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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
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MINISTRY OF LABOUR, FAMILY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

MULTIANNUAL EVALUATION PLAN

**for the
SECTORAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT**

November 2008

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ABBREVIATIONS:

ACIS	Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments
ECU	Evaluation Central Unit
ESF	European Social Fund
EC	European Commission
ESC	Evaluation Steering Committee
IBs	Intermediate Bodies
KAI	Key Area of Intervention
MASOPHRD	Managing Authority for Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
MIS	Management Information System
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	Priority Axis
SMIS	Single Management Information System
SOP	Sectoral Operational Programme
SOPHRD	Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development

Introduction

This document sets out the evaluation strategy for the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOPHRD) 2007-2013 in Romania.

The strategy has been discussed with the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments (ACIS) and with the Monitoring Committee for SOPHRD. The strategy presented in this Plan reflects the SOPHRD objectives and priorities within the context of the overall strategy of Romania for the use of EU funds. The strategy balances the Romanian policy needs with EU regulations requirements and European Commission guidelines.

Evaluation is not an end in itself. Evaluation should be one ongoing process with a high potential for adaptability to the needs of management and policy and strategic orientation of the OP. From this perspective, this Plan is the first great moment of the evaluation process. It is expected that over the period of implementation of SOPHRD it will be subject of updates, to enable their adjustments to the needs that will emerge. The completion of the evaluation exercises during the programming period should generate relevant information and knowledge relevant on the implementation of the SOPHRD.

European Commission (EC) defines evaluation as a “judgment on the value of a (usually) public intervention with reference to criteria and explicit standards (e.g. relevance, efficiency, sustainability, equity etc.)”¹. In the context of SOPHRD, the term “intervention” represents the operations² financed under this programme. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), evaluation contributes to accountable governance, by providing feedback on the efficiency, effectiveness and performance of public policies, organisations or programmes³. In the case of the SOPHRD, the evaluation provides an assessment of the programme implementation.

The main objective of the SOPHRD evaluation is to improve the decision-making process, the resource allocation and accountability of the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the SOPHRD. This can be achieved through informing key decision-makers, and other relevant stakeholders involved in SOPHRD implementation process, but also through encouraging the ongoing organizational learning, in terms of building an appropriate institutional capacity of the Managing Authority for Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (MASOPHRD) evaluation function.

The concept of an Evaluation Plan was introduced for the first time for the current programming period⁴. The SOPHRD Multiannual Evaluation Plan establishes the indicative framework of the evaluation activities that the MASOPHRD will carry out during the programming period 2007-2013. The SOP Multiannual Evaluation Plan is a management tool. The role of the plan is to support an efficient and effective implementation of the SOPHRD in order to achieve the programme objectives and to contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy, European Employment Strategy and the Cohesion Policy objectives.

¹ European Commission – DG Regio website:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/index_en.htm

² An operation is defined as “a project or group of projects selected by the managing authority of the operational programme concerned or under its responsibility according to criteria laid down by the monitoring committee and implemented by one or more beneficiaries allowing achievement of the goals of the priority axis to which it relates” (art. 2(3) of the Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006).

³ The Public Management Service (PUMA) of the OECD: “Policy Brief No. 5 - Best practice guidelines for evaluation” <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/56/1902965.pdf>

⁴ According to articles 37, 47 – 49 of the Council Regulation no. 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund

The SOPHRD Multiannual Evaluation Plan has been elaborated by the MASOPHRD – Programme Evaluation Unit within Programming and Evaluation Unit according to the following documents:

- Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999;
- Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999;
- Working Document No 1: Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Ex-Ante Evaluation;
- Working Document No 2: Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators;
- Working Document No 3: Commission Methodological Paper giving guidelines on the calculation of public or equivalent structural spending for the purpose of additionally;
- Working Document No 5: Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods : Evaluation during the Programming Period;
- Working Document No 6: Measuring Structural Funds Employment Effects;
- EC Working Document “Indicative Guidance on ESF Evaluation Quality Standards” European Commission (EC);
- EC paper on Social Partners as beneficiaries – European Social Fund support to social partners in the 2007-2013 period;
- EC paper on European Social Fund support to social partners in the 2007-2013 period complementarity and consistency with other EU financial instruments;
- EC paper on Partnership in Cohesion Policy – European Social Fund support to social partners in the 2007-2013 period;
- Romanian Government Decision no. 457/2008 on the institutional framework for coordination and management of the structural instruments;
- Romanian Government Decision nr. 381/2007 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities, with subsequent modifications and completions;
- Romanian National Evaluation Strategy;
- Procedural Guidance Manual for NSRF Operational Programmes in Romania, 2007-2013, Romanian Ministry of Economy and Finance, Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments (ACIS), Evaluation Central Unit (ECU).

