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CURRENT REGIONAL PROGRAMS IN ROMANIA

*Abstract*

*The essential problem for Romania after it's adhering to the E.U. is to support a sustainable socio-economic development at regional level in order to decrease disparities between it and E.U.'s average.*

*As a result, Romania will benefit by European Structural and Cohesion Funds only if it will be able to have a great absorption capacity.*

*Romanian legislation has the same direction with European legislation, but there are some difficulties yet.*

*After it's adhering to the E.U., the only way for Romania is to correlate national policy with European policy, in order to adapt our country to socio-economic and competitive conditions from the European Structures.*

During 2007-2013, Romania will receive 19.67 billions Euros from European Structural Funds. 98% of this money will be allocated to seven Operational Programs under Convergence objective in order to reduce socio-economic disparities between European regions.

The last 2% will be allocated to six Operational Programs under Territorial Cooperation with neighbour countries.

**Table 1: Operational Programs in Romania during 2007-2013 (bill. Euros)**

<b>Convergence Objective</b>		
<b>Operational Program (OP)</b>	<b>% of total budget</b>	<b>Management Authority of Operational Program (OP)</b>
1. OP Transport	23	Ministry of Transports
2. OP Environment	23	Ministry of Environment and Human development
3. OP Regional	19	Ministry of Development, Public works and Houses
4. OP Human resources development	18	Ministry of Labour, Family and Chances equity

5. OP Economic efficiency growth	13	Ministry of Economy and Finance
6. OP Administrative capacity development	1	Ministry of Intern Affaires and Administrative reform
7. OP Technical assistance	1	Ministry of Economy and Finance
<b>Territorial cooperation Objective</b>		
Operational Program (OP)	% of total budget	Management Authority of Operational Program (OP)
8-13. OP Territorial cooperation	2	Ministry of Development, Public works and Houses

The Regional Operational Program (ROP) is one of Operational Programs which are agreed by the European Union and an important instrument for the implementation of national strategy and regional development policies.

This program is applying to all eight development regions from Romania.

The general objective of the Regional Operational Program consists in supporting and promoting economic and social local sustainable development in Romania's regions by improving infrastructure's conditions and business environment which are able to support economic growth.

As a result, Regional Operational Program is focused on decreasing socio-economic disparities between developed and less developed regions.

In Romania, Regional Operational Program is financed by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It supports European regions which have a GDP per capita less than 75% from E.U.'s average.

The whole budget for Regional Operational Program is about 4.4 billions Euros during 2007-2013. European financing represents about 84% from the whole budget for Regional Operational Program. The difference comes from national funds, public co financing (14%) and private co financing (2%).

The distribution of the funds is made according with priority axes of the Regional Operational Program. Every priority axe uses a specific budget and it has a number of essential areas of implication which follow specific development objectives.

The general objective of Regional Operational Program consists in supporting and promoting a socio-economic equilibrate development for all Romanian regions using improvement of infrastructure and business

environment which support economic growth especially in less developed regions.

The Regional Operational Program has specific objectives too, as the following:

- improving of the general attractively and accessibility for Romanian regions;
- growing of regions' competitively as business locations;
- growing contribution of the tourism to regional development;
- growing of the socio-economic role of the urban locations.

The Regional Operational Program covers six priority areas, named priority axes. Every priority axe is divided into specific sections named key intervention domains.

The Priority Axe no.1 is connected with supporting sustainable development of the cities like urban poles of growth. This axe refers to the following:

- integrate plans of urban development;
- urban infrastructure rehabilitatee and improvement of urban services, including urban public transport;
- development of a sustainable business environment;
- social structure rehabilitatee, including social dwellings and social services improvement.

The second Priority Axe deals with improvement of regional and local transport infrastructure using rehabilitation and modernization of county roads and urban streets. It includes building or rehabilitation of belt highroad too.

The Priority Axe no.3 is focused on social infrastructure improvement and it is divided into following actions:

- rehabilitation, modernization and outfitting of health infrastructure services;
- rehabilitation, modernization, outfitting and development of social infrastructure services;
- improvement of endowing with equipments for operational basis during emergency situations;
- rehabilitation, modernization, outfitting and development learning infrastructure in order to support continues learning process.

The forth Priority Axe is connected with supporting local and regional business environment development. It is focused on:

- sustainable development of business support's structures;

- rehabilitation of pollutant and unused industrial centres and preparing them for new activities;

- supporting of micro firms' development.

The Priority Axe no. 5 is connected with sustainable development and tourism's promotion and it is divided into some specific objectives like these:

- restoration and sustainable valorisation of cultural patrimony, creating and modernization of colligate infrastructures;

- creating, development and modernization of specific infrastructures for sustainable valorisation of natural resources with tourist potential;

- valorisation of tourist potential and creating of necessary infrastructure in order to grow the attractively of Romania as a touristic destination.

