



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ
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ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА
ДОБРО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

REPORT

ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME “ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY” 2007-2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOVEMBER, 2016



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IDENTIFICATION:

Name:	Analysis of the implementation of Operational Programme “Administrative Capacity” and Operational Programme “Technical Assistance” in relation to the development of the final reports on the two programmes
Contract:	#CoM-112 from 11.11.2016 r.
Assigning Institution:	Council of Ministers
Implementing Organization:	Consortium „GFK – 2016“
Team Leader:	Kamelia Kaloyanova

This contract has been implemented by the “GFK – 2016” Consortium. The lead partner is “Five Consult” JSC and the partner – “Global Metrics” Ltd. It is a civil partnership under the meaning of art. 357 – 364 from the Contracts and Obligations Act, headquartered in Sofia, #27 Veliko Tarnovo Str.

The opinions expressed in this evaluation report solely to the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Administration of the Council of Ministers



Introduction:

The analysis of the implementation of Operational Programme Administrative Capacity 2007-2013 in relation with the preparation of the Final Report of the Programme, of which this executive summary is an integral part, was carried out in November 2016 by a team of experts of DZZD "GFK-2016" according to contract MC-112/ 11.11.2016 r. with the Administration of Council of Ministers.

This is an executive summary of the Final Evaluation Report and provides analysis of the implementation of the programme during the whole programming period.

The objective of the evaluation is to provide an independent analysis on which basis to evaluate the degree of disbursement of funds, the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall implementation of OPAC, socio-economic effects and impact of the programme and the correlation between the program objectives, the achieved indicators and the actual results. The evaluation objective was also to identify factors leading to success or failure in the implementation of OP; to identify the main problems and good practices and to formulate recommendations for the implementation of similar future activities.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- to assess to what extent the results achieved under the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity meet the objectives and the needs of the beneficiaries and the target groups and help to achieve the planned socio-economic impact;
- to assess to what extent the activities implemented are efficient and sustainable;
- to assess the effect of implementation of different measures of OPAC on the stakeholders and on the reforms of the relevant sectors in compliance with European and national strategic documents;
- to outline the main problems during the implementation of the projects and provide recommendations;
- based on the analysis of the progress of implementation to formulate recommendations for effective and efficient programming, management and implementation of OPGG.

The evaluation covers all four priority axes of the programme as follows:

- Priority axis I. Good governance
- Priority axis II. Human resources management
- Priority axis III. Quality administrative service delivery and e-governance development
- Priority axis IV. Technical assistance

According to the European Commission's guidelines and the requirements of the technical specification the evaluation was based on the following **evaluation criteria**:

- ➔ *Relevance* - the degree of correlation between the objectives set and the existing social and economic problems that are to be solved by the programme;
- ➔ *Effectiveness* - the extent of achievement of the goals/ objectives set at the programme level (achievement of results and performance indicators);
- ➔ *Efficiency* - the extent to which the results achieved correspond to the costs incurred;
- ➔ *Coordination* - coordination of the activities realized under the programme, with national and European policies;



- *Impact* - impact of the programme on the stakeholders;
- *Sustainability* - sustainability of the project results achieved under the programme after the end of the funding.
- *Applicability of aid* – analysis of the objectives of the programme and their adequacy in terms of changes in social, economic and political aspects during the programming period.

The key tasks and evaluation questions that the evaluation report answers are as follows:

Task 1: Analysis of the relevance between the strategies (objectives and priorities) set in OPAC and OPTA and their implementation, on one hand, and the current socio-economic situation in the country, on the other.

Question 1 : To what extent the needs and the problems of the administration and the judiciary are taken into account in the programming process of the Indicative Annual Working Programmes and in the grant procedures throughout the programming period? To what extent are the procedures launched under the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity throughout the programming period in compliance with the main strategic documents related to the administrative and the judiciary reforms?

Question 2: What are the reasons, factors for success/failure of the procedures of OPAC? What conclusions and recommendations could be made for future similar interventions?

Question 3 : What are the critical factors that influence support/hamper achievement of the objectives of the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity on a programme level, on priority axis level, on subpriority level and on measures for support level? What recommendations could be formulated for the future?

Task 2: Analysis of the achievements measured by physical and financial indicators, including qualitative analysis on the progress made in relation to the initially set objectives.