The **target audience** of the SOPHRD Multiannual Evaluation Plan is as follows:

- Managing Authority for Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (MASOPHRD);
- SOPHRD Intermediate Bodies (SOPHRD IBs);
- SOPHRD Monitoring Committee (MC) and specialized services of European Commission (EC);
- Evaluation Central Unit within the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments (Romanian Ministry of Economy and Finance) (ECU-ACIS);
- Social partners;
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- Policy makers;
- Academics;
- Beneficiaries;
- Civil society.

The Multiannual Evaluation Plan has been elaborated in accordance with the principles of partnership and good governance⁵. The Evaluation Central Unit within the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments (ECU-ACIS), the SOPHRD Intermediate Bodies (IBs), as well as the social partners and the NGOs were consulted during the Multiannual Evaluation Plan elaboration:

- The Multiannual Evaluation Plan was sent to ECU-ACIS for consultation. The Plan was discussed during the Evaluation Working Group meetings. All the Managing Authorities representatives responsible for programme evaluation participated at these meetings;
- In June 2008, MASOPHRD organized a meeting where the IBs representatives were invited for discussing the evaluation plan. The role of the IBs during the programme evaluation activities was discussed and clarified.
- Before the MC meeting from May 2008, the Evaluation Plan was sent to the social partners and to the NGOs as well as to the other members of the MC⁶. During the MC meeting, the SOPHRD Multiannual Evaluation Plan was presented and discussed. The MC members provided feed-back on the evaluation plan.

The SOPHRD Multiannual Evaluation Plan comprises 3 sections, as follows:

- Section I: Conceptual Framework for the SOPHRD evaluation;
- Section II: Indicative Evaluation Activities;
- Section III: Coordination and Management of the Evaluation Plan Implementation.

I. Conceptual Framework for the SOP HRD evaluation

1. SOPHRD Context

Elaborated in the context of the National Development Plan 2007-2013 and the National Reform Programme and in line with the 4th thematic priority of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 (“Development and more efficient use of Romania’s human capital”), SOPHRD⁷ is an important strategy for achieving the **national objectives in the fields of education and training, employment and social inclusion**. According to the Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion 2007-2013 and in line with the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and employment, SOPHRD also contributes to the achievement of the **EU objectives in the field of human resources development**. The SOPHRD priority axis and the key areas of intervention are in line with the National Reform Programme objectives and measures. The National Reform Programme was elaborated based on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs adopted by the EC in April 2005. These guidelines are the main policy instrument for developing and implementing the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. Therefore, it can be concluded the SOPHRD contributes to the achievement of Lisbon strategic vision in the field of the human resources development.

For reaching the national and EU objectives, the total financial allocation for SOPHRD is 4.089 billion Euros out of which 3.476 billion Euros from the ESF funding and the approx. 613 million Euros from the national public contribution.

⁵ Art. 5 of the Council Regulation no. 1081/2006; art. 11(2) of the Council Regulation no. 1083/2006

⁶ The members of the MC are the representatives of the central public administration institutions and other authorities and agencies working in the field of human resources development, SOPHRD IBs, social partners (trade unions and employers organizations), NGOs, representatives of the civil society.

⁷ The SOPHRD has been adopted by the European Commission Decision C(2007) 5811/22.11.2007.

