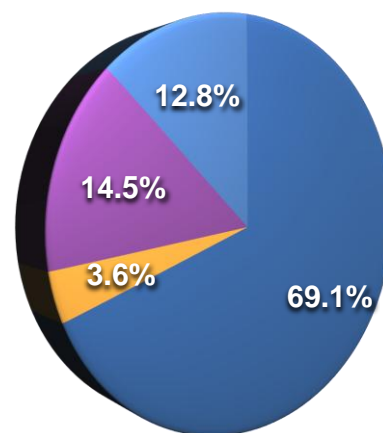
In August 2011 the mid-term evaluation of the programme has brought the need for the 2nd reallocation proposal. Interestingly for the Romanian OPTA, **Poland wants to reallocate the funds to Priority Axis 4 dedicated to promotion and communication, and to exchange of experiences among participants of the NSRF**. The new structure of the OP will be the following:

Table 26 Proposed reallocations (in Euro) for Poland:

Priority	Community part (until now)	National part (until now)	Total (until now)	Reallocation Community part (after reallocation)	Change of the community part	Change – total
PA1	357 000 000	63 000 000	420 000 000	341 700 000	-15 300 000	-18 000 000
PA2	18 700 000	3 300 000	22 000 000	18 700 000	0	0
PA3	74 800 000	13 200 000	88 000 000	64 600 000	-10 200 000	-12 000 000
PA 4	66 200 000	11 682 353	77 882 353	91 700 000	+25 500 000	+30 000 000
Total	**516 700 000**	**91 182 353**	**607 882 353**	**516 700 000**	**0**	**0**

Source: Polish Ministry for Regional Development

Bulgaria

Bulgaria has similarities in the EU relations and circumstances to Romania as both countries have entered into the EU at the same time. Hence, Bulgaria can be considered a useful for the Romanian experiences as both OPTAs have many similarities (although differences in the size), also as the country is usually being subject of similar approach by the European Commission as Romania.

142

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013   ECORYS   LIDEEA

The Bulgarian Operational Programme for Technical Assistance is smaller in size: 48.2 million Euro ERDF. However it has similar tasks as the OPTA in Romania - the specific objectives of OPTA are:

1. Strengthening the necessary capacity and functioning of the central and local administrative structures involved in the SCFs absorption.
2. Increasing the information and public awareness with respect to the effective and efficient use of the Structural and Cohesion Funds in Bulgaria.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following priority axes have been identified:

Priority axis 1 – Support to the implementation of the activities, performed by the Structures at central level: Central Coordination Unit, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority, OPTA Managing Authority, NSRF Monitoring Committee and OPTA Monitoring Committee; Capacity building measures for SF implementing structures.

Priority axis 2 – Further development and support to the functioning of the Unified Management Information System. Key areas of intervention:

✓ Development and maintenance of UMIS.
✓ Continuous support and training of the UMIS users.
✓ Equipment Supply.
✓ Support to the Help Desk.
✓ Development of integrated system of indicators, standardised queries and reports on request by OP MAs.
✓ Development of interfaces with external systems.

Priority axis 3 – Promotion of the European Cohesion Policy and its objectives in Bulgaria and ensuring the provision of general and statistical Information. Key areas of intervention:

✓ Planning, coordination, and realisation of a comprehensive information campaigns and public awareness activities.
✓ Providing data and analyses of the current economic situation and elaborating model for assessments of the EU funding impact and effects of funding on the various sectors.
✓ Further development of Unified Gateway giving access to general and specialised information about the management of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund of the European Union in Bulgaria.
✓ Securing the establishment / development of 28 district Info points - development and roll-out operations, securing the running operations, securing the publicity measures on local level, providing equipment required for the normal operation of the points as well as relevant trainings.

Table 27 Breakdown allocation for Bulgaria (in Euro)

Priority Axis	Community Funding (ERDF)	National Funding			Total OP	Co financing rate (%)
		Public	Private	Total		
1	2	3	4	5=3+4	6=2+5	7=2/6x100
PA1	25 00 0000	4 411 765	0	4 411 765	29 411 765	85
PA2	9 659 303	1 704 583	0	1 704 583	11 363 886	85
PA3	13 637 210	2 406 566	0	2 406 566	16 043 776	85
TOTAL	48 296 513	8 522 914	0	8 522 914	56 819 427	85

Source: OPTA Bulgaria 2007-2013

The Monitoring and Information System Presage

The French Presage system has been in place for a number of years now and it is constantly used as a valid reference for different Monitoring and Information Systems in Western Europe.

By networking all the partners concerned, the PRESAGE computer system used in France for the follow-up, management, control and evaluation of European programmes is helping to ensure an efficient and transparent implementation of European procedures. PRESAGE aims for a sound and efficient management of both European and national payments made in the framework of the European regional programmes in France.

In managing the Structural Funds, the French regions had progressively acquired computer monitoring tools, but without any real coordination. At least four types of software were being used and the data synthesis remained empirical and often unreliable. In May 1998, the French Government therefore set itself the goal, for the 2000-06 programming period, of putting into place a single monitoring and management software, the use of which would be compulsory for all managers of European Structural Funds.

To this end, in 2000 France submitted a specific Single Programming Document (SDP), entitled the

"Programme National Informatique" (PNI), in the form of a national programme for technical assistance, common to all European procedures and designed to introduce a single management tool in all the French regions. The actions programmed in are as follows:

- ✓ The human resources required for the project realisation (national and regional level).
- ✓ The intangible investments linked to computerisation (development, data capture, electronic transmission to the European Commission, training of instructors and users, training manuals).
- ✓ The tangible investments required for the project realisation (national and regional computing equipment).
- ✓ Follow-up, maintenance, implementation and evaluation (hotline, communication, follow-up, mid-term evaluation and final evaluation).

Approved by the European Commission on 22 March 2001, the PRESAGE device ('Programme Régional et Européen de Suivi,d'Analyse, de Gestion et d'Evaluation' / 'Regional and European Monitoring, Analysis, Management and Evaluation Programme') provides the 24 French regions with a device for the monitoring, management and evaluation of Community programmes linked to regional economic development: Objectives 1 and 2, INTERREG, LEADER+, URBAN and the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG).

The device has four main aims:

- ✓ To make available to the partners concerned all information regarding the management and implementation of SPDs.
- ✓ To make available the statistical data which are essential to carrying out evaluation exercises.
- ✓ To regularly update the national and European authorities on programme progress.
- ✓ To intervene in real time throughout the entire aid management and control chain.
- ✓ The computer application makes it possible to monitor and manage all projects, from the time of submitting a request for aid, by following the different stages in the application's progress, collecting information needed for carrying out the evaluation exercises and monitoring the control operations.

It is true to speak of a genuine "PRESAGE network" as the device links up all the actors involved in European programmes in France: regional Prefectures charged with steering the programmes, Regional Councils, General Councils, State services involved in appraising, managing, following up and controlling applications. Also connected to the system are the European Commission which transmits information, the ministries responsible for managing the funds and the DATAR[46] which consolidates the data at national level, as well as various other services.

PRESAGE is accessible in real time by all the partners in a secure environment. It is installed on the Interior Ministry's platform, which contains all the regional and national databases. The system permits the Regional policy European Union import or export of data in text format concerning the project, contracting authority, accounts of co-financers, invoices, etc. Data on the Structural Fund call can be transmitted electronically to the European Commission. A lot of data can be exported in text format for subsequent use with office automation tools (Excel, Access, etc.). As a result, data can be presented in the form of histograms, dynamic crossed tables and mapping tools.

A PRESAGE intranet provides users of the software with PRESAGE documentation, a FAQ section, forum and directory. To operate the system, a team of 37 persons were allocated to the project full time from the time of start-up, including: - one person per region charged with promoting and coordinating PRESAGE among users; - five persons from the Interior Ministry charged with running and processing the databases and two charged with technical assistance; - three technicians to provide assistance ("hotline") and ensure functional maintenance of the software. Since it was launched in 2000, some 2 300 users at 930 sites have used PRESAGE, totalling over 450 000 connection hours.

The total cost of the "Programme National Informatique" developed to finance PRESAGE is EUR 38 million, 56% of which is financed by the ERDF. These figures must be set against the EUR 10 billion in Community aid and the more than EUR billion of total financing which the project is able to monitor.

Table 28 Overview of PRESAGE and contact details

Project:	PRESAGE for efficient Structural Fund management
Program:	Project: PRESAGE, Programme: Programme National Informatique (PNI)
Total Cost:	38 000 000 EUR
EU contribution:	21 280 000 EUR
Contact:	DATAR Olivier , ANNE1 avenue Charles Floquet F75007 , Paris France Tel.: 01 40 65 10 62 Fax.: 01 40 65 12 19 E-Mail: olivier.anne@datar.gouv.fr

Comparison between the eligible activities, costs and beneficiaries of Romania with Spain, Poland and Bulgaria

This section presents a brief comparison in between the Romanian OPTA and the respective Technical Assistance Operational Programmes for Spain, Poland and Bulgaria.

---

[46] DATAR = Délégation à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'action régionale. In English: Delegation for town planning and regional action.

This analysis was undertaken during the Inception phase of the evaluation and it provided with valuable information and examples that would conduct the evaluators' proposals for new TA interventions.

From that initial analysis, the main conclusion suggested that there was a wide array of activities done in the context of the three national Technical Assistance Operational Programmes in Spain, Poland and Bulgaria but the majority of them were already included in one or another way under the current scope of action in the Romanian OPTA.

Even if that was the case, the main observation identified at the inception phase pointed out the following:

A.   The list of potential beneficiaries could be further expanded, especially taking into account the Polish and Spanish experiences.
B.   There were sufficient grounds for widening the scope of the Romanian OPTA in its relevant Key Actions for both this programming period and for the next one.

A) Beneficiaries

On the first point on beneficiaries, the Polish experience from the KAI concerning support of human resources, suggests to widen the list of eligible beneficiary institutions, as presented in the following non-exhaustive list of the Polish eligible institutions:

✓   National Evaluation Unit (in the Ministry of Regional Development).
✓   Relevant units in the regional units of national public administration.
✓   Managing Authority for the European Territorial Development Objective.
✓   Bodies of government dealing with issues of Nature 2000 sites and environmental impact assessments.
✓   Public Procurement Office.
✓   National Centre for Research and Development.
✓   Office of Competition and Consumer Protection.
✓   Centre for the Development of Education.
✓   Tax offices.
✓   Regional Directorates for Environment.
✓   Target groups (individuals, institutions, social groups directly benefiting from the aid) (if applicable).
✓   Office of Electronic Communication.
✓   Main Statistical Office.
✓   Office of Railway Transport.
✓   Energy Regulatory Office.
✓   National Water Management Authority.
✓   Polish Agency of Information and Foreign Investment.
✓   Head Inspector for Environment Protection.

Looking at the eligible beneficiaries of especially Poland and Bulgaria, the list of eligible beneficiaries can also be expanded, depending on the specificity of the KAI, almost in every Key Areas of Intervention, and especially at those focused at:

✓   Evaluation.
✓   Management Information System.
✓   Publicity and communication.

In the same manner, and as regards beneficiaries, the comparison between the Romanian OPTA and the Spanish one suggests the idea that there is a much wider array of potential beneficiaries for the case of Spain.

Potential beneficiaries for the Spanish case refer to many entities and bodies outside the Ministry of Economy (which is the Managing Authority of the Programme), including quite a few different Ministries and stakeholders from the social, business and the civil society spheres.

From the Bulgarian experience, and during the inception analysis, possibility of increasing the list of potential beneficiaries to the local and regional levels came out as another idea. This was supported by the successful project ideas developed in that Member State regarding the Bulgarian Network of Info Points.

B) Widening the scope of the Operational Programme

The general comparison between the Spanish and the Romanian OPTA regarding the activities and projects developed centred around the Key Areas 'KAI 1.1 - Support to the management and implementation of Structural Instruments' and the Key Area 'KAI 3.1 - Dissemination of general information and publicity activities regarding the Structural Instruments' allocated to Romania.

For the first one, the Key Area 'KAI 1.1 - Support to the management and implementation of Structural Instruments', most of the new activities for the Romanian OPTA that can be found in the Spanish case are related to the four thematic networks that were set up in Spain for OP coordination and for enhancing project generation. These networks are the mechanisms of coordination that serve as:

- An exchange of experiences and the dissemination of best practice funded by Structural Funds in their fields of activity;
- For the presentation and analysis of developments in Community and national policies with repercussions in the management of activities funded by Community funds;
- For the dissemination and analysis of technical problems caused by the application of Community and national legislation in the activities funded by Community funds, including that stemming from systems of management, control and auditing as main goals.

Out of the four existing thematic networks, the Thematic Network on Environment and the Thematic Network on Equal Opportunities should be especially mentioned. Both have proved to work very well and constitute solid drivers of Structural Funds Instruments in Spain, developing a large number of activities with a high level of effectiveness.

With respect to the comparison with the Key Action 'KAI 3.1 Dissemination of general information and publicity activities regarding the Structural Instruments' allocated to Romania, a few activities were identified within the Spanish OP that added to the existing pipeline in Romania. These referred mainly to the elaboration of studies and preparation of innovative actions related to the Structural Funds' Instruments implementation, oriented to the whole territory.

