

Annex No. 6 to OP Employment 2014–2020

“Ex-ante evaluation of the ESF programme document 2014–2020 managed by MoLSA”

Updated executive summary
(after comments by the European Commission)

PODPORUJEME VAŠI BUDOUCNOST

www.esfcr.cz

Working translation, without proofreading

The report has been prepared as at 11 December 2014.

The report is prepared for:

Czech Republic – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Na Poříčním právu 1
128 01 Prague 2

Author – supplier consortium:

HOPE GROUP, s.r.o., division EUservis.cz
Palackého tř. 10, 612 00 Brno

Naviga 4, s.r.o.
Pobřežní 249/46

Executive Summary of the Ex-Ante Evaluation of OP Employment

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic and the consortium of companies HOPE GROUP, s.r.o. and Naviga 4, s.r.o. concluded on 10 December 2012 a contract for implementation of the project called "*Ex-ante evaluation of ESF programming document managed by MoLSA for the period 2012–2020*". The purpose of the evaluation is to provide for a proper setting of the operational programme in order to make this programme an efficient tool contributing to the objectives of the Union strategy for smart and sustainable growth (Europe 2020).

The project started with an Opening Report and the first evaluation output was the Interim Report, continuously supplemented by separate evaluations of individual evaluation areas, for which the client gradually provided documents and information. **The Final Report** contained a final evaluation of all evaluated questions as defined by the contract dossier, provided that the evaluation has been applied to **the programme version** before approval by the government of the Czech Republic (version **as at 23 April 2014**). The submitted update of the executive summary evaluates the programme version of December 2014 (the version after comment by the European Commission).

Strategy of the programme

Problems and needs identified in the programme are relevant with respect to the current situation in the domain of human resources development in the Czech Republic and they comply with the needs identified in relevant strategies and with the analysis of problems and needs made in the Partnership Agreement. The significance of problems and needs is fundamentally properly specified, considering the determination of adequate budget sources allocation for the attainment of individual objectives of the programme. In terms of contents we may emphasize the summary made for each analysis domain, which contains key identified groups, their causes and links to solutions stated in the OP.

The programme properly defines target groups at risk of poverty, discrimination or social exclusion. The list of vulnerable groups is evidenced by the latest, available statistical data. Key causes of the current state have been defined for the mentioned target groups, as well as their specific needs.

The programme identifies problematic regions and responds adequately to their specific problems. The programme defines problem areas showing increased regional differences. The territorial dimension defined in the programme complies with the *Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic for 2014-2020* and corresponds to the approach applied by the Partnership Agreement.

Proposed objectives of the programme are consistent with the identified problems and needs. The objectives are comprehensibly and properly set with the context of problems and needs, therefore the relevant causality is obvious. The objectives are properly set also in terms of concentration, prioritisation of the problems to be solved and they comply with the EU 2020 strategy, the Common Strategic Framework and the Partnership Agreement.

Specific objectives of priority axis 1 are coherent. The programme includes also the *Youth Employment Initiative* (YEI), for which the programme reserves a separate investment priority 1.5. Due to synergies with investment priority 1.1 also the synergic effect of integrating YEI

Working translation, without proofreading

into the programme can be supported. The coherence of objectives under PA 1 is therefore properly set also in relation to other relevant instruments.

Specific objectives of priority axis 2 are coherent. In the evaluator's opinion, the two "key" investment priorities (2.1 and 2.2) are very appropriately supplemented with an investment priority supporting community-led local development strategies in order to involve local actors, without whom the support would probably be much less efficient and sustainable. The coherence of objectives under PA 2 is set also in relation to other relevant instruments. The evaluator proposes a minor recommendation with respect to the SO targeting.

Specific objectives of priority axis 3 are coherent. The priority axis coherence is obvious, because the axis does not bring any new intervention area but develops two specific aspects (social innovation and transnational cooperation). Objectives of PA 3 are not in any discrepancy with other relevant instruments.

Specific objectives of priority axis 4 are well integrated. Specific objectives in the priority axis 4.1 complementarily focus on the main elements of efficiency of public administration and judiciary. A system element focusing on quality of management and optimisation of performance in terms of processes and organisation on one hand and investments in development and enhancing competences and quality of human resources in public administration on the other hand. The coherence of objectives under PA 4 is set also in relation to other relevant instruments.

Horizontal principles

Chapter 11 properly identifies priority axes and investment priorities, which are expected to substantially contribute to horizontal principles. Investment priorities sufficiently incorporate specific actions to support compliance with horizontal principles. The method of compliance with the principles across the programme is described in an acceptable manner, the programme adequately ensures also the accessibility support for disabled persons.

Setting of priority axes

The intervention logic of IP 1.1 meets the required elements in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, takes account of possible effects/impacts of external factors and may be considered functional. The IP responds to identified problems and causes thereof. Problems and causes are sufficiently described, including illustrations by current quantitative data, needs are justified (only minor specifying recommendations have been made). Key external factors affecting the labour market and employment domains are mentioned adequately. Therefore the intervention logic in terms of fulfilment of specific objectives may be assessed as functional.