The ESF interventions in Romania under SOPHRD and their financial allocations are presented below:

1. **Promoting lifelong learning and the adaptability of labour force and enterprises** (PA 2 and PA 3), with a weight in the financial allocation of 38.37%;
2. **Promoting active employment measures** for the inactive population, especially for people living in subsistence agriculture, young unemployed and long-term unemployed, as well as the **integration on the labour market** and the social inclusion of vulnerable groups (PA 4, PA 5 and PA 6), with a weight in the financial allocation of 34.21%;
3. **Education and training in support for growth and development of knowledge based society**, aiming at modernizing the initial and continuous education and training systems, including support for university education and research (PA 1): with a weight in the financial allocation of 23.55%.

The **general objective of SOPHRD** is the development of human capital and increasing competitiveness, by linking education and lifelong learning with the labour market and ensuring increased opportunities for future participation on a modern, flexible and inclusive labour market for 1,650,000 people.

The **SOPHRD specific objectives** can be summarized as follows:

- Promoting quality initial and continuous education and training, including higher education and research;
- Promoting entrepreneurial culture and improving quality and productivity at work;
- Facilitating the young people and long term unemployed insertion in the labour market;
- Developing a modern, flexible, inclusive labour market;
- Promoting (re)insertion in the labour market of inactive people, including in rural areas;
- Improving public employment services;
- Facilitating access to education and to the labour market of the vulnerable groups.

The **SOPHRD horizontal objectives** are equal opportunities, sustainable development, information and communication technology, innovation, transnational and interregional approach, active ageing and partnership.

2. Ex-ante Evaluation

According to the Article 47(2) of the Council Regulation no. 1083/2006, the SOPHRD has been the subject of the ex-ante evaluation in 2006. The aim of the ex-ante evaluation was to ensure the quality of the programming process and of the final programming document.

During the ex-ante evaluation process the **partnership principle** has been applied. The ex-ante evaluation exercise was an interactive process. Thus, seminars, workshops, debriefing meetings and bilateral discussions brought together the planners, evaluators, social partners, NGOs and other stakeholders in order to ensure a good quality evaluation process. The purpose of the consultations was to identify the main challenges in the field of the human resources development and the priorities that should be financed during the programming period 2007-2013 through the SOPHRD.

The main recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation were the following:

- Relate the rationale of the strategy with other relevant policies, such as educational policy, changes in labour law etc, and show the additionality of the SOPHRD strategy to the national policies in the HRD field;
- Assure the complementarities and coordination between SOPHRD and Regional Operational Programme and Sectoral Operational Programme Increase of Economic Competitiveness;
- Revise the quantification of the SOPHRD objectives and explain the relation between the financial allocation and the quantified outputs and results.

3. Monitoring System

The European Commission underlines the need for stronger links between monitoring and evaluation on one hand, and between these two exercises and decision-making, on the other hand. European Commission (EC)⁸ defines monitoring “an exhaustive and regular examination of the resources, outputs and results of public interventions”. According to OECD, monitoring is a “continuous or frequent standardized measurement”⁹.

The legal framework applicable for the SOPHRD monitoring is as follows:

- Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999;
- Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999;
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 setting out rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund;
- Working Document No 2: Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators;
- EC paper on Social Partners as beneficiaries – European Social Fund support to social partners in the 2007-2013 period;
- EC paper on European Social Fund support to social partners in the 2007-2013 period complementarity and consistency with other EU financial instruments;
- EC paper on Partnership in Cohesion Policy – European Social Fund support to social partners in the 2007-2013 period;
- Romanian Government Decision No 457/2008 on the institutional framework for coordination and management of the structural instruments;
- Romanian Government Decision No 381/2007 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities, with subsequent modifications and completions.

⁸ European Commission – DG Regio website:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/glossary/glossary_m_en.htm.

⁹ OECD website: <http://www.oecd.org>.

The monitoring system collects technical and financial data at the projects level that are aggregated afterwards at the Key Area of Intervention, Priority Axis and SOPHRD level. The **monitoring of the technical data** relies on a set of output and result indicators as stipulated in SOPHRD and in the Framework Document for SOPHRD implementation. The **monitoring of the financial data** aims at revealing the payments made in relation with the budgetary commitments and financial allocations.

Both technical and financial data is introduced in a centralised electronic system - **Single Management Information System (SMIS)**. This system is developed by the Ministry of Economy and Finance in cooperation with all structures involved in managing the structural instruments (MAs, IBs, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority). The SMIS system is dedicated to all the Operational Programmes (OP) financed under the structural instruments. For each OP, SMIS has seven modules: programming, project management, monitoring, evaluation, audit and control, cash flow management.