New ideas for activities and beneficiaries also related to KAI1.3 – Horizontal training in the field of the management of programmes/projects and KAI1.2 – Evaluation.

For the latter, on evaluation related activities, the ideas initially identified at the inception phase related mainly to the fact of the setting up of Evaluation Thematic Working Groups covering aspects specific to:

- Communication. This is a fundamental feature in the 2007-2013 programming period whereby Regulation 1828/2006 sets a wide range of rules and procedures that have to be observed. For this purpose, and as we know, Operational Programmes have to develop Communication Plans and these Plans have to be object of specific evaluations. In Spain, a working group was set up in the framework of OPTA to guide, coordinate and monitor the whole process of Ops' communication related evaluations.
- Innovation and the knowledge Economy. This is the key thematic aspect the Lisbon Agenda. tried to promote during the 2007-2013 and, in this way, a special focus on monitoring and evaluation with this perspective was done in Spain. Activities include the setting up of the Evaluation thematic group and also the celebration of seminars and meetings on this fundamental aspect of OPs successful implementation.

And finally, on the Key Action KAI1.3 – Horizontal training in the field of the management of programmes/projects, and in the framework of this initial comparison, it can be noted that Spain introduces a number of training activities related to specific implementation aspects dealing with Art 13 related to the First Level Control, the use of electronic signature or environmental aspects in OPs' implementation that could complement the existing training activities already planned for the Romanian OPTA.

The main general difference between the Romanian OPTA and relevant Operational Programme in Poland is an additional Priority – focused on 'Support to Human Resources'. These actions constitute Priority 1 in the Polish OPTA, the biggest among four priorities. It is split into two Activities:

a. 'Support to employment'.
b. 'Increasing the qualifications'.

These types of activities are, in general, covered by PA 1 in the Romanian OPTA but obviously in dramatically smaller scale. The idea of expanding it by using that Polish example was considered within the current evaluation as very tempting for both, the absorption capacity and increasing the level of civil service, it was dropped based on the following factors:

1. The Romanian circumstances concerning the employment of new civil servants as well increasing the salaries seemed to be impossible for implementation.
2. It would be very difficult to achieve consent of the European Commission for such change of the OPTA.

Within the Polish OPTA Priority 2 Activity 2.1 'IT support in the NSRF implementation' the difference in comparison to Romania was linked to some actions focused on preparation for functioning of various IT systems in the next programming period. However, this focus has been taken into account mainly by expanding scope of undertaken projects beyond 2013, whenever feasible and appropriate.

Within the Polish Priority 3 'Support of the structural funds operations implementation' (which is similar to the Romanian OPTA Priority 1) the general difference concerned projects dedicated to implementation of various forms of international cooperation/initiatives/policies, e.g. European Territorial Cooperation, ESPON, Baltic Strategy, etc. These actions were interpreted as not constituting the major priority for improving the absorption capacity in Romania; therefore they were not developed further.

The second activity in the Polish OPTA concerns 'Evaluation' and as such does not differ in the general scope from the Romanian OPTA. The same general comment concerns the Priority 4 in
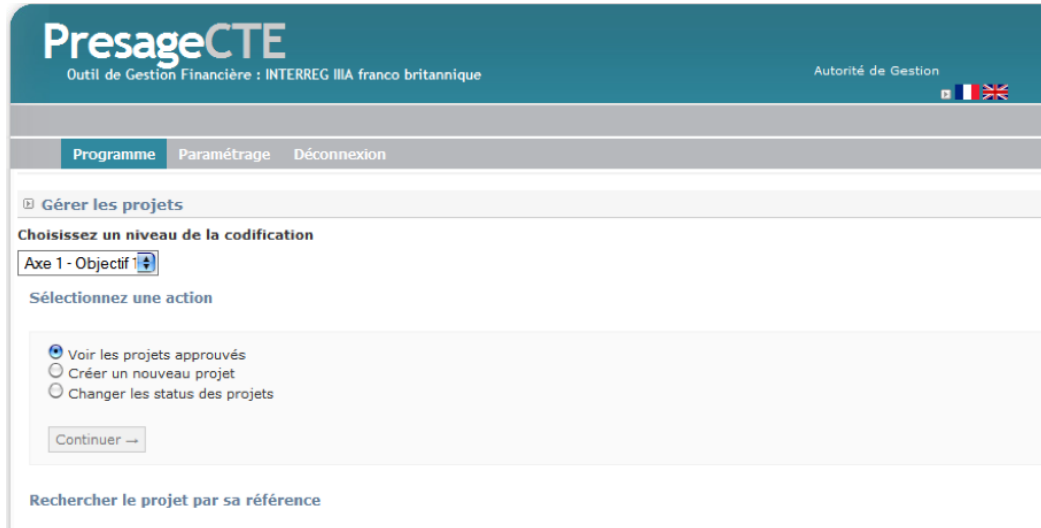
Poland 'Communication and promotion'. However, it is interpreted wider within the scope of the Polish projects implemented under that type of Priority.

Conclusions

- A comparative analysis of projects and operations co-financed by the Technical Assistance Operational Programmes of Spain, Poland and Bulgaria carried out at the inception phase of the evaluation revealed that there were grounds for widening the scope of activity within the framework of the Romanian OPTA.

- Within these grounds for enlargement in the content and number of projects, it was within the scope of Priority Axis1 on the Support for implementation and coordination of structural instruments where more space for development could be identified after carrying out this preliminary analysis.

- There were also reasonable grounds for increasing the number of activities and projects in those actions regarding Communication in the framework of Priority Axis 3: Dissemination of information and promotion of Structural Instruments.

- In contrast to this, the preliminary comparative analysis undertaken in the framework of this evaluation, revealed that limited scope for change could be found for projects that could be supported under the umbrella of Priority Axis 2 on Further Development and support for the functioning of the Single Management Information System

- Finally, the preliminary analysis has also concluded that the Romanian Technical Assistance Operational Programme observed a great margin of coincidence as to the scope, objectives and principal activities and projects to the analysed OPs in the other three Member States.

Below some screens from the PRESAGE system are included.
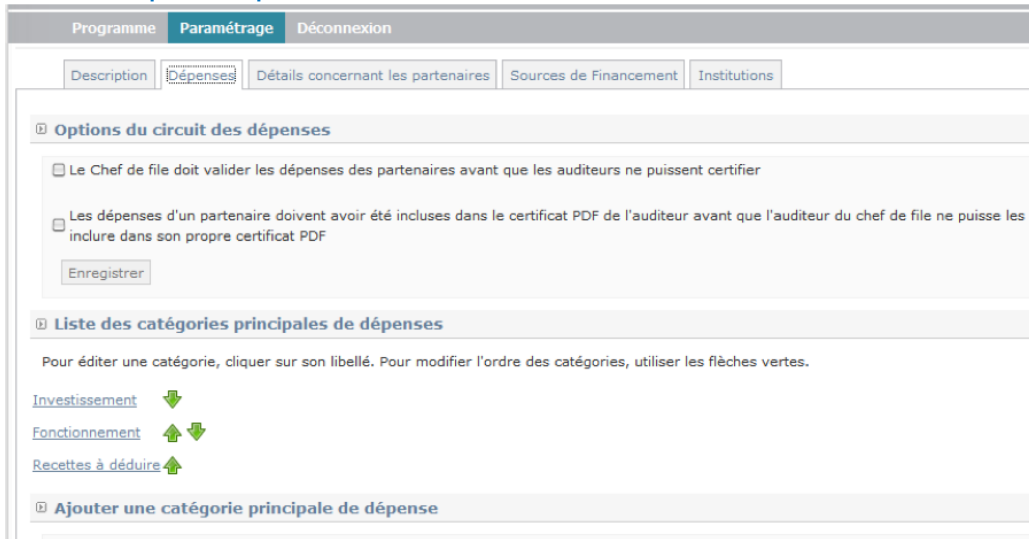
Table 29 Welcome screen

Source: PRESAGE system

Table 30 Programme set up

Source: PRESAGE system

Table 31 Set up of the expenditure and certification scheme

Source: PRESAGE system

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013

ECORYS   LIDEEA

Table 32 Application form (URBACT example)

- o 3.6 Communication activity
- o 3.7 Concrete results
- o 3.8 Outputs and deliverables

- 4. Action plan / Work programme

  - o 4.1 Action plan

- 5. Management of the project

  - o 5.1 Previous experience of lead partner
  - o 5.2 General co-ordination and overall responsibilities
  - o 5.3 Operational management, including administrative and financial aspects
  - o 5.4 Specific role and tasks of each project partner
  - o 5.5 Certifying bodies

- 6. Bank information

  - o 6.1 Informations

- 7. Other information

  - o 7.1 Argumentation

- 8. Detailed information on the lead and project partners

  - o 8.1 List of partners

- 9. Certification
- 10. Project finance

  - o 10.1 Financial contribution by partners and sources
  - o 10.2 Expenditures per year and budget line
  - o 10.3 Expenditures per year and source

Source: PRESAGE system

Table 33 Project description

Source: PRESAGE system

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013

ECORYS

LIDEEA

Table 34 Outputs

⊞ **Récapitulatif des financements par partenaire**

FEDER

| Nom du partenaire | FEDER | FEDER % | Contrepartie assurée par | | | | Total |
			Région	Ville	Administration d'Etat	Total contreparties nationales	
mon chef de file	10 000,00 €	66.67	0,00 €	5 000,00 €	0,00 €	5 000,00 €	15 000,00 €
Partenaire 1	0,00 €	0.00	1 000,00 €	1 000,00 €	0,00 €	2 000,00 €	2 000,00 €
Total	10 000,00 €	58.82	1 000,00 €	6 000,00 €	0,00 €	7 000,00 €	17 000,00 €
% Total	58.82	58.82	14.29	85.71	0.00	41.18	100 %

⊞ **Budget prévisionnel**

| FEDER | | Autres collectivités locales | | Autres Financements | Budget total |
FEDER	Total contreparties nationales	Autres collectivités locales	Total contreparties nationales		
10 000,00 €	7 000,00 €	0,00 €	0,00 €	0,00 €	17 000,00 €

Source: PRESAGE system

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013

ECORYS   LIDEEA

Annex 5 Proposed action plan for implementation of Evaluation recommendations

No.	Conclusion	Recommendation	Ways of Implementation
1.	**Ensure the absorption capacity and simplifcation of procedures for authorisation of payments**		
1.1	Certification and payments are lagging behind	It is recommended to simplify the procedures for authorisation of payments	Recommendation: accepted Responsibles: OPTA MA , MAEur Deadline: End June 2012
1.2	Lack of capacity at beneficiaries level to prepare and implement good projects under OPTA	Increase the capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and deliver projects by training and guidance	Recommendation: accepted Responsibles: OPTA MA, ACIS Directorate Deadline: - ToR for the delivery of training on project procurement, project management, etc. has been launched in March 2012. PA2 and 3 Beneficiaries should be prioritized for the training. - TA and Guidance: beneficiary manual for ACIS is ready. Needs to be finalised and approved. Deadline: November 2012
1.3	The current capacity of SMIS CS and the ICIS is insufficient for preparing and managing the projects in the pipeline	Increase the capacity of the beneficiaries by filling in the vacancies and to in/outsource activities as well as to implement the other recommendations deriving from the workload analysis:	See below
2	**Consider the expansion of list of activities, target groups and beneficiaries under PA1 based on the new project identified**		
2.1	PA1 is the engine of the programme and for this PA new projects have been identified. To be able to finance them some amendments to the Programme are inevitable.	In order to be able to finance the newly projects identified under PA1, some new activities, beneficiaries and target groups should be added to the eligibility criteria. For PA2 and PA3 there is no need for changes in the eligibility criteria:	
		- In the OPTA monitoring committee of 13 June new beneficiaries will be added Land register system, Ministry of Environment	Recommendation: accepted Responsible: OPTA MA and Monitoring Committee Deadline: July 2012
		- Have a discussion on the list of new projects to assess whether these are	Recommendation: accepted

ECORYS   LIDEEA

		feasible and desirable.	Responsible: ACIS Deadline: June
		- Potential beneficiaries proposed and selected will be consulted by ACIS	Recommendation: accepted Responsible: TAD Deadline: September 2012
		Depending on the results of above steps: starting the discussion with the Commission	Recommendation: accepted Responsible: OPTA Deadline: October 2012
3.	*Consider the reallocation options presented*		
3.1	PA2 and PA 3 are far behind contracting level and based on the project pipeline and additional project identified, contracting will only reach half of the commitment. KAI1.1, on the other hand can absorb a substantial higher budget than committed.	It is recommended to consider the different reallocation options based on the outcomes of Lothar+ (Even more scenarios than presented can be tested as Lothar+ is delivered to OPTA MA):	
		- Meeting in the week of 18 June 2012 to test the options	Recommendation: accepted Responsible: OPTA MA Deadline: Week of 18 June 2012
		- Present the options in the MC in autumn. See whether reallocation can take place within PA1	Recommendation: accepted Responsible: OPTA MA Deadline: October 2012
3.2	The proposed scenarios for reallocations within OPTA or to/from other OPs can affect the general and specific objectives of OPTA and the achievement of corresponding indicators.	- Prepare a proposal for reallocation and the consequences for the indicators for approval by the EC	Recommendation: accepted Responsible: OPTA MA Deadline: October 2012
4	*Ensure the follow up on the identified project ideas*		
4.1	Several new project ideas have been identified which could be added to the project pipeline, for which the exact	It is recommended that the project ideas identified will be further discussed between the OPTA Strategy Unit and the potential beneficiaries in order to ensure that those ideas are taken forward. Further guidance from the Strategy	Recommendation: accepted Responsible: OPTA Strategy Unit and beneficiaries

