



Ongoing evaluation of implementation of the Operational Programme Research, Development and Education

Ministry of Education, Youth and
Sports

**Evaluation of the effectiveness of
implemented activities in achieving the
specific objectives and defined results of
the Technical Assistance of the OP RDE**

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Final version



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Executive summary

In this programming period, two organisational structures of previous operational programmes (OP EC and OP RDI) were merged, which provided sufficient qualified staff of the implementation structure from the beginning of the OP RDE implementation. As part of the implementation of the OP RDE, partial steps were implemented that contributed to a more efficient setting up and functioning of the OP (e.g. change in the planning of TA projects, stabilisation of the implementation structure, etc.). A tool for sharing information on TA has been developed, which has contributed to higher awareness of TA competences. The process of public procurement was harmonised with other MEYS units which participate in the process outside the OP RDE implementation structure.

Both specific objectives (SO1 Ensuring effective administration and SO2 Ensuring awareness, publicity and absorption capacity) and all PA4 results stated in the programming document are covered by the activities of TA projects. Most projects contribute to SO1, namely to the outcome of the intervention “An optimal establishment of an administrative capacity ensuring effective programme management”. All monitored Output indicators in PA4 (6 indicators in total, no target value has been set for the indicator “Number of jobs financed from the programme”) are committed and the achieved values were reported. For two output indicators, the values already achieved exceed the target values of the indicators. For the three put-put indicators, the target values have not yet been met and the project commitments are not sufficient to meet the OP RDE target values. At present, it is possible to identify the risk of these indicators not being met. The target values of both result indicators are fulfilled according to the values reported in the annual reports. Almost 70% of the allocation for TA is committed and almost 50% of the total allocation for TA has been paid.

The TA projects are operational, contribute to ensuring the implementation of the OP RDE implementation structure and cover all areas of technical assistance. The projects serve to ensure the MA OP RDE activities and provide all activities related to the administration and support of departments within the implementation structure, with material security, reimbursement of costs and other activities related to the implementation of the operational programme. As of the date of this report, a total of 13 projects were duly completed in PA4 and another 9 projects were in progress. Eight of these nine projects are expected to be completed by the end of 2019 and one by the end of 2020. Other projects are under preparation or approval. There has been a change in the setting of TA planning, projects are planned and set on the basis of the Long-term Plan, which is based on the analyses specified by the Operational Manual. Analyses and Long-term plan are continuously created and updated, which also ensures the timeliness and relevance of individual projects. In the Operational Manual there is a chapter devoted to TA, which defines the processes and responsibilities associated with TA implementation. The quality of submitted TA projects is ensured by the OP RDE Technical Assistance Working Group, which approves applications for support prior to their submission.

The staff turnover rate of the implementation structure has stabilised in recent years, the stability index has been increasing, with 88% of employees in the implementation structure operating for more than 1 year in 2018 and 75% of employees participating in the implementation of OP RDE for more than 3 years. From the point of view of TA fluctuation staff, there is no problem which would jeopardise the OP RDE implementation. The growth of both fixed and variable components of employee financial compensation contributes to ensuring optimal conditions. In the questionnaire survey focused mainly on the satisfaction of employees of Section IV, it was not identified as an area with which employees would be significantly dissatisfied.



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In the area of education of employees of the implementation structure, the Ministry for Regional Development cooperates with the Ministry for Regional Development, which has set up a system for Education of employees, which includes all employees of the implementation structures of operational programmes. The trainings realised within this system are covered by the OP Technical Assistance. The statistics of the participation in the training and the questionnaire survey show that the employees participate in about one activity every six months. Employees are mostly satisfied with the offer of educational activities and after their completion evaluate them as beneficial. Between November 2017 and October 2019, the MA OP RDE staff attended 80 different types of schooling organised by the MRD, which focused on a wide range of areas. Altogether 1,377 participants attended these schoolings. Most of the employees took part in the “GDPR” training, which was attended by less than a quarter of the employees, followed by frequent schoolings in “Procurement I” and “Time Management” training. The questionnaire survey shows that employees participate in educational activities realised in the Czech Republic rather than educational activities abroad. In the last year roughly two thirds of respondents participated in training courses and seminars in the Czech Republic.

The surveys focused on the publicity of the OP RDE show that it is one of the best known OPs, both among the target group and among the general public. The information and publicity of the OP is ensured by publishing all relevant information (e.g. calls, manuals, results of evaluation surveys, etc.) on the OP RDE website. Another instrument for ensuring publicity is the long-term media campaign, which took place at the beginning of the OP and will continue in the coming years by presenting concrete results achieved. The absorption capacity of most calls estimated correctly.

The MEYS internal questionnaire survey identified insufficient awareness of TA and its activities / competences / processes / limits, and this finding was also confirmed in the questionnaire survey within this report. For the purpose of enlightenment, “Section IV Operational Procedures” was created on the internal sharepoint, providing the MA with the main TA information. In 2020, the plan is to introduce a unified technical support information system which would facilitate communication in the submission and implementation of requirements between Section IV staff and the TA Department. The system, as a means of placing requests and orders, will lead the user to submit a request or find out the procedure to perform the required action. The employee will then have an overview of what needs to be done for the request and at what stage the request is. At the same time, the system should simplify the path to information (for example through links).

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The strategy for combating fraud and corruption within the CSF Funds in 2014-2020 is implemented and ensured at the MA level by the Internal Anti-Corruption Programme and the Implementation Plan to Combat Corruption. The MA carries out a self-assessment once a year to identify and assess risks, and once a year it also evaluates how the strategy measures are implemented. The results of the MA



self-assessment in 2017 and 2018 indicate that most of the assessed risks are assessed as tolerable. Only the risk of double funding was assessed as significant in both years.

The evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy for Combating Fraud and Corruption carried out by the MA OP RDE in 2017 showed that of the 17 measures 15 are in line with the instruments listed in the Strategy and 2 measures are partially in line. In the evaluation carried out in 2018, all measures were already in line with the instruments outlined in the Strategy. The analysis carried out for the purpose of this report shows that all measures for combating corruption mentioned in the text of the OP RDE are linked to the activities of the MA, which should contribute to their fulfilment.

The investigations identified an increased burden related to the administration of OP RDE projects in support of research. In relation to administrative burdens, focusing on formal recording and documenting detailed information concerning the formal implementation of the project is perceived as problematic, rather than focusing on evaluating the project's material and professional progress. Administrative burdens are also increased by setting rules for public procurement beyond legal requirements. A number of documents submitted within the framework of an application for support and their subsequent binding nature, where it is necessary to duplicate changes in different documents, are considered problematic. The administrative demands are also increased by problems which are not based on the OP RDE rules (e.g. inconsistency in the interpretation of the rules by the MA staff or their excessive workload).

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