The monitoring module allows the examination of the technical and financial progress accomplished both at the project and the programme level based on the data provided by the beneficiaries. The project progress is assessed taking into account the targets previously introduced in the programming and project management modules.

MASOPHRD uses the SMIS system for monitoring the SOPHRD implementation. SMIS ensures the data collecting and recording both at project and programme level; the system can generate monitoring reports. The reports generated by SMIS are in line with the reporting requests of the EC¹⁰. The data is introduced into SMIS, either by the MASOPHRD or by the IBs, taking into consideration the provisions of the Agreements of delegation of tasks between them and the types of grants. MASOPHRD verifies and validates the data introduced by the IBs.

In order to collect and aggregate supplementary data necessary for ESF specific operations, MASOPHRD had the initiative of having a complementary support electronic system which addresses the SOPHRD needs. This electronic system – Management Integrated System (MIS) – is going to be implemented by middle 2009. The beneficiary will introduce technical and financial data related to the financed activities, but also personal data regarding each participant¹¹ within SOPHRD funded project. It will be possible to import the MIS data into the SMIS system using an adequate electronic interface.

¹⁰ Art. 39-42 of the EC Regulation No 1828/2006.

¹¹ According to the Applicant's Guide, the beneficiary must submit a target group registration fiche (Annex X of the Applicant's Guide). The personal data provided are treated as confidential data in accordance with:

- EC Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data transposed into the national legislation as Law no. 677/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data,
- EC Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector (Directive on privacy and electronic communications), transposed into the national legislation as Law no. 506/2004 concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector.

The **responsible bodies** for collecting the monitoring data are:

1. **at project level - The beneficiaries** elaborate the technical and financial reports¹² and they will introduce the monitoring data into MIS.
2. **at IBs level**
 - **Unit for the Verification of the Financed Operations** – monitors and approves the technical and financial reports for the regular grants¹³ sent by the beneficiaries; elaborates implementation reports at the KAI level and sends them to the MASOPHRD – SOP Monitoring and Reporting Unit;
 - **Antifraud and Irregularities Unit** – verify the project operations reality.
3. **at MASOPHRD level**
 - **Unit for the Verification of the Financed Operations** – monitors and approves the technical and financial reports for strategic¹⁴/regular grants sent by the beneficiaries; sends the technical and financial reports to the SOP Monitoring and Reporting Unit;
 - **Antifraud and Irregularities Unit** – verify the project operations reality;
 - **SOP Monitoring and Reporting Unit** – coordinates the monitoring and reporting activity of the SOPHRD implementation, monitors the monitoring function delegated to the IBs, elaborates implementation reports at KAI, PA and SOPHRD level, participates at the site visits to monitor the project progress.

The monitoring data transfer between different levels, as well as the validation of the monitoring data by MASOPHRD or SOPHRD IBs, according to the Agreement on Delegation of Tasks are described in a unitary procedure for monitoring and reporting agreed by MASOPHRD and IBs.

MASOPHRD has developed the project application system taking into consideration the necessity to introduce monitoring data from the project application form (e.g. data about target group). For each call for proposals, MASOPHRD elaborates the Applicant's Guide. The potential beneficiary fills in the application form on-line using the ActionWeb¹⁵ system. One of the sections that the potential beneficiary should fill in the section on project indicators¹⁶. The indicators are automatically generated by the ActionWeb for each call for proposals. The potential beneficiary should establish the indicators values that they want to achieve by implementing the project. The potential beneficiary can establish additional output and results indicators relevant for the proposed project. The potential beneficiary must also specify which will be the added value of the proposed project, justify if the project is sustainable and how it will contribute to the implementation of the horizontal principles¹⁷.

¹² The technical and financial reports elaborated by the beneficiaries are sent either to the IB or to the MASOPHRD taking into consideration the provisions of the Agreements of delegation of tasks between them and the types of projects (regular grant and strategic grant).

¹³ Regular grants are implemented at regional, multi-regional or local level with a value between 50.000 euro and 500.000 euro.