The last Priority Axe represents technical assistance in order to:

- support the implementation, management and evaluation of the Regional Operational Program;

- support the publicity and information connected with the Regional Operational Program.

The National Developing Plan (NDP) represents a specific concept of the socio-economic cohesion policy in the E.U. in order to offer a coherent and stable framework about Member States' development. This framework is translating into development priorities, programs and projects according with programming principle of the structural funds.

After Romania's adhering to the E.U., the National Developing Plan has a major role in lining up national development policy to European development priorities using incentives for socio-economic sustainable development at European level.

The National Developing Plan 2007-2013 represents the document of strategic planning and multiyear financial program approved by the Romanian government. This document was made under a large partnership and it is able to orient socio-economic development in Romania in according with the European Cohesion Policy.

The National Developing Plan is an instrument for public investments' priorities of development in order to cover the compatible priorities and objectives of the European Structural and Cohesion Funds.

As a result, the National Developing Plan isn't a national strategy for economic development, but it becomes one of the main components of this strategy. The National Developing Plan fundamentals priorities and strategic

objectives negotiated with the European Commission for financing using Structural and Cohesion Funds during 2007-2013.

The National Developing Plan is the main document which supports National Strategic Reference Framework during 2007-2013. This framework represents the strategy approved and elaborated together with the European Commission in order to use structural instruments and operational programs.

As a result, the drafting of the National Developing Plan was made in the same time with the drafting of Operational Programs. This process ensured the compatibility between these documents.

The elaboration of the National Developing Plan was made under Government Regulation HG no.1115/2004, which established methodological principles, the institutional framework and partnership consulting mechanisms.

The development strategy from the National Developing Plan represents a reflection of the development needs for Romania in order to decrease as quickly as is possible the disparities between our country and E.U.

This strategy is based on European strategic orientations connected with cohesion, on the priorities of Lisbon Agenda and Goteborg in order to obtain the growth of efficiency, better conditions for labour and sustainable environment protection.

In 2004, Romania had only 31% from the average European GDP per capita. As a result, the global objective of the National Developing Plan 2007-2013 was established as the decreasing socio-economic disparities between Romania and E.U.'s Member States.

Until 2013, Romania would recover about 10% from its general lag comparing with E.U.'s average.

The global objective is supported by three specific objectives:

- long term efficiency growth in Romanian economy;
- basic infrastructure development at European standards;
- improvement and efficient using of Romanian human capital.

In order to achieve the global and specific objectives, there were defined six national development priorities during 2007-2013:

- economic efficiency growth and knowledge economy development;
- transport infrastructure development and modernization;
- environment quality protection and improvement;
- human resources development, labour and social inclusion promotion and administrative capacity growing;
- development of rural economy and growth of agricultural efficiency;

- decreasing development disparities between Romanian regions.

In order to ensure the resources concentration on realising those objective and measures with maximum impact on decreasing internal disparities and between Romania and E.U., it's necessary establishing of a limited number of priorities.

On the other hand, inside these priorities are influenced a lot of specific interventionist domains and sectors such as: education, health, energy, communications, IT and natural risks' prevent.

The regional policy in Romania and the ability of accessing European Funds depend on Lisbon Treaty signed on 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2007. This treaty modifies the Treaty of European Community and the Treaty of European Union because it accords juridical personality to E.U., analysis the possibility of a Member State to take back from the E.U., sets up the function of President of the European Council, grows the role of the European Parliament and of the national parliaments too.

The Lisbon Treaty has a solidarity clause between Member States about terrorism, human and natural catastrophes and difficulties in energetic sector.

On the other hand, the functional dysfunctions and regional disparities are still great in Romania. Regions have unequal development and the development rate is more different between urban and rural centres. The absorption of Structural Funds is too little, the transport infrastructure is not adequate and basic infrastructure grows up in a minimal rhythm.

More, Romanian companies have just a little success on European markets as a result of European competition, of excessive taxes and law instability. Foreign companies which operate in Romania criticise law, institutional and taxes instability which don't allow them to realise long term strategic development plans.

Even that European Regional Programs have pluses and minuses, they try to solve existing problems or potential future problems too.

After it's adhering to the E.U., the only way for Romania is to correlate national policy with European policy, in order to adapt our country to socio-economic and competitive conditions from the European Structures.

Romania made important progresses, but it had failures too, especially connected with absorption capacity and business environment conditions.

Romania needs an efficient and sustainable socio-economic development. It is the only way for real progress.

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