ECORYS

LIDEEA

	scope and beneficiary has to be decided upon.	Unit is needed.	Deadline: ASAP
5.	*Improve the internal mechanisms and procedures for procurement*		
5.1	Projects are delayed in their implementation due to lengthily procurement procedure. This affects the absorption (payments) negatively.	The delays in procurement should be shortened by shortening the internal lengthy procedures and decision making rules	Recommendation: accepted Responsibles: Minister Deadline: Discussion is ongoing on the improvement of the functionalities of the Implementation Unit. Decision: 3rd quarter 2012

	PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS for the workload analysis specifically		
No.	**Conclusion**	**Recommendation**	**Ways of Implementation**
1.	*Capacity improvement through better structures*		
1.1.	Current TAD organizational structure leads to a number of dysfunctions, delays and/or difficulties in managing projects through: - additional flows introduced in the projects implementation process; - potential conflict of interests in managing MA and Beneficiary roles within the same structures; - beneficiary's accountability for projects implementation	**Analysis of impact and decision at strategic level on the following organisational structure changes:**	
		a. Implementation Service organized as a separate unit/directorate, under direct coordination of the General Director of ACIS, including also the financial management responsibilities related to procurement contracts implementation	Recommendation: to be decided Responsibles: ACIS head, head MA and Secretary of State Deadline: 3rd quarter 2012
		b. reorganizing the Financial Management Department remaining under TAD coordination to accommodate the MA needs,	Recommendation: rejected
		c. organize the ICIS as a separate department outside TAD, under direct coordination of the General Director of ACIS	Recommendation: will be decided Responsibles: ACIS head, head MA and Secretary of State Deadline: 3rd quarter 2012
1.2.	According to the Financing Decision, the beneficiaries have full accountability for the implementation of OPTA funded projects . At the same time, the administrative management of the procurement contracts as part of projects implementation is undertaken by the	**Clarification of the legal accountability of the beneficiaries for the financing contracts execution through:**	
		a. designation of Contracting Authority role for public procurement contracts to the beneficiary	Recommendation: will be considered Responsibles: ACIS head, head MA and Secretary of State
		b. delegate implementation responsibilities to the Implementation Service and	

155

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013

ECORYS   LIDEEA

	Implementation Service within TAD and in the absence of a formal document setting responsibilities among the structures involved in the project implementation	the Financial Management Service through implementation agreements to clearly define the division of tasks and responsibilities relating to public procurement and contract management between the beneficiary and the Implementation Service.	Deadline: 3rd quarter 2012
1.3.	The responsibilities and division of tasks between the structures is not always clearly set leading to unclear responsibilities and inefficiencies, but more important to dissipation of the legal accountability for the financing contract execution.	**Accommodate all OPTA beneficiaries' responsibilities, and support work division, between the different structures and efficiency increase through:**	
		a. further modify the Organising and Functioning Regulation (ROF) provisions regarding ACIS structures' roles and responsibilities: - TA will be hired to have a look at the ROF and to review/adjustment the job descriptions	Recommendation: accepted Responsibles: for ROF the General Director, for the job descriptions the directors of the beneficiary departments,
		b. prepare a project proposal for TA in support to PA2 and PA3 beneficiaries for job descriptions review/adjustment and for redesigning jobs in SMIS CS for better matching the structures' roles for a more efficient and clearer allocation of tasks.	For designing the project: the Implementation Unit Deadline: 1st quarter 2013
2.	***Capacity improvement through human resources management***		
2.1.	There is work overload in both beneficiaries as a result of:	**Improve capacity by reducing workload through in sourcing/outsourcing-** addressing staff shortages:	
	- permanent staff shortages in ICIS and SMIS CS through temporary suspension of a position in ICIS and 1 vacant position in SMIS CS - temporary shortages generated by projects implementation needs - less efficient working process in SMIS CS	**a.** filling in suspended position in ICIS and reallocate projects management tasks among the four existing permanent jobs of the unit.	Recommendation: rejected. Not relevant
		b. Outsource the following activities for communication and project management for ICIS: - Project management activities (preparation terms of reference and procurement dossiers, support in the evaluation of tenders, monitoring of procurement contracts implementation, verification of contractors progress reports, monitoring of technical activities and verification of deliverables). - Implementation activities of the communication plan	Recommendation: Accepted Responsibles: General Directorate ACIS Deadline: Procurement documentation ready 3rd quarter 2012
		c. Filling the vacancies within the beneficiaries units	Recommendation: Accepted Responsibles: ACIS Head

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013

156

ECORYS   LIDEEA

			Deadline: July 2012
		d. Outsource the activities for the SMIS Service - Project management activities (preparation terms of reference and procurement dossiers, support in the evaluation of tenders, monitoring of procurement contracts implementation, verification of contractors progress reports, monitoring of technical activities and verification of deliverables). - Helpdesk to SMIS users, application maintenance, training and organisation of events, error correction, maintenance of equipment)	Recommendation: Accepted Responsibles: SCD Deadline: Procurement documentation ready 3rd quarter 2012
		Improve capacity by increasing work efficiency through better working process	
		g. organise 1 hour weekly meetings each two weeks at directorate level and agree on the tasks prioritization and time allocation through classification by importance and urgency	Recommendation: accepted Responsibles: TAD, ICIS, SCD, SMIS CS Deadline: permanent
		h. organise 1 hour weekly operative meetings at unit level and agree on tasks prioritization and time allocation through classification by importance and urgency	Recommendation: accepted Responsibles: ICIS, SMIS CS Deadline: permanent
		i. prepare internal specific procedures and analyse the possibilities for outsourcing of the management of the outside claims and requests (not relating to SMIS)	Recommendation: accepted in corroboration with 3.3 (systems and tools) Responsibles: SMIS CS Deadline: 3rd quarter 2012
		Improve capacity by increasing work efficiency through increased staff capabilities	
		j. analyse options for including staff and management development needs analysis and training & coaching according to needs assessment in current training programmes and/or projects in pipeline	Recommendation: accepted for SMIS (project in pipeline) for ICIS to be considered Responsibles: TAD, ICIS, SCD, SMIS CS Deadline: ASAP
		Improve capacity by reducing staff losses through motivation	
		k. design of a financial incentive system	Recommendation: Rejected
		l. joint analysis (management and staff) and selection of tasks and	Recommendation: accepted in corroboration with

ECORYS   LIDEEA

			1.3.b Responsibles: TAD, ICIS, SCD, SMIS CS Deadline: 3rd quarter 2012
3.		*Capacity improvement through better working systems &tools*	
3.1.	The OPTA MA implementation procedures manual covering the 2007-2013 period is not familiar to ACIS beneficiaries. It also contains a number of inconsistencies and/or gaps regarding roles and responsibilities of different structures involved as well as insufficiently developed document flows.	**Improve OPTA MA Implementation procedures manual**	
		- revise OPTA MA Implementation procedures to correct inconsistencies, develop and complete insufficient/ missing responsibilities and document flows in procurement contracts implementation and adjust the content of the financing decision to comply with the actual rights and liabilities of both parties	Recommendation: Alternative action: solve liability issues between beneficiaries and the implementation unit in the implementation agreement Responsible: OPTA Deadline: ASAP
3.2	In the absence of a beneficiary's manual (who is doing what?) and of working guides (how to do?) the project managers' responsibilities for implementation are undertaken according to instructions received from ID and from the superior in a "learning by doing process". This sometimes leads to delays and/or tensions among staff from ID and beneficiaries on "who is doing what" or "who is accountable".	**Develop OPTA Beneficiary procedures manual**	
		a. prepare a detailed Beneficiary's manual answering the questions "who is doing what, when and how" covering all project cycle stages and correlated with the OPTA MA implementation procedures and its dissemination to all beneficiary structures.	Recommendation: accepted Responsibles: OPTA MA, TAD, SDC Deadline: second semester 2012
		b. disseminate manual and train the beneficiary staff in its use including through concrete examples and exercises in the use of documents and formats	
3.3.	For SMIS CS there is a lack of procedures to manage outside claims and requests which currently are creating an important amount of interruptions and stress; e.g.: helpdesk, equipment setting up for new users, equipment and/or software functioning claims, equipment users' responsibilities, requests for equipment supplies, ACIS equipment inventory	**Develop SMIS CS Internal procedures manual**	
		- prepare internal procedures manual to manage outside claims and requests not related to SMIS	Recommendation: accepted Responsibles: SDC, SMIS CS Deadline: second semester 2012

Annexes related to Sources

In the annexes the following documents can be found:

1. Methodology for Workload analysis and process re-engineering
2. Design and use of the tool "workflows and functions"
3. Workload questionnaires among PA2 and PA3 staff
4. Joint interviews with staff of the two ACIS structures beneficiaries

Annex 6: Methodology for Workload analysis and process re-engineering

The ToR suggested process reengineering and workload analysis as methodologies in analyzing the beneficiaries' capacity to plan and manage projects funded by PA2 and PA3. Our focus in applying these methods was to answer the evaluation question.

With this view two analyses were undertaken as presented in the Inception Report:

- o A workload analysis focused on the PA2 and PA3 beneficiaries' staff capacity (12 positions, of which 2 suspended) to perform the tasks and undertake the responsibilities given to them through the job description of the positions occupied in the institutional structure of ACIS, relevant for the implementation of OPTA.

- o Process re-engineering: an analysis of the work flows and functions to identify potential needs for process reengineering related to the role of ACIS relevant structures (Communication Compartment within TAD and SCD) as beneficiaries for OPTA PA2 and PA3.

1. *Workload analysis*

Workload Analysis is a methodology to determine the time, effort and resources necessary to carry out the unit's operations, resulting in identifying the organization's actual needs of human resources both in terms of quality and quantity, and develop these resources to achieve the goals and strategies that the organization wants to achieve in the various work sites.

Several models have been designed in time by various institutions to undertake the workload analysis according to their specific needs, such as:

- ➤ To calculate the workload of a position / sub position, and also needs the number of people to fill the position / sub position.
- ➤ Analyze workload by task, current location of specialists, and where staff is needed to address emerging issues.
- ➤ Analyzing current tasks and discuss potential ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- ➤ Enable discussion and review of priorities associated with work products.
- ➤ Provide suggestions how to reduce excessive or uneven workload.

Irrespective of the specific needs for which the workload analyses have been designed, the main starting point has been represented by the requirements of the job in terms of the amount and quality of the work.

In our approach we focused on the specific ToR requirements and on the needs identified during the inception interviews, with the view to answering Q2 *"to what extent and how the reduced capacity of the beneficiary affects planning and management of the projects funded by PA2 and PA3" and to identify which are the tasks/responsibilities of the beneficiary that can be outsourced.*

We therefore undertook a workload analysis for the PA2 and PA3 staff in the Communication Compartment in TAD and the SMIS Central Unit in the System Coordination Directorate with the view to identify potential work overloads which could contribute to the this reduced capacity and make recommendations to address them. During this analysis the emphasis was placed on the findings of the inception phase which pointed to the need to focus on tasks prioritization and outsourcing for PA2 beneficiary staff while for PA3 the needs seemed to be for more for extra staff and increase of skills/capability.

For a common understanding of the scope and extent of such an endeavour within the existing time and resources of this project it important to emphasize that the meaning of the word "task". In the context of this project task is defined as "A responsibility to be performed".

2. *Process re-engineering*

Process re-engineering is the analysis and design of workflows and processes within an organization. According to Davenport (1990) a business process is a set of logically related tasks performed to achieve a defined business outcome.

Our project team undertook an analysis of the as-is situation for the two beneficiaries, starting from the existing work flows for the PA2 and PA3 projects preparation and implementation and the relevant responsibilities and attributions provided by ROF and OPTA Implementation procedures. The information extracted from the desk research of these regulatory documents was then completed by the job descriptions content and data collected from the staff occupying the relevant positions in the beneficiaries' structures during joint interviews.

3. *Integrated approach*

It is important to point out that the two analyses were not made in isolation but in close correlation with each other. Although generally there is a difference between them in terms of objectives and expected results, in our case they were linked and fed into each other, used similar tools and sources of information and targeted the same staff. An integrated approach was used all the way and the two analyses were undertaken in parallel using joint desk research, common questionnaires and joint interviews as well as a common analysis of the findings and final recommendations, as presented bellow.

The integrated approach was used for all the activities undertaken during all the stages of the analysis. This enabled us to look at the same time at both the responsibilities and attributions for the ACIS relevant structures as PA2 and PA3 POAT beneficiaries and at the current workload of the existing staff, analyze the correlations between them and identify potential gaps, dysfunctions, tasks overlaps and/or work overloads. Therefore the stages of the two analyses overlapped and the tools and information collected were combined in a synergic way.

In doing this we used the absorption capacity model as presented in the Inception Report and, during the inception phase, we developed a joint questionnaire as a tool to collect and process the necessary data structured according to this model.

