



Executive Summary

**Efficiency assessment of OPTA management system and
Analysis of correctness of monitoring indicators setting in
OPTA**

Part 1: Efficiency assessment of OPTA management system



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Efficiency assessment of OPTA management system and Analysis of correctness of monitoring indicators setting in OPTA – Part 1: Efficiency assessment of OPTA management system was implemented by eNovation, s.r.o. in the period from September 2013 to December 2013, including the time for comment processing. The objective of this assessment was to evaluate the Operational Programme Technical Assistance (OPTA) management system in order to make the programme management more efficient, increase the quality of drawing from the EU funds, and to create strategic and other programme reports.

Consequently, the assessment was mainly focused on evaluating the progress achieved in the process of OPTA implementation geared towards qualitative and quantitative progress achieved within the process, role evaluation and analysis of the managing authority and the Monitoring Committee in the implementation process, evaluation of the system for announcement of calls for project submission with regard to appropriateness of continual call system used, analysis and evaluation of issues in the process of project implementation from view of the beneficiaries, risk analysis system evaluation, relation assessment between the managing authority and the intermediary body with regard to appropriateness and need for representation of the intermediary body within the implementation structure, and international comparison of similar technical assistance operational programme management systems in Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.

To achieve the stated objectives, the evaluator used a combination of several main evaluation methods, of which it is necessary to mention in particular analysis of data and documents, comparative analysis, outcome-focused analysis of the management process, questionnaire survey, and structured interviews (evaluation visits) with the implementation structure representatives. The data base primarily composes of data provided by the contracting authority in IS MONIT7+ and also by publicly available data sources. During the project implementation, the processor was in contact with the contracting authority, and consulted the evaluation outputs with them.

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The main findings and conclusion of the assessment

The progress achieved in the implementation process

Procurement, approval, and certification project phases of the management system function properly, even very well. The fundamental identified issue of the OPTA management system is in terms of achieving financial progress in the implementation phase, which obviously leads to a significant deceleration of project implementation. Due to a significant slowdown in fund drawing, in 2013 the n+2 rule will not be met, and a considerable amount of financial resources in the size of almost the entire annual allocation will be forfeited. In relation to

implementation of the n+2 rule in 2014 and 2015, the situation is slightly more positive, as the risk of significant losses has been reduced due to reallocation. The factual progress level achieved with regard to the period of the program is very good. Indicator performance achieved reaches above-average values compared to financial performance. Given the vast difference between the factual and financial implementation of the program, OPTA is given excess financial resources in relation to the defined objectives of the program.

Role of the managing authority and the intermediary body in the implementation process

According to the evaluating team, the role of the managing authority of OPTA is purposeful and effective with regard to the OP management quality. With respect to the functions and function settings of the managing authority, its role is entirely sufficient and contributes to purposefulness and effectiveness. It is possible to evaluate the qualitative, competence side of the matter, similarly. The only problematic issue is ensuring the administrative capacity in a way where the function of the OPTA managing authority can be executed not only purposefully, but mainly effectively. Effectiveness of the OPTA managing authority measures in relation to the identified problematic areas remains an issue, where the identified problems remain, and their status is not changed significantly (mainly due to external and directly intractable issues).

Recommendations: 1) Not to carry out any significant changes to the competences assigned to and divided between the managing authority and the intermediary body in the current period. The only relevant goal is to gradually phase out the activity the Centre for Regional Development of the CR by the end of the programming period, in case that in the 2014 – 2020 period, the intermediary body is not a part of the implementation structure.

2) Abolish the intermediary body as a part of the new OPTA management system, and assign its competences back to the managing authority.

Role of the Monitoring Committee in the implementation process

The role of the Monitoring Committee itself is purposeful and effective, however, the quality of the decision-making procedure in the Monitoring Committee is not fully satisfactory, and does not contribute to the effectiveness of the OPTA management. Competences and motivation of the OPTA Monitoring Committee members for exercise of their function, as well as their not fully qualified and objective intervention into OPTA activities related to them, in the form of

poorly targeted proposals and measures difficult to implement, can be considered a significant problem. The issue can be identified with regard to inadequate and insufficient representation of the main participants in the Monitoring Committee and its deliberative competences.

Recommendations: 3) Improve the relations between the main participants (with regard to motivation) and composition of OPTA. At the same time, lay down qualitative conditions and conditions of competence for membership in the Monitoring Committee (with regard to improvement of quality of its members) in order to ensure not only the current level of competences setting, but to improve their performance.

4) Begin to review the composition of the Monitoring Committee mainly with regard to integration of the Ministry of Regional Development departments, which became beneficiaries in the process of implementation, into the Monitoring Committee, and making them members with casting votes (currently being members with advisory votes). This step may improve the motivation of the main participants to take part in activities of the Monitoring Committee, and therefore improve the quality of its proceedings and mainly its outputs.

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System of call notices in OPTA

Regarding the specific settings of the programme defined by a limited number of applicants and a small number of projects, the system of permanent calls is effective. On the one hand higher requirements are expected from the managing authority in the process of programme management, on the other hand it enables more flexible use of administrative capacity, and reduces administrative burden. The given system is also convenient for the beneficiaries.

Recommendations: 5) Maintain the current system of permanent calls in the subsequent programming period.

Issues of the beneficiaries in the process of project implementation

The main issues of the beneficiaries, which the OPTA managing authority should focus on, can be identified in the areas of implementation of public procurement (beneficiaries support), problems in project monitoring, and payment of funds (in particular, the question of administrative capacity and administrative requirements on beneficiaries in conjunction with

unstable methodology and the administrative capacity of the managing authority and intermediary body).

Recommendations: 6) Further improve the support and control of the public procurement process by providing support before, during, and after completion of a tender (e.g. set fixed deadlines for tender completion by the beneficiary after signing the legal act).

7) Strengthen the administrative capacity providing support and control of public contracts including cooperation with the Public Procurement and Public Private Partnership Department of the Ministry of Regional Development as the creator of the Act, or provide these activities through an external entity.

8) Stabilize and strengthen the administrative capacity - increase the number of the managing authority members to provide various activities in order to increase substitutability and stability of the working positions (to maintain the experience gained in the process of OPTA implementation).

9) Increase the volume of documents submitted in electronic form, review the administrative procedures, and re-evaluate necessity and complexity of the submitted documents.

10) Increase stability of methodological guidelines and rules - mainly when creating a new manual and setting the monitoring process in order to minimize future changes. Always record the formal changes into the relevant documentation (e.g. manuals), and carry out changes in procedures and requirements at regular intervals (e.g. only once a year, always on the same date).