¹⁴ Strategic grants are implemented at national, multi-regional or sectoral level with a value between 500.000 euro and 5.000.000 euro.

¹⁵ ActionWeb is an informatic system created by the MASOPHRD. ActionWeb addresses to the SOPHRD potential beneficiaries who wants to fill in and submit the project proposal. Any project proposal financed through SOPHRD should be submitted online using this system.

¹⁶ According to the application form uploaded and transmitted using the ActionWeb system.

¹⁷ According to the application form uploaded and transmitted using the ActionWeb system.

According to the grant award, the beneficiary has to submit technical and financial reports on the project implementation progress. The report will provide information about:

- the current values of the output and result indicators at the project level;
- the description of the activities;
- a qualitative analysis of the progress achieved in relation to the objectives and the indicators.

During the project implementation, the beneficiary will introduce in the MIS, the technical and financial reports, but also information regarding the project participants (target group)¹⁸.

The monitoring data uploaded by the beneficiaries into MIS system are checked and validated either by MASOPHRD or SOPHRD IBs according to the Agreement of Delegation of Tasks provisions. The data uploaded in the MIS electronic system will be transferred in the SMIS system using adequate interfaces.

The SOPHRD Monitoring and Reporting Unit aggregates the technical and financial data at the KAI, PA and SOPHRD level.

The SOPHRD Monitoring and Reporting Unit is responsible for elaborating the following reports regarding SOPHRD implementation:

- Half-yearly Implementation Report;
- Annual Implementation Report;
- Final Implementation Report;
- Thematic reports.

These implementation reports are sent to the Programme Evaluation Unit within Programming and Evaluation Unit which uses them in the programme evaluation process. The Programme Evaluation Unit has also access to other necessary monitoring data.

II. Indicative evaluation activities

1. Types of evaluation activities

The General Regulation No 1083/2006 (art. 47-49) sets the obligations and the general rules for the operational programmes evaluation.

The evaluation activities themes are established in line with the SOPHRD priorities and objectives: education system reform, supporting lifelong learning, promoting adaptability, entrepreneurship and partnership, Public Employment Service modernisation, promoting active employment measures, human resources development in rural area and promoting social inclusion.

The envisaged evaluations are **strategic and operational**.

The **strategic evaluations** will assess the SOPHRD implementation progress in terms of socio-economic impact, the relevance and consistency of programme strategy with the HRD national and Community strategies and policies. The strategic evaluations will assess the coherence and the complementarity of the SOPHRD with other Romanian Operational Programmes (e.g. OP Administrative Capacity Development, SOP Increase of Economic

¹⁸ see Annex XXIII of the Regulation No 1828/2006.

Competitiveness, Regional Operational Programme, National Rural Development Programme) financed through EU funding. In addition to this, the strategic evaluations will also focus on specific horizontal themes (Information, Technology and Communication, partnership, transnationality, active ageing) and SOPHRD horizontal priorities (equal opportunities, sustainable development, competition and state aid).

Apart of the strategic dimension, the SOPHRD will be evaluated from the **operational** point of view by measuring, assessing and analysing implementation progress in terms of:

- relevance of the SOPHRD objectives;
- quality of the implementation system with an emphasis on 'smart administration'¹⁹ leading to better public services and administration;
- analysing data on financial and technical progress;
- providing recommendations to improve the performance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

The planned evaluations will combine both strategic and operational dimensions.

There are three main types of evaluation to be carried out for SOPHRD:

- Ex-ante evaluation;
- On-going evaluation;
- Ex-post evaluation.

On-going evaluation

The purpose of the on-going evaluation is to follow, on a continuous basis, the SOPHRD implementation progress in order to understand better and to analyse the outputs, the results achieved, as well as to recommend, if necessary, remedial actions.

The on-going evaluations need to be done whenever:

- monitoring data reveals a significant departure from goals initially set for any Priority or Key Area of Intervention;
- proposals are made for the revision of SOPHRD;
- according to the Multiannual Evaluation Plan;
- at Monitoring Committee initiative.

There are three types of on-going evaluation that have to be carried out during the SOPHRD implementation process: a) interim, b) ad hoc and c) with a cross-cutting theme.

a) Interim evaluation

The aim of the interim evaluation is to assess the relevance, consistency, efficiency and effectiveness of the SOPHRD implementation.

