„Evaluation of process settings within OPTA"

SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT

Version 1.0

30th January 2018
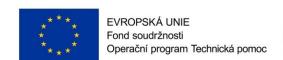
Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Summarizing the Final Report is one of the main outputs of performance of the Evaluation of process setting within OPTA. Its aim is to introduce all the main conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation. This evaluation was processed in the period from 26 October 2017 to 26 January 2018 by the evaluation team of HaskoningDHV Czech Republic, spol. s r. o.

The Evaluation Team would like to thank all representatives of the MRD involved in the implementation of the OPTA and all OPTA beneficiaries who have also participated in the implementation of the evaluation. Without their help, this Final Report could not be processed within the deadline.

2. Main conclusions and recommendations

The overall conclusions of the evaluation correspond to the wording of the answers to the identified evaluation questions.

Table 1: Overview of main conclusions of the evaluation

Evaluation Question	Main conclusion formulated in relation to the wording of evaluation questions
EQ 1.1. How demanding and comprehensible is system of implementation of the OPTA for implementation structure staff?	In general, the OPTA implementation system is not considered as demanding or incomprehensible by the staff of the implementation structure within MRD. The least understandable and even more demanding seem to be the processes in which the staffs are not involved. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that the OM of OPTA is a major contributor to the good understanding of OPTA processes, which is found to be completely or at least fairly synoptic and clear by the majority of staff of the OPTA implementation structure within the MRD.
EQ 1.2. Are the deadlines set in accordance with the requirements? What is the average time from submission to signing the legal aid act? Is there any connecting link within the applications, the processing of which takes longer than usual? At which stage there is a tendency to jam?	The deadlines set for the approval of project applications and payment application are set in accordance with established requirements. The average time from the submission of the project application to its approval is 31 days. The average approval period for first-level payment applications corresponds to 63 days for applications submitted in 2016, while for applications submitted in 2017 it corresponds to a total of 48 days. The average approval period for second-level payment applications corresponds to 17 days for applications submitted in 2016, while for applications submitted in 2017 it corresponds to a total of 8 days. When approving project applications in the

Evaluation Question	Main conclusion formulated in relation to the wording of evaluation questions
	case of longer periods the reasons are strongly individualized. When approving payment application, the reason is most often a non-functioning MS or, for example, the fact that at the time of approval of the payment application, the project is undergoing an AA audit, the audit report of which it is necessary to wait before approving the payment application. The tendency to jam can thus be identified in particular in case of payment applications, namely during their approval in MS.
EQ 1.3. Do the workers follow the established procedures? How are procedural exceptions used within the OPTA MA? Are there any? Are they often used? What are the criteria (or processes) to use the exception? What are the common reasons for using exceptions? Do the exceptions point to process setting vulnerabilities? To which ones?	On the basis of the survey carried out, it can be stated that the OPTA MA staff proceeds in accordance with the established procedures. However, if a non-standard situation occurs, the record is entered directly into the MS. This is especially true if some of the deadlines are not met (e.g. in case of payment applications). However, it has not emerged from these surveys that these exceptions would indicate weaknesses in the OPTP process settings.
EQ 1.4. Which requirements or processes represent the greatest burden for the beneficiaries?	Beneficiaries consider public procurement within the framework of implemented projects, preparing payment applications and preparing the project application within KP14+ IS to be the most burdensome areas or processes. Detailed reasons for this review are given in the analytical part of the Final Report.
EQ 1.5. What impact do Unified Methodology Environment (UME) requirements have on the implementation? Are there any weaknesses in the setup of OPTA processes that make it difficult to implement or are regarded as dispensable by the implementation staff and at the same time are based on JMP requirements?	Work in IS KP14 +, respectively directly in MS 2014+, can be described as the most problematic area related to OPTP processes. The use of these systems is an obligation for the OPTA MA resulting from the unified methodological environment. A number of steps implemented in these systems are extremely burdensome for both the beneficiaries and the staff of the OPTA MA. At the same time, the setting of some of UME requirements is totally dispensable for OPTA, and therefore unnecessarily burdensome in terms of OPTA implementation. Specifically SIP is not adequate and usable for OPTA; it contains a number of empty fields and a lot of information with no added value for OPTP.
EQ 1.6. To which management documentation rules refer the processes identified as weaknesses in the evaluation research?	The rules of the OPTA Management Documentation are largely based on the unified methodological environment. The rules of the OPTA Management Documentation are largely based on a unified methodological environment.