4. *Absorption capacity model*

For identifying the workload and processes we made use of the absorption capacity model. This model has been developed by Ecorys for the European Commission (DG REGIO) which has been used during the accession process of the new Member States and gives a good overview of the elements that are influencing the absorption capacity.

The absorption of Structural Funds depends on three factors: sufficient domestic co-financing, sufficient administrative capacity and sufficient delivery (projects). The administrative capacity can be broken down in three parts as well. Firstly the right structures should be in place (managing authority, certifying authority, etc), secondly sufficient and sufficiently skilled staff should be in place and thirdly the right systems and tools should be there to enable a good implementation of the funds.

Figure 43 Overview of the elements influencing the absorption capacity
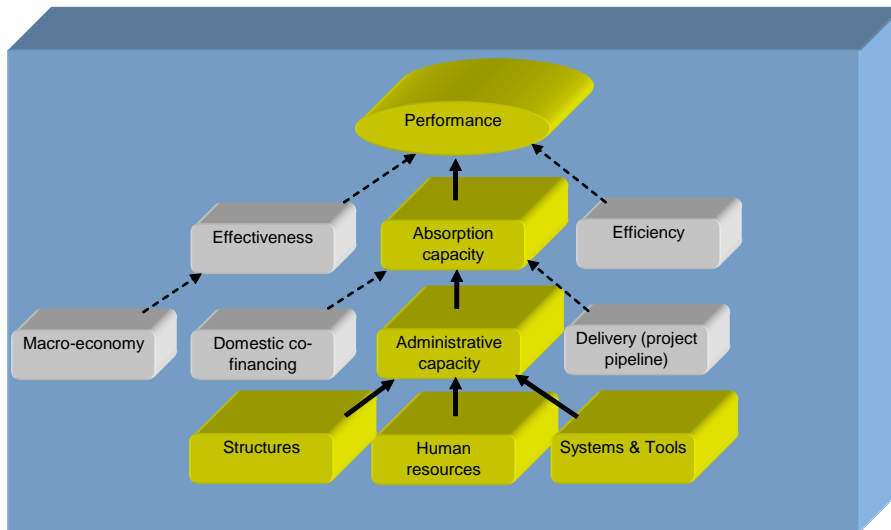
Source: Ecorys, based on the criteria used in the study "Key indicators for candidate countries to effectively manage the Structural Funds (NEI, 2002), p. 3 and 4

Measuring the administrative capacity starts with a distinction between structure, human resources, systems and tools. *Structure* relates to the clear assignment of responsibilities and tasks to institutions, or better at the level of units or units within these institutions.

Human resources relate to the ability to detail tasks and responsibilities at the level of job descriptions, to estimate the number and qualifications of staff, and to fulfil the recruitment needs. Securing the timely availability of experienced, skilled and motivated staff is a key success factor in the management and implementation of the Structural Funds.

Systems and tools relate to the availability of instruments, methods, guidelines, manuals, systems, procedures, forms, etcetera. In brief, these are all job-aids that can enhance the effectiveness of the functioning of the system. Systems and tools enable organisations to transform tacit and implicit knowledge (within the heads of individual people) into explicit knowledge that can be shared across organisations. Systems and tools therefore make organisations less vulnerable (e.g. when key staff is leaving), reduce the risk of malfunctioning and enhance overall effectiveness. Effective management of the Structural Funds requires that the above dimensions be taken into account: structure, human resources, systems and tools. Together these provide complementary elements of the management capability grid.

5.   *Stages and tools*

5.1 Initial desk research

An initial analysis of all the OPTA related documents took place during the inception period, with the view to have a better understanding of the requirements of the task and to develop the most suitable methodology. The information collected during this stage allowed us to better understand the context of the task and to identify the priorities and focuses of the approach as well as to prepare the appropriate tools, such as the questionnaires to be used for the data collection and processing. At the same time the relevant regulatory documents for the task were identified and collected.

The data categories to be collected and processed were defined in direct relation to the objective of our analysis: the answer to the question *to what extent and how the reduced capacity of the beneficiary affects planning and management of the projects funded by PA2 and PA3* of OPTA.

Therefore the relevant information was searched in the following directions:

- actions needed along the project cycle stages for planning and management of projects,
- existing capacity in the PA2/PA3 beneficiaries to undertake the necessary actions,
- identification of gaps/inconsistencies/overlaps to be addressed for capacity increase.

The necessary information for the integrated analysis was gathered through three main channels:

➢ a comprehensive desk research, which allowed the identification of the work flows and functions as established through the regulatory documents,
➢ workload questionnaires filled in by the PA2/PA3 beneficiaries' staff,
➢ 2 joint interviews with the staff of the two ACIS structures beneficiaries.

For the data collection and processing, tools were developed whose design allowed for the relevant data to be collected in a structured way to enable processing and extracting of conclusions.

The comprehensive desk research

This part of the research targeted the workflows and functions as set through the regulatory documents in relation to the responsibilities of OPTA beneficiaries for planning, preparation and implementation OPTA funded projects:

- Operational Programme for Technical Assistance,
- Functioning Regulations (ROF) of Ministry of the European Affairs,
- OPTA implementation procedures issued by TAD as OPTA MA
- Job descriptions of the positions in SMIS Coordination Service of SCD and Communication Unit of TAD, having OPTA beneficiary responsibilities allocated.

With the view to structure this analysis according to its purpose, a tool was designed („Workflows and functions", attached in Annex 7A), which enabled extracting those tasks and responsibilities related to the workflow of activities and at the same time, making the necessary correlations and comparisons between the responsibilities set in the various documents along the project cycle stages, for the identification of gaps, dysfunctions and /or overlaps. The structure of the document, prepared during the desk research also allowed later input of information collected from questionnaires and interviews with the view to give a complete picture and enable a comprehensive analysis.

The document contains two work sheets, one for each PA2/PA3 ACIS structure beneficiary. Both sheets have the same structure while the contents show differences as they were identified during the analysis, mainly due to different responsibilities in certain stages of the cycle generated by the provisions of the implementation procedures and contents of the job descriptions.

The structure of the document contains three main parts:

▪ project cycle stages and activities,

- list of responsibilities for projects preparation and implementation established by POAT and the regulatory internal documents (ROF and POAT implementation procedures), structured according to project cycle stages and its relevant activities,
- who does it according to :
  - ROF and POAT implementation procedures,
  - job descriptions
  - staff - questionnaires and job interviews

The information collected during the desk research stage was loaded into the document which was circulated to staff before the joint interviews with the aim to give them the context, help them better understand the relevance of the interviews and take ownership of the process.

The workload questionnaire

The first draft of the questionnaire was prepared during the inception phase and then was revised and finalized during the comprehensive desk research which followed. The questionnaire format is presented in Annex 7B.

Its structure was designed to include the tasks provided in the job descriptions aligned to the ROF responsibilities and contained two main parts:

➢ Part 1 "Time" – collecting data to allow estimation of the workload through asking for a time indication
➢ Part 2 "Capabilities and motivation"- asking questions on what problems staff perceived within their administrative capacity, related to prioritization, capability and motivation.

The integrated approach used in developing the questionnaire, present in both parts, allowed for a combined collection of data for both the workload analysis and the analysis of workflows and functions.

The first part of the questionnaire covered 3 main sections:

➢ tasks[47] and responsibilities by 3 categories:
  - tasks for PA2/PA3 projects preparation and implementation by ACIS structures, as POAT beneficiaries, according to ROF and OPTA implementation procedures
  - tasks allocated through job descriptions related to PA2/PA3 beneficiary role on the one hand, and to other ACIS responsibilities on the other hand.
  - tasks performed for PA2/PA3 beneficiary role and for other ACIS tasks
➢ time needed to perform the task
➢ factors influencing the workload

Due to the fact that the staff in the two analyzed structures is allocated both POAT beneficiary related tasks and other ACIS related tasks and with the view to identify the amount of time dedicated to PA2 and PA3 beneficiary role, the two categories of tasks were separated.

The identification of OPTA beneficiary responsibilities established through the regulatory documents versus the tasks actually performed, allowed the identification of potential lack of correlations, gaps and/or overlaps in the work flows in the projects preparation and implementation generating delays and/or blockages and therefore reduced work efficiency.

---

[47] For a common understanding of the scope and extent of the analysis within the existing time and resources of this project, the Inception Report defined the meaning of the word "task" as "A responsibility to be performed".

The estimation of time needed for the tasks performance allowed identification of potential work overload for the staff undertaking both OPTA beneficiary responsibilities and other ACIS related tasks.

However it is important to point out that this estimation contains elements of subjectivity in the absence of any detailed time records which could help very clear quantification. Therefore it would be difficult to make a correct estimation for both total number of hours worked in a month for a particular period and also for the time used for performing impermanent tasks such as those corresponding to some stages of the project cycle , e.g. preparation of project proposals and financing applications or evaluation.

Therefore the time estimation by responders represent monthly average estimates for both total working time and tasks structures, and were made taking into account the following limitations:

➢ retroactive estimation based on staff memories in the absence of working time records. A correct estimation could have been made on the basis of time records made by the staff for all the activities undertaken during a certain period of time, which has been out of this project lifetime,

➢ OPTA related tasks and other ACIS tasks allocated to staff, in various percentages both between staff and between beneficiaries.

➢ variation of workloads along time according to project cycle and length and/or periodicity of certain tasks, overlaps between OPTA tasks and other ACIS tasks, pick periods generated by deadlines for both tasks categories, all leading to uneven workloads and percentages of time dedicated to OPTA beneficiary role.

The identification of these factors influencing the workloads and the estimation of their influence on the working time offered important information regarding potential work inefficiencies due to factors such as: lack of work planning and prioritization, overlaps and interruptions, insufficient skills and knowledge at staff and/or management level, as well as to external factors.

The second part of the questionnaire was divided in 2 main sections:

➢ Prioritization, which targeted work process elements for projects planning and management, analyzed through the 3 main factors determining the absorption capacity model: structures, human resources, systems and tools.

➢ Human factors influencing staff workload: capability (skills and knowledge) and motivation (work satisfaction)

The Prioritization section brought elements defining the work process and its management, the decisions made on the tasks and responsibilities allocated to staff, their distribution and prioritization, quantity and quality of staff and necessary working tools (procedures and manuals).

These elements helped identifying the process dysfunctions and their main causes through:

○ verifying/confirmation of the findings from the desk research,
○ staff perceptions on the these causes,
○ new findings following to verification of the workflows and use of regulations and procedures in the daily activity,

The Capability and motivation section looked at the human factors influencing the workload, with the view to identifying the ways of increasing the absorption capacity through improvements of staff quality and work satisfaction. Therefore this part of the questionnaire collected staff opinions in two directions:

- staff development needs in the areas related to fulfilling OPTA beneficiary role (projects preparation and implementation) as an important means to raise work quality and efficiency,
➢ identification of the way staff motivation is affecting the absorption capacity and the staff perception on three motivation factors: financial, working environment and commitment.

All the columns in the questionnaire included detailed indications regarding its completion.

All the questionnaires were filled in with the ROF tasks relevant for the POAT beneficiary role, tailored according to each responder profile (name and job descriptions tasks) and sent to 8 staff in SMIS CS and ICIS having POAT beneficiary responsibilities. Each questionnaire was accompanied by an explanatory letter presenting the context and the content so that relevance was better understood.

Support was given to staff on a daily basis by phone and emails, answering questions and giving additional information and clarifications.

Joint interviews

After processing the data collected through questionnaires, two joint interviews were organised on March 14th. with the staff of the two units. The meetings were organised as open discussions with the main goal to share the results of the findings from the desk research and questionnaires and obtain further clarifications if and when needed

Two lists of questions were prepared and circulated to staff and management before the meetings along with the agenda (Annex 7C) and the „Work flows and functions" document, containing relevant information and findings from the desk research (section 2.1. above) and from the questionnaires. The lists of questions, adapted to each beneficiary unit, included questions asking for clarifications and/or additional information in relation to the provisions of the analyzed regulatory documents and the data filled in the questionnaires. For each question, the issue (lack of clarity or inconsistency) was presented so that the relevance of the questions was properly understood. With the same purpose at the beginning of each interview the participants were presented the context of the discussions: the project, the objectives and the stages of the analysis.

In addition to the topics in the list of questions, the director of TAD who took part in the first part of ICIS interview, was asked three additional questions related to ICIS and ID as part of TAD structure:

➢ what was the reason for ICIS transfer to TAD?
➢ how has ID become part of TAD?
➢ how is TAD managed to avoid potential conflict of interest between OPTA MA and ID (beneficiary responsibilities).

5.3 Analysis of findings and formulation of recommendations.

The analysis of findings and the formulation of recommendations were performed in a structured way according to the three capacity building elements presented in the absorption capacity model (structures, human resources, systems and tools) with the view to support the

client in directing the efforts and the necessary resources for implementing the recommended actions.