There are two interim evaluations planned for the SOPHRD:

- The 2009 interim evaluation will examine the SOPHRD implementation progress, looking particularly at issues such as SOPHRD management;
- The 2012 interim evaluation will focus more on priorities, looking forward to the next programming period with a view in identifying priorities for funding.

b) Ad-hoc evaluation

¹⁹ As defined in Council Decision on Community Strategic Guidelines (2006/702/EC)

Ad-hoc evaluations will be carried out whenever the SOPHRD monitoring reveals a significant deviation from the goals initially set or when proposals for revision of the operational programme are made. The ad-hoc evaluations may address either implementation or management issues or it can be a “thematic” evaluation. It is already envisaged to be carried out evaluations related to different issues, such as:

- access to life-long learning;
- life-long learning effects on the labour market;
- actions in subsistence agriculture and social inclusion.

c) Cross-cutting theme evaluation

The cross-cutting themes evaluations will be managed by the ECU-ACIS. This type of evaluation analyse more than one OP for assessing the coherence and the complementarity of all the OPs that pursue the same or similar objectives (e.g. the Lisbon strategy). This type of evaluation may also examine the horizontal issues across all OPs (e.g partnership).

Ex-post evaluation

The ex-post evaluation shall be carried out by the European Commission, in close co-operation with the Member State and the Managing Authorities²⁰.

²⁰ Art. 49(3) of the Council Regulation No 1083/2006.

1. Indicative list of evaluations

Table 1: List of indicative evaluations²¹

	<i>Proposed evaluation</i>	<i>Type of evaluation</i>	<i>Completion date</i>
1	SOPHRD interim evaluation ²²	Strategic and operational	Semester II 2009
2	PA2 (KAI 2.3), PA3, PA4, PA5, PA6 evaluation ²³	Strategic and operational	Semester II 2011
3	SOPHRD interim evaluation ²⁴	Strategic and operational	Semester II 2012
4	Ex-ante evaluation for the next programming period	Strategic and operational	Semester II 2013
5	PA1 and PA2 (KAI 2.1 and 2.2) evaluation ²⁵	Strategic and operational	Semester II 2014
6	Ex-post evaluation	Strategic	2015
7	Ad-hoc evaluations	Strategic and/or operational/thematic according to the needs	-

2. Indicative financial allocation

The SOPHRD evaluations (the ongoing evaluations for the current programming period and the ex-ante evaluation for the next programming period) are financed under PA 7 “Technical Assistance”. The indicative budget allocated for the SOPHRD evaluation is approx. 10 million Euros. The financial allocation for programme evaluation capacity building is approx. 3 million Euros. These financial allocations represent 8% from the Priority Axis 7 Technical Assistance.

3. The dissemination and use of the evaluation outcomes

The evaluation outcomes will be disseminated to:

- SOPHRD Monitoring Committee (MC) and specialized services of European Commission (EC);
- Evaluation Central Unit within the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Instruments (Romanian Ministry of Economy and Finance) (ECU-ACIS);
- Social partners;

²¹ The list is not exhaustive. MASOPHRD will take into account a number of constraints related to the administrative process, the true performance of the SOPHRD, changes of policy guidance.

²² The first interim evaluation will focus on the SOPHRD implementation system: efficiency of the system at the operational level, criteria used for project selection, how the indicators are collected and the monitoring system.

²³ The PA2, PA3, PA4, PA5 and PA6 address the employability, adaptability, entrepreneurship, social inclusion, equal opportunities, education and training at the individuals’ level. Through assessing the contribution of the projects to the achievement of the PA objectives, the outcomes and results reached under different PA, the achievement of the target values of the indicators, the target groups’ reached. This evaluation will provide an important input for making justified decisions regarding the SOPHRD implementation. If needed, remedial actions will be taken in order to improve the SOPHRD implementation.

²⁴ The second interim evaluation is a tool to prepare for the next programming period. It will take into consideration the regional dimension of SOPHRD implementation and the implementation of the horizontal principles.