The intervention logic of IP 1.2 meets the required elements in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, takes account of possible effects/impacts of external factors and may be considered functional. The investment priority responds to the identified problems and causes thereof, describes them sufficiently and presents key quantitative data. Needs are also justified properly.

The intervention logic of IP 1.3 meets the required elements in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, takes account of possible effect/impact of external factors and may be considered functional. The specific objective 1 adequately specifies two major problem domains – the low-level knowledge, skills and competencies of workers and the discrepancy between the workforce qualification level and the labour market requirements. For the second problem domain the evaluator recommends minor supplements to increase the robustness of problem identification and to meet the needs of the text. In terms of the specific

Working translation, without proofreading

objective the intervention logic may be assessed as functional. With the above state reservation, problems and their causes may be assessed as well-identified, planned activities respond to properly defined caused and result into the accomplishment of expected results and the defined specific objective. Similarly, it applies to the second specific objective which focuses on an increase in adaptability of older workers. The intervention logic is functional here.

The intervention logic of IP 1.4 meets the required elements in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, takes account of possible effect/impact of external factors and may be considered functional. Causes of problems related to specific objective 1 are defined adequately and in sufficient details, only a minor recommendation to specify the causes has been issued. The same applies to causes of problems relevant for specific objective 2, where coordination with activities of MoEYS CR will play a significant role. The intervention logic of both SOs may be assessed as functional.

The intervention logic of IP 1.5 meets the required elements in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, takes account of possible effect/impact of external factors and may be considered functional. The intervention logic in terms of fulfilment of specific objectives may be assessed as functional, planned activities result into the accomplishment of expected results and of the specific objective and enable a response to possible external factors.

The intervention logic of IP 2.1 meets all the required elements and may be considered functional. The evaluator especially appreciates the emphasis given to the necessity of coordination through local self-governments, involving relevant actors. The intervention logic in terms of fulfilment of both specific objectives may be assessed as functional, with a minor recommendation to supplement a problem solution.

The intervention logic of IP 2.2 meets all the required elements and may be considered functional. Specific objective 1 adequately emphasizes the accessibility, throughput and sustainability of social services. Specific objective 2 is focused on the domain of prevention, promotion of health, including equal access to health care and promotion of healthy lifestyle and active ageing. Further, the specific objective will focus on development of community-based care and deinstitutionalisation of psychiatric care (transfer of the main psychiatric care activity to community), in accordance with the identified issues. The intervention logic in terms of fulfilment of both specific objectives may be assessed as functional, planned activities result into the accomplishment of expected results and of the specific objectives and enable a response to possible external factors. The evaluator recommended to simplify the text and proposed possible interlinking and merging of certain activities.

The intervention logic of IP 2.3 meets all the required elements and may be considered functional. Interventions legitimately emphasise the support to cooperation of local actors, offer of social services and further education adapted to needs of rural regions. The programme underlines the focus on solving the issue of excluded localities and promoting social entrepreneurship. The intervention logic in terms of fulfilment of specific objectives may be assessed as functional; the evaluator recommends certain specifying amendments.

The intervention logic of IP 3.1 meets all the required elements and may be considered functional. An emphasis is given to the general development of the innovation environment, both on the part of the offer and of the demand, when the specific objective focuses on enhancing quality and quantity of use of social innovations. In terms of follow-up steps a substantial element consists in the supposed deployment of innovations through other thematic priority axes. The programme defines in details the concept and objectives of the

Working translation, without proofreading

entire innovation process. Planned activities lead to the accomplishment of expected results and specific objectives and will enable a response to possible external factors.

The intervention logic of IP 4.1 meets all the required elements and may be considered functional. The IP's focus is rather wide and in fact it covers both the domain of public administration and the domain of justice. The described intervention logic of the programme is linear, more or less. Measures (activities) in scope of PA 4 respond to key problems and EU recommendations and linked to the main identified needs. The activities, therefore, may be assessed as properly set, including the cross-cutting approach to the principle of combating corruption.

The operational programme anticipates subsidies to be used as a **form of support**. MA duly considers using financial instruments under the programme for investment priority 2.1, provided that in accordance with Article 32 of the General Regulation an ex-ante evaluation of the suitability of use of financial instruments is anticipated.

Monitoring of the programme

Evaluation task 3 assesses the setting of the programme monitoring, specifically of each investment priority.

For all the investment priorities we may generally conclude that **the system of indicators and the monitoring procedures have been duly designed and will enable efficient monitoring of the progress in implementation and determining the programme benefits (results)**. In general we may declare that **the defined result indicators are duly linked to the planned interventions and contribute to the accomplishment of expected results**. For the purpose of ex post evaluation of the programme internal indicators have been planned as suitable and the MA has already planned the monitoring thereof.