Priority Axis 2

PROJECT CYCLE	Task/Responsibility as beneficiary			Who does it?			Comments
Project stage	Project cycle activities	POAT	ROF and TAD procedures	According to ROF and TAD procedures	According to PA2 staff Job descriptions	According to questionnaires and interviews	
IDENTIFICATION AND FORMULATION	Project preparation		Project preparation	SMIS Unit	N/A	Preparation of project proposal	According to ROF, the System Coordination Directorate undertakes the OPTA Beneficiary responsibilities according to the attributions of the Directorate and to the implementation internal regulations, while SMIS Coordination Service has only technical responsibilities without any reference to PA2 Beneficiary role.
	Preparation and submission of financing application		Preparation and submission of financing application	Project Responsible (PR) in the Implementation Dept. TAD - Bureaux of projects preparation and public procurement (BoPPPP) in cooperation with SMIS Unit	N/A	Preparation and submission of financing application	TAD procedures: Part I.I: Organisation Structures and attributions: BoPPP within TAD prepares the financing application **for ICIS** Section E.1 :PR, within ID, prepares the financing applications, payment requests and progress reports **for ACIS structures**
APPRAISAL AND FINANCING	Evaluation and selection		Evaluation and selection of financing application	Strategies dept. TAD	N/A	N/A	
	Financing contracts		Preparation of contracts/ Financing decisions	Strategies dept. TAD to IS of TAD	N/A	N/A	
PROJECT IMPLEMEN-TATION AND MONITORING	Project management	The **Beneficiaries (B) play the leading role in the management and implementation** of the interventions approved within OPTA.	The **Beneficiary must ensure the implementation** of the Project acc.to the approved Financing Application - art.6 paragraph a) item 1)of the Financing Decision				The Beneficiary accepts the grant **and commits to implement the Project at his own responsibility,** acc.to the provisions of the Financing Decision and the European and national legislation in force - Financing Decision art 1, paragraph. 4)
		The implementation and financing mechanism of each OPTA project is regulated in a financing contract signed with the Ministry of European Affairs or **in a financing decision signed by the ministry of European affairs** for the projects where the beneficiary is ACIS.	The Beneficiary will be the **sole responsible** in front of the POAT MA for the Project implementation -- art.6 paragraph a) item 1)of the Financing Decision				Acc. to procedures, **there should be a Project Responsible** of the Beneficiary- no provisions in ROF and no clear procedures on the tasks and responsibilities of such a beneficiary PR
		They will be responsible, also, for the organisation of tenders and contracting of services and goods - FDI, chapter IV Implementation Issues.	**Administrative management** of the procurement contracts:				According to ROF and TAD procedures, the Implementation Service within TAD is responsible for the administrative management of the procurement contracts, monitoring the execution of the procurement contracts, analysing the contractors' periodical reports and confirming the reality of services provided by contractors. The beneficiary prepares the tender documentation, signs the
			Procurement procedures implementation, evaluation of tenders up to evaluation reports approvals	Implementation Dept. TAD - Bureaux of projects preparation and public procurement	PM in SMIS Unit takes part in the evaluations	Participates in evaluations	
			Tender dossier. Technical specifications, estimated value, terms of reference, invitation	SMIS Unit to Implementation Dept.TAD	PM in SMIS Unit	Prepares the tender tender dossiers	

ECORYS

LIDEEA

		to tender, contract format, etc.				procurement contracts verifies/confirms the progress reports and monitors technical implementation.
		Supervising contracts executions by contractors, verifying reports, confirming the invoiced services	**PM** within Implementation Dept. **SMIS Unit** for verification/ confirmation of progress reports	**PM in SMIS**	Verification of contractors 'progress reports attached to payment claims	1 job description has attribution (Carmen Ilioiu)
		Payments to contractors	**Financial Dept.** TAD	N/A	N/A	
		Pre-financing request plus copies of procurement contract and treasury account proof	Project Manager (PM) within ID	N/A	N/A	Procurement procedures and contract undertaken by Implementation Dept. TAD
		Progress reports	Project Manager (PM) within ID	N/A	Preparation of project progress reports	The beneficiary is obliged to prepare the progress reports and the payment claims request and to submit to POAT AM the supporting documents - Financing Decision art 6 a) 15)
		Payment claims preparation and submission	Project Manager (PM) within ID	N/A	Preparation of reimbursement requests based on the supporting documents attached to contractors' payment claims	
		Projects accounts	**Financial Dept.** TAD	N/A	N/A	The beneficiary must keep records of accounts using separate project analytical accounts art.6 a)14) Financing Decision
Technical Implementation:	**Eligible activities for PA2:**	**Technical responsibilities specified in ROF related to POAT eligible activities for PA2**			Monitors technical implementation of procurement contracts and takes part in technical tasks	
KAI 2.1.	Elaboration of studies and analyses regarding the functioning of SMIS and its digital network in order to identify the needs for future development of the system (SMIS-NSRF and its complementary applications)	N/A			N/A	
	Elaboration, testing and installation of new versions of SMIS (SMIS-NSRF and its complementary applications), including transfer of data from one version to another	N/A			N/A	
	Elaboration and distribution of procedural guides	Elaborates SMIS-NSRF management and using procedures			X	Covered by job descriptions
	Performance of maintenance activities for SMIS (SMIS-NSRF and its complementary applications) and its digital network	Plans, develops, monitors, administrates and maintains SMIS, at the level of hardware, operating and data base/application server and corresponding communication infrastructure			X	Covered by job descriptions
		Plans, develops, monitors, administrates and maintains SMIS - subsystem dedicated to structural instruments (SMIS-NSRF), complementary applications, including interface with other information systems			X	Covered by job descriptions
		Monitors access, availability and security of all SMIS equipment and services			X	Covered by job descriptions
		Elaborates, maintains and monitors implementation of security, access and continuity procedures of the services for the			X	Covered by job descriptions

ECORYS

LIDEEA

		information system			X		
		Ensures the system management through administering of the access rights from SMIS-NSRF			X		Covered by job descriptions
KAI 2.2	Employment of contractual staff for SMIS Central Unit and coordination network	N/A			N/A		Legislative blockage
	Carrying out the activities of SMIS Central Unit (running costs, administrative costs related to the organisation of meetings, supplies, IT specialised training for the SMIS Central Unit staff, travels of the SMIS Central Unit staff etc.);	N/A			X		IT Specialised training
	Expertise and advice to support the SMIS Central Unit.	N/A			N/A		
KAI 2.3.	Organisation of SMIS training events, including elaboration and distribution of training materials	Organises training for staff of SI management structures in charge with SMIS-NSRF use			X		Covered by job descriptions
	Training of SMIS trainers	N/A			N/A		
	Elaboration and distribution of user guides;	N/A			X		
	Elaboration of questions/ answers guide on the functional aspects of SMIS	Performs help-desk function for SMIS-NSRF users			X		Helpdesk- 2 job descriptions
	Organisation of regular meetings and presentation seminars	Coordinates the activity of the SMIS -NSRF working group and organizes its working meetings			X		2 job descriptions: Raluca Stoian coordinates the working group Cristina Ciocoiu participates
KAI 2.4.	Assessment of the IT&C needs				N/A		
	Endowment with hardware, software used by the institutions involved in the Structural Instruments system and IT&C services for SMIS operation				N/A		
EVALUATION							

ECORYS

LIDEEA

PROJECT CYCLE	Task/Responsibility as beneficiary			Who does it?			Comments
Project stage	Project cycle activities	POAT	ROF and TAD procedures	According to ROF and TAD procedures	According to PA3 staff Job descriptions	According to questionnaires and interviews	
IDENTIFICATION AND FORMULATION	Project preparation		Project preparation	**Implementation Dept.** TAD (Bureaux of projects preparation and public procurement) to Strategy. Dept (MA POAT?) **ICIS** to Strategy. Dept (MA POAT?)	N/A	Preparation of project proposal	ICIS responsibilities as OPTA Beneficiary acc. to ROF : preparation of project proposals and technical implementation of procurement contracts
	Preparation and submission of financing application		Preparation and submission of financing application	**Project Responsible (PR) in the Implementation Dept.** TAD - Bureaux of projects preparation and public procurement (BoPPPP) in cooperation with ICIS	N/A	Preparation and submission of financing application	TAD procedures: Part I.I: Organisation Structures and attributions: BoPPP within ID prepares the financing application for ICIS Section E.1 :PR, within ID, prepares the financing applications, payment requests and progress reports for ACIS structures
APPRAISAL AND FINANCING	Evaluation and selection		Evaluation and selection of financing application	**Strategies dept. TAD**	N/A	N/A	
	Financing contracts		Preparation of contracts/Financing decisions	**Strategies dept. TAD to ID of TAD**	N/A	N/A	
PROJECT IMPLEMENTA-TION	Project management	The **Beneficiaries (B) play the leading role in the management and implementation** of the interventions approved within OPTA.	The **Beneficiary must ensure the implementation** of the Project acc.to the approved Financing Application - art.6 paragraph a) item 1)of the Financing Decision				The Beneficiary accepts the grant **and commits to implement the Project at his own responsibility,** acc.to the provisions of the Financing Decision and the European and national legislation in force - Financing Decision art 1, paragraph. 4) Acc. to procedures, **there should be a Project Responsible of the Beneficiar**y- no provisions in ROF and no clear procedures on the tasks and responsibilities of such a beneficiary PR
		The implementation and financing mechanism of each OPTA project is regulated in a financing contract signed with the Ministry of European Affairs or **in a financing decision signed by the ministry of European affairs** for the projects where the beneficiary is ACIS.	The Beneficiary will be the **sole responsible** in front of the POAT MA for the Project implementation -- art.6 paragraph a) item 1)of the Financing Decision				
		They will be responsible, also, for the organisation of tenders and contracting of services and goods - FDI, chapter IV Implementation Issues.	**Administrative and technical management** of the procurement contracts:				According to ROF and TAD procedures the Implementation Service is responsible for the administrative management of the procurement contracts, monitors the execution of the procurement contracts, analyses the contractors' periodical reports and confirms the real delivery of the services
			Procurement procedures implementation, evaluation of tenders up to evaluation reports approvals	**Implementation Dept. TAD -** Bureaux of projects preparation and public procurement	**PM in ICIS** takes part in evaluations	Participates in evaluations	1 job description has attributions (Coralia Alina Zadorojnai) The beneficiary/superior will sign the contracts

ECORYS

LIDEEA

		Tender dossier. Technical specifications, estimated value, terms of reference, invitation to tender, contract format, etc.	Implementation Dept TAD - BoPPPP	**PM in ICIS**	Prepares the tender dossiers	2 job descriptions contain attributions
		Supervising contracts executions by contractors, <u>verifying reports</u>, confirming the invoiced services	**Implementation Dept. TAD - ICIS** for verification/confirmation of progress reports	**PM in ICIS**	Verification of contractors 'progress reports attached to payment claims	2 job descriptions contain attributions
		Payments to contractors	**Financial Dept.** TAD	N/A	N/A	
		Pre-financing request plus <u>copies of procurement contract</u> and treasury account proof	**Implementation Dept. TAD** to Financial Mang.Dept. TAD ????	N/A	N/A	Procurement procedures and contract undertaken by Implementation Dept. TAD
		Progress reports	**Implementation Dept. TAD** to Financial Mang.Dept. TAD ?	N/A	Preparation of project progress reports	<u>TAD procedures Section E.1</u> : PR, within ID, prepares the financing applications, payment requests and progress reports for ACIS structures
		Payment claims preparation and submission	**Implementation Dept. TAD** to Financial Mang.Dept. TAD	N/A	Preparation of reimbursement requests based on the supporting documents attached to contractors' payment claims	<u>Financing Decision art 6 a) 15)</u>: The beneficiary is obliged to prepare the progress reports and the payment claims request and to submit to POAT AM the supporting documents
		Projects accounts	**Financial Dept.** TAD	N/A	N/A	<u>Financing Decision art.6 a)14)</u>: The beneficiary must keep records of accounts using separate project analytical accounts
Technical Implementation	**Eligible activities for PA3**	**Technical responsibilities specified in ROF related to POAT eligible activities for PA3**			Monitors technical implementation of procurement contracts and takes part in technical tasks	The list of tasks/ responsibilities in the procedures and ROF, refer to the eligible operations in KAI 3.2 and to only one in KAI 3.1
KAI 3.1	Organization of campaigns and events (seminars, conferences) to be undertaken in order to promote a greater understanding of the EU funds and the implementation and monitoring arrangements in Romania;			N/A		1 job descriptions: participates in
	Preparation, publication, translation and distribution of materials (publications, brochures, folders, CDs and other possible formats) with information and promotion of the Structural Instruments;			N/A		Participation in the preparation of materials from the informational content point of view - 1 job description
	Publicity actions and publication and dissemination of materials connected to OPTA;					Covered by job descriptions
	Carrying out opinion polls;			N/A		
	Supporting national information campaigns on TV, radio or other media;			N/A		
	Organisation of information sessions for different categories of public (journalists, promoters etc.) in order to increase the understanding of Structural Instruments and to promote these funds;	Coordinates the organization of conferences, seminars, workshops, information events/ communication/ promotion on structural instruments initiated by the ministry	ICIS	X		Covered by job descriptions
	Analysis of impact and identification and			N/A		