²⁵ Due to the integrated approach at the national level of PA1, it is considered that this evaluation should take place in 2014. PA1 and PA2 (KAI 2.1 and 2.2) will be evaluated together because PA1 addresses training and education, at the system level and PA2 (KAI 2.1 and 2.2) contains education policy elements related to close links between education and labour market.

- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs);
- Policy makers;
- Academics;
- Research institutes;
- Beneficiaries;
- Civil society.

The evaluation reports will be published on the MASOPHRD website www.fseromania.ro. Most of the reports will be printed in hard copies and distributed to the relevant stakeholders. The evaluation outcomes will be presented at different seminars, workshops, round-tables, fairs, conferences on evaluation. An Annual Evaluation Conference at the national level will be organised by MASOPHRD.

The evaluation outcomes will be used by:

- **Policy makers** – for elaborating/revising HRD public policies and strategies. Social partners, NGOs, academics, research institutes, beneficiaries and general public should be consulted during the policy making process.
- **Decision-makers** – to make informed decisions regarding the HRD strategies implementation, to improve the dialog and the participation of the social partners and civil society in the public policies elaboration and implementation.
- **Monitoring Committee** – for making informed and justified decisions regarding the SOPHRD implementation process.
- **Beneficiaries** – for understanding the strategic importance of the HRD policies; for establishing project objectives that will lead to the achievement of the SOPHRD objectives.
- **ECU-ACIS** – in writing the strategic reports at the end of 2009 and 2012 according to article 29 of the Council Regulation 1083/2006.

III. The management of the Multiannual Evaluation Plan implementation

1. Programme Evaluation Unit

The **Programme Evaluation Unit** is set up within the Programming and Evaluation Unit – MASOPHRD²⁶. Four evaluation officers are working in the Programme Evaluation Unit, out of which one is responsible for coordination the programme evaluation activities.

The main responsibilities of the **Programme Evaluation Unit**²⁷ during the evaluation process are:

- elaborates and revises the Multiannual Evaluation Plan in consultation with the relevant stakeholders and the annual technical fiche on the indicative list of evaluation activities;
- monitors the implementation of the Multiannual Evaluation Plan;
- prepares progress reports on the implementation of the Multiannual Evaluation Plan for the Monitoring Committee meetings and other necessary reports;
- provides inputs to SOPHRD Implementation Reports;

²⁶ According to the Order of minister of labour, family and equal opportunities no. 1013/17.11.2008 on the MASOPHRD organisational chart.

²⁷ According to Order of minister of labour, family and equal opportunities no. 1014/17.11.2008 on the MASOPHRD Organisational and Functioning Regulation.

- elaborates the technical fiche for each evaluation exercise;
- manages the evaluation exercise;
- collaborates and facilitates the evaluator's access to the information;
- collaborates, facilitates the consultation process and provides feed-back on the evaluation reports elaborated, revised and improved by the external evaluator²⁸;
- ensures the quality control of the evaluation reports²⁹ using the knowledge achieved during the evaluation capacity building activities; the final evaluation report is approved by the MASOPHRD;
- elaborates the action plan³⁰ regarding the implementation of the evaluation reports recommendations, based on the MASOPHRD specialised units proposals;
- monitors the action plan and prepares progress reports on the implementation of the evaluation report recommendations;
- participates, as members, at the Evaluation Steering Committee meetings;
- ensures the technical secretariat for the SOPHRD Evaluation Steering Committee;
- provides inputs for NSRF cross-cutting evaluations;
- introduces the evaluation report in SMIS;
- communicates and disseminates the evaluation outcomes in order to ensure the transparency of the evaluation process;
- submits the evaluation reports to the SOPHRD Monitoring Committee members;
- participates at the SOPHRD Monitoring Committee meetings;
- participates at institutional and administrative capacity building activities on programme evaluation;
- participates at the Evaluation Community of Practice meetings;
- supports the partnership development throughout the programme evaluation process.

2. SOPHRD Evaluation Steering Committee

The Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) is established at MASOPHRD level. Its main role is to support the programme evaluation process. The ESC members cooperate and are consulted by the MASOPHRD throughout the SOPHRD evaluation process.