Question 1. What is the contribution of OPAC to the Lisbon process, including the implementation of objectives set out in Art. 9 par. 3 of Regulation (EC) №1083 / 2006?

Question 2. To what extent are the results, the indicators and the objectives achieved on a programme level, priority axis level, subpriority level and measure of support?

Question 3. Did the implementation of the physical indicators contribute to achieve the objectives and the identified needs in the programme. How?

Question 4 What are the measures for monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the Managing Authority of OPAC and the Monitoring committee of the programme? What problems are encountered and what measures are taken to solve them?

Question 5. Specific questions

- 2.5.1. *What are the values of the indicators under priority axes? To what extent the objectives and the expected results are achieved on a priority axis level, sub-priorities level and on a programme level? What are the possible reasons for deviations from the target values of the indicators?*



- 2.5.2. *What is the number of participants in the projects financed under OPAC in accordance with Annex 23 of Regulation (EC) № 1828/2006?*
- 2.5.3. *How the supported by ESF OPAC activities contribute to the implementation of:*
- *Europe 2020, the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020; National Reform Programme and National Action Plans for social inclusion?*
 - *Annual reports and recommendations to the Council on the National Reform Programme of Bulgaria and containing a Council opinion on the Convergence Programme of Bulgaria for 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 within the framework of the European Semester?*
 - *Strategic documents in the area of administrative reform, judicial reform, e-government and e-Justice?*
- 2.5.4. *How the supported by ESF OPAC activities contribute the implementation of recommendations in the field of employment and objectives related to employment by the Community in the field of social integration, education and training (art. 4, para. 1 of Regulation (EC) № 1081/2006)? What is the observed change related to the objectives of the operations?*
- 2.5.5. *Do OPAC operations have significant influence on the activity of the revenue authorities and do they have impact on increasing revenue collection in the state budget?*
- 2.5.6. *Do OPAC operations have significant influence on the activity of the Supreme Administrative Court and the system of administrative courts?*
- 2.5.7. *Do OPAC operations have significant influence and in what direction on the quality and quantity of:*
- *Trainings for the employees of the administration?*
 - *Trainings of the magistrates and judicial employees?*
- 2.5.8. *Do OPAC operations have significant influence and in what direction on the capacity of the training institutions for the state administration and judiciary?*
- 2.5.9. *How the results of OPAC operations complement / are distinguished / from the results of the interventions for the judiciary and NGOs under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation Program, the interventions for administration under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013 and under Operational Programme Technical Assistance the results of other projects and programs with similar target groups regardless of their source of funding?*

Task 3 Contribution to the implementation of the European Union horizontal policies

Question 1: To what extent the horizontal policies are integrated in the instruments for granting financial aid?

Question 2: Are there substantial deviations from the set objectives?

Question 3: What recommendations for the future can be formulated?

Question 4: To what extent are the procedures of the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity programmed in a way that contributes to the application of the European Union horizontal policies? To what extent is the project selection process targeted toward the promotion of innovative approaches, protection against discrimination etc. ?



Question 5: How the partnership principle is observed within the implementation of the operations programme and what is the effect?

Question 6: What is the effect of the implementation of the Programme on promoting equality between men and women?

Question 7: What is the effect of the implementation of the Programme on promoting innovation, dissemination and integration activities related to transnational and interregional cooperation?

Task 4: Evaluation of the achieved sustainability of the results of the OPAC

Question 1: To what extent are the results of each of the procedures of the Operational Programme are sustainable? Which are the factors that predetermine the sustainability of the activities, financed under the Programme, what is the significance of the external factors (reorganisation, change of the legislation, etc.)

Question 2: What reforms have been introduced as a result of the funding received under the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity? Which activities/procedures depend on further financial support under the Operational Programme Good Governance (OPGG)? Which activities/procedure depend on follow-on measures, requiring financing from the OPGG? What recommendations could be formulated for future to ensure better sustainability of the results and the impact of the OPAC?

Task 5: Analysis and evaluation of the significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

Question 1: Are there significant problems identified relating to compliance with EU legislation during the implementation of OPAC? What measures are taken to address them?