ECORYS ▲

LIDEEA

		analysis of the most effective means for the promotion and publicity activities.					
	KAI 3.2	Remuneration of staff operating the Information Centre;			N/A		
		Purchasing books and materials for the Information Centre;			N/A		
		Communication about the Centre and its services;			N/A		
		Construction and maintenance of the web page;	Construction, administering and permanent updating of the www.fonduri-ue.ro web page	ICIS	X		1 job description Ioana Felicia Pâslaru: coordinates and supervises
		Functioning of the Information Centre, including the phone centre;	Functioning of the Information Centre and Call-Centre for the structural instruments	ICIS	X		1 job description Ioana Felicia Pâslaru: coordinates and supervises
		Functioning and remuneration of staff for the information points;			X		
		Organisation of events connected to the activity of the Information Centre.			X		
EVALUATION							

Colours:
- pink tasks allocated to beneficiary through ROF and TAD procedures for projects preparation and implementation
- blue tasks allocated to the Implementation Service through ROF and TAD procedures for projects preparation and implementation
- yellow: beneficiaries obligations as stated by the regulatory documents and eligible activities in OPTA not covered by the ROF, TAD procedures and job descriptions

ECORYS

LIDEEA

Annex 7B Workload questionnaires among PA2 and PA3 staff
Questions related to time

Staff			Tasks for PA2/PA3 projects preparation and implementation by ACIS structures, as POAT beneficiaries, according to ROF and Internal procedures (Please check the tasks filled in the column bellow)		Tasks allocated through job description (Please list here the tasks in the job description related to PA2 beneficiary role) In case the job description does not specify such tasks fill in N/A	Tasks performed (Please list here the tasks you perform for the PA2/PA3 beneficiary role). In case you do not perform a certain task provided in column 6, fill in N/A or "Subcontracted", by case You can add lines for additional tasks performed and not listed	Time needed - hours per month- (Please estimate how many hours you need for each of these tasks per month)	Tasks allocated according to job description (Please list here other ACIS tasks specified in the job description)	Tasks performed - hours per month - (Please list here other ACIS tasks you perform) In case you do not perform a certain task provided in column 9, fill in N/A or "Subcontracted", by case You can add lines for additional tasks performed and not listed	Time needed - hours per month- (Please estimate how many hours you need for each of these tasks per month)	Factors influencing the workload Please fill in the number corresponding to the estimated percentage of the working time influenced by these factors, as presented bellow : 1. 0-10%; 2.10-25%; 3. 25-50%; 4.more than 50% Fill in only for the factors which apply						Comments
Name of staff	Position in the organisation	Role in the PA2/PA3 projects (project member/ responsible for...). List the projects you are involved in and your role them	You can add the necessary number of lines to complete the list if incomplete	Tick in the box "X"if OK. If you are not familiar with them please write "Don't know")							Other priorities (urgent tasks due to deadlines)	Overlapping of tasks	Interruptions by colleagues/ superiors/ others	Insufficient knowledge for the tasks	Too much time spent in meetings	Other factors	
			PA2 project related tasks, including participation in meetings/training/events					Other ACIS related tasks, including participation in meetings/training/events									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

ECORYS   LIDEEA

Questions related to capability and motivation (part 1)

			PRIORITISATION												
			Who is deciding on which activities should be undertaken?			**Do you have difficulties with planning PA2/PA3 projects?**	**What difficulties are you having with planning PA2/PA3 projects?**								
Staff			Fill in the number of the factor which applies : 1. 0-10%; 2.10-25%; 3. 25-50%; 4.more than 50%				**Structures** (fill in "1" in the boxes which apply)			**Human resources** (fill in "1" in the boxes which apply)			**Systems and tools** (fill in the number corresponding to the answer which apply)		
													Procedures (who does, what and when)	Manuals/working guides (how it is done)	MIS improper functioning
Name of staff	Position in the organisation	Role in the PA2/PA3 projects	Yourself	Your superior	External	Yes/No	Unclear task division	Unclear responsibilities	Lack of prioritization	Insufficient staff	Insufficiently qualified staff	Insufficient vision	1. No procedures 2.Too many 3. Too complicated 4. I do not follow procedures	1. No manuals 2. Unclear or too complicated 3. I do not need manuals	Explain if it is the case
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013

ECORYS   LIDEEA

PRIORITISATION (continued)

Do you have difficulties with planning PA2 /PA3 projects?	What difficulties are you having with managing projects?									What could be done differently/improved?								
	Structures (fill in "1" in the boxes which apply)			**Human resources** (fill in "1" in the boxes which apply)			**Systems and tools** (fill in the number corresponding to the answer which apply)			**Structures** (fill in "1" in the boxes which apply)				**Human resources** (fill in "1" in the boxes which apply)			**Systems and tools** (fill in the number corresponding to the answer which apply)		
							Procedures (who does, what and when)	Manuals/working guides (how it is done)	MIS improper functioning								Procedures (who does, what and when)	Manuals/working guides (how it is done)	MIS improper functioning
Yes/No	Unclear task division	Unclear responsibilities	Lack of prioritization	Insufficient staff	Insufficiently qualified staff	Insufficient knowledge	1. No procedures 2.Too many 3. Too complicated 4. I do not follow procedures	1. No manuals 2. Unclear or too complicated 3. I do not need manuals	Explain if it is the case	Create project multifunctional teams	Clarify allocation of tasks - review job descriptions	Improve management	Increase outsourcing	Hire more staff	Staff development	Personal development	1. Review procedures 2. Train staff in the use do procedures 3. Verify the application of procedures	1. Develop working guides 2.Train staff in the use of guides 3. Verify application	Explain what improvement you need
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36

ECORYS   LIDEEA

CAPABILITY: skills and knowledge							MOTIVATION										What other area of improvement not included in this table would be needed
In what way is capability hindering you in your work?				What is required by the job (job description) regarding the project management capability?	Is this capability / skills / knowledge available?	What improvements are needed	Would you consider the motivation within the unit to increase the absorption capacity		What kind of motivations are needed for the job ?				What improvements are needed to stimulate motivation ?			
(fill in the number corresponding to the answer which apply)				(Fill in the number of the area which applies)	(Fill in the number of the level which applies)	(Fill in the number of the level which applies)	(Fill in the number of the level which applies)	(One sentence)	(Fill in the number corresponding to the answer which apply)			Yes/No	Write one phrase in the box of the applicable answer			One phrase
Reduce quality	Increase work time allocated to tasks	Not achieving objectives	Decrease motivation	1. project management, 2.project preparation, 3. time management, 4. strategic planning, 5. public procurement 6. other (specify)	1. No knowledge 2. Minimum 3. Satisfactory 4. Excellent	Training &coaching in 1. project management, 2.project preparation, 3. time management, 4. strategic planning, 5. public procurement 6. other (specify)	1. High 2. Average 3. Low	Please explain why this is the case	Financially	Working atmosphere/ environment	Commitment	Is this motivation available?	Financially	Working atmosphere/ environment	Commitment	
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53

Questions for the joint interviews scheduled for March 14th 2012
Communication Compartment for Structural Instruments

	Issue	Questions
	QUESTIONS DERIVED FROM DESK RESEARCH	
1.	OPTA Implementation procedures issued but the TAD also cover some of the **Beneficiaries responsibilities**	➢ How familiar are you with OPTA Implementation procedures? ➢ If yes, do you follow the procedures exactly ? ➢ What difficulties do you face when applying procedures ➢ Are there other tasks you perform as OPTA beneficiary not covered by procedures? What do you do differently?
2	The procedures are not very clear about the responsibilities for the **project proposals/ financing applications**. There are different provisions in different parts of them.	➢ What is your unit role? Who does what?
3	According to the Financing Decision, **the Beneficiary** holds **full and sole responsibility (accountability)** for the implementation of the project. However other structures are involved in the project implementation but they are not jointly responsible. The Beneficiary signs all the papers related to the project/contract, even those prepared by other structures. For PA3, the beneficiary is under the same coordination with the MA.	➢ How are these implementation responsibilities tasks transferred from the Beneficiary to other structures – is there an implementation agreement or another similar document? ➢ How is this situation managed for avoiding a conflict of interest?
4	According to OPTA Implementation procedures the **procurement procedures** are undertaken by the BoPPPP within the Implementation Dept. of TAD. However the **procurement documents** are prepared by the Beneficiary and the procedures are very specific and detailed on the documents to be prepared. For ICIS however there is an exception and the beneficiary only participates in the preparation of the technical part.	➢ How are the procurement documents prepared: who does what? ➢ Who holds the responsibility for the overall procurement documents which go to the Implementation Service ?
5	According to OPTA implementation procedures, the **ID undertakes the procurement procedures** and prepares the procurement contracts while the Beneficiary signs them and undertakes Contracting Authority role and responsibilities. At the same time the **administrative implementation** is also managed by the ID while **the Beneficiary is responsible for the technical implementation.**	➢ How is this technical implementation done without overlapping the Contractor of the procurement contract? Who does what? ➢ How the administrative and technical implementation are coordinated/managed? Who does what?
6	ICIS is beneficiary for several projects in the pipeline for the period 2011-2015: 15 projects for PA3. According to OPTA implementation procedures, each project has **2 Project Managers (PM)**: one in the Beneficiary and one in the ID. The **procedures do not contain a checklist** of project tasks and their deadlines for the project managers.	➢ How do the tasks of the PM in Beneficiary and ID relate to each other? Are there overlaps? If yes, for what tasks? ➢ What tasks does the PM in Beneficiary undertakes for this role? Is there a checklist at beneficiary level for project tasks and deadlines to be undertaken by the PM? If not how is the tasks allocation/ distribution made?
7	OPTA Implementation procedures are not very clear about the **progress reports and payment claims** for the projects. While, according to the OPTA implementation procedures, these documents should be prepared by the PM in the implementation unit for ACIS structures, actually the PMs in the beneficiaries structures (PA2) prepare them.	➢ What is your unit a role in their preparation?
8	OPTA Implementation procedures are not very clear about the **records of accounts** for the projects by the	➢ Does SMIS Dept/SCD keep record of accounts for the projects? If yes who does what?

ECORYS   LIDEEA

	Beneficiary. While the Financing decision provides for the obligation of the Beneficiary to keep separate records of accounts and according to ROF the Financial Management Service within TAD ensures that the Beneficiary does that, other provisions state that this unit performs them.	
	QUESTIONS DERIVED FROM QUESTIONNAIRES	
9.	The respondents for both PA2 and PA3 identified the need for a set of OPTA **Beneficiary** Implementation Procedures to clearly set all the tasks, responsibilities and deadlines of ACIS structures beneficiaries along all the project cycle.	➢ How are the tasks, responsibilities and deadlines currently established in the absence of such procedures? ➢ Do the current tasks undertaken for the OPTA beneficiary role overlap between beneficiary staff; e.g.: procurement documents, helpdesk for SMIS users, other technical activities
10.	The job descriptions vary and are not very clear regarding the job goal/position and OPTA beneficiary role. Also the content of the job descriptions in ICIS cover more other ACIS tasks while the projects preparation and implementation tasks represents a much smaller part.	➢ How were the job descriptions prepared: who prepared them, how were the job goals defined, how were the specific requirements and responsibilities for the position set? ➢ What is your opinion regarding the structure of the jobs/positions within the unit as defined through the job descriptions? Do they reflect/cover the needs? ➢ What improvement should be done to the job descriptions to better define the job goal in relation to the unit role identified by ROF ?
11.	The questionnaire indicated that an important part of the **decisions on tasks to be performed (**more than 50%) are made by yourself while the rest of the decisions is made by the superior and by external factors. Delegation of responsibilities is both a way to increase work efficiency and at the same time a motivation tool	➢ What is the level of the responsibility for which there is delegation at this moment? ➢ What would be the level of responsibility which would increase motivation and for which there is sufficient capability? ➢ What would be the level of responsibilities which would increase motivation and for which increase of knowledge and skills would be needed?
12.	**Lack of prioritization** was identified as one of the issues for planning and managing projects together with unclear responsibilities and tasks allocations.	➢ Who should do this prioritization? What should be your role?
13.	According to the questionnaire you are not involved in **projects planning**	➢ Who is doing this planning? ➢ Do you think you could be involved? If yes, how? If no, why not?
14.	Among the ways for structures improvement, **cross functional teams** with clear responsibilities and tasks allocations was confirmed by most of the respondents as a potential solution. Outsourcing was also identified by some of the respondents as a way to increase capacity.	➢ How do you think such a team should be built? What would be its membership? ➢ Would outsourcing be an appropriate solution for your unit? If yes, what activities could be outsourced?
15.	**Motivation needs** - general opinion for all 3 categories indicated **Salary according to performance** was indicated as a motivation factor together with the working environment and commitment. **Management commitment** was mentioned in the questionnaires as a motivational factor	➢ Knowing that the level of salaries is established by law for civil servants according to the categories and grades, how do you see a potential solution for payment according to performance ? ➢ Would it be feasible a financial incentives scheme eligible through OPTA? ➢ What elements of the working environment would be more stimulating: ambient, working relations, other ➢ How management commitment could become a motivation element?
16.	According to time estimates in the questionnaires most of staff work overtime at an average of **19-20 hours a month**. The working time additionally spent due to the factors presented in the questionnaires exceeds in most cases 50%. Among the influencing factors, „Other priorities (urgent tasks with deadlines)" comes first.	➢ Do you appreciate that a monthly working plan with deadlines and priorities at the unit level could solve/improve the situation? ➢ What other solutions do you think would be appropriate considering the specific of the unit?
17.	**Insufficient staff and insufficiently skilled** staff were identified as important causes for difficulties in managing projects. Staff development was identified as a general need, however some staff expressed concerns regarding the appropriateness and use of the skills and knowledge acquired .	➢ Would the staff number still be an issue in case the time loses will be reduced by addressing the influencing factors? ➢ What would hinder you from using the knowledge acquired through training in the daily activity: - inappropriateness of training content to your current needs, - the others, including colleagues and superiors do not use them ➢ Would a training &coaching programme tailored to specific needs of ACIS structures OPTA beneficiaries be the solution for an appropriate staff development programme? Who should propose such a programme for funding through OPTA?