In most investment priorities **the definition of indicators meets the requirements of comprehensibility and availability, robustness and clarity of normative interpretation**. Minor deficiencies have been identified; the evaluator proposes to make definitions of certain indicators more exact.

In general we may also conclude that **target values of output and result indicators correspond to the relevant allocation**. Minor amendments (to be considered) have been proposed for indicators of certain investment priorities.

On the whole we may declare that adequate procedures for monitoring and data collection have been set and these procedures enable evaluations to be made ex post.

Financial and factual milestones of all the priority axes have been set in accordance with the methodology specified in the Partnership Agreement. Selected monitoring indicators cover most of the priority axis allocations and show the progress in implementation of relevant interventions. **The set target values of milestones** have been specified on the basis of preceding experience and may be considered **achievable**.

Administrative capacities and involvement of partners

Evaluation task 4 included an assessment of the administrative capacity for the programme management and involvement of partners, including activities reducing the administrative burden for beneficiaries.

Working translation, without proofreading

The evaluation implies that during preparation of the operational programme **adequate human resources and administrative capacities** for the programme management have been proposed (or planned). Partnership principles have been complied with in the preparatory stage of the programme, including a sufficient **involvement of partners**, which is in an adequate extent planned also for the implementation stage of the operational programme. Specific outputs are also presented reflecting partners' involvement in preparation of the programme. The programme document adequately identifies planned activities **reducing the administrative burden of beneficiaries** at both national and programme levels.

Adequacy of financial allocations

Evaluation task 5 assessed the adequacy of financial allocations for individual priority axes.

The evaluator has not identified any material inconsistencies at the level of individual POs or at the level of IPs. Allocations of individual priority axes may be assessed as adequate. Financial allocations for individual priority axes correspond to the importance of the relevant problems and needs, on the basis of which the programme specific objectives have been set, to the size of the programme's contribution to the problem solution, nature of activities and selected forms of support (combination thereof) and requirements on the thematic concentration. The distribution of allocations reflects the most significant recommendation of the Council for the CR, including the increase in allocation for investment priority 4.1 and priority axis 1 – Promoting employment and adaptability of workforce.

Contribution of the programme to the Strategy Europe 2020

The operational programme Employment 2014–2020 dominantly contributes to fulfilment of the objectives of the Strategy Europe 2020 in the area of employment and poverty and accomplishes the 3rd priority of the Strategy, Inclusive Growth. In the area of employment the programme, particularly by promoting active employment policies and by reducing differences of disadvantaged groups in their position in the labour market, as well as by interventions to increase employability and competences of workers as a pre-requisite for sustainable employment and prevention of unemployment. Conditions for the strategy implementation are supported by interventions in the system area, through improving the quality of performance of the public employment services and of the adult education system. In the field of poverty key interventions include promoting the integration of the socially excluded into the labour market, promoting the development of the social entrepreneurship sector and interventions in the system of social services. Interventions in the sphere of efficient public administration show implications basically for all the objectives of the Strategy EU 2020, because they create conditions for a more efficient implementation of public policies at all levels. The increased efficiency of the public administration and reduced administrative and regulatory burden will contribute to a more favourable environment for enhancing the competitiveness of the Czech Republic, creating conditions for fulfilment of objectives in the area of employment and reduction of poverty. Due to the time horizon of the strategy objectives the contribution of interventions in the field of social innovation and transnational cooperation seems rather marginal, however, by their contents the interventions fulfil the priority of Inclusive Growth and the flagship initiative "Innovation Union".

Fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities

Chapter 9 of the OP Employment, "Ex-Ante Conditionalities" specifies the relevant thematic and general ex-ante conditionalities. **The draft OP Employment addresses ex-ante conditionalities relevant for the proposed programme strategy and selected thematic objectives and investment priorities.** Descriptions of fulfilment of particular (sub)criteria of the conditionalities were kept up to date.

Description of changes and improvements to the programme

During the ex-ante evaluation the evaluated document has recorded certain substantial shifts and improvements. The programme strategy has been supplemented with an analysis of problems and needs of the Czech Republic, the programme has been made more specific in terms of justification of thematic objectives and investment priorities, information focused on the use of integrated instruments and repayable forms of financing and information describing synergies of the programme within the system of ESIF instruments.

Most priority axes and investment priorities show shifts consisting particularly in a simplified structure, higher transparency and comprehensibility of the text and logic links within the entire intervention logic chain. Certain activities and investment priorities have been added or amended. Definitions of specific needs of target groups and of beneficiaries have been improved. In terms of monitoring the programme indicators have been specified in more details and supplemented, target values have been set including target values for milestones. The applied terminology has been clarified and made more precise.

The chapter on partnership has been structured better – aspects required in the programme template have been added and descriptions of involvement of the partners have been made more specific. During the preparation phase of the operational programme also the relevance and links of the planned interventions have been specified in relation to the individual key elements of the strategy EU 2020, key objectives, national objectives, priorities and key initiatives and the relevance of ex-ante conditionalities for the selected priority investment priorities and specific objectives has been clarified gradually.