Question 2: Which are the main difficulties, problems, errors related to the implementation of the programme and including, where applicable, the classification of the problems detected in the application of the procedure under Article 62, paragraph 1, letter d) i) of Regulation (EC) №1083 / 2006? What are the measures taken by the Managing Authority to resolve them?

Question 3: Which are the main difficulties, problems, errors related to the implementation of the programme and including, where applicable, the classification of the problems detected in the application of the procedure under Article 62, paragraph 1, letter d) i) of Regulation (EC) №1083 / 2006? What are the measures taken by the Managing Authority to resolve them?

Question 3: What are the reasons for the main problems identified throughout the implementation of the Operational Programme and what recommendations can be formulated for similar interventions in the programming period 2014 - 2020 ?

Question 4: Are there significant problems identified in the implementation of actions and activities foreseen in Article 10 a, d, e, f of Regulation (EC) №1081 / 2006 (gender mainstreaming, strengthening integration in employment and social inclusion of other disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities, innovative activities, including a presentation of the themes and their results, dissemination and mainstreaming, transnational and/or interregional actions)?

Task 6: Analysis of the implementation of the technical assistance



Question 1. How the technical assistance contributed to the implementation of OPAC for the period 2007-2015?

Question 2: What is the share of the amount of Structural Funds allocated to the Operational Programme spent under technical assistance? What conclusions and recommendations for more effective and efficient use of technical assistance can be made?

Task 7: Analysis of the measures and activities for information and publicity

Question 1: What are the values of the indicators achieved throughout the implementation of the Communication plan of OPAC and what are the achieved results? Which projects can be designated as good practices and what are the significant events?

Question 2: What are the implemented measures for information and publicity in the implementation of the Communication plan of OPAC?

Methodological approach

In order to cover all tasks and all evaluation questions to be answered, a combination of methods are used that allow to analyze the programming process and the extent to which individual measures responded to the needs of the target groups and the extent to which they have covered important socio-economic developments of the country:

- ➔ Online surveys with a wide range of stakeholders: beneficiaries, NGOs and other groups that are affected by the implemented projects and changes administrations at central and local level, etc.;
- ➔ Online interviews with representatives of OPTA Managing Authority /MA/ (including experts who are currently part of management "Good Governance" and experts who are former employees and who had a key role in the preparation and implementation of the two programs);
- ➔ In-depth interviews with representatives of the different beneficiaries under the directions of interventions. Beneficiaries were selected who implement key projects, also beneficiaries who have had a large number of projects and beneficiaries who have projects with a large budgets;
- ➔ Group discussions with management representatives and experts from the Managing Authority of the program (including former employees who had a key role in the preparation and implementation of the two programs) divided into groups of expertise: programming, monitoring and evaluation, financial implementation, communication and publicity verification.
- ➔ A variety of analytical and statistical methods.

Thus the evaluation team investigates separate factors of success / failure of the procedures under OPTA, as well as the factors that have influenced and facilitated the achievement of the objectives of the program.

The evaluation is developed in 7 evaluation tasks as each of them formulates evaluation questions (EQ). The analysis provides answers to these questions.

The main **conclusions of the analyses** are presented below.

With regard to the programming of the Indicative Annual Working Programmes and the grant award procedures



The approach followed by OPAC in the preparation of the Indicative Annual Working Programmes takes into consideration both the strategic objectives of the programme and the needs of beneficiaries - administration and judiciary. The beneficiaries of the programme were consulted throughout the preparation of IAWP while the consultation process has been improved throughout the implementation of the programme. Generally, all launched grant award procedures within the period 2007 -2014 address one or more strategic documents in the respective field that have been active at the time of developing the procedure, as well as recommendations from the European Commission. At the end of the programming period the grant award procedures comply with the strategic documents in the respective field, adopted after their preparation and development. Some of the procedures follow on previous procedures, with the objective of achieving better results. The beneficiaries of the programme are of the opinion that the needs and problems of the administration and the judiciary have been considered to a very large extent throughout the programming of the Indicative Annual Working Programmes and the grant award procedures. The large number of projects submitted under the competition- based grant award procedures show that measures funded by OPAC meet the current needs of the beneficiaries. The most active beneficiaries are municipalities, they have implemented the largest number of projects under OPAC. The structures of the judiciary show less interest in applying for the funding under the Operational Programme and in implementation of projects.

