



UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



GUVERNUL ROMÂNIEI



## 3 Approach and methodology

### The aim of the project is

*to provide a clear image on the current administrative capacity of the authorities and the beneficiaries, with a view to the necessary measures for improvement, to ensure the efficient implementation of the CSF Funds 2014-2020.*

### Definitions and components of the administrative capacity

Administrative capacity can be defined as the ability and skill of central and local authorities to prepare suitable plans, programmes and projects in due time, to decide on programmes and projects, to arrange the co-ordination among principal partners, to cope with the administrative and reporting requirements, and to finance and supervise the implementation correctly, avoiding irregularities as far as possible (ECORYS/NEI, 2002).

### For the authorities

Broadly three elements of administrative capacity can be distinguished – **policy (including structure), people** and **systems** (World Bank, 2006b). These dimensions relate to three specific types of capacities that are subjects of administrative development interventions. These components have also been used for the development of key indicators to measure the administrative capacity to manage Structural Funds (ECORYS/NEI, 2002).

The first dimension deals with **structural development of the institutional framework and the organisations** and seeks to enhance the existing organisational structures and mechanisms that exist in order to improve the policies implementation.

The **human resources dimension** aims at the development of the individual capacity and is part of the broad area of human resource management. This dimension includes recruitment, equipping individuals with information, knowledge, and training in order to enable them to effectively carry out their tasks. Interventions focus on recruitment and career management, as well as on the existing incentive and merit systems.

Finally, the dimension of **systems and tools** refers to the development of instruments, methods, guidelines, manuals, systems, procedures, forms, etc., which enable organisations to transform tacit and implicit knowledge (within the heads of individual people) into explicit knowledge that can be shared across organisations (ECORYS/NEI, 2002). ICT infrastructure, and in particular E-Government as a tool to improve service delivery, is a particular aspect of the dimension of systems and tools.

The relevant literature reveals the influence of contextual factors on the administrative capacity development measures. We distinguished the institutional stability, stakeholder involvement, alignment of goals between the involved actors and effectiveness of cooperation between actors involved (SEOR, 2006). Other success factors in the implementation of the administrative capacity development measures include the following: the existence of a custom, country-specific approach that clearly identifies the main weaknesses of administrations as well as the central policy areas that require administrative support (diagnosis level), sufficient focus on the regional and local dimension, and the need for the institutional and administrative capacity building process to follow a framework of coherent reforms – rather than ad hoc actions (Ecorys,2010). The context factors, relevant for the Romanian EU funds system, are fully considered in the design of the analysis tools.



UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



GUVERNUL ROMÂNIEI



## For the Beneficiaries

Three key dimensions of the administrative capacity of the beneficiaries have been identified in the previous study "Challenges associated to the capacity of SI Beneficiaries" (NSRF 2011) and have been adopted for this assessment for consistency of the methodology and comparability. The three key dimensions are capacity of the beneficiaries to manage projects, capacity to mobilise human resources, capacity to mobilise financial resources.

The first dimension Capacity of the beneficiaries to manage projects aims at ensuring the organisational capabilities to integrate the project management into the organisation, including a provision of adequate project structures, managers and expertise, reliable management and control function, preparation of mature projects.

Capacity to mobilise human resources aims at ensuring the adequate expertise quantitatively and qualitatively and include internal resources or use of external expertise through outsourcing.

The third dimension is the capacity to mobilise financial resources and looks at the availability of own and or borrowed financial resources as well as at the capacity to use the prefinancing mechanisms in place.

As in the case of the authorities administrative capacity we have considered a number of contextual factors part of them relating to the authorities capacity. The contextual factors refer to the environment of the projects implementation generated either by the EU funds system functioning (e.g. e-tools, adequacy of the guidelines, manuals and advice provided by authorities and contextual factors particular for the public administration in Romania, e.g. civil servants effectiveness and efficiency, corruption risks.

## Methods

We have used in this assessment different methods to respond to the specificities of the assignment and ensure the triangulation principle is observed, as follows:

- *Literature and documentary research* for accessing public and published studies (including those from international organisations) and other related public documents, commonly not published but made available by the Ministry of European Funds and other institutions that are part of the system. The task was challenging due to the complexity of the subject area and the multitude of documents. The evaluation team has performed an inventory of the relevant studies and evaluations, and this will be continuously updated for the next two follow-up assessments foreseen in the assignment. The list of the documents analysed is included in Annex 1
- *Checklist*; in order to structure the analysis on the key issues reflecting the administrative capacity for each of the three dimensions we have designed two checklists; one for the assessment of the authorities, and one for the assessment of the beneficiaries, in order to capture the most relevant elements of the administrative capacity according to their different roles. The checklists will also be used as the basis for further assessments.
- *Online survey*; to collect information and data in an efficient manner from a large number of authorities and beneficiaries
- *Interviews*; to collect additional information and clarify information and preliminary findings from the survey and the documentary research.
- *Focus groups*; for facilitating and exploring mutual experiences at system, programme and national level; we have designed two focus groups, one for the assessment of the authorities, and one for the assessment of the beneficiaries
- *The data base*; collection of a broad variety of information, in a structured and meaningful manner, relevant to the assessment criteria. The information and data included in the database



are linked to the checklists' items. Every time the assessment is run, the database provides the analysis with information and data that enables the evaluator to analyse the fulfilment of the criteria of the checklist.

- Presentation in the Inter-institutional Committee in charge of drafting the Partnership Agreement is a requirement in the ToR for consultation, information sharing and obtaining support for implementation of the recommendations.