180

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013

ECORYS   LIDEEA

Questions for the joint interviews scheduled for March 14th 2012
SMIS Coordination Service

	Issue	Questions
	QUESTIONS DERIVED FROM DESK RESEARCH	
1.	OPTA Implementation procedures issued but the TAD also cover some of the **Beneficiaries responsibilities** However it seems that beneficiaries outside TAD are not familiar with these procedures.	➢ <u>How familiar</u> are you with OPTA Implementation procedures? ➢ If yes, <u>do you follow the procedures exactly</u> ? ➢ <u>What difficulties do you face</u> when applying procedures ➢ Are there <u>other tasks you perform as OPTA</u> beneficiary not covered by procedures? What do you do <u>differently</u>?
2	The procedures are not very clear about the responsibilities for the **project proposals/ financing applications**. There are different provisions in different parts of them.	➢ What is your unit role? Who does what?
3	According to the Financing Decision, **the Beneficiary** holds **full and sole responsibility (accountability)** for the implementation of the project. However <u>other structures are involved</u> in the project implementation but they are not jointly responsible. The Beneficiary signs all the papers related to the project/contract, even those prepared by other structures.	➢ How are these implementation <u>responsibilities tasks transferred from the Beneficiary to other structures</u> – is there an implementation agreement between SMIS and ID/TAD?
4	According to OPTA Implementation procedures the **procurement procedures** are undertaken by the BoPPPP within the Implementation Dept. of TAD. However the **procurement documents** are prepared by the Beneficiary and the procedures are very specific and detailed on the documents to be prepared. In the job descriptions there are <u>6 positions with responsibilities for the preparation of procurement documents</u>, of which 3 positions only from the technical point of view , including the head of dept.	➢ How are the procurement documents prepared: who does what? ➢ Who holds the <u>responsibility for the overall procurement</u> documents which go to the Implementation Service since, according to job description, the <u>head of unit is responsible only for the hardware part</u>?
5	According to OPTA implementation procedures, the **ID undertakes the procurement procedures** and prepares the procurement contracts while the Beneficiary signs them and undertakes Contracting Authority role and responsibilities. At the same time the **administrative implementation** is also managed by the ID while **the Beneficiary is responsible for the technical implementation.**	➢ How is this technical <u>implementation done without overlapping the Contractor</u> of the procurement contract? Who does what? ➢ How the <u>administrative and technical implementation are coordinated/managed</u>? Who does what?
6	The SMIS CS is beneficiary for several projects in the pipeline for the period 2011-2015: 25 projects for PA2. According to OPTA implementation procedures, each project has **2 Project Manager (PM)**: one in the Beneficiary and one in the ID. The **procedures do not contain a checklist** of project tasks and their deadlines for the project managers. The content of the <u>job descriptions are not very clear</u> either about the roles of the positions for the projects preparation and implementation and **differ among the positions** although there are several staff holding the role of **Project Managers** in various projects.	➢ How do the tasks of the <u>PM in Beneficiary and ID relate</u> to each other? Are there overlaps? If yes, for what tasks? ➢ What tasks does the PM in Beneficiary undertakes for this role? Is there <u>a checklist</u> at beneficiary level for project tasks and deadlines to be undertaken by the PM? <u>If not how</u> is the tasks allocation/ distribution made?
7	OPTA Implementation procedures are not very clear about the **progress reports and payment claims** for the projects.	➢ What is your unit a role in their preparation?
8	OPTA Implementation procedures are not very clear about the **records of accounts** for the projects by the Beneficiary. While the Financing decision provides for the obligation of the Beneficiary to keep separate records of accounts and according to ROF the Financial Management Service within TAD ensures that the Beneficiary does	➢ Does SMIS Dept/SCD keep record of accounts for the projects? If yes who does what?

ECORYS   LIDEEA

	that, other provisions state that this unit performs them.	
	QUESTIONS DERIVED FROM QUESTIONNAIRES	
9.	There are contradictory answers among respondents regarding existence and use of procedures: either no procedures or too complicated. The general idea is that the SMIS CS staff is not familiar with/aware of OPTA implementation procedures or believe that they are TAD procedures only. There was however identified the need for a set of OPTA **Beneficiary Implementation Procedure**s to clearly set all the tasks, responsibilities and deadlines of ACIS structures beneficiaries along all the project cycle	➤ How are the tasks, responsibilities and deadlines currently established in the absence of such procedures? ➤ Do the current tasks undertaken for the OPTA beneficiary role overlap between beneficiary staff; e.g.: procurement documents, helpdesk for SMIS users, other technical activities
10.	The **job descriptions vary and are not very clear** regarding the job/position goal and OPTA beneficiary role . At the same time they do not cover all OPTA beneficiary tasks in terms of project preparation and implementation although there are several project managers	➤ How were the job descriptions prepared: who prepared them, how were the job goals defined, how were the specific requirements and responsibilities for the position set? ➤ What is your opinion regarding the structure of the jobs/positions within the unit as defined through the job descriptions? Do they reflect/cover the needs? ➤ What improvement should be done to the job descriptions to better define the job goal in relation to the unit role identified by ROF ?
11.	All staff indicated that an important part of the **decisions on tasks** to be performed are **made by superiors**: in half cases superiors make decisions for more than 50% of tasks while for the other half they make decisions for 25 % and 50% of the tasks. Delegation of responsibilities is both a way to increase work efficiency and at the same time a motivation tool.	➤ What is the level of the responsibility for which there is delegation at this moment? ➤ What would be the level of responsibility which would increase motivation and for which there is sufficient capability? ➤ What would be the level of responsibilities which would increase motivation and for which increase of knowledge and skills would be needed?
12.	**Lack of prioritization** was identified as one of the issues for planning and managing projects together with unclear responsibilities and tasks allocations.	➤ Who should do this prioritization? What should be your role?
13.	Among the ways for structures improvement, **cross functional teams** with clear responsibilities and tasks allocations was confirmed by most of the staff as a potential solution. **Outsourcing** was also identified by some of the respondents as a way to increase capacity.	➤ How do you think such a team should be built? What would be its membership? ➤ Would outsourcing be an appropriate solution for your unit? If yes, what activities could be outsourced?
14.	Motivation needs - general opinion for all 3 categories indicated **Salary according to performance** was indicated as a motivation factor together with the working environment and commitment. **Management commitment** was mentioned in the questionnaires as a motivational factor	➤ Knowing that the level of salaries is established by law for civil servants according to the categories and grades, how do you see a potential solution for payment according to performance ? ➤ Would it be feasible a financial incentives scheme eligible through OPTA? ➤ What elements of the working environment would be more stimulating: ambient, working relations, other ➤ How management commitment could become a motivation element?
15.	According to time estimates in the questionnaires most of staff work overtime at an average of **19-20 hours a month**. The working time additionally spent due to the factors presented in the questionnaires exceeds in most cases 50%. Among the influencing factors, „Other priorities (urgent tasks with deadlines)" and interruptions by colleagues/ superiors/other came first most of the answers.	➤ Do you appreciate that a monthly working plan with deadlines and priorities at the unit level could solve/improve the situation? ➤ How do you think interruptions could be eliminated/limited? ➤ What other solutions do you think would be appropriate considering the specific of the unit?
16.	**Insufficient staff and insufficiently skilled** staff were identified as important causes for difficulties in managing projects. Staff development was identified as a general need, however there are some concerns regarding the appropriateness and use of the skills and knowledge acquired.	➤ Would the staff number still be an issue in case the time loses will be reduced by addressing the influencing factors? ➤ What would hinder you from using the knowledge acquired through training in the daily activity: - inappropriateness of training content to your current needs, - the others, including colleagues and superiors do not use them ➤ Would a training &coaching programme tailored to specific needs of ACIS structures OPTA beneficiaries be the solution for an appropriate staff development programme? Who should propose such a programme for funding through OPTA?

182

Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the OPTA
Project co-financed from European Regional Development Fund through OPTA 2007-2013

ECORYS   LIDEEA

MINISTRY FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments, Evaluation Central Unit

Framework agreement for the assessment of structural instruments 2011-2015, Lot 1 – Evaluation,

Subsequent contract no. 2/23/22.12.2011 –

"Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance"

Kick off evaluation meeting
12 January 2012

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Central Evaluation Unit
- ✓ Claudia Măgdălina, head of Unit.
- ✓ Mariana Acatrinei, counsellor.

Project team
- ✓ Marie Jose Zondag - team leader.
- ✓ Radoslaw Piontek – expert.
- ✓ Javier Fernandez - expert.
- ✓ Miheala Constatinesu - expert.
- ✓ Zamfira Balan - expert.
- ✓ Catrina Sinescu - project assistant.

Directorate for technical Assistance
- ✓ Livia Chiriţă- Director
- ✓ Daniela Bălan head of Strategies unit
- ✓ Cristina Pătrascoiu – counsellor, Strategies Unit
- ✓ Ioana Pâslaru – expert, Information Compartment
- ✓ Manuela Balamat –counsellor, Implementation Unit
- ✓ Dorin Dorian- head of Implementation Unit

Directorare for System Coordination
- ✓ Cristina Ciocoiu – expert
- ✓ Eugen-Viorel Grigore head of SMIS Unit

Directorare for Analysis and Programming
- ✓ Mirela Cristean counsellor

Directorate for Monitoring
- ✓ Antoaneta Popescu - General Director of ACIS
- ✓ Florentina Ciocănel - Director of Monitoring Department
- ✓ Ramona Panea counsellor -Monitoring Department

Audit Authority
- ✓ Eugen Teodorovici - Director for ERDF Audit Directorate

Certifying and Paying Authority
- ✓ Cristina Moise - expert
- ✓ Tomescu Nicuşoara - expert.

Annex 9: Inception interviews list of interviewed people & topics

List of interviews in the inception phase(excluding Kick-off meeting, see annex 8)

Thursday, 12 January 2012 Project team: • Mrs. Marie Jose ZONDAG - team leader. • Mr. Radoslaw PIONTEK – expert. • Mr. Javier FERNANDEZ – expert. • Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert. • Mrs. Zamfira BALAN – expert. • Mrs. Catrina SINESCU - project assistant.	**Central Evaluation Unit – Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments (ACIS)** • Mrs. Claudia MAGDALINA – head of Unit. • Mrs. Aneta STOICA –councillor. • Mr. Anton ENACHESCU - –expert principal. **Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments** • Mrs. Antoaneta POPESCU – Acting General Director. **Audit Authority** • Mr. Eugen Orlando TEODOROVICI – Director for ERDF Audit Directorate.
Friday, 12 January 2012 Project team: • Mrs. Marie Jose ZONDAG - team leader. • Mr. Radoslaw PIONTEK – expert. • Mr. Javier FERNANDEZ – expert. • Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert. • Mrs. Zamfira BALAN – expert. • Mrs. Catrina SINESCU - project assistant.	**Technical Assistance Directorate - ACIS** • Mrs. Livia CHIRITA – Director of Technical Assistance Directorate . • Mrs. Daniela BALAN – head of Strategies Unit. • Mrs. Ioana PASLARU – expert Information Compartment . **System Coordination Directorate - ACIS** • Mr. Eugen-Viorel GRIGORE – head of SMIS Central Unit . • Mrs. Cristina Elena CIOCOIU – expert – SMIS Central Unit. **Monitoring Directorate - ACIS** • Mrs. Florentina CIOCANEL – director of Monitoring Directorate . **Technical Assistance Directorate - ACIS** • Mrs. Livia CHIRITA – Director of Technical Assistance Directorate .
Monday, 16 January 2012 Project team: • Mrs. Marie Jose ZONDAG - team leader. • Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert. • Mrs. Zamfira BALAN – expert. • Mrs. Catrina SINESCU - project assistant.	**Authority for Certification and Payment (ACP)** • Mrs. Ioana PREDULEA – Deputy General Director. • Mrs. Consuela TOADER - head of Certification Unit . • Mrs. Mihaela HOFNAR – councillor Certification Unit. • Mrs. Steliana DUMITRESCU – coordinator Methodology Compartment. • Mrs. Cristina MOISE – expert Methodology Compartment. • Mrs. Nicusoara TOMESCU – expert Technical Assistance Compartment.
Tuesday, 17 January 2012 Project team: • Mrs. Marie Jose ZONDAG - team leader. • Mrs. Catrina SINESCU - project assistant.	**Central Evaluation Unit – ACIS** • Mrs. Claudia MAGDALINA – head of Unit.
January 2012 Project team: • Mrs. Marie Jose ZONDAG - team leader.	**Ernst & Young** • Mrs. Marie Brunagel – Team leader of 'Absorption forecast and evaluation of the options for funds reallocations within the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013'
January 2012 Project team: • Mrs. Marie Jose ZONDAG - team leader.	**European Commission – Directorate-General Regional Policy** • Mrs. Mirabela-Marie Lupaescu –Desk officer of European Commission for the Romanian OPTA

ECORYS   LIDEEA

MINISTRY FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments, Evaluation Central Unit

Framework agreement for the assessment of structural instruments 2011-2015, Lot 1 – Evaluation,

Subsequent contract no. 2/23/22.12.2011 –

"Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance"

Topics discussed at inception Phase Interview (prepared by the Ecorys Team):

Below topics give an idea of the type of questions we would like to ask. Our objective with the interview is to:

1) Deepen our knowledge, based on what we have read in the documents that were send to us,

2) Collect the needed documents/files for the project,,

3) Fine-tune the presented approach to your needs (what will be most efficient and effective to do),

4) Check what has already been done or thought about to avoid that we will re-invent the wheel.