With regard to the achieved objectives and results

The physical indicators of the programme achieved the set target values to a very large extent. Some of the indicators exceeded the target values, others did not achieve the target values, but in general a very high degree of achievement of the set values of the indicators on programme level can be reported.

The indicators of **Priority axis 1 Good governance** have exceeded or are close to the set target values. Despite the achieved physical progress, the objective of priority axis related to the effective functioning of the administration and the judiciary, is partly achieved. The reasons for this are that although the project results are available, the effectiveness of grant award procedures has proved insufficient.

The implemented projects for functional analyses have achieved their immediate project objectives, but long-term effects have not led to the desired outcome - improvement of the effectiveness of the public administration. The comprehensive effects are limited, given that the implementation of functional analyses of individual administrations has resulted in limited change of internal organization and the organizational changes are related to a small part of the whole administration. Generally, OPAC operations contributed towards transparency and accountability in the administration, but the observed effects of this, such as reducing corruption are insignificant. The reasons are external for the Programme. Despite the existence of governmental Strategy and Programme for preventing and countering corruption and the political pressure from the EU to implement reforms in this area, the relevant changes are slow and inefficient. The achievement of the desired effects depends on the political will to implement the results of the projects and to adopt the relevant legislation.



An important contribution of the programme under this priority axis is the preparation of strategic documents of the administration at central and local level, the developed capacity for strategic planning and monitoring of policies.

An important result of the Programme is the introduction of a legal obligation for compulsory impact assessment of the legislation and compulsory consultations with stakeholders.

The objectives of this sub-priority 1.4. are not met, the reason for this is the lack of a functioning legislation on Public Private Partnership.

The objectives of priority axis I related to the judiciary (sub-priority 1.5.) are partially achieved. There is no visible progress in judicial reform for the recent years as far as the public perception is concerned (citizens and businesses). The main reason for that is external to the Programme and is due to internal resistance from the judiciary system to change ,on the one hand, and the lack of political consensus on the necessary reforms, on the other. In December 2015 the National Assembly adopted amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria concerning the functioning of the Supreme Judicial Council. In August 2016 the National Assembly adopted legislative amendments to the Judiciary Act regarding judicial reform. Currently it is hardly to predict when the reforms in the judiciary would be “visible” for public perception. In addition the achievement of the objectives under the sub-priority is hindered by the lack of interest by potential beneficiaries.

The objective of **Priority axis II Human resource management** is achieved to a very high extent as the implemented projects have contributed to improving human resource management and training of civil servants, the judiciary and civil society. Under this priority axis are 12 indicators are set, 8 of them have exceeded the target values, three are close to the set target values, and one is out of date.

The launched grant award procedures under sub-priority 2.1. are generally successful in terms of the achieved results. The most significant results achieved are under the project of the Administration of Council of Ministers which ended at the end of December 2015 (the end of the programming period). An Integrated Information System for coordination and management of human resources in public administration was upgraded and implemented in 472 administrative structures. The developed system should have long-term positive effect related to improving the management of human resources at the central, regional and municipal administrations, which will be assessed after a certain period in which it operates and is used by the administrations.

Grant award procedures under Sub-priority 2.2. can be defined as successful – the beneficiaries have shown strong interest to implement projects, the projects have been completed successfully and their immediate objectives have been achieved. However the sub-priority axis objectives could be achieved in a more efficient way if the procedures were based on a general analysis of needs and strategic planning –it is how, what training to be conducted and who should provide the trainings. Such an approach has been adopted in OPGG where IPA and other training institutes will be responsible for training on general and specific competence of state employees. Another factor that has impeded achievement of optimal objectives of the sub-priority is the insufficient capacity of the Institute for Public Administration to take full advantage of funding opportunities and to increase its capacity and prestige of a national institution, providing training for administration.

The objectives of sub-priority 2.4. are improving the qualifications of magistrates and court officials and elaborating overall human resource management policy in the judicial system. Generally,



launched grant award procedures under this subpriority have contributed to achieving the subpriority objectives. The beneficiaries have shown strong interest to apply for and implement projects, the projects have been completed successfully and achieved their immediate objectives. Projects of National Institute of Justice have significantly contributed to the increase of the number of people trained by the Institute, as well as to diversify the training topics and teaching methods. Magistrates and court staff have been trained which contributed to improving their capacity.