Evaluation Question	Main conclusion formulated in relation to the wording of evaluation questions
	Processes in which weaknesses have been identified are related to the NCA's methodological guidelines, in particular to the Methodological Guideline for monitoring the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds in the Czech Republic in the 2014-2020 programming period.
EQ 1.7. What are the possibilities of OPTA MA to potentially streamline OPTA management in the context of exposed process weaknesses?	The possibilities of the OPTA MA are limited in some ways in view of the obligations arising from the unified methodological environment and the setting of the MS 2014+ IS. Any revisions and changes need to be discussed and approved by the NCA, which, however, according to the experience of the staff of OPTA MA proves to be problematic.
EQ 2.1. How do the actors see the set cooperation and processes between OPTA MA and PMD, BD?	The established cooperation and processes between the OPTA MA and PMD, BD is perceived positively by the actors; majority is being fully or rather satisfied with the cooperation.
EQ 2.2. To which parts of the management documentation do the processes refer that were identified as weaknesses within the evaluation research under evaluation task II?	Weaknesses in the setting of OPTA management documentation processes have not been identified during the investigation carried out in relation to the evaluation task 2. The task 2 was mainly focused on the evaluation of the co-operation arrangements between the OPTA MA, PMD and the BD. However, it was rated very positively (see the answer to the previous EQ).
EQ 2.3. What are the possibilities of the OPTA MA for possible streamlining of OPTA management in the context of revealed weaknesses in the setting of relations between OPTA MA, BD and PMD.	Weaknesses in the setting of relations within OPTA MA, OR and PMD have not been identified during the investigation carried out. Strengthening the management of the OPTA MA may consist, for example, in the partial clarification of certain areas (requirements for documents, way of communication, habits at the MRD …) on a regular joint meeting of relevant stakeholders from various departments.

The following is a summary of the main recommendations arising from this evaluation.

Table 2: Overview of evaluation recommendations

Recommendations	Owner of recommendation	Significance of recommendation	Recommended term of recommendation implementation
To arrange, for example, once a year	OPTA MA	Medium	Annually

Recommendations	Owner of recommendation	Significance of recommendation	Recommended term of recommendation implementation
voluntary training for employees of the OPTA implementation structure within the MRD, where all the major links between the underlying processes and their essentials will be reminded; alternatively, familiarization with changes or new procedures will be discussed, ambiguities and possible suggestions will be discussed to improve and streamline of the established communication between departments.			
To pay even more attention to training new staff so that the processes and related procedures are fully understandable and clear.	OPTA MA	Medium	Continuously
To set specific deadlines for submitting implementation reports and payment applications already in a legal act by the MA. In this way, the workload associated with the approval of payment applications could be more evenly spread over all months of the year. The first period for which the implementation report would be presented would not necessarily be 6 months, but could be shorter or longer. Consequently, it would be appropriate to follow the 6-month monitoring period.	OPTA MA	Low	For new OPTA projects or during the following programming period
To set the ex-ante control of public procurement, e.g. of small-scale, as voluntary, i.e. ensured by OPTA MA only if requested by the beneficiary. In this way, part of the administrative burden at the level of both the MA and the beneficiaries would be reduced, while at the same time maintaining the possibility that, in the case of less experienced beneficiaries, this control may continue in the future.	OPTA MA	Medium	During the next update of the Manual for Beneficiaries
To ensure systematic collection of best practice from the field of preparation of evaluation criteria for public contracts that are repeated in the OPTA. These best practices should also be shared with OPTA recipients.	OPTA MA	Medium	For the remainder of this and the new programming period
To initiate comment procedure on the NCA	OPTA MA	High	Within 2

Recommendations	Owner of recommendation	Significance of recommendation	Recommended term of recommendation implementation
methodological guidelines in areas that have been identified as less useful or less functional for OPTA.			months
At the same time to initiate a NCA work platform so that NCA starts to address cross-cutting issues affecting all OPs and to provide them with methodical explanation. This platform should discuss how the role of NCA should be so that NCA can really become a valuable part of the implementation structure of individual OPs.	OPTA MA	High	Within 2 months