The members of the ESC are:

- representatives of the MASOPHRD directorates;
- representative of the ESF Coordination Directorate;
- representatives of the SOPHRD Intermediate Bodies;
- evaluation officers within the Programme Evaluation Unit;
- other stakeholders (depending on the evaluation theme, could be: ministries and other public institutions, social partners, NGOs, academics, research institutes and other special guests).

²⁸ MASOPHRD decided to externalise the programme evaluations (see Table 1: **List of indicative evaluations**) in order to ensure an independent, objective and qualified opinion on the SOPHRD implementation.

²⁹ The quality of the evaluation reports will be assessed against the quality criteria presented in the EC Working Document no. 5 (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/working/wd5_ongoing_en.pdf).

³⁰ The action plan comprises the evaluation report recommendations that will be implemented, responsible bodies for implementing the recommendations and the implementation activities timetable.

The ESC is chaired by a MASOPHRD representative designated by the MASOPHRD general director. By involving of a wide range of stakeholders as ESC members, MASOPHRD promotes the principles of good governance, partnership and transparency.

The main responsibilities of the Evaluation Steering Committee are:

- provides feed-back on the evaluation technical fiche elaborated by the Programme Evaluation Unit;
- provides feed-back on the evaluation reports elaborated, revised and improved by the external evaluator;
- ensures the quality control of the evaluation reports using the knowledge achieved during the evaluation capacity building activities;
- periodical reviews the progress of evaluation activities;
- identifies and suggests solutions for how to deal with the risks associated with the evaluation process.

3. Monitoring Committee

The main responsibilities of the Monitoring Committee are:

- Approves the Multiannual Evaluation Plan, after being consulted on the plan elaboration;
- recommends the ad-hoc evaluation topics and initiates the ad-hoc evaluations;
- examines the evaluation results and recommendations;
- formulates recommendations for the action plan that follows the evaluation report;
- approves revisions of the SOPHRD.

Both Monitoring Committee and MASOPHRD have a right to disagree with recommendations within the evaluation reports, if these are unjustified or based on weak analysis.

4. Evaluation Central Unit

As the national co-coordinator of the Structural Instruments evaluations, the main responsibilities of the ECU-ACIS are:

- Endorses the SOPHRD Multiannual Evaluation Plan;
- Carries out cross-cutting evaluations at NSRF level;
- Provides capacity building activities to support the MAs evaluation operational capacity;
- Provides overall quality assurance activities to ensure the quality of all evaluations.

5. Capacity Building in Evaluation

The MASOPHRD Programme Evaluation Unit is actively involved in the evaluation process. Therefore, the evaluation capacity needs to be supported and strengthened.

- Starting with 2006, the evaluation officers within Programme Evaluation Unit participated at trainings, internships, workshops, study visits organized by MASOPHRD and ECU-ACIS, but also to other public events on evaluation (e.g. international conferences, Community of Practice meetings).
- The evaluation officers within Programme Evaluation Unit together with the other MAs evaluation experts are active members of the Evaluation Working Group. The

Working Group meetings are organized and chaired by ECU-ACIS and take place every month. During these meetings, the participants exchange experience and disseminate examples of good practices in the field of programme evaluation.

- Starting with 2009, MASOPHRD will focus on developing and running evaluation capacity building actions. These actions will address the Programme Evaluation Unit, IBs and MC members as well as other ESC members according to their needs and role in the programme evaluation.
- The evaluation officers within Programme Evaluation Unit will also benefit from the know-how transfer from the external evaluators.
- The capacity building activities will be financed through SOPHRD PA 7 “Technical assistance”, KAI 7.1 “Support for the implementation, general management and assessment of SOPHRD”.

The evaluation capacity building will be a permanent priority of the MASOPHRD during the SOPHRD implementation.

As outlined in introduction, the Multiannual Evaluation Plan should be seen in a dynamic perspective and must be adapted to the specific needs assessment that will reveal different aspects of the SOPHRD implementation. Evaluation is an iterative and interactive process. In this context, it must be remembered that in accordance with Article 48(3) of Regulation (EC) number 1083/2006, during the programming period, Member States shall carry out evaluations linked to the monitoring of operational programmes in particular where that monitoring reveals a significant departure from the goals initially set or where proposals are made for the revision of operational programmes.