The objective of **Priority axis 3 Quality administrative service delivery and e-governance development** is partially achieved, though most indicators have exceeded their target values or are close to the set target values (except the indicator for e-Justice). The approach for achieving the objectives of the third priority axis related to the development of e-governance did not lead to optimal use of time and resources. There is no prioritization of measures which in practice is imperative, as e-governance can not happen without the basic preconditions. On the other hand, introduction of e-services by individual administrations have marginal effect without having the necessary environment for data exchange and the electronic identification of users.

Although most of the projects under sub-priorities 3.1. and 3.2. achieved their immediate project objectives, the development of quality and user-oriented administrative services is still in its early phase of development. A number of elements of e-government within individual institutions, especially at central administration level have been established. The problem is that there are no national specific requirements / regulations adopted on how the developed services, registers, etc. would be integrated with each other. It is not clear how the achievements of a project can be used by other administrations / institutions. In practice, achieving interoperability between all registers is an important technical problem that remains topical at the present time.

The objectives of the sub-priority 3.3. are achieved to a small extent. Despite the insufficient physical implementation at the end of 2015 e-Justice portal was developed and deployed under OPAC project. The e-justice portal is a very significant progress in the introduction of e-justice in Bulgaria and would contribute to increase of transparency in the judicial system. At present the portal incorporates 6 electronic services. The reasons for insufficient achievement of sub-priority's objectives is external to the programme and is due to the reluctance of institutions in the judicial system for computerization of processes, on the one hand, and the lack of political consensus on the necessary reforms, on the other.

The insufficient effectiveness in achieving of procedures objectives resulted in a change of the programming approach and laying down different measures of support in the new strategic documents for the period 2014-2020.

With regard to the implemented reforms

The financial resources provided by Operational Programme Administrative Capacity has been a very important tool to solve critical problems of administration and the judiciary - trainings, e-governance, improvement of administrative service and internal processes, preparation of analyzes and improving the capacity for policy making and strategic planning, performing reforms in key sectors of the political institutions makers and others. OPAC projects enabled the supported



institutions to implement certain activities for which the available budgetary resources were not sufficient.

The implemented projects financed by OPAC have sufficiently contributed to improving the efficiency of administrative structures at national level. The evaluation highlighted the following directions in which the work performance was improved and the processes in institution at national level were optimized:

- Introduction of e-government facilities and improvement of the internal processes in the administration with the help of information and communication technologies;
- Development of electronic registers within the existing individual licenses, registration and licensing regimes;
- Introduction of electronic services;
- Optimization of structures and internal rules and regulations;
- Improvement of human resource management;
- Development of human resources assessment system and models for improvement of qualifications according based on the the needs of individual administrations;
- Increasing the qualification of employees;
- Increasing the transparency and access to information;
- Institutionalizing the process of impact assessment in public administration;
- Improving the capacity to formulate and implement policies;
- Capacity building for the preparation of sectoral analyzes;
- Capacity building for planning, managing and monitoring the implementation of public policies;
- Improvement of administrative services for businesses and citizens;
- Introduction of internal controls and combating corruption.

The extent to which OPAC procedures contributed to the reform of the the judicial system in Bulgaria is not at the level of expectations of the public perception and various stakeholders. However, it should be noted that OPAC provided financial assistance and a number of key projects were implemented under the programme , which projects have a potential to positively impact the judicial system and the implementation of reforms in the judiciary. Some of the projects in reference are:

- e-Justice - research and development of integrated communication and information system and electronic portal of the judiciary; introducing standardized electronic applications, electronic case management and transmission of documents between judicial authorities, but also between other relevant public institutions;
- Developed model of programme budgeting in the *Supreme Judicial Council*
- Improvement of the Unified Information System for Combating Crime (UISCC);
- preparation and implementation of specialized videoconferencing equipment as part of the trial, development of tools for statistical analysis of the workload of the judiciary, unified system for filling and handling of complaints, introduced as a measure to combat corruption;
- establishing a network of judges - "court coordinators for European law" - to increase the capacity of the Bulgarian courts in the application of EU legislation;
- increasing the capacity of initial training by strengthening the network of judges mentors, improvement of skills of judge mentors and strengthen the organization of their work;



- increase the capacity of the Prosecutor's Office of Bulgaria through the creation of specialized structures to fight organized crime and related offenses, including increasing the effectiveness of the training of prosecutors and support of specialized prosecutors to improve their skills through networking with other such specialized prosecutors from Member States.