Topics that we will discuss:

- Your expectations / wishes for project,
- Problems of absorption capacity. What already tried to increase absorption capacity?
- Why not more projects already?
- Ideas already thought of to increase absorption capacity, (so that we can investigate or exclude this option in the project),
- The type of workload analysis that is useful and needed? Difference with the ToR that was tendered 29 Dec?
- What activities already outsourced,
- Any preferences what we should look at in the scenarios (costs, activities, beneficiaries, etc,),
- With whom to contact on tasks/workload?
- Who to train on LOTHAR,
- Project pipeline (status and actions to increase number of projects),
- Capacity of the Managing Authority& Beneficiaries,
- Delineation of tasks, something done?
- Who are dealing with PA1, PA2, PA3 (per unit?)(IB),
- Who to involve in workload analysis?
- Who to contact on update of project pipeline?
- Who to contact/train on LOTHAR?
- Anything else?

Annex 10: Interviews for Q3 & Q5 (list of interviewed people and topics)

MINISTRY FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments, Evaluation Central Unit
Framework agreement for the assessment of structural instruments 2011-2015, Lot 1 – Evaluation,
Subsequent contract no. 2/23/22.12.2011 –
"Evaluation of the absorption capacity of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance"

List of interviews for answering evaluation questions Q3 and Q 5 (phase 3 A, B and 4 A, B)

Interview institutions and representatives	Area of interest for OPTA	Interviewer on behalf of the Project team	Date of interview
Ministry of European Affairs **Authority for Coordinating Structural Instruments (ACIS)** • Mrs. Livia CHIRITA– Director, Technical Assistance Directorate (Managing Authority for Operation Programme Technical Assistance)	PA1 PA 2 PA3	Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert	Wednesday, 25 April 2012
Info Centre for Structural Instruments • Mrs. Ioana SAVA - Manager • Mr. George ZAHARIA - Expert in Structural Instruments	PA 3, KAI 3.2	Mr. Radoslaw PIONTEK – expert Mr. Javier Fernandez –expert	Thursday, 26 April 2012
Department for Fight Against Fraud (DLAF) • Ms. Anca ILIE – counsellor, Directorate for Juridical Affairs, Unit for Programming and training • Mr. Alin BRESUG – counsellor, Directorate for Information Management	PA1, KAI 1.1	Mr. Radoslaw PIONTEK – expert	Thursday, 26 April 2012
Agency for Regional Development for Bucuresti-Ilfov Region **(Intermediate body for Regional Operational Programme)** • Mrs. Roxana OPRESCU – expert, Directorate for Technical Assistance • Mr. Daniel POPESCU – expert, Directorate for Technical Assistance	PA 1 PA3	Mr. Radoslaw PIONTEK – expert Mr. Javier Fernandez –expert Mrs. Zamfira Bălan - expert	Thursday, 26 April 2012
General Secretariat of the Government • Mr. Laurentiu GRIGORESCU – expert (working with Structural Instruments), Directorate for Public Policies • Mr. Dragos NEGOITA - expert (working with Structural Instruments), Directorate for Public Policies	PA1, KAI 1.1	Mr. Radoslaw PIONTEK – expert Mr. Javier Fernandez –expert Mrs. Zamfira Bălan - expert	Thursday, 26 April 2012
EvalRom (Evaluation Society in Romania) • Mrs. Laura TROFIN – senior evaluator, member of the Executive Board	PA 1 –KAI 1.2	Mr. Radoslaw PIONTEK – expert Mrs. Zamfira Bălan - expert	Thursday, 26 April 2012
Ministry of European Affairs **Authority for Coordinating Structural Instruments (ACIS)** • Mrs. Mariana ACATRINEI– counsellor, Central Evaluation Unit • Mrs. Angelica VLADESCU – counsellor, Central Evaluation Unit	PA1 PA 2 PA 3	Mrs. Sacha KOPPERT- team leader. Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert.	Friday, 4 May 2012
National Authority for Regulating and Monitoring Public Procurement in Romania (ANRMAP) • Mr. Bogdan CIUBUC– counsellor, General Directorate for Regulating and Evaluation	PA 1	Mrs. Sacha KOPPERT- team leader. Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert.	Friday, 4 May 2012
EvalRom (Evaluation Society in Romania) • Mrs. Roxana MIHALACHE– senior evaluator, President of the Executive Board	PA 1 –KAI 1.2	Mrs. Sacha KOPPERT- team leader. Mrs. Catrina SINESCU - project assistant.	

ECORYS LIDEEA

National School of Political and Administrative Studies (SNSPA) • Mr. Univ.Prof. Phd. Adrian MIROIU Rector	PA1 KAI 1.2 PA3	Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert	Friday, 4 May 2012
Agency for Regional Development for West Region (Intermediate body for Regional Operational Programme) • Mr. Sorim MAXIM– Director, ADRVest	PA 1	Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert	Friday, 4 May 2012
The Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE) • Mr. Univ.Prof. Phd. Nicolae ISTUDOR – Pro-rector, Department for Inter-institutional and economical and social environment Relations	PA1 KAI1.2 PA3	Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert	Monday, 7 May 2012
University of Bucharest, Law Faculty • Mr. Univ.Prof. Phd. Flavius BAIAS, dean of the Faculty of Law Bucharest	PA1 KAI 1.2 PA3	Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert	Monday, 7 May 2012
Association of Communes of Romania • Mr. Sergiu TARA- executive director	PA 1	Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU – expert	Monday, 7 May 2012

Topic lists for the interviews on relevance of project ideas

Questions addressed to the interviewees

Concerning project ideas

5. Relevance of the proposed project ideas for the interviewee's scope of activity?

6. Relevance of the proposed project ideas for their needs and challenges confronted. This is to say, would this project contribute to solve pressing needs and/or contribute to improve performance or challenge confronted by the given (potential) beneficiary?

7. Coherence of the proposed project ideas with the Operational Programmes and the current project pipeline? This topic could refer not only to coherence but rather take one step further and deal with complementarily and added value?

8. Feasibility of the proposed project idea? In terms of:

   1.2 In terms of complexity?

   1.3 Management capacity at the beneficiary? (What can be done to make it feasible)

   1.4 Public procurement issues?

   1.5 Availability/capacity of final recipients?

   1.6 Feasible in time: for this project period? Otherwise, if not feasible for 07-13, worth discussing for 14-20?

   1.7 Other feasibility issues

9. Activities proposed versus eligibility of costs? (What changes are needed to make it eligible)

10. Who to implement the project ideas? Additional typologies of beneficiaries needed?

Concerning other needs:

11. To what extent are there additional needs by the beneficiary that are not included in the project pipeline and project list discussed that could be addressed by OP TA? (both currently eligible and non-eligible project ideas)

Concerning absorption

12. In case the beneficiary has no projects/a limited number of projects: What are the reasons for not having projects or having only a limited number of projects?

ECORYS   LIDEEA

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS Focus Group 1 with representatives of Managing Authorities, 10 May 2012

Ministry of European Affairs Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments Managing Authority for Operational Programme "Technical Assistance" **OPTA MA**	**Mrs. Livia Chirita -** Director OPTA Managing Authority **Mrs. Daniela Balan -** Head of Strategy Unit, Directorate of Technical Assistance **Mrs. Cristina Patrascoiu** responsible for OPTA monitoring, Strategies Unit, Directorate of Technical Assistance **Mrs. Ramona Panea** - Senior Adviser, Monitoring Directorate **Mrs. Claudia Bedea - Head of Evaluation** Central Unit **Mrs. Mariana Acatrinei -** Advisor, Central Evaluation Unit
Ministry of Environment and Forests Managing Authority for Sectoral Operational Programme **"Environment"** **SOP ENV**	**Mrs. Doinita Manea** - Advisor, Department of Technical Assistance **Mrs. Maria Elena Teodorescu** - Head of Department, Directorate for Technical Assistance.
Ministry of Interior Affairs Managing Authority for Operational Programme "Administrative Capacity Development" **OPDAC MA**	**Mr. Paul Moldovan** - Advisor, Program Strategies Unit
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Managing Authority for Sectoral Operational Programme "Increase of Economic Competitiveness" **SOP IEC**	**Mrs. Cornelia Budică** - Advisor, Technical Assistance Coordinator; **Mrs. Adriana Nica -** Technical Assistance Advisor
Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism Managing Authority for Regional Operational Programme **ROP**	**Mrs. Cornelia Mateiu** - Training Coordinator, Program Management Division
Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection Managing Authority for Sectoral Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" **MA SOP HRD**	**Mrs. Ioana Alexandra Raiciu** - consultant
Ministry of Transport Managing Authority for Sectoral Operational Programme "Transport" **MA Transport**	**Mrs. Daria Predoana,** advisor, Directorate for Technical Assistance Projects
Project Team *"Evaluation of absorption capacity of Technical Assistance Operational Programme"*	**Mrs. Sacha Koppert** - Ecorys expert, Team Leader **Mr. Javier Fernandez** - Ecorys Expert **Mr. Radoslaw Piontek** - Ecorys expert **Mrs. Mihaela Constantinescu** - Ecorys expert **Mrs. Catrina Sinescu** - local project coordinator

ECORYS   LIDEEA

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS Focus Group 2 with OPTA Beneficiaries and stakeholders, 11 may 2012

Ministry of European Affairs **Authority for Coordination of Structural Instruments**	**Mrs. Livia CHIRIȚĂ -** OPTA Managing Authority Director, and Director of Technical Assistance Directorate **Mrs. Claudia BEDEA -** Head of Evaluation Central Unit **Mrs. Mariana ACATRINEI -** counsellor, Central Evaluation Unit **Mrs. Cristina CIOCOIU -** senior expert, SMIS Unit, Directorate of System Coordination **Mrs. Adriana GORGONEȚU -** senior expert, Strategies Unit, Directorate of Technical Assistance **Mrs. Mariana SVESTUN -** Senior counsellor, Directorate for Programming and Analysis
Ministry of Environment and Forests	**Mr. Narcis JELER** counsellor, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department, National Focal Point to UNFCCC
Association of Municipalities of Romania (ACOR)	**Mr. Sergiu ȚÂRA** - executive director of ACOR **Mr. Catalin CONSTANTIN** - projects coordinator at ACOR
National Institute of Statistics	**Mrs. Alexandra YAHYA,** Expert, Directorate for European Affairs and International Cooperation
Regional Development Agency West	**Mr. Adrian MARICIUC** - Coordinator of Growth Pole Unit
National School of Political and Administrative Studies (SNSPA)	**Mrs. Oana Andreea Ion, Phd -** Lecturer, Department of International Relations and European Integration
Regional Development Agency Bucharest-Ilfov, IB ROP	**Mr. Ioan Ciupercă** expert, Technical Assistance Department, project manager, EEN network (innovation / business centres)
National Authority for Regulating and Monitoring Public Procurement (ANRMAP)	**Mr. Corneliu Burada -** General Director
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment, IB for SMEs	**Mrs. Diana Veronica SOARE,** counsellor, Programming and Technical Assistance Unit
Structural Instruments Information Centre	**Mr. Gabriel ZAHARIA** Structural Instruments expert
Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism	**Mrs. Delia POPA** - public manager, General Directorate for Spatial Development
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania	**Mrs. Elena GEMENIUC,** counsellor, Chamber Representation Directorate
Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection	**Mr. Dan MOLDOVAN** - councillor, Directorate for Equal opportunities between women and men
National Authority for Scientific Research (ANCS)	**Mrs. Svetlana GOMBOS** - counsellor
University of Bucharest **Faculty of Law**	**Mrs. Monica-Amelia RAȚIU, Phd** - Lecturer, Department for Public Law
Project Team *"Evaluation of absorption capacity of Technical Assistance Operational Programme"*	**Mrs. Sacha KOPPERT** - Ecorys expert, Team Leader **Mr. Javier FERNANDEZ** - Ecorys Expert **Mr. Radoslaw PIONTEK** - Ecorys expert **Mrs. Mihaela CONSTANTINESCU** - Ecorys expert **Mrs. Catrina SINESCU** - local project coordinator

ECORYS   LIDEEA

ECORYS

P.O. Box 4175
3006 AD Rotterdam
The Netherlands

Watermanweg 44
3067 GG Rotterdam
The Netherlands

T +31 (0)10 453 88 00
F +31 (0)10 453 07 68
E netherlands@ecorys.com

W **www.ecorys.nl**

Sound analysis, inspiring ideas