With regard to the difficulties encountered

The implementation of operational programmes in Bulgaria throughout the first programming period had its own specifics and difficulties. The main difficulties in implementing the OPAC were in terms of:

- Lack of experience and administrative capacity both -in beneficiaries and in the Managing Authority at the beginning of the programme; a number of corrective actions were taken by MA
- Unstable institutional environment and changes in administrative structures, both in beneficiaries of OPAC and in the Managing Authority;
- Difficulty in applying the rules and procedures of Public Procurement Act
- Administrative burdens related to project reporting and multiple requirements, which also addressed and optimized continuously;
- Lack of political will to implement some of the reforms.

Large part of the identified problems are addressed with specific recommendation including the programming OPGG.

With regard to the application of horizontal principles

The horizontal principles specified in OPAC at programme level are as follows:

- Gender equality and prevention of discrimination –gender equality and prevention of discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnical origin, religion or beliefs, injuries, age or sexual orientation;
- Innovations and mainstreaming - development of new approaches and exchange of best practices when enforcing the different policies;
- Partnership - the basic objective of this principle is to guarantee to a sufficient degree the access and participation of socio-economic partners and other parties concerned in the processes of programming, monitoring and evaluation of the ESF support.
- Sustainable Development – further to environmental protection the objective of the principle also include social justice and cohesion, and promoting innovative, knowledge-based economies, promotion of lifelong learning

In the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity there are no objectives specifically related to the horizontal principles. The horizontal principles are reflected in all grant award procedures as well in developing part of the system of indicators. The Guidelines for the applicants of all grant award procedures provide that the submitted proposals shall comply with the EU horizontal policies and shall contribute to their implementation, The envisaged activities shall comply with the horizontal principles of OPAC and shall contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the priority axis. In that context, it can be concluded that the grant award procedures under OPAC contribute to



the implementation of horizontal policies, relatively fewer were the procedures related to the principle "Innovation and mainstreaming"

With regard to the sustainability of results

The sustainability for the purposes of the present evaluation was reviewed in terms of measuring how the achieved results of the funding will continue to be applied or used after the end of the programme's support.

The expected level of sustainability is different, the evaluation report contains conclusions about the expected sustainability of projects implemented under the individual subpriorities/ priority axis. Factors that affect the achieved sustainability of the results could be grouped as follows:

Institutional factors - the capacity of organizations and their administrative potential are key factors in terms of project management. Functional characteristics and their provision with material and human resources determine the achievement of sustainability. This is an important factor for OPAC as support for institutional and professional development is a key objective of the programme, as well as the creation and strengthening of reliable administrative systems.

Economic sustainability - achieved efficiency of properly spent funds and the need that additional resources are necessary in the future to ensure sustainability.

External factors - political stability, organizational restructuring, economic crises, common level of development, uncertainty on the availability of the necessary national funding to support the developed electronic systems.

Lack of political commitment, political will and consensus to pursue policies and changes.

Unclear willingness of beneficiaries to implement real change and to enhance the achievements.

Recommendations:

A significant part of lessons learned were taken into consideration when programming the new operational programme "Good Governance", which unites the upgrade of two programmes - OPAC and OPTA. There are a number of changes and adapted best practices and lessons learned in programming of the Partnership Agreement, operational programmes for the period 2014 - 2020 and subsequently developed legislation and regulations for ESIS. In that context, there are few recommendations that can be given based on the analysis, and they have a more horizontal nature:

The main measures supported under the programme whose sustainability depends on continuous funding are the reforms in the judiciary, including e-justice and e-governance. In addition, because of the limited impact that has been achieved so far, additional measures are necessary that would follow on optimising the structure of the administration, improving human resources management, and developing public-private partnerships.

Regardless of the results achieved a horizontal activity that shall be necessary in the future is provision of resources to maintain and upgrade the qualification of human resources both in the administration and the judiciary. In this regard relevant measures to increase the capacity and prestige of IPA and NIJ as major training institutions respectively for the administration and the judiciary have to be taken. For the same reasons support measures for the provision of training and capacity building can be directed to other institutions providing centralized training for



administration such as the Psychology Institute of the Ministry of Interior, National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Diplomatic Institute, which are envisaged as beneficiaries of the OPGG.

In summary, the sustainability of the investments made under the programme is associated with capacity built, the ability to analyze needs, clear objective setting, strategic planning, monitoring and impact assessment as well as developed and implemented systems for eGovernment services. The investments have a very important role in solving the specific needs of key major beneficiaries (National Revenue Agency, Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency, Customs Agency, the Registry Agency, Sofia municipality and the municipalities in large urban centers with a population of over 100 thousand, as well as many others institutions at the central level) and for smaller administrations and beneficiaries (such as small and medium-sized municipalities, NIJ, IPA National Association of Municipalities, etc.). Upgrading with new measures within the new programming period would contribute to achieve better sustainability of projects and investments.

With regard to the continuation of measures with OPGG's fund, it should be noted that OP "Good governance" is programmed in relation with the implementation of the thematic objective (TC) № 11 "Strengthening the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration," Investment priority "Investments in institutional capacity and efficiency of public administrations and public services at national, regional and local level to implement reforms and achieve better regulation and good governance ". The priority axes are drawn on the basis of consultations with representatives of the administration, the judiciary and civil society and comply with the Public Administration Development Strategy 2014-2020, National Programme for Development "Bulgaria 2020", the National Reform Programme and E-governance development strategy 2014-2020, as well as recent strategic documents in the field of judicial reform.

OPGG should adopt a proactive and leading role at the early stage of the project cycle - programming and planning measures based on sound analysis of needs and in coordination with the beneficiaries. This will overcome the reactive approach of planning and part of the reported significant problems in project implementation shall be addressed – e.g. "short and ineffective planning of activities by beneficiaries, leading to frequent change their priorities";" launching and procurement project activities to external contractor under the PPA provisions, combined with a high degree of rethinking the priorities and measures of the beneficiaries, which contributes to delaying the implementation of the programme.

The indicator system must be effective. The indicators should be explained to the widest extent possible to the applicants and beneficiaries of OPGG in all phases of the project cycle.

The reporting of indicators should allow the reporting of the objectives of individual measures, and thence - the specific and overall objectives of the programme.

Last but not least, indicators related to horizontal policies (equal opportunities and sustainable development in accordance with the " Guidelines on Mainstreaming of Environmental Policy and Climate Change Policy into European Structural and Investment Funds - phase "Implementation of the Partnership Agreement and programmes in the period 2014-2020." (approved by a Decision № 3 of the Council of Ministers of 6.01.2016) should be taken into consideration.



The information campaigns and training of beneficiaries in all phases of the project cycle should be continued including extensive and detailed training in relation to the application of Public Procurement Act, simplified costs, use of Unified Management Information System for the EU Structural and Investment Funds 2020.

With Regards to the use of Technical Assistance

According to the text of OPAC the technical assistance is aimed at improving the capacity for effective and efficient management and implementation of the programme. The main goal of PA 4 is to achieve high absorption rate of ESF funds and thus to achieve the objectives of OPAC. Based on the high absorption it can be concluded that the PA objective is achieved.

The projects funded under the PA 4: Technical assistance mainly to support the work of the Managing Authority by payment of the remuneration (motivation of employees) - 45% of funds; to strengthen the capacity of MA and Monitoring Committee, as well as the internal audit units in the two administrations (Ministry of Public Administration and Administrative Reform and Ministry of Finance) - 18%, securing the implementation of various processes related to program management (10%).

The rest of the projects financed under PA4: Technical assistance are aimed at ensuring activities related to information and communication of the program. The implementation of these projects is included in the analysis of Task 7.

At the beginning of the program there were difficulties related to the capacity of the MA when programming documents were developed, as well as manuals for implementation of the program application guidelines. Then the need was identified for additional experts, training of experts updating of manuals and guides. These difficulties decreased significantly with the experience gained, increased staff number, improved administrative capacity.

With Regards to the Implementation of the Communication Plan

Based on the reviewed performance data and information from reports the following conclusions could be drawn:

- ➔ Measures for information and publicity of OPAC set out in the Communication Plan ensured transparency in the management and implementation of the Operational Programme, which has helped to increase the confidence of the general public not towards the Managing Authority but also to public institutions as a whole.
- ➔ During the implementation of the CP, the MA has conducted proactive communication policy with respect to all target groups - the general public, potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries of OPAC.
- ➔ In the course of implementation of the Operational Programme and in full compliance with the CP, regularly information is provided to the media, Bulgarian citizen, national, regional and municipal administrations, the judiciary, the civil society and all stakeholders, including the regional level.
- ➔ A variety of communication tools and channels have been used – they have been assessed as suitable for informing the main target groups of OPAC. The OPSC website has been valued the highest confidence among all. It has been defined by the beneficiaries as the main communication channel for information on the program, which is logical in today's socio-



cultural and communication conditions in which the perception of the Internet as an opportunity for an exchange of information is a prerequisite for the development and application of good information and communication campaign.

- ➔ As a result of the implementation of the planned measures of the CP, the public interest is largely attracted and public awareness increased on the scope, objectives and results of OPAC, funded by the ESF.
- ➔ Thanks to the communication and publicity measures implemented, the interest of potential beneficiaries to the program has significantly increased, which encouraged them to show greater activity in applying for OPAC funding.
- ➔ The policy of transparency and openness on behalf of the MA has helped to improve the quality of projects implemented by the beneficiaries and their general competence in relation to the implementation of projects under OPAC.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Most of the lessons learned were taken into account when planning the new operational program "Good Governance", which upgrades the two programs - OPAC and OPTA. There are a number of changes and adopted best practices and lessons learned in programming of the Partnership Agreement, operational programs for the period 2014 - 2020 and subsequently developed regulations for ESIF. In this sense there are just a few recommendations that can be given as a result of the analysis, and they have a more horizontal nature:

The main measures supported by OPAC whose sustainability depends on continued funding are judicial reforms, including e-Justice and e-government. Also, due to limited effect achieved upgrading measures are needed regarding the optimization of the structure of the administration, improvement of human resource management and development of PPPs. Horizontal activity regardless of the results will be needed in the future to provide resources to maintain and upgrade the qualification of human resources both in the system of administration and the judiciary, and in this regard - measures to increase the capacity and prestige of the Institute on Public Administration and National Justice Institute as the major training institutions respectively for the administration and the judiciary. For the same reasons support for the provision of training and capacity development can be directed to other institutions providing centralized training for administration like the in Psychology Institute of the Ministry of Interior, NAMB and the Diplomatic Institute, which are envisaged as beneficiaries of the new OPGG.

In summary, the sustainability of the investments made under the two programs is associated with the capacity built, the ability to analyze needs, to set clear goal setting, strategic planning, monitoring and impact assessment as well as with the design and implementation of the systems for eGovernment services. The investments have a very important role in solving the specific needs of key major beneficiaries (NRA, AGC, Customs Agency, the Registry Agency, the Sofia Municipality and the municipalities in large urban centers with a population of over 100 thousand). Upgrading with new measures within the new programming period would help achieve greater sustainability of projects and investments.

OPDU should adopt a proactive and leading role at an early stage of the project cycle - programming and planning measures based on sound needs analysis and in coordination with the beneficiaries. This will overcome the reactive approach of planning and part of the reported significant problems



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will be removed in project implementation as "short and ineffective planning of activities by beneficiaries, leading to frequent change their priorities" and "preparation and public procurement of project activities, combined with a high degree of rethinking the priorities and measures of the beneficiaries contributes to delaying the implementation of the program

The indicator system must be workable and explained to the utmost detail to applicants and beneficiaries OPGG in all phases of the project cycle.

The reporting of indicators should enable an implementation of the objectives of individual measures, and therefore - the specific and primary goals of the program.

Last but not least, it should be taken into account that the indicators related to horizontal policies (equal opportunities and sustainable development in accordance with the "Guidelines for the integration of environmental policy and policy on climate change in the European structural and investment funds - phase "Implementation of the partnership Agreement and programs in the period 2014-2020." (approved by a decision № 3 of the Council of Ministers from 6.01.2016).

Continue information campaigns and training of beneficiaries in all phases of the project cycle including extensive and detailed training in relation to the application of PPA, simplified costs, use of EUMIS 2020.